

**GAKU DO YO JIN SHU**

**Practical Advice  
On Pursuing the Buddhist Truth**

**--- from Master Dogen ---**

Translated by Master Gudo Nishijima

**Gaku** means to study, to learn, or to pursue. **Do** means the Truth. **Yojin** means warning, pointer, or piece of advice. And **Shu** means collection. Therefore **Gaku Do Yojin Shu** literally means a collection of pointers for pursuing the Truth.

The work is now referred to in Japan as *Eihei Shoso Gakudo Yojin Shu*. *Eihei Shoso* means the first patriarch of Eihei Temple, that is Master Dogen. But the title **Eihei Shoso Gakudo Yojin Shu** is not so old.

Master Dogen wrote this book in approximately 1234. The reason I say “approximately” is that, though the book is made up of ten articles, only two articles, no. 3 and no. 6, are dated. We can think that each of the ten articles was written on a different date, but we cannot guess the exact dates. However, we can suppose that all chapters were written in or around 1234.

The editor of this book is also unknown. Some scholars think that it was edited by Master Dogen himself, while others insist that it was edited by Master Ko-un Ejo, who was Master Dogen’s successor.

Master Dogen came back from China to Japan in 1227, when he was 27 years old. In the following years he wrote several books, for example, **Fukan-zazengi** (Universal Guide to the Standard Method of Zazen), **Shobogenzo Bendowa** (A Talk about Pursuing the Truth), **Shobogenzo Maka-hannya-haramitsu** (The Accomplishment that is Great Real Wisdom), and **Shobogenzo Genjo-koan** (The Realized Universe), but the works he completed before writing **Gakudo Yojin Shu** were relatively few.

He first established his own temple, *Kosho-horin-ji*, near Kyoto in 1233. It is clear that it was an ardent desire to spread true Buddhism in Japan at that time which led him to write down for his disciples and students what he considered were the most important pointers in pursuing the Buddhist truth.

It is evident, then, that studying **Gakudo Yojin Shu** plays a very important part in clarifying Master Dogen’s attitude to following the Buddhist way.

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## 1. Establish the Will to the Truth

The will to the Truth has many names but they all refer to the same state of mind. In the words of Master Nagarjuna, "A mind that reflects only upon the inconstancy of the secular world, as it appears and disappears, may also be called the will to the Truth".

So for the present we can use this definition of the will to the Truth. It is certainly true that when we consider the fickleness of the secular world our mind does not become selfish, and the desire for fame and profit does not arise. Rather, afraid that time is flying by so fast, we must practice the truth as if our to save our hair from burning. And knowing how fragile our own physical existence is, we must do our best to follow in the footsteps of Gautama Buddha.

We may listen to the heavenly song of the Kalavinka bird, but our ears are soon lost in the evening breeze. We may look at the lovely face of Moshō Seishi, but the morning dew comes and our eyes are shut forever.

However, once we are free from the fetters of attachment to sound and form, we can naturally meet the supreme principle of the will to the Truth.

We have heard many examples, from ancient times until today, of people who lacked knowledge, and people of narrow views. Almost all of them fell into the pit of fame and profit; they lost their chance to live the Buddhist life forever. It is pitiful, it is tragic, but we should know that it happens.

Even if we read splendid Buddhist Scriptures, both allegorical and literal, and even if we receive theoretical Buddhist books, both exoteric and esoteric, unless we have thrown away fame and profit, we can never claim to have established the will to the Truth at all.

Some say that the will to the Truth is the will to the supreme, right, and balanced enlightened mind and so it is irrelevant to fame and profit. Some say that the will to the Truth is a momentary state of mind in which the three thousand views and understandings exist. Some say that the will to the Truth is the gate to the Buddhist teachings in which mind does not appear even momentarily. Some say that the will to the Truth is the mind with which we enter Buddhism. But people who say these things have not yet known the will to the Truth themselves, and so they slander the will to the Truth indiscriminately. They stray further and further from the heart of the Buddhist truth.

For example, when you have the will to fame and profit, reflect upon your own mind there and then. Does your mind at that moment include the three thousand worlds of essence and form, or not? Do you experience the Buddhist teaching in which mind does not appear even momentarily, or not? No, there is only deluded craving for fame and love of profit; in that state there is no chance at all of grasping the will to the Truth.

Since ancient times, Buddhist saints who got the truth and got the teachings of Gautama Buddha have taught by mingling with common people, but they have absolutely never had any wrong desire to get fame and profit. They were not even attached to Gautama Buddha's teachings. How could they have had any attachment to secular values?

The will to the Truth, as I have stated before, is a mind which reflects on the impermanence of this world, and this is just one among many possible explanations of it. This will can never be the same as what lunatics dictate.

Images of non-appearance, and the three thousand worlds of forms, are realised by splendid action which is done after the establishment of the will to the Truth; so we should not confuse the stages of the process. In short, if you forget yourself for a while and do your practice in private, you will just become familiar with the will to the Truth.

So we can say that the sixty-two non-Buddhist views are all rooted in selfishness. When our outlook becomes selfish, we must practice Zazen and calmly reflect on ourselves. What have we got, inside and outside of our body? What have we got to rely on fundamentally? We got our body, hair and skin from our father and mother, his seed and her egg – like nothing from beginning to end. Mind, intentions, consciousness, our mental recognition, seem to make our life whole. We breathe in, we breathe out, but what does it amount to in the end? We cannot call these things self either. Among all these phenomena, here and there, there is nothing to be attached to. Only the deluded attach to them. Those who have attained the truth leave them as they are. However, worrying about the self which is no-self and getting caught up in the idea of appearance which is non-appearance, people fail to practice the Buddhist practices that they should practice and fail to cut the emotional secular ties that they should cut; they hate the true teachings and chase after wrong teachings. How can they be so completely wrong?

## **2. When you meet and listen to the authentic teachings of Gautama Buddha, be sure to learn them through practice.**

(In Confucianism they say that) one word of advice offered up to a king by a loyal minister sometimes has the power to revolutionise a nation. So when one word of Gautama Buddha is offered down to us, none of us can fail to undergo a revolution in our hearts and minds.

Of course unless a king is intelligent he will ignore the advice of his loyal minister. Similarly, unless we are excellent we will ignore Gautama Buddha's words.

Without undergoing a revolution in our hearts and minds, we will not be able to separate ourselves from social trends or stop worrying about life and death. In the same way, without accepting the advice of his loyal minister, a king can never enact effective policies in his country.

### **3. To enter into and experience Buddhism, always rely upon practice.**

A secular book (of Confucianism) says that when we study, the reward exists just in the study itself. Gautama Buddha said that when we practice, enlightenment exists just in the practice itself. I have never heard of anyone getting an education without studying, and I have never heard of anyone getting enlightenment without practicing.

We can make intellectual distinctions between practice that relies on subjective faith and practice that relies on objective teachings, or between sudden enlightenment and gradual enlightenment, but it is only with practice itself that we can transcend enlightenment. Students can be classified according to the depth of their study, or whether they are clever or stupid, but those who plod on with their study cannot fail to become educated. Getting an education does not depend only on whether the king is excellent or not, or whether the student's luck is good or bad. If anyone could get an education without having to study, how would it be possible to transmit the ways of those ancient kings who knew how to govern effectively? Similarly, if anyone could get enlightenment without having to practice, how would it be possible to understand Gautama Buddha's teachings of delusion and enlightenment?

We should know that we establish practice just in our delusion, and we get experience before getting enlightenment. Then we can know that the ferries and rafts in which we thought we were travelling were just dreams we had last night, and we can be free forever of our old illusions, seeing that the terrible serpent was in fact nothing more than a creeping vine. Buddhas do not make intentional efforts to make this happen; it happens when they are activated by the moment of the present.

Furthermore, we can say this: Experience is a result of practice. Our own treasure does not come from outside ourselves. And practice is a function of experience. So (as practice and experience in Zazen are one) how can we redefine our concrete mental state as anything other than what it is? At the same time, when we utilise the eyes of experience to reflect on the situation of our practice, not one single blemish hinders our vision; it is as if we could see white clouds ten thousand miles away. But if we analyse every step of our practice as a step towards enlightenment, our feet will not be able to make contact with one single speck of real dust; if we try to tread on the ground, our heavenly state and the concrete earth will be separated completely. By humbly retreating from a state like this, we can transcend even the state of Buddha.

Written on March 9<sup>th</sup> (in the lunar calendar) in the second year of the Tenpuku era.

#### **4. Do not practice Gautama Buddha's teachings with the intention of getting something.**

The practice of Gautama Buddha's teachings can only be done by accepting the true standards laid down by our Buddhist ancestors. We should not use our own standards.

Furthermore, if we rely on mind we can never get Gautama Buddha's teachings, and if we rely on the negation of mind we can never get Gautama Buddha's teachings.

Unless we have a mind to control our action in line with the truth, our body and mind cannot find balanced peace. Until the body and mind are peacefully balanced, the body and mind cannot be pleasant. Until the body and mind are pleasantly balanced, experiencing the truth may be painful.

When someone can control their action to bring it in line with the truth, how do they behave? Their mind neither grasps nor rejects anything, and they have no will to fame and profit. They do not practice Gautama Buddha's teachings to make themselves popular.

However, if we look at people nowadays, even those who practice Gautama Buddha's teachings, we see an ever widening gap between their minds and the truth. If there is something they can do to get the praise of others they do it at once, even though they know that it violates the truth. If their practices do not win the reverence and admiration of others they discard those practices, even though they know that those practices may be just the truth. How pitiful it is! For example, all of you here and now, calm your minds and reflect, Should we say that the mind and conduct of people today are Gautama Buddha's teachings? Shame on us. Shame on us. The eyes of the Buddhist saints are shining light on the real situation.

In general, those who practice Gautama Buddha's teachings do not do so for their own sake, so how could they ever practice for the sake of fame and profit? We should just practice for the sake of Gautama Buddha's teachings.

The benevolence and compassion of the Buddhas, their love and pity for living beings, are neither selfishness nor altruism; they are just ordinary feelings in Buddhism. Haven't you ever seen how insects and animals struggle and suffer to bring up their offspring, going through physical and mental torture, and how in the end they get no reward for their long efforts as mother and father? Yet they still look on their children with benevolence and compassion. Even little animals are like this. The Buddhas naturally look upon living beings in the same way.

The splendid teachings of the Buddhas are not limited to benevolence and compassion; the teachings manifest themselves universally at every concrete place. This is the basic fact, and it applies equally to everything.

Now that we are already disciples of Gautama Buddha, how could we miss the chance to follow Buddhist habits? We Buddhist practitioners should not intend to practice Gautama Buddha's teachings for our own sake, we should not practice Gautama Buddha's teachings for fame and profit, we should not practice Gautama Buddha's teachings for good effects and bad effects, and we should not practice Gautama Buddha's teachings to get something mystical. Only for the sake of Gautama Buddha's teachings, we practice Gautama Buddha's teachings – this is just the truth.

## **5. To practice Zazen and study the truth, look for a true master.**

An ancient Master said, "If the establishment of the will to the Truth is not right, then all practices will come to nothing."

How true these words are! And we should also know that practicing the truth depends on whether the master is true or not.

The student is like a fine wood and the master is like a carpenter. Quality wood will not show its beauty unless it is in the hands of a good carpenter. Whereas in the hands of a real craftsman, even warped wood will show its quality at once. The truth or falsity of enlightenment lies in the rightness or wrongness of the master. We can understand the facts with this simile.

In the whole history of Japan, however, there has been no true master. How do we know this? We can know it by reading what past teachers have said, just as we can find out about the source of a river by scooping out water downstream.

In our country, from ancient times until today, although many teachers have edited books, taught students, and preached to human beings and gods in heaven, their words were green and their speech was immature. They never arrived at the upper limits of intellectual study, so how could they ever have reached even the boundary of real experience? They just passed on words and phrases and made their disciples recite names of Buddha. Night and day they would count the treasures of others, without being able to get half a penny for themselves. That was the blunder of the ancient masters.

Some of them taught others to seek enlightenment that was different from a concrete mental state, and some of them taught others to look forward to life in another world. Delusion, confusion, and wrong ideas sprang from these teachings.

(It is like when bad doctors prescribe medicine.) For example, even if the medicine itself is good, unless the doctor tells his patient how to take it, the medicine may be more harmful than poison. There has never been anyone in this country who could administer medicine effectively, and until now there has been no master who could give an antidote for the bad medicine. For this reason, people have struggled to avoid life and sickness, but how can anyone escape ageing and death? That people have tried to do so was completely the fault of the teachers; the students were not to blame at all.

Why do I say so? Because these things happen when teachers make their students discard basics in favour of trivialities. Before they have any real understanding of their own, such teachers become exclusively absorbed in making their own selfish mind vigorous, while all around them others are falling down into the wrong state. It is so pitiful. The teachers themselves have never understood this wrongness and delusion, so how could their disciples be expected to know right from wrong?

It is very regrettable that Gautama Buddha's teachings have never spread to this small country far from civilised nations, and that no true master has ever appeared. If you want to study the supreme Buddhist Truth, you have to visit excellent Buddhist masters in far-off China. Reflect upon the vigorous road that is far beyond intellectual thinking. If you cannot find a true master, it is better not to study at all.

Generally, in looking for a true master, don't worry about age or experience: a true master is just someone who has realised the true teachings and received the certification of a true master. Knowledge of words is not important. Understanding is not primary. A person of extra-ordinary power and unrestricted mental vigour, who transcends their own opinion, who does not linger in states of emotional consciousness, and in whom practice and understanding meet in equilibrium – this is just a true master.

## **6. What we should know in practicing Zazen.**

Practicing Zazen and pursuing the truth are great tasks throughout our life – we should not take them lightly. How could we be rash in carrying them out? People (who were pursuing the truth) in the past have severed their arms or cut off their fingers; these are excellent examples from China. Long ago Gautama Buddha gave up his family and relinquished his kingdom; this is also a precedent for practicing the truth.

People today say that we should practice the practice which is easy to practice. But these words are completely wrong. They do not conform to Buddhism at all. Even if we chose to practice something as easy as lying on a bed, it would eventually become tiresome. And if we allowed ourselves to be bored by our one practice, all our work would become tiresome. Needless to say, people who like easy practice do not have the right constitution to pursue the truth.

Far from being easy, the teachings which have spread through the world today are just the teachings which the Great Master Gautama Buddha attained after arduous and painful practices endured in eternal time. The original source was like this. How could the streams be easy? A person who loves truth should never intend to do easy practice. If they look for easy practice they can never land on solid ground, and so they may have difficulty getting to the treasure house.

In the past there have been people of very great ability, and even they said that their practice was difficult. We should recognise the depth and greatness of the Buddhist truth. If Buddhism were originally easy to practice, people of great ability throughout history would not have said that Buddhism is difficult to practice and difficult to understand. Compared with those people in history, people today do not amount to so much as one hair from a herd of nine bulls. Even if we summon all our meagre resources and scant knowledge and strive to do difficult practice, we can never even arrive at what was easy for these old masters to practice and understand.

Just what is this thing that people today like to understand easily and practice easily? It is not secular teaching, and not Buddhist teaching either; it cannot match the practice of demons in the sky or demons on the ground. It cannot match the practice of non-Buddhists or the practice of intellectual and sensual Buddhists. It could only be called the most deluded and the most wrong practice of ordinary people. And even if those who seek it intend to get out of secular society, their daily lives will still be caught in an endless cycle of miserable life and death.

Difficult though it may be to break our bones and crush our marrow, the most difficult thing is to make our mind balanced. Difficult though it may be to keep the precepts and maintain pure conduct, the most difficult thing is to make our physical conduct balanced. If it were valuable to grind our bones to powder, the many who have endured such austerities since ancient time would have attained Gautama Buddha's teachings, but few people really have attained

the teachings. If it were valuable to be a man of pure conduct, many puritans since ancient times would have attained the truth. The reason is that it is very difficult for a person to make their mind balanced.

Perceptiveness is not important. Scholastic understanding is not important. Mind, will, consciousness are not foremost. Mental images, thoughts, and reflections are not foremost. Without using these things at all, people in the past have experienced the balanced state of body and mind and entered into the Buddhist Truth. That is what Gautama Buddha meant when he said that Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara changed direction and lost consciousness of his perception. When it is clear that two faces – movement and calmness – do not really appear, that is the state of balance.

If the Buddhist truth could be entered through perceptiveness and wide knowledge, senior priest Jinshu would have been a man of the truth. If the Buddhist truth were averse to vulgarity or low rank, how could the patriarch on Mt. Sokei (Master Daikan Eno) have got the Buddhist truth? It is obvious that the transmission and reception of Buddhism is beyond perceptiveness and wide knowledge. If we look for the facts, we can get the facts; and if we reflect on the facts, we can experience Buddhism.

We do not mind being old and withered, and we do not mind being young and in our prime. Master Joshu was in his sixties when he began pursuing the truth, but he became an excellent master in the lineage of Master Bodhidharma. A daughter of the Tei family began her study of Buddhism when she was only thirteen and she went on to become an excellent member of a Buddhist temple.

The dignity of the Buddhist teachings only appears if we behave as Buddhists, and we can only distinguish the dignity of the Buddhist teachings if we experience the Buddhist teachings.

Veteran scholars of theoretical Buddhist teachings and experts in secular teachings can all find Zazen eventually. There have been many examples of this: Master Eshi of Mt. Nangaku was a man of many talents, but he still studied under Master Bodhidharma. Master Yoka Gengaku was an eminent figure, but he studied Buddhism under Master Daikan Eno.

It may be said that the realisation of Buddhist teachings and the attainment of the truth rely upon study under a master. When you visit a Buddhist master and study under them, listen to what the master says without trying to match it with your own views. If you compare what the master says with your own views, you will not be able to get the master's teachings.

When you visit a master and listen to their teachings, make your body and mind pure, and make your eyes and ears calm. Just hear the master's teachings and don't mix in any other images at all. Making your body and mind one, be like a jug ready to be filled with water. Then you will surely be able to get the master's teachings.

The stupid people of today memorise sentences from books or get knowledge of Buddhist ancestors, then try to match this with what the master says. At that time they only have their own views or the words of past ancestors. They are not ready for the Master's words at all.

Another group are those who, giving primacy to their own views, open Buddhist Scriptures, memorise one or two words, and consider that they have got the Buddhist teachings. Subsequently, after they have visited teachers of clear understanding and masters of the fundamental teachings, if the teachings they hear are the same as their own views they affirm the teachings, but if the teachings do not conform to their own old opinions they deny the teachings. Without knowing how to discard wrong teachings, how can they ever climb back onto the right track? It may be that, even with the passing of limitlessly many aeons, they will still be deluded people. This might be a most pitiful thing. Is it not sad?

Buddhist students should know that the Buddhist truth is beyond thinking, discrimination, supposition, reflection, perception, or understanding. We spend our lives dallying around inside of these things, so if the Buddhist truth exists within them, why have we not realised the Buddhist truth yet? Students of the truth should not rely on the faculties of thinking, discriminating and so on. At the same time, we are always equipped with thinking and other faculties, and if we apply them with our own body and examine our situation, then it is like looking into a clear mirror.

The gate of entry into this Buddhist situation exists solely under the control of masters who have attained the truth and who have realised the gate completely. It is totally beyond the reach of those who just teach words.

Fifteen days after the Spring Equinox (in the lunar calendar), the second year of the Tenpuku Era (1234).

## **7. Any person who hungers to practice Buddhism and to transcend secular society should, without fail, practice Zazen.**

Buddhism is superior to other teachings. Therefore people want to get it. In the time when Gautama Buddha lived, there were not two teachings at all. The Great Master Gautama Buddha guided living beings with only the supreme Truth.

Since Master Maha-Kasyapa transmitted the essence and treasury of Gautama Buddha's teachings, twenty-eight generations in India, six generations in China, and patriarchs of the five sects, have transmitted the teachings from authentic successor to authentic successor, without any breaks in the transmission at all.

Therefore, since (Master Bodhidharma came to China in) the middle of the Futsu Era of the Ryan dynasty (527), among all excellent people, from Buddhist priests to kings and officials, there were none who failed to devote themselves to Buddhism. Truly speaking, if you love excellence, love what is really excellent. Don't be like Shoko, who loved dragons but fainted when he saw a real one.

In China and the east the net of abstract teachings has spread over the ocean and mountains. But even though the net covers their mountains, Buddhist priests have no oneness of clouds and mind. And even though the net is spread over the ocean, the oneness of mind and waves has dried up.

Stupid people like the systematic teachings of letters. They are as stupid as the man who has caught a fish's eyeball and claims to be holding a pearl. Deluded people play around with words. They are as deluded as the man who treasures a pebble in a swallow's nest as a precious jewel. Most of these people fall into demon pits, and they usually damage their bodies as well.

It is very regrettable that in this country far from civilisation, people easily slip into reverence of wrong customs, and the right teachings of Gautama Buddha have never been able to spread. In China, on the other hand, the whole country has already devoted itself to the right teachings of Gautama Buddha. In our country, Korea, and so forth, the true teachings still have not spread. Why not? Why haven't the true teachings spread? Koreans at least have been able to hear about the true teachings, but we in Japan have not even been able to hear their name. The reason is that the many teachers who went from Japan to China in the past all remained inside the net of abstract teachings. Although they passed on Buddhist Scriptures, it was as if they had completely forgotten about Buddhism itself. What was the use of doing that? Their efforts came to nothing, because they were ignorant of the real traditions of pursuing the truth. It is very pitiful that in spite of their efforts, they spent their whole lives just wasting their human bodies.

Generally in studying Buddhism, when we first enter the gate of Buddhism we listen to the teachings of reverend Buddhist priests and we try to practice according to their teachings. At that time, there is something that we should

know. It is this: the Universe turns us and we turn the Universe. When we can turn the Universe, we are strong and the Universe is weak. When the Universe turns us back, the Universe is strong and we are weak.

The Buddhist teachings have always had these two factors, but no-one other than true successor has ever known it. Hardly anyone other than humble patch-robed priests, has even heard of this teaching. Before this old principle is recognised, it is not possible to pursue the truth intuitively, and even less is it possible to distinguish between right and wrong.

Nowadays, however, this old principle has been transmitted naturally to those of us who practice Zazen and pursue the truth. And so we do not make mistakes. Other sects are not like this.

Someone who yearns for and searches for Gautama Buddha's way can never find the true way unless they practice Zazen.

## **8. About the conduct of Buddhist priests and nuns who practice Zazen.**

Since the time of Gautama Buddha, the direct transmission in one line has passed throughout twenty-eight generations in India and six generations in China, without so much as a thread of hair being added, and without so much as a grain of dust being destroyed. The ritual robe arrived at Master Daikan Eno on Mt. Sokei and the Buddhist teachings spread throughout the Universe. From that time, the essence and treasury of Gautama Buddha's true teachings flourished in great Tang dynasty China. The real situation of these teachings cannot be grasped however we grope, and cannot be attained wherever we search. The real situation is that at the place of perception we forget what we recognise, and in the moment of attainment we transcend mind.

Master Daikan Eno transcended his humble figure on Mt. Obai and Master Taiso Eka cut off his arm on Shoshitsu Peak. When they got their master's marrow, they changed their mental situation and enjoyed the excellent style of Buddhist behaviour. After they prostrated themselves they stepped back and settled into line unobtrusively. At the same time, they remained at no fixed place and had nothing to attach to, either in mind or in body. They didn't stop and didn't stay.

A Buddhist priest asked Master Joshu, "is there Buddha-nature even in a dog, or not?" Master Joshu said, "Nothing". Should we pause to consider the word "Nothing"? Should we linger upon the word "Nothing"? If we look for something concrete to rely upon, there is nothing at all.

Try this: Let go of your hands. Just release your grasp for a while. How are body and mind? How is real conduct? How are life and death? How is Buddhism? How are secular rules? How are mountains, rivers, and the earth; or people and domestic animals, how are these in the end? As we research these things again and again, two forms – movement and non-movement – naturally do not appear at all. When this non-appearance occurs, the state is not rigid, but few can experience it, and many are deluded by it.

Someone who is pursuing the truth is already half way to the truth. Don't give up until you get there. This I pray. This I pray.

## **9. Direct yourself at the truth and practice it.**

Someone who is bravely pursuing the truth should first make sure that their aim is true. The true aim is, for example, what Gautama Buddha got when, sitting under the Bodhi tree, he saw Venus shining brightly; in that instant he suddenly realised the supreme way to the truth. The truth that he attained is beyond the reach of Sravakas, Pratyeka-buddhas and so forth. Gautama Buddha was able to realise the truth by himself. Since then Buddha has transmitted the truth to Buddha and the transmission has not been broken, even until today. If someone has attained that same truth, how could they themselves not be Buddha? To “direct yourself at the truth” is to recognise the limitations of Buddhist teachings and to make the state of Buddhism clear.

The Buddhist Truth exists under the foot of every human being. When a person is caught by the Truth, they can clearly realise the moment of the present. When a person is caught by enlightenment they can perfectly realise themselves as just a person. So even if they understand the truth perfectly, they may still be able to drop down into one concrete enlightenment. Going directly to the truth is something as free and elegant as this.

Nowadays, people who pursue the truth have not yet recognised what can be understood and what cannot be understood, and so they like to chase after concrete effects. Is there anyone who does not make this mistake? They are like the son who has rejected his father and is fleeing his homeland, throwing away jewels with every weary step. Even though he is the only son of a wealthy man, he has long been a tramp in a strange land. Truly, it is only natural that people should act like this.

In general, students of the truth want to be caught by the truth. To be caught by the truth is to lose all trace of enlightenment. Practitioners of the Buddhist truth should first of all believe in Buddhism. Belief in Buddhism should be the belief that we ourselves originally exist inside the truth, without delusion, without wrong images, without disturbances, without anything extra or anything missing, and without mistakes. These are the kind of beliefs we should establish, and this is how we should make the truth clear. Then according to these beliefs, we practice. This is our basis for pursuing the truth.

What these criteria really mean is that we should sit away the roots of intention, and we should keep ourselves off the path that leads to intellectual understanding. This is the method by which practitioners should be guided at first. After that, the second step is to transcend body and mind and get rid of delusion and enlightenment.

In general, the most difficult person to find is the person who believes that they already exists in Buddhism itself. If a person genuinely believes that they are already in the Truth, they naturally understand the great Truth, and they may even know the origins of delusion and enlightenment.

Of those who try to sit away the roots of intention, eight or nine out of ten will catch sight of the truth at once.

## **10. Taking a direct hit here and now.**

If you want to regulate your body and mind, two ways exist naturally. One is to visit a master and listen to their teaching. The other is to make efforts in practicing Zazen.

When we listen to the teachings, our consciousness is free to roam anywhere. When we practice Zazen, our practice and experience are securely grounded. Therefore, if we try to enter the Buddhist Truth by discarding one way or the other, we will never be able to receive a direct hit.

In general, we all have our own body and mind. Inevitably, we are sometimes strong in practice and sometimes weak. We are sometimes brave and sometimes cowardly. But by using these states of body and mind, which are sometimes moving and sometimes stable, we can experience ourselves as Buddha directly. That is just a direct hit.

In other words, if we just follow Gautama Buddha's experience, without changing this body and mind which we have had from the past, we can say that we are in the here and now, and we can call it a direct hit. It is just following Gautama Buddha, so it is not our own old viewpoint. It is just being struck by a direct hit, so it is not getting some new state.