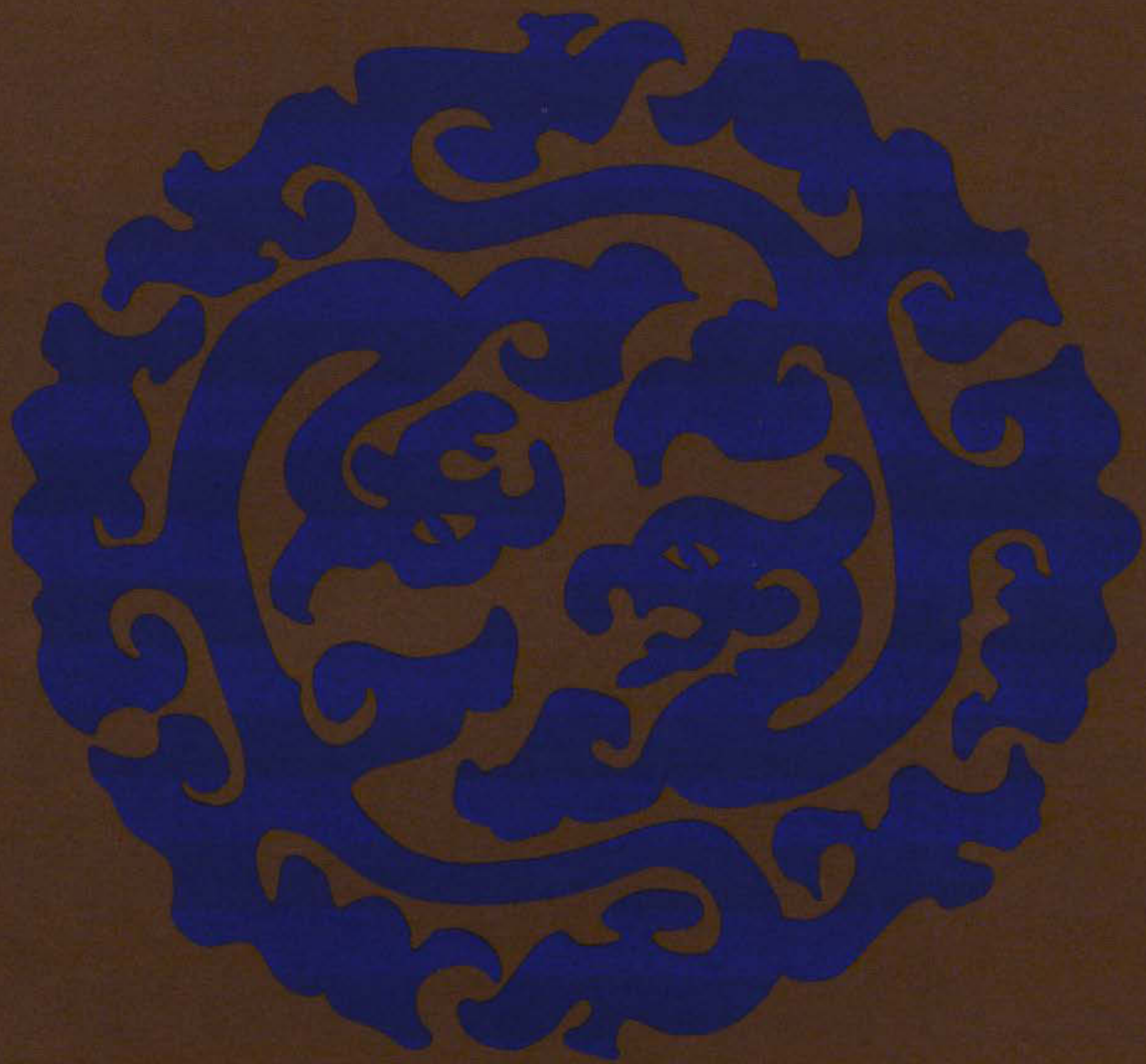


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*Selected Writings of Suzuki Shōsan*  
*Translated by Royall Tyler*



**SELECTED WRITINGS OF SUZUKI SHŌSAN**

**Translated by Royall Tyler**

**China-Japan Program  
Cornell University  
Ithaca, New York 14853**



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## INTRODUCTION

Suzuki Shōsan 鈴木正三 is known, although not widely, as a Zen teacher, moralist, and kanazoshi writer of the early seventeenth century. Born in 1579 into a warrior family in the old province of Mikawa, he fought for his Tokugawa lord at Sekigahara in 1600 and at the sieges of Osaka in 1614 and 1615. Shōsan was indeed a hatamoto (direct retainer), and his intense loyalty to the shogun is impossible to miss in his writings and sayings.

Shōsan, a fiercely combative man, also had a true Buddhist vocation. As a layman he frequented Zen masters and temples. In 1621, after a period of duty as an officer of the guard at Osaka Castle, he at last shaved his head--with such characteristic abruptness, however, that Iemitsu could easily have punished him. Then after a year or two of wandering and of leading a life so austere that it nearly killed him, Shōsan settled in Mikawa on land given him by a younger brother named Shigenari 重成. Eventually Shigenari built for him there the Onshinji 思真寺 which still survives as a Sōtō Zen temple.

In time Shōsan lost patience with the quiet of Mikawa. He had conceived the ambition to bring about the reign of the True Law (shōbō 正法) and he therefore felt called to the center of his world, to Edo. It was not until 1648, however, that he moved to Edo permanently. In the meantime he had spent the years 1642-1645 on Amakusa rendering his last official service to the bakufu: Shigenari had been appointed daikan of Amakusa after the Shimabara Rebellion and had had Shōsan summoned

to reestablish Buddhist influence in this heavily Christianized area. To this day, Shōsan, Shigenari, and Shōsan's son Shigetoki (long since adopted by Shigenari) are honored on Amakusa at the Suzuki Shrine.

In Edo Shōsan took disciples and gave instruction, as was his habit, to people of every sort. But though many of his disciples were monks he refused to ordain anyone. He did not want to be responsible for removing people from the secular world. He insisted instead that the truth of Buddhism was to be found in man's daily work, if only man could perform that work in a spirit of compassion toward his fellows and of grateful service to the ruler. Shōsan often spoke of his zeal to lay before the shogun a proposal for the reform of Buddhism and for the upliftment of the nation, clearly implying that only the shogun could give valid sanction to the True Law. In imagination, indeed, Shōsan saw himself debating the prelates of all sects and silencing them all before the shogun and his entourage with the one decisive admonition, "Let all sects strive toward Buddhahood." If he lost the debate, he would say, he wanted to be beheaded on the spot. But the grand confrontation never took place and in fact the proposal never reached the shogun. Shōsan died in 1655 recognizing his failure.

Shōsan had no great number of disciples (42 attended his funeral), but he did mightily impress a few. Among them was Echū 惠中 (born in 1628) who joined him in 1648. Shōsan had no real heir, however, and no one visibly continued his style. For that matter, Shōsan himself acknowledged no master. Apparently it was the Rinzai master Daigu 大愚 (1583-1668) who ordained Shōsan, but Daigu himself had refused to give Shōsan a religious name; hence Shōsan (whose lay names had been



Shigemitsu 重三 and Kudayū 九太夫) took the name Shōsan on his own. Although some sources claim Shōsan for Rinzaï and he himself vigorously championed Sōtō, he in fact had friends on both sides and belonged to neither. He seems to have preferred being a lone voice. One feels that he wanted to save the world singlehandedly or not at all.

No doubt it is this isolation from the Zen hierarchy which made it reasonably natural for Shōsan to urge everyone to recite the nembutsu. The nembutsu is anathema in orthodox Zen, and Shōsan's devoted use of it has startled his modern readers. However Shōsan was under no obligation to be orthodox, and the nembutsu was definitely widespread in Shōsan's time. In kanazōshi literature, religious practice is almost synonymous with recitation of the nembutsu. Moreover several contemporary Zen masters such as Munan 無難 (1603-1674) and Ungo 雲居 (1582-1659) regularly taught the nembutsu--not, of course, to fellow Zen specialists, but to laymen. Such men were concerned to teach something effective and accessible to all. To Shōsan almost everyone, including himself, was a beginner and a layman at heart, and the nembutsu suited his purpose. In any case his nembutsu had very little to do with Amida. It was abstract, a convenience, and it worked. Everyone knew it. For that matter, Shōsan could also advise a nō actor to achieve Zen samādhi by singing nō.

Shōsan himself generally recited the nembutsu with clenched fists and gritted teeth, as though beating off a thousand spiritual demons. This too was the way he meditated in silence. He urged people to catch the spirit of the Niō, the Guardian Kings who keep watch at temple gates, and indeed he often struck the fierce pose of a Niō by way of illustra-

tion. Again, he liked to tell warriors that they must practice tokinokoe zazen (zazen in the midst of battle cries), and he cautioned that any meditation which would not hold up in the thick of the fray was no true meditation at all. It is no wonder that such a tough old soldier should have had no successor in a time of established peace.

Tokinokoe zazen is only the most vivid (and the most heartfelt) example of the instruction which Shōsan addressed to all four social classes, each according to its calling. Shōsan believed himself to be the first truly to proclaim that the Buddha's teaching and the world's teaching are one and the same. He liked to refer to a saying: "Once you're all the way into the world there's no quitting it because there's nowhere else left to go." (Seken ni nittoku sureba shusse amari nashi

世間に入得ずれば出世をまじなし) Therefore the warrior must achieve perfect meditation in battle or in the watchfulness of the guard; the perfect farmer must achieve it as he recites the Nembutsu "with each stroke of the hoe"; the artisan must achieve it as he labors in his workshop; and the merchant must achieve it as he does what is proper to merchants, that is, as he amasses wealth.

In recent years Shōsan has been taken for a preciously early forerunner of the capitalist spirit in Japan just because he urged merchants to make money. No doubt the average warrior did in fact look down upon money-grubbing, but I do not believe that in Shōsan's time merchants were philosophically despised. They were seen instead as one of the four necessary pillars of the nation, albeit the most junior one. Shōsan valued them because they promoted jiyū 自由, which I understand to mean something like "free flow." The early seventeenth century was a

time for civic enthusiasm, and much of Shōsan's teaching was simply a call for everyone to put his shoulder to the wheel. Shōsan strongly warned merchants against making excessive personal profit from their transactions; they were to be the selfless and efficient distributors of needed commodities. Shōsan would have deplored any threat which the merchants might have posed to a social order which was for him the natural pattern of the human universe.

Shōsan taught selflessness as the key to true service and to true freedom; and for him the key to selflessness was to lose the fear of death. He never let anyone forget that the source of all baseness and of all egotism is man's own body with its desires, the worst--or perhaps the sum--of which is the lust for comfortable survival at any cost. Shōsan once said that he had nothing to talk about except death; and another time he said that his teaching was a Buddhism for cowards. For himself he strove to reach a state of such alert equanimity that he could without a quiver let anyone who wished to do so cut off his head. Shōsan constantly urged people to contemplate the foulness of the body and he condemned Buddhists, past and present, for having neglected so essential a practice. His story Ninin bikuni is in fact a discourse on this theme. Toward the end of his life he sometimes exclaimed that despite all his efforts he was still "hoarding this sack of filth," meaning the physical Shōsan. Few men of religion in Japan can ever have exceeded Shōsan in their disgust for the flesh. Therefore for Shōsan "Buddhahood in this very body" (the famous Shingon slogan with which Zen seems seldom to disagree) was a problematical goal. Shōsan aspired to transcend birth and death, but he clearly could not do so, outside of

one or two passing moments, while he retained his physical body. No doubt the same is true of all men in fact, but Shōsan drew from the difficulty of the endeavor a conclusion which was not current in his time.

Shōsan was convinced that no Buddhist within memory had worked as hard at the task of enlightenment as he. (One can readily grant from the surviving evidence that no one had worked harder.) And since he, as he once said, had gotten nowhere, he did not believe that anyone else past or present, except Shakyamuni himself, had really achieved Buddhahood either. He dismissed the Zen patriarchs and founders practically in one breath, accusing them of having taken it easy one way or another. The only ancient of whom he thought highly was P'u-hua 普化 (9thC.), a famous eccentric and the very opposite of the civic model which Shōsan publicly championed.

Actually, opposites and contradictions abound in Shōsan's teaching. It may be impossible to make him make logical sense all the way through. Someone once asked him the obvious question: why had he become a monk at all? But Shōsan would give no reason. He would only say that he had done so because of karma. Shōsan always acted first and spoke or wrote later. He had nothing but scathing criticism for clever talkers. Once a visitor complained that he could not practice Buddhism because he could never remember any instructions or doctrine. Shōsan replied, "Why that's fine! Buddhism is to remember nothing at all. . . . It's as though you'd just given a loud clap. That's being a Buddha." Shōsan may not have cared about intellect and logic but he was always himself: loyal, strenuous, compassionate and cantankerous to the last.

In the course of his life Shōsan wrote two moral tracts of which

the first, Mōanjō 盲安杖, dates from just before Shōsan took the tonsure while the second, Bammin tokuyō 万民得用, was put together by Shōsan in his very last years from even smaller pieces which he had written at various times in the past. He also wrote an instructional essay entitled Fumoto kusawake 麓草分 addressed to newly ordained priests; an anti-Christian tract called Ha-Kirishitan 破吉利支丹 which Shōsan deposited in each of the 33 temples (32 Sōtō Zen and one Jōdōin honor of Ieyasu) he had founded in the Amakusa area; Ninin bikuni, 二人比丘尼 a melodramatic tale; Nembutsu sōshi 念佛草子 a barely dramatized instructional dialogue on the nembutsu; and Inga monogatari 因果物語, a collection of allegedly true stories gathered by Shōsan himself to illustrate the inexorable workings of karma. Echū, during his years with Shōsan, noted down many sayings of the master and many anecdotes about him, and eventually published these under the title of Roankyō 羅鞍橋 Echū also published a second collection of miscellaneous materials on Shōsan which he called Hogo shū 反故集.

This volume of translations includes Mōanjō, Bammin tokuyō, Ninin bikuni, and roughly two thirds of Roankyō. It also includes Kaijō monogatari 海上物語, a kanazōshi tale by Echū in which Echū presented a greatly idealized but recognizable portrait of his master. All these items speak for themselves, but the reader should know that Ninin bikuni is not strictly speaking an original story; a great deal of it is taken directly from two stories attributed to Ikkyū - 休 (1394-1481): Gaikotsu 骸骨 and another Ninin bikuni. As for Roankyō, the original consists of three fascicles. I have omitted from the first



and third only those items which I feel to be weak or redundant. However for various reasons I have omitted almost all of the second fascicle, which starts with comments on classical Zen texts and goes on to record some of Shōsan's sermons. From this second fascicle I have retained little but Shōsan's remarks on nō, of which he was very fond, and a summary of his own version of the famous play Sotoba Komachi.

NININ BIKUNI  
(Two Nuns)

Hither we come, though only for the briefest stay, to the house of ceaseless shift and change where life and death simply cannot be foretold; and away we go again for good and all, to the underworld or to rebirth. For this, whom are we to blame? All we see and all we hear is vanity. So many times do we add our own tears to the dews of P'ei Mang.<sup>1</sup> Those dear to us and those less dear have in their numbers passed away, and we mingle our fruitless sorrow with the smoke above T'ai Shan.<sup>2</sup> Why then do we not put away from ourselves the body, that mirage which is not worth grief, and seek the condition of enlightenment whose pursuit brings advantage indeed?

Consider now a man from the province of Shimotsuke, Suda Yahei by name. At the age of twenty-five he was killed in battle, bequeathing to posterity eternal fame. His wife, only seventeen,<sup>3</sup> could hardly speak for weeping, and the fire of longing burned within her breast. The first week of mourning, then the second, then the fifth went by until soon, with the passage of the months and days, the anniversary was at hand.<sup>4</sup>

It is melancholy indeed to apply to holy monks for memorial services and to go in search of enlightenment. Suda's wife, reliving this day a year ago, wrote a verse:

How hateful  
Though dear to me  
Is that one day  
When he I lost  
Could well, I feel,<sup>5</sup>  
Be with me even now.

So the wave of her emotion swept her on until tears of grief clouded her eyes. In their chamber so red, within emerald curtains, had they lain the night long under the enfolding covers;<sup>6</sup> they had been like shrimp mated in their cozy lair.<sup>7</sup> But of all that not even the dream remained. Desiring at very least to seek out the place where her husband had breathed his last, she let her longing for that sky yonder take her and set forth one midnight as one might, so she felt, set forth in troubled sleep upon the highroad of dreams. Wherever her feet led she followed, and her heart was heavy as she groped her way along. "No one will know me now," thought she, "no, but oh, how long shall this dewdrop that is I endure? Wing to wing we swore we'd be, boughs of one tree; and now my heart is filled with nothing but sorrow."

But everyone must tread the painful road of parting and loss, and so she wandered here and there, quite aimlessly, until the sundown bell tolling from a country temple announced that this day too had reached its close.<sup>8</sup> Then she went up to a little dwelling and obtained lodging for the night. When the lady of the house saw her she wondered who this soft-spoken girl could be, so very young, to come in such evident distress to so poor a village in search of a place to lay her head. At the piteous sight she found herself wringing the tears from her sleeve. Suda's wife then told the lady her story and held back nothing at all. The lady heard her out. "I do believe you have reached your goal," she said. "That battleground is not far from here, though I have heard no more than tales of what the fight was like."<sup>9</sup> With the allies and their foes ranged on either hand, with war cries and archers' yells ringing out through heaven and earth,<sup>10</sup> a warrior named, as I recall, Suda Yahei,

broke into the enemy ranks and killed many men before he himself was struck down. That at least is what I have been told. Could you possibly be related to that brave man? Oh my poor dear lady!" she cried and pressed her sleeve to her eyes. For a moment she could not speak. But Suda's wife, at these words, felt she had just witnessed the very scene, and collapsed upon the ground in a condition more pitiful than words could ever describe.

After a little while the lady of the house spoke up. "Do not grieve so," she said, "please. Those who come together must always part, you know. Could anyone live without ever having to say goodbye? Neither you nor I have long to stay here. How rightly the old poem says,

Whether one go first  
Or linger on  
The way is the same:  
Friends join  
Only to part again.<sup>11</sup>

Don't you agree? Nothing exempts you from the rule. Why then do you grieve so?"

"How kindly you remind me of these things!" Suda's wife, thus admonished, replied. "I know you are quite right, and yet the clouds of the passions are thick around me. I am lost in the darkness of wrongful clinging, nor does the moon within my breast ever shine clear. So heavy are the bonds that tie me to the three worlds of transmigration that my heart never wakens at all. It's a human body I have, hard indeed to obtain, but my being a helpless woman must be my reward for lives gone by,<sup>12</sup> and all this must be my own fault." And with such thoughts as these in mind she made the verse,

Now you've gone your way,  
No grief for me:

It's I'm to blame, I know,  
For all my longing.

There came to her, where she lay that night, a wind from across the reeds, and the shrilling of insects died away. Far off a stag was belling, evoking in her sorrows ever renewed. Sleep eluded her and a bell's lonely ringing rent her heart the night through. At last the moonlight that streamed through the eaves was gone from her pillow; the heavens in the small hours were desolate. Soon bird after bird began to sing and the sky lightened. Mrs. Suda then took leave of the lady of the house and set out, bound for her husband's grave. The lady went a long way with her to show her the path as best she could, and returned at last to her own home in tears.

Suda's wife passed hither and thither along roads utterly unknown to her, wetting her skirts with dew and her sleeves with tears, her sole guide the rumor that her goal lay somewhere in this direction.<sup>13</sup> So, sick at heart, she struggled through the entangling grasses of trails that led her on she knew not whither through the fields. "Could it be here that my dear husband met his end," she wondered, "or was it yonder?" She stood motionless upon the broad plain while the autumn wind blew chill, scattering dew from the bush clover, and color drained from the lush greenery. The villages in the far distance were veiled in mist. Now, to add to the dreary landscape a fresh touch of mourning, an autumn shower fell, till the scrub bamboo leaves by the trail drooped one upon the other. She had no idea how to make her way back from this place, and her heart failed her utterly. Pampas plumes, springing up from the hummocks of grass around her as she stood there, all alone, seemed to beckon,<sup>14</sup> until in bitterness she recalled the old poem,



O pampas plumes,  
If you beckon,  
It's here I'll remain;  
For any field at all  
May make my final home.<sup>15</sup>

And to this she herself added:

O pampas plumes,  
Beckon if you will:  
I'll never go  
Till, as I vowed,  
I stand beside his grave.

With this she rested a while. A look toward the line of mountains to the west told her the sun was already going down. This would never do, so she journeyed on. Hesitantly she felt her way along until the sun, as ever is its way on autumn days, quickly sank; and twilight set in. Near the base of the mountains she found a grove of pines, and within a tiny chapel roughly built. Having nowhere else to go for lodging she thought she might spend the night in the chapel, and so went up to it to look about. She saw a stone monument, moss-covered and overgrown with vines, a crumbling grave marker without legible inscription,<sup>16</sup> and, in the old cemetery, many, many recent tombs.<sup>17</sup> A pine tree there, a token of the past, still grew as green as ever, but here and there a branch had died. "I wonder in whose memory it stands," thought she as she contemplated a moment the dreamlike fleetingness of life. Then, deeply moved, she made this poem:

The very pine  
They planted here  
In many a branch has died,  
Nor can one know, alas,  
For whom it stands.

All night long she prayed for the spirits in this place, that they should reach full and complete awakening.<sup>18</sup> Then, toward dawn, she slept

a little while. In her sleep she dreamed that she walked behind the chapel and that there, from all directions, old skeletons had gathered, of every size and description. She was both startled and afraid. However one of the skeletons came up to her and disturbed her still further by addressing her thus:

What say you of the end  
That's every man's,  
O you who shrink away  
And look askance?

Touched by the skeleton's poem, Suda's wife shed tears of heartfelt gratitude and gave this in reply:

Yes, this little while  
That I draw breath  
I do indeed  
See askance the corpse  
Left beside the path.<sup>19</sup>

With this, she went up to the skeletons and entered into their play. Then the skeletons clapped their hands all together and sang loudly in chorus: "Yes, we're the ones who promptly have given back all we borrowed from earth, water, fire and air. We've cut out the seed of the six robbers<sup>20</sup> and the passions, we've left behind the village where the ten evils lurk,<sup>21</sup> and we've come back to our own first home. From men's eight sufferings<sup>22</sup> we now stand apart, to our great joy!" To Suda's wife, all this was becoming more and more strange. One of the skeletons now began to dance, displaying the while a slip of wood inscribed with a phrase from the sutras. "Those were words worth heeding!" he said. "Now, girl, listen! Between you and us there is no difference at all. You are quite wrong to think us other than yourself. The beauty of your physical body, every bit of it, comes only from the flesh and skin laid

upon your bones and given an attractive look. This is not your real self, for what makes flesh is earth; what makes life-fluids, water; what makes breath, wind; and what makes the body's warmth, fire. These four components are not to blame if in our delusion we believe that what we have borrowed is our own, till fire turns to the flames of rage and burns out our heart; or if water becomes the seed of lust and drowns us in passions's clinging till we sink in the ocean of suffering. Wind it is that overturns the heart and becomes the seed of endless rebirth, while earth turns into the seed of dullness until we enter the total darkness of hell. There the howls of fury never cease. A woman who does not know this truth is ignorant indeed. Call this dream world a dream, but a dream it still is. What are we to take as real? What does it mean, that we should call a dream something which exists not at all? There is not a single thing even to be called a dream. Nothing means anything,' they sang, 'nothing means anything.' and their voices became the wind singing through the pines.

As Suda's wife awoke from her dream a bell was ringing to mark the last hour of the night, and light was just dawning in the sky. 'Well, well,' she thought to herself, 'what a strange way to find my link to enlightenment!<sup>23</sup> Why, it must have been a message from the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas! I've heard tell of the dream upon the pillow of Kantan, in which a man lived through fifty years of the greatest glory only to realize at last that all had been empty; and his hopes were thus answered in full.<sup>24</sup> Now I too, after a dream at a broken-down old chapel, find my heart opened to enlightenment and feel as though I have awakened from the dream that is this sorry world."

With this, she shed tears of the most heartfelt gratitude, prostrated herself before the chapel altar, and set out for the village nearby. Among the dwellings she saw there, one of the most poor-looking was set in a place somewhat apart. On approaching she noticed that the trees around it were old, that the garden on one side was all overgrown with moss and covered with dead leaves, and that the line of the roof was sagging. The place had a good feeling, however, so she went in.

She who was presumably the lady of the house seemed very kind, and hardly more than twenty years old. At the sight of Suda's wife she asked, "Where are you bound like this, all alone? Your air is quite unusual, and you seem so sunk in thought that it makes me wonder." To this well-meant inquiry Suda's wife responded with complete frankness, recounting everything about her travels. "How wonderful is your resolve!" the lady then exclaimed. "It must be a link between us in past lives that brought you here. I am so happy that I must tell you my own story."

"I was born in Miyako. When I was a child, however, I was kidnapped by slave merchants and sold here, where I knew no one, in the depths of the East. Later I heard that I was to be sold again, somewhere in Mutsu, but a well-born nun who lived here took pity on me and kept me with her. Now this nun had an only son, and she married me to him and loved me more than my parents in Miyako had ever done. Soon, though, she passed away and I was left, as it were, an orphan. Sorrow was all I now knew in the world and it was in grief that I spent my days until, quite unexpectedly, my husband himself died in the winter of

last year. Now I feel I would gladly melt away myself, like lingering snow waiting for the sun. Even on spring mornings I recall the old days and I weep when the warbler sings his first song. Filled with regret for the fallen cherry blossoms, I lament the passing of spring. It pains me even to change into summer wear. U-no-hana flowers clustered along the fence, cuckoo calls, the fragrance of tachibana blossoms--none can quell my longing for the past. In the rainy fifth moon, when the skies are overcast, my heart never clears at all; nor am I refreshed when breezes from the thick, young foliage blow in at my door. Once the summer heat is gone the noise of the wind somehow shivers right through me. When the sad time comes to make offerings for my husband's soul I long for a glimpse of the departed in my dreams, but the first wild goose cries and still I hear nothing from him. The belling of stags and the shrilling of insects evoke only renewed sorrows. On moonlit nights I do not even enter my bedroom, but write in verse how all griefs are gathered in me alone. It is not rain beating on the leaves, nor the sodden skies of fall, nor snow deep upon the roof that can extinguish the fires smouldering in my breast. Morning clouds and evening showers bring me keen sadness. They truly wound my soul. O woe is me! In the presence of the wind that scatters flowers and strips the trees bare I surely should realize that all things pass; yet on the contrary, every little thing becomes in me the seed of further longing until I am utterly sick of the world. Do please consider how in past lives we may have rested a while under the same tree or drawn water from a single stream.<sup>25</sup> Please stay with me a while. When this year too is past and spring is half



over I will go with you myself, anywhere. We will seek out a holy monk and become nuns together; then we will set our course for enlightenment, clear the darkness from the world, and say prayers of guidance for our loved ones too."

Thus she held Suda's wife with many kind words, and Suda's wife allowed herself to be detained until the year was gone and already the second moon had come. Just when they had decided they must be off, however, the lady fell ill. Each day they thought to set out that day or the next, but slowly the lady declined. Her pleasant looks changed pathetically and her lovely form grew thin. But no weeping can mend life's sorrows. At last she reached her end and, as though falling asleep, passed away. This is the way of the ever-shifting world, that those one saw but yesterday today are no more; that the numbers of the dead should only grow; and that a man this morning ruddy of face should by the evening have become bleached bones. Empty the world is, and fleeting, nor is this truth ever to be evaded--and yet what karma could ever require one to witness so tragic a scene?

The season was by then the last of the third moon. The cherry blossoms had fallen and spring was fading fast. Temple bells were ringing for sundown. Without a soul to come visiting her Suda's wife plunged deeper and deeper into grief. In her lamentations she now turned her eyes to heaven and now threw herself upon the ground, but all to absolutely no avail. She spoke to the villagers, for things could not be left so, and had them take the body to the graveyard. Heartless as they were, however, the villagers just dropped the body there and returned each to his own dwelling.

Suda's wife stayed on in the ruinous, ownerless house, in a truly dreadful state. She spent her whole time in tears, alone, and no words could ever express the condition of her feelings. "Alas," she thought, "we had promised each other to leave the world together and to be re-born in paradise upon the same lotus. But oh, our plans all turned out to be fruitless! I could not bear, though, not to stay on here at least a while, not to offer incense and flowers for each of the five weeks of mourning, not to give her guidance." So she continued invoking the name of the Buddha Amida as diligently as before.

When, after seven days, she went out to the graveyard, she found that the corpse had not been burned at all, but had been left exactly as it was. Drawn by her great affection for the lady she approached; but of beauty not a trace remained, and she could not believe that this had been her friend. The hair was like a snarl of thorns and the body was distended, a horrible sight to see. Weeping uncontrollably, Suda's wife made this poem:

A flower did she seem,  
She who now so soon,  
Alas, lies, a corpse,  
In the open field.

How sordid they were, those who had not even covered the body with earth! It was in tears that she made her way home. "Considering the things both of past and of future," she reflected, "each and every one is like a dream. Never, in so empty and dreamlike an existence, do we give up anger toward others, discontent at our own lot, and jealous envy. Yes, we lay plans for a century ahead and understand nothing of the pity of things. Those who are in service from morning to night go to sleep at midnight and rise before dawn; they torment their hearts with agonies

most difficult to bear and know not a moment's peace. So it is that they have no sympathy for others. It is all very, very sad, but there is no use crying over it now." And she invoked Amida with ever-increasing devotion.

After the second week she went out once more. The wind that blows through the heavens was carrying the corpse's stench in every direction, and the body was grossly bloated. Here and there the flesh had been rent and the guts lay torn and scattered round about. A pack of dogs was fighting over the remains. Overcome with grief Suda's wife made this verse:

Do you know  
That every man's proud show  
All too soon  
Must come to this,  
Or do you not?

When she was home again she gave up all her thoughts to praying for the perfect enlightenment of the deceased.

She went once more after the third week. The body was no longer whole. Torn and dispersed, the flesh had turned to white worms, and bluebottle flies were thick upon it. The lady's delicate scent was now a foul stench, unbearable, and her past beauty had utterly vanished-- a terrible sight. Who, witnessing it, could ever have imagined how the lady had once been loved? But of course men love the flesh alone. Do they not realize that it is but a lying shape? Perceiving that there is no one of whom this is not true, Suda's wife made this verse:

Yes, now at last  
I know how sad a thing  
One's own body is.  
Toward it what love  
Could one ever feel?

And she went home again, praying all the while that her friend should know quick enlightenment.

Now the fourth week was over. Suda's wife found when she went that there was little odor any more, and the flesh left upon the bones had dried. The worms had wriggled away and there were no flies. The tangled hair, scattered in the wind, had wrapped itself here and there around the base of the weeds. There was no way to tell whose body this had once been. Moved, Suda's wife made the poem:

The shape that lingered  
There among the grasses  
Is all broken now;  
Yet I'll not forget her,  
My friend of old.

Then she made her way home, contemplating only the dream that is this life.

The fifth week was over too. This was, she felt, a day for special remembrance, and so it was with a particularly heavy heart that she went out this time to the graveyard. The grasses were growing lush round about, and the bones that remained under the mugwort clumps were completely disconnected. They could have been either a man's or a woman's, for the rains had washed them and the sun had bleached them, and they had no odor whatever any more. There the white bones lay, one here, one there among the grasses, and there was nothing over which even to place a marker. As no one would come visiting, one could not know who this had once been. "She decayed all untended, alas," thought Suda's wife, "illuminated only by the moon! And I who ponder these things, shall I be any different? In vain do we set our hearts upon this world, this empty dream, nor ever desist from feelings of lust and passion. So deep

is our clinging to thoughts of love that we ignore rebirth into enlightenment. Day and night, sinful karma keeps building and building! A sad thought indeed, it is, that all this is our reward for lives already lived. This is the day for special remembrance of her, and it is beyond me to contain what is now in my heart. Yet to whom shall I tell all and be comforted?" And thus troubled she made the verse:

My heart I leave now  
In the fields where she lies;  
What then of my body  
As it goes its way?

Everything is simply a dream. Time and again Suda's wife grieved that, in her ignorance of the passing of all things, her seeing and her hearing had brought her heart pain and caused her very body suffering. She therefore wandered immediately away from the place and sought out a mountain temple where she took refuge with the holy priest. She shaved off her hair, observed the precepts, dyed her bright robes in black, hung a stole and begging bowl around her neck, and set out on the road to liberation. How noble was her resolve!

"In the old days," the priest said, "one who was drawn to the Way would enter a monastery and receive instruction from learned priests. Now, however, it is different, for anyone who is in the least drawn to the Way leaves his monastery. Therefore learned priests have no interest in the Way and monks have no ardor at all. It is a terrible thing. And it is natural that people should leave the monasteries, since it is not possible to mingle there with those who truly aspire. Even those who do cast off the world, for whatever reason, care not at all for the path of liberation. They have never even heard of sitting in meditation. All they want is to know a little more and to be a little better than others.



Thus they never throw off at all the bonds of name and fame. There is no good whatever in their having shaved their heads, for it is in contests with their fellows that they vainly spend their days. They are nothing but laymen in disguise. As the poem says,

The depths you seek  
Far into the mountains  
Are not there at all,  
O you who live  
With your mind as of old.<sup>26</sup>

All you have to do is get rid of the mind you started with. You who seem to have the resolve, let no distance ever deter you but follow the road on the very end. Never, in any case, should you think your body real. For all that you are a woman, then, before whom need you feel ashamed or inferior? It is clearly taught that there is no fundamental difference between man and woman. Ah, how excellent it is that a nun like you should follow the instruction of learned monks, waste her body away in pilgrimages through every province, visit the Buddhas and the kami, and pray for the realization of enlightenment!"

Once when Suda's wife was passing through some mountains she met an old woman who looked over eighty years old.<sup>27</sup> "You must be from nearby," she said to the old woman. "Do you suppose there might be anyone of high character and resolve in this area?" "Yes indeed," the old woman replied, "a long way into the mountains from here, where few people ever go, there is a holy nun living in a tiny hut. She is no ordinary person, or so I hear.d' "Tell me the way, then," our nun begged, and received a careful description of the entire journey.

So the two parted. Our nun climbed high mountains as she had been told to do, and descended into valleys. The trail led on afar, now

buried in leaves, now moss-covered as it passed over bare rock, and the hills round about were utterly unknown. On and on she went until in a rocky gorge she found a dark little hut of bundled twigs. Of the outside world, nothing reached that place but the ring of the woodman's axe, the cries of monkeys leaping from tree to tree, the howling of mountain gales, or the sound of water falling over stones. Such was the society here.

Our nun approached the hut. "I am a nun on wandering pilgrimage," she said, "and I have taken the liberty of coming here in the desire to see you." From the hut there emerged a bent and ancient nun clad in black robe and stole and leaning upon a staff. Her forehead was wrinkled with all the waves of the four seas, and her eyebrows were thick with the frosts of far mountains. "Do please come in," she said, and led our nun into her single room. There was nothing in it but an earthen cooking pot upon an iron tripod, reminding one somewhat of an altar, and one round mat. Our nun then spoke up: "I have shaved my head, as you see, and dyed my clothes in black, and yet I still know nothing of the link to enlightenment, and so far I might just as well never have become a nun. Please, in your compassion, give me instruction."

"I myself have not yet reached the goal," the old nun replied, "but of the teaching that the Buddhas and the patriarchs have handed down to us I will tell you roughly what I have retained. The root of the round of birth and death is bewilderment caused by forgetting that this body lasts only a little while, and by clinging to what has form. From this bewilderment arise the three poisons which are greed, anger,

and dullness, and these attack us both by day and by night. Greed, anger, and dullness branch out into those sicknesses which are the eighty-four thousand passions, and these in turn are named the karma of beginningless rebirth. It is not easy to part oneself from this bewilderment. The essence of what we call the Buddha's way is to assault the mind with the mind itself. When we let the mind take us wherever it pleases it leads us into the three evils and the four ways;<sup>28</sup> but when we admonish the mind and make it obey us we move toward the Buddha-realm. They say that the mind is our greatest enemy, and you should be aware of how the mind's own devils attack us. Therefore it is fear of the devils of the mind, and reverence for the mind's Buddhahood, that we call prayer for the life to come. The cycle of rebirth among the six realms refers to being led by anger into hell, by greed into the starving ghosts, by dullness into the beasts, by the human ego into the ashuras, by the keeping of the five precepts into the human beings, and by the keeping of the ten precepts into heaven. Thus the cycle of rebirth among the six realms is the work of the mind all by itself. Moreover, by including the four holy natures of the Srāvakas, the Pratyekabuddhas, the Bodhisattvas, and the Buddhas, we get what we name the ten worlds; and it is within the one mind that each of these ten worlds has its existence. The sutra says, "The three worlds are one mind alone, there is no other thing outside the mind. Mind, Buddha, and all sentient beings are without difference between them."<sup>29</sup>

The point, therefore, is precisely to apply the mind to the mind and so to cleanse the mind of all impurity. The Buddha is without mind

and without thoughts. The ordinary person has both mind and thoughts. Once there is mind there are the three worlds, and the three worlds are all suffering. The sutra says, "The three worlds know no peace, they are like a house on fire."<sup>30</sup> It is the Buddha who calls this world of ours a house on fire, but the ordinary person knows nothing of what this means. He enjoys his burning house and considers it a dwelling both clean and cool. Deep in fond attachment and clinging, he builds up for all eternity the seeds of suffering in the evil ways and is never, never able to escape.

Thus, there are in the mind of the ordinary person four delusions, and these are the delusions of permanence, of pleasure, of self, and of purity. The first of them, permanence, consists in this: that with this impermanent, illusory body that death may surprise at any moment, we still let the mind dwell upon this world of ours and harbor the belief in permanent existence. As for the second, pleasure, we do not realize that the body is compounded of suffering but believe it to be a source of pleasure. The Buddha taught about eight sufferings. Birth, old age, sickness, and death are four of them, and then there are encountering those one hates, parting from those one loves, not obtaining what one desires, and, finally, attachment to the five aggregates.<sup>31</sup> These, all together, are what we call the eight sufferings. The delusion is ignorance that such sufferings as these exist and the belief that the body is a source of pleasure. Regarding the third delusion, the self, the materials which form this body are only borrowed from earth, water, fire, and air, so that there is nothing to believe in as 'myself.' The delusion lies in ignoring this fact and in thus being

hungrily attached to this temporary body and in loving it as one's own. Fourth and last, now, the delusion of purity means that while burdened with this impure, filthy body, one does not realize the truth but believes it to be clean and pure. If only one knew how impure the body is, how could one ever be attached to it? Fluids of the eyes and nose, urine and faeces, the five entrails--not one of these is clean. Do not go without considering that once this flesh breaks down it turns into worms. It is for this reason that the Buddha taught contemplation of impurity. One who would contemplate impurity should live, so the teaching says, near a burial ground where there are many corpses. It is by setting one's eyes upon this truth and by purifying body and mind with a resolute spirit, without pause either by day or by night, that one may escape from the delusion of purity."

"I do thank you very much for all you have taught me," our nun then said. "But it is so hard to leave all these delusions behind. Please, I beg you, give me the means and the power to do so."

"When it comes to practice," the old nun replied, "there are ten thousand methods. Nowadays, though, strong practices do not work well. For us women, in particular, it is the Nembutsu, so well suited to our nature, which we had best employ. But you must not practice the Nembutsu without faith. If a person's root-energy<sup>32</sup> is divided there will be inconsistencies in that to which he aspires. First of all, now, people rely upon the original vow to save by grace,<sup>33</sup> and so always practice the Nembutsu in the hope of being reborn in paradise. Second, there are those who grieve to undergo suffering life after life because of the thoughts of greed, anger, and dullness that they have entertained

in the round of birth and death throughout beginningless time; and these diligently practice the Nembutsu on the strength of their determination to destroy the three poisons, being ready and willing to give themselves up totally to the practice, to assault both body and mind, and to confess all evil karma. Then there are, thirdly, those who practice the Nembutsu with fierce courage, considering that the Nembutsu is the sharp sword of Amida with which they are disposed to cut off all thoughts and to sweep clean away every conception whether of good or of evil. Fourth, there are those whose aim is to remove themselves from birth and death, so that they practice the Nembutsu swiftly, keenly, giving up the things of this present existence, discarding life in each instant of thought, and determined in fact that this very moment shall be their last. This is certainly the Nembutsu of right thoughts before death. Therefore an ancient said that if it is a matter of common practice for one to face death, facing death will be a commonplace affair. Fifth, there are those who pay no heed to any matter whatsoever, but who practice the Nembutsu with faith utterly firm, having removed themselves from all things. This is the Nembutsu that leaves behind all forms and all thoughts. The type of Nembutsu will differ according to the root-energy of each person, but the one thought of fiercely courageous faith is common to all. As the sutra says, 'One thought of Amida destroys countless sins.'<sup>34</sup> This text is not to be doubted."

Our nun then promised she would practice the Nembutsu according to the old nun's instructions. Day and night she did so, with never a pause, filled with fiercely presevering faith. Thus the months and the years went by, but still she grieved that she had not awakened from the



dream. "Through the Nembutsu I am accumulating a great deal of merit," she said at last, 'but either I become very virtuous, or I become absorbed in being pure, or again I feel quite unattached to anything.<sup>35</sup> These are all very well, but in the end I still do not know how to get away from this mind of mine. I do believe my mind is in darkness. What am I to do?" The old nun replied, "Why, you must use concentration and contemplate how 'all conditioned things are like dreams and illusions, foam, light and shade, like dew or like lightning.'<sup>36</sup> It is this that is the core of the Buddha's teaching."

Our nun then took this teaching to heart and for long years practiced contemplation. She realized, however, that her belief in the reality of existence had not yet ceased, and she therefore spoke once more. "For long years now," she said, "I have contemplated how all things are like dew or like lightning, according to your instructions, but this idea is now caught in my mind and I realize that I cannot get rid of it. Please, give me a means to achieve this."

Then the old nun seized the front of her guest's robe, demanding, "Who are you? Who are you?" Our nun did not understand but the old nun pressed her harder and harder and beat upon her chest. "Speak! Speak!" she shouted and knocked our nun down. Our nun tried to get up but the old nun knocked her down once more and struck her, shouting, "It's nothing, nothing, nothing at all!"<sup>37</sup> Our nun then stood up, clapped her hands and laughed, saying, "It's nothing, nothing, nothing at all!" and bowed to her teacher.

"Thank you, thank you so very much!" said our nun after a while. "Once when I was dozing at a country chapel a skeleton sang, 'It's

nothing, nothing, nothing at all!' and I do believe he was the Buddha himself. I lived all my years in vain because I never knew what he meant. Now the dream is over I understand him very well!" Tears of extreme joy spilled upon her sleeve. She then acknowledged the old nun as her teacher, cut firewood for her and drew her water, and served her devotedly day and night. At last she matured in her line of practice, saved all beings whether related to her by karma or not, and achieved the great Rebirth in paradise. Later there was built upon the spot a temple to which the high-born and commoners alike, even down to these latter days, flocked on pilgrimage. There are no words to express the wonder of her story.

## MĀANJŌ

(A Safe Staff for the Blind)

[Topics discussed:]

1. That joy lies in knowing birth and death.<sup>1</sup>
2. That one must know himself by reflecting upon himself.
3. That one must in all things achieve sympathy with the mind of others.
4. That one must practice, in good faith, loyalty and filial piety.
5. That one must discern his own lot in life and know what is his natural endowment.
6. That virtue<sup>2</sup> lies in avoiding dwelling upon anything.
7. That by forgetting himself one must guard himself.<sup>3</sup>
8. That one must be firmly resolved to take great care when alone.<sup>4</sup>
9. That by destroying the mind one must cultivate the mind.
10. That one must give up petty gain and achieve the great gain.

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1. We must know without a doubt that joy lies in knowing birth and death. Now, the truth that all who are born must die is upon our lips, but we do not realize it in our hearts. Youth is soon over, the hair turns white, wrinkles furrow the brow, the physical body declines day by day, and with every sunrise and sunset our dewdrop life approaches its term. This never astonishes us, however. Last year gives way to this, spring passes and fall comes, yet we do not understand what is

meant by the scattering of the blossoms and the falling of the leaves. Though sparks from the flint flash before our eyes we do not grasp that they are transient, illusions. Truly, even those who wear around their neck the robe and bowl, who enter the way of renunciation and who thus seek to know the emptiness of all phenomena, in the end find it hard to rid themselves of the profound urge toward permanence of being.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, since we believe this body to be real and solid, our sufferings never cease either by day or by night.

If you are one who is really concerned about his body, forget it right now. Where does suffering come from? Only from love of the body. A warrior, especially, must in his own life know birth and death. When you know birth and death the Way is automatically present. When you do not, humanity, morality,<sup>6</sup> propriety, and wisdom are absent too. Some hold that two characters are used to write the word samurai because the warrior knows both birth and death.<sup>7</sup>

Of Ch'u Chiu and Ch'en Ying, in China, one thought nothing of dying while the other kept himself safe and sound. In the end they destroyed the enemy, twice enthroned the crown prince, and achieved the true meaning of the profession of arms.<sup>8</sup> This was because they knew birth and death. It is therefore quite wrong to accept your lord's generosity,<sup>9</sup> to love your own wife and children, and to promote your own interests, while all the time feeling that your body is yours and letting your spirit go slack. Know well that it is to your lord's generosity that you owe your very life, and serve him by giving him your body. Then for yourself you will achieve peace. Yes, your body is your lord's: what are you to call your own? That you may go into

your mind beyond such shallows as these and mount guard unremittingly, you must see that "never has there been a single thing,"<sup>10</sup> and that birth and death do not exist.

Ōta Dōkan of Musashi entered deeply into the Way and was an expert in poetry as well.<sup>11</sup> As an enemy stabbed him to death with a spear saying, "Make a poem now, if you're so good," Dōkan managed to gasp out,

"At such a time  
I surely would cling to life  
Did I not know  
That my body never was."

Again, Ninagawa Shin'uemon's farewell poem runs,<sup>12</sup>

"If I had died  
That same moment I was born  
Wind still would blow  
This evening through these pines."

And Abbot Ikkyū has this:<sup>13</sup>

"A pause, and from the past  
Pass into what will be:  
Let wind blow if wind will,  
Let rain if it will rain."

The delight of these men is beyond all measure. This is because people like them, despite their initial bewilderment, entered upon the Way and practiced it.

What should your practice be? Simply to rid yourself of your self. Alas, you can remind a man that many he loves and many he does not will die before him. But he will think that you are talking of someone else and will let your words go right through his head. Who lingers on for long? What thing endures the least while? This world, all dreams and fancies, takes our whole gaze, fills our ears. Know then, know that this world has always been changing. If you clearly recognize that it does not last, what can stand in your way?

What is it, this body which battens onto a dream world and in which we delight as though it were our own? Earth, water, fire, and air join in temporary union to give it form. It is not ours at all. When we cling to the four elements, the four elements bewilder us. Go all the way without time and again being bewildered by the four elements.

There is a self, but it is not a self.<sup>14</sup> Though distinct from the four elements it belongs with them. It accompanies the four elements and avails itself of them. An ancient has said, "There is something which precedes heaven and earth. It is without form and its root is still. It is truly the master of the myriad shapes, and the four seasons around it never withers."<sup>15</sup>

2. Know yourself by reflecting upon yourself. Let your learning be as great as you please, and your erudition as vast, yet you know nothing if you do not know yourself. Until you know yourself, therefore, you cannot know others. Those who know themselves not at all make the foolish self the foundation of their mind. In slandering others, in liking only those who agree with them, in detesting those who do not meekly yield to them, and in raging over every little thing, they torment themselves and torture their minds. All this is due to their own wrongs. If everyone is out of tune with you, know that you yourself are out of tune with everyone. He who has no wrong in himself does not give up on anyone; and since he does not give up on them, all men like him. Why? Because the genuine man is humble and upright, because he is genuine in all things and possessed of deep compassion. He who knows himself and who has nothing wrong in him is a man of virtue. When we are wrong our sufferings never cease. You must know therefore, without a doubt, that

whatever is wrong is your foe, and you must take care to reflect upon yourself unremittingly, twenty-four hours a day. There are many people in the world, but few who know themselves.

People think that they know their rightful station in life. But possessing as they do a body bound to die, they forget all about death and look forward to ten thousand years. Hence no one grieves at the passing of time; and in the meantime people devote themselves to greed, anger, and perverse falsehoods. They violate loyalty and filial piety and fail to understand humanity or morality. They flatter, deceive, and contort themselves. They do not bother with family duties but take pleasure in worthless things. Ignoring what is wrong with themselves, they discourse upon the rights and wrongs of others. Their infatuation with themselves is so powerful that they have no compassion for others. Greedily attached to whatever pleases them, they hold what displeases them at a distance. Sometimes happy, sometimes sad, they make distinctions at random and go against everything. When by chance they hear the Way, they turn it into a ruler for measuring others. Why is this? Even if you do not know the genuine principle, you will never get anywhere until you recognize your own wrongs. Some say that anyone, having heard such truth as this, would know what his rightful station is; but that wrongs, being ingrained through long years of habit, are hard to reform speedily. If you really recognize that the errors are your own, however, you will hardly claim that they are difficult to correct.

If your own strength is not enough, you should purify your mind by committing yourself to the Buddhas and to the kami.<sup>16</sup> Why should the



Buddhas and the kami not heed those who pray for a mind pure and without obstruction? The prayers of ordinary people contain desire upon desire, foolishness upon foolishness. The Buddhas and the kami have warned us about these things and taught the sutras for us, and we end by reading these very sutras and praying for covetousness and stupidity. Why should the Buddhas and the kami heed us? We should on the contrary be chastised. In vast compassion the Buddhas and the kami take pity on beings who are drunk with the three poisons of greed, anger, and dullness, and who are foundering in the ocean of suffering. By means of all the teachings they save such beings and cause them to reach the place of incomparable bliss. These things the Buddhas and kami do because of their vows.<sup>17</sup> How tragic it is that people should not comprehend this! They gladly allow themselves to be cornered by greed, burned by anger, and made dark by dullness. They know nothing of themselves but proceed from darkness to darkness and incur agony. Is this not a sorry spectacle?

All is evil.<sup>18</sup> Calm your mind and know yourself. The accomplished man entrusts himself to things, not to his own self. The ignorant man entrusts himself to himself, not to things. Thus when you entrust yourself to yourself, pain and delight succeed one another in a round of pain; but when you entrust yourself to things, pain and delight succeed one another in a round of delight. An ancient has said, "In the presence of bewilderment right and wrong are both wrong."<sup>19</sup> Set these words before your eyes, exhaust yourself again and again. An old saying goes, "The sage has no self. There is nothing that is not the self."<sup>20</sup>

3. Achieve in all things sympathy with the minds of others. Do not forget your fellow men. You must know above all the four generousities that are bestowed upon you. The first of these is the generosity of heaven and earth; the second is the generosity of your teachers; the third is the generosity of the lord of the land; and the fourth is the generosity of your father and mother.

The generosity of heaven and earth is that we should borrow from them the four elements and dwell upon the vast earth in our flesh. Food and clothing, moreover, fire and water, our very possessions and tools, are all the generous gift of heaven and earth. Reflect upon this well.

The generosity of your teachers is none other than the generous gift of their instruction which leads the bewildered, ordinary man to cast off the suffering of the three ways, to escape the wheel of rebirth, and to reach enlightenment.

As to the generosity of the lord of the land, in troubled times people cannot settle anywhere. Bandits and ruffians, in evil hordes, fill the land until the road to the neighboring village is impassable. Day and night men's minds are in a constant state of tension. All they are moved to do is to fight, and thus they are no different from demons or from beasts. The lord of the land, however, pacifies the country, and by right government establishes a correct reign. Men practice humanity, morality, and the five constants.<sup>21</sup> The minds of the people are on the true path and, all untutored, they are close to the Way. They have plenty of space to settle in and are free to do everything they need in order to live. Will you ignore, then, the virtue of that generosity?

The generosity of your father and mother is that you dwell in your mother's womb and give her the pain of childbirth. Then, after you are born, she labors day and night to suckle you and to rear you, and makes it possible for you to grow up. This generosity is described in detail in the Sutra of Weighty Parental Generosity.<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, there is the generosity of all sentient beings. The generosity of farmers, the generosity of tradesmen, the generosity of clothing and cloth-making, the generosity of merchants, the generosity of the mutual interdependence of all occupations--if you know these well you will not withdraw from men.

You must always be receptive to the mind of others. Thus when you are in the presence of your lord, put yourself in his place and realize the shortcomings of all you do. When in the presence of inferiors, put yourself in their place and never forget how beings suffer. Never give up pondering, day and night, the woes of great heat, of hunger and cold, of physical exhaustion and mental anguish. Peasants and farmers, they say, injure both body and mind at their unrelenting labors, and they grow the five grains and feed everyone in the whole land. Each grain of rice stands for the work of a hundred hands. Never forget what troubles they have borne. The sovereign, by his efforts, nurtures the myriad households and saves the least man alive. But great suffering reigns when food runs short. Imagine the agony, when your crop will not pay your debts and taxes, of having to sell your wife and your daughter, of having to part from them in this very life, and of having to move to a far-off province. Do not despise a man who has fallen in the world and who cannot protect his family, when you see him hopefully flattering you. Try living his life for a while.

Furthermore, outcasts and beggars suffer their entire lives from hunger and cold, and they sleep their whole lives in field and mountain. Is the prospect not a painful one? Be receptive, moreover, to the innocent minds of children. When the heart is in pain, they say, the body and mind waste away and sicken. Even the ailments of adults spring from the seven emotions. Hence the reason why we enjoy watching animals suffer, penned in cages or leashed, is that we do not understand their minds. The pain must be very sharp, as they long for moor and hill. Will a compassionate man not take pity on them?

It is said, again, that when a man loves killing, it is because he has no humanity; and that killing living beings makes for a short life. If you yourself hold to life, then consider all living beings down to the smallest insect. Since to long for children, to be jealous of husband or wife, and to cling to life are all bewilderment,<sup>23</sup> these creatures must be far more ignorant even than man. Even those who receive the teaching of the sages, those who know the truth of the Way and who constantly practice it, are obsessed with the self and cling endlessly to life. How much more will this be true of totally ignorant beasts? Ponder the subject well.

Always recognize the misfortunes of others. Although all things are distinct from one another, the original mind is one. What are we to call "self" and "other"? For the ignorant man, individual selves are separate from one another. For the accomplished man there is no distinction between "self" and "other." Thus the genuine man puts sympathy first, and his compassion is deep. Lord Shakyamuni feels compassion toward the beings of the three worlds<sup>24</sup> as though they were

his only son. Are we not indebted to him? The undivided waters flow along and part into myriad waves. The one moon in heaven is reflected in countless ponds and pools, and human nature is in no way different. Thus there is nothing to be despised, nothing to be held at a distance. You must awaken to the principle that all beings have the Buddha-nature. There is a verse that runs,

In each last drop of dew  
Upon the garden's tangled weeds,  
Shrunk very small now  
Lodges the moon!<sup>25</sup>

4. Practice, in good faith, loyalty and filial piety. When it is fame and profit that drive us we have no integrity.<sup>26</sup> Even they who please their lord and wait intimately upon him seldom have integrity. All that moves them is the greedy desire to improve their own fortunes. Know that integrity lies in feeling shame not before others but before yourself in your own heart. What is integrity? Say, for example, that your own child does not love you. Nonetheless, if you have integrity the very babes will love you. On the other hand, you may well love others' children, but they will not love you unless you have integrity. Be ashamed, then, be ashamed.

It is not easy to follow with integrity the path of loyalty and filial piety. Even they who rush into the enemy ranks and who meet death there act only for fame and profits. So all they do is run after glory, covet a fief, or complain how meager their stipend is. Either that or they do nothing but argue over good and bad, or try to steal others' real zeal. This is because they are completely ignorant of morality, because they let themselves go with their own desires and work away at causing their own shame.

If in good faith you act with the utmost loyalty, what need have you to reflect upon yourself? If you practice martial courage in the spirit of morality, why should you compete with others? Those who die for their country are no doubt few. To give up life on the spot, precious as it is, for the sake of duty, is supremely human. Therefore nothing can be weightier than duty. Since people forget this truth they are constantly attached to their own selves and have no integrity, and therefore in the end do not know even of the existence of virtue. Is it not sad, the way they pile woe on woe and needlessly stay on where they have always lingered, in the three ways?<sup>27</sup> Remember that you were born a man, make morality heavy and your own life light; give up your self and enter the way of integrity.

How ignorant people are! Consider how men behave in our present age: even in popular literature there are countless instances where men slander their lords and commit the most reprehensible acts. When we examine the source of these things we find nothing but greed filling the person's breast, ignorance overflowing the mind, and the wild expression of self and shame. Even if a man is not up to achieving good faith, why does he not know shame? He may be in service to a bad lord and have nowhere to turn, but that is certainly not the lord's fault. Consider the karma that is yours from past lives: are you not ashamed of yourself? Moreover many people are ill all their lives or are born as blind men or outcasts, and they suffer from morning to night. Whom shall such as these accuse of having caused their misery? The blame is theirs alone. Time and again people think wrongly on this score.

You must let everything go and enter the path of loyalty and of

filial piety. When it is with bewilderment in your mind that you love your wife and children, you will never have enough of feeling tender toward them. Then your devoted practice of loyalty toward your lord, or of love for your parents, will be shallow no matter how hard you work at it. Indeed, when bewilderment exceeds integrity, no amount of clearing away will get rid of it. Your practice of humanity and of morality will have no integrity, no matter what exhortations you subject yourself to. All this happens because you are blocked by the six roots<sup>28</sup> and bewildered in yourself, and therefore your integrity is obscured. Give your self up twenty-four hours a day and enter upon the path of integrity. There is nothing perverse about integrity. The man of integrity is simply the man who has nothing to strive after. There is a verse that runs,

One who is simply natural  
Is a Buddha just like that.  
Should you see a Buddha,  
He is just a natural man.<sup>29</sup>

5. Discern your own lot in life and know your own natural endowment. Now the good man is very high-minded. He forgets himself and is considerate of others. He puts sympathy first and his compassion is deep. He distinguishes clearly between right and wrong, his mind is receptive, and his observance of loyalty and of filial piety is correct. He acts toward all men with integrity and he does not abandon the evildoer. In a high position he is not boastful, but modest and unassuming.

Ordinary people know their duty and do not stand against the world. They reflect upon the jibes others direct at them, and take care with themselves. They exhort themselves against ignorance and respect those



who for even a short while have studied the Way. They associate closely with the wise, and they do not violate loyalty and filial piety. They set their hearts on humanity and on morality, perform in good faith their family duties, and place little value on their own lives. Their primary aim is to bequeath their fame to ten thousand generations.

Ignorant people seem to observe loyalty and filial piety, but they waver. Though they study humanity and morality they have no integrity. It is to fame and profit that they devote themselves. Now they are aware of shame and now they forget it. They fulfill their duty in one quarter and violate it in another. Although capable of compassion, they pay no attention to the misfortunes of others. They are prone to betray even close relationships, to take advantage of every opportunity, and to hate those who, being upright, will not do the same. They exhibit their own talents and long to outstrip others. Even when they know right from wrong the difference remains unclear to them. Drawn to what they like and repelled by what they dislike, they are hardly accommodating. Though without desire they are base; though reliable there is nothing to rely on them for. They discourse upon men's fortunes according to their shallow understanding, but they do not properly know their own. They make ignorant and wrong distinctions; hence their minds are agitated at random and they are often at odds with the world.

Those of the lowest degree of ignorance mock good people who are the least accommodating and hate those who are wise. They consort with base people and rejoice in the worst aspects of others. They envy those who excel and show off their own cleverness. They belittle others

and are puffed up about their own status. Favors they quickly forget, but they bear an enduring grudge against the least opponent. They flare up in anger at the slightest provocation and even take pride in doing so. They know nothing of shame, their desires run deep, and they have not the least understanding of right and wrong. When they speak only evil words come forth, and they make it a virtue to have no feeling for others. They thoughtlessly injure others and hurt themselves, bear grudges against persons who have done them no wrong, and become furious if anyone differs with them. They exhibit a stern manner and never give any consideration to anyone. The deeper trends of their nature are not unified. Since their discernment is very poor they compare the lowest people to the very highest and criticize them, or else they fill their minds with the wrongs of others and are completely confused. All this is because they simply cannot distinguish their own lot in life. Skill at go or shogi, for example, is clearly divided into ranks. Why should it not be so with the distinctions between people? If you are to hate the faults of others, will you also hate poordgo or shogi playing as a fault?

What shall be our conclusion? That although no one means to live badly, when the mind is not up to living well one destroys himself as well. One is then like a poor man, for example, who fails to get away with living beyond his means. So do not undertake that which goes beyond your capacity and your station in life. In any case, once you have understood that it is a deficiency in your own mind which is causing your distress, you will at last be capable of compassion. When you yourself are straight and true you will find no one bad in this world.

When you are wrong in yourself you will find the world full of bad people. There is a verse which runs,

If only it were others' evil  
I find within my good!  
The evil of every man  
Is my very own.<sup>30</sup>

Let this verse be a mirror for the mind. Nevertheless, it does not mean that we should allow all faults. It tells us to grasp the real teaching and to correct our faults with compassion.

Think of animals. Horses are horses, cattle are cattle, and fowl and fowl; and each has its own role. The same is true for nonsentient plants and trees. Hemp is naturally straight and mugwort bent. Some plants yield medicine, others poison. From what origin, then, has their diversity sprung? Although the blessings of heaven and earth are constant, there are differences between one thing and another. What shall we judge to be good, and what bad? We truly must realize that all things are one. There is a verse which goes,

Though spring rain never picks  
The place it falls,  
The plants it wets below  
Are of many kinds.<sup>31</sup>

Willows are green and flowers red.<sup>32</sup>

6. Know that virtue lies in not dwelling on anything. People all get attached to this or that and have no notion of the wider perspective: they have no virtue. Then, too, when we look at how people make their living we see nothing but small profit and great loss. No one knows his rightful station, nonetheless. If you wish to give up the small and cleave to the great, discern what it is you are clinging to and let

it go. Then you are sure to gain virtue. Think for example how a go expert looks the board over, grasps the progress of the game, and accordingly gives up ten stones in order to gain eleven. But a poor player sees nothing at all. He hangs onto each and every square, never realizing that his stones are dying all over the board. Never let your attention wander.

Now the ignorant man comports himself just like this. The blind man is in darkness to the depths of his mind and never leaves the company of the blind. All he wants to do is to lord it over other blind men, and he therefore falls into inky blackness forever. Women, in the same way, stick to other women. Their clinging to self is deep, and they are spiteful and jealous. Ignorant as they may seem, however, no one is any different. The great consort with the great, the small with the small, and no one breaks company with those of his own stature. Peasants and farmers confine their attention to a couple of villages, no more. Within this circle all they ever do is compare standing and quarrel over who is the cleverest among them. Warriors themselves confine their society to that of other warriors, and they never go beyond the company of their own fifty or one hundred friends. All they care about is their reputation. They compare status, struggle to be thought the smartest, and are spiteful and jealous. Monks, too, stay with other monks. They vie to be called the wisest of all, long to have their very own temple, and all the while know nothing of liberation.

Other men are otherwise in character and demeanor, but in bewilderment we are all one. When we see shapes we cling to them; when we hear sounds we yearn for them. Some men are very handsome, but their

flesh rots and turns to worms. Their bones are ugly to see, and their minds are like the minds of demons or beasts. What is there to cling to?

A woman's nature, now, is twisted deep down. Her greed is enormous, her egotism profound, and she is drawn to bewilderment until she knows no right or wrong. Her words are crafty and her mind is shallow. What you do when you yield to her turns to karma for rebirth; when you oppose her she is your sworn enemy. Know, at any rate, that she is pitifully ignorant. Be careful, do not be confused yourself. Of course I do not mean that you should give women up. I am telling you not to cling to seductive shapes and so exhibit your own shame. Women are the mothers of Buddhas and are absolutely not to be slandered. We have all to correct what is wrong in each one of us.<sup>33</sup>

Now the ignorant man simply has no place whatever in the realm of humans. Most people, it seems, live only among starving ghosts or among beasts. On occasion they enter the ashura realm, but peace is never theirs. This delights them, however, for they do not know enough to reject such things. One hint of the real truth and they are afraid, and break out in mockery and slander. Are they not pathetic? Know all this very clearly, give up every point of attachment, and be free. Do not dwell one instant. There is a verse that runs,

Wherever your mind dwells,  
Move on;  
You'll soon enough be back  
Where you were born.<sup>34</sup>

Do not dwell here, do not dwell there, but give it up, give it up and know your refuge. As the old saying goes, "The thousand peaks, in their might, die out at the edge of the plain; the clamor of ten thousand waves melts back into the sea."<sup>35</sup>

7. Remember yourself by forgetting yourself. Now when we crave life and long for profit we forget parents, children, brothers and sisters, and we become preoccupied only with ourselves. Again, when we yield to our own likes we forget ourselves and give not a thought to shame. We do not understand whence our action comes nor whither it leads; and it never occurs to us that we are bound for destruction. There are many dismal examples to prove this. Never, never forget yourself.

The teaching that enjoins humanity<sup>36</sup> says that humanity is to forget oneself and to bestow blessing upon others; to save people from danger and to aid them in extremity; and to put sympathy first and have a compassionate heart. But because the ignorant man pleases himself and forgets others he is absorbed in greed, anger, and false views, nor does he reject evil karma or the passions. Not for an instant does his suffering stop, by day or by night. Mount guard attentively.

In each mind is the Buddha, in each mind are demons. In each mind are hell, starving ghosts, beasts, humans, and heaven. The sutra says,<sup>37</sup> "In all three worlds there is one mind only. Outside the mind there is no particular teaching. There is no difference between the mind, the Buddha, and sentient beings." So when we reprove this mind and build up good karma we reach realization. When we do exactly as we please, on the other hand, the three poisons spread and we fall into the hell of the three ways. Reprove your mind and still more forcefully reprove it. Fear it and fear it more.

There is a story that a group of people once boarded a ship and sailed out across the ocean. Once they were at sea a redfaced demon with one eye as bright as the sun in the middle of his forehead came

striding across the waves. With his mouth split open up to his ears, three horns, and fangs protruding hither and yon, he was quite impossible to describe. Said the demon, "Have you ever seen anything more terrifying than me? Have you?" At the sight the heart failed all on board, and they cowered in the bottom of the ship. One among them, however, was following the Way, and he now stood forth. "You fool!" cried he. "There is a demon of ego-consciousness who can drag one down to the eight major hells, and he is more horrendous than a hundred thousand of you put together. Have you seen him? Have you?" At his words the demon melted away and disappeared.

There really are demons of evil karma in the mind of one who is preoccupied with himself. All the sufferings are present there, all the eighty-four thousand passions. Ah, foolishness! If we are to give form to the benighted mind, what form shall we give it?<sup>38</sup> Quickly, be one who has renounced all things and who is unaware of himself. There is a verse which runs,

Love for the body  
Brings the body pain;  
Without love for the body  
The body's at ease.<sup>39</sup>

And another verse goes,

Unless the leaping flames  
Of anger die away,  
Carry you off it will:  
The chariot of fire!<sup>40</sup>

8. Be firmly resolved to take great care when alone. Even one who is careful in everything feels shame only over his reputation in the fickle world; and he will embellish his outward manner and conceal his inner errors. One who conforms perfectly to the world and never opposes



it is still bound to have faults deep in his mind. Consider the mind your foe and take care when alone. Others may not recognize your secret errors, but you yourself certainly do. Clear your mind and ponder them. Others are ashamed lest you detect their faults. Why, then, should you not feel shame toward yourself? You forget this truth and are ashamed lest others discover what is wrong in you, but the mind of others and your own mind are not separate at all. Do not be slack with yourself. There is a verse which runs,

'I know her not,'  
You tell your friends;  
And if your heart then asks,  
What will you say?<sup>41</sup>

9. Cultivate your mind by destroying your mind. Do not let yourself suffer because the dim mind obscures the clear, bright mind. Demolish the former at all times. An old saying runs, "Kill! Kill! Stop killing a second, and you shoot like an arrow to hell."<sup>42</sup> A verse goes,

Break each spear  
As it threatens you  
With the hammer  
Of the mind.<sup>43</sup>

How should you wield this hammer? All things in man's life are dreams. Understand that one instant of delusion is the source of an eternity of suffering, then recite Namu Amida Butsu with full attention. This is the hammer. We are taught that "One thought of Amida destroys countless sins."<sup>44</sup> Therefore we speak of the pure land which is mind only, or of the Amida of each person's mind.<sup>45</sup> It should not be hard to call up the Buddha Amida who dwells within us. For those of firm faith, in whom arises the spirit of fierce perseverance, and for those who are prepared to call Amida's name without pause, day or night, the time in

the end will come when they will meet the Amida of their own mind face to face; and then they will dwell in peace in the Pure Land which is mind only. "For those who have committed the most grievous sins there is no other method. Let them only call upon Amida and they will be re-born in paradise."<sup>46</sup> This text is not to be doubted.

10. Give up petty gain and achieve the great gain. All that men do in life is for themselves. It is not true that every one of the ancients let his body go. Indeed it is because one considers the body that he takes care when walking or standing, sitting or lying,<sup>47</sup> and rejoices when he attains virtue. I call them ignorant who do not recognize this and who suffer from lust for fame and profit. Thus it is that in every man concern for the body is identical but the way of seeing virtue is different. The accomplished man gives his life for integrity and does not dwell upon fame and profit. By letting himself go he achieves great gain. Ignorant men, however, are not sorry to devote their whole lives to profit and greed. They may torture their minds all through life, torment their bodies, and covet endlessly, but not one of them will see his desires fulfilled. Desires are never fulfilled, but no one gives them up. The reason why people agonize in vain their life long, the reason why they grow themselves the seeds of karma for rebirth in the three ways and wallow in the ocean of suffering, is that they let the mind dwell on the body which is a dream.

The Buddha said, "All conditioned things are like demons, illusions, bubbles, shadows, like dew or like lightening; and as such are we to see them."<sup>48</sup> Truly, people do not recognize that this means our body, this illusionist's trick. Darkly ignorant, they exhaust

themselves in yearning for fame and profit until their small gains and great losses make a sorry spectacle indeed. The Buddha, however, appeared in the world to save them. When one follows the teaching of the Buddha and of the patriarchs he cannot fail to win great gain. Calm your mind and realize that this is so.

Now one speaks of the three thousand major chiliocosms.<sup>49</sup> On that scale, not even sovereignty over a large country makes a man great. How much more true is this, then, of someone who does not reign over even a small country! As an old saying has it, "A millet grain on the vast blue ocean knows its life is very short."<sup>50</sup> Such is the teaching that the Buddha laid down. Be attentive and attain this truth.

What, then, do I call "great gain"? To escape from the three worlds; to make the four corners,<sup>51</sup> up and down, north, south, east, and west your own; in height to discern all of past, present, and future; and in breadth to travel everywhere in the ten directions.<sup>52</sup> That is what I call great gain.

BAMMIN TOKUYŌ  
(Right Action for All)

Prayers<sup>1</sup> Regarding Practice

1. The Buddha said, "It is upon kings, officers of state, devotees, and patrons that the Buddha's teaching is bestowed."<sup>2</sup> In times like these, Buddhism will not be recognized as the truth<sup>3</sup> unless it is so decreed by the government.
2. The Buddha is complete in the fullness of virtue. Those, therefore, who practice without assuming as their own goal the fullness of virtue, are not disciples of the Buddha. It is my prayer that you should make the fullness of virtue the goal of your practice.
3. The Buddha-treasure, the Dharma-treasure, and the Samgha-treasure: he is not a monk who accepts these Three Treasures<sup>4</sup> and still practices without the goal of giving generously to the people and of making himself a treasure for the whole land. It is my prayer that you should preserve in your practice the aim of the Three Treasures.
4. The Buddha's teaching is the teaching of the attainment of Buddhahood. However, there are a right way and a wrong way to understand "attainment of Buddhahood." If people do not know the difference between the right and the wrong, all will follow the wrong teaching.<sup>5</sup> My Prayer is that you should practice with your eyes upon the attainment of Buddhahood.
5. The practice of the Buddha's teaching is the way of emancipation from the three worlds.<sup>6</sup> Therefore a monk is said to have "left his home." He has not left his home who does not aim to emancipate himself

from the three worlds. My prayer is that your practice be directed toward emancipation from the three worlds.

6. The Buddha's words teach that once one fully enters the world, he cannot leave it because there is nowhere left to go.<sup>7</sup> This statement signifies that it is by the world's teaching that one attains Buddhahood. Thus, the world's teaching is the Buddha's teaching. The Avataṃsaka Sūtra makes the following declaration: "The Buddha's teaching does not differ from the world's teaching, nor does the world's teaching differ from the Buddha's teaching."<sup>8</sup> If we do not proceed according to the principle that one achieves Buddhahood by following the world's teaching, we are totally ignorant of the Buddha's intention. My prayer is that you should regard the world's teaching as the Buddha's teaching.

7. Consider how statues of the Buddhas are set out. At the gate stand the images of the Guardian Kings;<sup>9</sup> on the dais are the Twelve Gods,<sup>10</sup> the Sixteen Good Gods,<sup>11</sup> the Eight Vajra Protectors,<sup>12</sup> the Four Heavenly Kings,<sup>13</sup> and the Five Great Lords.<sup>14</sup> Each displays his might and wields his weapon, bearing spear, sword and pike, or bow and arrows side by side with his companions. One who in his practice has not thoroughly assumed the intention of these powers will never govern the six robbers<sup>15</sup> and the passions. You will never match their intention<sup>16</sup> if your practice is indifferent. My prayer is that you should practice with your eyes upon the images of the Buddhas.

Now, the Buddha's teaching is one which destroys the evilness of men. Shall disciples of the Buddha not take that road? At present, however, practice capable of matching the Buddha's intention is rare. People dwell upon fame and fortune and take wrong paths. This is my

prayer, and none otherd that the Buddha's disciples should enter the true Way and lead sentient beings out of their bewilderment.

The Benefit of the Three Treasures in Action (Sambō tokuyō)

1. The treasures of Buddha and Dharma: to employ in the exercise of martial courage.
2. The treasures of Buddha and Dharma: to employ in regard to the laws of the land.
3. The treasures of Buddha and Dharma: to employ in correctly following the way of the five relationships.<sup>17</sup>
4. The treasures of Buddha and Dharmad to employ in all the arts.
5. The treasures of Buddha and Dharmad to employ in one's own profession.
6. The treasures of Buddha and Dharma: to employ without hindrance from good or evil.
7. The treasures of Buddha and Dharma: to employ in setting mind and body at ease.
8. The treasures of Buddha and Dharma: to employ for the greatest good in all things.
9. The treasures of Buddha and Dharmad to cure the sicknesses of the mind.
10. The treasures of Buddha and Dharma: to dwell in the Pure Land of Supreme Bliss.<sup>18</sup>

When the Buddha appeared in the world he bestowed upon it the Three Treasures, Buddha, Dharma, and Samgha. If monks do not aim their Practice toward emancipation, however, the mighty radiance of the Three Treasures is hidden and the world is without merit. It is in leaving the

three worlds behind him that a monk deserves to be said to have left his home. He is not a monk who does not aim his practice toward emancipation. In this way a physician is an officer who cures the ailments of the flesh, and the disciple of the Buddha one who cures the diseases of the mind: the passions and the sufferings due to karma. He must be a genuine follower of the way. If the Buddha's vast teaching is not the world's very treasure, then the name of the Three Treasures is a lie as well.

1. Buddhist practice quells the six robbers and the passions. Let not the mind be weak. With spirit as stable as the very dharmakaya,<sup>19</sup> dispose your warriors, faith and perseverance, in the van. Then wield the sword of original nothingness; cut clean away those delusions, self-clinging and greed; keenly and swiftly advance, around the clock without break; and dwell in the diamond mind. When this mind is yours to wield even in sleep, you are naturally fully realized. Once inside and out are one, you crush all demon hosts of karma-knowledge<sup>20</sup> and of darkness, to awake suddenly from the dream and demolish the fortress of solid reality.<sup>21</sup> Birth and death, your enemies, you cut down; and now you settle in the capital of enlightened wisdom, there to guard perfect peace. It is this spirit which is the treasure to use in the exercise of martial courage.

2. Buddhist practice is to observe the precepts strictly, never opposing the teaching of the Buddha and of the patriarchs; to banish the mind warped and twisted, and to become of good mind; to clearly distinguish right from wrong, then to let right go;<sup>22</sup> to practice only a morality without morality; and to lead all people, uprightly and with



compassion, to enlightenment. This mind is the treasure to use in connection with the law.<sup>23</sup>

3. Practice of Buddhism is to abandon self-preoccupation; to set the six harmonies<sup>24</sup> in action, making no distinction between self and other; and to achieve integrity of mind, thus requiting, above, the four generosities,<sup>25</sup> and saving, below, sentient beings in the three worlds. This mind is the treasure to use in the correct pursuit of the way of the five relationships.

4. Practice of Buddhism is to let go the mind of cleverness and discrimination, and thus to leave behind thoughts that cling to form; to reach the mind of selflessness; and to entrust yourself to things without any personal partiality whatever. This mind is the treasure to use in all the arts.

5. Practice of Buddhism is to erase the mind of evil desire. Here, there is no more arrogance, flattery, covetousness, or seeking after fame and profit. This mind is the treasure to use in the trades and the professions.

6. Practice of Buddhism is to quit the mind that discriminates between all things; to gain victory over the teeming thoughts; and to dwell in the One Mind. This very mind is the treasure to use in all endeavors whatsoever, the treasure that good and evil never hinder.

7. Practice of Buddhism is to destroy utterly all karma-blocks,<sup>26</sup> and to quit all suffering. It is this mind that, put to use by warriors, farmers, artisans, and merchants, is the treasure that brings peace to body and mind.

8. Practice of Buddhism is to quit the mind of impurity, pollution,

and evil; to achieve the mind pure and unobstructed; and to consider suffering as delight and evil as good. This mind is the treasure to use for every good in everything.

9. Practice of Buddhism is to quit the mind dark and bewildered, and to leave behind the mind of the three poisons.<sup>27</sup> This mind is the treasure that cuts off the passions and contains no spiritual ills.

10. Practice of Buddhism is to cut off all conditioned things and to attune oneself to the self-nature at the original source. It is this mind that, being unborn and undestroyed, is the treasure that dwells in the Pure Land of Supreme Bliss.

Now, the Buddha is complete in the fullness of virtue. The treasures of Buddhism are countless and inexhaustible. When the Buddha's disciples, however, dwell upon fame and fortune, the Three Treasures lose their might and their radiance is hidden, until all people wander in the darkness of the deep night of bewilderment. When the Buddha's disciples follow the Buddha's intention and set out on the road to emancipation, the mighty radiance of the Three Treasures is manifest and illumines the whole land, and all sentient beings are at peace. How dreadful it is, how tragic! The Buddha's disciples have turned against the Buddha's intention.

#### The Four Classes

##### For the Warrior's Daily Guidance

A warrior said, "You claim that the Buddha's teaching and the world's teaching are like the two wheels of a carriage. Even without the Buddha's teaching, though, the world would still lack nothing. Why

then do you use the simile of the two wheels of a carriage?"

"The Buddha's teaching and the world's teaching are not two separate things," I replied. "The Buddha has said that if you fully enter the world, you cannot leave it because there is nowhere left to go. The Buddha's teaching and the world's teaching both establish the right and true,<sup>28</sup> practice morality, and take the way of uprightness; that is all. As far as uprightness is concerned, there are the shallow level and the deep. Worldly uprightness, in my view, is to preserve morality without bending principle, to follow correctly the way of the five relationships, and not to be at odds with things but to have no personal bias at all. This is the road down which to proceed from shallow to deep. From the Buddhist standpoint, true uprightness is to realize that all conditioned things are lies, empty and illusory, and to act at one with the original dharmakāya, the natural self-nature.

Ordinary people, now, are gravely ill, while the Buddha is the king of healing. Ordinary people must first recognize that they are sick. Within the mind filled with birth-and-death and darkness are the diseases of delusion and bewilderment. The diseases of greed and wrong views abide there, as do those of laxness and iniquity. These are founded upon the three poisons and turn into those diseases which are the eighty-four thousand passions. The Buddha's teaching is to erase this diseased mind. Is it different, then, from the teaching of the world?

He who has reached the Way knows the truth of original emptiness. Truth and righteousness he takes for his smiths, to forge the mind of original emptiness both by day and by night. Thus he removes himself

from the filth of impurity and pollution. Purity and unobstructedness he takes for the mind's sword, and therewith cuts off at the root thoughts of clinging to self and of greed. Victory over the teeming thoughts is now his, and he rides above all things; nor is he troubled by anything at all, for he is unborn and undying. Such a man I call a follower of the Way.

An ordinary man, on the other hand, takes the lies of illusion to be genuine, and manufactures personal bias that clings to whatever has form. He allows every passion to arise, and thoughts of greed, anger, and dullness first of all; and so he loses the original mind. He is ever scattered and confused, and each thought as it appears defeats him. Therefore his mind is beaten and his body anguished; nor has he any buoyancy, but lives his life to no purpose, in utter darkness. Bewildered in himself he wanders, and clings to whatever he encounters. Such I call the mind of the ordinary man.

It behooves us now to know some other names of the original mind; it is called the true vajra body or the solid dharmakāya. This mind does not become involved in anything. It does not fear, nor is it surprised. It does not grieve, nor does it retreat. It is unmoving, and the lord of all things. He who has mastered it and can apply it is called a foursquare fellow,<sup>29</sup> a man of iron mind and guts, one who has reached the Way. This man is not hindered by the teeming thoughts. Able as he is to turn all things to his purpose, he has the greatest freedom. Therefore if a Buddhist practitioner does not from the start have fierce courage, he will hardly achieve anything. You cannot enter upon the Buddha's way in weakness. Unless you mount keen guard and

practice powerfully, you will undergo pain in accordance with your passions.<sup>d</sup> He is a man of the Way who resolutely conquers all things; he is an ordinary man who, with thoughts that cling to form, suffers, overcome by everything. Therefore, one who in passion whips up hot-blooded courage may, for a moment, have the might to smash through an iron wall. In time, however, his hot-bloodedness will change. This mind of the stalwart man is unmoving, and never changes. If a warrior practices this, why should he not reach the mind of the stalwart man?

Take a man who, in a state of passion, could trick the great warrior Fan K'ai.<sup>30</sup> As death nears, when the murderous demons of transience fall upon him, even he will find his accustomed courage lost and his fierceness gone, nor will he be able to summon any strength at all. He tries to open his eyes, but sees no shape or color. His ears are deaf, his tongue is numb, and he cannot utter a word. When the murderous demons burst upon his inmost mind, intent on smashing his vital organs, his breathing is choked off. Through all the three hundred and sixty joints of his bones, through the eighty-four thousand pores of his skin, agony sets in, so strong that he shows the demons cowardice. The horror of Death Mountain<sup>31</sup> is too much for him, and in the River of Three Fords he drowns, exhibiting then his shame before the court of Emma. Into the three and four evil ways<sup>32</sup> he falls forever, and life after life, birth after birth, his shame is for all to see. No one will escape, neither I nor any other. Shall we say that the people of the fleeting world do not suffer, just because they do not recognize this shame? Shall one who ignores this be said to know right? Shall he be called a man of morality? Take thought, therefore, beforehand. If

you know right, you will conceive fear. If you are a man of morality you will cut down the enemy, birth-and-death, with the mind's fiercely keen sword, and dwell in peace.

"I quite agree," the samurai said, "that the point of Buddhist practice is to know the right, to act with morality, and to grasp the essence of uprightness. Would you please teach now, in detail, the proper disposition of mind for the practice of the way of uprightness?"

I replied, "Methods of practice are infinitely diverse, but the main thing is simply to banish all thought of oneself. The source of suffering is the one thought "I," "I." To know that this is so, is right. To strive on this basis and to annihilate that one thought, with sincerely fierce courage, is exactly what is meant by moral conduct. One who knows not the right does not understand the source of suffering or of delight; one without morality cannot cut the bonds of birth-and-death. Set your gaze mightily, therefore. There is thus in the mind of the ordinary man a buoyancy to conquer all things, and a heaviness to sink beneath things. In action this buoyancy is the gateway to the Buddha-realm. This heaviness, in action, is the highroad to hell. You must keep your buoyancy day and night, by means of the power of your vow to achieve emancipation."

The very foundations of fierce courage, so I hold, belong to the class of conquering buoyancy:

1. Mounting guard over birth-and-death.
2. Acknowledging generosity.
3. Advancing to the front line of battle.
4. Acknowledging the principle of karma.

5. Perceiving illusion and transience.
6. Perceiving the impurity of this body.
7. Regretting the passing of time.
8. Having faith in the Three Treasures.
9. Offering this body up to one's lord.
10. Guarding oneself.
11. Being always ready to give up one's life.
12. Acknowledging one's own faults.
13. Feeling that one stands before a great personage or before one's lord.
14. Keeping to humanity and morality.
15. Keeping one's eyes upon the words of the Buddha and of the patriarchs.
16. Compassion and uprightness.
17. Keeping in mind the link with the one great matter.<sup>33</sup>

Attitudes such as these proceed from fiercely determined steadfastness, hence one disassociates oneself from all clinging and rides in victory over things. When you keep your buoyancy, therefore, you will suffer only lightly even if you should suddenly go out to your death. To keep this buoyancy, simply fix the eyes well upon an image of a Vajra Guard or of Fudō, for these show what it takes to quell evil demons. If you have fiercely determined steadfastness, you will realize this. Do not look upon them in weakness. When this fierce courage never lets up, the fortress of the mind is secure, and you have the virtuous might of unobstructedness and of freedom. Though a demon host eighty-four thousand strong rise in hot rivalry against you, they will not be able to



face you. On the contrary, their power will vanish, their strength will fail, and they will all fade out into nothing. Why should a man who devotes himself to martial courage not be able to put this attitude into action? If you should, in weakness, have thoughts that cling to form, the demon host will gain strength and wax in might. Instantly they will burst into the citadel of the dharma nature and dispossess the king of the mind. The six robbers will laugh for joy, the evil demons will gain their freedom and fly through all the eighteen realms,<sup>34</sup> until in the end you sink into hell. You must take the greatest precautions.

The following belong to the class of heaviness that sinks, overcome by things:

1. Forgetting oneself and neglectfully letting the mind escape.
2. Enjoyment and pleasure-seeking.
3. Failing to recognize duty.
4. Failing to recognize the principle of karma.
5. Failing to recognize transience and illusion.
6. Longing for fame and profit.
7. Display and arrogance.
8. Fox-like scepticism and unbelief.
9. Fondness for things, clinging to everything.
10. Weakness and lack of courage.
11. Greed and lack of compassion.
12. Judging the rights and wrongs of others.
13. Self-centeredness and self-satisfaction.
14. Selfish love and jealousy.
15. Failing to acknowledge generosity.

16. Deceit and flattery.

17. Forgetting birth-and-death.

There are, furthermore, the seven emotions: joy, anger, grief, affection, sadness, fear, and astonishment. From these seven emotions, it is said, all diseases spring. Such states of mind arise from ignorance and are infinite in their diversity, but they can be classified according to the above. It is with clinging as their very substance that they arise, and therefore as thought after thought emerges, the original mind is overcome and vanishes, and you founder in distress. If, while you are dwelling in this sinking state of mind, you are told to go out immediately and die, your agony will be very great. Therefore I hold that to conquer oneself is wise, and that to suffer, overcome by one's own mind, is foolish. When you have been able to conquer your own mind, you have conquered everything; you rise above things and are free. When you are overcome by your own mind, you are overcome by everything and sink beneath things, nor can you rise at all. Apply your mind to your mind, and mount powerful guard.

The mind it is  
That leads the mind astray;  
In your own mind  
Let not your mind  
Wander as it will.<sup>35</sup>

This is a very good verse indeed. When you let the mind do exactly as it pleases, thoughts that cling to form multiply and you fall into the three ways. When you have been able to kill the mind, you directly attain realization. There is an old saying: "Kill! Kill! Stop killing an instant, and you shoot like an arrow to hell."<sup>36</sup> You should keep your eyes on sayings such as this.

The Shōbōnengyō says: "The wise do ever grieve, as though imprisoned in hell; the foolish ever rejoice, they are like Kōonden."<sup>37</sup> Such are the words of the Buddha. Never should you make light of the admonitions of the ancients, but you should well know the one great matter. Why should anyone founder in hell for delighting in this illusory body? You must constantly control the mind. If your own personal mind is on the surface, you will find it difficult to mingle with others. Always, you should feel great contrition and dwell upon the essence of uprightness. You should arouse the great vow to get away from forms and names. Letting everything go, you should give up your very life thanks to the power of your trust in fiercely courageous determination; then keenly, swiftly, advance upon the peerless way. If this mind is unshakably seated throughout your body, day and night without break, so that you mount guard even in sleep, and if it is allowed to mature with time, then inside and out will naturally become one. Suddenly you will awake from the great dream, the Buddha's teaching and the world's teaching will be accomplished together, and you will be in all time and all space, to their very confines.

#### For the Farmer's Daily Guidance

A farmer said, "I do not neglect that great matter, my Rebirth,<sup>38</sup> but I have no time, for work on the farm never lets up. It is a wretched way I have to make my living. This present life of mine is worthless, and suffering will be mine in the future. This distresses me very much. What can I do to attain realization?"

"Farm work is Buddhist practice," I replied. "It is misunderstanding that makes it menial work. When your faith is firm, it is the

practice of a Bodhisattva. You are wrong to think you need leisure to pray for Rebirth. Those who insist upon attaining Buddhahood torment both body and mind in their quest, while those who pray for Rebirth will not reach Buddhahood in ten thousand eons. As you labor so painfully hard in burning heat and freezing cold, with spade, hoe, and sickle, take body and mind, where the passions grow so thick, as your enemy. While you hoe and reap, press the attack and press it again upon your mind, as you work. In any period of leisure the passions will grow thicker yet. When you work painfully hard as you assault body and mind, your mind is untroubled. Thus you do your Buddhist practice the year round. Why should a farmer prefer any other practice? A man can enter a monastery and worship all day long, but if he does not give up pre-occupation with himself, everything he does will turn to the karma of transmigration, let him be as holy as he likes. To reach Buddhahood or to fall into hell, therefore, depends upon the mind and not upon the work. In sum, you must simply keep to the essence of uprightness and acknowledge the principle of cause and effect. Merit accrues all unawares to those who labor in the fields. Paying due homage to the Three Treasures, celebrating the gods, sustaining the land, the whole people, and the world: it is the virtue of the farmers alone that accomplishes these things. There is no being, down to the very beasts, that does not receive this virtue. Is it not recompense for your own? Is it not tragic that farmers, whose merit is so vast, should direct the one mind wrongly and so, on the contrary, produce the karma of the three evil ways? Always know the truth, and settle the one mind.

To receive life as a farmer is to be an officer entrusted by

heaven with the nourishment of the world. Give your body, therefore, utterly up to heaven, without the least thought for yourself. Work the fields in true service to heaven's way and celebrate, as you grow the five grains, the Buddhas and the kami. Make a great vow to give to all, yes, even to the very insects, and say Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu in time with the strokes of the hoe. When you put yourself into each sweep of the sickle and labor without other thought, wet fields and dry fields are the Pure Land; the five grains themselves are pure fare, and those who eat them will find they destroy the passions.

Will not heaven protect you? If as you labor you dwell upon greed and forget the one great matter, wet fields and dry fields will be unclean, and the five grains you grow will be unclean fare. Be sure that good and evil both bring the reward back to their source. Whosoever gives the three poisons free rein, heaven will not protect him. When he fails to dwell in fierce determination, with ever-heightened concentration and firm faith in the Nembutsu, good fortune will vanish and disasters come, and he will be despised by all. In the present life his troubles will never cease, and for future eons he will fall into hell. How could you not fear these things?

Man's life is a dream within a dream. Though you overflow with joy, to joy there is no end. If you are absorbed in Rebirth into enlightenment, and work with the one thought of the Nembutsu courageously repeated without break, then all unawares you will become integrity itself. You will be empowered with the virtue to let go of form and name and you will become a man of great liberation, of great freedom. The delights of the Pure Land Paradise will be yours for all eternity. Should all this not make you happy? Have faith, have faith."

For the Artisan's Daily Guidance

An artisan said: "Enlightenment in the life to come is certainly important, but my trade leaves me no leisure. Day and night I do nothing but work at my living. How can I possibly reach realization?"

I replied: "All trades whatsoever are Buddhist practice. It is on the basis of men's actual work that Buddhahood is to be attained. There cannot be any activity which is outside Buddhist practice. The proof is that everything one does is for the good of the whole world. Let not a man who has received a human body, who is endowed with the Buddha-nature, fall willingly, because of misunderstanding, into the evil ways. The one Buddha, the Tathāgata originally awakened, benefits the world by dividing himself into countless millions. Without smiths, carpenters, and all the other trades, the needs of the world would never be met. Without warriors, the world would not be governed. Without farmers it would not be fed, and without merchants nothing in the world would circulate freely. Every other trade, as it comes into being, works for the good of the world. There are men who have discoursed of heaven and earth, there is the man who invented writing, and the man who distinguished the five organs one from another and so gave us medicine. In endless diversity they emerge and work for the world's good, but all in reality are none other than the one Buddha's virtue in action.

Although all men do thus possess the precious Buddha-nature, they know nothing of all this, but abase themselves and this body. To evil-mindedness and evil works they give themselves completely, and willingly enter the evil ways. Such men are called bewildered, ordinary men.

The Buddhas of the three times,<sup>39</sup> by appearing in the world, directly demonstrated that sentient beings are Buddhas. With the eyes one sees shapes, one hears sounds with the ears, one smells odors with the nose and speaks words with the mouth, and is all the while free in thought. The freedom of the arms, the freedom of the legs--these are just the freedom of the one Buddha. Therefore the essence of prayer for the life to come<sup>40</sup> is trust in oneself. If you genuinely pray to reach Buddhahood, you should simply have confidence in yourself. Since you are yourself a Buddha, to have confidence in yourself means that you must trust in the mind of the Buddha. In the Buddha there is no desire. In the mind of the Buddha there is no anger, no stupidity, no birth-and-death, no right and wrong, no passions. In the mind of the Buddha there is no evil at all.

Is it possible not to lament that one should fail to believe that this is so, but should manufacture personal desires, arouse anger, and dwell in greed; that day and night one should make clinging to self, self-satisfaction, wrong views and deluded thoughts one's masters, and follow them everywhere; that being constantly in pain and anguish one should lose the original self-nature, build hell for oneself all life long, and dwell there through the eons of the future? If you fear this and lament this, and so spur on your aspiration toward the one great matter; if you let the teeming thoughts go and in every single thing you do believe in the true Buddha within you, saying the while the Nembutsu of swift, keen, and genuine courage, you will naturally, as your mind matures, become integrity itself. At last, when you have taken trust as far as it can go, you will all unawares enter the realm



empty of self and other, the realm where there is nowhere to dwell, and the true Buddha within will be plain for all to see. Have faith, have steadfast faith.

For the Daily Guidance of Merchants

A merchant said: "I was born into the human realm, it is true, but my work is the sorry business of buying and selling, and there is no instant when my thoughts are not on profit; therefore I cannot advance toward enlightenment. This situation pains me greatly. Please, teach me a remedy."

"He who proposes to engage in trade," I replied, "must first of all develop the right frame of mind for increasing profit. That is the frame of mind for you, that and none other. Give your own life up to heaven and singlemindedly study the way of uprightness. The devas will deeply bless the upright man, and Buddhas and Gods will protect him. No disasters will strike him, his good fortune will naturally increase, people will love and respect him, and every little thing will be just the way he wants it. But he who, in his longing for profit, cheats people and makes a difference between himself and others will come under the malediction of heaven. Thus calamities will befall him. He will be hated by all, loved and respected by none, and nothing will ever be the way he wants it.

Noble or humble, high or low, poor or wealthy, long of life or short: such is our karma from past lives. Though we desire fame and fortune for ourselves, nothing can possibly come of it. In the end, karma for the three evil ways multiplies and we turn against heaven, to incur without doubt the punishment for our deeds. Bear clearly in mind

that when in the business of buying and selling you fear this and take care, when you cast off all personal desire, you function as an officer entrusted by heaven with assuring free flow throughout the land. If in conducting your business you let yourself be guided by heaven, if you leave off longing for profit and keep to the essence of uprightness, then just as fire burns or as water runs downhill, heaven's good fortune will be yours in due measure and all things will be as you wish. However, you must not rejoice in your reward.

There are what is called root-for-good with outflows, and root-for-good without outflows.<sup>41</sup> The world, this dream, this bubble, has decided that the body, unreal and subject to birth-and-death, is real, and never leaves off its thoughts of permanent existence. To do good thus, while harboring nothing but thoughts of clinging to the world, is called root-for-good with outflows. Goodness with outflows brings on prosperity, and by performing it one gains high rank, wealth, and the very greatest pleasure. The time comes, however, when the basis for these things is used up, and then one is bound to fall into the evil ways. In the same way, for example, an arrow is shot into the sky falls back to earth once the bow's force is spent. Therefore root-for-good with outflows is not something to rejoice over. Goodness without outflows, on the other hand, is the seed of enlightenment. The spirit of enlightenment is to keep before one's eyes the statements that "All actions are impermanent: this is the law of birth and destruction."<sup>42</sup> And that "In the three worlds there is no peace, for they are like a house on fire"<sup>43</sup> one does not let the mind dwell upon the realm of conditioned things but seeks the subtle delight of nirvana.

That is goodness without outflows. Urge on your faith, therefore, by means of the power of your vow to make the business of buying and selling itself into goodness without outflows, and keep your awareness that all is illusion. Offer this body to the world, and make up your mind that what you do is only for the sake of the land and of the whole people. Vow then that you will transport goods from your own province to others, that you will bring goods from other provinces to your own and trade them in lands and villages yet more distant, and thereby please everyone. Keep in mind that while you thus make your rounds of the provinces you are performing a practice toward the elimination of all karma-blocks. In laboring over mountain after mountain, assault both body and mind; in crossing rivers great and small, purify your mind; and when you launch your ship upon the limitless expanse of the ocean, let your body go. Say the Nembutsu all the while, and perceive that life is no more than a journey through the floating world. When thus you conduct your trading without greed, having given up all clinging, the devas will protect you, the gods will be generous toward you, your profits will be enormous, and you will become a man of the greatest wealth. Despising that you are yourself a millionaire, you will at last find risen within you great faith, fierce and unshakable. Walking, standing, sitting or lying you will be in meditation. Quite naturally enlightenment will mature in you until the subtle delight of nirvana is yours, until you are an unobstructed man of great freedom and tread alone both yin and yang. What joy, throughout the eons of the future, could equal this? Do these things, do them with firm resolve.

I pray that by this merit  
I touch all things  
So that sentient beings and I  
Both attain the Buddha's way.<sup>44</sup>

SELECTIONS FROM ROANKYŌ (SAYINGS)  
Recorded by Echu

I-2

One day he gave instruction. He said, "When you practice Buddhism, make the Buddha-images your models. And talking of Buddha-images, a beginner won't ever reach Nyorai zazen<sup>1</sup> by gazing at an image of the Nyorai. Let him gaze instead at an image of a Guardian King<sup>2</sup> or of Fudō,<sup>3</sup> and let him do Guardian King zazen.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, I've realized that the Guardian Kings are the gateway to Buddhism, and that Fudō is the starting point of the Buddhas. That's why the Guardian Kings stand at the gate, and why Fudō is the first of the Thirteen Buddhas.<sup>5</sup> If you don't get their energy the passions will defeat you. All you need do is act with whole effort from strength of spirit. But nowadays Buddhism is in full decline, the direction has gone wrong, and nobody's really alive. Everyone's dead. In Buddhism, a 'lively fellow' is one who acts from living energy. People don't realize this, though. They turn soft and pretentious and they think their complacency is Buddhism. A lot of them go around completely mad, claiming they're enlightened and spouting outrageous nonsense. I know nothing about this business of pretensions or of enlightenment. I just dispose myself so as to conquer all things with a buoyant spirit, twenty-four hours a day. Everyone should get the unshakable energy of the Guardian Kings or of Fudō, then they should practice with it and destroy bad karma and the passions."

With this he glared straight ahead, clenched his fists, and gritted his teeth. He said, "When you mount guard with full attention,

nothing will show its face. Once you have this fiercely persevering energy in action, your practice will mature. There's nothing special you need. No practice at all will be any use if it's done emptily. Set your gaze firmly and work up the energy for samādhi.<sup>d</sup>

I-3

One day he gave instruction. He said, "Practice of Buddhism means just one thing: to get and to practice the great, unshakable energy of Fudō and of the Guardian Kings. I know of no Buddhism other than to attack and destroy body and mind with this energy. Anyone who wants to come into my Buddhism, let him muster his energy and set his gaze, let him take on the energy of Fudō and of the Guardian Kings as they're shown subjugating demons, let him keep the Guardian Kings' spirit and so destroy bad karma and the passions. I've never heard of anyone in the past who ever ordered the images of the Buddhas this way, but certainly the idea accords with what I feel, and it applies very well in everything. I've observed that in the sutras the Buddha often teaches fierce determination. You'll never conquer the passions until you get this energy. First of all, you have to know all about getting energy from Buddha-images. If you're lax, the energy won't come to you. You have to fix your gaze unwaveringly on the image and mount guard around the clock over the diamond-mind."<sup>6</sup>

I-4

In the spring of 1649 some Sōtō monks came and asked for the essentials of his teaching. The Master gave them instruction. He said, "Buddhist practice means to guard yourself."<sup>7</sup> This is what everyone in

the Sōtō sect says, both young monks and old. 'I've let my self go,' they say, and it's a good saying. That's why I wrote in Fumoto Kusawake that one must never forget oneself. Take a good look at that passage.<sup>8</sup> The essential point of practice is that one thing, guarding yourself. All the passions arise from the draining away of energy.<sup>9</sup> The only thing you have to do is set your gaze and mount keen guard around the clock, without letting your energy drain away for any reason. That way you quell the six robbers<sup>10</sup> and the passions. It won't work unless you mount guard so that your energy doesn't drain away even in your sleep. You may think you're mounting guard most diligently, but as long as it drains off while you're asleep the passions will overcome you. If that happens, the horse of consciousness will gallop into the thickets of delusion, and the monkey of the mind will gambol among the branches of fame and fortune. Set your gaze firmly, take the warning "Have no deluded thoughts' as your bit and bridle, and mount resolutely keen guard. Don't for an instant let your energy drain away.

I-5

One day he gave instruction to the monks just mentioned. He said, "I myself know nothing about satori and all that. Perhaps you're not after any such thing, but with the merit that's yours for having been born human and become monks, you should by all means avoid the way of starving ghosts. The starving ghost spirit is particularly strong in present day monks. There are starving ghosts greedy for wisdom, first of all; as soon as they're acolytes they're hungry to be known as wise and to excel. Then there are ghosts starving for plenty of disciples, for the master's robe, for temples, for the master's banner, or for



solitude. Founded as they are on these thoughts, they manufacture a starving ghost attitude toward everything and never have a moment's peace. All their lives, for nothing, they're assaulted by the starving ghost's afflictions. Drawn on as they are for all eternity by these thoughts, they can only fall into the three evil ways. Take great care to avoid the way of starving ghosts. And don't have this world foisted off onto you by other people. 'I'll make you an elder,' some way, or 'You're a good pilgrim monk!' Others say, 'It's too bad you gave up your studies,' or, 'I can make your fortune, you know.' All these people are foisting the world off on you. These days there's not a soul who steals the world away. There are only people who foist off name and gain. Be very, very careful not to have the world foisted off onto you.d'

I-6

One day he gave a monk instruction. He said, "it's best for monks to keep to the koans. You must keep Chao-chou's Mu.<sup>11</sup> Apply your energy powerfully and round the clock, in every circumstance, mount guard with Mu, Mu, Mu, Mu. Make sure it doesn't get away from you, not even in sleep. And in particular, you can't go wrong if you mount guard over death."<sup>12</sup>

I-7

One day he gave instruction. He said, "The beginning practitioner must somehow or other see to it that authenticity arises in him. He should never do forced practice or strenuous zazen before authenticity comes. If he forces himself to put out root-energy<sup>13</sup> or does rough

practices, his nature will tire, his energy will dwindle, and his efforts will come to nothing. He will merely vegetate and will live out his life to no purpose. . . . Never, never let your energy dwindle. There are untold numbers of people these days who do forced practices or empty zazen, so that their energy dwindles and they get sick or go crazy. All you have to do is promote your resolve and arouse authenticity."<sup>14</sup>

I-9

During the evening conversation he said, "I want to propose my way of government, the upholding of Buddhism, formally to the authorities."<sup>15</sup> Heaven hasn't let me do it yet, though. For one thing, the Buddhism which the patriarchs and predecessors have left us at the cost of bloody tears and relentless practice, has fallen to ruin because there's no official decree to support it. Our greatest problem is the way Buddhism's been dropped and gets no outside protection. Because I'm sure Buddhism will never be recognized as the truth unless the government so ordains. My deep desire is to present this proposal as boldly as I can. I'll say, 'I await most steadfastly and humbly your edict, that Buddhism shall be recognized as the truth.'

He said furthermore, "Alas, if the ruler himself were to set Buddhism straight, the thing could be done effortlessly, with a single sentence. I've been thinking about this for some time, but I haven't quite known how to say it. Now I've grasped the problem, though, I could set Buddhism straight right now, throughout the land, with just one sentence."

"What sentence do you mean?" a monk asked.

The Master replied, "'Let all sects work together toward Buddha-

hood.' With this one sentence I'd instantly make Buddhism the true teaching. So the different sects have to be brought together and an inquiry has to be made, as to which do work toward Buddhahood. The inquiry will hold that to work for words, for knowledge, for rank or for a temple does nothing to promote the attainment of Buddhahood. Once those who are wrong are suitably instructed, true Buddhism will be manifest on the spot. I have a tremendous ambition to propose these ideas.'

I-10

One day a certain recluse came and requested guidelines for practice. The Master gave him instruction. He said, "You must drop everything and work at dying. See to it that by constantly working at dying you break through death,<sup>16</sup> and that when you actually die, you're not amazed. It's when you're bringing others to enlightenment and sharing ideas with them that you need knowledge. To reach your own Buddhahood you've no need to know anything. All you have to do is be earth and work at dying with the Nembutsu."<sup>17</sup>

The recluse said, "I consult Mōanjō constantly. Is that wrong too?"

"Any attempt to memorize it is useless," the Master replied. "All you need do is lighten death with the Nembutsu.'

"There's no more evil in my mind," the person went on. "I have no more desires."

The Master said, "You're thinking you've made it because a little bit of you is still. However desireless you may be now, though, however good, thoughts of enjoying this world and thoughts of self-love aren't

going to quit. If you don't get away from them, they're all karma that leads to transmigration. To destroy these thoughts, see your body and mind as foes. Just glare fiercely at them and annihilate them with the Nembutsu. You need no special knowledge for this, you need no special wisdom. You can't get anyone to reach Buddhahood for you, and no one else drags you down to hell. Hell or heaven, it's your own thoughts right now that draw you there. Anger is hell, greed is the way of starving ghosts and ignorance that of beasts. These are known as the three evil ways. Above them are the three good ways of ashuras, men, and devas. In all these make the six ways.<sup>18</sup> Each is in the one mind. Never to leave them, but to rise and fall among them, round and round, forever, is called the cycle of transmigration through the six ways. What proves it is that your own mind, right now, is involved in transmigration. Your good thoughts soon turn bad, your bad thoughts soon turn good again. This shows how your dwelling shifts from hell to heaven and back. I myself go round and round in the evil ways just as you do. It's quitting these thoughts and being unborn and undying that's known as reaching Buddhahood. So by naturally achieving the eradication of every thought you attain Buddhahood. How are you to stop your thoughts by indirect methods? You must set your gaze firmly, say Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu, and push the assault on your life to its furthest limit. Then you'll eradicate your thoughts. Great evil and unfulfilled hopes always come to an end, but there's bound to be something left over. It's very hard to eradicate thoughts. So you have to make this bag of worms<sup>19</sup> your foe and wipe it out with the Nembutsu. That's the practice that eradicates thoughts."

"Then am I to gather that the thing is to remove oneself from the body?" the person asked.

The Master reprimanded him. "You'd be wrong to gather anything," he said. "Buddhism isn't something to be gathered. It means working till you're rid of body and mind."

I-12

One day a monk who had only recently become a disciple took leave of the Master, saying that he would have no teacher any more and that he meant to beg his way around Japan. The Master reprimanded him. "What you've just told me you're going to do is completely reckless," he said. "It's essential that someone who wants to practice Buddhism should look for a good teacher and mingle with good friends. But you've hardly made the commitment to practice before you're off on rash pilgrimage all over the country, without any plan and without understanding the principle of what you're doing. I just can't approve. In the old days when our predecessors went on pilgrimage, they were looking for a teacher or looking for the Way, and they cared not a bit for their lives. They might wander on for ten thousand leagues. Some, who had gotten the Teaching, went around testing other matters. Others, mightily grounded men, went on such pilgrimages in order to come into contact with all things and to test their own natures more and more rigorously. Some, men of heart, turned to the hills and waters, the grasses and trees, and wandered so as to polish their minds. But I've never heard of it doing any good for an aimless person like yourself to go on pilgrimage. You'll just drift around here and there and turn into a ruffian. When you're hard pressed you'll even steal, and right away, for

no good reason, you'll be a criminal. I don't know how many monks have gone off this way and become corrupt or gone mad. I'm sick of people like that, I don't even want to hear about them. If you take my objections seriously, you'll stay. If not, there's no point in your coming here any more. I'll cut you off for this life and the next." In view of this violent reprimand, the monk at last stayed.

I-14

One day an elder<sup>20</sup> came. He said, "When I was doing zazen the other day I suddenly felt sure I was going to die any moment. Do you suppose that meant my energy had waned?"

The Master listened. "It was a gift that came to you from within," he replied. "That's just wonderful. People this energy doesn't rise in have to be given it from outside."<sup>21</sup>

I-15

During the evening conversation he said, "What they call practice is very, very hard to scale. At present I'm in zazen each instant, round the clock. When I'm in a crowd, for example, being jostled and wrestled around, or when I'm dancing, however wildly I caper my zazen energy doesn't go slack. Ever since I was very young I've guarded myself attentively and I've made short work of conquering my thoughts so they don't make a fool of me. From there I've intensified my practice, and I've reached the point where nothing can make me slacken. For all that, though, it still doesn't serve birth and death."<sup>22</sup> That's a real problem."

I-16

One day he gave instruction. He said, "It's best for beginners to start by praying for faith and saying mantras and dharanis,<sup>23</sup> so they work right through body and mind. Or if they work through all karma-blocks<sup>24</sup> by chanting the Eight Phrase Dharani<sup>25</sup> ten, twenty, or thirty-six thousand times, they'll urge on their resolve and arouse authenticity. Right away they must give up the idea of being good monks and concentrate on working at being earth.d'

I-17

One day he turned to the gathering. He said, "Once I thought I'd really given up the world. Looking back now, though, that was nonsense. I'm sure that whatever thoughts I still have along those lines are total nonsense too.d'

I-18

One day he gave instruction to the recluse lately mentioned. He said, "Whenever anyone shaves his head, his standing goes up right away. He gets flashy and corrupt and puts on the airs of a virtuous monk. Everyone concerned with the Way is like that nowadays. You, if you want to follow my teaching, will have to be nothing but earth. You'll have to modestly avoid looking for advancement and practice from the soles of your feet up. If you mean to be lazy or to walk around talking lofty nonsense, I don't want you here.d'

I-20

One day he gave a warrior instruction. He said, "Without Buddhism you can't put true warrior courage into action. The courage you have



when the blood's hot may be strong, but somewhere there's going to be a spot of cowardice. Personally, when I look down from a high cliff my legs shake and I feel a coward. You won't be a stout-hearted fellow unless you practice Buddhism."

I-21

One day a monk who was going into retreat on Ishinotaira-yama<sup>26</sup> came to take leave of the Master. The Master gave him instruction. He said, "On your way now, guard against negligence and inattention. If you come across an old grave, you should say the segaki<sup>27</sup> before you pass by. There's bound to be a soul left in the grave. Don't ignore it. That's one thing. Another is that even after you get there, nothing's going to be different. Don't think there'll be any change. I assure you there'll be no change whatever you do. And then, with monks as empty of faith as they are these days, they handle sutra rolls and worship the Buddha without washing their hands after they're relieved themselves. Don't do thinks like that when you get there. Read sutras and worship clean in body and mind. Pray to the Buddha, the Gods, and the Three Treasures for devotion to the Way. Offer guidance to all souls and work for your own merit. You have to know very well that good and evil both come back to their origin. That's another thing. Furthermore, you're called a 'companion in harmony,'<sup>28</sup> so you can't get away with not keeping harmony; and you have to keep the six harmonies while you mingle with people. The reason is that a badly disposed man is confined right away, even with respect to where he'll live. But if you yield to ordinary people, you'll be comfortable living anywhere. Then again, you've got to pick a spot to live. And you have to go visiting

the good men of neighboring provinces, and keep coming home when you've done so. If you meet ten men, you'll have ten items of merit. That's another thing. And you have to be humble and careless of yourself, willing to run in and grab shit or piss and throw them away. You can't get away with being half-baked about anything. It's always good for practice to work your body. That's another thing. Keep carefully to what I've said, and your devotion to the Way will be firm. Don't ever let it drain away."

I-26

One day an old monk came and asked for basic teaching. The Master gave him instruction. He said, "Formal medication won't work. Just shut yourself up in a hut, say sutras and dharanis day and night, comfort those who've none to comfort them, and do your daily chores. Do you do any acts of worship at all?"

The man said, "I make the three prostrations."

"How is authenticity going to arise that way?" The Master replied. "Do at least five hundred or a thousand prostrations. You'll assault body and mind that way, and empty them of karma-blocks. And don't expect to be a Buddha in one lifetime. It takes kalpas of lives to get there. This time you have to make sure you get out of the starving ghosts and beasts, and at least become a human being."

I-28

One morning he addressed the gathering. He said, "Each morning at a particular moment, in about the time it takes to walk a couple of hundred yards, the great matter comes up; and it's very sharp. In the

last few years, especially, a distressing energy has cornered me more and more."<sup>29</sup>

"Someone like me," said a monk at this point, "doesn't even have the energy even to settle on a spot to guard, or to guard that one spot."

The Master said, "It's not something you'll know as long as you're mounting guard by conscious design. But for those who have no energy from within there's no solution except to give it to them through artifice, from without. Anyway, the spot to guard is one, whether you're saying the Nembutsu, contemplating illusion, or meditating on death. People do have different affinities, though, and that's why there's a variety of teachings. You should guard only that with which you have affinity. When your faith is strong, it makes no difference what you guard. Most people, I'm sure, let their minds get out into the world, and founder."

I-29

One day the Master scolded someone who had failed to read Fumoto Kusawake. He said, "I know my style's choppy, but it was for you people that I transcribed what I had in mind, and you've been around me all these years without even looking at it! I've never heard of such dull indifference! You're absolutely shameless! Are you here just to fool me and get an easy meal? And there you are in front of me with that expression on your face. With that attitude you'll be going around peddling me all over the place and bringing shame on me as well as on yourself. But my shame will last only a few years. Aren't you concerned about the shame that'll be yours for all eternity, before Emma?<sup>30</sup> You're just outrageous! As long as you're at my place you can let your

Buddhist practices be rather approximate, but you surely ought to look over my books and see that you clear up with me any questions you may have. Instead, you haven't looked at a word of them! Shameful, that's what it is! It'd be pure compassion if I just threw you out and made you beg. Decide you'll cut off all ties with the world and beg without a thought for yourself. If you get something you eat, if not, you don't. Let Heaven take care of you on your pilgrimage. That'll be better than eating and drinking at your ease and doing a lot of Buddhist practices. Yes, you really must leave me and make it your practice to beg."

I-30

During the evening conversation someone remarked that nowadays monks have no interest in the way. The Master listened. He said, "Quite apart from that, not one of them actually leaves the world at all. That's why if you threw them out of their temples right now they'd all be helpless."

The speaker went on, "Present day monks complain if the offerings for ceremonies and services to comfort the dead are too small."

The Master said, "Well, if they're going to use their own share, it's natural enough that they're greedy. A temple's trouble if you're responsible. Still, people love to have temples and won't let them go, and whoever doesn't have one yet is jealous. It's resolve, though, that's the treasure. With just a little resolve you come to hate the world, your ambitions quit, and you even give up your temple. That much doesn't entitle you to be called a practitioner, however. And yet no one goes even that far. Still less does anyone work up the grit to

sink his teeth into things like a man-eating dog. It's too bad, it really is."

I-33

A man came one day. He said, "There's a daimyo's wife who's horrified at her own cruelty when she has people clean the privies, so to those who do so she gives money."

The Master listened. "Very good, very good!" he said. "She's quite right. Me too, I'll have to have my people do the cleaning by turns, when they're together. It's wrong for those who pray for the future life<sup>31</sup> to have others do the menial chores. That's a good thing you just told me. It reminds me of an old story. A scholar spent the night in a mountain temple. The next morning he saw the boy about twelve years old who lived at the temple. 'Until yesterday evening,' he said, 'this boy's physiognomy showed he was to die within three days, but this morning it shows he'll live to the ripe old age of eighty. It's extraordinary that his life should have been prolonged seventy years in one night. What goodness has he summoned? What root-for-good<sup>32</sup> has he achieved?'

"Everybody at the temple was amazed, and asked what had happened.

'I don't know I did anything good,' said the boy. 'Last night when I went to the toilet, the board you stand on was so dirty, I couldn't bear it. Then suddenly it occurred to me that here I was having trouble bearing it for a moment, whereas my mother wouldn't think of complaining if she was covered with excrement from head to foot. She'd only feel love for me. I realized the deep gratitude I owe her is hard to repay, but I decided to repay it. So I cleaned off the board with

my hands. I can't see I did anything special.'

"Everyone was deeply impressed. They realized that it was the merit of this act that had done it. Isn't that a fine story?"

I-34

During the evening conversation he said, "As far as I can see, there aren't many even among the ancient patriarchs and masters whose practice had matured. Most gave approval to small understanding, and used sutras and records of sayings to write their own treatises and to leave their own records of sayings for the instruction of others. That's my opinion. Otherwise, not one of them could have left any document to express the state of mind trained with power. They all comfortably broke through. Not one left any statement that he hadn't. If I leave anything to posterity it'll have to be a statement that I've gotten nowhere.d"

I-37

In the spring of 1651 he gave instruction. He said, "To understanding I prefer having death energy<sup>33</sup> come. Myself, I'd had a feeble energy ever since I was young, but it's only much later that death energy came to me. Say someone had his head cut off right now--I'd get it as though the head cut off were my own. When I hear anyone's died, I get the energy just like that. Alas, I don't suppose much of this is getting through to you right in your chest. Anyway, when I speak of death pain assaulting me, I mean my chest pounds and I'm really in agony. If this went on long the energy would wane, but now it's unalloyed. I myself at first thought it might be a bad thing, but on later consideration I

realized that this energy is the medicine for all ills. Everything is still, and the very truth stands out in its workings.<sup>34</sup> Even now people with death energy get good by and by. So I feel death energy may well be the start of leaving birth and death."

I-38

One day he gave instruction. He said, "Ignorance of the Way is truly dismal. Warriors' sons these days turn monk and get through life by skinning the dead.<sup>35</sup> That's as low as you can sink. It's all right to turn monk for enlightenment, but it's all wrong to do it for a livelihood. It's suffering to covet just one hundred koku.d<sup>36</sup> Enough to keep yourself alive is ample. . . . Those who've gone to hell because of the world have a hope the Buddha's teaching will save them. But those who've gone to hell because of the Buddha's teaching--who's going to save them? They haven't a hope of rising again for all eternity."

I-40

One day he addressed the gathering. He said, "Once I loved living in the mountains, and whenever I saw any little wood or grove I'd want to build a hut there. So I did sometimes live in the mountains. But heaven was against it and I never followed through. I'm glad of it now. If I'd stayed like that I'd have turned into a good Buddhist and never had an inkling as to where I might be wrong. Once I approved of living in the mountains, but now I disapprove; and I think perhaps the level of my practice has risen a bit. The way I see it now, a taste for living in the mountains betrays an eccentric and a pretentious turn of mind. It's the same thing as a layman making a fancy garden or doing up an elegant living room.d'



Someone said here, "Lately there's a recluse at such-and-such a place. He looks very strange, but none the less he's clearly teaching truth.d'

The Master listened. "If you learn your words," he said, "you can say any great thing. Buddhists these days think it's all right to fall into cleverness, and since everyone agrees that's fine they revere clever people. I assure you nothing's as useless as cleverness. In fact it turns into tremendous resentment. When I was young, I myself made this mistake. Never, never fall into cleverness."

I-43

In the summer of 1651, during the evening conversation, he said, "Sometime or other I stopped making discriminations, and I've no conceptual knowledge. So, though I'm bound at times to speak in error, I've worked along and survived till this year and still I've never failed to meet the problem. Never since my youth have I been the kind to make discriminations. But every time a conversation gets to the heart of the matter, it's I more often than any discriminating thinker who have the last word. Personally, I don't think this is anything to be proud of. But the ability to speak trenchantly, that I've always had to a strong degree. When something's under discussion, as soon as I catch the subject my mind settles down and my words cut right through."

I-44

One day he spoke and said, "Up to about the spring of last year my energy was like a strong bow drawn, or like a tireless horse charging. My energy was in perfect tune, as though stretched to the very full."

This year, I know, my energy level has settled a little, but it shows no sign of slackening. I think perhaps it's matured a bit."

I-47

One day the Master addressed a visitor. He said, "Even among those who criticize me sharply, many are good talkers and discourse very cleverly. Absolutely no one practices, though. At Ishinotaira I used to teach Buddhist ideas a little, but everyone got involved with intellectual Buddhism. So I gave it up and discussed ideas no more. That's when I started teaching nothing but practice, practice. In Buddhism I always dislike clever understanding. For me, only one who has the energy for sudden enlightenment is a vessel of the Teaching. The Zen teaching in particular is simply to throw off all clinging, and that's to wield a cutting blade at all times. To mount guard over birth and death is a cutting blade too. Zen energy itself is the cutting blade."

I-51

Someone came one day and said, "I always say that when I die I'm to be put in a sack and burned just as I am."

The Master listened. "Once in China," he said, "there was a famous warrior who left a last request much like yours: that his body should be buried on the spot. People at the time said he'd been able to die all right, but not to let go of his body. They even satirized him in verse. So just throw yourself away--let the dogs and crows eat you."

"I don't think I'd want to show off anything so ugly," the visitor said.

The Master replied, "If that's your attitude, you'll do better to display yourself to people even more. The principle of contrition and repentance is to throw open to light what's worst in you. And if you know it's so ugly, why don't you junk it? Actually a corpse is nice and clean. What could be filthier than the living body? Tears, snot, shit and piss--there's nothing clean about it. Keep in mind that it's just a bundle of bad karma and, yes, a filthy bag of shit, and glare right at it. Do that, and you'll junk it."

I-53

Someone came one day, and during a casual conversation he said, "Ah, I'd like to make you just twenty years old!"

The Master listened. "What a horrible idea!" he said. "The very thought of living with the mind I had when I was young is thoroughly repulsive. If it was with the mind I have now, on the other hand, there'd be no problem. That's because a day's practice now is more important than a whole year's practice before."

I-54

During the evening conversation he said, "I suppose there must be among the people in the world a great many hopeless incompetents, but it's amazing the way they all manage to muddle through. Doubtless it's because they've experienced more of life than younger people. I'm sure I'm one of the most incompetent men alive but I get impatient whenever I hear anyone talking about Buddhism. Perhaps that's because I've been involved with it ever since my youth."

I-56

One morning he addressed the gathering. He said, "It doesn't always happen, but sometimes death energy presses me hard. And every morning at a particular time the great matter comes up from below my navel, and fills my chest to bursting. It's not something just to dispel with a sigh."

A monk asked at this point, "Is it the great matter of birth and death you're calling the great matter?"

"I'm not saying what great matter it is," the Master replied.

"It's just the great matter.d"<sup>37</sup>

I-57

One day a layman came. He said, "I've heard of you, so I've come to call. Please give me instruction."

The Master said, "If one man hands down a lie, they say, ten thousand pass it on as the truth. Once some joker says Shōsan's after publicity, the word gets around and people think perhaps I soar through the sky or shine, and they flocked to me like tourists. When it's a perfectly ordinary old man they see, they're all disappointed. I assure you I'm a commonplace earth Zen man. The only reason I practice is that I don't want to die, because if I happen to be killed I want to make sure I can hold my head out without a thought and die free. Aside from dying, though, I don't leave the starving ghosts or the beasts. Is my wanting to get out of there any better than the people who think nothing at all of being there? There's no special way I'm better than anyone else. If you want to listen to me, you'll have to be a thorough know-nothing.d"

The visitor thought the Master was hiding something. He insisted that the Master give him instruction.

The Master said, "I don't know anything good about my Buddhism. All I know is what's bad about me. If we get together and you visit often, I'll show you how I'm always lamenting for the starving ghosts and beasts at my place. I assure you that's all I know that's any good. Maybe you think I'm playing myself down for you, but I don't know a thing that would sink me to the lowest pit of hell."<sup>38</sup>

"Your behavior shows you've got Buddhism," the Master went on. "Show it to me!"

The visitor said he had no idea what the Master was talking about.

"No, no," the Master urged him, "you've got something! Show it to me! Show it to me!"

"I have the story about Chao-chou telling the monk to go wash his bowl,"<sup>39</sup> the visitor then said, "I got it from a priest. And I've begun to get away from my physical body."

The Master replied, "When they assume they're treasures to the world just because of the Three Treasures, monks on the contrary teach people nonsense and do them harm. That's the way it goes. And it isn't that they haven't mastered the words. They've mastered them, but their starving ghost attitude and their beast spirit won't quit. Myself, I've seen the nature<sup>40</sup> a little on my own, but that doesn't do me any good. In fact people these days who say they've seen the nature usually make others worse. For yourself, just be earth and say the Nembutsu.

"What is practice?" the visitor asked.

"It's to give yourself totally," answered the Master.

"And what does 'be earth' mean?"

"Throw out all the clever knowledge and delusion you have on your chest. Erase ideas with Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu; erase yourself and be one with emptiness. That's what I call reaching Buddhahood by being earth."

"Nowadays," the Master continued, "a lot of people go around handing out Buddhism cheap. I've nothing to hand out at all. The advantages of coming to my place amount to nothing. You'd better realize that. That's what I've got to tell you. The problem isn't one I put aside, though. When it comes to the one great matter, even I strongly desire to hold fast to the seed, through all births and lives, and to come at last to full enlightenment. For you, just work at saying the Nembutsu. Hōnen himself<sup>41</sup> said he didn't know anything good for Buddhahood except the Nembutsu and he left us the One Page Document, the Two Page Document, and the Three Page Document as well.<sup>42</sup> I quite agree it's the right practice. In the first place, it has no side-effects. You say Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu with force, beating a great gong in your chest. Bad karma doesn't have a chance to show its face. If this is your disposition at all times, you wipe out thoughts. It's bad to use words to explain it, of course, but since you're considering the Nembutsu as a beginner, the two characters nen and butsu mean to think of the Buddha. There can't be anyone who thinks of the Buddha all the time. Everyone's involved with thoughts of the world. A mind whose thoughts are on the world belongs to the evil ways. Your own mind is going round and round in the evil ways, and that proves it. Sometimes your mind's strong, sometimes it's weak. Sometimes it's angry,

sometimes it's greedy, sometimes it's jealous or envious. It's so fond of the evil ways that it goes round and round among them and can't even get to the way of human beings. And even if it has the good karma to reach heaven, it soon enough falls back down to hell. That's why what little goodness may come now soon turns to evil. All in all, you won't evade transmigration if you don't cut off your thoughts at the root. Do the Nembutsu hard and empty yourself of thoughts. If the least thought lingers, you'll be reborn in the way to which that thought belongs."

"You have a dangerous nature," the Master went on. "The way you are, you soon get stuck up when you're praised, and you run around sprouting horns.<sup>43</sup> People must be praising you everywhere. I'm sure no one abuses you and runs you down the way I do. Take care, don't let anyone spoil the merit you've gotten from meeting me. That's what I have to say to you."

That evening he addressed the gathering. "The man today was too intellectual," he said. "Don't you agree? With a character like that it's hard to get into Buddhism. The more he talks the grander his ideas are. He'll never get anywhere unless someone lays a stick to him. He's bound to get a bit better if someone jumps on whatever he says. If I were a regular teacher, I'd find some way to get to him."

"I don't even want to meet a man like that, so full of diseases," a monk remarked.

The Master listened. "No," he said, "I prefer difficult people. I'd like to meet someone who can push Shōsan hard, but I'm sorry to say I've never done so. Ah, it's someone who can corner me I want."



I-59

During the evening conversation he said, "So-called Taoism, Confucianism, the heresies that developed in the old days in India, and Buddhism--they're all one. There's no difference whatever between them. Monks, can you tell them apart?"

After a while he said, "All the different teachings think the ultimate is the final place you can get to by practicing discrimination. They don't realize the mind opens out beyond discrimination. The opening of the mind is Buddhism's real meaning. And in Buddhism itself, the sects think their only job is to interpret the sutras as well as possible. They don't realize the meaning comes to one outside of any interpretation. Zen's the only one that doesn't rely on words and stays away from interpretation, and that makes getting the meaning the main goal. In Zen, the more you study the more you fall into interpretation, and the further you get from the meaning. That's why in Zen intellectual learning is strictly forbidden."

I-63

During the evening conversation he said, "My practice just doesn't rise. Forty years ago, when I was at the Saijōji in Sekimoto, in Sagami province, I heard a sea monster had come up off Odawara. I took off on the spot in a little boat, like a fool, planning to twist his horns. I was determined to go right through all the lava caves on Mt. Fuji,<sup>44</sup> too. Ever since my youth I've been that powerfully disposed, but it's done me no good. Looking back on it now, I did it all sincerely. I wouldn't do it any more, though. It was an outrageous way to behave."

He also said, "Never since my youth have I paid any attention to apparitions or to ghosts."

I-66

During the evening conversation a monk said, "When I go through town I start sort of coveting things I don't need."

The Master said, "That must be a habit you picked up during a long stay among the starving ghosts."

"I've done my best to eliminate covetousness too" someone else said, "but it just won't go away."

"Don't resist it," the Master replied. "Just do the Nembutsu singlemindedly. If you build up the Nembutsu's merit, everything will vanish by itself."

I-68

One day he said, "There's one respect in which my state of mind has changed since I turned sixty. When I guide the dead,<sup>45</sup> I take on the mood strongly and actually change places with them. Sometimes I feel as though I'm actually rushing into the flames to suffer for them--I really feel it very keenly. Whenever I go out to guide the dead, right away my energy shifts itself into the warrior's glare."<sup>46</sup>

I-69

A certain main temple of the Sōtō sect prohibited the study of Buddhist sutras or Zen records. Thereupon every last subordinate temple took the matter up with the authorities.<sup>47</sup> Once a monk from the plaintiff side came. The Master turned to him and said, "If the

authorities right now asked you to give the gist of the argument on both sides, what would you say? Come, try telling me."

The monk was at a loss.

The Master said, "You can't get it out, can you! What's not in your very heart, you can't express with ingenious thinking. I always have to have a thing in my heart and cut through to the quick of it when I speak, or else nothing comes out right. I'll talk for you.

"Well, here's how things stand. Our patriarchs and predecessors recognized no particular records or sutras but devoted themselves to the Way. Something can be drawn from the records, however. How are we to further the sect's message if, under the present conditions of ignorance and indifference to the Way, all study is prohibited? Nonetheless, if this measure does raise Buddhism, I'll follow it by all means. I won't turn against it. Whatever happens, though, I'm speaking this way because it's very serious to mistake hodge-podge, phony teachings for Buddhism, while prohibiting the records of the sayings of the Buddha and of the patriarchs--records which have been truly transmitted by our own sect. Essentially, our purpose on this occasion is that Buddhism, which over the past three hundred years has fallen into error,<sup>48</sup> should be restored by the government to the condition of the truth. The matter is a very serious one. We read that the Buddha and Buddhism depend upon the king, upon his ministers, and upon powerful patrons.<sup>49</sup> I must therefore request that you gather all sects together, that you appoint judges to examine the position of all parties, and that you make sure the truth is served."

"But what would you say," asked the monk at this point, "if the

main temple side objects that it's precisely what you call a phony teaching which underlies the intention of the Buddha and of the patriarchs, and is the wordless way?"

The Master replied, "'Fine,' I'd say, 'fine.' Thank you! I'm delighted to see you're a man of the Way. Let's debate the Buddha's intention before the high officers assembled here. If I lose they can cut off my head. Aha! Now's the time they're going to listen to both sides!' That's what I'd say. I'd really have them cut off my head. I'm determined they can cut my head off if someone better than me show up and puts across his version of the truth."

A monk said, "What would you say if despite your claim that Buddhism has gone astray, the officials question whether laymen are actually competent to decide what's Buddhism and what's not?"

The Master said, "'It's precisely laymen who are the ones to hear the case!d' I'd say, and I'd take out the ten oxherding pictures<sup>50</sup> and show them one by one. 'This is what the practice of the Buddha and of the patriarchs is about,' I'd tell them. 'Do you know any monks nowadays who really follow the very first one? You'll have to look for them.'"

In this connection he addressed the gathering and said, "If I were to take care of this business I'd say, 'It's the true teaching when the Buddha, being complete in all virtues and acting in perfect freedom as the mind directs, is of service to the whole world. Both sides, therefore, will state what they understand by 'all virtues,' and if neither statement corresponds to what's right, then both are wrong. Just concentrate on 'all virtues.d' Now, 'all virtues' isn't something to apply

within the confines of the ordinary man, it's something to apply within the confines of a Buddha. And since the true teaching is to become a Buddha, both sides must give up wrong understanding and establish one universal path toward Buddhahood. They must teach disciples, from the time they're acolytes on up, to watch what leads to Buddhahood. And the wordless Zen sect doesn't take study as the basis, no indeed. Phony teachings are by the same token wrong understanding. That's why as long as we judge according to discriminatory thinking and pursue private enlightenment, our use of phony teachings will cause the old koans to all die out.

I-72

"Speaking of all virtues," the Master asked the gathering during the evening conversation, "what is it that shows up in action? Tell me what's the substance of all virtues.d'

"Emancipation," said a layman present.

The Master replied, "Emancipation's emancipation, but you'd have done better to say the substance is no-mind and no-thought. That's where everything comes into action from. When you're in a state of no-mind and no-thought you're in tune with everything. It's the state of mind you're in when you're really one with a rhythm or with a nō chant--when you put yourself totally into saying, 'You have before you a monk who is taking a look at all lands. . . .'<sup>51</sup> I personally don't know how to handle the fan,<sup>52</sup> but I've a mind to let the chant lead me, to be one with it, and to dance free. The expression 'manifesting form in tune with things' refers to no-mind and no-thought. Say for example there's a fellow who loves to dance. If he says to you, 'I love to dance, teach

me to dance the Nembutsu,' you won't be complete in all virtues if you don't."<sup>53</sup>

In this connection he said, "I myself once gave instruction to a fellow who told me, 'I love to kill, teach me to be a Buddha by killing.' I said, 'Do you enjoy the way each bird you kill squawks out its life, its wings all askew? If you do, are you going to enjoy your own death too? Die gladly, and that's Buddhahood. Being a Buddha means dying untroubled. So every time you kill, practice having your own limbs and bones smashed, practice dying too. You have to get so you die roaring with laughter. Whoever does that really kills. If that's not the way you kill, your killing's just a warrior's amusement.' After that the man carried out a firm decision to give up killing, and later he advanced in his practice. I myself didn't learn about all virtues from anyone special, I know it because I feel it's agony not to die free, and because I've trained myself in various ways. What I teach is Buddhism for cowards."

I-73

One day he gave instruction. He said, "Since at the origin nothing was blocking him, the ordinary man has his Nyorai-mind well seated.<sup>54</sup> The six robbers and the passions plunder it from him, however, so that when he keeps the six robbers and the passions out with the mind of the Guardian Kings, the original mind emerges of itself. It's like having a club-bearer where one dismounts, a chamber-guard within, and guards at each stage of the way: when they mount unflinching guard the lord is quite naturally safe. The Guardian Kings represent the footsoldier zazen of the Nyorai. Practice this footsoldier zazen first. Then there

are the Sixteen Good Gods,<sup>55</sup> the Four Heavenly Kings,<sup>56</sup> and the guardian gods of the various steps toward the original mind. And the Twelve Gods who bear the twelve branches on their heads:<sup>57</sup> they guard the twelve hours. So when you mount strong guard around the clock, the passions vanish and the central Buddha is quite naturally stable. Without this energy you won't be able to conquer the passions. I simply must present this view of the images of the Buddhas to the authorities. I'll speak, if they'll hear me, even if I have to become a ghost to do it."

I-75

During an evening's conversation we told a lot of stories about the different ways ghosts take revenge. The Master listened. He said, "Of course, of course, people don't realize that, though it's extremely important. When someone dies they think there's just nothing afterwards. It doesn't occur to them to be careful of evil, and nobody's afraid of how he may be reborn. So naturally these things happen. It's a very, very serious matter."

"It doesn't scare me at all to hear stories like that," someone remarked.

"That's because your karma is deep," said the Master.

"I'm not afraid of karma either."

The Master said, "It's the man of much karma who isn't afraid of karma.d'

I-77

One day he gave instruction. He said, "People these days think Buddhism's no use if you don't have satori.<sup>58</sup> That's wrong. Buddhism



means to translate the mind you have right now into action, so as to serve present needs. In fact it's translating your mind into action, with power, that I call practice. The stronger your mind gets, the more it can serve. Hard work brings great virtue. There's little virtue in little work. You may not be getting as much as the man who takes in ten thousand koku, for example, but if it's a thousand koku you're getting, you're more than the hundred koku man. It's like that. You get the virtue that's coming to you. Likewise it's absurd to believe that once you're in satori, that's a Buddha's space.<sup>59</sup> Perhaps you have understanding, but you can't put it freely to use. A Buddha's space is something else. You don't have to be after satori--it's by constant practice that you'll reach virtue."

I-78

One day he gave instruction. He said, "Originally there's no body. It starts as a drop, then it gets bigger and bigger till it's human body, and since it's a clot of bad karma and passions from the ground up, it's a most foul thing. Tears, snot, shit and piss--there's nothing clean about it. And what's the present that comes wrapped up all this? It isn't the bodhi-mind, no, and it's not the spirit of compassion. It's just hate and love and greed, and what springs from the three poisons,<sup>60</sup> the four pains and the eight pains,<sup>61</sup> the ten evils,<sup>62</sup> the five deadly sins.<sup>63</sup> Isn't it too bad that all life long these thoughts assault you, that you transmigrate eternally round and round in the evil ways, and suffer great torment? Deeply believe this, never let yourself be led astray by this rotting flesh. If you can just drop preoccupation with the body you'll have peace. Say, for

instance, a fellow comes for your head. If you've gotten where you can hold it out and let him take it without a thought, how can you possibly suffer? And what passions are going to block you?"

I-81

One day he gave instruction. He said, "Practice means nothing but fierce, courageous energy. Failing that, all practice and all goodness are useless. There can't be much difference between Nyorai zazen and Guardian King zazen--just the difference between showing it in the face and using it within. How are you going to be present at all, without this energy, as you're dying with an ordinary man's mind? And what will you conquer everything with? I've succeeded in working up this energy and I hope to pass it to each of you, but not one of you gets it. So far, it seems, it's as difficult to pass on as it is to practice."

I-82

During the evening conversation someone said, "Death has never impressed me in the least."

The Master listened. He said, "That's fine, I'm sure, but the level of your practice isn't going to rise. I hate death, and I practice so as to be able to die fully alive. As long as I'm still subject to death, I'm certain I have the energy to practice life after life and birth after birth. It's all very well for you to say death doesn't impress you, but that doesn't make you a man of the Way. Even if it's true, your own lord isn't going to know you're the master of the six roots."<sup>64</sup>

I-83

During the evening conversation some said, "I'm rid of desire."

The Master listened. "Maybe desire's down," he answered, but that'll do you no good. I, precisely, like desire. I want people with the desire to be Buddhas. The ancients were men, weren't they? Am I less than they? What I want is a great fever of desire, through all births and lives, to be a Buddha and to escape, and to lead all beings to enlightenment."

I-84

One day a devoted reciter of dharanis came, and the Master gave him instruction. He said, "Saying dharanis without one extraneous thought is better than anything. Once you build up merit that way, karma-blocks run out, ailments vanish, life gets longer, the mind's agonies are stilled, and at death too you have right thoughts."

In this connection someone said, "Mr X puts a lot into his practice. Lately his energy's light and even his body seems to be getting younger."

The Master listened. "Certainly," he said. "His thoughts of right and wrong will thin out and he'll look young enough to be a child. I'm over seventy myself, but my energy is still eighteen or nineteen."

I-86

One day someone came and said, "I can't practice, because I can't remember anything I'm told."

The Master listened. "Why, that's fine!" he said. "Buddhism is to remember nothing at all. Buddhism's the way you throw out whatever

you've stored in your memory. All you do is clear the dust off your mind with the Nembutsu and work at throwing away, throwing away. Going at it that way you forget both the Buddha's teaching and the world's teaching--it's as though you'd just given a loud clap. That's being a Buddha.d'

I-89

During the evening conversation he said, "Solid reality<sup>65</sup> is something that's hard to get away from. For everyone including myself houses, gold, silver, all things, glitter there before our eyes and there's no way to think they're nothing. You won't wake up from solid reality, anyway, until you see the original nature. I've encountered it myself from time to time, but I can't freely put it into action.<sup>66</sup> What I do have strongly is the energy to glare all the time at this bag of filth, walking, standing, sitting or lying, or at the toilet even, and to think of it always as a hateful mass of pain. But I haven't broken through yet, nonetheless. Still, my understanding's small, but that much at least I can put to use."

I-95

Someone came one day. "There's an extraordinary thing that happened recently," he related. "In a certain town, now, there's a miserly fellow who cares nothing for the Way. His son's so worried about this that he thinks up a scheme. 'Here's a great opportunity,' he remarks, 'but I just don't have time for it. If someone like you, father, was at all interested in the Way, it'd suit him perfectly.' The father hears the word 'opportunity' and he insists on asking his son what he

means. The son says, 'There's a fellow who's willing to pay anyone ten gold ryō if he'll say the Nembutsu sixty thousand times a day for three years.' 'Why that's just right for me!' answers the father. 'He needn't look any further. Let me accept, quick.' Delighted, the son firms up the deal and gives his father the gold. The father takes it and from morning to night never puts his rosary down. He's done the Nembutsu just the way he promised for two years solid when one day he calls his son. 'I'm old,' he says sadly, 'and death's near. I have no needs. I'm sorry I accepted the money, I can't imagine why I did it. I've been slow to take care of my own future life, and here I've forgotten about it to pray for somebody else's. That's terrible. I want the Nembutsu I say this coming year to be for my own enlightenment. I'll have to return the money, with interest. Please make some excuse and give it back.' 'I don't know,' says the son, 'but if that's the way you feel I'll try.' And he takes the money. From then on the father absorbs himself totally in Amida and prays most wonderfully for the future life. That's the story."

The Master listened. He said, 'What a skillful device! That's certainly a fine man. And that aspiration to enlightenment should have emerged in a man with such karma--it just shows the amazing power of the Nembutsu.'

Then he turned to the gathering. "Suppose someone wanted to commission two or three years' practice from you," he said, "for a thousand or even ten thousand ryō--I'm sure none of you would have the energy to undertake the job. But doesn't the Nembutsu have colossal power?"

I-97

One day he gave instruction. He said, "I set my gaze straight all the time and work myself up calling on Hachiman,<sup>67</sup> so my energy's completely engaged. My teaching really can't come across easily to monks, it can only come across to warriors. That's because I don't care at all to impress. All I have at my disposal is an energy that's constantly worked to a high pitch. My teaching is bugle Buddhism."

I-98

On a day in the eighth month of 1652 he went to the Hōshō Zen temple at Hatodani in Musashi, and several dozen farmers from the villages around came to ask for basic teaching. The Master gave them instruction. He said, "Farm work is Buddhist practice. There's no need to ask for any special directions. The body of each one of you is the Buddha's body, your mind is the Buddha's mind, your work is the Buddha's work. But your mind's turned the wrong way, so you go to hell even as you do good. . . . If you summon a great vow to rid yourself of all karma-blocks through your farm work, if as you till the fields you say Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu at each stroke of the hoe, you're bound to reach enlightenment. Just let Heaven take care of everything. Keep to uprightness and don't dwell on your own desires. That way you'll have Heaven's blessing, and both this life and the next life will be fine. People sometimes say you can't get through life with just uprightness, but they're wrong. No one I've ever heard of, from antiquity on, ever starved to death while keeping to uprightness. It's those who aren't upright who then and now have ruined their families and hurt themselves. Anyway, poverty isn't to be so much disliked. I've

never heard of anyone either who starved to just because he was poor. It's wealthy houses that have so many robberies and murders. Besides, poverty and wealth are decided by karma. How can anyone be foolish enough to have perverse desires? But anyway, you have to decide that nothing could be more agonizing than to starve to death because you're in the wrong, and then you have to let everything go and keep constantly to uprightness. That's the state of mind to till the fields in. Everybody hates the thought of starving to death, but nothing's easier. Your appetite lasts two or three days. After that your energy fades out, you get sleepy, and you die painlessly and at peace. Do you think just dying is always so easy. . . .?"

Late that night he turned to those around him and said, "I wonder how much resolve went into the founding of this temple. It doesn't look like something a man would do if he hadn't his eyes open, and had no concern for the Way. I want to rub Buddhism off on anyone who has a little resolve, even by force. I want to get right into his chest and bring it up.

1-99

During the evening conversation a monk said, "It's going to be hard to bring peace to the world with Buddhism as long as capital punishment continues."

"No, that's not true," said the Master. "You execute whom you must, you kill whom you must. You do it with compassion, however. For instance, there are many who are struck by Heaven's punishment until they become lepers or outcastes, but who still never think of objecting and enjoy their own evil. Isn't that so? That's why life after life



and birth after birth they don't leave bad karma behind. Wordly people too--I see them, and all I feel is sorrow. They've no merit whatever. For one thing, when the people of the world see a criminal crucified before their eyes they're warned against evil, so that the punishment produces good. And for another thing, the criminal himself meets a sudden end, repents, and cuts off his evil at the root. When you look at it from that standpoint, the greater punishment was simply to prolong the period of his suffering; whereas his punishment now is less, and the root of his bad karma is cut off. Isn't that great compassion? If it's done with compassion, it's no crime."

I-101

During an evening conversation he said, "The Zen master Ta-hui<sup>68</sup> said to put the two words 'birth' and 'death' on the tip of the nose,<sup>69</sup> and not to forget them. And the Zen-master Po-shan<sup>70</sup> said to stick the one word 'death' on the forehead. Neither is a strong teaching. Put it on the end of the nose, put it on the forehead--it's just borrowed a while, then. It seems this Ta-hui and this Po-shan hadn't strongly taken to mind and practiced the great matter which is birth and death. What they said is weak. My own teaching would be, 'Make the one word "death" master in your mind, give up everything and guard it.'

After a while he said, "Even so, though, you can't use it just as you wish. It's when you can trample it right underfoot that you can put it to use. Pictures of Bishamon trampling the demons<sup>71</sup> prove this."

I-103

One day he addressed the gathering. He said, "It's a crime to let beginners have satori easily and to have them break through in a short time. There are a lot of people in the world these days who do that. It's terrible. What I prefer is just to have them practice saying the Nembutsu as in the Pure Land sect. That's why it's the first task I give to beginners."

I-105

During the evening conversation he said, "Look at Shingaku--as soon as people hear a few words they all become Shingaku followers. Then look at the people who listen to me--they listen and listen, and still not one can understand me. It's strange. But Shingaku addresses itself to works, so it can be practiced just like that; whereas my teaching is practice applied to the mind. Perhaps it's not easy for anyone to be good at it."

Someone said, "Shingaku's heretical, it criticizes Buddhism."

The Master listened. "No," he said, "Shingaku is the flower of Buddhism. Its present popularity is an omen of Buddhism's rise."<sup>72</sup>

I-106

One day he gave a woman instruction. He said, "A woman's mind and the Buddha's mind are one. The passion-mind is just like the bodhi-mind.<sup>73</sup> The only difference is in the way they're put into action. So you've got to dispose your mind to quick action and practice Guardian King zazen."

Someone asked if Nyorai zazen is really bad.

The Master listened. He said, "No, it's not bad. But to the extent that it means giving an advanced technique to a beginner, it doesn't do the job. It's best for beginners to start with Guardian King zazen.d'

I-107

One day he gave a warrior instruction. He said, "It's best to practice zazen from the start amid hustle and bustle. A warrior, in particular, absolutely must practice a zazen that works amid war cries. Gunfire crackles, spears clash down the line, a roar goes up and the fray is on: and that's where, firmly disposed, he puts meditation into action. At a time like that, what use could he have for a zazen that prefers quiet? However fond of Buddhism a warrior may be, he'd better throw it out if it doesn't work amid war cries. So there's nothing to do but practice keeping the spirit of the Guardian Kings. For beginners certainly, nothing but the spirit of the Guardian Kings lends itself to use in all situations."

He said furthermore, "It's with the energy of zen samādhi that all the arts are executed. The military arts in particular can't be executed with a slack mind.d' Then he himself mimed holding a sword on guard. He said, "This energy of Zen samādhi is everything. The man of arms, however, is in zen samādhi while he applies his skill, then loses it when he lays down his sword. On the other hand, he who practices Buddhism always acts from this energy and never lets it go, so nothing ever defeats him. Gradually he trains himself and matures until he's attuned to nō singing, or to rhythm and suchlike; and being in harmony with all things, he's complete in all virtues.<sup>74</sup> A disposition like that I call Buddhism."

I-110

One day someone asked, "All things being equal, which is it better to be for practice, a monk or a layman?"

The Master replied, "For the most part, monks fight with two hands and laymen with only one. Laymen have many obstacles which block them in the Way, while monks have few. But monks these days all hate Buddhism, and half of the laymen don't care for the Way either. On top of that, energy's low and there's very little morality. But a warrior has a lord, his energy's keyed up, and he naturally has the spirit to guard death. In the end, it's the layman who practices nowadays. None the less, between men of authenticity, it's the monk who has the advantage."

I-112

One day a monk asked, "Don't Fumoto Kusawake and the other things you've written express the solid reality view?"

The Master replied, "They do indeed. The ordinary man's mind always sees reality as solid. And if you don't practice with the ordinary man's mind, what will you practice with? A lot of people these days harm others by falling into the nothingness view. Some too are full of original emptiness. This is the height of solid reality. The mind that seeks enlightenment from awareness of this reality generally gets away from such reality. It's the mind that comprehends original emptiness and so proceeds from nothingness that doesn't get away from reality. The Nembutsu as taught by Honen, etc., itself comes from awareness of this reality. It's true, though, that the virtue of no-thought does come with the Nembutsu that posits a solidly real Pure Land. Nowadays, when those who are sure everything's originally empty want to practice, right

away they opt for the solid reality view, and so it's as though they were making bad karma for themselves."

I-113

One day he addressed the gathering. He said, "Mr. X says it's wrong to ask for some good word when you meet a man. 'Things heard with the ears won't help,' he says, 'and even if they do help they're useless once you forget them, however hard you've listened. Meeting a man from time to time, it's best just to get his energy. If when you meet me you get my energy,' Mr. X says, 'you'll be fine for a while.' No one who's met me so far has met me that way, though. Everyone comes to ask for a good word, or just to get a look at Shōsan. If you really want to meet me there's only one thing to be concerned about. If you don't get my energy you can meet me a thousand times a day and it'll do you no good."

I-116

During the evening conversation he said, "Beginners should rid themselves all the time of what they're thinking about, and check their minds constantly. They're always getting caught up without even knowing it in this thought and that."

That night he went to pass water several times, and ran into a monk who was up. The Master saw him. "You're not the kind to sleep much," he said. "That's good. Natures that sleep nights as soundly as can be just won't do. The deep sleeper who soon must be hard at his practice is like a dead man. That kind may practice devotedly for five or ten days, but soon he relaxes again and sleeps more soundly than ever. The more you're aware of sleeping, anyway, the more you'll summon

authenticity. However prone you may be to sleep, you won't be able to once the energy to die comes up from deep inside you."

The monk asked, "Do you mean you can't sleep because you're thinking how terrible death is, or you can't sleep because you're convinced you'll die any moment?"

"I'm not saying either," the Master said. Once you get the great matter a little, you can't sleep a wink."

I-125

In the winter of 1652 he gave instruction and said, "Someone asked Hōnen Shōnin how to pray for the future life. Hōnen answered that praying for the future life means praying as though you were about to have your head cut off. That's a good teaching. I assure you that if you don't say the Nembutsu that way, you'll never rid yourself of all clinging."

I-128

One day a monk asked, "How am I to summon up the energy of the Guardian Kings?"

The Master answered, "Just practice dying. When I was young I'd charge into an armed host over and over, and that was how I worked at dying; but I always made it. Or else I'd pit myself against two or three men with spears, and try dying pierced through. But I couldn't die, I'd end up winning no matter what I did. I'd grip the cormorant's neck<sup>75</sup> and smash the spears. I couldn't be beaten. That's the way I've worked at dying, so I know the energy.d'

I-129

One day the Master gave instruction to some warriors. He said, "It's while you're about the warrior's duties that you should practice warrior's glare zazen. I've failed myself, through all my practices, to exhaust all clinging to self; so I've practiced being as a leper, too.<sup>76</sup> But I realize that doesn't work for me now, I can't put it in action. It's with battle glare zazen that I know for sure the energy of zen samādhi. Buckle on your six weapons then, all of you! Wield the long sword and the short, and the crossblade lance. Call on Hachiman, screw yourself up, glare ahead, and practice zazen. If there were any old suits of armor around here I'd have you monks put them on yourselves and do zazen like that. Be as lazy a monk as you please, you'd change your mind on the spot if you put on the six-piece armor and wielded the long sword and the short, and the crossblade lance."

One of the warriors said, "Just the other day I had a mind to try my strength, so I wrote the character 'death' in a place easy to see, and worked to keep it in mind by gazing straight at it.d'

"Fine," said the Master, "fine! Keep up the work! You'll soon get the energy for zazen.d'

I-130

One day the Master gave instruction. He said, "It's best never to leave the company of men of the Way, even if you feel no difference. Their energy will come across to you without your even knowing it."

I-131

A physician came one day. He said, "I recently undertook to treat a strange patient in Nishinokubo<sup>77</sup> and I've tried various remedies, but



she hasn't gotten any better. She's obviously beyond the help of medicine. I do hope you'll find a way to heal her.d'

"What's the matter with her?" the Master asked.

"Threadlike worms are coming out all over her," the physician answered, "leaches cling to her, and she can't take any food or liquid. She's been afflicted continuously for two whole months and she's gone half crazy."

The Master listened. "That's terrible, that really is," he said. "Send her to me. I'll guide her out of it."

A moment later he said, "You have to be very sharp to guide someone like that. Now you've told me, the way to comfort her comes straight to mind. I'll first have the Tentokuin<sup>78</sup> do guidance services for her and guide her as though she were dead. Then I'll take over. I'll write sutra texts and dharanis on her body and make her into a stūpa. The worms won't be able to attack her once I've made her a stūpa,<sup>79</sup> and she's bound to get better if I comfort her that way for two or three weeks. Guiding is like a doctor's medicine. It won't work if you administer it without proper care. I'll comfort her till she's better, even if I have to read her to death with sutras. If I don't cure her it'll mark a defeat for Buddhism. Bodily disorders are cured with medicine; but a person like this, who's being attacked by her own karma, can easily be cured by guidance, even if she's spitting fire or sprouting horns.d'

The next day the physician sent the patient over and the Master, as he had previously planned, did funeral services. That night from the sixth hour, at dusk, till past the fourth, he sat monks around the

patient, hit her with the zen stick, assaulted her with sutras and dharanis, and made her do prostrations. All of a sudden the patient ran out the gate to the house across the way and collapsed, unconscious. The Master ordered her to be left like that and stopped the monks. The next morning she got up and she came to the Master to thank him.

"Since the worms started in at me," she said, "I hadn't slept at all for two months and more. Last night was the first real sleep I've had. This morning I feel as though I'm out of a dream and back to being human. Thank you! Thank you for your kindness! For all I knew, I was done for. Before my wits left me I wanted you to guide me even if you had to guide me to death; and now I'm back to being human in this life, I'm very very grateful." With this, she shed tears of emotion, saluted the Master, and withdrew.

That evening the Master said, "As soon as I heard this case I realized that since others really could see the worms that were at her, she could easily be healed by guiding her. Later, when she arrived, I saw her energy was sick and I thought it would take time. I was amazed, though, at how little trouble it took to heal her. Whatever attacks a person directly can always be healed with guidance. It's disorders of the spirit that are hard to cure."

I-132 (continuation of I-131)

The next day the Master addressed everyone. He said, "The quick recovery of the patient we just had certainly proves the power of Buddhism, doesn't it! Yes, Buddhism's power is really wonderful. But people aren't impressed. Just think about it, though. What could have healed our patient, if not the power of the dharanis? Given enough time

Confucianism might have cured her, but it wouldn't have done the job all that well. What could possibly compare with the power of the Buddhist sutras, though--the way they healed so serious an illness so fast? It's absolutely amazing!"

I-135

"When you do zazen," a monk asked during the evening conversation, "is it all right not to think of a koan and not to say the Nembutsu, but just to work from a well-grounded energy?"

"Absolutely," said the Master. "If you act with full attention, koans, dharanis and Nembutsu are all one. All you have to do is make sure your energy doesn't sink. Yes, if you want to make sure your energy is fully alive, you have to do battle glare zazen with your eyes on the face of Bodhidharma."<sup>80</sup>

I-139

One day he gave instruction. He said, "Practitioners these days are all governed by demons. You have to guard yourself with strength, and always ward off the demons of birth and death. A man of old has said that if the Bodhisattva doubts, the demons of birth and death have their chance."<sup>81</sup>

"What are these demons of birth and death?" a monk asked.

The Master answered, "The coming into being of the mind, that's the chance that makes demons of birth and death."

I-144

One day two young warriors came and asked how to go about practice. "What duties have you been assigned?" the Master inquired.

"I'm a Great Chamber guard,"<sup>82</sup> said one.

The Master instructed him. He said, "You've got to mount guard screwed up so tight that no ruffian, not even a Fan K'ai or a Ch'ang Liang,<sup>83</sup> not even Hachiman himself, could possibly get past you. That's zazen. There's no special guidance to give you."

"I'm a bodyguard," said the other.

The Master gave him instruction. He said, "To be a bodyguard you've got to set your gaze and be willing to die any moment, resolved that whoever comes, whether vagrant or rebel, you'll instantly join combat with him. That's zazen. If you let your energy go while you're on guard, you'll be useless."

#### I-145

One day someone brought along a man who had the disease of Buddhism. "This person is a man of exceptional authenticity," he said. "Please give him instruction."

The Master took a look at the man. He said, "Aha, that kind of authenticity I can do without. In fact I'm sick of the authenticity people have around my place. If he's a bugle man, if he's up to whacking the head off a horse or an ox, I'll be glad to make his acquaintance."

#### I-146

One morning he said, "I've practiced hard ever since I was young, so my mind's always alert. It's amazing. In the morning, especially, I used to get brave enough to charge right on out; but later this turned to a grim energy, very sharp. Extremely unpleasant, it was. I wondered if perhaps my practice had dropped, though there was no reason why it

should have, and I told Genshunbō<sup>-84</sup> about it. He said, "In your very heart you're pledged to the Buddha and to all the sutras. Your inborn nature, so to speak, is linked with the words of the Buddha. According to the Shōbōnengyō, the wise man is always full of grief, like a prisoner in jail; while the foolish man rejoices always, like the Deva Who Speaks with Light.<sup>85</sup> This showed me my practice wasn't wrong, and so by irresistible degrees I forged my link with the one great matter.<sup>86</sup> At that time I doubted the ancients' saying, that zazen is the easy gate to the Teaching, because my heart was in agony. When Genshunbō told me this, though, I stopped worrying about it. The way it looks to me now, bliss in the midst of this pain is still bliss. Nonetheless, people in this latter age are most likely to misunderstand the saying."

I-148

One day a monk asked if there is any difference between the energy of the Twelve Gods and that of the Guardian Kings.

The Master replied, "The Guardian Kings represent the stage at which the mind acts in one direction only. The Twelve Gods are quieter, their minds are at a stage somewhat more mature. The stages of the Bodhisattva images and Buddha images mature by degrees, each being the level at which the mind is put in action. The Twelve Gods bear the twelve branches on their heads because they represent the twelve hours of practice. The Four Heavenly Kings trample the demons, whereas it's on our heads that we carry them."

In this connection he said, "Yes, and where do you think Buddha-images come from? They all come from the Buddha-mind. They express the Buddha's mind at each instant, and are named accordingly."

I-150

One day Elder Tetsu<sup>87</sup> said, "When I sit quietly in zazen, so as to be undistracted, my energy sinks and I fall asleep. How am I to prevent this?"

The Master gave him instruction. He said, "You'll have to do your zazen dancing."

I-152

One day the Master saw a monk being lazy and reprimanded him. He said, "What use are you when you let your energy go that way? I've never let my energy go since I could crawl. When I was four, a cousin who was four like me died, and I was very perplexed as to where he'd gone now he was dead, and what had become of him."

I-156

A monk said during the evening conversation, "When Genshunbō used to perform the liturgy for the adoration of the holy relics,<sup>88</sup> the whole congregation would be moved to tears. It was very impressive."

The Master listened. "Very impressive indeed," he said.

"He kept the two hundred and fifty rules," the monk went on, "and was surely remarkable. But they say he died quite exceptionally badly."

The Master said, "Ritsu monks must be full of faults. They're as dignified as Buddhas, so people think they are Buddhas. It's a sin indeed to be revered as a Buddha without being one in mind. It's bound to make the mind bad at death."

In this connection he said, "A monk who's relative of mine, Reian,<sup>89</sup> had a bad nature. He'd produce packaging twine from his hands

and he had a variety of supernatural powers with which he impressed everybody no end. Feeling compassion for him, I reprimanded him in a number of ways, but he wouldn't give it all up. I got very angry.

'With that nature of yours,' I said, 'you're no sooner a monk than you turn into a fox. Are you going to turn yourself, my own nephew, into a fox before my very eyes? If you won't go back to lay life I'll beat you to death.' And I forced him to become a physician. Be very careful, monks, don't get yourselves revered by anyone."

After a while he continued, "On that score, Shōsan's mind is at rest. I absolutely detest it when people revere me. My nature is to be bested by anyone, my character is to be lower than anyone else. It doesn't even occur to me that I've improved. I'm just the old Kudayū. When I think about it, though, there's something I have over other people. In a debate over a saying, for example, I feel critical no matter what I hear anyone say. Often I'm not all that impressed with the sayings of the ancients, either. But usually I'm just dull. It's very, very strange. On close consideration I find the reason is that this bag of worms is bad, good for nothing.

Someone asked, "Are there mistakes in the ancients' sayings?"

"Patriarchs and masters they may be," the Master replied, "but they're not Buddhas. They've got to have made mistakes, otherwise they would indeed be Buddhas. In what I hear of the Buddha's sayings there's never a word I'd disagree with."

#### I-161

One day several old ladies came and asked for basic instruction. The Master said, "I just don't know anything to teach you."



A moment later he suddenly said, "We die! We die! Say the Nembutsu and never forget we die."

I-162

The Master constantly said the Nembutsu. One day an elder said, "Last night I dreamed I objected to the way the Master says the Nembutsu.d"

The Master listened. "You're even dreaming about it," he said, "so apparently you don't approve of my saying the Nembutsu. But you don't understand. What I mean when I say Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu is Let It Go, Let It Go.<sup>90</sup> Is that bad? Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu won't gum up the ears any more than Let It Go, Let It Go, and you'd be foolish to think it will."

I-164

One day an elder came. He said, "There's no point in having your monks recite a lot of sutras. As far as the basic mind's concerned, there's no difference between monks who recite sutras and monks who don't."

The Master listened. "Their minds may be the same," he said, "But it's still good to help the dead with sutra recitation and to earn one's own rice with the sutras. Thoughtless eating is thievery. The minds may indeed be the same, but at least it's better not to eat like a thief.d"

I-166

"Once in Yoshino," he related to the gathering one day, "I saw a yamabushi striding down from Ōmine.<sup>91</sup> He had a long sword and a kongō staff,<sup>92</sup> and he went by me very bravely indeed. 'That En no Gyōja,<sup>93</sup> he was a great practitioner all right!' I thought to myself; and the yamabushi's energy came across to me in a rush. . . ."

I-169

One day he gave instruction to a group of young warriors. He said, "Young man, don't think you can count on hot blood, and get away without practicing! You can't go wrong with practice. The stronger you are, the stronger you get; and if you're weak, you get stronger by and by."

"When you act with strong mind," he went on, "whatever you do is naturally good. But the energy that wants everything done with discrimination just can't be let go."

I-170

One day a number of people said they could not get the spirit of fierce perseverance. Thereupon the Master struck the pose of the Un Guardian King. He said, "And this energy, do you get any of it?" Then he spread his arms wide, opened his mouth in a big A and said, "And this energy? I've seen and A Guardian King just like this in Mikawa. Anyone who sees a Guardian King like that should get his energy. Of course, the Un Guardian King is fine too.<sup>94</sup> Most other Guardian Kings I've seen are just weak."

Then he demonstrated as he said, "There are Buddha-images made like this, screwed up tight and glaring their alertness, among the Twelve Gods in the Kakuonji in Kamakura. They have very great power. These are the ones that suit me best." And at this point he started teaching about battle glare zazen.

He said furthermore, "You have to look at Buddha-images with full attention, all the way up to the Arhats.<sup>95</sup> You won't find any that are devoid of energy. All have a settled gaze and a lively form. Bishamon trampling the demons represents the stage where one mounts guard, glaring

over oneself. And a Buddha like Idaten,<sup>96</sup> shown as he is full of power, is a fine sight. He makes an image worthy to be enshrined in the temple kitchen. Most Buddha-images come across. Only Daikoku<sup>97</sup> isn't of very great interest as far as I can see. He must show something, though."

I-171

One day he turned to the gathering and said, "Can you all steal someone's mind away with your strong energy? I've long since been good at stealing people's griefs and desires. Grief especially I snatch away with no trouble at all. Such is the power of strong energy."

I-172

One day he said, "Alas, if the affairs of the whole land were governed in accordance with Buddhism, I believe the one word 'beast' would be enough to rule it. Up to Hideyoshi's<sup>98</sup> time, as many as three thousand people a year were condemned to death for fighting and murder. Under the present rule government is correct and the world is clean, so that those condemned to death for murder number one thousand. When you consider the problem in this light you see that people may be ever so ignorant and obdurate, but if they're governed with Buddhism death sentences are bound to drop to five or six hundred. So Buddhism is the foundation for great peace. In fact government will be able to dispense with officials who draw huge stipends. As far as that goes, temples should be exempted from tax on their holdings and lands, and lest any feel they've no function they should be assigned official duties. These duties would mean properly uplifting their patrons. It

must be stipulated that if any criminal, man or woman, should come from among a temple's patrons, the temple will be held at fault and the priest will be dealt with according to the law. And as for how the patrons should be uplifted, the temples must teach them the difference between beasts and human beings. Human beings are those who forget themselves and give blessing to others, who save those in danger and help the needy, who put kindness first in all things, and who hold that humanity means to have a sympathetic heart. They should be taught that it's the mark of a human being to be compassionate and straightforward, and to uphold morality. They must be thoroughly taught, on the other hand, that he who boasts of the human face he's put on, he who brazenly shows off, he who despises those below him and envies those above him, and who thinks of nothing but selfish greed, may look outwardly ever so much like a human being, but is in fact a beast. 'Patrons,' they must be told, 'never, never be beasts. Don't get me, your priest, into trouble too by being a beast.' And from the time boys are called Jirō or Tarō, from the time girls are called Chiyo or Nene,<sup>00</sup> the difference between these two should be inculcated in them. 'What a beast you are! What a beast!' they should be scolded, whenever appropriate. A huge wild dog's head, with the mouth split up to the ears, should be placed at execution grounds and made the altar image of the realm of beasts; so that from the children's earliest youth, whenever badness or mischief comes into their minds, they can be scolded with 'You beast! You're the kind who's bound right off to the realm of beasts!' They'll naturally become very docile if they're menaced like that every time, though they may not straighten out immediately. Once that's how it's done, things

won't be like the way those Confucians teach humanity, morality, propriety, and wisdom, etc. nowadays. People will be very simple. So every time a patron comes to the temple, all the priest will need to say is, 'Don't be a beast.' And if any priest misbehaves or does anything wrong, it'll be strictly ordered that the patrons are to be held at fault and made to pay a fine. So priests will have the proper dignity, and both priests and patrons will naturally advance on the path toward Buddhahood. In addition, the authorities will appoint an Inspector of Temples who in cases of wrongdoing will advise that the laws are to be strictly enforced and who will vigorously communicate to temples and patrons alike, on behalf of the authorities, the principles I've just outlined. This way, the radiance of the Three Treasures will shine out. The whole land will be illumined and will be a realm of peace. Hope for governing the land with Buddhism has been shut up in my heart ever since my youth, but I do think it can be done with this one word 'beast'. . . ."

II-50

Question: "It took Bodhidharma nine years to find one successor, the Second Patriarch.<sup>100</sup> Ta-hui on the other hand, came much later, but he had thirteen successors at once. So was Bodhidharma less good at bringing people to enlightenment than Ta-hui?"

The Master replied, "There are various degrees, even within small understanding. If you rolled all of Ta-hui's thirteen into one, they still wouldn't come up to Bodhidharma's one man.

Another question: "Was Bodhidharma a Buddha the same as Sākya<sup>ni</sup>?"

The Master replied, "Bodhidharma worked through the Zen sect, he's

not on a par with the Nyorai Sākyamuni, the teacher and guide of the three worlds.

Question: "Of course, they were very different in virtue. But as far as individual Buddhahood is concerned they must have been just the same. Even a man like Chao-chou spoke of 'the old Buddha.d'"

The Master said, "That's a term of respect favored by the men of his time. Bodhidharma certainly was mightily enlightened. But he can't have been in one and the same space with the Buddha. His space is a long way from that one. People these days, in their ignorance, believe that once you've gone into satori you're just the same as the Nyorai, and there are some who claim that Patriarch Zen is better than Nyorai Zen.<sup>101</sup> It's complete nonsense. No one else is worth even the Buddha's little finger, from Kāsyapa and Ānanda<sup>102</sup> on down. Just as long as the Buddha was in the world everyone did everything necessary to achieve the Way. That's the period known as the 'eight thousand visits to the world.'<sup>103</sup> So all the arts were more perfect than what we have now. There was nowhere in the world's ten directions, not even beyond heaven or earth, which the Buddha didn't govern. There wasn't so much as a speck of dust he hadn't made. To me, that really is Buddhahood for all time. It's so vast thought can't possibly encompass it. . . ."<sup>104</sup>

## II-56

The Master related, "At Toribeno<sup>105</sup> in the Capital there's a monk who lives among the tombs. One day a monk, an old friend of his, asks him if there's nothing here that scares him. 'I'm an empty cicada shell now,' the monk replies. 'It's when you have an ego that you're afraid.d' 'Who are you to tell me that?' the visitor asks, and the monk answers,

'A cold pine without mind, its needles sing in the wind.' In the Kantō that's supposed to be a hisan.<sup>106</sup> Blockhead Buddhism from an old boy who's just an empty shell, that's what it is. If it had been me I'd have said, 'What's the great teacher and guide of the three worlds going to be afraid of?'"

II-58

The Master related, "In Sakai there used to be a man who'd fallen into the nonbeing view.<sup>107</sup> To refute him, Abbot Takuan<sup>108</sup> made a verse:

O you who claim there's no past  
And no future either,  
Where did you come from, then,  
To live in this world?

This can't qualify as a Zen monk's poem. Zen's method is direct confrontation, words that touch the quick of consciousness.'" And he said,

"O you who claim there's no past  
And no future either,  
Whoever you are, then,  
To think this world is?"

II-59

A monk said, "Abbot Ikkyū asks, 'If a liar goes to hell, what are you going to do with Sākyamuni who makes up things that never were?' Why, does the Buddha tell falsehoods too?"

"It's just because Sākyamuni and Amida tell lies that they're Buddhas." The Master replied. "If they told the truth they'd be ordinary men."

II-60

Question: "There's an old verse that says,



There's no doubt, deep in the hills  
Is the place to live:  
Plants and trees never talk  
About men's rights and wrongs.

I hear it's a poem about the Way. Is that true?"

The Master listened. He said, "There's one word in it I'd change."

"Which one?"

The Master said,

"There's no doubt, deep in the hills  
Is no place to live:  
Plants and trees never talk  
About men's rights and wrongs."

II-64

The Master addressed the gathering. He said, "Everyone's slandering the Ikkō sect<sup>109</sup> these days. Tell me, each of you, what's wrong with it."

"They have intercourse with women," said a monk, "and they eat meat. That's against the precepts."

"Well, but their whole purpose is to be the same as laymen," the Master replied. If that's what they're to be judged on, laymen could never be Buddhas. Establishing Buddhism, you see, means that once the whole land is of one sect the realm lacks nothing. But although teachings like the Ikkō sect's don't violate our shrines, they're indifferent to them; and so our shrines would all fall into neglect and ruin. If all of Japan went over the Ikkō sect, every one of our shrines would die out. And Japan is the land of the Gods. Once the Gods die out, how's the land to be kept going?"

II-70

The Master related, "Back in Mikawa an old woman asked an elder where she'd go after she died. The elder was completely stumped. It's really awful, isn't it. Most elders these days can't even answer questions like that. They have no idea what the Teaching's about, that's why." And he gave this answer: "You'll go wherever you like, to hell or to heaven--wherever your mind draws you."

II-71

Someone came and said, "An elder lately told a fellow who meant to follow his lord in death not to worry about the next life, because he, the elder, would guide him. 'I don't need any guidance from you,' the man said, 'just guide my lord properly. I'll follow him to heaven or hell, wherever he goes.' And the elder was stumped."

The Master listened. He said, "If it had been me I'd have said, 'Is that the kind of nonsense you talk? It's very clever of you to kill yourself to follow your lord. So you think you'll get away with going with him? Whoever's with his lord in this very life, if he's wise he'll serve his lord's interests; and if he's a fool he'll be an enemy to his lord. Besides, do you really believe you can just die and be free to go with him? The lord's a lord, the inferior's an inferior, a parent's a parent, a child's a child, and they all have their own karma to take them to places either good or bad. That's why it takes guidance to convert karma."

II-82

One day one of the Kanze family<sup>110</sup> came and asked for basic instruction. The Master said to him, "Sing a passage from nō."

The visitor strengthened himself and sang for a little while. The Master said, "When your energy's focused and you bring the voice up from your whole body, do you have random thoughts?"

"No," said the visitor, "I have no random thoughts."

"Well that's the energy for zazen," said the Master. "There's nothing special to do. That's the energy you have to keep in action all the time. Once it matures you'll achieve no-form and no-thought. When you've achieved no-form, the shapes you show will be attuned to what you're doing. The dances of gods, of men or women, of demons--you'll be able to perform them exactly as they are, so that your acting and your singing will make you more and more famous; and you'll reach the fullness of the Buddha's teaching and of the world's teaching, both. Work at zazen just with your singing."

In this connection he said, "Nō singing is a good thing to do. Nō is about the best thing Japan has produced. First of all the words are beautiful, and everything about the music and dancing is fine as well. The Buddhist tone of the texts, I feel, can hardly be faulted, and plays like Yuya or Matsukaze<sup>111</sup> are particularly beyond reproach. . . ."<sup>112</sup>

Shōsan then discusses the play Yamamba. He remarks that whereas some plays have far better dance than text, Yamaba's text is much more interesting than its dancing. However, he says that the text of Yamamba is full of mistakes, and he suggests several changes to remove any hint that Yamamba is not a fully enlightened being. For example, he objects to Yamamba saying in the final noriji that "clouds of wrongful clinging pile dust high, turn Yamamba, ogress in form . . ." because these words make her sound like an ordinary person.

Finally Shōsan takes up the play Sotoba Komachi.<sup>113</sup> As with Yamamba, any suggestion that the old Komachi is not fully enlightened puzzles him, and he can only think it a mistake. "Therefore," he says, "I rewrote the play. Matsudaira Izumi-dono<sup>114</sup> saw my version and showed it to Kanze Sakon-dayū;<sup>115</sup> and he said he would have it performed for the Shogun."

### II-83

Echū presents the text of Shōsan's revised version of the nō play Sotoba Komachi.<sup>116</sup> It is entitled Omokage Komachi, "Komachi in Dignity." Several of Shōsan's changes bear on points which he finds awkward or illogical. For example, he changes the end of the ageuta just before Komachi sits down to rest on the stūpa, to eliminate Komachi's puzzling question about who the rowers of the river boats may be; and in the kakeai a little further on he removes the comparison between the hidden cherry tree in bloom and the stūpa Komachi is sitting on. Again, some of the revisions introduce a moralizing, sentimental tone like that of Shōsan's story Two Nuns. In the first speech of the play Komachi quotes her own famous poem in which she says she would go with any current, meaning any love, that might tug at her; but Shōsan changes the end of the poem to ask, "where will the current take me in the end?" At this point Shōsan has a tsure masked as a young woman come onstage beside the shite, the old Komachi, to stand visibly for the lost beauty which old Komachi now laments. This too seems like a change toward the sentimental and the excessively explicit. And when Komachi challenges the two monks, "What's wrong with my resting [on the stūpa] too?" Shōsan has her say instead, "My resting on the stūpa is merit, isn't it?"

To remove any ambiguity about Komachi's enlightened condition, Shōsan has in effect to change the whole play. Perhaps the key line of Sotoba Komachi is gyakuen nari to ukamu-beshi, "Back-links it is that lift one high"; but in Roankyō II-82 Shōsan says this statement is "weak," and in "Komachi in Dignity" he eliminates it. Nor does he allow Komachi to say "Now my strength gathers" before she delivers her punning verse of triumph to the defeated monks, for an enlightened person is always strong; and he substitutes a verse of his own, for the original one is "flippant," as he says in Roankyō II-82. Komachi's sudden possession by the ghost of Shi no Shōshō, and the unseemliness of her speech at that time, are inadmissible, and Shōsan therefore has her say, quite to the contrary, that she is free in the poor life she leads and that her mind knows no discord. All she can admit is that "I am sorry to recall the sadness of the past!" Then she confesses that Shōshō's bitterness had in the past driven her mad, and the monks ask her to show them how her madness was. Shōsan brings on an ai no otoko dressed as Shōshō and this ai, after a short speech of his own, simply mimes the action as Komachi describes it. Thus the dignity of the old Komachi whom we now have before our eyes is preserved. Shōsan's final revision is in the last lines of the play, for there, in Sotoba Komachi, Komachi speaks of entering the way of enlightenment at last. Shōsan has her speak instead about the awakening she has experienced since entering the way of enlightenment.

II-85

The Master one day spoke to the gathering. He said, "Fumoto Kusawake I wrote at the request of Abbot Ban'an.<sup>117</sup> The first chapter tells

what a young person must watch when he first shaves his head, how he should have faith in the Buddha and in the patriarchs, and how he should keep to what's proper for a monk. Then, as he may go on wandering pilgrimage when he's fully grown up, I write how to do it. I write how to guard one phrase,<sup>118</sup> unconcerned with knowledge; how to beg; how to study; how to contemplate impermanence; and how to arouse the power of prayer.<sup>119</sup> Here he's going to have to practice hard, so I write how to abandon one's body and how to guard oneself; then, how to tell true from false, and how to get rid of the solid reality view. This is all I have to say about practice--nothing more advanced. It really is a guide for beginners. Next, since he'll be taking over a temple and tending the dead, I write how to guide the dead, how to give alms to outcastes, how to accept offerings, and even how to relate to the patrons. Nobody's made anything of it, though. Maybe the last four chapters will ring a bell with some people so they can get something out of them. . . ."

[Shōsan goes on to summarize some main ideas in Fumoto Kusawake, often stressing that he knows whereof he speaks by personal experience. Everything he says about such subjects as keeping the six robbers out of the citadel of the mind is found elsewhere in his writings, especially in Bammin tokuyō.]

## II-86

The Master one day spoke to the gathering. He said, "Shimin nichiyō<sup>-120</sup> I wrote when someone asked me for something useful on martial courage; and I took the occasion to write the three other chapters as well. The attitude's the same for all, it's just the work that's different.

He said furthermore, "When I say in Bushi nichiyō that the Buddha's teaching and the world's teaching are not two, I mean one applies this in practice to the world. And therefore as a result of practice one becomes freer and freer with the world. One can't put the world freely to use without the Buddha's teaching. And the Buddha's teaching and the world's teaching both mean nothing more than to make the principle correct, to act morally, and to practice the way of uprightness. However, it's absurd to admire for their uprightness the people nowadays who just stand there wiping their faces when someone hits them. These pious fellows' lack of anger means they're good for nothing. . . . These days you can't find anyone to tell you anything about uprightness. That's why I write that the substance of uprightness is to make the principle correct, to act morally, and to have no personal motives--even though I never heard anyone say that. That's the substance of my uprightness. And uprightness from the Buddhist standpoint is to realize that all conditioned things are empty, deceiving lies, and to act at one with the original, true dharmakāya,<sup>121</sup> the natural self-nature. That I believe to be true uprightness, and I purposely stressed it in writing. In terms of the Ten Oxherding Pictures it's no. 10, where he enters the marketplace carrying his gourd--that's a fellow who works at once with the natural self-nature. All an ordinary man knows is disease. In the depths of his ignorant, birth-and-death mind there are the diseases of delusion and bewilderment, of covetousness and false views, of cowardice and intemperance. Rooted in the three poisons, these turn into the diseases of the eighty-four thousand passions. To annihilate them is what I call Buddhism. Is this any different from what the world



teaches? And the man who's reached the Way, he knows original emptiness and so he makes principle and morality the smiths to forge his mind day and night; he rids himself of all impure and evil filth, takes up the mind-sword of purity and unobstructedness, and cuts off at the root thoughts of self-love and clinging. He conquers all thoughts, he rides above all things, nor does anything trouble him; he is unborn and undestroyed. Such a man I call a man of the Way. If you don't first polish your mind with principle and morality, what will you polish it with? When you thus polish it mightily the rust of impurity is gone and a cutting edge appears: this cuts the thought-root of self-love. And with only self-love cut, you conquer all thoughts and are detached. Pain and pleasure, both are unworthy of attention. This is what I call a man of the Way. . . ."

### III-1

In the first month of 1653 the Master visited a Zen temple. Some manzai dancers<sup>122</sup> arrived just then. "Several others have already come," the resident priest told them, "go away." "We'll double the blessing they gave you!" the manzai replied, but the resident priest would not have it. "Just let them dance," said the Master. "It's their living. The way the world is, we have to help each other get by. As long as the world's letting me get by myself, I'd be wrong not to help others get by. Besides, you can't support them all by yourself, but it's easy to be kind to people and help them along with alms. I'll give ten sen myself." The resident was much impressed, and allowed the manzai to dance.

III-4

One day at the Tentokuin he said, "Elders, understand me well. Don't make beginners do strenuous zazen. Some time past a monk from a certain temple did empty-shell zazen<sup>123</sup> for a long time, and eventually the news went out that he was emitting light. Soon, however, he went crazy. And in the Kamigata, Vinaya Master Genshunbō told me his disciple Hokyūbō had done zen meditation for a long time, and that light had been coming from between his eyebrows and sticking to the end of his nose. 'Is this a good thing?' Genshunbō asked. 'No.' I said when I heard it, 'it's terrible! In fact he's going to go crazy soon.'

The Vinaya Master was surprised and begged me to think of a remedy. 'It's perfectly easy,' I said. 'Hit him with a stick.' 'The rule is that a monk strikes no one,' said the Vinaya Master. 'Then make him do manual labor.' 'A monk doesn't do that either,' the Vinaya Master said. 'In that case,' I replied, 'make him do prostrations before the altar, reciting the Heart Sutra.<sup>124</sup> The light will soon disappear.' The Vinaya Master wanted to know why the light should disappear if the disciple did prostrations that way. I answered, 'First, what do you think it is that's shining? It's his thoughts. Just steal his thoughts and the light will vanish. And I'd have him recite the Heart Sutra so as to show him the meaning of "The five skandhas are all empty, there is no form, sound, smell, taste, or touch." Teach him well the meaning of this and make him do prostrations until he's tired out. Once he's exhausted he'll collapse and when he wakes up he's to prostrate himself some more. After four or five days of this his light will go out soon enough.' The Vinaya Master heartily agreed and did as I'd indicated. The light vanished immediately."

And he continued, "Without a focal point for the energy no method of practice can bear fruit. Something like comforting spirits is a focal point. In Mikawa some time ago a man's servant had a constricted throat. The fellow could utter only frantic sounds, and he was in pain. When I heard this I quickly realized that he'd been possessed by the ghost of someone who'd died by strangling. But his affliction waxed and waned. I called him over, sat him down in front of the Buddha, and told him to let me know when his trouble began. By and by someone came to tell me it had started. I went up to him, gave a shout, and kicked him flat. He recovered instantly and has had no trouble since. All this has to do with stealing thoughts."

III-5

One day someone asked, "How do you put into practice the 'buoyant spirit' you wrote about in Shimin nichiyō?"

The Master gave him instruction. He said, "It's the spirit that hopes in the very jaws of death. Or it's the spirit you have when you glare straight ahead and press on with perseverance. Without such energy you won't be able to apply the buoyant spirit in all situations. Buddhist practice, from start to finish, is simply to use this energy to get away from birth and death. Just get away from birth and death and you're a Buddha. So this energy is the only way to reach Buddhahood. You need nothing special. Things like understanding are no particular use. Just as they say that poison can be medicine, medicine can be poison; and understanding is often in fact an enemy. Better than understanding, better than anything else, is simply to go forward, tempering yourself with the spirit of fierce perseverance. As the old verse goes,

Awakening's awakening  
That's not awake at all.  
Awakened awakening's  
Awakening dreamed.

Awakened awakening's really dangerous! I myself prefer awakening un-  
awake. Rebirth in paradise through the Nembutsu as taught by Hōnen, for  
example, is unawake awakening."

III-6

One morning he turned to the gathering. He said, "Are any of you  
pressed at dawn by a distressing energy? And is your energy always  
such as to make you sigh? Is it so strong that you clench your teeth  
hard? No one knows how to put this energy to work, but that's the way  
things are. Naturally you monks don't get it, and most of those who ad-  
vertise themselves as warriors listen to me with half an ear. But  
there's a woman in a certain man's service--she listened for a year or  
two, and as quickly as that the great matter rose up in her. Isn't  
that extraordinary? For me, it was years and years ago that the great  
matter came up."

III-8

During his evening talk he said, "There are natures which by natural  
endowment are close to having no outflows, and others in which the out-  
flows are strong. . . .<sup>125</sup> In some the natural endowment is such that  
it makes you think their nature will never be free from solid reality,  
however much authenticity they may have."

In this connection someone asked, "Does Shen-hsiu's gāthā on the  
true nature<sup>126</sup> express an erroneous view?"

"It isn't the gāthā of a man who's seen the nature," the Master

replied, "but it's good as an indication of how to practice."

"Doesn't it express the solid reality view, which you deny?"

"It certainly does," answered the Master. "It's with thoughts of solid reality that practice is to be accomplished. No one can be without outflows while he's alive. Using the mind to wipe the mind clean means simply to discard, always to discard. But it's a mistake, in the meantime, to mock delusion by fighting one's thoughts. Just sweep away ideas of good and evil over and over with the spirit of fierce perseverance, and dispose yourself in resolute silence."

### III-9

On the fourth of the fourth month of 1653 he gave instruction. He said, "Have you all properly understood what the buoyant and sinking energy states are about, and what resolve, authenticity, and morality are? I'm going to die soon, so each of you must understand the matter right. First, to be fond of the Teaching is resolve. Genuineness refers to the energy state you're in when you're angry. Morality is to follow the good and so to become good. When your nature clears, that's morality. Some time ago there was an elder who was amply filled with resolve and authenticity but who hopelessly lacked morality. Therefore he was dark and quite useless. There are also people whose natures are endowed at birth with morality but who lack resolve and genuineness and so are no use at all. Anyway, if these three aren't in harmony no practice will mature. So you must heighten your resolve, arouse authenticity, and correctly preserve morality. These three, when they blend into one another, become fierce perseverance; they become the spirit that swiftly and keenly works out the link to the one great matter. When the

ancients themselves advanced swiftly and keenly, theirs was the spirit of fierce perseverance. Unless the might of fierce perseverance arises, you'll never know that swiftness, that keenness."

III-10

During the evening conversation he said, "I'd like to instruct young monks right from the start. At the beginning it's easy to communicate the gist of the Buddha's intention, but to get people to grasp it later is actually very difficult. Practice matures slowly. Rather than have them study the degenerate teaching we have nowadays, I'd like to communicate the gist to them at least. It's fine just to do the Nembutsu like an old woman, but that in itself doesn't do others any good. It's better to understand the gist of the intention."

After a while he said, "Still, however thoroughly you know the intention, thoughts that hoard this bag of filth never stop."<sup>127</sup>

III-11

One day he gave instruction to someone who loved living in the mountains. He said, "As for practice, it's better to do it in the world. If you were bound to reach Buddhahood in the mountains, then why did Ikkaku Sennin,<sup>128</sup> who was in the mountains for twenty years, leave them out of infatuation with a woman? The practices of mountain recluses these days are hardly likely to be up to those of Ikkaku Sennin. By and large all they do is despise the people of the world as being in error; they think they're the only ones good, and they commit sins."

III-12

On the eighteenth of the fifth month of 1653 a warrior from adcer-tain province came. He said, "Nowadays Buddhism in Japan is splintered

and has no unity. Why is this?"

The Master said, "It's because no one really grasps the principle that everyone has his own Buddhism. You yourself work hard all the time, but if someone asked you why you practice, could you give a simple answer? Come, reply!"

The visitor thought about it.

The Master pressed him. He said, "Even if you'd answered on the spot, you'd have talked nonsense. You can't speak because you don't have the main idea constantly alive in your heart. If it was up to me I'd say I practice just because I hate death. I'd say it just that simply."

"That's all I ever say," he went on. "Otherwise, I wrote in Shimin nichiyō and in Fumoto Kusawake about achieving no-birth and no-death. I don't have the energy to guard this state constantly though, so I can't talk about it. The whole time they're listening to my teaching, everyone's reading essays and records of sayings by other people. They compare the others to me this way and that, and they make judgments about them. No one has ever heard what I have to say. Everybody loves Buddhism. I know nothing about Buddhism. All I work at is not being subject to death."

### III-13

On the nineteenth of the same month the son of Mr. X, one of the hatamoto,<sup>129</sup> came and requested the tonsure.

The Master listened. He said, "I've never approved of giving up one's own duties to seek the Teaching. For a warrior, especially, shaving the head is a stupid thing to do. For practice, nothing's better



than service. Be a monk, and you'll on the contrary create hell. Service is spiritual practice."

The Master gave the man such instruction as this several times. The man would only talk of the course he had decided upon, however, and refused to listen. He insisted on requesting the tonsure.

The Master said, "If that's the way things are I can't help you. Do as you please. I never let anyone become a monk at my place. In fact you can have your head shaved anywhere but here. And whatever happens, don't get stuck later on. I'll tell you now, when the authorities make their investigation you're not going to have much of an excuse. 'It is distaste for the world that made me enter my present condition,' you'll say as you appear before them, resolved to cut your belly. 'If in your opinion I am wrong, I await your punishment.' If this is the attitude you take, then you can shave your head. That's one thing.

"Another thing is, even if you do become a monk, you'll have to eat, you'll have to clothe yourself, you'll require footwear and paper for your nose. Remember you're going to need about three gold ryō a year, Don't rashly shave your head and then later on turn into a starving ghost. Shave your head if you know exactly what you're doing.

"It's wrong to take over a temple and eat off the precious offerings made there. And any hankering you may have for the meager stipend your relatives use to try to make ends meet in this world, is equally wrong. It's better instead to eat by offering this body to your lord and by serving him. Your devotion to your lord will certainly not go unrequited. Your course will allow you to rise in rank quite naturally. That's another thing. If you understand what I've just said, do as you please. Don't get stuck later on.

"Once I've given myself to the Teaching," the man said, "what obstacle could get me stuck?"

The Master said, "I don't call it Buddhism to give oneself up so casually. If that's attainment of Buddhahood, would you ask someone to cut off your head? Or would you call rushing off to drown in the Horikawa<sup>130</sup> attainment of Buddhahood? To give oneself up means to rid oneself of clinging. Once you're past clinging nothing stands in your way, even though you do have a body. That being true, though, doesn't make it right for you to wear your body out. You mustn't senselessly exhaust yourself and fall ill.<sup>131</sup> Besides, do you think that shaving your head is giving up your body? Shaving your head, on the contrary, means seeking pleasure for yourself. Even in praying for the future life, don't we pray for our own selves? If it's to give yourself up that you want, why don't you work at your present service? Giving oneself up consists precisely in performing distasteful tasks.

Spiritual practice, especially, requires a powerful spirit--so you're better off a warrior than a monk. When you have a lord, certainly, your energy state is constant. That energy state you're in when you wield the long sword and the short, when you shout 'Sa!' to attack, comes to you naturally. For yourself, you can't even hold yourself in this energy state; so be sure that when you're a monk your energy will wane. And what good will your shaven head do you then?"

The man asked, "What does a monk or a layman do for spiritual practice?"

The Master gave him instruction. He said, "Spiritual practice means arousing a strong desire to get away from birth and death; so that

even if you fall to the bottom of the Hell Without Relief<sup>132</sup> you don't lose this single thought, but through all births and lives powerfully guard your desire to leave birth and death behind at last. This spirit must be very strong in you. He who mounts guard that way is called a man of firm faith, a practitioner. Well? Does your own ardor for the Way involve this spirit?"

"My ardor for the Way is not as strong as that," the man said. "So many things are able to trouble my mind, I think I'll first live away from Edo for ten years or so."

The Master said, "With a spirit like that you can't be said to have any ardor for the Way. For myself, I've never been held up by problems like loneliness or irritation."

"For the sake of confession," the Master continued, "tell me each one of your achievements."

The man said, "I've understood the principle that 'the five skandhas are all empty.'"

The Master replied, "That's the ancients' mind, not yours. What do you think? You can bring me the sayings the great sages have left and speak them as your own, but can you put them into action with the evil, ordinary man's mind you have? Once you really get to the substance ever empty, then you'll be able to put them into action. Your mind's a complete blank, isn't it. I'll tell you what to do. Spit out everything you've learned, all your delusions about Buddhism, and turn to saying the Nembutsu."

"I've done zazen for a long time," the man went on, and there's a little light before my eyes. I told Elder Mutoku<sup>133</sup> about it, and he

said it was something called the light of the dharmakāya. He said if I worked harder the light would fill my whole body. That's what I want to do as a monk, to cultivate this over a long period."

The Master said, "Well you've made a big mistake. The light's your energy waning. If you think it's good, you'll be insane before long. Don't you feel somehow that your energy's less?"

"It certainly is less," the man replied. "The sound of grinding in a grinding bowl, for instance, echoes inside me till I can't stand it."<sup>134</sup>

"Look at that, then!" the Master said. "Isn't that a great loss of energy? There's still time, though. Give it up right away. Ah, that Mutoku or whatever his name is, he's a dangerous man. I've heard of him. Nowadays, I understand, even eighteen- or nineteen year-old Rinzai monks are looked up to because they've seen the nature. If the Way was to be realized as easily as that I'd be a Buddha or a Bodhisattva myself, in no time. The great matter has been my concern ever since I was young, and it's come up in my chest like fire. I've practiced till eighty, but the breakthrough won't come. With people looking up to monks like that I can see what Mutoku's Buddhism is. There are a lot of practitioners like that these days. Understanding they may have, but I don't think that young followers of Buddhism are to be looked up to. Practice doesn't mature easily, I know that for certain.

"For myself, I once saw in the Hōbutsu shū how Sessen Dōji was moved to trade his life for the line 'All actions are impermanent,'<sup>135</sup> and at that moment the meaning of 'All actions are impermanent' came across to me in a rush. Then again later on, when I was sixty, one

morning at the hour of the tiger<sup>136</sup> I fully caught the Buddha's awareness that all sentient beings in the world are his children.<sup>137</sup> Really, at the time, the sight of the very ants and crickets made me pity the way living beings enjoy and suffer in their lives; and I wondered deep down if there wasn't some way I might save them. That feeling stayed with me three days, then disappeared. Still, even now it benefits me, because ever since then I've had a little compassion.

"I haven't missed the experience of seeing the nature, either. Because when I was sixty-one, at dawn on the night of the twenty-seventh to the twenty-eighth of the eighth month, I got completely away from birth and death and certainly encountered the original nature. The meaning of it all, I realized as I danced in joy and gratitude, is that there's nothing, nothing at all. At the time you could undoubtedly have chopped my head off and I wouldn't have seen anything real about it because there was nothing, nothing. I was like that thirty days. But it occurred to me that this wasn't like me at all, and I felt this experience had come to me because of just one burst of energy. So from then on I let it all go. I came back to my original state of mind, set death as usual deep in my chest, and practiced hard. Just as I'd thought, the whole thing was rubbish; and now here I am, hoarding this bag of filth called Shōsan.

"Then again later on--it was the same thing--P'u-hua's<sup>138</sup> meaning came right to me in the time it would take, say, to walk a few hundred yards. This was of great benefit to me. There arose in me a strong desire to practice as much as P'u-hua, through all births and lives. I realized that P'u-hua is certainly of a Buddha's space. He was quite

right to call Ho-yang, Mu-t'ung and Lin-chi a new bride, an old woman, and a little baby.<sup>139</sup> Seen through P'u-hua's eyes they all must have been blind. They're supposed to have seen the nature, but that's a mistake. Besides, I myself, as I just told you, have practiced hard enough that various realizations have come to me. But I've let whatever experiences I've had go; I've returned to my original state of mind and practiced hard, and now I'm hoarding this bag of filth. You too, become a monk right now and try practicing till you're eighty. Absolutely nothing changes. So if you shave your head with the knowledge that you're crazy if you do and crazy if you don't, go right ahead. If you shave your head assuming that everything will be fine afterwards, you'll be making a big mistake. Nothing whatever will change. If something does change, it'll be because some goblin's gotten at you or because you're insane."

The man was silent for a while. Then he said, "Until today I'd been meaning to become a monk. I'll look odd if I don't go through with it."

The Master said, "There's nothing final about what you've said so far. If later on you go back to lay life, make your living as a foot-soldier or whatever. Your mind isn't really made up if you wonder who will say what if you do such-and-such. When I was past forty I got fed up with the world. So when the inquiry came I said I was like this because the world disgusted me completely. 'And,' I said, 'if you find me at fault, I await your punishment.' I was resolved to cut my belly. Then on an impulse I shaved my head. It was reported to the unit captain and to the Rōjū<sup>139</sup> concerned that Kudayū had gone completely mad.

'Alas,' the Rōjū said, 'he certainly has behaved very strangely. But be very careful how you treat people, don't think a man's mad when he's quite sane.' So he watched for the right mood and moment, and in the course of an evening conversation reported that Suzuki Kodayū had impulsively developed an interest in religion. Whatever Daitokuin-samad<sup>140</sup> may have thought, he was always very kind. He decided that it was not actual interest in religion but actual retirement. The Rōjū was delighted and summoned me. I'd been wondering what was going to happen, but I needn't have worried. Yes, could any lord ever be so generous? I was quickly ordered to name an heir, so in haste I had the present Kodayū<sup>-141</sup> present his respects. You always have to make a complete break.

"I myself shaved my head like this to start with. But now my work has moved on I think service is the best thing for spiritual practice. Then again, I don't worry about what people will say of me in the future. Anyway, I became a monk as I said and wandered everywhere. I slept among fields and mountains and reduced my clothing and food. For a while I was a Ritsu monk, and I drove myself very hard. When I was at Chidori-yama in Mikawa, practicing Ritsu discipline, I lived off barley gruel and boiled barley. Meanwhile, I was exposing myself to wind and rain, and I strained my insides with the coarse food till I fell ill. Soon I was in serious condition. I tried any number of treatments without recovering. Many physicians gave up on me, and I had made up my mind that I was going to die. Since my condition was hopeless and I couldn't possibly live, my relatives from the village nearby gathered hastily around me, and my younger brother, an excellent



physician, came when he heard what was happening. 'You don't need medicine or anything else,' he said, 'you'll be all right if you just follow a regime.' I asked him what he meant, and he said I should eat meat. 'I'm not going to argue,' I replied. 'As long as it's good for me, I'll even eat a corpse.' And so I followed his advice. In two years I recovered completely. Once the sickness was cured, without any medicine at all, I resumed a frugal vegetarian diet; and I've survived to this day. People spoke very badly of me at the time. I came perilously close to death but, being shameless Shosan, I took care of my health, lived on to my present old age, and more or less completed my practice. You really have to be determined, or nothing gets done."

After that the man came a few times and listened to the Master's teaching. Bit by bit he grasped it, so that in the end he gave up the idea of being a monk. He devoted himself to service as his spiritual practice.

### III-15

One day he gave instruction. He said, "At the level of the teaching of middle antiquity,<sup>142</sup> you just can't get away from thoughts that cling to forms. The teaching doesn't directly communicate the energy-state needed to get away from birth and death. All it does is teach how to be intellectually free. Abbot Hsiang-yen<sup>143</sup> has the proposition,<sup>144</sup> 'It's like when a man's up a tree, holding onto a branch with his teeth. His hands touch no branch, and no branch supports his feet. There's a man under the tree, and he's asking why Bodhidharma came from the west. If the man in the tree doesn't answer, he's ignoring the question. If he does answer, he's dead. What's your own answer?' But

this isn't a strong teaching. It involves the business of fearing to lose one's life. I myself would make the person face this question: 'Do you have the guts to die free of a fall from a tree a thousand fathoms high? Do you?' The reply of the senior monk Hu-t'ou, that he hadn't climbed the tree yet, was a good approach. For myself, though, I'd say here too, 'I don't shirk dying.'"

### III-16

One day he gave instruction. He said, "You still have to keep up vigorous practice even if you've seen the nature. Seeing the nature certainly isn't the breakthrough. People these days, though, think their practice is done with as soon as they understand anything, then they set themselves up as teachers and sanction people. They're sadly mistaken about the principle of the Teaching. They may at their stage have seen the nature, but that's certainly not the Buddha-space. They have no idea what they're sanctioning. And you shouldn't get sanction until you've gone through with strong, constant practice, and reached a space at one with the Buddhas and the patriarchs. Even then, there's the business of transcending Buddhas and patriarchs. I observe that in China too the principle of the Teaching has long since been mistaken.

"Even if the Buddha's intent does come across," he continued, "it's not in five or ten lifetimes of practice that you'll get through the spaces involved. No, it's hard to get there in many, many lives, as I know because I've had a good look at the space of the Buddhas of the three times.<sup>145</sup> So I can't say I've reached those spaces, though I've definitely seen up to the space of the Buddhas of the three times. The Teaching went wrong five hundred years ago, and that means you have

always to keep the spark in hand.<sup>146</sup> On this score, I can bear true witness.

### III-18

One day a warrior came. He said, "When I try to force authenticity up in me, my spirit sinks and my energy wanes. So lately I've given up this pursuit of authenticity. I set my energy going, sing passages from nō and suchlike, and dance and run around a little. Then suddenly my energy grows strong, and I can tell it's reached a level such that it won't drain away."

The Master watched him. "That's excellent!" he said. "I'm sure I can see you've gotten lighter right from here. Now you'll have to guard the stage of self-renunciation."

At the time two ship captains from Ōno in Owari were present, seated in the gathering. The Master turned back to them. "You too, get this energy," he said. "Once this energy's yours you'll be utterly unmoved, whatever calamities or ill winds you meet; and you'll sail free and unencumbered. It's being slack that makes people fluster at such times, that makes them die to no purpose and founder in the ocean of suffering."

### III-19

One day a monk said, "The Master always says that for spiritual practice you're far better off a warrior than a monk, and he objects to giving the tonsure to anyone. But some people wonder why he took the tonsure himself. What should I answer?"

The Master listened. He said, "Try your idea."

"It must be because a monk's merit is greater than a layman's for raising up Buddhism."

"You're wrong," said the Master, "It was only karma that made Shōsan shave his head. Shōsan must have had the karma to be a monk. I desperately wanted to shave my head, that's why I did it."

He remarked in this connection, "There are however those who fail to understand this karma's principle, and who claim that anyone who listens to the Buddha's teaching turns monk, gets sick, or goes mad. And for this they therefore blame the Teaching. Such a view is all wrong. The Teaching's to blame for none of this, it's karma from past lives. That's why you find madmen even where no one's heard the Teaching, and sick people too, and the blind. What is one to hold accountable for this?"

### III-23

During the evening conversation a monk said, "I don't know how many people come to you--elders, plain monks, and seekers--but your words don't touch them and they're all gone again soon. Why is this?"

"No doubt they leave because the teaching here doesn't suit them," another monk remarked. "Either that, or it's exactly the same."

The Master listened. "It's neither," he said. "They all come to Shōsan's place to assert themselves. But at Shōsan's place no self can be asserted, and that's why they all go away."

### III-24

One morning the Master suddenly said, "I feel I'm dying just now, it's pressing me sharply." After he had been like this a while he said, "The breakthrough's going to come any moment, but it's so hard!"

III-28

One day Mr. X came. He said, "I'm a magistrate, and my mind has no rest. How can I get peace of mind?"

The Master asked what kept him so busy. "Making policy decisions with my different retainers," he replied, "and helping each other execute them."

"You'll never make sense out of things as long as you look at them that way," the Master said, "You must simply put yourself in a resolute frame of mind, cough up everything, and be at rest. Then you must keep silent when you're brought a case and listen to the claims of both sides without a thing in your mind. If you do that, then you'll naturally know in your heart what to do, just as a mirror reflects forms, as soon as you hear the case. You can never handle it as long as you have personal prejudices. If you just handle things uprightly you need no rest at all. Anyway, you won't be able to handle a thing if you hesitate. You have to be determined that if you make a bad decision you'll go out and cut your belly, and handle affairs with total attention, according to their own merits. In the end the essential thing is always to guard your mind."

III-30

One day he reprimanded a recluse who loved saked. "For years and years," he said, "I've scolded you and embarrassed you, but you won't stop. You're really monumentally shameless! And here you are in front of me with that expression on your face. I'm sure this is the first time you've ever been a human being. Well, you can't change karma, but I still have a scheme. You'll stop if I put a few gallons of sake in a

bucket and make you drink till you're sick of drinking. Then I'll stand monks around you chanting sutras and dharanis and ladling sake over your head. I'll keep on after you and guide you that way till you die of it. It's in Ushigome<sup>147</sup> I'll do it to you, and soon. Yes, and a practitioner should never smoke tobacco."

In this connection the Master told this story: "Once, when Abbot Ban'an was living at the Kiunji, I disapproved of how much sake he was drinking and told him to quit. The Abbot said he didn't like it either, but people wouldn't let him quit. I told him that as soon as the first patron got out of line and insisted he should drink, he should knock his tray over and stand up. The Abbot heartily agreed and in due course did as I suggested. He stopped drinking altogether, and in the end no patron got out of line at a feast. A practitioner is one who never enjoys anything that serves no purpose, and he certainly must decisively leave off using bad things which will turn against him.d'

### III-35

One day the Master arrived at a certain place. In conversation there he said, "Nothing's as senseless as human life. This body's bound to suffer with one disease or another, bound to die some sort of death, and bound still to have karma of some kind. It's nothing but trouble."

The wife of the host heard him and took him completely to heart. "I've always been sickly," she thought, "but that's the karma I got with my body. No doubt I still have some kind of karma left." So she grew determined to exhaust her karma at all costs. She recited dharanis and read sutras, subjected herself to punishing labors, and pushed

herself to the very limit. Aided by Nembutsu, sutras and dharanis, she pressed relentlessly forward, and kept on this way for ten days. Then one evening in her private chapel, as she was lamenting her bad karma, death pangs assailed her. Her energy did not escape, however, and authenticity rose up in her. "I'll work this karma-body to death," she said, and dismissed her servants. Then she set to it. "You hateful lady, so high and mighty!" thought she as she toiled with her personal staff; and in this meditation she wholly absorbed herself. Soon her sickness was gone. Her womanliness disappeared and she looked just like a man. The Master considered her an authentic practitioner.

### III-36

One day a warrior came and asked how to say the Nembutsu. The Master gave him instruction. He said, "You're a warrior, so imagine an enemy host and charge into them always with Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu. Charge with the Nembutsu over and over until you can go among them with complete freedom of mind."

He said in this connection, "There was some time ago, among the farmers of Owari, a faithful devotee of the Nembutsu. Once he asked me how to practice the Nembutsu. I'd never been taught the answer, but after a little thought I told him there are five ways of saying the Nembutsu.

1. The Nembutsu of merit. The sutra says, 'A is the Buddhas of the ten directions and the three times; MI is all the Bodhisattvas; DA is the eighty thousand holy teachings; and all together they spell AMIDA Buddha.'<sup>148</sup> What this passage means is that when you say DA you get through to the Buddhas of the ten directions and the three times; that



when you say MI you get through to all the Bodhisattvas; and that when you say DA it's as good as if you'd read the eighty thousand holy teachings. So you have to say the Nembutsu with the thorough understanding that all merit is encompassed in these six syllables.

2. The Nembutsu of shame and confession. This is the Nembutsu you say to confess evil karma and the passions of body and mind, thus exhausting them all.

3. The Nembutsu of severing. In this, you take the Nembutsu as a sword, and with Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu sever and clear away all thoughts both of good and of evil.

4. The Nembutsu of the brink of death. This is the Nembutsu in which you decide that this very moment is your last, and with Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu work at dying.

5. The Nembutsu of equalness. In this Nembutsu nothing hinders you; you say Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu as equally as the sound of wind in the pines."

When the Master had spoken the man heartily approved. "Ah, what excellent Nembutsu!" he said. "I don't need them all, though, I'll just practice the Nembutsu of severing. That's the one that suits me perfectly." And he was absolutely delighted.

"Later on," the Master continued, "after bravely saying the Nembutsu for six years, he one day summoned his son. He said, 'Today I'm going to die, so please send someone for Orizu no Genjō.<sup>149</sup> The son was puzzled, but he sent for Genjō. When Genjō arrived the man told him what was happening. He asked him to please stay for the day and ordered him rice with sasage beans.<sup>150</sup> Once the afternoon meal was over the man

sat up very straight. The son, wondering why his father should die when he wasn't ill, turned to his father. 'If you have any statement to leave me,' he said, 'I'm ready to listen.' His father heard him. 'After I've talked nonsense for sixty years,' he replied, 'you'd still have me talk nonsense as I die?' And he just sat there in complete silence. After some time he said, 'There is one thing I'd like to leave with you, but you wouldn't make head or tail of it.' 'Please, please tell me what it is,' said the son. The father answered, 'No, it's a dream!' 'A dream it is indeed!' cried the son; 'father and son, we're caught in a game played in a dream!' 'That conventional idea of a dream isn't what I'm talking about,' said the father. 'It's just a dream!' And right then he passed away to rebirth in paradise. He'd gotten that much from something I'd made up and taught him on the spot. Pick any one of the five Nembutsu, whichever is most congenial to you, and practice it. You're bound to have merit according to the power of your faith."

### III-37

During the evening conversation he said, "At first I thought totally empty zazen was a good thing, and I practiced it for a long time. But one day I changed my mind. I realized no-thought and no-mind would never surpass the Buddha Shakyamuni. The Buddha did use actual thoughts to preach all the sutras he ever taught however, and he based himself on discrimination between right and wrong. It occurred to me there's no doubt a validity to no-thought; it can't be a state of vacuous blankness. Then I disposed myself with the warrior's glare and attuned myself somewhat to the source, whereupon my cowardice receded. Each of you, too, should distinguish right from wrong, and in all you do you should practice

zazen in a state of no-thought."

"I used to be sorry I'd never pursued living in the mountains," he went on, "but now I think it's a blessing. My reason is that if you just sit like that, you won't even know you're turning into a good devotee and you'll never realize your faults. By being constantly in the world you know your own shortcomings and you're an ordinary man."

After a little while he spoke again. He said, "Even if you do become good, though, there's one thing that's unendurable. Such is my nature that I've never forgotten death. I can't neglect it, no matter where I am. The only thing I have over others is the degree to which I detest death. That's what's made me practice with the warrior's glare. Really, it's because of my very cowardice that I've made it this far."

### III-39

One day as he was saying guidance services he related, "Some time ago I visited a certain abbot. 'Right around here,' the abbot told me, 'fire has jumped out of a man's house and traveled to the cemetery where it's set light to a grave. The grave is that of the man's previous wife. In great distress the man asked me to say guidance services there, and I did so as best I could. But the fire wouldn't go out.' When I heard this I immediately said, 'The fire should have gone out with no trouble at all.' The abbot asked me what I meant. 'First of all, I said, the fire isn't going to go out because of guidance for the woman in the grave. The fire isn't from the former wife, it belongs to the present one. You see, at the moment the husband simply doesn't care for his present wife, and no doubt he talks of his former wife all the time. This makes the present wife burn. That must be the situation, more or

less. So make the man listen to reason, make him properly ashamed of himself by telling him he's a slave to his clinging. Say, "Come, it's your present wife you're married to," and make him happy with her. Reconcile the two by changing his attitude. Do this, and the fire will go out immediately.' The abbot was delighted and soon reproved the man as I'd suggested. The fire went out just like that. Such situations are like a doctor carefully feeding the patient's pulse and administering a remedy. If you give guidance without due consideration, no good will come of it."

And he told this story too: "A man in a certain place was possessed by the ghost of a living person, and applied to me for guidance to cure his affliction. When I asked what the situation was his servant said, 'He was cruel enough to throw out his mistress. Since he has a wife the mistress has been profoundly bitter and angry, till her shape appears to the man and he's become very ill.' In this case too I quickly grasped what was involved as soon as I'd heard the story. 'Certainly I'll guide him,' I replied, 'but steal me some implement that the woman always keeps by her.' So he stole a precious comb of hers and gave it to me. I put the comb on a table and the next morning, just when I imagined she'd be looking for it, I plunged in and said sutras and dharanis with all the earnestness I could muster. I also set a tablet dedicated to the sick man beside the comb and read the segaki. After I'd done this two or three mornings the man's affliction completely cleared up. Guidance will never succeed unless you pay sharp attention. Most often I have no healing power, but in this sort of situation I've been effective ever since I was young."

III-41

On the twelfth of the sixth month of 1653, in the evening, he gave instruction. He said, "Since ancient times there have been plenty of clerical and lay devotees, but they're all just learned Buddhists. Not one of them says to use the teaching of the world in everything. No doubt there are people who say that, but so far I haven't heard of them. I think perhaps I am the first. In Japan, you know, monks and laymen make gāthās and poems, or they write edifying verses or great poetic statements. This I call Pastime Buddhism. Others, when you ask them a question, come right back with a reply. 'A good answer!' people think, and they're impressed, till the speaker himself imagines this is Buddhism and comes out with some truly hideous utterances. This I call Smart Talk Buddhism. Otherwise, there are more wrong understandings these days than I can count. Upliftment Buddhism, Elegance Buddhism, Bumptious Buddhism, Grandstand Buddhism, Satori Buddhism, Crybaby Buddhism<sup>151</sup>--there are plenty more personal Buddhisms besides, but they're all manifestations of this disease. I've never cared for them. What I prefer is just to glare straight ahead from morning to night. Buddhist practice for me is to do that myself and to teach others the same. My Buddhism is warrior's glare Buddhism."

III-42

A monk said to the Master, "I hear that although Mr. X has been visiting in a friendly way and receiving the Master's instruction, he actually has been slandering the Master's teaching. Is there any reason why?"

The Master listened. "I'm not surprised," he said. "The way he

comes once a month to admire my face, how could he know what I'm talking about? People always slander another if he thinks differently. Most visitors, I imagine, come to see me just like tourists.d'

III-45

One day someone came and boasted about this and that. He said a lot of people knew him for his cleverness, and that he was in touch even with daimyo.

The Master listened. "A showoff plays the fool," he said. "Whoever wants to advertise himself says, 'Me, Sir? Do you mean me?' when you address him, and bows to everyone. He's puffed up with pride and does nothing but salute lords who aren't his. He doesn't realize that people are secretly laughing at him. In the days when I was called Kudayū I took no pride in being known, so that even on guard duty I didn't bow to anyone, great or small. I just concentrated on mounting guard, and usually had nothing to do."

III-50

One day the wife of a certain daimyo came and asked how to prepare for the future life. The Master told her she should pray for the future life by singing kouta;<sup>152</sup> and he had her sing. The lady sang. The Master listened. "That pathetic little voice and that cute phrasing aren't the way to do it," he said. "Bring the voice up from your whole body, and don't be shy when you sing. If you always sing that way, you'll naturally realize the energy of Zen meditation. Once this energy's fully mature, you'll be able to put it into action even when you're not singing.'

III-51

During the evening conversation he said, "Isn't Mr. X's mother an extraordinary woman? Lately, she says, something's come over her. Suddenly she's noticed a combative energy; she feels like knocking over water jugs and things like that. And in fact even her appearance has improved. Just today she went into the next room, and there she saw the women idly chatting. 'You good-for-nothings!' she shouted. 'Do things with energy like this!' And on the spot she mimed a Guardian King. I caught a glimpse, and there was nothing funny about it. You'd think a woman doing an imitation like that would be comical, but not at all. I think she must have gotten something of the Guardian Kings' energy, otherwise she couldn't have done it the way she did. Each of you now, stand up and try the same. You're going to look funny. And just the other day, she told me, statues she had had made of the Guardian Kings were delivered. When she saw them she suddenly caught the energy of the A Guardian King, and she felt as though she'd coughed out everything. And in fact her whole expression had visibly changed. Anyone who didn't know would have called her a madwoman."

III-57

On the morning of the tenth of the seventh month of 1653 the Master said, "You have to put out as much energy as the Buddha-images express. I myself used to be like a mighty bow fully drawn, but that's not true any longer. I'm not going slack, though. I think I may have matured a little."

"Even in sleep," he continued, "I'm so full of the great matter that I sigh. But the demons keep coming. They don't do anything to me



any more, however, because I work hard and won't let them lift their heads. I mount strong guard and glare at them, thoroughly revolted. Whatever I do, though, I'm stuck with this body and the breakthrough won't come. I've gotten into P'u-hua's space, so I know my practice isn't good enough."<sup>153</sup>

III-59

One day a woman came. She said, "I have a little resolve, but I'm so ignorant my practice can't come to anything."

The Master gave her instruction. "Ah, you've a fine nature!" he said. "When it comes to praying for the future life, plain earth is the very best. Wisdom or talent you don't need. All you know is useless. The only thing to do in every circumstance is to practice getting rid of yourself."

In this connection he said, "Here we have a woman who says she's ignorant. Her nature's completely of earth. When she heard me, though, authenticity soon rose up in her. 'Well,' she thought, 'I'm a poor woman, and I carry around in my breast all sorts of evil thoughts. Do I have to die like this?' So a sense of urgency filled her, and she practiced day and night. Death pains then swept upon her and she became one with the great matter. Gathering the old women together she said the Nembutsu loud and clear, and forgot everything. Such was her remarkable woman's Buddhism. In the end, for steadfastness an earthen nature is best. You too, do all you can.d'

III-61

During the evening conversation he said, "It's really vast, isn't it, the mind of the Buddha who preached 80,000 sutras and more! And he

also gave eighty-four thousand names to the passions. How many passions could you name? I believe I could think up a couple of dozen. People can't even name their own passions, and yet the meditations given in the more than eighty thousand sutras came pouring forth. A boundless, infinite mind indeed!"

He said furthermore, "There's a teacher who says the Buddha's teachings contain a statement that sudden enlightenment is for those of small capacity; and it must indeed be so.<sup>154</sup> After all, it takes many lives and totally devoted effort to go through all fifty-two stages from beginning to end,<sup>155</sup> and this is something beyond the reach of small capacity. Yes, the idea of making a person see one truth must in fact be for those of small capacity.

### III-62

During the evening conversation he said, "Ever since my youth I've been disinclined to express myself in words. At present I have no Buddhism; and of course with respect to the things of the world, name and fame especially, I've nothing whatever of them on my chest. Consequently, even when I meet a man I've nothing to say. I just stand there like a fool. If someone brings me a problem I don't lack an answer, but I've no words to frame a skillful reply. Still, when I think how I want to set Buddhism straight, the desire to make people better is very strong in me. There's nothing else."

### III-63

During the evening conversation, he said, "Nowadays the Rinzai style is certainly on the upswing, and it's winning. Buddhism will never

be able to rise that way. From now on, it's from the farmer style of the Sōtō sect that Buddhism will be coming."

III-65

A group of hatamoto came at the time of the evening conversation. They said, "Blessed as we are by the compassion of our lord, we his humble servants are filled with gratitude"; and other such things.

The Master listened. "That needs no saying," he said. "And as far as our present lord is concerned, I must point out that it was the Zen sect here that foretold his future. I was at Sogi-no-yu in Mino when there came the announcement that the Shogun had an heir.<sup>156</sup> 'Aha, this is very auspicious,' I boldly remarked. 'Right off the boy has tiger, rabbit, dragon, and snake in sequence. What sort of sage has just come into the world?'<sup>157</sup> This Great Shogun has certainly brought ample virtue with him!' Surprised, the people around me asked me what I meant. I said, 'Well, His Lordship has not been well in recent years, so that everyone has been troubled, from the hereditary vassals to the daimyo of every province and on down to the humblest folk. In the remotest areas people have been as though waiting for something, and ill at ease. Then 'Hooray! An heir is born!' came the news, and the whole land settled down. Suddenly men's minds were still. Doesn't this mean he brought peace to the land with his birth cry? Can you imagine the power to bring peace to the realm at the very moment of your birth? In what era will you find a lord like that? His reign is bound to be one of great peace.' What I said touched everyone. Later, when I came here, I told Matsudaira Izumi-dono that that was the way I saw the future. Izumi-dono was amazed. 'Why, I'd never thought of it!' he said. After-

wards I visited Izumi-dono again and he said, 'In conversation one evening recently I told our Lord how a certain Buddhist devotee had foretold the young Lord's future in the way you said. Our Lord was extremely pleased.'

After a time the Master said, "Never the less, I cling to my own life. I'd like to see this Lord raise up Buddhism before I die."

### III-69

A monk said, "I understand that X, who visits you here in a most familiar way, is slandering you. From now on I'm going to stop him coming."

The Master said, "Whatever X says about him, Shōsan's still hoarding himself. I want to be slandered till I'm sick of myself. This man is my teacher. Don't keep him away."

### III-70

One day he was on his way somewhere. After relieving himself he rinsed his mouth and washed his hands in a puddle by the road. A monk objected that this was hardly clean water. The Master said, "It must be cleaner than my mouth."

### III-71

One day an old lady came with a dozen or so young women, and asked how to prepare for the future life. The Master gave them instruction. He said, "This is the way I pray for the future life: I make a great vow to erase all thoughts of hoarding this bag of filth; and day and night I devote myself to powerful saying of the Nembutsu."

"What merit do such devotions gain one?" one of the women asked.

"They remove one from suffering," the Master said. "Praying for the future life doesn't involve what happens after death. It's by getting away in this world from present suffering that you reach great peace. But where do you think this suffering come from? It comes only from fond thoughts of the body. What would turn to suffering if we didn't have this body? So I think reaching Buddhahood is getting away from this body. Yes, we suffer the agonies of the Hell Without Relief itself in this body. And to hoard this body, actually to enjoy it with strong, clinging thoughts, to manufacture hell day and night and give it concrete existence, and to take pleasure in it, even, without realizing how things stand--that's fearful indeed. Weigh everything and take great care. Love and hate, regret and greed, envy and jealousy, yes, hot and cold, aches and pains assail us till we've not a moment's peace. Do you understand? It's having a body endlessly afflicted that's Hell Without Relief. Suffering doesn't come from outside. And where do you think we get this suffering body from? We get it from the thoughts that each of us is manufacturing this moment, night and day. If you gave outward expression to the shape of your present thoughts, what shape do you think you'd get? I'm sure all your thoughts would be shaped like snakes. It's awful, isn't it! So decide it's terrible and make complete confession. Then exert yourself: clench your back teeth, tighten your fists, hit your chest, pick up your body and glare at it. Think, 'Hateful bag of filth!' and say Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu. If you're at all neglectful you take over, beside your own hell, the very delusions of other people. You think such-and-such a woman is good or bad, or you love or hate so-and-so; and so you take them into yourself and incorporate them into your own hell. You must mightily summon the

power of prayer, you must decide over and over that you won't let a single thought, good or bad, stay in you, and cough out your very guts. That's the way to say the Nembutsu."

He said furthermore, "Never let yourself grow jaded. Be determined you're going to kill this bag of worms you have with you, and as you put your body to use, throw it away. Understand me well, young women. You, old lady, are no longer burdened with having to be attractive, and your heart is all one devotion. But the reason why you young women are so comely is that you've a lot of bad blood. The proof is that if you were to burn alongside the old lady, it's you who'd smell.<sup>158</sup> Really, lustful desires are great afflictions all by themselves. That's why it's those of you who don't have those desires who are at peace, even when you're all together here like this. And those of you who do have them suffer more and more, don't you. Call up full authenticity. Ask yourself what karma had you born an unhappy woman, and whether you have to go on like this life after life. See how dismal the prospect is, then make a great vow before the Buddha and, this time, save yourself. Perhaps you won't reach total liberation, but if you aren't at least re-born as a man you might just as well not have been born human at all. There's no doubt, either, that Buddhahood can be reached in one lifetime."

"Taking over other people's hells really is what's wrong with us," a woman said. "How can we avoid doing it?"

"That's what the Nembutsu I've been talking about is for," replied the Master. "But I'll give you an illustration. Suppose you're going down a path and you run into a corpse or some such rotting thing. Could you clear it away before you go by, if you were told to?"

"What a horrible idea! I couldn't possibly!d' the woman exclaimed.

The Master said, "Then you couldn't clear the evil from the human mind either. The evil in the human mind is the mind's decay. Hate this rotting thing as well."

III-75

One day he related, "Among the group in Echizen<sup>159</sup> there's a man named X who's really got my message. I say this because when a friend asked him what you need to cast yourself away he answered, 'Casting yourself away refers to the spirit of struggle. Seizing a lance and thrusting it swiftly forward--that's casting yourself away. Forcefully driving it home is the fruit of having cast yourself away. This is also called the buoyant spirit. Some karma itself is buoyant karma and some is sinking karma. Some musical modes are buoyant and others are sinking modes. I'm told the song Takasago ya, kono urabune ni ho o agete is the buoyant mode.'<sup>160</sup> This man has really listened carefully, hasn't he! His reference to musical modes is certainly very effective. I'm going to use nō singing myself to instruct those who can't understand me." And he suddenly began to sing the concluding passage of Yashima.<sup>161</sup> There was in the gathering a layman to whom the Master's energy came across with great force. The man's mind was filled with courage and his energy was very strong for several days. Nothing defeated him. Both in action and at rest he was in excellent spirits. Later on the Master heard about it. He said, "The spirit of fierce perseverance did undoubtedly come across to him. He surely won't come out of it soon. To have this energy constantly means you must exert a very great and well-directed effort."



III-76

One day he gave instruction. He said, "In the end there are laymen and lay women who have gotten my energy of fierce perseverance, but among the monks there's no one like that. It can't be helped. As long as monks don't get it too, it doesn't benefit beings; nor will it be left to later generations. Monks, please work hard!"

III-78

On the eighteenth of the second month of 1654, at the Kenshūji,<sup>162</sup> a layman asked how to say the Nembutsu. The Master glared straight ahead, clenched his fists, swelled his chest, and said, "Namadabu, Namadabu, Namadabu is how you say it. Always dispose yourself like this, or it'll serve no purpose."

In this connection he said, "Practice consists solely in not letting your energy wane. When your energy's low, for example, and a mob of warriors comes at you bellowing war cries, you'll be robbed of your energy on the spot and you'll be completely undone. When you've kept your energy up, however, and a crowd of warriors roars at you, you'll instantly answer their yells, roar right back, and attack. So their yells will actually be your allies. . . ."

III-79

One day someone came and said, "Lately I've tried to force authenticity up and I've had a lot of ideas about Buddhism, till my chest has started hurting."

The Master listened. "Cough up everything," he said, "both the Buddha's teaching and the world's teaching, and just let your mouth sing

no as it will. If you cultivate your energy that way the trouble will soon disappear."

The man did as the Master had told him, and recovered immediately.

III-81

One day he gave instruction. He said, "The practice of the men of middle antiquity was to keep body and mind pure; to assure themselves first of all of a good body and then to fill it with Buddhism; and to bring people to enlightenment and so to make them good, to uplift them. Certainly they must have stood out above ordinary people. But what I teach is different. My principle is right from the start to fix the gaze on this bag of filth and give it up completely. That way, from the outset my practice is to be a dunce. It's best to practice just being as though a leper. As far as I'm concerned, it's wrong to act like the men of middle antiquity. Such behavior is bound to turn into self-asserting Buddhism. As long as you act so as to be a leper, other people won't let you assert yourself even if you want to. The ancients practiced so as to become Buddhas; I practice so as to be a leper. Keeping to this as I do, I know nothing special except getting rid of this bag of filth."

"I have something against the ancients," he continued. "All they did and taught was an array of nice things like the sixteen contemplations.<sup>163</sup> They discarded the teaching which the Buddha considered the most important of all, the contemplation of impurity. I really do hold it against them."

III-82

One day a monk came. He said, "In the last few days death pains have been pressing me sharply. How can I clear this suffering?"

The Master struck the pose of the A Guardian King. "It's this energy you dispel it with," he said. "It's the only way I know."

III-84

One day in a certain place a man was possessed by a fox. The Master stopped in his house. When evening came and they lay down to rest, the Master had the man lie beside him. After a while, very quietly, he sang the concluding passage of Tamura.<sup>164</sup> At this the man cried out and returned to his senses. "It's terrible, it really is," said the Master. "You've been possessed by a fox. But the enemy was destroyed just now, thanks to the bodhi-power of Kannon." The man suddenly recovered at these words. "I'm extremely grateful," he said, and was very happy indeed. "How did it feel to be possessed by the fox?" a monk then asked him. "Well," the man said, "all that happened was that I thought everything people were saying was about me, and I absolutely hated it. I got furious thinking of all the lies they were telling about me. Also, when people were laughing and joking I thought they were going to do something to me, so I was always afraid." The Master listened. He said, "It's agony, all right, to live as a beast. I'm sure a beast's mind is always like that. It's pitiful, yes it is."

III-85

On the seventeenth of the fifth month of 1654 he gave instruction to Ichian.<sup>165</sup> He said, "You should practice making your mind strong, with never a drop in energy, by nothing but study. You'll be lecturing

people on which wise man did what and on what such-and-such a sage had to say, and you'll be looking down your nose at them. But it'll do you no good. That's the way to end up despising others. So far, certainly, I've never seen a single man who achieved goodness by study, and no one who's studied is any good. . . ."

III-88

Late in the night of the twenty-fourth of the fifth month of 1654 a monk said, "Lately a volume called Daily Readings from the Sutras<sup>166</sup> has come over from China. It extracts the dharanis from the sutra texts, those which are in daily use at present in China. Included are the names of eighty-eight Buddhas; I understand they're chanted at the services for the second hour. Among them is the name of a Buddha called Buddha of Great Might and Fierce Perseverance. And there are others called Buddha of the Persevering Host and Buddha Happy in Perseverance."<sup>167</sup>

The Master jumped up as soon as he heard this. "What extraordinary names for Buddhas!" he said. Long since I've felt such Buddha-names must exist, but I've wondered if perhaps the Buddha never did teach them, and if my own practice was wrong. Anyway, I didn't think there was anything to do but follow my course, so I made myself work at it right up to now. These Buddha-names make me closer to the Buddha than ever. Such excellent names for Buddhas must have come from the Buddha's own mind. It's really extraordinary, don't you think, that the Buddha should give things like that in his teaching! It's to prove my teaching that these Buddhas have deigned to come!" And the Master was very happy indeed.

This inspired everyone until we requested, and were granted by the Master, leave to invoke these names. Those who in the past had been instructed by the Master to invoke Amida had expressed a wish for inscriptions of Amida's name, with the Master's name and seal; but he had withheld permission. "As to witnessing to these Buddhas," he said however, "that I can certainly do." And he wrote "Hail the Buddha of Great Might and Fierce Perseverance" with his name and seal, and gave the papers out. Again, of the Buddha of the Persevering Host and of the Buddha Happy in Perseverance he said, "I know them both." And he wrote the names of these two Buddhas to the left and right.

### III-89

Someone came one day and said, "In the Shingon sect the only daishi is Kōbō Daishi,<sup>168</sup> and so Kōbō's authority is now supreme. Hence the prestige of Shingon. In Tendai, though, every head of the sect from Dengyō Daishi<sup>169</sup> on has had the title daishi, so that Dengyō has little authority. They say this is to Tendai's disadvantage."

The Master listened. "That's natural," he said. "People can hardly be expected not to flatter and deceive."

In this connection he said, "It's always been generally true, I notice, that once the second generation has succeeded to the founding teacher, the tradition declines immediately. That's why things have been this way ever since the time of the Buddha's disciples. The Buddha often taught the spirit of fierce perseverance in the sutras, but I've never heard of anyone paying any attention to it since. If anyone did pay attention to it, it must be Kāsyapa;<sup>170</sup> but I see things soon changed. I'm sure in the old days, just as now, good men were hardly

ever to be seen. There can't be any difference. All I can imagine is that while the Buddha was in the world everyone must have been good without even knowing it."

"I hear P'u-hua was a man of the Buddha's space," said a monk.

"Why didn't he bring people to enlightenment?"

The Master replied, "Intense aliveness was his space--not the mode of energy where any enlightening or anything else goes on. I'm quite sure of that."

### III-90

During the evening conversation the Master said, "It's all wrong to joke, etc., on the pretext of indulging in 'mad words and gorgeous language.'<sup>171</sup> Smart talk makes people laugh and diverts them a moment, true enough. But that's the way to put authenticity out of their minds and to make them frivolous. It's hard to stop joking because joking isn't thought wrong, and so it isn't discouraged. Actually, it turns out to be a deeper sin than slander. Take great care. A practitioner doesn't once in his life laugh from the very depths.

### III-91

One day at a layman's house he heard people singing light songs. He said, "Singing and dancing are the voice of the Teaching, they say, and it's true: singing and dancing are the voice of the Teaching. Men have fewer thoughts than women, but certainly since women go astray more often, their sins are shallower."

III-93

During the evening conversation on the fifteenth of the eighth month of 1654 the Master said, "Monks these days don't know what Buddhism is about, so they allow oibara.<sup>172</sup> It's the height of abuse. Nothing could be more awful. The practice never existed in India, China, or Japan under the rule of the sages. It's because monks of our time don't know what Buddhism is about that this abuse has gotten started. That's why I'd like to make wooden figures of those priests who've allowed oibara. I'd crucify them before the priests' temples. I'd want them to be examples for posterity. It's all the monks' fault that laymen have no idea how wrong oibara is. I'm sure any monk who knew a thing or two could tell them why. 'Come to me for guidance services all you like, but if oibara's involved I won't go.' he'd doubtless say. My reason is that guidance services are done to help the deceased escape the round of birth and death, whereas guidance for people who are so fond of the round of birth and death can do no good at all.' But no one can say even that much. There are monks who've completely agreed when I've told them, but they're just the same. . . ."

III-95

One day at mealtime he said, "Now I'm born into the world, I'd like before I go to return somehow to the world at least as much merit as I've consumed."

"I'm sure no one returns even a third of it," an elder remarked.

"No," replied the Master, "there must be some among the workers who do. Farmers, especially, feed the whole world. Many of them, before they die, must give back to the world more than they've ever taken. I'd



like to be a farmer myself and give it back. Ah, it's a great matter, a great matter."

III-107

On the third of the tenth month of 1654, the Master gave instruction to a dying monk. He said, "You'll die, but it's no great matter. You could have lived on another twenty or thirty years and practiced all the while, but it wouldn't have made any difference. I've made it to eighty myself but there's no change, no change at all. Still, I've certainly caught the seed. You too, mount keen guard to the end, with the one thought in mind that you won't lose the seed. For what's ahead, go to hell or wherever you please; let your body turn into any body at all. What you become's no great matter. I and everyone, once we've life, have to practice always and not lose the seed. Even in ancient times, Shakyamuni must have been the only one who had really broken through. The other patriarchs and masters, the Dengyō and Kōbō of our own land especially, must still have been a long way from a Buddha's space. Put your mind at rest. There's no change, not even after a pretty long life. In the end life goes according to karma, and I know nothing about that. It's the seed that's up to me. Set your gaze straight, let everything go, and mount true guard till the end.' Whereupon the sick monk passed away with right thoughts.

III-108

One day he gave instruction. He said, "Always to practice being in zen samādhi means not letting your energy go. Once you're truly convinced you'll die tomorrow, nothing can make you let your energy go.

Energy gets away because you forget death. You have to clench your teeth, set your gaze, and keep to dying this instant. It gets away very easily indeed. And it has to be at least strong enough to hurt, or it's no good. This is where the energy of fierce perseverance itself comes from. Anyway, we're dying this minute, that's obvious. It's nothing to neglect."

III-109

One day he gave instruction to someone who was doing sinking zazen.<sup>173</sup> He said, "Rather than try to go through with this nonsense, just work at dying. You don't need anything special. You have to push yourself to work at death over and over, so much so that you don't lose it even in sleep. Right now, you know, you're hoarding this decaying, rotting thing. Hot and cold, aches and pains--there's nothing about it which isn't grief. Glare at it, hating it for its afflictions, and arouse yourself always to struggle with the sensory world. I don't have much to show for it, but personally, when I devote my energy to this, I keep constantly in an energy state such that I clench my back teeth, glare ahead, and gaze unwaveringly. I've done like this ever since I was a little boy. . . . That's the state I call warrior's glare zazen."

Then he actually mimed working himself up. He said, "When I invoke Hachiman and dispose myself this way, I have stable energy here."<sup>174</sup> That's what I'm talking about. When I use this energy, it just doesn't happen that thoughts hinder me. My zazen is like this. These days everybody's zazen is not to let thoughts emerge, and this thought of not letting anything emerge soon emerges itself. I've tried that zazen method where you don't let thoughts emerge. One when Abbot Ban'an was living at Iwamura, I even decided that on the way to see him I wouldn't

let a single thought emerge. So I went all the way from Ishinotaira to Iwamura without letting one thought emerge. It was thanks to the energy of fierce perseverance that I kept this state, however. I'm not one to have no sinking thoughts at all. Anyway, unless you arouse a great thought, your thoughts won't stop. In the last analysis, everyone does zazen so as not to let thoughts emerge, while my zazen is to arouse thought. I arouse a thought as enormous as Mt. Sumeru.d'

III-111

During an evening conversation in the last month of 1654 the Master said, "How can the Buddhist way of government be proposed to the authorities?"

A monk said, "We could take the initiative, but it won't work if they don't think of it first. We should get them to take the initiative, if at all possible."

The Master reprimanded him. He said, "People often talk that kind of nonsense around me. They'll never understand me. I'm going to make the proposal come what may, at the risk of my life. To tell the truth I'd still want to make it even as a ghost. It's not some way to have them move first that I'm talking about. The energy to put my proposal through no matter what, is right here in my chest. You'll never understand me."

III-112

One morning the Master said, "Ah, I hate this body, I'm sick of it. And here I am, none the less, thinking the Teaching is somehow going to rise up."

III-113

In the spring of 1655 the Master gave the gathering instruction. He said, "Always be as though up against a lance. My own mind is always as though I had a lance coming right at me."

III-114

One night as he went to relieve himself he hit himself and said, "Ah, the foul bag of filth! It's when I go to the toilet that I realize more keenly than ever how foul the body is, and I detest it. The thing's absolutely absurd."

The Master would say any time. "The thing's absurd, absurd!" And often he would heave a great sigh and say, "It's terrible! It's terrible!" Even in his sleep he would sigh. And as the monks and laymen sat around his bed each night, he would exclaim, "Whatever for? Whatever for?"

III-116

The next day, the Master reprimanded someone who had the disease of Buddhism. He said, "You have Buddhism; I have none. There's no way we can get together. I don't want you here any more.d'

He also said, "Burdened as people are with this rotten thing, they never give it a glance. They spend their time rating others. It's very foolish of themd Just yesterday, seeing Shōan<sup>175</sup> heaving great sighs and feeling so sick, I felt to the core how revolting the body is. That's what I've always kept my eyes on, and I've never looked at anyone else's Buddhism. Now the great matter is on me, it's pressing me very hard. It's so sharp. That's the way I've been all these years, but I haven't been able to break through. So I can't say I'm right, but at

least there surely aren't many who've gone as far in their efforts as I have."

III-117

One day a visitor told us he had heard that some monks had petitioned for permission to invite a priest visiting from China<sup>176</sup> all the way to Edo.

The Master listened. He said, "Excellent! I must take this opportunity to advance my ideas on the establishment of the true teaching. This time I'll present a memorandum directly. I'll stake my life on it and I'll say, 'If you don't use the principle of the Teaching right, all of Japan will immediately go over to the Christians. Take very careful consideration. Nothing has ever been better than the true Teaching.' Yes, I'll support my proposal with Buddha-images and with sutra texts that save all beings. I've heard something about how that Chinese priest runs his meditation hall. But how could the way he does it help laymen? That's the only thing I long to do."

III-118

The Master said once in the middle of the night, "It just doesn't come! Ah, I toil away, but it's no use! Soon I'll rot at last, and I'll be like this to the end."

III-120

Once he was furious that the understanding of both clerical and lay devotees should be so extraordinarily poor. Just then some monks arrived. The Master spotted them. He said, "Sometimes I wonder if the people who come to see me ever get anything even half right--and not one ever does."

I especially don't want to look at sloppy monks. You disgusting monks! Get on, get on home!" And he quickly threw them out.

III-121

One day as the monk Genseki<sup>177</sup> was at the point of death, the Master gave him instruction. He said, "Nothing changes, however long you live. Better to rid yourself of this rotten thing, this body of pain, just as quickly as you can. It's then that this life's breakthrough comes. All the years I've lived, there's no difference at all. I imagine that for men like Abbot Dōgen<sup>178</sup> the breakthrough must have come, but that's not a Buddha's space yet. That's not to be free. You're not the only one who hasn't done what he hoped. Whoever one is, and however long-lived, nothing's going to change. The best thing you can possibly do is get rid of this rotten object on the spot. I'm going soon myself."

At these words the monk passed away to the future life with right thoughts. He was nineteen years old.

III-123

One morning the Master turned abruptly to the gathering. "There's a thing that hurts me," he said. "For swords there is the Hon'ami line, men who can tell forged inscriptions from genuine ones and determine the value accordingly.<sup>179</sup> Calligraphy too has a standard so that one knows whether or not it's the real thing. All the arts are the same. That's why they last. The thing is that the government has the right policy toward them. Buddhism alone has no standard and no discerning supervision. All we have are people's own arbitrary versions of Buddhism, and the Buddha's teaching is dead. This hurts my whole being. It's because

the government consistently singles Buddhism out for neglect and lets people be as they please. My chest is bursting with the desire to put a proposal on this matter before the authorities, but it's turned out that Heaven hasn't allowed me to do so. When our present Lord<sup>180</sup> turns fifteen, perhaps he'll take the proper measures. When he's twenty, a direct appeal may perhaps move him. Anyway, my own life is over.<sup>d</sup>

He said furthermore, "I do believe I should take a Buddha-image into the Great Chamber of the Rōjū, or something like that. 'This is Buddhism,<sup>d</sup> I'd say. But I haven't had a chance to do that either. It's just a rotting corpse I'll end up. I'm going to die soon, monks, so remember what I say."

### III-124

"As I understand it," a monk said one day, "the Master teaches morality and morality only. How is one to keep to morality?"

The Master glared at him. "Morality is to die with vigor," he said.<sup>181</sup>

### III-125

One day someone came and requested gyakushu services<sup>182</sup> for himself. The Master listened. "It's because no one can make sense of my teaching," he said, "that I'm asked to do things like that. I'm no priest, I know nothing about gyakushu."

"What a ridiculous thing to want!<sup>d</sup> he went on. "What<sup>d</sup>I mean by gyakushu is guarding the mind keenly from morning to night, and never being beaten by anything. For me, it's working like that that's gyakushu. I'll leave that to you as my last words."



III-128

When the Master arrived in Kanda,<sup>183</sup> he noticed beside the main house a little square apartment of two rooms. "I've found a good place to die," he said, "I'll die here.d' And in he went. Only Isai and Shōchi<sup>184</sup> were always with him. A monk spoke to him. He said, "According to the doctors your pulse is bad--how do you feel?" The Master smiled. He said, "Shōsan took care of dying thirty years ago."

III-129

One morning the Master turned to those around him. He said, "Solid reality is tenacious, isn't it! You all think Shōsan's still alive. You believe I'm still in the world, and this illness of mine obsesses you. You look as though it's going to snatch your energy away."

He said furthermore, "Mount keen guard over death. That's all I ever say. No matter how long he lives, Shōsan has nothing special to talk about but death.d'

III-130

One day the Master said, "Into the world I came this life, and I'm dying an absurd death. And for my merit this time all I've done is discover one Buddha-image.<sup>185</sup> It has to be somewhere in the sutras. I'll look for it later. Even if it isn't in the sutras, you won't go wrong if you practice this way."

III-131

The Master at first closed off his room. Two or three days later, however, he allowed everyone to come and visit him. "Please give us more basic instruction," said a monk then.

The Master glared at him. "What do you mean?" he said. "You can't get what I've been saying for thirty years, and now you want instruction? Shōsan's dying." After that, no one asked any more questions. Then at the hour of the monkey<sup>186</sup> on the twenty-fifth of the sixth month of 1655, the Master quietly passed away.

III-133

After the Master's passing, Elder Fusan<sup>187</sup> spoke to the disciples. He said, "When people asked him lately about his illness, he wouldn't answer the question. He'd just ask, 'Why isn't there anything different about Buddhism? Why isn't there anything different about Buddhism?' Really, that's all he said up to the very day he passed away. He lived Buddhism so hard all his life, did he? Then let each of you keep his resolve. Don't let the Master's deepest wish come to nothing."

III-134

An old friend of the Master spoke to me. He said, "Once in Mikawa the Master was pressed by the one great matter. He spat up yellow phlegm and sighed loud enough to startle those near him. From closeby his whole chest seemed aflame. At that time he wasn't sleeping at all except for a nap toward dawn. But every night he would turn to us and say, "I surely do sleep well!"

III-136

Someone related, "Once while I was traveling with him the Master chose to take poor lodgings. I said we could pay the same amount and still not have to take poor lodgings, but he answered, "As long as we're paying the same, we have to make sure it benefits others. A good room

can be rented to anyone, so there's no problem. But poor lodgings can't be rented, so the owner can't make it. The merit's in staying there and helping out. We may be a little uncomfortable, but it's only a night.' So in the end we stopped at the poor inn.

III-137

Mr. X related, "Last year when my wife died I was depressed and confused. Then Shōsan appeared at the entrance to the room. "Remove this rotten object immediately." he commanded. "Throw it out!" And he sent the body off to the temple. At the sound of his voice my mind suddenly opened and my heart was eased. This shows how a good man's guidance is bound to help you. Nowadays people make no effort to choose the priest for the guidance, and that's all wrong."

III-138

Mr. X, an old friend of the Master, related, "Shōsan ever since his youth had a penchant for monks and temples. He'd associate with any monk at all, just as long as he was a monk. At first he served Gongen-sama.<sup>188</sup> But once he had some relief from his duties he ceded the family headship to his son, retired to the Tahō-in in Shimotsuma and to the Saijōji in Sekimoto, and mingled with the monks there. He also built a dwelling near Abbot Daigu of the Nansenji<sup>189</sup> and lived there for a long time. After that he went into the world again and served Daitokuin-sama. He distinguished himself for loyal service at the battle of Sekigahara and at both sieges of Osaka. At last, though, he became a monk.

"Once when both of us were on guard duty in Osaka and were assigned

to the same squad, the squad captain gave a party at the residence of Takagi Shusui.<sup>190</sup> We were all relaxed and drinking freely, constantly offering each other more and even promising to see each other home, until the gathering became quite unruly. Suzuki-dono never mingled with others, however. He was one to stand leaning against a pillar, glancing sharply all around him, and that's what he was doing that time too. But suddenly he came out among us. 'Come, come,' he said, 'you're all talking nonsense. You've even settled the order you're going to see each other home in. Must you still quarrel? This wrangling does no one any good. Here we're charged with important guard duty--let's all get to our posts alive. Once we're out the gate, let's let our own lives go, resolve to die, and act as the occasion demands.' At his words, everyone from the squad captain on down agreed completely. The whole gathering apparently felt relieved, and calmed down."

III-139

When the Master was a layman, there was among his colleagues a man who did tsujigiri.<sup>191</sup> Once the Master addressed this man. He said, "You do tsujigiri, they say--but it can't possibly be true. You couldn't do tsujigiri."

"I most certainly can, and do," the man replied.

"No," said the Master, "it can't be tsujigiri."

"Very well," the man answered, "I'll show you."

So they went off together and hid themselves in an isolated spot.

Two merchants came by. The man said he'd go out and cut them.

"No, don't," the Master said, and stopped him. "You have to cut the mandi point out."

Next came a man who looked as though he took in a thousand koku. Now the Master said, "Come on, we'll cut him," and was about to attack. The other was amazed. "You're crazy!" he said. And he stopped the Master and refused to move forward.

"You really are a terrible coward," the Master said. "Here I tell you to cut him, and you lose your nerve and can't do it. That's what I meant when I said someone who loses his nerve can't do tsujigiri. If you can't cut a man like that you might as well give up tsujigiri. Cutting people like the first who came by, that's like cutting monks and nuns. Does a real warrior cut people like that?"

Thus the Master so shamed the man that he realized how wrong he had been. Drawing the sword at his hip, he struck it till it rang and gave up tsujigiri on the spot.

### III-140

Someone related, "There once came a message from a certain place requesting guidance for a child, so the Master kindly did the services for the seventh day.<sup>192</sup>

A monk remarked in this connection, "Nowadays monks and laymen both say that since a child has no karma he doesn't go to the evil ways after death; so they neglect guidance services for children. What do you think about it?"

The Master listened. "It's wrong," he said, "They should be guided properly. My reason is that a child, unlike adults who die permeated with karma, does have past karma but, because it hasn't yet begun to emerge, he has no thoughts of good or evil. If a child's properly guided during this period he'll immediately be established in goodness, and is

bound to receive life as a good person. What proves it is that since a child's energy is all one, he can be led astray just like that. That shows you."

He continued, "I'd like when a man dies to have him guided right away by someone good. I'd like to have the Nembutsu said with total concentration, even by a layman. My reason is that the spirit of the deceased wanders around and longs to attach itself to something. If a good man guides it at this time, it's bound to attach itself to goodness on the spot. If the guidance is done wrong-mindedly the spirit's energy will instantly turn toward evil. And once it's turned toward evil, goodness can hardly touch it even with the guidance of a good man."

"The spirits of the dead," he went on, "are more easily quieted than the spirits of the living. Since the spirits of the living are inevitably in possession of a body their thoughts are strong, and goodness comes across to them only slowly. The spirits of the dead have no body, they wander in the middle state<sup>193</sup> and they're willing to cling to anything. So if good is done for them, they get the energy very powerfully.

### III-143

Someone said, "Once when the Master visited me I told him there are a lot of people around here who talk for and against Buddhism and Confucianism, and I asked him which is better. 'You can tell by comparing their sources,' he said. 'Shakyamuni and Confucius differed widely in virtue. To prove it, I'd like to know who in the Capital these days practices clear virtue.<sup>194</sup> I've never heard of any such person. And as for Buddhism, look at the old women who say the Nembutsu every day at the Seiganji and elsewhere. Aren't they something? And really, saying the

Nembutsu is not a bit below keeping clear virtue. Anyone who claims it's inferior, bring him to me and I'll tell him a thing or two. I want my head cut off if I lose the argument."

III-146

Someone related, "Once when I was traveling with the Master, we came to a bad stretch of road full of slippery places. The Master said, "A slippery path is best, because the attention won't slacken. I'd like to put you all on a slippery path forever."

III-148

Abbot Honshū<sup>-195</sup> said, "The Master is the revival of Buddhism in modern times. There isn't anyone before him who can really be said to have practiced. Once at Abbot Motsugai's place in Utsunomiya, Myōkan, Daigu, and Gudo<sup>-196</sup> were listening to Motsugai's lectures. Then the Master arrived, still a layman. He faced these three and pressed them with questions. 'Look at the records of sayings,' he said, 'they're full of expressions like "great enlightenment," "the way of enlightenment," or "reflecting upon enlightenment." Have you all mastered these to the point where you can listen to lectures on them, or lecture on them to others? Is this what the ancients themselves did?' All three were at a loss, so they took note of him. They devoted themselves to zazen and began to examine their practice.

"At that time Abbot Ungo<sup>197</sup> was the one to whom Katō Shikibu-dono<sup>198</sup> turned for refuge. Once Abbot Daigu visited Shikibu-dono, and each time Daigu met Ungo, Daigu would shout, 'Temple priest! Temple priest!' 'You're always putting on some idiotic act,' said Ungo, and got very



angry. 'It's no act,' retorted Daigu. 'If you don't like being called a temple priest, practice the Buddha's way. You're a temple priest, aren't you, if you lecture on Confucian texts, write Chinese and Japanese verse, and go around nodding your head in laymen's houses?' Abbot Ungo realized he was wrong, and in the end entered the Way. Others beside Ungo have been known for their practice, but always after this incident. In the last analysis, it all comes from the Master's influence. Real practice had apparently been dead a long time. Quelling apparitions and evil spirits by guiding them is also something that started with the Master. Before him, all people did was pray, and no one in the end had ever heard of guiding them."

III-150

Abbot Honshū said, "Once when I was with the Master he visited Lord Saburōkuro in Osaka. Within the area over which Saburōkuro was daikan, an important village headman, wicked by nature, had plotted murder, and the matter had come under investigation. The man himself had been ruined. Lord Kobori Enkō<sup>-199</sup> was just then inspecting the Kinai and so was at Fushimi. The matter was referred to him, and the order came down that the following day the headman's whole family, men and women together, should be executed. The Master heard of this. He said, "The sentence in the men's case is proper; but as for the women, I want to do something to save them.' 'It's an order from higher up,' his brother objected. 'A subordinate can do nothing about it.' The Master said, 'Since the time of Gongen-sama, no death sentence has ever been extended to the women for an affair of this kind. If they're executed under your administration, it'll stand forever as a precedent. You absolutely have to

make the authorities realize this.' Then the Master himself made a vow to all the gods of Japan. He stationed men at each town between Osaka and Fushimi, and transmitted his ideas by letter. Exchanged went back and forth five or six times during the night. In the end, he saved most of the women. Ever since he was young he made every effort to help people whenever possible. When he saw others' ills, especially, he forgot himself in compassion for them."

III-151

An old friend of the Master said, "The Master was always delighted when even a single person improved. In the end, though, he turned his attention to the lord of the land and to his ministers, and entertained the ambition to save all people everywhere. Even among his followers there were none whom he particularly favored or loved. He simply felt compassion toward the whole world. In particular, he never considered his disciples as truly his own. He quite naturally considered even the acolytes who were with him as companions. Therefore no matter how many decades one stayed with him, he was always as though one had just arrived."

KAIJŌ MONOGATARI  
(On the Sea)

A Tale about Shōsan by Echū

Alas for the play of human life, with its tricking shapes and patterns! Alive in the morning and gone by nightfall, we have an instant for our time in the world. Who ever could take pleasure in this body?

Now on the day of the equinox in the eighth moon of 1656, a ship sailed from Nagasaki harbor bound for Satsuma. It was a large ship and it carried many passengers, folk both common and well born. A crowd indeed! For a look around revealed many warriors, and a throng of merchants and farmers too. Three ladies were keeping themselves somewhat apart. Pet birds in cages had also been loaded aboard, and who could have brought them? But gazing further about the ship one noticed a man about sixty years old from the looks of him, with white hair loose around his head and a most unusual glance. He claimed to be a monk from the Bandō. Very humbly dressed he was, and it appeared that he was on pilgrimage to see each province. After a stay in Nagasaki he was presently on his way to Satsuma and to Hyūga. How precious was his goal, to destroy all men's doubts in whatever manner should suit them best and to guide them in the true Way!

Meanwhile there were people from every province on board, and they were glad to pass the time by asking each other where they had come from and where they were going. The monk alone remained silent, seemingly indifferent to the others' talk. At sunset a mountain bell

tolling evening faintly reached the ship, and suddenly the monk began to chant Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu aloud. The feeling quickly caught on with everyone. The passengers were somehow keenly alert, and the whole ship grew quiet. Everybody looked at the monk. Then a lady approached him.

"On a voyage like this," she said, "we laymen think of home. But you're a monk and you've no worries, whatever wilderness you're in--at least, that's what I supposed. And yet you seem preoccupied. Could you please tell me what you're thinking about?"

"Just now a great matter came up sharply in my chest,"<sup>1</sup> the monk replied. And after a moment's pause he continued, "Everyone forgets the one great matter. People spend the time talking and thinking foolishness. It's so stupid of them! They never understand that death will be on them, not one of their thoughts acknowledges that all things pass. To this world so fragile all deeply cling, and look forward to ten thousand years of life. Evil karma they create day and night, a terrible error indeed! The Buddha himself taught that he appeared in the world so as to establish the link to enlightenment. A great matter it is, yes, a great matter!"

"What is the one great matter?" the lady asked. "Please, in your kindness, give me instruction."

The monk answered, "By the one great matter I mean the great matter in the heart and mind. It's nothing the mouth can talk of, nothing the ears can hear, but I'll give an idea. If this moment you faced death, it would be a great matter, wouldn't it. For a human being no matter's as great as death. This death makes no choice between noble

or common, young or old, but the time of its assault comes at last to everyone. When you don't forget this but keep it ever in mind, when in your heart you accept and concentrate on it, planning to escape from birth and death, that's what's called practice, or prayer for the future life. Ah, what could be more absurd than human life? The great consort with the great, the small with the small, and from birth to death afflictions never cease. Nor do we suffer thus in one life only, but karma both good and bad from this present life assures us of eternal agony. An unhappy prospect, isn't it! Each one of us, suddenly, from out of the formless, is a while endowed with life; and a spot of dark ignorance first makes us take for granted that this passing body is ourself. Then by degrees we begin hoarding the ten thousand things till soon we're ordinary people without beginning and without end, as we are now. A sorry situation, you'll agree. After this life we'll have all sorts of others, and round and round we'll go in the ocean of eternal pain, never escaping, and with no likely end. Think of it, just think of it: it's awful! Anyway, as long as we don't purposefully practice well enough to get back to the origin, we'll never get away, not once in a thousand lives or in ten thousand eons. We'll be like that always. This is what's called 'the ordinary man sunk forever,' or eternal transmigration. It's what inspired the Buddha, in his compassion, to teach the sutras. Whoever has faith and practices accordingly will leave at last the dark way of birth and death. He'll return to the capital city, original emptiness, and obtain the subtle joy of nirvana. This we call reaching Buddhahood, or being reborn in paradise. Could any living thing, then, not trust in that Way? It's a fact that everything that's

received life, human beings obviously, but the very birds and beasts as well, must return once, by conscious effort, to the origin. What other great matter could there be, than that?"

"It is indeed a great matter you speak of," the woman said. "For me, a woman, the sufferings of this one life are hard enough to bear. When you tell me this will last eternally, my heart quite fails me! Please, in your compassion, tell me how to evade birth and death, how to leave these afflictions behind!"

"Where do all your present sufferings come from?" answered the monk. "They all arise from one thought: love for this body.<sup>2</sup> This one thought really is the source of affliction and the root of bewilderment. Therefore we speak of the spirit fiercely persevering and unshakable, which refers to working with strength of spirit at throwing off this rotting flesh. You need nothing special. For if you've reached the point where you can let someone take your head without a thought, if he comes asking for it, what could possibly cause you pain? Someone who's rid of his body to that extent is called a man of the Way, free from birth and death. This is all your practice should be."

Now the lady, devoutly trusting the monk's words, withdrew. But another came forward and asked, "Well then, do you reach Buddhahood if you drown yourself in the Horikawa?"<sup>3</sup>

"That's for a madman to do," the monk replied. "Who could admire that? If you get rid of clinging you're unobstructed, even with the body. The thing is to destroy attachment to what has form by being always ready and willing to throw your life away. Your trade's not involved, it's the work of the mind alone. Defeat by the mind is hell,

victory over the mind is the Pure Land.<sup>4</sup> There's no Buddha, there are no sentient beings outside the mind. You have to see quite clearly that it's the mind's demons that attack the body. Anger is of hell, covetousness is of starving ghosts, ignorance is of beasts, victory and defeat are of the ashuras, the five precepts are of human beings, the ten precepts are of heaven, and so within the one mind there are the six ways. That's why the Buddha teaches that 'In the three worlds there is just one mind. Outside the mind there is no special teaching, and the mind, the Buddha, and sentient beings are not different from one another.'<sup>5</sup> All there is to do is to purify the one mind. There's no special procedure. Anyone can see this. When you let yourself be defeated by the mind your afflictions never cease, night or day. And when you conquer the mind you're at peace. So the Buddha himself taught us swiftly to crush our mind and never to let it do as it will. The eternal transmigration I spoke of a moment ago is its work, and escape from the three worlds means destroying one thing, the mind. Watch the mind well, therefore, and conquer it. This is Bishamon trampling the demons. Ten thousand teachings there are, and ten thousand practices, but what they amount is none other than annihilating body and mind with strength of spirit."

"I've heard of seeing the nature and of reaching Buddhahood," said the person,<sup>d</sup>but it's hard to understand what you mean by teaching that we've only to be rid of this body. Why, if only we're rid of body and mind, we don't have to be enlightened not to suffer, do we?"

"It doesn't have to be enlightenment you're after," the monk answered, "you just have to work through your karma-blocks. Once you get



yourself away from everything and this body and this world are both a lie, it'll be Buddhahood. There can't be any treasure you'd trade for your body, not a kingdom or anything else. So if you're away from this body and you still have no regret, what in the dharma world or in emptiness could stand in your way? As an old man of the Way says,

If in the body you've cast off  
No mind is left at all,  
There is no bewilderment,  
No enlightenment.<sup>6</sup>

And when Shakyamuni, the Tathāgata, had finished preaching all the sutras he ever taught, on the evening of his nirvana, he left as his last statement to all sentient beings these words: 'My dying now is like relief from a disease. There is no pleasure for me in this, my body, for it founders in the ocean of the afflictions: birth, old age, sickness, and death. It is truly to be discarded, for it is a borrowed thing made of sin and evil. Only those who have wisdom know this well. They can cast off this body, they kill it as a hated enemy; and as they break through<sup>7</sup> they rejoice. I, like them, go to death gladly. Let each of you, therefore, work well, work singlemindedly at this way to escape. All things moving or still in the world are crumbling, unstable forms.'<sup>8</sup> And with these words he entered nirvana. It's really true that the main aim of practice is nothing but being rid of this body. Escape! Escape!"

Another person now came forward. He said, "I'm all for what you've just told us. But there are those who say that whoever follows the Buddha's teaching turns his back on the world. Is there any truth to that?"

"That's what people who don't know the Buddha's teaching say," replied the monk. "The Buddha has contrasted the eighty-four thousand dharma-gates with the eighty-four thousand passions, and has said that all his teachings are for the sake of leading all minds to enlightenment. So the Buddha's teaching is the teaching that destroys all human evil. Could anyone claim that to destroy evil is bad? In fact all teachings are the Buddha's teaching. There isn't any Buddhism outside the world. This is why the Buddha said that once one has fully entered the world one can't leave it because there's nowhere else to go. The Buddha's teaching and the world's teaching are not two. The body is the Buddha-body, the mind is the Buddha-mind, and one's trade is the Buddha's work. When you're attentive, they're all the Buddha's way. That's how the Buddha instructs beings in the four families and the eight families,<sup>9</sup> according to their aptitude. And the sutra passage that says that all sentient beings will reach enlightenment is quite clear. A monk, now deceased, understood this truth in a book which he addressed to warriors, farmers, merchants, and artisans, and which he called Shimin nichiyō. It's being widely read at present and you should look at it. Besides, the Three Treasures are the world's greatest treasure. If we don't concentrate on them and don't let them help us in our worldly occupations, the name of the Three Treasures will be a lie. When he hears the Buddha's teaching, the warrior touches the warrior's true aim and the merchant touches the true aim of the merchant. Such are the benefits. The treasure of the Buddha's teaching is truly boundless and inexhaustible."

"Some say people who listen to the Buddha's teachings go mad or get sick. Is that true?"

"That's a tremendous mistake," the monk replied. "Buddhism is to destroy all deluded thoughts and to dwell in the original mind, in the original nature. How could you go mad that way? The seven emotions are eliminated, so you're on the contrary free of disease. Even medical books say that the ten thousand diseases come from the seven emotions. There are sick people among practitioners but it isn't the Teaching's fault, it's the fault of their past karma. That's why there are sick people and mad people too, even where no one's heard the Teaching. What's to blame? It's this kind of statement that people who have nothing of the Way use to discourage others, with lies. But let them. Why not learn from those who've reached Buddhahood by practicing the Teaching, rather than be afraid of people who've gotten sick from hearing it?"

Now a young warrior spoke up. "Some people claim that those who listen to Buddhism grow fainthearted," he said. "Is that a fact?"

"Buddhism teaches escape from birth and death, so it always concentrates on working at dying and on being free with death. How could it make anyone fainthearted?"

Another warrior said, "Isn't always guarding death a cowardly thing to do? Death is of no interest to me."

"You're a lazy fellow to forget death," the monk answered. "The fool is always carefree, but when he's hard pressed he suddenly changes and falls apart. Among warriors such a man is called irresponsible, and there's nothing lower than that. There's a saying that 'warrior' is written with two characters because of the two words birth and death.<sup>10</sup> They say a real warrior's one who keeps these two words hanging round his neck. In the service of the lords of Odawara there used to be a

strong man named Matsuda. Because of his many incomparable feats he had more letters of admiration than you can count; and when he was eighteen he achieved fame, for he received in his lord's own handwriting a letter that he was better than the Fan K'uai or the Chang Liang of China.<sup>11</sup> This Matsuda always used to remind his son that a warrior must remember death at least three times a day, morning, noon, and night. And they say of him too that it's because he guarded death this way that he was better than Fan K'uai. How could anyone call all that cowardly? And that's the way Buddhism is too. Buddhism is to break through death by always working at dying, and to die free and unamazed when you actually go. Haven't you seen that some of the ancients escaped in their very body, that some got away sitting or departed standing? And here's proof that if a man works at dying he's free when the real thing comes: when Ōta Dōkan of Musashi was stabbed to death by an enemy's spear, he said with his last breath,

"At such a time  
I surely would cling to life  
Did I not know  
That my body never was."<sup>12</sup>

And Ninagawa Shin'uemon left to the world as his last words this poem:

"If I had died  
That same moment I was born  
Winds still would blow  
This evening, through these pines."

"I quite see that guarding death makes one act bravely," said the warrior, "But I'm always eager to charge faster and further than any practitioner, to be free with death, and to distinguish myself."

"By all means distinguish yourself and die well," said the monk. "There is, however, a difference between hot-blooded valor and the valor of morality. In our own time there certainly are strong men, men who

die well; but who could admire them? All their valor arises from ignorance, never from morality. Hot blood may give them a moment the might to smash iron walls, but once their hot bloodedness is gone and they're at their last breath, how will they act? It's then you can tell. Yes, in the old days there was a provincial deputy both glib and perverted. All the retainers grieved that the house was going to ruin, but the deputy was so forceful that they couldn't get a complaint through to their lord. A dozen men or so therefore decided to risk their lives to report the problem. One of them was a man who had won an absolutely peerless reputation in battle; but he withdrew. People discussed him at the time, and they judged that although he was up to charging a thousand mounted men, he was a coward when it came to the quiet valor to give his life for morality. Some men, too, are brave in battle but still disloyal to their lord, deceiving their companions and causing consternation among the retainers of the house, being corrupt as magistrates or as officials and tormenting the people. However forceful the spirit of fellows like these, they can hardly be called the soldiers of humanity and of morality. Therefore he is called a real warrior who studies the way of the wise, who rids himself of all such immoral tendencies as disloyalty or unfilialness; who, reaching the genuine mind, respects his lord and gives the people ease; and who considers his own life unimportant and keeps to morality. Without practice one side of you may be strong, but the other will be full of immorality. Once there was among the retainers of a certain house a man named Inose, and for various reasons he was to cut his belly. Just then a friend of his, a monk named Nyosui, came to visit him. 'Ah,' said Inose vehemently,

'death is more painful than I'd ever thought! What I want is the spirit of fierce courage. The lively fellow's the one who tramples down the body and throws it away.' And he continued, 'There's a saying of the Buddha, "Kill! Kill! If for an instant you do not kill, you will shoot like an arrow to hell";<sup>13</sup> and here's where it applies. I've often thought since the other day of cutting my belly well, but I'm not going to fall into the hell of fame and gain.' And with this admonishment to himself, Nyosui told me, Inose achieved non-striving.<sup>14</sup> At this point a large group of Inose's companions arrived. Inose addressed them as follows: 'Listen to the Buddha's teaching, all of you. I've just seen that every warrior must listen to it. If in the future any of you get into trouble for any reason and have to cut your belly, you may do it well, but your motive will only be fortitude, or a taste for the experience, or a desire for fame and gain. It won't be complete indifference and detachment. Now I'm going to die.' And pressing his palms together and shedding tears of emotion he said, 'How precious is the generosity of the Buddha and of the patriarchs! That I whose life has run out, who am about to die, should die in such great peace as this--it's a blessing hard indeed to return.' And his joy knew no bounds. 'It's time now,' he said, and made his way to the cemetery. His companions pointed out the west for him, but he said, 'Here's the west, here's the east--what nonsense are you talking?' And he cut his belly facing the west.<sup>15</sup> This proves that if you don't trust in the Buddha's teaching you'll never be one who's free with birth and death. From ancient times until our own latter age, many of those who've been known for their courage must have fallen into the hell of name and gain that Inose spoke of.

There's a big difference.' At these words of the monk, all the warriors present were convinced, and let faith arise in them.

A merchant then came forward. "People like me greatly respect the way of practice," he said, "but we can't enter Buddhism because these days honesty isn't enough to get anyone through life."

To him the monk replied, 'You're making a big mistake. I've never heard of anyone honest and compassionate starving to death at any time. It's the dishonest who've always--and who still do--ruin themselves and destroy their houses. The honest, compassionate man may at times be poor, but he has assured in the future a happy rebirth. Now try doing business in strict honesty. Just as fire burns and water runs downhill, good fortune, more than you need, will be yours. Once upon a time the rich man Sudatta,<sup>16</sup> his good karma running out, lost his entire fortune. From the depths of his pure and desireless heart, however, infinite treasure filled each of his storehouses and he was a wealthy man once more. And in Japan too, in the capital in Yamashiro,<sup>17</sup> there appeared from a pure and desireless heart gold coins, till the man became rich and was called, so they say, Mr. Cause-and-Effect. Just recently, in fact, there was another who had riches from his pure desireless heart. A man of Nagasaki in Hizen called Ichizaemon the Middleman, in 1653 after a big snowfall, picked up a money pouch with one kan and five hundred momme in it by the riverside. Delighted, he put it in his pocket and went his way, when a warrior with a page came running from the opposite direction, very pale, and looking frantically around in every direction. 'Did you drop anything?' asked Ichizaemon when he saw them. The warrior said no, but he still was looking all around. 'I've picked up something odd,' said Ichizaemon. 'Please describe to me what you've



lost.' At last the warrior actually noticed him. 'It's very stupid of me,' he said, 'but I've dropped my money pouch.' 'Isn't this it?' asked Ichizaemon, and took out the pouch. 'That's it,' said warrior and page together. 'Then I'll give it to you' said Ichizaemon, and did so. Now the warrior regained a little color, and he said, 'The kindness you show me is beyond imagination. Our two lives are now under your care. We are from the house of Ōmura. I was ordered to go and pay off my lord's accounts, and this boy here carelessly dropped the purse without even realizing he'd done so. We would have been helpless without your kindness. It meant our lives. And now thanks you you we'll be able to return to our quarters. We're very, very grateful. It's extremely rude of me even to take this pouch back, but with things the way I just told you, I really must.' And he made the gesture of receiving it respectfully two or three times. 'But where are you from?' he then asked. 'Please tell me your name. I'll come to thank you properly.' Ichizaemon at these words thought of the warrior's rank and he said, 'I have nothing worth calling a name, and I have no home to seat you in.' The warrior insisted, however. Ichizaemon said, 'I'll tell you, then. I'm one of the sixty middlemen of Nagasaki and everyone knows me as Domori no Ichizaemon.<sup>18</sup> The warrior assured him he would come to see him, and they parted. The next year Ichizaemon made over eight hundred me of silver, and with that as his capital became wealthy in a couple of years. Once he had lived in a broken-down, rented room, but soon he built himself a large house and hired servants, both men and women, and all of a sudden was a wealthy man. Isn't that getting a fortune for being without desire? And that happened just recently. Always trust in the story's message and keep to honesty."

Now someone came forward from the side and said, "Yes indeed, that Ichizaemon is a good friend of mine, and he's doing fine just as you say, this very minute. Everything about his fortunes has changed. Some years ago he had a daughter, a third mouth to feed. He and his wife didn't think they could manage the third mouth if they let her live, and they were about to kill her. Then Ichizaemon said, 'We mustn't kill her. This is the reward for my karma. I've always loved fishing, and I don't know how many tens of thousands of times I've hooked fish. It strikes me right in my heart that this is my reward. It's a good example for everyone, and the seed of my own enlightenment. This is my precious daughter,' he said, and spared the child. Now she's six years old. Since then he stopped killing any living thing, and put his trust in the way of practice."

The monk listened. "That's a fine man," he said. Each of you should learn from him and fear the rewards of karma. Cause and effect are crystal clear. In the province of Kai there's a lacquer merchant named X who's acquired the ability to catch sparrows by hand. He lies in wait at night for the sparrows who live in the reeds by the edge of a lake, and kills them all. Many young warriors have tried it, but none of them has ever even gotten a second. Getting the first one makes them yell, and the others all fly away. No matter how many the lacquer merchant catches he doesn't make a sound, so he crushes them all to death. But when the man had a daughter, she was born dumb. It's now a disaster for father and daughter alike. How could anyone fail to consider that not only is he bringing affliction upon himself in his own lives, but that suffering will visit even his children and his grand-

children? People who don't understand this and who insist on being fond of killing might just as well be taking the lives of their own children. That's something to be very careful of. It's what you get for taking the lives even of beasts, and it's still clearer when you kill one single human being.<sup>19</sup> What the Buddha taught is that if in this life you kill a man you will yourself be killed in seven lives. And he also taught that killing results in early death. Anyone who didn't fear such things would hardly be human. Even the world at large admits that humanity means to put sympathy first and to take every form of compassion to heart."

Now someone who had just come from Shimabara related, "In Shimabara there's a zato<sup>-20</sup> whose grandfather, during the Korean campaigns,<sup>21</sup> stole many gemstone eyes from statues of the Buddha. In retribution, his three younger brothers and sisters were given to live in blindness. This happened just recently, they say, and there are many other such examples in the world. Never make light of what's proper to the Three Treasures. Revere the Buddhas, the patriarchs and the kami, be deeply respectful and never in anything whatsoever go against what's right. Be sure that good and ill are rewarded at their source."

"These proofs of cause-and-effect are clear enough." said another, "but why is it that evil men flourish so?"

"Karma from this life that receives immediate reward in this life," replied the monk, "is known as karma simple and present. What's rewarded in the next life is known as karma simple and once deferred, and what's rewarded in the life after next is known as simple and twice deferred. There is besides karma that's rewarded at random in time, whenever a

moment of weakness leaves you open to it. It's known as indeterminate karma.<sup>22</sup> No karma you've done, no karma as small as a poppy seed even, goes unrewarded. I strongly urge you to avoid every evil act. For the more an evil man flourishes, the more terrible his end will be. The Buddha's teaching is that the evil man's prosperity is a sign that the good karma from his past lives is all used up. His next life will be evil only and he is sure to go to hell, just as a lamp flares up the moment before it goes out."

"Some good men have greater and greater misfortunes. Why is that?"

The monk replied, "That too is due to strong past karma. They're unlucky even if they do good. And what do you think would happen if they didn't do good? Here too, the Buddha's teaching is that this is a sign that bad karma from past lives is running out, and that in the life to come everything will be good and you'll reach Buddhahood. There's no need to discuss such things at length. To tell the truth, a good man's misfortunes are actually merit due to root-for-good.<sup>23</sup> As the old verse goes,

This world, so full of grief,  
To me brings joy,  
Reminding me  
How we've to hate the body.<sup>24</sup>

Grief is actually the support of enlightenment. Anyway, in this dream world what difference is there between good fortune and bad?

Then another person came forward and said, "The teaching that good must be encouraged and evil chastised is surely a device to keep the world quiet. I don't suppose there can actually be any such thing as a life to come. What remains after death to go round and round in transmigration and to undergo affliction?"

"It's the mind that remains and suffers," answered the monk. It's like when a house burns down but the owner escapes.d'

"I've seen people die," the person said, "but I've never seen anything stay behind. If there's anything that does, bring it out and show it to us."

"Why," said the monk, "where's my mind right now? What color is it? What shape? You tell me, just you tell me!"

So he pressed the questioner, but the man could make no reply.

"Then do I have no mind at all?" the monk asked. "You can't see it, but that proves I've got it. You can't say it isn't there just because you can't see it. It's because the mind is formless that you can see the body but not the mind. The body dies but the mind doesn't, and it definitely exists. The Buddha called people like you the heretics of nonbeing<sup>25</sup> or heretics who reject cause-and-effect. Furthermore, if you say it exists and it doesn't you've nothing to stand on, while if you say it doesn't exist and it does, you're making a big mistake. That's dangerous philosophizing. The Buddha mastered the three times and therefore knows clearly past, present and future; and he teaches sentient beings that one thought today may sink you in the ocean of suffering through long eons of the future. A good example is the way a go expert has a clear overview of the game and can see any number of moves ahead, so that he does exactly what's best with each stone he moves. But the ignorant man has no overview. All he can see is what's right before his eyes, today, and he questions the life to come just the way a bad go player can't see a single move ahead, so that he doesn't see he's dying all over the board and doesn't believe the expert can see forward

many moves. Instead of believing your own ignorant discriminations you'd do better to entrust yourself to the Buddha and to have faith in enlightenment in the life to come.d'

"I understand how sufferings come because the mind lingers," said the man, "but it can't be true that people fall into the way of beasts. Barley grows from barley, millet from millet. When a man dies he becomes a man and when a horse dies he becomes a horse. How could one possibly become a beast?"

"You don't even understand what makes a being sentient or insentient," answered the monk, "and you think plants and humans are the same? Plants belong to the insentient, they have nothing you could call a mind. All they have for seed is their fruit. Humans and beasts are sentient, all they have for seed is the mind. All beast that he is, if a beast does summon up a human mind he becomes a human being. The Nāga Princess was a beast, but she turned all the way into a Buddha.<sup>26</sup> And all human that he is, if a man has a beast's mind he instantly gets a beast's life. The teaching therefore is that the main thing is to purify the mind, always the mind.d'

"I understand you very well," came the rejoinder, but it doesn't matter because in the next life you'll be somebody else. You won't be ashamed to be a beast because you won't remember the Mr. So-and-so of this life at all. No suffering that comes your way will be suffering to you, and the same with the good that karma brings you. What do you say to that?"

The monk replied, "And you, you don't suffer when afflictions come to you right now in the present?"

"I do," the speaker said.

"Then do you remember your last life?" asked the monk. "It isn't remembering the past that makes suffering painful, it's the present itself that's painful. If you know no more than that you won't mind turning into a beast. Why, the immorality of it! You're in no position to hear about it once you're dead, of course, but the very essence of being human is to give the name one leaves behind a higher importance than shame in the present life.<sup>27</sup> Do you suppose you'd gladly be a madman? A madman's not in his right mind, he doesn't know a thing about shame."

Now someone else came forward. "I myself am very concerned about the life to come," he said, "but I've never heard anything from anyone who's ever died, to say he's saved or not. That makes me wonder."

"Of course you've never heard anything," the monk replied. "Even in this present life the dead are a long way off and send no news. And just think how not only are we lives apart from them after we die, but how those who are saved go a hundred thousand million worlds from here while those who aren't fall upside down into hell for eight hundred thousand eons. When would they ever take time to send us messages? Of course the literature of India, China, and Japan is full of proofs that ghosts do work their will in various ways, and you should have a look at these. But you have good enough news of yourself. Why do you want to get messages from elsewhere? It's because you've never done any practice that you're not helped. Aren't you suffering right now, in the land of ordinary men?"

"Why don't people remember their former lives?" asked the questioner.



"Because their ignorance is profound," replied the monk, "and because they therefore fail to comprehend their destiny. Even now people who haven't the strength to practice, who let their energy get away, grow senile, and become natural idiots. You can be certain, then, that no one will forget at the time of the one great matter, parting from life. In the old days in Sung China there was a scholar named Hsiao Ching-shun of Honan<sup>28</sup> who had passed his examinations. One day when he was visiting a temple called the Yu-lu-ssu<sup>29</sup> he fell from the veranda and broke his leg. He lost his understanding of the present, forgot the past, and couldn't remember a single word. A monk saw him and reflected that if a little accident could bring on such a result, parting from life itself would be certain to do so; whereupon he gave up everything, entered into the samādhi of meditation, and, realizing at last the great matter, emerged as the Zen master T'u-shuo-chao. If that's the way realizing where you're wrong moves you to practice, you'll obviously know your own fate and in fact countless long lives as well."

"Dying must be like going to sleep," someone said. "What suffering made the scholar forget all that?"

The monk replied, "If right now I drowned you in this sea, would you still die as peacefully as going to sleep? That's the time when unbearable sufferings like the agony of the Mountain of Death and the great River of the Three Ways<sup>30</sup> attack throughout your body. The pain's enough to end your life--it's not something words can describe. The wise man knows this beforehand, but the ignorant man is suddenly blocked when the time comes, and he suffers."

"The suffering I understand," said the speaker, "but after death it

must be like dreamless sleep. What suffering could there be then?"

"No, you've got it wrong," the monk answered. "You start suffering as soon as you're dead. The Buddha has taught that the agonies of the middle state<sup>31</sup> are hard to endure. You're like a poor man with nowhere to go, you wander around with never a place to rest a single night. But say for a moment it is like going to sleep. The suffering you'll get when you're born again will be as though you're waking up to helpless pain. It's like when there's a poisoned swelling in your body and you're happy because on the surface it's improved. It's bound to break out again. If you don't cut the root of bewilderment once and for all, you'll have no peace for ten thousand eons, for a thousand lives."

Now someone new came forward. He said, "I just can't understand this business about suffering after death. I'm going back to before I was born."

"Well," said the monk, "do you mean you remember before you were born? Most people remember nothing from before they were a couple of years old. How can you know what came before you were born? The Buddha said that high rank comes from veneration, low rank from contempt, long life from compassion, and early death from killing. Where do you come from? From hell, starving ghosts, or beasts, I'm sure. If you're going back where you came from, the three evil ways is where you're headed."

"I'm going back to original emptiness," the speaker protested.

The monk smiled. "A happy homecoming," he said, "yes indeed! Are you a natural Maitreya then, of the Buddha's own nature? You'll never get there without practice. A child of three could say as much, and they say it's hard for an old man of eighty to bring it off too. Everyone

knows about original emptiness, but it's not in any few lives that you'll get there. I don't suppose you could make one single bad thing empty, right now. Or is everything empty, from your own body to the whole world and to the whole realm? I'm sure everything you dislike, everything you're fond of, everything you're sorry about, and everything you want exists as solid as can be. No emptiness there. All that's empty's your mouth. You won't know what you're talking about until you're a man of no-form and no-thought."

Now another person came forward. He said, "It's fine that a bad man should fall to the evil ways, but there's no evil in me and I'm going up in my next life, prayer or no prayer. I've never wished anyone ill, I've never killed anyone, and I've never stolen a thing."

The monk listened. He said, "How could you possibly be so stupid as to think there's no evil in you while you've got the root of the eighty-four thousand passions, the three poisons and the ten evils in your heart all the time? There's a verse,

How sad you're satisfied  
That there's no fault in you  
Just because you've never stolen,  
Never killed a man!<sup>32</sup>

The ancients called this adopting robbers into your own home. You must drive out your robbers right away.d'

Then a somewhat older woman came forward. "From what you told us a while ago," she said, "we have no news of the dead because some go a hundred thousand million worlds from us and some founder far away in the Yellow Springs. So nothing we offer here, nothing we do here to remember the dead can reach them, and there's no point in all our sending good after the dead to guide them, is there?"

"No," said the monk, "you're wrong. There's nowhere the Buddha's power doesn't go, from the highest heaven down to where meet the disks of water and of gold.<sup>33</sup> That's why we do Buddhist services. When the merit of the Buddha's sutras and practices transfers to him, the celebrant is pure in mind and so becomes without thought and without mind, till his mind is identical with emptiness and travels everywhere. Even though it's one drop of water that turns to nectar and moistens the ten thousand souls in the three worlds, the power of the Buddha's dharanis is the power of all monks and of the awesome gods. This is the attitude to have when you make offerings and chant sutras. When the chanting offers up a single savor, it fuses with the hundred savors. It's like a bee visiting the flowers: all he takes is the taste, he leaves color and fragrance unimpaired. The quantity of offerings has nothing to do with it. The only thing that gets through is the spirit. And an expression of thanks, in the world, has nothing to do with the amount you give. The spirit's what the donor gets. It's like that."

"I'm very grateful to have heard how to chant sutras with the power of the Buddha," said the woman, "but what is it that helps the dead when the beneficial power of dharani or Nembutsu-saying does reach them?" Do please tell me just how this works."

"It's the mystery of the Buddha," the monk replied. "Reason simply can't deal with it. The Buddha himself said it's inconceivable. It's only Buddhas that know it amongst themselves. No one else does. That's no cause to doubt it, though. You may not know how it works, but you know it exists because prayers really do have extraordinary effects. It's called the merit of example. What they call the example wasp gets

flies and spiders together and tells them, 'Look like me! Look like me!' And they soon turn into wasps.<sup>34</sup> This is like the way the Buddha had compassion on sentient beings and taught the sutras. That's why you're naturally close to the Buddha's mind if you say sutras or the Nembutsu with faith. To explain it in understandable terms, you rise because the Buddha's intention, complete in all virtues, comes across to you. It's as though everyone on board our ship should get this country monk's spirit and forget all thoughts. That should show you."

Someone else now advanced. He said, "I've heard that sentient beings are originally Buddhas, but how did bewilderment begin?"

"Discriminating thought can't help you know the answer to that question," answered the monk. "It's after you've practiced that you'll awaken to yourself and know."

"I'm told that sentient beings are originally Buddhas," the speaker went on, "but that they become ordinary people. If that's so, aren't they lost when they're bewildered, even though when their practice bears fruit they're Buddhas?"

The monk replied, "Once you're a Buddha you're never bewildered again. Reaching Buddhahood means being void of self and at one with emptiness. So the self is gone. What's going to be bewildered then? Even if in the future a bewildering thing emerges out of space, it's something space is producing, not you. To say that the Buddha-nature gets bewildered and becomes an ordinary person means that clinging to self has just emerged from space. People make a great many mistakes in their understanding of Buddhahood. You must know what reaching Buddhahood really means."

Another now came forward. "In ancient times," he said, "there were men of great awakening and of great penetration. In our own time there are none. That's why the Buddha defined the period of the true teaching, of the semblance of the teaching, and of the latter days of the teaching. But some say that for us sentient beings in these latter days of the teaching the times let us be as we please, and that we still don't do anything we shouldn't.<sup>35</sup> Is that true?"

"The Buddha's teaching isn't subject to time," replied the monk, "it's subject to the mind. In these latter days strong faith is still enough to get you to the same space as the ancients themselves. Even in early times, you see, bad men were already running afoul of the law; and even in these latter days loyal men are still prized. But I don't understand what you mean by 'be as we please.' Would it occur to us that it's everyone as he pleases if this ship capsized this instant? We'd all want to be the first back up on the hull. Why wouldn't we all want to be left floating alone, if it were true? And if we don't do what we shouldn't when we're all just as we please, why don't we give our lust for virtue and distinction a rest? No amount of seeking will get us what has no seed in our past, but still we're always longing for this and that."

"I do understand that I'm to do good even when alone," the speaker said, "but won't it all have been to no purpose if I don't get enlightenment?"

The monk replied, "If you practice forcefully and still don't have enlightenment in this life, you're bound to get it in the life to come. It's like finishing tomorrow something you've started today. If aspiration

doesn't come up in you this time, when will you plan it for? They say that having no desire in this life is a great obstacle in the next. The Buddha's way, you see, is that your practice will gain you the virtue you're due even if you don't get enlightened. The Buddha taught that those in the great gathering eighty thousand strong<sup>36</sup> were not all the same, but that each would achieve the virtue due him. As they used to say in the old days, it's not dragon's liver or phoenix bones, but for the fellow who likes it the flavor's right. Someone who takes in a thousand koku doesn't get as much as the man with ten thousand koku, but he's better off than the man with a hundred. The thing is not to worry about other people but just to conquer oneself. Today I conquer myself as I was yesterday; this year I conquer myself as I was last. The ancients taught that a day of zazen is a day of Buddhahood and a life of zazen is a life of Buddhahood."

"However much you say not to worry about other people," the speaker remarked further, "the behavior of monks these days hardly inspires one to faith."

The monk listened. "That's the men's fault, not the Teaching's," he said. It's the monks we've to blame for the monks' bad behavior. The Confucians themselves say that the gentleman chooses virtue, not loss. The sin's the same as if I stole because others are stealing. Why should my mirror be other's failings, why shouldn't I be concerned about myself? Bad as monks' behavior may be, believe them just as long as what they teach is good and you're sure to reach virtue. In the same way, as sick as the doctor may be, you're all right just as long as his medicine works.<sup>37</sup> People these days are ignorant, and that's



their disease. What virtue is there in taking the good and bad of other people into your own heart and turning it into your hell? When a person's bent he's pleased to be followed, but when he's wise he speaks ill of his own shortcomings. Whoever has business with anyone is sure to speak ill of him. It's a great shame. Why don't people consider their own shame, even if they don't actually know what's right? The old texts themselves say that if you don't trust others or yourself, you're glad when things go right and you're not unhappy when things go wrong. As the old verse goes,

If only it were others' evil  
I find within my good!  
The evil of every man  
Is my very own.<sup>38</sup>

Yes, the reason we lay blame on others is that our own mind's bad. Repent of it, repent!"

Now came someone else. "I believe sentient beings are going to die out, because Buddhism prohibits intercourse with women," he said. "That's why I put my trust in Confucianism, not in Buddhism."

The monk listened. He said, "It's monks for whom Buddhism prohibits sexual intercourse. Householders are enjoined against lust, meaning only that they mustn't conceive affection for anyone other than their spouse. What, do Confucians play around as they please? And why are you so unhappy about sentient beings dying out? It's just the same as being sorry to see bad men dying out and good men increasing. The Buddha's wish to end sentient beings signifies that he means to make them all Buddhas. But the demons kings of the six great heavens,<sup>39</sup> they're the ones to be sorry to see sentient beings disappearing and turning into Buddhas. They plot to keep everyone from leaving the three

worlds, so the story goes. Your mind's the same as theirs, it's very like what they urge. Their sad wish is never realized, but the Buddha does grieve that he can't empty the world of sentient beings. This is one of the three things a Buddha can't do.<sup>40</sup> Anyway, those who slander Buddhism do so because they don't really know the Buddha's words. Long ago in T'ang China there was a scholar named Han T'ui-shih<sup>41</sup> who spoke very strongly against Buddhism. Abbot Ta-tien<sup>42</sup> said to him, 'You're slandering us because you've never read Buddhist books--because you're so used to reading Confucian writings. You're just like Shun's dog. Shun's dog didn't bark at Shun because he was used to him. But he wasn't used to Yao, so he barked at him. It's not that Yao wasn't a sage.' When he heard this, Han T'ui-shih changed his mind and took refuge in Buddhism. And then there's Wang Ching who said to Chang Wen-ting,<sup>43</sup> 'A hundred years after Confucius departed the world Mencius was born. Why should there have been no sages after that?' 'Why indeed?' replied Wen-ting. 'There are plenty of men better than Confucius or Mencius.' 'Who?' asked Wang Ching. Wen-ting said, 'Ma Ta-shih of Kiangsi, T'an-jan Ch'an-shih, Fen-yang, Wu-yeh, Hsueh-feng, Yen-t'ou, Tan-hsia, and Yun-men.'<sup>44</sup> 'What makes them better than Confucius or Mencius?' Wang Ching asked. 'The Confucian tradition is shallow,' said Wen-ting, 'it doesn't last. Everyone is taking refuge in the Buddha.' At this point Wang Ching wholeheartedly agreed that Chang Wen-ting was right. Later on Chang Wu-chin<sup>45</sup> heard the story and judged that it was the discourse of a man who knew. There's no telling how many others have taken refuge in Buddhism, including such Confucian or Taoist experts as Tung-p'o, Shan-ku, or Lo-t'ien.<sup>46</sup> They say that after P'u-t'ung of Liang there

was absolutely no one, from the highest princes on down to the lowest officers, who didn't take refuge in Buddhism.<sup>47</sup> In India, moreover, the ninety-six kinds of heretics taught their doctrines, worked their magic powers, and slandered the Buddha's teaching; but in the end they recognized they were wrong and every one of them became the Buddha's disciple. For people who go for the best, this is going for the best. For you with your clinging to self, to slander the true teaching is exactly like a swallow arguing about flight with the p'eng bird,<sup>48</sup> or like a firefly debating light with the moon. It's like not knowing the way to cast the false aside and to take refuge in the true."

"Is either Confucianism or Buddhism greater than the other?"

"Confucianism and Buddhism both teach praise of good and chastisement of evil," said the monk, "and that makes them teachers to the world. Between Confucianism and the Buddha's intention, however, there's a tiny divergence that amounts to the distance between heaven and earth. And even within Buddhism itself there's what's known as outflows and no-outflows.<sup>49</sup> The ways of Confucius and of Lao-tzu correspond to good with outflows. Saying that the three teachings are one refers to these two being one with the Buddhism that has outflows. They don't help one to escape from the karma of transmigration. The Buddhism without outflows, however, is nothing thought can deal with. There have been since ancient times many wise men and sages, but the great guide of the three worlds, Shakyamuni the Tathāgata, complete in all virtues, is far above them. In the earliest times men who had the Way judged that the intention of the sages is hard to fathom. How then should ignorant people in our own time succeed in divining the Buddha's

intention? The ordinary man's space goes as far as it goes, but he can't see people above him. The mountain monk<sup>50</sup> doesn't speak from the human ego. And that's the way the Teaching is too."

Someone else now came forward and said, "I have an only son who has a taste for being a monk, but he and I don't agree. I suppose I'll make him either a monk or a physician, though. I'm very sorry to ask this of you, but would you be kind enough to interpret a hexagram for him?"<sup>51</sup>

"I study the way of the Buddha and of the patriarchs, I know nothing of the way of yin and yang," the monk replied. "But could there be anything bad about a man becoming a monk? It's like asking if one's nature is good or bad after one's reached Buddhahood. Becoming a monk is the start of reaching Buddhahood. They say one's rank then transcends the three worlds and one's virtue stands high in the ten directions. How many in the greater chiliocosm will go the same way? It's not just one man who rises, so the teaching goes, but for every son who becomes a monk nine families are born in heaven. A human body is hard to get, so clearly, becoming a disciple of the Buddha is exactly like the blind turtle coming upon the floating log.<sup>52</sup> As I said before, we won't escape transmigration, not for ten thousand eons or a thousand lives, if all sentient beings at once aren't rid of birth and death. So a monk makes his start toward escape. In the Vinaya precepts<sup>53</sup> the Buddhas of the three times teach that no one ever achieves the Way as a householder. Yes, there no doubt are natures more or less suited to earning a living in the world, but there's no nature it could possibly be bad for to be a Buddha. The four rivers run into the sea and have no true name.<sup>54</sup>

Think of the saying of the Buddha, that when the four qualities<sup>55</sup> seek monkhood they are the Buddha's disciples. What could block you when you're back to the original source? What could fail to be attuned to a nature that has the same root as heaven and earth, the same substance as all things? It's impossible to describe all the merit a monk has. By that merit any bad karma, any evil attitude of mind, any vengeful ghost or foe whatsoever will be instantly destroyed. And the proofs are before our very eyes. Isn't it true that once any evildoer, whoever he may be, enters a monastery and becomes a monk his sins vanish immediately and his life is saved?<sup>56</sup> And how much more will this be so, then, of a genuine monk? Whatever could equal in worth the fundamental will, sustained through all births and lives, to undertake to grow to Buddhahood in company with all sentient beings; the will to escape forever from the three worlds, to requite on high the four generosities, and to save below the three existences?"<sup>57</sup>

"Then are monks the only ones who reach Buddhahood?" the same person asked.

"Householders reach Buddhahood too, if they have a monk's mind," the monk replied. "And if monks have a householder's mind they're doubly wrong. They may look exactly as though they're monks, but if they've no concern for the Way and it's just a livelihood to them, being a monk actually is the seed of bad karma. In fact Buddhist practice is founded on all the trades and occupations. It's independent of form. I've heard that it's bad for practice to become a monk, especially if you're a warrior, because your energy then goes slack."

"I hear that monks do hard, painful practices that people of

lesser capacity couldn't manage. Is that true?"

"Very hard practices, certainly. But there are practices for everyone, so there's no prejudice against lesser capacity. Anyway, however hard the practice, nothing could be harder than dying. If you're on the Way, why would death make you retreat? In the old days too they used to say that you shouldn't live without the Way, even if it means dying to get it. You should give your life for the Way because what point is there in living on without it? Besides, your given occupation has a term, and even if you're contented you're still going to die when it's time. Never mind that you feel regretful, there's nothing to regret. Why not devote yourself to morality instead of wasting yourself on the hills and the fields? People who make their life in the world do hard, painful practices too, you know. The great cleave to the great and the small to the small. Watch how people take pleasure in life as they make their way through the world and you'll see that none of them consider peace. There's nothing but distress everywhere. They seem only to suffer, from birth to death. And each of their thoughts, especially, is the karmic seed of future hell. To tell the truth, monks are much more comfortable. They're never disappointed because they have no worldly ambition, and if they do have ambitions they're satisfied as long as they don't let themselves be carried away by them. And since they're not dependent on anyone they have no grudges. Since they have no grudges they don't get angry, and since they don't get angry they have no grief or sorrow. If they're hungry they beg and eat, and if they're cold they have paper bedding. Since they covet nothing they don't let their mind dwell on anyone, and they

fear nothing because they've no enemies. They wander as they wish from province to province because they've no wife or children. There's travel money everywhere and food always up ahead. All this is because the Tathāgata's portion of good fortune hasn't run out.<sup>58</sup> Everyone has a portion of food, a portion of life and a portion of good fortune. There are sure to be gifts from Heaven. If you devote your life to wandering pilgrimage, no danger will amaze you. Your whole resolve is simply to discard your body, yours alone. You've no worries. No one can embarrass you because you've no pretensions, and since you've cast off the world there's no one to be bitter at. With that one cutting blade, the mind, the body's quite safe. In the whole world there's nothing to stand in your way. And so you reach enlightenment in the end."

"Naturally you're quite safe," said the speaker, "with your one robe and your one bowl, free of ambition, unconcerned about yourself. But in our time there are many learned laymen too. Won't you be sorry when in your untutored state other people argue you down?"

"There are bound to be dull monks just as there are bound to be clever laymen. Not even laymen ought to be ignorant. Abbot Chao-chou said, 'I'll learn from anyone who's better than me, even a three year old. I'll teach anyone who's not up to me, even a centenarian.'<sup>59</sup> Ignorance is the way to learn. On the other hand, to fail to learn out of self-centeredness is a shame. Wisdom is what contributes to one's enlightenment, not to one's superiority over others. The learned are learned and the ignorant are unlearned, but what could distress you when your mind's full? A monk is said to have cast off the world; he



casts off the opinion of worldly people and pays no attention to it whatever. When in the old days Shishi Sonja<sup>60</sup> was asked by the king for his head, he gave it up without regret. He'd gotten away from the world, and so having no thought of anger he didn't suffer. That's the way to let the body go with no regrets. Why listen to boors and dullards? The old texts themselves say that praise doesn't please such a man and that he pays no heed to slander. A sutra says that for a bad man to slander a good man is like kicking up dust against the wind. The other isn't harmed and everything comes back on oneself so that disasters are sure to strike. What could be as stupid as to go around earnestly slandering someone who remains completely unaffected? In the old days a heretic cursed the Buddha but the Buddha paid no attention to him. The heretic finally got tired of cursing and stopped. The Buddha turned to him and said, 'When you give someone a gift he doesn't accept, does the gift come back to you or not?' The heretic said that it comes back. 'You cursed me just now,' the Buddha then went on, 'and I didn't accept it. So the trouble comes back to you.' Then the heretic recognized that he was wrong and became a disciple. With this attitude, how can a disciple of the Buddha suffer?"

"So the practitioner isn't afraid of what people see or of what they say. Does this mean he's not ashamed to do bad things?"

The monk replied, "The Buddha taught that the Teaching itself is to be discarded, and still more what's not of the Teaching. Why should he violate the Teaching? It's just that he's ashamed in his own mind instead of being embarrassed before others. In the last analysis it's when you make your own conduct right that you can pay no heed to people's slander. A practitioner will act despite any slander if he's

following the true teaching; but no praise can make him violate it. The monks people praise nowadays are all worldly monks who violate the Teaching. It's the ones they slander who have no human sensitivities and who are the true monks. The whole thing's like a monkey with nine noses laughing at a monkey with one."

Completely convinced, the questioner withdrew. Now a warrior getting on in years spoke up. "I have many things to ask you," he said to the monk. "I hear oibara<sup>61</sup> is utterly wrong, but please tell me exactly why."

"Well," said the monk, "guidance for the life to come generally means how to be unborn and unextinguished, not coming and not going, still and at ease--how to get away from transmigration. But it's inconceivable that one could encourage any such cause of transmigration as the desire to seek to go with one's lord to a good rebirth. Monks these days don't know the truth of the matter, that's why this evil has emerged. Who would do it, if monks showed how oibara turns to bad karma for the lord? It's no fault of the people of the world, it's the fault of the monks. But there are some who get the right instruction from a monk and yet who still don't desist because they don't want to go back on their given word. That's not loyalty to their lord, that's concern for their own name and gain. It does seem too as though there are lords who know this well enough, but who can't repress the desire for a companion in death. Once a daimyo on the verge of dying gathered his pages together and said, 'I'm sure you're all going to keep me company now;' and each one promised he would. One among them came forward, however, and said, 'Sir, it's not right to go with you this time.

Please allow me to abstain.' People at the time criticized the one, saying his mind wasn't strong and so although he'd gotten to die, he hadn't gotten to live; and they praised the other as a strong person who'd been alive in a situation where life was difficult. Life and death are both subject to morality alone."

"China is a large land, hard to rule and control," said the warrior, "but I hear that even without specific laws they have none of the religion of the Southern Barbarians. Japan is a small land, easy to govern, and our laws are particularly strict--to say nothing of the fact that Japan is a long way from China. And yet why is it that Christianity won't die out here? One or two missionaries make their appearance every year.<sup>62</sup> What's the reason for this?"

"China is a land where the true teaching is widespread," replied the monk, "and people are well acquainted with the Way. That's why the perverted teaching doesn't appear there. In Japan we're duped by the perverted teaching because the true teaching isn't widespread."

"Then are Japanese more stupid than Chinese?"

"No," said the monk, "it's just that since the true teaching isn't widely known here ignorant folk are taken in by the barbarians from the south. If only the true teaching would appear the problem would clear up immediately without any need for laws. It's not only the perverted teaching either--the need for all the other laws would clear up too.<sup>63</sup> That's because ignorance would cease and there would be no more bad people. The Saishō-kyō<sup>64</sup> says that the seven calamities don't strike the land when the true teaching is present. There are many examples of this in India, China, and Japan. In the old days in China there was a

king called Wu-tsung, and he ascended the throne in the first year of Hui-ch'ang.<sup>65</sup> In the fifteenth year of the same he killed monks, razed temples, and destroyed Buddhism, claiming that he was eliminating a pernicious error. The next year, however, Wu-tsung died of a tumor on his back. The seven calamities immediately appeared in the land and the people suffered afflictions. This was known as the judgment of Wu-tsung. Then there ascended to the throne a Son of Heaven who had faith in the Three Treasures, and the land was at peace. And Japan's Prince Shōtoku<sup>66</sup> too brought Buddhism over in order to govern the land. It was the first time Buddhism ever came to our country. It's from being the foundation for the governing of the world that the Three Treasures get their name. And temple names like Ankokuji, Kokushōji, Taiheiji, Gokokuji, and Anrakuji refer to the same thing.<sup>67</sup> But the sects of today have forgotten the Buddha's intention and they don't know how to be a treasure for the land. On the contrary, many of them are enemies of the country. When a monk lets the genuine spirit arise and guides the people, the great light of the Buddha complete in all virtues will appear, and the Buddha's teaching and the world's teaching will be accomplished in all things."<sup>68</sup>

"What use is completeness in all virtues?" the warrior asked.

"You have to get away from yourself," the monk replied. "Once you're away from yourself you can apply completeness in all virtues. What makes the practice is the spirit of fierce courage. The stronger this spirit gets as it matures, the more it can serve. Without Buddhism a man's bound to be slack somewhere, however strong he may be. You can't be a good, solid fellow without practice. There used to be a

master of the martial arts called Miyamoto Musashi.<sup>69</sup> He fought more than sixty duels with the famous warriors of his time, from the age of sixteen on, and he won them all. One year he lived at Akashi in Harima. Someone came one day and asked to see him, saying he was called Gonnosuke the Peerless and that he'd heard of Musashi. When Musashi's disciples went out to see they found a huge man six feet tall with a sword, and eight disciples every bit as big with him. That Gonnosuke was famous, and the word had gone around so that a particularly large number had accompanied him. Musashi's disciples were no little terrified. Only two were with him at the time and they reported the situation to Musashi, all wrought up at the thought that they were in for it this time. Musashi was whittling toothpicks. He said to show the visitor in. So the disciples admitted Gonnosuke and in he strode, a giant of a man and sharper than anyone. This was the sixth month, so he was wearing a haori of habutae silk with a red sun disk on it, and written in gold letters from shoulder to waist the words 'Gonnosuke the Peerless, founder of Japan and finest warrior in the land.' His eight companions sat down formally all in a line. At the sight Musashi's disciples were certain this was it, and they loosened their swords in their scabbards. Musashi, however, remained exactly as he had been. 'Are you Gonnosuke?' he asked as he went on whittling his toothpicks. 'I've heard of you, but I'm afraid I've never been able to pay you a visit. I'm delighted you've come.' 'As you say,' replied Gonnosuke, 'I'd been wanting to meet you but had never been able to do so. Then lately I decided to make a trip to Kyushu and my boat touched nearby. When I heard you were here I came to see you.' After these formalities

were over the talk turned to the profession of arms. 'I've trained myself in combat not only in all the eight provinces of the Kantō, but as far as Mutsu<sup>70</sup> itself,' said Gonnosuke, 'but I've never met my match. That's why I'm on my way to practice arms in the provinces of the west. I've had the privilege of seeing your father's own incomparable sword, but I hear that you've now had it reworked.<sup>71</sup> I'd be much obliged if you'd let me have a look at it.' 'You wouldn't find anything special about the incomparable sword if you did see it,' said Musashi. But Gonnosuke insisted. 'Take on my disciples, then, and show me your sword,' he said. 'No,' said Musashi, 'my art of arms isn't in the making and in the use of the sword. That's because my art of arms is to stop a man from bringing anything off, however he comes at me. You keep that in mind and attack me with your sword, and I'll show you. Delighted, Gonnosuke said he would indeed do so, and from out of a brocade bag he took a wooden sword over four feet long and inlaid with patterns in gold along its entire length. Musashi took the bit of wood about two feet long that he'd been whittling toothpicks from, and stood up. 'Go right ahead,' he said. Instantly Gonnosuke attacked. With his little bit of wood Musashi blocked him time after time and wouldn't let him thrust. Gonnosuke struck with his sword reversed and just touched with the point the very end of Musashi's sleeve. 'Hit! Hit!' shouted Gonnosuke. 'That's no hit,' said Musashi. 'What good does a touch like that do you? I'll show you what a hit is.' And they joined again. Gonnosuke's face showed he meant to strike hard, and he set about doing so; but he couldn't get his sword out. Unconsciously, he retreated. Musashi backed him into a corner of the room and struck him between the

eyebrows a sharp blow which soon produced redness and swelling. At this point Gonnosuke saw he was wrong and became Musashi's disciple. Musashi was a great master, but if it hadn't been for the power of Buddhist practice he'd have had points of weakness. He was a great painter too, and once he had an order from his lord to paint a picture of Bodhidharma. So Musashi painted as hard as he could, but his brush wouldn't work and he couldn't paint as well as usual. At last he went to bed without having finished. Suddenly in the middle of the night he got up and had lamps lit. 'I couldn't paint him because I wasn't using my real skill,' he said, 'the art of arms.' And he painted Bodhidharma perfectly. When later on Musashi's disciples asked him what he'd meant Musashi said, 'I couldn't paint because I'd dropped my art of arms and was afraid before my lord. What I mean by my art of arms is that when I've my sword in hand there's no I and no other, and heaven and earth are demolished. What high station, what low rank could exist? That's the energy I painted with, that's why the picture came off.' Musashi's disciples were deeply impressed. A devotee now deceased<sup>72</sup> said that when the man of arms takes up his sword he's in zen samādhi, but that when he puts it down again he goes slack and is an ordinary man. He said that a Buddhist never goes slack, no matter what he encounters, because he always dwells in the diamond mind; and that he therefore is free to act in every situation. That's what he was talking about. It's as though at arms Musashi were fearless, but a painting had made him afraid. Just act from the spirit of fierce courage and you'll be a good, solid fellow."

The warrior was very happy. He said, "I perfectly understand that



one should practice the spirit of fierce perseverance. But the way we ignorant, ordinary people are in this latter age, the energy to do so is hard to come by. Please give us a practice attuned to our energy.' And he looked around the ship. 'Talk about an encounter that happens once every few thousand years,' he said--'this is it. How long will we have to wait for our next chance if we let this one slip by? To meet such a link with enlightenment in the latter age we live in surely calls for gratitude. Come, all together, before this monk, let's summon up great aspiration and set out on the road to enlightenment.'

Everyone agreed, and all saluted the monk together. 'Please,' they said, 'in your compassion, give us ignorant people a practice that will help us.'

The monk replied, "The ancients taught that zazen is the essential practice for anyone of any capacity whatsoever. But it's hard to have the real energy for zazen in our latter age. You'll naturally dwell in the energy for zen samādhi if you say the Nembutsu forcefully. This is the indivisible unity of Zen and Pure Land in a nutshell. Zen Master Yung-ming<sup>73</sup> said that where there's Zen and no Pure Land nine tenths are missing; and that where there's Pure Land and no Zen, there's every practice and every good. This practice is the one practice that suits impartially wise men and fools, monks and laymen, men and women, nobles and commoners, and that's equally appropriate in ancient times and in our latter age. For the Way, it's best to be unlearned. Study is always an enemy. Small knowledge, they say, is an obstacle to enlightenment. Abbot Dōgen says that a man named Kūami of Mount Kōya was a master of both the exoteric and the esoteric traditions, but that in time he began

to practice the Nembutsu.<sup>74</sup> Once when a scholar came and asked him what his doctrine was, Kūami said he couldn't read a word, he'd forgotten everything; and that all he did was say the Nembutsu. He was for Dōgen a model of passion for the Way. Dōgen said to discard all study of literature and poetry and to work away steadfastly. He said that when writing a record of sayings one shouldn't pay any attention to style but write just as it comes--as long as you've heard the truth your writing will be a treasure for students. Anyone who refuses to read it because it's badly written wouldn't get anything out of it anyway. Such is Abbot Dōgen's main teaching. And Hōnen Shōnin teaches that even if you've mastered every sutra the Buddha ever taught, you have to discard it all and say Namu Amida Butsu on equal terms with any devout nun.<sup>75</sup> Learning really is useless. There are plenty of learned people these days, but when it comes right down to it they can't say a word. What wisdom you do get out of them is wrong. Some of them live in the mountains and write verse in Chinese or Japanese. Their poems live in the mountains very nicely, but they don't go into the mountains at all. However much their verses may be on the Way, their own minds are nowhere near the Way. It's absurd! All the other arts monks practice are the same. All you have to do is be earth and say the Nembutsu steadfastly."<sup>76</sup>

"If salvation is in simply saying the Nembutsu, even in total ignorance, please tell us exactly how it works."

"One reaches Buddhahood," replied the monk, "because by the merit of the Nembutsu all bad karma and all passions are destroyed. The efficacy of these six letters is beyond the imagination of us sentient beings."<sup>77</sup> Buddhas are the only ones who know it. They say that as a

mantra the Nembutsu is like a password in war. Once in a certain army's camp they decided on two secret words, 'u' and 'mu.d'<sup>78</sup> Anyone who said mu was a friend, and anyone who said u they considered an enemy and killed. But all the prisoners in the camp said mu and got away. I don't know anything about the efficacy of saying mu but it seems as though all the people who imitated the others got away. I know nothing about the efficacy of calling on Amida, but everyone who does so is saved. Hōnen Shōnin taught that you'll be reborn in paradise if you say the Nembutsu, even if you doubt the whole thing. It's a dharma-gate<sup>79</sup> that the Tathāgata Amida took five hundred years to ponder, so that its merit really is infinite. The Buddhas in the six directions clearly praise it. Never doubt it! Of all teachings it's the best, and it has the most merit. The Buddha taught that in the ten thousand years of the latter age of the Teaching all sutras but the one teaching of Amida would disappear.<sup>80</sup> This means that now we're in the latter days all other teachings have come to an end, and that this calling of the name alone remains to bring all sentient beings to enlightenment. Doesn't this dharma-gate deserve our gratitude? But I observe that our own time corresponds to the Teaching's diffusion in the latter age. And I'm told that Buddhism had been finished in China too, but that in recent years a man called Master Lien-ch'ih<sup>81</sup> has appeared on the scene and revived it, having drawn the eight sects together. They say a big Buddhist revival is now getting under way in China. And Master Lien-ch'ih's own basic practice is that of the Nembutsu. After him, Shou-cheng Po-shan<sup>82</sup> of the Sōtō sect has used it too. In his sayings Po-shan asks why we don't concentrate on Amida instead of on the koans.

T'ung-yung Fei-yin<sup>83</sup> of the Rinzai school says the same thing. And in the gatherings of Abbot Yin-yuan and of Master Ch'ao-yuan Tao-che who've come over to us from China,<sup>84</sup> for the services of the second hour,<sup>85</sup> they say either the Amida Sutra<sup>86</sup> or the Nembutsu. In Japan too, men like the lay monk Shōsan and Zen Master Ungo<sup>87</sup> have reestablished practice, though it had long since been abandoned; and they themselves did nothing but the Nembutsu. Zen Master Ungo wrote a book called Ōjō yōka and offered it to all sentient beings. And the monk Shōsan wrote the books called Nembutsu monogatari and Ninin bikuni in which he distinguishes five kinds of Nembutsu and teaches the Nembutsu in five stages. Just now I'll talk about the fourth of them, the Nembutsu of right thoughts before death. Shōsan says, 'Your aim must be to remove yourself from birth and death, so that you practice the Nembutsu swiftly, keenly, giving up the things of this present existence, discarding your life in each instant of thought, and determined in fact that this very moment shall be your last. This for certain is the Nembutsu of right thoughts before death. Therefore an ancient said that if it's a matter of common practice for you to face death, facing death for you will be a commonplace affair.'<sup>88</sup> That's the way Shōsan Dōnin taught the Nembutsu. Now you must make up your minds once and for all that you'll really do as he says, so that even if death could stand before you you can die with your mind sharp. You must throw away everything you hate, everything that irritates you, everything you're sorry about and everything you want, and say Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu. As the merit of the Nembutsu builds up the fixation on clinging to what has form will die out, you'll reach the spirit that's free with birth and

death, and from right thoughts before death you'll be Reborn. What aspiration to sustain through all births and lives could compare with this?"

Then all the passengers aboard, high and low, listened. 'How wonderful,' they thought, 'that someone completely illiterate can have freedom from birth and death! How could I fail to practice it?' and they went in at the gate of the Nembutsu in joyous faith. No one aboard any longer had any doubts. But just as they were disposing themselves to samādhi in the Nembutsu without other thought, and to sure Rebirth, another person came quietly forward.

"I don't care that you say," he said, "I just can't believe it. It isn't possible not to desire, not to worry about oneself; it isn't possible to die at ease!"

The monk listened. "Your doubts are like a heavy drinker seeing a light drinker and disbelieving that he actually does drink only lightly, because the heavy drinker can't image why anyone wouldn't like drinking as much as himself. Or again you're like a man who was born blind and who can't believe what he hears people say about the light of the sun and the moon. Believing that what all the saints have said, from the Buddhas and patriarchs on down, is nonsense, refusing to listen to the truth but taking as a standard one's own foolish mind--that's what the ancients called foxy doubts and distrust. Someone who won't see what's true no matter how often he's told, someone who doesn't understand morality, doesn't belong to humankind. The Buddha himself taught that someone without shame is no different from an animal. The Buddha's instruction is very clear. The passengers aboard this ship

I needn't mention, but the captain and the crew themselves all understand me. The only ones who won't listen are these pet birds and you. You've got to reverse your whole attitude and put your trust in the way of the Buddha and of the patriarchs. If you don't you'll never rise, not while a thousand Buddhas come and go in the world. You'll be the runt of the litter, left behind in hell forever. Beware! Beware!"

"Does that mean the Buddha is going to leave me as the runt in hell because he doesn't like me for refusing to enter the Buddha's way?"

"Why no," replied the monk, "it's your karma that keeps you there. You rise no more because in the strength of your own karma you will not follow the Buddha's teaching, even though the Buddha does have compassion for any bad man. When at last a practitioner reaches Buddhahood the Buddha has no grief. When an ignorant man is to rise no more for long eons The Buddha sorrows for him, for he's a man worthy of compassion. Once the Buddha wept red tears from his two eyes. The Venerable Ānanda asked him why. The Buddha said, 'Because I'm sad that sentient beings fall into hell out of indifference to the Way. Sentient beings who have no link to enlightenment are very hard to save!'<sup>89</sup> And that's what he meant."

When presented with this kind explanation, the objector changed his mind. Pressing his hands together he apologized. The monk nodded in acknowledgement and said, 'All right, all right, any little change of mind is a treasure for ten thousand kalpas. Just be a sayer of the Nem-buttsu. You can't trust old age or youth, so even when you're young the way to run is toward enlightenment. And people over half a hundred years old, then--will they neglect to practice when they think to be

concerned about their end? When someone already close to old age wishes to forget the things of the world and devotes himself to the Nembutsu, and yet actually forgets enlightenment because of the importance he attaches to this world, that is because he is thoroughly steeped in bad karma. There are many such people in the world. Just throw away the things of this life; forget every clinging thought of the world, and steadfastly say the Nembutsu. If you're in the world but not of the world you'll find the world easy to get through. There's a verse:

A pause, and from the past  
Pass into what will be:  
Let wind blow if wind will  
And rain if it will rain.<sup>90</sup>

And another:

It is so true, alas--  
How many are satisfied  
That life has fulfilled  
All of their desires?<sup>91</sup>

And another:

The living die,  
The dead gain ever more  
In this my life, alas, how long  
Am I bound to mourn?<sup>92</sup>

And yet another:

Love for the body  
Brings the body pain;  
Without love for the body  
The body's at ease.<sup>93</sup>

Just let body and mind go and say Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu. Without strength of faith you've no strength at all. That's what the old monk has to say. That's what it comes down to in the end. It's the one great matter for everybody."

And he clenched his fists, set his gaze and intoned, "Namu Amida



Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu." At this everyone on board shed still further tears of emotion and joined him in the Nembutsu unswervingly, with single mind; and they seemed to have no other thought at all. With the passengers saying the Nembutsu and beating time on the sides of the boat, the crew were soon saying it too, and rowing to the rhythm. A light breeze filled the sail, light shone, and the ship flew, as it were, through space. One might have believed that they were sailing the lake of the eight merits<sup>94</sup> aboard the ship of the Universal Vow,<sup>95</sup> with Kannon and Seishi<sup>96</sup> at the oars. The ocean surface itself seemed to glisten with golden light. Gold, silver, and crystal were the sands. Along the shore plovers were crying, sounding as though they too were calling on the Buddha and upon the Teaching, and keenly touching the heart. Angels came down from heaven, dragon gods rose up from the deep, and it was as though the very fish in the eternal stream had suddenly obtained the fruit of the enlightened one. The Buddhas of the ten directions appeared, riding upon the radiance of their joy, and all felt they were with them in the paradise of the Pure Land. Tears of happiness overflowed their sleeves, and they utterly forgot who and where they were. But the monk rapped his stick on the gunwale for them to stop. The exaltation went and their voices died. The monk swept his gaze around the ship and spoke in a loud voice.

"What a sorry Nembutsu!" he said. "Right away you're clinging to form and you've fallen into being picturesque. This old monk was getting your energy very well, he knows. The least clinging to form makes karma for transmigration. You see, the aim of Buddhist practice to be rid of forms and names. What we call the Nembutsu of right thoughts

before death is saying Nembutsu to conquer all things, without any strong clinging to any form, and casting one's life away in each instant of thought. With strength of spirit there's not one thought's disease. And this we call the Nembutsu of no-mind and no-thought. Clench your fists, set your gaze, and all round the clock without break say it to wipe out all love of this body, all thoughts of the world. If you don't, you won't be able to use any of it when you're facing death. You're so slack! What a spiritless Nembutsu!"

Thus he severely reproved them, and all on board caught his energy in full. They rose as conquerers above all things, and on they sailed, each with his Nembutsu urging on the others and indifferent to high noon or to night, until in no time their ship had touched upon the coast of Satsuma. They had arrived at the other shore. All thanked the monk together and each went his way. And the monk himself rose up and mingled with the travelers, bound one knew not where.

NOTES FOR NININ BIKUNI

<sup>1</sup>A mountain in Honan and a famous burial ground.

<sup>2</sup>A sacred mountain in Shantung. The reference must be to the smoke of sacrificial fires.

<sup>3</sup>By Japanese count.

<sup>4</sup>In theory the soul of the dead wanders for forty-nine days in the interval between death and rebirth, a period called the middle state (chū 中有) or, to use the more familiar Tibetan term, the bardo. In fact it was apparently normal to mourn and to offer prayers for only thirty-five days. The seventh, fourteenth, twenty-first, and thirty-fifth days were especially important. Hence it is these days which mark the stages of decomposition of the corpse of the friend of Suda's wife, below.

<sup>5</sup>Most of the verse in Ninin bikuni, like this one, are by Shōsan himself. No notes will be given for Shōsan's own poems.

<sup>6</sup>The scarlet chamber and the green curtain belong to a stock description of the lovers' bedroom in nō. It ultimately comes from the poem "The Everlasting Wrong" (Ch'ang-hen-ko 長恨歌) by Po Chū-i 白居易 (772-846). "Wing to wing. . ." below is from the same source.

<sup>7</sup>A male-female pair of a certain species of shrimp enter, while still young and small, the space within a sea creature called the Venus' flower basket, a kind of sponge. There the two shrimps grow until they are too big to get out again. They are paired for life.

<sup>8</sup>The pilgrim seeking shelter for the night is the typical figure to appear at the beginning of a nō play.

<sup>9</sup>It is typical of the ai in a nō play to protest that he has not witnessed the place or the event under discussion in person, but has only heard about it from others. The lady is playing here about the same role as the ai since she is the one who gives Suda's wife the directions she needs to get to where she wishes to go.

<sup>10</sup>This scene recalls the battle scene in the nō play Yashima. Shōsan knew the passage by heart.

<sup>11</sup>Author unknown.

<sup>12</sup>The courtesans in the nō play Eguchi reflect likewise that their present lowly condition as women is a reward for lives gone by. This passage is full of similar echoes of the common sentiments of nō.

<sup>13</sup>In a typical nō play the waki, whose role Suda's wife is playing, is temporarily barred from access to the place where the action will occur. Often the ai is responsible for this, as in Nue or Yamamba. The passage in which Suda's wife gets lost in her search for the grave is roughly equivalent, especially since the real point of this part of the story is the dream Suda's wife has at the country temple.

<sup>14</sup>Susuki plumes are a commonplace in poetry. It is notable that the well in the nō play Izutsu is surrounded by this same susuki, and that Narihira's tomb is said in Izutsu to have susuki plumes nodding over it.

<sup>15</sup>A poem by Shijō Nakanomiya 四條中宮 in the Shika waka shū  
詞花和歌集 .

<sup>16</sup>This is surely an allusion to the sotoba in Sotoba Komachi. The pine tree planted in someone's memory, below, likewise appears in nō. In nō, however, it is sure to be vigorously green since it stands for the living past, for timelessness. Shōsan has the pine show unmistakably that the past is gone forever and that death awaits us all.

<sup>17</sup>One wonders if these are the tombs of the recently fallen warriors. They seem not to be, however, for Suda's wife apparently does not take them as such. They are simply general reminders of death.

<sup>18</sup>This is exactly what a waki does. Then he dreams his dream-- a dream which will show him something more real than the everyday world as it appears to the everyday mind. The dream ends the way Yashima and Matsukaze end: with the sound of the wind in the pines.

<sup>19</sup>Shōsan once actually asked a woman visitor if she would be able to handle a corpse she might find in her way. The woman was horrified and said she could not (See Roankyō III-71).

<sup>20</sup>See Roankyō, note 10.

<sup>21</sup>See Roankyō, note 62.

<sup>22</sup>See Roankyō, note 61.

<sup>23</sup>See Roankyō, note 86.

<sup>24</sup>This experience is the subject of the nō play Kantan. In this Chinese legend a traveler sleeps upon a magic pillow and dreams through a whole lifetime in the course of which he becomes supremely wealthy and powerful. When he wakes he finds that the rice which had been on the stove when he fell asleep has not even finished cooking yet. He, meanwhile, has seen all the folly of the world.

<sup>25</sup>A familiar image for a link established in previous lives. This whole page is a torrent of stock images from nō and classical poetry.

<sup>26</sup> Author unknown.

<sup>27</sup> This old woman plays the same sort of ai role as the lady whom Suda's wife first meets. Indeed the tale from now on follows the same nō-like pattern as the beginning of the story. The resistance "our nun" encounters in her progress toward enlightenment is the parallel to her getting lost before; and her decisive encounter with the old nun is the true realization of the dream of the skeletons. Indeed the first lady's sermon-like counsel is parallel to the avowed sermon of the old nun.

<sup>28</sup> See Bammin tokuyō, note 32.

<sup>29</sup> See Mōanjō, note 37.

<sup>30</sup> See Bammin tokuyō, note 43.

<sup>31</sup> Goun 五 福 : all physical, mental, and other elements in the phenomenal world.

<sup>32</sup> See Roankyō, note 13.

<sup>33</sup> Amida's vow to save all sentient beings, who would otherwise be too weak to save themselves, by his grace alone.

<sup>34</sup> See Mōanjō, note 44.

<sup>35</sup> She is complaining of being attached to virtue, purity, or non-attachment itself.

<sup>36</sup> See Mōanjō, note 48.

<sup>37</sup> One would think that at a time like this a teacher would be extremely careful not to give the student the answer. But no doubt Shōsan was simply driving the point home a little harder for the reader. The point is that nothing has permanent existence and that all things are consequently "empty." The "one great matter" is nothing at all.

#### NOTES FOR MŌANJŌ

<sup>1</sup> In other words, in knowing that the distinction between birth and death is illusory.

<sup>2</sup> Shōsan used toku 徳, "virtue," to include the meaning of another toku 得, "gain."

<sup>3</sup> Shōsan used the word onore 己, "self" or "oneself," to mean approximately the human ego.

<sup>4</sup>The The Mean 中庸 enjoins the gentleman to take great care when alone, lest while unobserved by others he be tempted to err.

<sup>5</sup>Jōjū 常住 : more literally, "permanence of dwelling." The urge to believe that things have permanent existence, and the closely related urge to hold onto them permanently.

<sup>6</sup>Gi 義 .

<sup>7</sup>The two characters are probably bu 武 and shi 士 which together spell bushi, the most common word for a warrior. Samurai is written with only the one character .

<sup>8</sup>When Ch'u Chiu's 苻 白 lord, Shuo of Chao, was killed in battle, Ch'u Chiu in collusion with Ch'en Ying 程 嬰 guarded the life of the heir. Ch'u Chiu lost his life in the endeavor. Ch'u Chiu and Ch'en Ying lived in the "Spring and Autumn" period of Chinese history (770-435 B.C.).

<sup>9</sup>On 恩 .

<sup>10</sup>Traditionally, the third line of the gāthā composed by Hui-neng, the sixth patriarch of Zen in China, in reply to his rival Shen-hsiu (See Roankyō, note 126).

<sup>11</sup>Ota Dōkan 大田道範 (1432-1486) was famous for having built the original castle in Edo. He was also a poet and a practitioner of Zen.

<sup>12</sup>Ninagawa Shin'uemon 蜷川新右衛門 (d. 1447) studied Zen under Ikkyū and was an expert in the military arts as well as a well known renga poet.

<sup>13</sup>Ikkyū Sojun 一休宗純 (1394-1481), the forty-sixth abbot of the Daitokuji in Kyoto and a man famous for the freedom and eccentricity of his lifestyle.

<sup>14</sup>Here Shōsan used the word ga 我 , "self," in the sense of the higher or transpersonal self.

<sup>15</sup>This passage closely resembles the beginning of chapter 25 of the Tao-te-ching 道德經.

<sup>16</sup>The kami are the native gods of Japan. Shōsan said hardly anything about them but they clearly meant a great deal to him. In Roankyō he dismissed the Ikkō sect of Pure Land Buddhism because they cared nothing for the kami, the foundation of Japan (See Roankyō II-64 in Zenshu, p. 209).

<sup>17</sup>Their vows to save all beings. Only a very Buddhistically-colored kami would make such a vow, which is particularly characteristic of the Buddha Amida.



<sup>18</sup> Banji wa mina hi nari 萬事ハ皆非ナリ. Shōsan may have meant that all forms which tempt one to become attached to them are evil. It is the attachment which is actually evil, however, not the forms themselves.

<sup>19</sup> Shōsan was probably recalling a passage in the Shaseki-shū 沙石集 by Mujū Ichien 無住 - (圓) (1226-1311); and the Shaseki-shū passage is in turn based on a similar one in Shōjimon 障子文 by Kakuban 覺金覺 (1095-1143), the founder of the Shingi 新義 branch of Shingon Buddhism.

<sup>20</sup> The Zen master Shih-t'ou Hsi'ch-ien 石頭希遷 (700-790) is said to have made this comment after a reading a passage in the Chao-lun 摩訶論 by Seng Chao 僧肇 (384-414).

<sup>21</sup> The five constant human relationships distinguished by Confucianism. These gojō 五常 are the relationship between ruler and subject, parent and child, older and younger brother, husband and wife, and friend and friend.

<sup>22</sup> The Bumo onjū kyō 父母恩重經 (Fu-mu-en-chung-ching). As a sutra this text is a forgery, but it was widely read both in China and in Japan.

<sup>23</sup> It is not bewilderment to have an emotional attachment to one's lord.

<sup>24</sup> The sangai 三界 are defined as the world of desire, the world of form, and the world of the formless.

<sup>25</sup> Author unknown.

<sup>26</sup> Makoto 誠.

<sup>27</sup> Sanzu 三途, the realms of hell, of starving ghosts, and of beasts.

<sup>28</sup> See Roankyō, note 10.

<sup>29</sup> Author unknown.

<sup>30</sup> Author unknown.

<sup>31</sup> Author unknown.

<sup>32</sup> This statement from a line of Chinese verse means that things are as they are, each according to its own nature. The original line is said to be by Su Tung-p'o 蘇東坡 (1036-1101), but I have not been able to locate it in Su Tung-p'o's works.



- 33 Shōsan tried very hard to be equal-minded about women but there is no doubt that for him they were inferior to men.
- 34 Author unknown.
- 35 The gāthā on Tung-shan's "three pounds of flax" (koan no. 18 in the Wu-men-kuan 無門解) from the Lien-sung-chi 聯頌集.
- 36 That is, Confucianism.
- 37 The Kegon-kyō 華嚴經 (Avatamsaka sūtra).
- 38 Shōsan once asked a woman this same question. His own reply was that the thoughts of this benighted mind would look like snakes (See Roankyo III-71).
- 39 Author unknown.
- 40 Author unknown.
- 41 Author unknown. The poem appears in the Gosenshū.
- 42 Source unknown.
- 43 Author unknown.
- 44 The origin of this saying is unknown. It appears, for example, in the Kanjin ōjō ron 勸心住生論 of Ninkū 忍空 (fl. ca. 1154).
- 45 The teaching that Amida and his Pure Land are the mind of man himself was very common in Shōsan's time.
- 46 This passage appears in the Ōjō yōshū 住生要集 by Genshin 源信 (942-1017) and is quoted as well in the Hōbutsu shū 宝物集, a collection of Buddhist readings with which Shōsan was especially familiar.
- 47 There are the shi igi 四威儀, the "four dignities."
- 48 A truly ubiquitous quotation from the Diamond Sutra.
- 49 An expression to designate the limitless extension and diversity of being in the domain of a Buddha.
- 50 A line from the "Prose-poem on the Red Cliff" (Ch'ih-pi-fu 赤壁賦) by the Sung poet Su Tung-p'o 蘇東坡 (1036-1101).
- 51 The four intermediate directions: northeast, southeast, etc.
- 52 To be able to be everywhere in time and in space constitutes two of the six super-powers (rokutsū 六通) of a Buddha.

NOTES FOR BAMMIN TOKUYŌ

<sup>1</sup>Nengan 念願 : one's highest desire.

<sup>2</sup>From the Nehan-gyō 涅槃經 (Nirvāna sūtra, T12, 621a). The quotation is not exact. Shōsan omitted the sutra's mention of monks and nuns.

<sup>3</sup>Shōri 正理 . In this context the word suggests something close to the idea of official religion.

<sup>4</sup>The Three Treasures (the Buddha, the teaching, and the community of monks) stand for the whole of Buddhism.

<sup>5</sup>Shōsan believed that only intense work and concentration can lead one to the right; and this is a path that very few follow.

<sup>6</sup>See Mōanjō, note 24.

<sup>7</sup>Seken ni nittoku sureba shusse amari nashi 世間に入得ずれば世あまらずし . I have not been able to find any source for this saying.

<sup>8</sup>This passage occurs in the Kegon-kyō 華嚴經 (Avatamsaka sūtra, T10, 105b). There is also a very similar statement in the Shaseki shū 沙石集 .

<sup>9</sup>See Roankyō, note 2.

<sup>10</sup>See Roankyō, note 57.

<sup>11</sup>See Roankyō, note 55.

<sup>12</sup>The Eight Vajra Protectors (hachi kongo 八金剛 ) are a group of eight mighty beings the foremost of whom is Fudō 不動 (Acala).

<sup>13</sup>See Roankyō, note 56.

<sup>14</sup>The Five Great Lords (godaison 五大尊 ) are identical with the first five Vajra Protectors.

<sup>15</sup>See Roankyō, note 10.

<sup>16</sup>I 意 .

<sup>17</sup>See Mōanjō, note 21.

<sup>18</sup>The paradise of the Buddha Amida (See Mōanjō, note 45).

<sup>19</sup> See Roankyō, note 6.

<sup>20</sup> Gōshiki 業識, knowledge which one obtains as a result of karma.

<sup>21</sup> See Roankyō, note 65.

<sup>22</sup> "Right" is ri 理.

<sup>23</sup> Hatto 法度, laws and edicts.

<sup>24</sup> Roku wago 六和合, the six ways in which disciples of the Buddha establish and maintain harmonious relations with one another.

<sup>25</sup> Shion 思.

<sup>26</sup> See Roankyō, note 24.

<sup>27</sup> Greed, anger, and dullness.

<sup>28</sup> Ri o tadashi 理ヲタダシ.

<sup>29</sup> Daijōbu no kan 大丈夫の漢.

<sup>30</sup> See Roankyō, note 83.

<sup>31</sup> Shide no yama 死出の山, a mountain that appears on the road to the underworld. The River of Three Fords (Sanzu no kawa 三途の川), below, is the river which souls must cross to enter the underworld, and Emma 閻魔 (Yama) is the king of the underworld and the judge of souls.

<sup>32</sup> San'aku shishu 三悪四趣, the lower realms of incarnation. Hell, starving ghosts, beasts, and ashuras.

<sup>33</sup> Ichidaiji innen - 大事因縁, that which evokes in one the aspiration toward the one thing that really matters: enlightenment (See also Roankyō, p. 198, n. 86).

<sup>34</sup> Jūhachikai 十八界, the eighteen realms of existence which include the five aggregates as well as the six senses and their objects.

<sup>35</sup> Attributed to Hōjō Tokiyori 北条時頼 (1227-1263).

<sup>36</sup> Source unknown.

<sup>37</sup> See Roankyō, note 85.

<sup>38</sup> Goshō 復生, rebirth into enlightenment in Amida's paradise.

<sup>39</sup> Past, present, and future.

<sup>40</sup>Gose o negau koto 後世を願ふこと : deeply to desire rebirth into enlightenment.

<sup>41</sup>Root-for-good is zenkon 善根, karma which leads to good in the future. On "outflows" see Roankyō, note 125.

<sup>42</sup>See Roankyō, note 135.

<sup>43</sup>Two lines from the "Parable" chapter (Hiyu-bon 譬喩品) of the Lotus Sutra (T9, 14c).

<sup>44</sup>Four lines from the "Parable of the Magic City" (Kejōyu-bon 化城喩品) chapter of the Lotus Sutra (T9, 24c). They were commonly used, as here, as an ekō 回向, a prayer that the merit of a particular deed be transferred to all sentient beings.

#### NOTES FOR ROANKYŌ

<sup>1</sup>Shōsan often used this term (meditation on the image or on the spirit of the Nyorai 如來 or Tathāgata, i.e. the Buddha Shakyamuni) to designate a wholly inward mode of meditation in which no energy is visibly manifested on the outside. Nyorai zazen is the meditation which the beginning zen practitioner assumes he should be doing; but Shōsan said several times that a beginner is not capable of Nyorai zazen, and he recommended Guardian King zazen instead. There is no sure indication that Shōsan himself ever practiced Nyorai zazen.

<sup>2</sup>The Guardian Kings (niō 仁王) are two figures who stand on either side of the gate to a temple. They are shown in the pose of repulsing demons. The one on the left as one enters the gate has his mouth open as he pronounces the syllable A; the one on the right has his mouth closed as he pronounces the syllable UN. These two syllables together form the famous mantra AUM or OM which, like Alpha and Omega, stands for totality.

<sup>3</sup>Fudō Myō-ō 不動明王, in Sanskrit Acala. A wrathful figure who in Japan is a form of Dainichi 大日 (Mahāvairocana), the ultimate Buddha of the Shingon tradition. He is blue-black in color with protruding tusks, and he stands upon a rock. In his right hand he holds an uplifted sword and in his left hand a noose, to cut down and to bind all evil. He is surrounded by the flames of wrath and knowledge. Fudō is the central member of the Five Wrathful Kings (Go Dai Myō-ō 五大明王, in Sanskrit Vidyārājas) of whom the four others (Trailokyavijaya); in the south Gundari 軍荼利 (Kundali); in the west (Daitoku 大威徳. (Yamantaka); and in the north Kongoyasha 金剛夜叉 (Vajrayaksa). Nowhere did Shōsan name these four directional powers, but he was acutely aware of the principle of a supreme central power surrounded by guardian figures in the four quarters.

<sup>4</sup>Meditation done in a spirit of intense, strenuous concentration. The practitioner feels he is actually a guard charged with repelling every attack by evil influences, and he may contemplate or physically imitate the pose of a Guardian King.

<sup>5</sup>The thirteen Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who are enshrined on the altar at each stage of the full cycle of memorial services for a deceased person. For the first seven days the main figure is Shinkōō 素戔王, an emanation of Fudō; for the second seven days Shokōō 初江王, an emanation of Shaka (Sākyamuni); for the third seven days Shūteiō 宗帝王, an emanation of Monju (Mañjusrī); for the fourth seven days Gokan'ō 玉官王, an emanation of Fugen (Samantabhadra); for the fifth seven days Emmaō 陽魔王, an emanation of Jizō (Ksitigarbha); for the sixth seven days Henjōō 蓮成王, an emanation of Miroku (Maitreya); for the seventh seven days Taisan'ō 太山王, an emanation of Yakushi (Bhaisajya-guru); for the hundredth day Byōdōō 平等王, an emanation of Kannon (Avalokiteśvara); for the first year Toshio 都市王, an emanation of Seishi (Mahasthamaprapta); for the third year Godotenrin'ō 王道転輪王, an emanation of Amida (Amitābha); for the seventh year Renjōō 蓮上王, an emanation of Ashuku (Aksobhya); for the thirteenth year Bakkuō 拔苦王, an emanation of Dainichi 大日 (Mahāvairocana); and for the thirty-third year Jion'ō 慈恩王, an emanation of Kokuzō (Ākaśgarbha). Shōsan placed great importance upon memorial services for the dead and would therefore have been quite familiar with these figures.

<sup>6</sup>The dharmakaya (hosshin 法身) is the absolute Buddha-mind, subject neither to time nor to space.

<sup>7</sup>Shōsan often spoke of "guarding oneself" (jiko o mamoru 自己を守る). Jiko can mean both the ego and the higher Self. Here and two lines below it is closer in meaning to ego: one mounts guard over jiko so that it should not run amok and overwhelm the mind.

<sup>8</sup>Zenshū, pp. 84-86.

<sup>9</sup>"Energy" is my consistent translation for the term ki 気. Ki actually has a range of meanings having to do with responsiveness to the will or the impulse to perform Buddhist practices so as to move toward enlightenment. Thus ki can refer also to responsiveness to a particular style of practice, or even to the style itself. A related term is kakki 活気, "lively energy" (see Roankyō I-2, above). This is often equivalent to the word hataraki 仕事 which means "energetic action."

<sup>10</sup>The six senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and consciousness. They are more commonly called the "six roots" (rokkon 六根).

<sup>11</sup>The basic koan, or meditation subject, given to beginning disciples by those Zen masters who use koans. When a monk asked Chao-



chou 趙州 (778-897) if a dog has the Buddha-nature, Chao-chou answered "Mu." This "Mu" becomes the object of unremitting concentration.

<sup>12</sup>Death itself was Shōsan's main meditation object, as he said in many ways in many passages of Roankyō.

<sup>13</sup>Konki 根機: the ki with which to move decisively toward enlightenment. The beginner is not yet capable of this ki.

<sup>14</sup>眞実 "Authenticity" is my consistent translation for shinjitsu. Shōsan used this term a great deal. "Sincerity" would be another possible rendering.

<sup>15</sup>Shōsan believed that Buddhism was essential to the welfare of the land and that he himself could open the eyes of all men, most importantly the shogun, to the nature of true Buddhism. For Shōsan only the Bakufu, and no religious institution or authority, could give valid sanction to true Buddhism. In other words he wanted to make Buddhism the state religion. In his day, however, Buddhism had lost its position of intellectual and moral leadership to Confucianism. The long line of distinguished Zen monk-advisors to the medieval shoguns had come to an end with Sūden 宗伝 (1569-1633), to be replaced by Hayashi Razan 林羅山 (1583-1657) and his successors. As a Buddhist militant Shōsan was fighting a losing battle, although the lonely battle against great odds was clearly the type he preferred.

<sup>16</sup>"Break through" (hima o aku 障を破く) is an expression which Shōsan often used. It seems sometimes to mean "attain a private enlightenment which does not bring benefit to all sentient beings." Here, Shōsan was no doubt talking about achieving such mastery over death that death would no longer hold any terror; such mastery that the practitioner would never actually experience death at all.

<sup>17</sup>Shōsan often spoke of "being earth" or "becoming earth" (tsuchi to naru 土と成る) in conjunction with the practice of the Nembutsu. This expression seems to be unique in Japanese Zen and apparently means something like "forget everything." It may have some connection with a poem in Gaikotsu, a tale attributed to Ikkyū (1394-1481) 一休: Tare mo mina umaru to shirazu sumika nashi; kaereba moto no tsuchi ni narubeshi ("None of us know we're born, none of us have a home; when we go back we'll be earth as we were before"). Shōsan knew Gaikotsu very well indeed since his Ninin bikuni is partially based upon it.

<sup>18</sup>The "six ways" (rokudō 六道) are the six realms of transmigration: hell, starving ghosts, beasts, ashuras (fighting demons), humans, and heaven. The "three evil ways" are the first three of these, the lower three realms of existence.

<sup>19</sup>One of Shōsan's favorite ways of referring to the human body.

<sup>20</sup>"Elder" is my consistent translation for chōrō 長老, a title for a senior monk and especially for the resident priest of a Zen temple.

<sup>21</sup>Those who do not naturally have the kind of energy which Zen meditation requires must get it from a teacher such as Shosan or, conceivably, from external circumstances.

<sup>22</sup>I.e., it is still not good enough to abolish the illusory distinction between birth and death.

<sup>23</sup>A mantra (in Japanese shingon 真言) is a syllable, word, or phrase imbued with spiritual power. A mantra like the Nembutsu may be repeated tens of thousands of times in a single day. A dharani (darani 陀羅尼) is like a mantra but is longer and hence is repeated much less often. Certain dharanis sum up the meaning of an entire sutra.

<sup>24</sup>Goshō 業障 are obstacles in the way of enlightenment. They appear as a consequence of acts committed under the influence of cupidity, anger or dullness.

<sup>25</sup>Hakku darani 八句陀羅尼, also known as the Bussetsu ryōgon shinju 八說楞嚴神呪: a dharani which sums up the Ryōgon-gyō 楞嚴經 (Surangama-samādhi-nirdeśa).

<sup>26</sup>This was where Shōsan's home temple, the Onshinji, was located in the province of Mikawa. The Shōsan of Roankyō lived in Edo.

<sup>27</sup>Segaki 施餓鬼: a formula to accompany the offering of oblations to the suffering spirits of the dead.

<sup>28</sup>Wagōsō 和合僧: a translation of the Sanskrit word sangha. The normal meaning of the term is simply "monk," but the over-translation is necessary here in order to convey Shōsan's meaning.

<sup>29</sup>This "distressing energy" was a phenomenon which Shōsan had experienced most of his life. Other references to it will be found further on in Roankyō. Apparently it was a source not only of distress but of power and had something to do with the extraordinary vigor with which Shōsan lived his whole life.

<sup>30</sup>Yama, the king of the underworld.

<sup>31</sup>To pray for the future life (goshō o negau 後生を願ふ) is to long for rebirth in the Pure Land Paradise of Buddha Amida. The notion of rebirth in paradise after the death of the physical body sounds utterly opposite to the Zen insistence on achieving enlightenment here and now, but the two need not be as far apart as they seem. Certainly, anyone who aspires to higher rebirth will naturally do every thing he can in his present life to promote his chances for the next, and this may include Zen practice. Shōsan's own statements and experiences show



that for him, final enlightenment is impossible until one is finally rid of the body, whatever style of Buddhism one may practice in this life.

<sup>32</sup>Zenkon 善根 : actions which constitute the root of good karma and hence of later good fortune.

<sup>33</sup>Shiki 死機 : that ki, or energy, which the imminence of death arouses, and which is at the same time the ki needed to master death.

<sup>34</sup>A tentative translation for the phrase ri made hataraitte idetari 理マテ"働カシテ出タリ").

<sup>35</sup>I.e., by living off the profits (offerings) from funeral and memorial services.

<sup>36</sup>A very comfortable stipend for a samurai. One koku (the unit of measure for rice) was felt to be enough to sustain one man for one year.

<sup>37</sup>"Great matter" is daiji 大事 . Daiji or ichidaiji 一大事 ("the one great matter") may in Zen discourse refer to enlightenment, and this is indeed how the monk just above took it. Shosan, however, insisted on keeping the expression completely non-specific. There are no words for what this "great matter" is.

<sup>38</sup>I do not understand what this means.

<sup>39</sup>A koan, no. 7 in the Wu-men-kuan 無門 關 門 關 .

<sup>40</sup>Kenshō 見性 , "seeing the nature," refers to an enlightenment experience in which the practitioner glimpses the nature of the real. The term designates especially the first genuine enlightenment experience of a Zen trainee.

<sup>41</sup>Hōnen 法然 (1133-1212) founded the Jōdo (Pure Land) sect in Japan. He was a key figure in the popularization of the Nembutsu.

<sup>42</sup>The One Page Document (Ichimai kishōmon - 一枚起請文) is a famous capsule exposition of the essentials of Jōdo faith and practice. Hōnen wrote it in 1211. However no Two Page Document or Three Page Document are listed in the complete works of Hōnen: Hōnen Shōnin zenshū, ed. by Kuroda Shindō and Mochizuki Shinkyō, Kyoto, Shūsuissha, 1911.

<sup>43</sup>I.e., you become a demon of arrogance.

<sup>44</sup>Fuji no hito ana 富士の火穴 are natural caves in the lava flow on the lower northwest slope of Mt. Fuji, formed originally when pockets of gas in the molten mass burst. Men sometimes lived in these caves, but presumably they are difficult and dangerous to explore fully.

<sup>45</sup>"Guide" is my translation for tomurau 導子, to say liturgies and prayers in order to guide the spirit toward enlightenment or toward a higher incarnation.

<sup>46</sup> - Shōsan often advised people to clench their fists, grit their teeth, and glare straight ahead as though into the eyes of a powerful enemy. He called this teaching "warrior's glare Buddhism" (hatashi manako buppō 果し眼仏法).

<sup>47</sup> The appeal would have been made to the Jisha Bugyō 寺社奉行, the Intendent of Temples and Shrines, who had jurisdiction over such religious disputes. However it is not clear what incident this was. Perhaps it had something to do with the so-called zatsugaku jiken 雜学事件 of 1652. In this "affair of the extraneous studies" Shōsan's friend Ban'an (Ban'an Eishu 万安英種 1591-1654) and a group of other Sōtō monks appealed to the Bakufu against the Sōtō hierarchy. The precise nature of the issue is not known since the "extraneous studies" involved have not been identified. Ban'an's side eventually lost (See Yokozeki Ryōin, Edo jidai Tomon seiyo, Tokyo, Bukkyōsha, 1938, pp. 775-780).

<sup>48</sup> - Shōsan apparently felt that Zen had declined in the Ashikaga period, though no further remarks of his on the subject survive.

<sup>49</sup> See Bammin tokuyō, note .

<sup>50</sup> The Ten Oxherding Pictures illustrate the stages in the approach to enlightenment and constitute, if one may be permitted the comparison, a sort of elevated comic strip for Zen trainees. The series starts out with a very confused individual looking for his lost ox. The person then sees the tracks of beast, finds him, catches him, masters him, rides him home, forgets all about him, and at last disappears entirely along with the ox. The last picture shows a man head back toward town, fully realized, to help others. The series originated in China and had long been in use on the Zen tradition.

<sup>51</sup> This phrase is a standard opening for a nō play.

<sup>52</sup> The main character in a nō play always carries a fan. The use of this extremely important property is closely related to the dance itself.

<sup>53</sup> - Shōsan meant that the one who is "complete in all virtues" (mantoku emman 万徳圓滿) is able to instruct each person in the most suitable manner. This is in fact a characteristic mark of the Bodhisattva.

<sup>54</sup> In other words the Buddha-mind, or original enlightenment, is present in every person. It takes the spirit of the Guardian Kings, however, to keep this fundamental endowment inviolate. The "central Buddha," below, is analogous to this "Nyorai mind."

55 The Sixteen Good gods (jūroku zenjin 十六善神) are the protectors of the Prajñāpāramitā tradition to which the Diamond Sutra and the Heart Sutra belong.

56 The Four Heavenly Kings (shitenno 四天王) are the kings of the four quarters: in the south Zōjō-ten 增長天 (Virūdhaka); in the west Kōmoku-ten 廣目天 (Virūpākṣa); in the north Tamon-ten 多聞天 (Vaiśravaṇa); and in the east Jikoku-ten 持国天 (Dhṛtārastra).

57 The Twelve Gods (iūniin 十二神) are twelve mighty devotees who serve the Buddha Yakushido 藥師 (Bhaisajya-guru). They are associated with the twelve hours of the old Japanese day.

58 Satori (悟り) generally means "awakening" or "enlightenment," but it refers particularly to the first major enlightenment experience of a Zen trainee. In this latter sense it means much the same thing as kenshō (see above note 40). It is a serious error to assume that satori is the be-all and end-all of Zen training. Indeed Shōsan emphasized here that satori has no intrinsic importance.

59 Bukkyōgai 仏境界: the realm, or condition, of the fully enlightened being. I have consistently translated kyōgai as "space."

60 The three poisons (sandoku 三毒) are greed, anger, and stupidity.

61 The four pains (shiku 四苦) are those of birth, old age, sickness, and death. The eight pains (hakku 八苦) are the four pains augmented by separation from those one loves, being thrown together with those one hates, not getting what one desires, and being attached to the body, the mind, and the world.

62 The ten evils (jūaku 十惡) are killing, stealing, adultery, lying, use of immoral language, slander, equivocation, covetousness, anger, and false views.

63 The five deadly sins (gogyaku 五逆) are patricide, matricide, killing a saint, injuring a Buddha, and causing discord among the community of monks.

64 See above, note 10.

65 Jitsu-u 実有: the error of believing that things have permanent and immutable existence. It is one of the fundamental mistakes that the ordinary man makes about reality. The term is similar in meaning to joju 常住 (see Mōanjō, note 5).

66 One who can put the "original nature" (the Buddha-mind, original enlightenment) itself into action is no doubt a fully enlightened person. Shōsan sharply distinguished between a passing encounter with the original nature and the degree of mastery that allows one to act from the original nature at all times.

67 The Japanese god of war, generally considered to be the deified form of the Emperor Ōjin whose traditional dates are 200-310 A.D.

68 Ta-hui 大慧 (1089-1163) was a Chinese Zen master of the Lin-chi (Rinzai) line.

69 This probably means to visualize them during meditation in about that position.

70 There is a Chinese Sōtō Zen monk named Po-shan Yüan-lai 博山元來 (Hakusan Ganrai) who lived from 1575 to 1650. However it is unlikely that Shōsan would have referred to a contemporary Chinese monk.

71 Bishamon 毘沙門 is one of the Shitenno (see above, note 56). He is the protector of the north and is also known as Tamon-ten 多門天. He guards the place where the Buddha preaches and is usually shown trampling two demons called amanojaku 阿摩諾加古 .

72 The term shingaku 心学 is now associated with a school of popular spiritual instruction founded by Ishida Baigan 石田梅巖 (1685-1744). It existed before Baigan, however, and was current in the early Tokugawa period in association with the message of sankyō itchi 三教一致 the oneness of the "three religions" (Buddhism, Confucianism, and either Shinto or Taoism). Fujii Otoo cited half a dozen popular religious works of the early seventeenth century which include the word shingaku in the title (see Fujii Otoo, Edo bungaku kenkyū, p. 15).

73 Shōsan affirmed here the principle that nirvana and samsara, enlightenment and delusion, are the same. It was current in his time to believe that women are inherently further from enlightenment than men (as indeed the Lotus Sutra itself makes clear) and therefore the statement that the passion-mind and the bodhi-mind are just like one another is a particularly strong form of the classic paradox when applied directly to women.

74 Shōsan allowed nō chanting as an effective practice analogous to the Nembutsu. In this sentence he may have been suggesting that one who is a perfect master of his own path (whether that path is the way of the warrior or the art of nō) is "complete in all virtues" and therefore like a Bodhisattva (see above, note 53).

75 The "cormorant's neck" (u-no-kubi うの頸) is the narrow part of the blade of a short sword (tantō 短刀) made in the Yamato style.

76 Shōsan spoke two or three times of being a leper. Apparently he had in the past made himself deliberately repulsive so as to humble himself.

77 A place in Edo.

78 A temple with which Shōsan was associated in Edo.

79 A stūpa is a sacred mound, tower, or monument (such as a grave monument) which is mystically identified with the body of the Buddha. Shōsan was proposing to turn the women into a living stūpa, thus making her incorruptible.

80 An Indian teacher who, according to tradition, brought Zen Buddhism to China in 520 A.D. He is generally depicted with powerfully glaring eyes.

81 Source not identified.

82 He guards the main hall of his lord's castle.

83 Fan K'uai 樊噲 was a general who served Han Kao-tsu, the founder of the Early Han dynasty. He was credited with having saved his master's life in an engagement. He and Ch'ang Liang 張良, who also served Han Kao-tsu, were often mentioned as paragons for the warrior.

84 Genshunbō 玄奘法師, or Genshun, was a Shingon monk on Mt. Kōya with the rank of Risshi 律師 (Risshi was a high monastic rank in several sects including Tendai and Jōdo). He had given the shami-kai 沙彌戒 (the ten precepts which the Buddhist novice vows to uphold) to Shōsan when Shōsan first became a monk.

85 This passage does not exist in the current text of the Shōbonengyō 正法念經. A similar passage appears, however, in the Zōichi agon kyō 增一阿含經. Genshin 源信 (942-1017) in his Ōjōyōshū 往生要集 quoted the same text as Shōsan and attributed it too to the Shōbonengyō; in all likelihood Shōsan got the passage directly from Genshin. The "Deva Who Speaks with Light" is Kōonden 光音天, in Sanskrit Abhasvara, a deva who appears in the Shingon Taizokai 胎藏界 mandala. Kōonden is a representation in human form of the third heaven of the second dhyāna, one of the heavens in the world of form (shikikai 色界). The beings in this heaven do not need speech but communicate by means of the light of their samādhi. Perhaps the fool is compared to Kōonden for the same reason that the old monk in Kaijō monogatari, near the end of the tale, scolds the ecstatically chanting gathering: they are attached to form and caught up in the picturesque.

86 "Link with the one great matter" is ichidaiji innen 一大事因緣. For sentient beings the link with the one great matter, enlightenment, and the basic factor that makes enlightenment possible, is being born into the world as a human being. Thus enlightenment is the purpose of being born with a human body. Even a human being, however, may not establish a link with enlightenment. Shōsan, characteristically, established his by means of hard work.



87 Otherwise unknown.

88 Literally, "When Genshunbō used to start the sharirai with the words 'Isshin chōrai. . . .'" The sharirai 舍利禮 is a short Shingon ritual text of adoration to the relics of Sākyamuni. Isshin chōrai 一心傾禮, its opening phrase, means, "With all my mind I prostrate myself in adoration. . . ."

89 Otherwise unknown.

90 "Let It Go" is hōgechaku 放下着, an expression much used in Zen. It occurs originally in koan no. 57 of the Ts'ung-yung-lu 從容錄.

91 Ōmine is a sacred mountain massif that rises above the village of Yoshino 吉野, south of Kyoto and Nara. It is a major center for the yamabushi, an order of lay Buddhists whose practices are often performed in the mountains and who work a great deal with fire. Statues of Fudō are to be found here and there on Ōmine in association with spaces for the ritual use of fire.

92 The kongō 金剛 or "diamond" staff is what the yamabushi carry in place of the ordinary pole that the average mountain climber would use. It is surmounted by a cluster of jangling brass rings.

93 En no Gyōja 役行者 (born 634 A.D.) is the semi-legendary founder of the yamabushi, the formal name of whose order is Shugendo.

94 On A and UN see above, note 2.

95 The perfected saints of Hinayana Buddhism.

96 Idate 伊達 (in Sanskrit, Skanda) is one of the eight generals under Zojo-ten 增長天, the king of the southern quarter. He protects Buddhism, keeps monks from being lazy, and in a monastery is enshrined in the monks' quarters.

97 Daikoku 大黒 (in Sanskrit, Mahakāla): the Daikoku Shōsan referred to is probably the well-fed, casual figure often shown in Japan with a mallet in his right hand and a big sack over his left shoulder, treading upon two full bags of rice. This Daikoku is one of the Shichifukujin 七福人, the Seven Happy Gods. Other powers by the name of Daikoku are more fierce and energetic, being of the same general nature as Fudō and the Guardian Kings.

98 Roughly the 1580's and the 1590's.

99 Jirō, Tarō, Chiyo, and Nene are all names suitable for infants and very young children.

100 Shen-kuang Hui-k'o 神光慧可 (481-593), the successor to Bodhidharma.

101 "Patriarch Zen" (soshi zen 祖師禪) would presumably consider the teaching of the Zen patriarchs to be at least a refinement of the teaching of the historical Buddha. "Nyorai Zen" would consciously go back for inspiration to the historical Buddha himself.

102 Two famous direct disciples of the historical Buddha. According to Zen tradition it is through Kāsyapa that Zen traces its lineage back to the Buddha himself.

103 The Buddha is said to have entered the world eight thousand times prior to his appearance as Sākyamuni.

104 In this passage Shōsan spoke of Sākyamuni as a mystical world-ruler very like Shōsan's ideal of the Shogun.

105 A famous cremation ground in Kyoto.

106 A hisan 秘參 is presumably some sort of "secret visit" to a master. I cannot find the word, but it must mean here that the answer is taken in the Kantō to be authoritative and to express enlightenment.

107 See above, note 65.

108 Takuan: 澤庵 was a distinguished Rinzai monk contemporary with Shōsan. In 1607 he became the abbot of the Daitokuji in Kyoto. Later, after a period of retirement and then of exile, he was obliged to accept high honors from the third Takugawa Shogun, Iemitsu. As he often said, he would gladly have declined and retired to the country.

109 The Ikkō sect 一向宗 is an alternate name for the Jōdo Shin sect 浄土真宗 founded by Shinran 親鸞 (1173-1262). The sect invokes Amida and Amida alone, and is therefore indifferent at best toward the Japanese kami. Shinran took a wife and ate meat just like a layman, and this was still a unique mark of the sect in Shōsan's time.

110 The Kanze family constituted a most important line of nō actors, being descended from the great actor-playwrights Kannami and Zeami.

111 These two plays were the most dependably popular in the nō repertoire. Yuya 雛野 is traditionally attributed to Zeami and Matsukaze 松風 is Zeami's revision of a play by Kannami. Yamamba 山姥, mentioned below, is another very popular play of uncertain authorship.

112 The two paragraphs below are a summary rather than a translation of this section.



113 Sotoba Komachi 卒塔婆小町 is a nō play by Kannami.

114 Matsudaira Norinaga 松平乗寿 (1604-1654), a lord of Tatebayashi Castle in the province of Kazusa. He became a member of the Rōjū (the Council of Elders) in 1651, four years before Shōsan's death.

115 Kanze Sakon-dayū 觀世左近大夫 is probably the ninth generation head of the Kanze line, Kanze Tadachika 觀世忠親 (1566-1626).

116 This entire section is a summary of the original text.

117 Ban'an Eishu 万安英種 (1691-1654), a Sōtō Zen monk who was very active in the movement to return Sōtō practice to the manner of Dōgen, the sect's founder. Ban'an was also close to the Rinzaï monks Daigu 大愚, Ungo 雲居 and Isshi 一休.

118 "How to guard one phrase" is ikku no mamori yō 一句の守り様. Shōsan may have been speaking of concentration on a single phrase such as the Nembutsu so as to extract from it its full significance. However he also may have been referring to koan training.

119 "How to arouse the power of prayer" (ganriki no okoshi yō 願力の起し様) probably refers to arousing the true aspiration toward enlightenment and possibly to the true longing for rebirth in the Pure Land.

120 Shōsan later incorporated this tract into Bammin tokuyō. The original section of Shimin nichiyō 四民日用 (Daily Guidance for the Four Classes) was Bushi nichiyō 武士日用 (Daily Guidance for Warriors) which Shōsan wrote in 1631 at the request of the daimyo of Wakayama, then Tokugawa Yorinobu 徳川頼宣 (1602-1671), the tenth son of Ieyasu.

121 See above, note 6.

122 Manzai 萬歳 were dancers who made the rounds of people's houses at the New Year, dancing and singing to bring the residents good luck.

123 "Empty shell zazen" (nukegara zazen 抜殻坐禅) was Shōsan's term for meditation done without any concentration or effort and which gets the meditator nowhere.

124 The Heart Sutra (Hannya haramitta shingyō 般若波羅蜜陀心經), in Sanskrit Prajñāpāramitā hrdaya sūtra is a very short compendium of the whole Prajñāpāramitā tradition. It is one of the essential texts of Mahayana Buddhism. The quotation below is actually a paraphrase from the Heart Sutra. The "five skandhas" (goun 五蘊) mentioned there are the five constituents of the entire physical and mental world.

125 The muro 無漏 condition, "without outflows," is without defilement (Sanskrit, kleśa) and is pure; it is a condition of enlightenment. The uro 有漏 condition, "having outflows," is defective and therefore removed from enlightenment.

126 The famous verse recorded in the Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch (Liu-tsu-t'an-ching 六祖壇經) in which Shen-hsiu 神秀 (606?-706) presented his understanding of Zen to his master Hung-jen 弘忍 (601-674), the fifth patriarch of Zen in China. The gist of the verse is that the mind is a mirror to be constantly cleaned, lest it gather dust. Shen-hsiu's rival Hui-neng 慧能 (638-713), the future sixth patriarch, wrote in reply a verse in which he said that there is no mirror and no dust. Shōsan recognized that Shen-hsiu's verse did not go far enough, but he found it valuable as a guide to practice. Indeed Shōsan's whole teaching was based on strenuous effort. Ultimately this effort should bring about a realization that there is no mirror to clean; but Shōsan never talked about such an advanced stage.

127 In other words, however, thoroughly one may understand Buddhism one will still cling desperately to physical life.

128 Ikkaku Sennin - 一角仙人, a famous hermit of Buddhist legend, is said to have been born from a deer in the ancient Indian kingdom of Vārānāsi. On his forehead grew a single horn. Through meditation he acquired magic powers, but he lost them when at last he saw a woman and was overcome with desire. Undone then, he came out of seclusion and entered the world.

129 The hatamoto 旗本 were the direct retainers of the Tokugawa house of less than daimyo rank. Shōsan himself, as a layman, had been a hatamoto.

130 The river that runs north and south through the western part of Kyoto.

131 This is exactly what Shōsan himself had done in his early years as a monk.

132 This is the Muken jigoku 無間地獄, the Avīci hell, lowest of all the Buddhist hells.

133 Otherwise unknown.

134 Abnormal irritability and sensitivity to noise are phenomena which can occur in the course of prolonged meditation practice.

135 When Sākyamuni, in a previous incarnation, was Sessen Dōji ("Snow Mountain Youth"), Indra changed himself into a demon and told the future Buddha two lines of verse: "All actions are impermanent, / This is the law of birth and annihilation" (諸行無常 / 是生滅法). Sessen Dōji, however, realized that there must be two more lines to the

strophe and therefore asked for them. The demon said that there were indeed two more lines but that since he was a demon he would have to have blood in exchange for them. When Sessen Dōji promised his blood, the demon recited: "Birth and annihilation are annihilated;/And quiet annihilation is joy" (生滅均已寂滅為樂). Then Sessen Dōji threw himself off the mountaintop. But the demon caught him and saved him, saying that he had only been testing him. This story is told in the Hōbutsu shū 寶物集, a collection of Buddhist tales and parables edited by Taira no Yasuyori 平康賴 about 1180. It was widely read even in Shōsan's time (See Hōbutsu shū, ed. by Yoshida Kōichirō 吉田 幸一, Koten bunko v. 77, Tokyo, 1953, pp. 47-48).

136 About 4 A.M.

137 The Hōbutsu shū (edition cited indn. 135 above, p. 135) quotes this verse from the Lotus Sutra: "Now these three worlds/Are all my own;/The sentient beings there/Are all my children" (Lotus Sutra, T9, 14c).

138 P'u-hua 普化 (dates unknown) is a celebrated Zen madman of the ninth century. The story to which Shōsan refers immediately below appears in the Lin-chi-lu 臨濟錄 (T45, 503b); other stories about P'u-hua are given in the k'an-pien section of the Lin-chi-lu. Lin-chi (Lin-chi I-hsüan 臨濟義玄 d. 867) is the august founder of the Lin-chi or, in Japanese, Rinzai school of Zen. Nothing is known of Ho-yang 河陽 or Mu-t'ung 木塔 outside the present anecdote.

139 The Rōjū 老中 was the senior council of advisors to the Shogun. Here Shōsan was referring to a particular member of the Rōjū, probably to one that he knew personally.

140 Tokugawa Hidetada (1578-1632), the second Tokugawa Shogun.

141 Shōsan had taken the precaution to adopt a son, who apparently took Shōsan's own common name of Kudayū, before he himself left the world.

142 By this term Shōsan probably meant to designate Zen as it had developed in China.

143 Hsiang-yen Chih-hsien 香嚴智閑 (dates unknown). Initially a disciple of Po-chang 百丈 (720-814), he then succeeded to the dharma of Wei-shan Ling-yu 為山靈祐 (771-853) who had also studied under Po-chang.

144 Koan no. 5 in the Wu-men-kuan 無門關.

145 The Buddhas of past, present, and future.

146 Elsewhere Shōsan spoke of three hundred years as the period during which Zen had degenerated. What he meant on such occasions is not clear.

147 No doubt at the Tentokuin, a temple with which Shōsan was associated in Edo.

148 The source of this reference cannot be identified.

149 Unknown.

150 A dish suitable for an honored guest.

151 I cannot find anywhere an appropriate meaning for the word hego へご . This meaning was suggested by Miyajima Hōshū in Yūmyōzen no Suzuki Shōsan, p. 170.

152 A type of ballad.

153 Shōsan probably meant that he had caught convincing glimpses of the nature of P'u-hua's enlightenment; and that since this enlightenment was not his everyday condition he still had far to go.

154 The source of this assertion cannot be traced.

155 The fifty-two stages of the Bodhisattva's progress toward Buddhahood.

156 Iemitsu (1604-1651), the third Tokugawa Shogun, had his first son in 1641. In 1652 this son became the fourth Shogun, Ietsuna.

157 This is a sequence of zodiacal signs connected with the date and time of the baby's birth. The series was apparently felt to be extremely felicitous.

158 Shōsan, and apparently many others of his time, believed that the body of a good, pure person would give off pure smoke when burned, and that the smoke from a deluded person's corpse would smell foul.

159 Shōsan may have had a group of lay disciples in Echizen, but nothing is known of them.

160 The start of a favorite passage from Takasago 高砂 , a famous nō play of the first category by Zeami. The passage has often been used as a wedding song: "Takasago! Aboard our craft we'll hoist the sail. . . ."

161 A great warrior nō play of uncertain authorship. The passage in English goes: "Foemen the eye saw were flocking gulls, what the ear heard as war howls wind down the shore through high pines rushing, wind down the shore through high pines raging, a morning gale, no more."

162 Another temple in Edo with which Shōsan was associated.

163 The jūrokusōkan 十六相觀 are the sixteen contemplations of the Pure Land of the Buddha Amida as taught in the Kammuryōju-kyō 觀無量壽經 (Sanskrit, Amitayur-dhyāna-sutra).

164 A warrior nō play.

165 Unknown.

166 Shokyō nichijū 諸經日誦 . Probably the Chu-ching-jih-sung-chi-yao 諸經日誦集要 compiled by Chu-hung 禎 寔 (1532-1612).

167 The original names of these Buddhas (I give the Japanese reading) are, respectively, Dai-kyō-shōjin-yūmyō-butsu 大強精進 勇猛仙 ; Shōjin-gun-butsu 精進軍仙 ; and Shōjin-ki-butsu 精進 喜仙 .

168 The posthumous name of Kūkai 空海 (774-835), the founder of Shingon Buddhism in Japan. His extraordinary brilliance made him into a general cultural paragon in the Japanese tradition. Daishi 大師 is a title.

169 The posthumous name of Saichō 最澄 (767-822) who founded Tendai Buddhism in Japan.

170 Kāśyapa, one of the Buddha's disciples, was particularly known for his meticulous observance of the principles of practice which the Buddha had laid down. It was through Kāśyapa that the Buddha transmitted Zen to posterity.

171 Kyōgen kigo 狂言綺語 is one of the ten evils which a Buddhist should not commit. The phrase was also used to refer to all entertaining song, dance, and theater.

172 Oibara 追腹 is the ritual suicide of a vassal who kills himself in order to follow his lord in death.

173d In Bammin tokuyō Shōsan distinguished between "buoyant energy" (ukamu ki 浮木) and "sinking energy" (shizumu ki 沈木). The former conquers all things while the latter is defeated by everything. "Sinking zazen" is zazen done with this sinking energy, and is worthless. Elsewhere Shōsan called this sort of zazen "empty shell zazen" (nukegara zazen 撥柄坐禪). Such zazen amounts to just going through the motions and formalities of meditation; it is not in fact meditation at all.

174 As he said this Shōsan no doubt pointed to his tanden 丹田, a place in the body just below the navel. The Zen practitioner experiences the tanden as the seat of strength and courage, and often concentrates on it in the course of meditation.



175 Otherwise unknown.

176 Yin-yüan 隱元 (1592-1673), the founder of the Ōbaku sect of Zen in Japan. Yin-yüan (Ingen) arrived in Japan from China only in 1654, and even then it was some time before he was able to leave Nagasaki. Hence there is no possibility that Shōsan could have met him or that he could have influenced Shōsan's teaching in any way.

177 Unknown.

178 Dōgen 道元 (1200-1253) founded the Sōtō sect of Zen in Japan.

179 Hon'ami 本阿弥 is the name taken by successive generations of a line of sword connoisseurs. The first Hon'ami served Ashikaga Takauji in the fourteenth century and his successors were active in Tokugawa times. Such was the expertise of the Hon'ami line that their judgment was held to be definitive. It provided the kind of "standard" (minamoto ; 原, a "source" of certain knowledge) that Shōsan is about to discuss.

180 The Shogun Ietsuna (1641-1680).

181 The term in the original is isdgi 義, which I translate elsewhere as "morality." Gi has a wide range of meanings, however, and its use here also suggests "the ultimate meaning of life."

182 Gyakushu 逆修 means services and prayers said for the guidance of a person's soul before his death--to give him a head start, so to speak.

183 That is, at the residence of one of Shōsan's younger brothers, probably Shigenari.

184 Otherwise unknown.

185 No doubt Shōsan meant the Buddha of Great Might and Fierce Perseverance (See Roankyō III-88).

186 About 3 to 5 P.M.

187 Fusan 不三 seems to have resided in Kumamoto at some time after Shōsan's death but little else is known of him.

188 Tokugawa Ieyasu.

189 Daigu Shūchiku 大愚宗築 (1583-1668).

190 Takagi Kiyohide 高木清秀 (1526-1610), an old vassal, friend, and military advisor of Tokugawa Ieyasu, was also known as Takagi Shusui 高木主水. However it is unlikely that such a man (who was originally from Mikawa) would have maintained a residence in

Osaka in the first decade of the seventeenth century; and moreover this incident must have taken place in about 1617 or 1618, years after Shusui's death. The text has Takagi Shusui jo or Takagi Shusui no tokoro 高木主水所, and I give here the only interpretation of this expression which I can think of.

<sup>191</sup>In the Tokugawa period a warrior had the right to try out his sword on members of the lower classes. The exercise of this right was called tsujigiri 辻斬, "cutting down at the crossroads."

<sup>192</sup>The seventh day after death.

<sup>193</sup>See Ninin bikuni, note 4.

<sup>194</sup>Meitoku 明德. (in Chinese ming-te) is one term for the ideal of Confucianism. It occurs in the Ta-hsüeh 大學.

<sup>195</sup>An old friend of Shōsan and the resident priest in a Sōtō temple near the Onshinji in Mikawa.

<sup>196</sup>Gudō Tōshoku 愚堂東寔 (1579-1661). Echū wrote of Myōkan that he "covered his tracks" (Sekihei Dōnin gyōgyō ki bengi in Suzuki Shōsan Dōnin zenshū, p. 16). I have not been able to identify Mōtsugai 物外.

<sup>197</sup>Ungo Kiyō 雲居奇庸 (1582-1659).

<sup>198</sup>Katō Akinari 加藤明成 (1592-1661), lord of Aizu Castle.

<sup>199</sup>Kobori Enshū 小堀遠州 (1579-1647), a daimyo under Ieyasu and his successors and a celebrated aesthete. He was appointed Fushimi bugyō 伏見奉行 in 1615 and died in office.

#### NOTES FOR KAIJŌ MONOGATARI

<sup>1</sup>A statement characteristic of Shōsan. Roankyō contains several references to such intense rushes of energy which apparently were for Shōsan a source both of power and of pain. The phenomenon undoubtedly had much to do with Shōsan's style of teaching and practice, but I do not understand it.

<sup>2</sup>This was one of Shōsan's favorite themes. The statement below about letting someone take one's head is thoroughly typical of Shōsan.

<sup>3</sup>A river that runs north-south through the western part of Kyoto. Drowning oneself in the Horikawa was proverbial.



<sup>4</sup>These two sentences particularly are quintessential Shōsan.

<sup>5</sup>See Mōanjō, note 37.

<sup>6</sup>Author unknown.

<sup>7</sup>This is a hima ga aku 隙が開く, one of Shōsan's favorite expressions (See Roankyō, note 16).

<sup>8</sup>I have been unable to identify this passage.

<sup>9</sup>The four families (shishu 四衆) are monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen. The eight families (hachibushu 八部衆) are the eight kinds of beings who protect Buddhism: devas (ten 天), nāgas (ryū 龍), yakṣas (yasha 夜叉), gandharvas (kendatsuba 乾闥婆), asuras (ashura 阿修羅), garudas (karura 迦樓羅), kinnaras (kinnara 緊那羅), and mahoragas (magoraga 摩睺羅伽).

<sup>10</sup>See Mōanjō, note 7.

<sup>11</sup>See Roankyō, note 83.

<sup>12</sup>See Mōanjō, notes 11 and 12.

<sup>13</sup>Source unknown.

<sup>14</sup>The term used is mui 無為 (in Chinese wu-wei), "non-striving." Inose is perfectly calm and clear. He no longer has the ambition to "die well," he is simply ready.

<sup>15</sup>The direction of Amida's paradise.

<sup>16</sup>In Japanese Shudatsu 須達: a rich man who devoted himself to the historical Buddha. He built for the Buddha the famous Jetavana-vihara (Gion shōja 代園精舍) in the city of Sravastī.

<sup>17</sup>Kyoto.

<sup>18</sup>This name may mean "Ichizaemon the Stutterer." Ichizaemon was a suai すあい, a local Nagasaki word meaning "middleman."

<sup>19</sup>However killing a man in battle or on the orders of one's lord does not constitute the sin of taking life.

<sup>20</sup>A zato 座頭 was a blind musician or masseur who usually had his head shaven in monkish fashion.

<sup>21</sup>At the end of the seventeenth century Toyotomi Hideyoshi, then the supreme power in Japan, twice conducted extensive campaigns against Korea and ultimately against Ming China itself. The first campaign took place in 1591-92 and the second in 1597-98. Neither succeeded.

<sup>22</sup> Jungengō 順現業, jungogō 順後業, and futeigō 不定業. These resemble the sanjigō 三時業 expounded in the Kusharon 俱舍論 (Abhidharma-kośa), but the sanjigō do not include the idea of "indeterminate karma."

<sup>23</sup> See Roankyō, note 32.

<sup>24</sup> Author unknown.

<sup>25</sup> Such would be a person who claims that nothing exists. He is just as wrong as the one who claims that things have solid, permanent existence.

<sup>26</sup> This princess was a little snake girl who, by making a priceless offering to the Buddha, was instantly transformed into a man and then elevated to full enlightenment (See the "Devadatta" chapter of the Lotus Sutra, T9, 35c).

<sup>27</sup> It is not clear how Shōsan or Echū would have distinguished between this commendable concern and "lust for name and gain."

<sup>28</sup> 小景淳. I have not been able to identify him or Tu-shuo-chao 都牟皐, below.

<sup>29</sup> 鐵虎身.

<sup>30</sup> See Bammin tokuyō, note 32.

<sup>31</sup> See Ninin bikuni, note 4.

<sup>32</sup> Author unknown.

<sup>33</sup> That is, at the very bottom of the cosmos.

<sup>34</sup> The jiga-bachi 似蚊蟲 is actually the mud wasp. This insect imprisons inchworms in the nest with its eggs; when the eggs hatch the inchworms serve as food. Seeing young wasps emerging from a hole into which the jiga-bachi had inserted other creatures, people apparently believed that the jiga-bachi had transformed the other creatures directly into wasps.

<sup>35</sup> In other words, that we are living perfectly well in these "latter days" even though nothing obliges us to do so.

<sup>36</sup> The great throng of people who were listening to him preach.

<sup>37</sup> Perhaps Echū diverged from Shōsan here. Shōsan might not have agreed that the medicine can be truly effective if the doctor himself is sick.

<sup>38</sup> Author unknown.

<sup>39</sup> Dai roku ten no maō 大六天の魔王. These are the kings of the six heavens of the world of desire (yokkai 欲界) which itself is one of the three worlds (sangai 三界).

<sup>40</sup> The Buddha cannot change a being's fixed karma (to be born deaf or blind, stupid or clever, etc.); he cannot save sentient beings who have no affinity whatsoever with him; and he cannot do away with the world of sentient beings (See Ching-te-ch'uan-teng-lu 景德傳燈錄, T51, 233c).

<sup>41</sup> Han T'ui-chih 韓退之 is Han Yü 韓愈 (768-824), a great Confucian and man of letters who in 819 presented to the throne a famous memorial of protest against Buddhism. It is very unlikely that Han Yü ever turned to Buddhism.

<sup>42</sup> Ta-t'ien 大顛 is probably a disciple of Shih-t'ou 石頭 (700-790). There are stories about him in the Ching-te-ch'uan-teng-lu, T51, 312c, although this story is not given there.

<sup>43</sup> Wang Ching 王荆 is Wang An-shih 王安石 (1021-1086); Chang Wen-ting 張文定 is Chang Wan-p'ing 張萬平 (1007-1091).

<sup>44</sup> Ma Ta-shih is Ma-tsu Tao-i 馬祖道一 (d. 788), the great T'ang master. T'an-jan 坦然 was a disciple either of Nan-yueh 南嶽 or of Ch'ang-shan 常山 (See Ching-te-ch'uan-teng-lu, T51, 224b and T51, 245b). The master Fen-yang Shan-chao 汾陽善昭 lived in the ninth century but his birth and death dates are unknown. Wu-yeh 武業 is Fen-chou Wu-yeh 汾州武業 (947-1024). Hsüeh-fêng I-tsun 雪峯義存 lived 822-908. Yen-t'ou Ch'üan-ho 嚴頭全義 (827-887) was a friend of Hsüeh-fêng. Tan-hsia T'ien-jan 天然 (d. 824) was a successor to Ma-tsu. Yun-men Wen-ya 雲門文偃 (d. 966) was the founder of the Yün-men sect of Chinese Zen.

<sup>45</sup> Chang Wu-chin 張無盡 is Chang Shang-ying 張商英 (1043-1121).

<sup>46</sup> The poet Su Tung-p'o 蘇東坡 lived 1036-1101. Shan-ku 山谷 is Huang T'ing-chien 黃庭堅 (1045-1105). The poet Po Lo-t'ien 白樂天 (Po Chi-i 白居易) lived 772-846.

<sup>47</sup> I cannot identify P'u-t'ung of Liang 梁の普通.

<sup>48</sup> The colossal bird of the first chapter of Chuang-tzu.

<sup>49</sup> See Roankyō, note 125.

<sup>50</sup> I do not know just who the mountain monk (sansō 山僧) may be. In the Lin-chi-lu the word is used to mean "I" but that is not necessarily the case here.

<sup>51</sup> In other words, "Would you read the omens and decide if he should become a monk after all?"

<sup>52</sup>It is said that one has about the same chance of obtaining a human body that a blind sea turtle who rarely surfaces has of coming up with his head through a hole in a piece of floating wood.

<sup>53</sup>The Kai-kyō 戒經 (Prātimoksa), the body of the rules of conduct for monks and nuns.

<sup>54</sup>I cannot identify these rivers, although they are perhaps related to the "four natures" below. Echu seems to have meant that the four rivers have no names that distinguish them in essence from one another.

<sup>55</sup>I cannot identify these four natures (shishō 四性); perhaps the original word is a mistake for shishō 四姓, the four castes of ancient India: brāhmana, ksatriya, vaiśya, and śūdra.

<sup>56</sup>Shōsan could not possibly have let his enthusiasm carry him so far as to make a statement like this.

<sup>57</sup>The three existences (sannu 三有) are the three lower realms of transmigration: beasts, starving ghosts, and hell.

<sup>58</sup>I do not understand this sentence.

<sup>59</sup>Chao-chou 趙州 (778-897) lived to a legendary age. This passage is item no. 5 in the Chao-chou-chen-chi-ch'an -shih-hsing-chuang 趙州真際禪師行狀, the final section of Chao-chou-ch'an-shih-yü-lu 趙州禪師語錄, which is itself a part of the Ku-tsun-su-yü-lu 古尊宿語錄 (See Suzuki Daisetsu 鈴木大拙 and Akizuki Ryōmin 秋月龍溪, ed., Jōshū zenji goroku 趙州禪師語錄 Tokyo, Shunjusha, 1964).

<sup>60</sup>Shishi Sonja 師子尊者 propagated Buddhism in one of the ancient kingdoms of northern India. When the king of the country persecuted Buddhism he had Shishi Sonja (the Sanskrit version of whose name I have been unable to locate) beheaded. The head, however, bled not blood but a fluid as pure and white as the Buddhism Shishi Sonja had taught.

<sup>61</sup>Oibara 追腹 (also called junshi 殉死) is the ritual suicide of a vassal who wishes to follow his lord even in death.

<sup>62</sup>Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries did indeed smuggle themselves into Japan even after the final edict proscribing Christianity had been issued in 1639. They were always captured.

<sup>63</sup>Shōsan clearly considered Christianity to be a menace to Japan, one that further stimulated his militant manner. Even the temporary Christian incursion felt to the people of the seventeenth century like a kind of pollution.

<sup>64</sup>最勝王經 (the Suvarnaprabhāsa sūtra).

<sup>65</sup>841 A.D. The Hui-ch'ang 會昌 suppression of Buddhism took place in 845--the sixth year of Hui-ch'ang, not the fifteenth as Echu wrote.

<sup>66</sup>Shōtoku Taishi 聖德太子 (574-622), the Crown Prince and Regent under Empress Suiko 推古 (r. 592-628), played a major role in establishing Buddhism in Japan, although he did not import it in quite the simple way this statement suggests. The power of Buddhism to protect the state has been particularly important to the Japanese.

<sup>67</sup>These names mean, respectively, Temple of the Land at Peace; Temple of the Land Cleansed; Temple of Great Peace; Temple Protector of the Land; and Temple of Tranquil Ease.

<sup>68</sup>One feels the ideal of the world savior or messiah behind a statement like this. Shōsan said such things too.

<sup>69</sup>Miyamoto Musashi 宮本武藏 (1584-1645), also known as Miyamoto Niten 宮本二天, was one of the greatest swordsmen in Japanese history and an excellent painter as well.

<sup>70</sup>The far north of the main island of Honshu.

<sup>71</sup>I do not understand what Gonnosuke means.

<sup>72</sup>Suzuki Shōsan.

<sup>73</sup>Yung-ming, 永明 (904-976) was a monk who combined Zen and Pure Land practices.

<sup>74</sup>Kūami 空阿彌 is better known as Myōhen 明遍 (1142-1224) who, having been taught the Nembutsu practice by Hōnen, introduced mass recitation of the Nembutsu to Mt. Kōya. This story occurs in Dōgen's Shōbōgenzō zuimonki 正法眼藏隨聞記, kan no. 3, item 9. However Dōgen does not tell it in order to advertise the Nembutsu. Instead he says just before it that the learned man does well to conceal his knowledge, and he cites Kūami as a perfect example of the learned man whose passion for the Way (dōshin 道心) made him forget all he knew. Elsewhere Dōgen makes it quite clear that the Nembutsu, like all other practices beside silent zazen, is useless at best (See for example Shōbōgenzō 正法眼藏, the chapter entitled Bendōwa 辨道話, Nihon koten bungaku taikai v. 81, p. 78).

<sup>75</sup>I have been unable to locate this saying in Hōnen's writings.

<sup>76</sup>A very characteristic teaching of Shōsan.

<sup>77</sup>See Roankyō, note 148.

<sup>78</sup>U 有 could be translated as "being" or "is"; mu 無 means "nonbeing" or "is not." U and mu are thus philosophical opposites. They sound very impractical as passwords, at least in Japanese.



79 A gate of access to enlightenment.

80 I have not been able to locate this reference.

81 Lien-ch'ih 蓮池 is a popular title for Chu-hung 寂庵 (1535-1615), a monk who became famous for teaching a combination of Zen and Pure Land Buddhism. It is possible that Shosan had never even heard of him.

82 Possibly Po-shan Yüan-lai 博山元來 (1575-1650) (See Roankyō note 70).

83 T'ung-yung Fei-yin 通容費隱. (1593-1645), the teacher of Yin-yüan.

84 Yin-yüan Lung-chái 隱之陸琦 (1592-1673), the founder of the Obaku sect of Zen in Japan. He came to Japan as a refugee from the collapse of the Ming in 1654. I cannot further identify Ch'ao-yuan Tao-che 超玄道者.

85 Niji no kingyō = 時の勤行 which may also mean "services performed at the two times," perhaps daily. I have not identified these observances.

86 The Sukhāvātī-vyūha.

87 Ungo Kiyō 雲居希賢 (1582-1659). He was notorious in the Zen world for teaching the Nembutsu.

88 From Ninin bikuni, p. 28.

89 The Hōbutsu shū (edition cited in Roankyō, note 135) says that the Buddha wept these tears when he preached the Hiyu-kyō 慧雨經 a collection of Jātaka tales.

90 See Mōanjō, note 13.

91 Author unknown.

92 A poem by Ono no Komachi 小野小町 (9th c.) included in the Kokinshū.

93 Author unknown.

94 A lake of water from Mt. Sumeru and from the seven oceans that lie between Mt. Sumeru and the seven outer golden mountains. Such water is sweet, cold, soft, light, pure, odorless, harmless to the throat, and gentle to the stomach. In other words it is the water of enlightenment.

<sup>95</sup> Guzei 引誓, a word for Amida's original vow to save all sentient beings. Shinran 親鸞 (1173-1262) in his Kōsō wasan 高僧和讃 compared Amida's vow to a ship capable of carrying sentient beings across the ocean of suffering. The metaphor is a common one.

<sup>96</sup> Kannon 觀音 (Avalokiteśvara) and Seishi 勢至 (Mahāsthāmaprāpta) are the two Bodhisattvas who attend Amida.





