

曹源一滴水

Shodo Harada Roshi's Newsletter

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The gate to the new century has opened, and already we have welcomed the second new year. Last year we entered this new twenty-first century, and since the eleventh of September our world has been completely disrupted. Of course, this disruption has not yet been resolved. The huge pain and suffering from this event have to be looked at very clearly.

This year, according to the Chinese calendar, is the year of the horse. There is an ancient Chinese writing called the *Enanji*. One section of the *Enanji* says, "10,000 things happen to a person, but it is all Saio's horse." In the Kan dynasty in China, in the north of China in the area of Toreidei, there was an old man who was able to clarify the Great Way. This man's horse crossed over the border of his country into the land of Ko. When his horse ran away to the neighboring country of Ko, his neighbors all said, "Oh how sad, how terrible!" and they went to give their condolences to the old man whose horse had run away. But that old man said, "No, no. We can't say this won't end up bringing some kind of good fortune."

They thought he would be miserable because he had lost his horse, but in fact, that is not how he was looking at it. That very horse that had run away to the land of Ko then came back and brought with it many other wonderful, excellent horses. The country of Ko was famous for the fine horses that were born and raised there, and the old man's horse brought back many of those fine horses. The people around him were amazed, and they celebrated the old man's good fortune. But the old man was not so excited, not so joyful. He said, "Let's see how this will become a source of difficult problems now."

Soon, a new colt was born. As the colt grew, the old man's young son liked to play with him and ride him. One day, in a terrible accident, the son fell off the horse. He was disabled, unable to walk without limping and unable to do the same work as others. It was very sad, and people were constantly comforting the old man, to which the old man would say, "Let's ask how will this become a good thing." After a year, the soldiers of the country of Ko came over the border to fight a war. All the young people had to go to war. Taken away from their fields and harvests, they were all sent to fight. Carrying swords, they went and fought and were killed. It was an extremely savage war. Nine out of ten of the young men from the neighborhood died. But the son of the old man couldn't go to war because of his injuries, so because of his terrible accident he was able to stay alive and remain with his

parents.

When we experience great tragedy, it often becomes the source of something wonderful. And when we experience something wonderful, it will often become the source of something terrible. Our views about the Afghans and the Taliban are an example. While we knew there was a country called Afghanistan, few of us knew anything about what was going on there. We were ignorant about the inner workings of Afghanistan. For those of us who are Buddhists, Afghanistan is a very important country. From India to China, Buddhism was transmitted along the Silk Road, following the same flow as the culture. Three years ago, when the Taliban destroyed the Bamian Buddhist statues, many people started looking at Afghanistan for the first time. These statues were an important part of the history of Buddhism, and of Afghanistan as well. Although the country has a very severe environment, it had been peaceful, and it produced abundant agricultural products, including sugar, wheat, and fruit trees.

The English, the Russians, and others have fought wars and battles there. Between 1842 and 1919, when Afghanistan became independent, it experienced three great wars and continuing civil strife. Within this turmoil, this process of breaking apart and coming together again, 2.5 million people have already died. This already impoverished agricultural and farming country has become even more destitute, without enough food to feed its people. It has known more and more misfortune, including devastating earthquakes. And now the wars inside Afghanistan are continuing. The country is still not united. How will Afghanistan once more achieve harmony? The whole world is looking at this now.

In Tokyo recently world leaders met to discuss how to bring Afghanistan back to health. Great amounts of money were pledged for doing that. And with that, a new approach has been realized. Afghanistan's new leader, Hamid Karzai, said that he wants to talk to the people who are just ordinary citizens, that people want to see their children going to school whistling. Karzai has been continually praying for the renewal of the real Afghanistan.

In the Chinese writing of the word *peace*, half of the word is written with a symbol for rice and a symbol for mouth. This represents the harmony that comes from having rice to put in a mouth. And this is how we really are. When we are hungry and we put food in our stomachs, we naturally become smoother. This is true not just for humans but for all animals; eating is our most important source. After a baby has had enough of its mother's milk, it is in a good mood. If you watch a baby, you can see this clearly. When well fed, babies look satisfied and have an abundant, tranquil appearance; they will pick up a toy and play all by themselves.

In the east we have the saying, "When our food and clothing are sufficient, then for the first time correct behavior can be born." If we don't have enough to eat, we get irritated and agitated and have a hard time being peaceful and at ease. That word for harmony, which is also half of the word

for peace, is represented by rice going into the mouth. The symbol that is the other half of the word for peace means "to measure." On an old-fashioned balance, there was a plate on which things were placed to be weighed. In the center of the balance were two dots. If the objects on both sides on both sides of the center weighed the same, then the balance would be in a stable and level position, with the measure centered between the two dots. In order to have peace, a world must be created in which everyone can eat. A balance of food for everyone is a basic condition for peace.

There are now people who are spending hundreds of dollars every night for a meal, and at the same time there are people who do not have enough food for even one meal. As long as there are so many millions of hungry, unfed people, there is no way this world can become peaceful. The impoverished Arabs who have brought forth this terrorism at this time are pointing at this, at the difference between those who have food to eat and those who don't have food to eat.

In Buddhism from olden times, there is the rule that food should be distributed equally and with no distinctions in who receives offerings. When we go to the monastery to do zazen, we all eat the same things together. In today's world, the equivalent of the offering of old is the salary. Salaries may vary according to ability, knowledge, and wisdom. But we should still all have the opportunity to eat the same amount, because having something to eat is what makes people calm and quiet, and everyone eating the same food together is an even greater abundance. It is not our rank that eats. It is our physical bodies that eat. We all require calories. We all equally need to eat. Those who are working hardest need to be eating the most calories, and they are often those of lowest rank.

In Zen we also have the rules of Master Hyakujo. Master Hyakujo, who first made our basic rules, gave in his rules the rule of *fushin*, meaning that everybody comes out to work. Today the word *fushin* has become a part of the everyday Japanese language. In its the original sense, it meant that when we build a house or when we make a road, for example, everybody comes out together and works together equally on the project. This is called *samu* in the temple. We ring a bell, and that calls everybody to come out now, so that we can all work together on this big job. Everyone brings their shovels and pitchforks, all of their different tools, and we all work on the job harmoniously. All the way from the highest ranking abbot to the lowest ranking young novice, everyone comes out and works together. When everyone works together at the temple, that is *fushin*.

It was Hyakujo Zenji in the Tang dynasty in China who created this way of doing it. Hyakujo is the great master in China who firmed up the basic rules for living in a monastery. In Hyakujo's rules, this is what is written. Hyakujo Zenji lived until the age of ninety-five. Even after he was eighty, he did not rest from work; he always came out to participate in the group work. He would always observe the rules he had made, never himself breaking them. There were many young people training at his temple, and when they saw

their old, respected, venerable teacher working with them, they said, "You don't have to work with us. We can do it. You make it possible for us to live here in good health."

Nevertheless, he said, "I won't rest at all." Since his students knew that he came outside to work because that is where his tools were, they thought that if they put the tools away, then he wouldn't have any reason to come out. They hid his tools. The next time the bell rang to call everyone out to work, there were no tools for him. He silently returned to his room. After that, he didn't come out for his meals at all. He went on a hunger strike. This was the original hunger strike. People today make a complaint or they go on strike about their unfair wages, but this was a very different hunger strike. He wanted to work, and that is why he was on a hunger strike. When that happened, everyone was worried. Why didn't he come out for work?

He then gave the famous, splendid words, "A day of no work is a day of no food": if I haven't worked in a day, then I cannot eat on that day. When his students gave him back his tools, he very happily joined them in the work and continued to work every day. This is a very important story, one to be thankful for. We all need to work together in this same way; unless we can, we will not have peace. From that peace, we will all become bright and happy.

This same teaching is also found in the Buddhist sutras. From this teaching comes the great honoring of the sangha, the harmony of the sangha. Where I trained in Kobe at Shofukuji, there was a great master named Bankei Zenji who lived four hundred years ago, during the Tokogawa era. This temple of Shofukuji was built in honor of Bankei Zenji. He was very demanding about this matter that all people living in the temple should eat equally. He even said that the Dharma of that time was decaying because people ate separately and the senior people ate more delicious things. One day at his temple they received three eggplants from the feudal lord. Because eggplants weren't in season, this was a very special gift. The attendant made an eggplant dish and gave it to the roshi. The roshi responded, "Did you make this for everybody?" The attendant answered that he had not. "I don't have enough to make this for everybody. It is not eggplant season. We received this as a gift from the feudal lord, for you, master, to have eggplant. This is the instruction with which we received it; please eat it." To this Master Bankei said, "If that is the case, cut it up so everyone can have it in their soup."

Used in that way, only three eggplants were able to become a part of each person's soup. Maybe there was no flavor and no fragrance, and you wouldn't even have been able to tell that there was eggplant in the soup, but Bankei's state of mind is what is important. Another time he was eating miso soup, and he asked if everyone was having the same soup. When he was told, "No, everyone is having an almost rotting soup, so we brought a special one for you," the master replied, "For you to say to me to eat something especially good is like saying to me 'don't eat at all.' I can't receive such

food. I've told you every day. Don't you get it yet?" He went into his room, closed his door, and didn't come out. He, too, was now doing a hunger strike. He was doing a hunger strike because he wanted to be fed terrible things, rotting things. They went to Dairyō, the monk in the kitchen, who said, "I was mistaken about that. That was a big mistake, I made a big problem for everybody." The cook said this out loud, just outside the paper doors to the room where the master was having his hunger strike. They couldn't do anything about the hunger strike, so they had a temple member go into his room and say, "This was a mistake. From now on they will give you the same terrible-tasting, rotting things to eat as they have." Hearing that, the master's state of mind improved and he stopped his hunger strike. This state of mind of Bankei Zenji has dried up and withered in this day and age.

In China, there is a very famous book, the story of Sangoku. In the story, as Sangoku's army is going into a neighboring land, he receives a large amount of sake from the feudal lord he represents, in support of their efforts. Instead of drinking it all by himself, he decides to give it to the soldiers. He announces that he will send the sake down the river at the same hour the next day, so everyone should gather at the shore in order to drink some of it. He poured all of the sake into the source point of the river, and everybody gathered and drank it out of the river. This is a very interesting story. Of course, if they put their mouths to the water at the river's source they wouldn't have tasted sake; they would have tasted water. But when people experience the greatness of mind that was shown by this general, they will not feel that they have wasted their lives as they put them on the line in following him.

Politicians as well should not be grieving about poverty but should grieve about losing people. When people are not divided in rank between higher and lower, and everyone has equal food, from there will come energy, power, harmony, and peace. It is frequently said as well that resentment about food is never forgotten. The other side of that is we should never forget the grace or our gratitude for those who bring us food when we are very poor, feeling so miserable. When people bring us something to eat we feel enormous gratitude. How glad we are when people bring us food. How thankful. We can't forget that. If we are honest with ourselves we know that we all want to eat something delicious and share it with only a few people. Yet when it comes to difficult times, we want to have many people to help us through them. Human beings are all somewhat selfish in thinking in this way. We need to throw away that narrow, selfish state of mind and all together eat both the good and the bad things. This is our pure mind. And in this state of mind comes the cultivation of true humanism. Without a state of mind like this, how can we possibly have peace? How can we expect to have world peace?

In the summertime, in the most severe, hottest part of the season, when we sweat, our entire body gets sweaty. In the coldest, freezing days of winter, when the snow is falling, walking barefoot doing takuhatsu from town to

town, we feel the cold through our entire body. This is the way of the person training in Buddhism. Doing it that way we receive offerings from different houses and we are thankful for them. We put our hands together and pray in gratitude. And as we put our hands together the people at the house where we are receiving alms say "thank you" and bow to us as well. Where is this world today? On the days when the ground is soaked with rain, we stand on the corners of the poorest streets, and from some dark hallway an old person holding children gives us an offering. I bow in a ninety-degree angle and thank them. And they bow at my bare feet in the cold rain. We all forget our poverty and we are both deeply moved by this meeting. "Even for one like me, who has no merit, why would I receive such a gift? I have to do my training as hard as I possibly can. I am being taken care of by all of society and am able to do training because of everyone offering. This body, while I think it is my body, is not my body. I think it is mine, but it is not mine. It belongs to all the people. I offer it to all people."

This is the state of mind of a person of training. We vow deeply in our heart to be able to see this and pray that the Buddha Mind is alive today, in this very moment and in this dojo. We work to keep this alive. Getting up early in the morning, we go into the jikido, and we have rice gruel and chant our meal sutras:

First let us reflect deeply on our true effort and the efforts of those who brought us this food.

Second, may we live in a way that makes us worthy to receive it.

Third, what is most essential is the practice of mindfulness which helps us transcend greed, anger, and delusion.

Fourth, we appreciate this food which sustains the good health of our body and mind.

Fifth, we accept this food to complete the awakening of the pure mind of all beings.

"First let us reflect deeply on our true effort and the efforts of those who brought us this food." We consider the amount of great labor it took to make this food available to us, even for making the simple rice gruel. From the planting of the rice until the completion of the gruel, what an enormous amount of energy and determination it took from so many people. How much effort and work we have been offered. To be able to receive so much, the great energy of all of that, how is it possible? How great is the honor of receiving that! We have to feel deeply the great blessing of the person who offers it to us. This is the most basic bottom line of receiving food in the dojo.

This is not about thanking a god who creates everything, but about thanking the humans whose labors and whose hands have brought the food to us.

This is a very important thing to remember, and this is the same point as Hyakujo's words. The rice and the wheat, all of the things that are necessary for making our meals, are in some way touched by human hands. We don't just go to the deep mountains and pick things and eat them as they are. All of them are aided in their production and brought to us through the help of others' hands. The iron or coal are also the product of human labor. This is a very important aspect of what we receive. As Hyakujo Zenji has said, we cannot live without the merit of others and without the work of others. To live without making efforts is to steal other people's offering of their efforts. We must be thankful for those and not steal them, and also not resent giving them our energy for working. And that is why we have the second line.

"Second, may we live in a way that makes us worthy to receive It." Have we really done enough work to make ourselves worthy of receiving those laborious efforts of others? We need to see this very clearly. Some would ask why do we think about anything in that ignorant way when, after all, we pay money for our food. Why do we need to bow to others and think about what and who has brought our food to us? But the people from the olden days have an ancient poem that says:

If we look deeply at that light from the lamp that is shining on our pillow, then we know that the sweat of other people brings even the light in that lamp to us.

Can we really buy people's sweat without offering anything ourselves? Can we receive these things, and without working ourselves, say that because we pay money for them that's okay? Does that really resolve this whole question? Does that really account for the whole picture? Each grain of rice, each needle, comes from people's own toil, people's own sweat. We need to be able to gassho and see this importance in each and every thing.

The Buddha, when he was born, walked seven steps, raised his right hand to the heavens, and, pointing to the earth with his left hand, said, "In all of the heavens and all the earth, there is only one." This is how it is recorded in the legends of the Buddha. This is not about him saying that only he was splendid, and you are all stupid fools. Of course it is not that. And even though it was the Buddha, of course he couldn't walk as soon as he was born, nor could he talk. A person who has understood the Buddha's truth well, one who could describe him in this way from his birth, wrote this. Looking at things in the Buddhist way, there is no god in the heavens for humans to bow down to, nor is there is a devil that tempts us and makes us lazy or evil. This is about humans' great clarity of mind, our splendid being. To say that he immediately walked seven steps is to recognize the great splendid mind of each person, the dignified, clear mind of each and every person. To be able to realize that, become awakened to it, and build an excellent society and world is the teaching of the Buddha.

To be selfish and try to do whatever you want to with this world, to be

immoral and live self-centeredly and selfishly, is not how humans truly are. In our mind, we have a true deep potential for awakening. If we can realize this awakening, then we can see all things clearly and see the world as it is. We can see from a loving mind and realize and awaken to this true essence of our original mind. This is not something which gives birth to egoistic, self-centered actions. In the very important teaching of the Buddha, we have that teaching of "in the one is the many, and in the many is the one. In one, all are embraced, and in all, one is embraced." In the many, the one is given life. One is the many. The many are one. This is the direct perception of the way of teaching of the dharma. Each and every individual human being is individually dignified, precious, and important. For this state of mind to come forth spontaneously and naturally, is to awaken to our true, clear Bodhisattva mind.

In the UNESCO songs there is one of how the bird of peace flies in our heart. We can't solve the difficulty about peace only with the physical and the material. We also have the words of Confucius. When one of his disciples asked him about filial piety, Confucius answered that one has to cultivate even all of the cows and horses. Even the horses and the cows and the children, all of them need to be cultivated completely. Yet there are things we can only do with other human beings, that can only be born through being a human being. And this is a very, very important thing to observe. Even if we all eat the same thing, just that won't bring peace.

There has to be respect for other human beings as well; we must be able to observe another's human character. If we don't have that, then it is not the most basic true human quality. As it says in the Lotus Sutra, about the Bodhisattva Jofukyo, who would meet all people and say to everyone he met, whether a man or a woman, to every single person, no matter what work they did, no matter what their level in society, "I deeply honor you and hold nothing against you. I have no prejudice against you. I see you as a person who is a Buddha, and for becoming this, you have been born. All beings, all people, have been born to do this practice."

It is said that this was one of the Buddha's past lives, and it is also the ideal life of the future. This is the vow, what is described in this way of being - to see all beings as the Buddha, and to see that quality of Buddha Nature in each and every being. True religion is to see that potential, to perceive clearly that each being is endowed with that, to be able to prostrate to that dignified clear self in all people. Religion where all people can trust and bow to each other is most necessary in the world today. No matter what country, what person, whether they have knowledge or don't have knowledge, whether they have rank in society or no rank in society, whether they are healthy or sick, male or female, young or old, all of them are alive to realize this true nature with which all beings are endowed. Even if we go to a country without any such religion, it needs to become one in which human beings can respect each other and prostrate to them. This is the most important teaching that all beings need to be able to realize and accept. Religion is not only praying to god, praying to the Buddha, reading sutras, or

learning doctrine. To be able to offer your whole life for society is the Way of life that is living religion.

When we see Christ on the cross and know that he is doing this for us, and he says, "follow me," here is the true essence. To offer our whole body and develop our original character are the words of Confucius. In this way, human truth is realized. In Buddhism, we talk about awakening to our Bodhisattva Nature. To be able to give up our selves and bring others to realization first is true religion's essence. First, we have to bring forth our Bodhisattva nature, and then deepen within and see clearly our true nature. Within that we can awaken to our original character and know that which was always there beyond mistake. We can realize that we are all endowed with this pure nature and bring forth this Bodhisattva Vow and love all beings.

This love is very important, but there are also economic, material, and human perceptions and physical needs. It can't just end with love. It needs to be something even deeper, something very spiritual. To deepen to that point we have to know this place where we are one with god, one with Buddha's wisdom and god's love, and to awaken to these directly. To know directly this deepest compassion and deepest wisdom is true awakening. This is the ultimate love. To awaken to this, and to bring people to this awakening, is the wisdom and compassion of the Buddha that we all already have within us. By giving life to this, we find the most true love. Here we are at the 21st century, and in this 21st century maybe we have great technical and material progress, but in our mind we have no progress at all. In olden days people would defend and fight with spears and sticks. Maybe that was less terrible. But today with one great bomb, how many millions of people are destroyed? To have developed this kind of a weapon and to be looking for a chance to use it, we are much worse than the primitive people who used bows and arrows and spears.

We haven't seen beyond those objective places in our mind. More than 2500 years ago, we were taught not to kill living things, not to go to war, not to kill even one bug. This was the Buddha's teaching, and this is the most superlative, excellent way of human beings' living. Saying this, people would always have opposite opinions as well. Is it okay for people's safety to be disrupted? We have to protect politics or else what can we rely on? We have to defend our country, to defend our safety and security. We have to do this and that to defend it and protect it. This is absolutely necessary. In this way, arguments are always raised. But right now, as everybody knows, there is nothing as stupid as war, so why don't we stop it? Instead use this money that we use for defense for helping people, for welfare. We should now be coming to this time of transformation and change.

The Buddha himself, when his country was destroyed right in front of his face, swallowed his tears and instead of seeking revenge sought peace for all beings. Aren't we at a place where we should learn from this? And when we see this, and we think this way, and we look at the phenomenon of what is

happening today, we have to raise our voices and say, "Return to the way of the Buddha." I think we have to see this time happen right now. From the interpretation of the way of Zen, I speak.

The Buddha Dharma is the Buddha's awakening. In the teaching of the Buddha, the meaning is not in the teaching, but in the awakening from which that teaching was brought forth. The awakening to the truth, the Buddha's awakening, that enlightenment is what cannot be stopped and never ends. It is in that deep awakening that the Buddha's life continues. As the words of the *Inexhaustible Lamp* and the *Vimilakirti Sutra* say, from one candle to the next, even though the candle melts, the light continues. In this way, the light of awakening continues; even if the bodies that carry it disappear, the light continues. And in that way, the Buddha who was alive 2500 years ago is still alive today as well. In the Mahayana, this is the teaching. This year, 2002, as we receive it, as we welcome it, let us once again make our motivation and our passion bright, and firm and deepen our vow. When we bring our vow to all people, when we teach this to them, then this truth becomes the way people can truly become. Every day deepen your state of mind with the teaching of the Buddha and the wisdom that comes from it, deepen it within yourself, and do not let go of that vow.

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