

# To Meet That Which We Cannot Know

IN ZAZEN WE TRY to find a stable physical position, so we can listen to the voices of the mind and know the sensations of the body. If these voices or sensations remain unrecognized, they control us, and we may feel we don't understand why things are so complicated or unworkable in our lives.

As we continue to practice zazen, we begin to understand that our own mind is making up the appearance of the world and also reacting to it. Gradually understanding this, the mind is not so disturbed by itself and begins to relax. We begin to acknowledge some deep taste from zazen, some deep taste of our life.

This is not something we can talk about because we do not have language for it. Trying to explain sitting misses the mark. Gradually we learn to trust that which we cannot say, and we recognize the unsayable as our deep wisdom, the stronger "voice" within.

When our full energy is available, we see how our thoughts and feelings have created the separate and suffering self. We say

THE TRUTH  
suffering because this self feels isolated and does not recognize its interdependent nature, how it exists in cooperation with everything.

Again and again in zazen we see separation: our mind may be commenting, "Zazen is great," or "This is impossible," or "I wonder if I'm doing it right." It feels as if there is one who thinks and that which is thought about. No matter how long we look, we cannot find the thinker.

We realize that we have been arguing or discussing totally inside our own mind. All the inner voices are created by our own mind. We begin to listen to our thinking as the creative activity of our own consciousness, rather than as some trustworthy voice inside.

When we find that we are thinking—planning or remembering—in zazen, we "wake up" and come back to inhalation and exhalation. Each time we return to inhalation/exhalation we interrupt the conditioned pattern of the mind. Each time we leave our story line to return to the breath, we strengthen our awareness that breathing is what is actually happening and storytelling is our fictional life. We acknowledge our thoughts and reactions as our storytelling mind rather than what is actually happening. We learn there is no outside.

We also pay attention to the sensations of the body without doing anything about them. As much as possible we don't move away from them. We don't judge, interpret, or comment on them. Sensations are not right or wrong. We practice to see what is right in front of our face.

We gradually become intimate with the consciousness we are, which we inherited when we took birth. Our karmic stream is neither good nor bad. Do relationships tend to be

## WHAT WE CANNOT KNOW

smooth or awkward for you? Do you trip going down the street trailing too many packages, too many tasks? Karmic predispositions. Can we acknowledge all this with a neutral and interested mind?

We are 100 percent individual and 100 percent a member of the community. We exist independently of all of the projections people have of us, and things are independent of our projections of them. And yet the way that things exist is ultimately the same for all of us—we are members of the same community.

Because we experience that things change, we begin to see there isn't anything to hang on to. Each situation is its own unique universe of causes and conditions. We begin to talk differently, hold opinions provisionally, and not take ourselves so seriously. We help each other let go of our self-righteousness. Our attachment to the separate self weakens.

We sit to meet that which we cannot know. And to be willing to see everything, all the scenery of our consciousness, along the way. It is a great relief to begin to live our life in accordance with reality as it is, rather than reality as we create it.