

PART II

RIGHT ATTITUDE IN PRACTICE

" The point we emphasize is strong confidence in our original nature. "

Single-minded Way

" Even if the sun were to rise from the west,
the Bodhisattva has only one way. "

The purpose of my talk is not to give you some intellectual understanding, but just to express my appreciation of our zen practice. To sit with you in this way is very very unusual. Of course, whatever we do is unusual, because our life itself is so unusual. Buddha said, " To appreciate you^r human life is as rare as soil on your finger nail ". You know the soil on your nail is such a small speck. Our human life is rare and wonderful; when I sit I want to remain in this way forever, but I encourage myself to have another practice, for instance to recite the sutra, or to bow. And when I bow, I think, " This is wonderful ". But I have to change my practice again to recite the sutra. So the purpose of my talk is to express my appreciation, that's all. Our way is not to sit to acquire something; it is to express our true nature. That is our practice.

If you want to express yourself, your true nature, there should be some natural and appropriate way of expression. Even swaying right and left, before or after sitting, is an expression of yourself. It is not preparation for practice, or relaxation after practice; it is part of the practice. So we should not do it as if it were preparing for something else. This should be true in your everyday life. To cook, or to fix some food, is not preparation, according to Dogen; it is practice. To cook is not just to prepare food for someone or for yourself; it is to express

your sincerity. So when you cook you should express yourself in your activity in the kitchen. You should allow yourself plenty of time; you should work on it with nothing in your mind, and without expecting anything. You should just cook! Even cleaning is not preparation for rituals. We clean, and then we observe rituals, and then we clean up again. That is also an expression of our sincerity, a part of our practice. So it is necessary to sit in zazen in this way. But just to sit is not our way. Whatever you do, it should be an expression of the same activity. So we should always appreciate what we are doing. There is no preparation for something else.

The Bodhisattva's way is called 'the single-minded way', or 'one railway track thousands of miles long'. The railway track is always the same. If it were to become wider or narrower, it would be disastrous. Wherever you go the railway track is always the same. That is the Bodhisattva's way. So even if the sun were to rise from the west, the Bodhisattva has only one way. His way is in each moment to express his nature and his sincerity.

We say railway track, but actually there is no such thing. Sincerity itself is the railway track. The sight we see from the train will change, but we are always running on the same track. And there is no beginning or no end to the track, beginningless and endless track. There is no starting point nor goal, nothing to attain. Just to run on the track is our way. This is the nature of our zen practice.

But when you become curious about the railway track, danger is there. You should not see the railway track. If you look at the track you will become dizzy. You should just appreciate the sight you will see from the train. That is our way. There is no need for the passengers to be curious about the track. Someone will take care of it; Buddha will take care of it. But sometimes we try to explain the railway track because we become curious if something is always the same. We wonder, "How is it possible for the Bodhisattva always to be the same? What is his secret?" But there is no secret. Everyone has the same nature as the railway track.

There were two good friends, Cho-Kei and Ho-Fuku. They were talking about the Bodhisattva's way, and Cho-Kei said, "Even if the arhat (ardenlightened one) were to have evil desires, still the Tathagata (Buddha) does not have two kinds of words. I say that the Tathagata has words, but no dualistic words." Ho-Fuku said, "Even though you say so, your comment is not perfect." Cho-Kei asked, "What is your understanding of the Tathagata's words?" Ho-Fuku said, "We have had enough discussion, so let's have a cup of tea!" Ho-Fuku did not give his friend an answer, because it is impossible to give a verbal interpretation of our way. Nevertheless, as a part of their practice these two good friends discussed the Bodhisattva's way, even though they did not expect to find a new interpretation. So Ho-Fuku answered, "Our discussion is over. Let's have a cup of tea!" That's a very good answer, isn't it?

So now I should say, " I am hungry, so let's have breakfast ! " My talk is over; your listening is over. There is no need to remember what I say; there is no need to understand what I say. You understand; you have full understanding within yourself. There is no problem. But something has to go on the track. We have a railway track, and we have some passengers, and so we should have a train. So.. (getting up).. train starts for the dining room !