

*from Seeds for a Boundless Life,
Zen Kai Blanche Hartman*

preparing to bloom is very quiet. It doesn't look outward to see if it's doing it right. It finds this bloom within itself somehow. It comes from the very nature of the bulb, this bloom that we see as beautiful. It's beautiful from the beginning, it's completely there. It just needs conditions around it to help it bloom. In Zen, practice centers and teachers provide the conditions to help buddhas bloom. But really it's all there, it's all completely present right with you from the beginning. This is our faith. In faith that we are buddha, we enter Buddha's Way. In faith we can bloom fully in the most appropriate way. We practice this practice.

BEING JUST THIS ONE

I'll read you this quotation from Dogen Zenji's fascicle called "Self Receiving Self Employing Awareness" or in Japanese, "Bendowa." He says, "The zazen of even one person at one moment imperceptibly accords with all things and fully resonates through all time." He is saying that our present practice will affect all time: past, present, and future. And each moment of zazen is full of this realization.

We are not practicing only by sitting but also before and after we sit. This kind of practice fills the universe. It would be tragic if practice ended after forty-five minutes of sitting. Therefore, we cannot measure our practice through time or space or just measure our own personal practice. Dogen says, "Know that even if all buddhas of the ten directions, as innumerable as the sands of the Ganges, exert their strength and with the Buddha's wisdom try to measure the merit of one person's zazen, they will not be able to fully comprehend it."

The spirit of our practice is to practice without trying to acquire anything, because we already have everything we need. Without trying to be anything other than just this one, because just this one is a buddha from the beginning. We practice to express and realize and settle on the suchness of this one, so that it

can manifest in whatever activity we undertake, so that our oneness with all beings becomes evident. Can we do it, can we make it happen? Just sit, and just be willing to be here as this one, and allow what arises to come out. Be willing to be just this one. Can we just sit zazen, not judging whether we're doing it right or doing it wrong, just practice knowing the body?