

SENSE & ESSENCE

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by Justin Stone

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The first thing that I want to talk about is something that Zen emphasizes very much but which I think is universal, and that is merging sense with essence. Merging sense with essence. Does that give you a picture right away? Many years ago (it might be 25, 26 years ago), I was in the Himalayan foothills living with the Yogis, eating one meal a day (which wasn't very nourishing), spending most of the time in meditation and other times roaming through the hills down to the Ganges. The Ganges is very narrow when it gets up that high, where the source of the Ganges is.

And Virginia [Shilson] is going to see that pretty soon, aren't you, Virginia? Are you going to Gangotri? Yes, you will see the source up there.

I had been there meditating for a while when I got a letter from a friend who was a teacher and said, "You are now in the holiest spot in the world," and various things of that nature. But I didn't feel very content there and I couldn't figure out why. I liked the Yogis but there wasn't much social contact. And then one day, suddenly, a phrase came to my mind. A long time before that I had been in a Zen temple in Kyoto where the head priest of the temple, Ogata-san, spoke some English, which was very unusual. One day evidently I said or did something that he didn't like, and he admonished me:

"Stone-san, be the big hermit.

Anybody can be the small hermit."

I once said to his wonderful wife, "You are the most genuinely Zen person I have ever known," and she said, "I don't know anything about Zen." And I answered, "See what I mean." She got across the sermon in a different way. She went like this [Justin holds a closed fist up, then opens all fingers], like a flower opening. She didn't have to use many words and that made an impression on me. But I didn't pay much attention to Ogata-san's words. And here it was, a much later time in the Himalayas, and suddenly his words came to me – "Be the big hermit. Anybody can be the small hermit." It hit me very hard. Here I was, being the small hermit. The Indian idea, the idea of Yogis generally, is to get away from all the fuss, the commotion, the distractions. And in this vacuum, then do your practice.

In Zen, in the *10 Bulls of Zen*, it later shows the one who has attained enlightenment coming back to the marketplace to be like everybody else, living in the marketplace. As one Zen adept put it, "I'm just an ordinary man who understands things." That's not terribly ordinary. So when I thought of that, "Be the big hermit. Anybody can be the small hermit," I looked around at some of the Yogis I had gotten to know.

One was a very prosperous lawyer from Lucknow, and he took the scriptures literally. At the age of 50 he gave his worldly goods to his wife and set out to become *sanyasi*; he set out to live as a renunciate. He was living up here in an ashram; he didn't have five cents. When he and I would take a walk, I would lend him a few *annas* to get a cigarette. He wasn't supposed to smoke but he would sneak away, and we would both pretend we didn't know what he was doing. On the outside he was a complete renunciate, but inside he was still a prosperous lawyer from Lucknow. He really suffered because his daughter sent him letters with pictures of her new child, his grandchild, and he wouldn't open the letters. He had cut himself off and then he was expelled from the ashram and a lot of things happened. He wasn't very content.

I saw others and I didn't find very much contentment, anymore than I have found it among the Zen Buddhist monks or the Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka. So I left the mountains the next day. I found a way to get back to New Delhi and eventually, by slow stages, worked my way back to Bombay and then left to Africa. It made a big impression on me – "Don't be the small hermit. Be the big hermit."

I have taken a few quotations from a book of letters that Da Hui, a very great Zen teacher, wrote to lay people rather than to monks. I'm going to give you a couple of quotations. Da Hui says, "Trying to eliminate passion aggravates the disease. There is no obstruction in worldly circumstances according to one's lot." What he's speaking of is karma. He also says, "If you can recognize the inherent nature while going along with the flow, all is right." Now, the inherent nature would correspond to essence, to that which cannot be seen or touched or felt. But those who practice, who meditate, and who practice T'ai Chi Chih, after awhile become very familiar with it.

Steve [Ridley] recently sent me a letter in which he had typed out a chapter from *Abandon Hope* [written by Justin Stone] called, "The Growth of Certainty." It states, I think quite clearly,

something about inherent nature – in the midst of your activity, in the midst of the problems that you have, there will still be a way to be aware of the inherent nature. This is what Da Hui is advising, not to get away from it.

Vimalakirti was a great layman in Buddhism, one of the greatest of all Buddhists. He said, "It's like this. The high plateau does not produce lotus flowers. It is the mire of the lowest swamplands that produces these flowers." In other words, the lotus, which is so often thought of as a symbol of purity, grows in the midst of dirt, swamplands. The reason I am going into this is that so often I have heard about this issue from people. I have been guilty of this, too.

There was a very strong urge in me many times, particularly after times I spent in the Orient, to get away and live in solitude and devote myself to my own spiritual practice. But certain spiritual experiences told me that was not the way for me and so it went by the wayside. Many feel, "Oh, I have to get away from all this. I have to divide the day in two – my busy day, making a living, screaming at the children, doing the other. And then the time of purity when I get away from it and live the other life." But that isn't what is being said here. Right in the time of screaming at the children, you can be aware of the essence while being in the world of the senses. To be in the world of the essence.

Hakuin Zenji, who was certainly an ascetic and one of the strictest of all Zen teachers, said, "Samadhi in actual life is a hundred times better than *samadhi* in quietude." He was saying positive *samadhi* rather than absolute *samadhi*. Absolute *samadhi* is like a trance state, a state in which you are away from everything. The senses don't operate. But Zen says that you must digress from that to positive *samadhi* that operates in every action that you take.

Zen teachers have always thought much more highly of living the everyday life honestly and being aware of the essence than trying to get away from everyday life. Engo, another Zen teacher, said, "In the busiest marketplace, one will be able to enjoy unhindered movement." Do you get the essence of that statement? "In the busiest marketplace one will be able to enjoy unhindered movement." Right in the midst of the transaction, you have the great freedom.

It's very different from *moksha*, getting off the wheel of life and death. I know of several people who practiced the Indian ways

with the idea of attaining *moksha*, and one of them got ill and became very frantic about it. He thought he was going to die. And I said, "Well, this is your chance to get off the wheel of life and death." I don't know people who want to get off the wheel of life and death. They do the ceremonies and pay homage to it while knowing that really isn't what they want. If it is your calling, however... For instance, Tom Fernandez, Steve's friend and my friend, is one of the best T'ai Chi Chih teachers, a very influential one whom everybody likes. And yet Tom has retired to live a monastic life at the Self Realization Foundation; he has retired from the world. That was his calling. He had attained a growth of certainty and knew he wanted to do that. Steve and I both wonder whether he will want to do it continually. But if you are going to live that kind of a life, there must be no doubt in your mind that is what you want to do.

Vimalakurti, the great layman, said, "If you consider quietude right and commotion wrong, then this is seeking the real aspect by destroying the worldly aspect." Does everybody follow that? When you like the quiet and hate the hubbub, this is just the time to apply effort. He goes on, "Suddenly, when in the midst of the hubbub, you topple the scene of quietude, that power surpasses the meditation seat and cushion by a million times." By a million times. Although Vimalakurti was considered at the very top of Buddhism, the Buddha used to send some of his top disciples to see Vimalakurti, who chose to live as a layman. He had a family. He said, "When, in the midst of hubbub, you topple the scene of quietude, that power surpasses the meditation seat and cushion by a million times." He's not saying *not* to meditate or *not* to follow the contemplative life. He's saying don't give up the worldly aspect while seeking the quietude.

One monk said, "Don't be fond of purity. Purity makes people weary. Don't be fond of joyful liveliness. Joyful liveliness makes people crazy. As water conforms to the vessel, it accordingly becomes square or round, short or long. Water follows the course of circumstances." Doesn't it? If you have a square box, the water is square; if you have a round vessel, the water is round. So when people ask questions like I have been asked so many times, "What do I do about diet?" ... "What do I do about sex if I'm meditating?" ... "What do I do about this and that?" I answer, be like water; conform to the circumstances, to what is called for.

A great Zen story, that I think most of you have heard, has to do with two monks in China walking along on a very rainy day. They came to a little stream that had become swollen and was very high. Buddhist vows, of course, are very strict, and one of the things is that you are not to touch a woman. Nuns live apart from the monks. When the monks got to the bank of this little stream and were about to wade across, they saw a girl standing there who couldn't see how to cross. Without thinking, one of the monks picked her up and put her on his shoulder and carried her across the stream and put her down. And then they kept walking. After they had walked awhile, the first monk turned to him and said, "You know we've taken vows. We're not supposed to be with women. We're not supposed to touch women." And the first monk said, "Are you still carrying that lady? I put her down three miles back."

That is nonattachment to the circumstances. The moment had called for his carrying her across, so he carried her across. I've heard so many stories of this type. All of you have heard me tell the story about a monk on a rainy day in China walking along the street. He saw a little scorpion struggling in the water; it was drowning. I don't know if you've ever been stung by a scorpion but I have. You know about it. He reached down, picked the scorpion out of the water, and the scorpion promptly stung him. Ouch! And he put the scorpion down. And this little scorpion turned right around and walked back into the puddle and it started to drown again. And the monk immediately reached down and picked him out again. And he got stung again and put him down. The third time this was happening, a bystander walked up to the monk and said, "You fool, don't you understand that anytime that you pick that scorpion out of the water he's going to sting you?" The monk said, "Yes, I do realize it. It's in his nature to sting me. But I also realize it's in my nature to keep pulling him out of the water."

So, don't be fond of purity; purity makes people weary. Don't be fond of joyful liveliness; joyful liveliness makes people crazy. Many people mistake liveliness or "Where's the action?" for joy. And those are the type of people that I think wind up committing suicide very often. As water conforms to the vessel, it accordingly becomes square or round, short or long – according to circumstances but still aware of the essence.

This whole affair is like the sun in the blue sky: it shines everywhere, on the daily activities of everyone, and it appears in

everything. It doesn't just shine on the pure and it doesn't just shine on those who are away from busy life.

I stayed at an ashram for a while and met a Sister (I don't remember her name) who had lived a renunciate's life for so long. But now the ashram was near civilization. And she had to go down and buy provisions, groceries, and bring them back. She told me, "When I get down there I can't wait to get away and get back up here." And I said, "Sister, you don't understand your teaching at all." That's so impure, she felt, and this is so pure. But the sun shines on everybody, pure and impure alike.

Da Hui says, "In the old days, the military governor and the minister for transport were able to study Zen and attain great penetration and enlightenment while in the thick of wealth and rank." A teacher very often hears that wherever money is concerned, there is evil. I've known this not to be the case. One of the most profound Buddhists I've known was a man named Gooding, who was the head of a firm on the New York Stock Exchange. When Mr. Gooding died he left a half million dollars to the University of Chicago to set up a department of Buddhism. He had had a real enlightenment experience, but he carried on his everyday life; he was a very good executive. He didn't feel he had to leave that life in order to be a good Buddhist, whereas with those who've become renunciates, very often I have seen great hypocrisy. They pretend something on the outside and are something else on the inside.

So wealth and position, or lack of wealth and position, are not good or bad. The attachment to wealth or power is crippling. Let's say you've got a nice car and a nice home. If you're going to go to pieces if somebody takes those away from you, then you're in tough shape. They take away the car, and well, you can ride a bicycle. The senses are not bad or good; they are the senses.

My friend Lynnette, in Santa Fe, is one of the most enlightened people that I have ever met in the world. Very early in her life she went away on a retreat, a Christian Science retreat. To her, Christian Science is very much like Zen. When I asked her what the retreat was like, she said it was hilarious, that they were laughing all the time. She had had a real enlightenment experience. Since then I have seen it illustrated in her life a hundred times.

She and her husband were building a new house in Santa Fe; they put every cent of theirs in that new house. Someone called and said their house was on fire. I saw them shortly after and said,

"What did you do?" She said, "Well, we walked over and we watched the fire for awhile, and we got sleepy and we went home and went to sleep." When I said later, "I really like your two daughters; they're great girls," she said, "I don't really think of them in that way; they're two nice girls who come around the house." They're great friends that way. Lynnette is about 78 now. She's taking jazzercise. She said she's dancing off pounds she didn't know she had. She does T'ai Chi Chu'an and I don't think she feels any limitations. She's a very good example of what we're talking about. There are so many stories along those lines that I could tell.

Some of you have heard the story about when she came to Los Angeles when I was living there. She and some friends and I went up to a little cafe where you could eat outside under Cinzano awnings. It was run by an Austrian man in Laurel Canyon. We sat out there and when it came time, we ordered dessert. The owner was famous for making tortes, sacher tortes. Have any of you ever tasted sacher tortes, the ones from Austria? Nobody ever ate *one*. If you eat one, you're going to eat a second. They're the richest things in the world. So at the end of the meal we ordered sacher tortes for everybody. When the tortes came, we all started to take a bite. And just as I got my fork up [gestures to his mouth], Lynnette said, "Can we do without this?" I said, "Sure," and put my fork down and pushed it away. And she pushed hers away and they were all looking at us. And she said, "Then we might as well eat it." So we took it back and ate it and enjoyed it. I don't think any of them got the lesson. She was constantly teaching as she went along. As long as we weren't attached to it, we could have it. If, as soon as you see it, you begin salivating... For a lot of people, it's hard to put it down then. As soon as we pushed it away, she said, "We might as well eat it." And that is the attitude. There is nothing good or bad about wealth and position.

Tom Bottoms used to think that T'ai Chi Chih lessons, because they did so much good, should be free. I feel that the workman is worthy of his hire. So I said, "Tom, if they're going to be free, will you be able to get teachers?" Tom lives in an idealistic world. He wanted to start a commune with some other people and asked, "What do you think?" And I said, "Each one of you has his idea of what this commune is going to be like. It's going to be a lot of fun when you get there and are living there – until you come together and say, 'I want it this way' or 'I want it that way.' Each one wants

the ideal place but ideal by his own standards." And when I hear about one world, suppose it turns out to be one world under Hitler?

Da Hui says, "If you can penetrate right here in everyday life, your power will surpass that of home-leavers by twenty-fold." A little while ago it was a million times, now it is twenty times. Home-leavers, of course, are monks and ones devoting themselves entirely to their spiritual practice. What he is saying is, just be aware of essence while in the world of the senses.

"Once awareness is correct, then in your daily activities, when seeing form, hearing sound, etcetera; whether standing, walking or sitting down; whether angry or calm, active or still; there is nothing that is not profound clarity." If you're angry, be aware that you're angry, that's all. Just be aware of it, of what Krishnamurti calls "choiceless awareness." To say, I will never get angry... I don't know anybody who can say that. I was angry for a little while last night at the airport because it was so hopeless, and then I thought it over and the anger went away. It was just a case of finding a solution. But I was aware that I was angry, so I guess I wasn't really angry.

Da Hui says, "You do not have to give up the ordinary life to live the spiritual life." That says it in a nutshell. Is there anybody who disagrees with that? Would you have enough courage to put up your hand if you did? If you disagree with it, I'd like to hear your side of it. He said, "You do not have to give up the ordinary life to live a spiritual life. Properly seen, the ordinary life is the spiritual life. What is given up is greed, anger, and delusion."

As you become purified of greed, anger, and delusion, you are in spiritual activity whatever you do. Krishnamurti once said, "Love and do as you please." Of course there is a trick to that. Not everybody can love. When you love and do as you please, whatever you do will be right. But here it's saying, if you give up, or begin to give up, greed, anger, and delusion, you are not giving up activity and social contact any more than you are seeking activity or social contact. If you're attached to the social contact and have to constantly be with people, and need the stimulus of others, this is still attachment. But it's on the other side of the coin.

What is spiritual? According to Hui Neng, really the founder of modern Zen, it is when "the straightforward mind accords with reality, not the devious, scheming, falsifying mind." As I look around here to those of you whom I know fairly well, I don't see any devious minds. You would know better than I do. The one who

is scheming for personal advantage all the time, not looking at it in the overall sense, is not being spiritual despite whatever practice he carries on.

When there is nonattachment, there must also be no attachment to the nonattachment. Many people do spiritual practice and feel superior to one who doesn't do it. You know, "Oh, I meditate. You don't meditate? Hummm." This can go on in so many different forms. Oh, I'm a vegetarian. I'm one of the "ins" and you're one of the "outs." But when the Buddha was asked about diet, he said, "Diet doesn't mean anything if you still have greed, anger, and delusion. And if you're without greed, anger, and delusion, it doesn't matter what you eat." Continually they are saying the straightforward mind accords with reality; the mind that is like water reacts to the circumstances.

The monk saw the lady standing on the shore and, without a second thought, picked her up and carried her across and put her down. And then two miles down the road he said, "Are you still carrying that woman? I put her down back there." That is exactly what is meant by non-attachment.

You've heard me chant the *Hridaya Sutra*, the *Heart Sutra of Buddhism*. [Justin chants slowly in Chinese]. Very often, when I am teaching some course, I will chant it all the way through in its entirety. Sometimes have it written out. Chanting is very good for the soul. If you can chant, not thinking of the meaning, not wondering what time is dinner, not wondering anything else, but just chant, it is very helpful. In the *Heart Sutra* it says, "Form is emptiness; emptiness is form." That is quite different from the idea that, "I can be empty in the Himalayan foothills, but down here I'm just conscious of form." That is separating essence and the senses. Form is emptiness; emptiness is form. The senses and essence are the same thing.

I suggest sometime, or at all times, that you sit once in a while and just feel the essence. I don't mean imagining it. I didn't agree with a book by Brother Lawrence (a wonderful man) about practicing the presence of God all the time. If the presence of God has to be imagined, then it is something you're creating with your imagination. I don't see how anybody of any spiritual inclination can fail to see God all around him at all times. (If you want, use the word God, Reality, Essence, whatever you want to use.)

I don't think you have to practice the presence of the Lord or the essence. The essence is there every minute and the *prajna*, the

intrinsic wisdom, is there every minute leading you along the line that you should be led. So if you can sit and feel the essence with no distractions, whether it's for 30 seconds or 5 minutes, it's very good. But how many people who have a little time sit down without doing something – leafing through a magazine, doing one of fifty other things, or letting the mind run on. How many people sit and do nothing?

Sister Carita did a wonderful poster that said, "Don't just do something, stand there." Of course, what we have always heard is: "Don't just stand there, do something." Anybody can do something. Stand there. Feel the essence and then be aware of it while you go through your daily activities. Da Hui says, "In the conduct of their daily activities, sentient beings have no illuminations. If you go along with their ignorance, they're happy. If you oppose their ignorance, they become vexed." And this is so. When somebody has problems and you sympathize, "Oh, that's too bad, oh dear," they're very happy and they like you. But if you point out the principle that has caused this problem so the problem will not recur, they don't like it very much. And if you disagree with the judgment, they're very unhappy. So Da Hui says, "If you oppose their ignorance, they become vexed. But if you go along with their ignorance, they're happy."

There was a very funny cartoon in the paper in which a man said to a psychiatrist, "For a while I tried seeing reality as it is, but I found that self-delusion is much more fun." You laugh and agree but self-delusion isn't much more fun. Yet you have to be very careful in pointing that out to somebody. You have to do it in a roundabout way, bring up the principle that is continually bringing about the same problems. Until we see it, we keep having the same problems – just as you can begin having an experience in meditation and continue having that same experience.

I've told some of you the story about when I first met Ramurti Mishra – a great teacher who's written two wonderful books, *The Fundamentals of Yoga* and *The Yoga Sutras of the Patanjali*, which he translated from Sanskrit. When I first met Mishra we got along beautifully. I didn't know what to expect because Paul Reps had told me to go and meet him. Paul calls him "Krishna Murky" and he calls Mishra "Misherable." When I first met Misherable, we talked about various things, and I told him about this experience I was having continually in meditation. He asked me details, and I said I had it in India, Japan, and so forth. I can't remember it very

well now, there was a lot to it, but at one point in the meditation, I would see my own profile and from that I would see the head of a Buddha on a table. The Buddha's head would glisten with gold and was then overcome with flames. The head was burned away and when the flames stopped there was nothing. When the water is clear the moon disappears. And he said, "Don't you understand that?" and I said, "No," and he said, "Universal consciousness is burning up individual consciousness." "Oh, is that what it means?" I never had the experience again.

Da Hui finishes by saying, "Once you've attained purity, when actively you reveal the function of profound clarity, although essence and function are distinguished, the profound clarity is one." It's a very deep statement. When active, you are revealing the function. When quiet, you are aware of the essence. We make essence and function two different things. What do I mean by essence and function? The lamp, the bulb, is the essence. The light it gives is the function. But there would be no function without essence, no light without the bulb; the bulb can only manifest through the light. When active, you reveal the function of profound clarity, and although function and essence are distinguished, the profound clarity is one. That is bringing together sense and essence. Does everybody understand that part?

Before I go on to the second part of what I want to say, does anybody have any comments or questions about merging sense with essence? *Seijaku* means stillness in the midst of activity – not stillness away from activity, stillness in the midst of activity.

Are there any profound comments?

Questioner: Can't it be interchangeable; can't we make light the essence and the bulb the function?

Justin: The reason you think of the bulb as the essence is the same way we have Shiva and Shakti. Do you know those two names? You can't have Shiva without Shakti or Shakti without Shiva, the male and the female aspects. The kinetic aspect is Shakti and the still aspect is Shiva. The still aspect is the bulb, and the active, kinetic aspect is the light. That's why we say the light is the function. When we turn the switch, the light goes on but the bulb is still there. When we stop the movie, the screen is still there but the movie, the action, is gone. In India, many worship Shakti, the kinetic or active aspect rather than Shiva. I see what you mean, that the essence is light and the other is the device for producing light. But what I'm saying here is the still, unchanging is the essence; the

active that comes on and off, that moves, that does something, is the function.

Questioner: Once you create the light, the still unchanging is divided.

Justin: The principle of light is unchanging, yes, but if you want to do it the other way around, that's perfectly all right with me.

Questioner: What about the symbol of the Tao, where nothing is totally pure.

Justin: That is exactly like Shiva and Shakti in that you can't separate them; you can't separate *yin* from *yang*. I understand what you are saying, which is that really the basic thing here is the light, not the lamp, that the lamp is the device for producing light.

Questioner: I'm totally confused between the light bulb and the light and the....

Justin: Don't get hung up on the light bulb and the light.

Questioner: Can you go over it again?

Justin: Yes, but it's not important. What you're doing is taking an example. Let's throw out the light bulb and the light.

Questioner: It's okay with me but I want to know which one is....

Justin: I'm saying that it's not important. The important thing is, we are dealing with sense and essence, essentially merging sense with essence. While seeing the light be aware of the light bulb; while seeing the movie, realize that the unchanging part of the movie is the screen behind the movie. In the prior examples, I gave only half of the statement: "When the water is clear the moon appears." It's true that the reflection of the moon appears in the clear water. "When the water is clear, the moon disappears." They're both right, but they're right at different levels. When the water is clear the moon disappears. One of the great Zen masters was asked by one of his monks (he had 1500 monks), "What is the most remarkable thing?" And the master said, "The most remarkable thing is that I sit up here alone on the top of this peak." There were 1500 monks around him, yet he was alone. That is at the level of "When the water is clear, the moon disappears."

Questioner: You made a comment that we should be like water and conform to circumstances. Does that mean that we be balanced somehow so that we don't submerge and completely lose our own essence in different situations?

Justin: Yes, but it wasn't my example; it was his example. He's not saying to be like water, be easy-going; this would not be living the life of the senses. What he was saying was simply, when this man comes to the water and this woman can't get across, he picks her up and carries her across. That's what the circumstance called for at the time. You can say that it's against his vows, but he's not living from the vows; he's living from his own nature, which came forward at that time. So you can't apply any high-bound rules; we continually break the rules. A Zen master would continually emphasize that being consistent is the least important thing to him.

This is the famous story of Matsu, one of the greatest of the Zen teachers. One of his students – who became a great teacher himself – had his enlightenment when Matsu said, "Mind itself is Buddha." You can say "Mind itself is Buddha" to two million people but only the one who is prepared (who is without greed, anger, and delusion) can receive it and have something happen. And what happened was, this man experienced great enlightenment. (I'm trying to think of his name because his name has something to do with a plum.) Later when he was teaching on a mountain by himself, Matsu wanted to find out whether the Great Plum's enlightenment was real, and so he sent one of his students to see the Great Plum who was teaching. The student asked, "When you were with Matsu, what stimulated your enlightenment?" and Matsu answered, "This mind itself is Buddha." So the student said, "But he has changed greatly." "What is he teaching now?" "He is now teaching, 'Not mind, not Buddha.'" And the Great Plum said, "Well, let that old guy continue to fool people. Let him teach 'Not mind, not Buddha.' I still say, Mind is Buddha." And the monk went back and told Matsu that the Great Plum wouldn't accept this. Matsu's comment was, "The Great Plum is ripe." If he had changed, if he had vacillated, there certainly wouldn't have been a growth of certainty. Of course, this is very easy in our everyday lives, to change each time we hear something. It's very easy in music each time you hear a good pianist or something, to play differently than you've played before. So much for sense and essence. I could've given you five million quotations. I was going to have some from Swami Ram Dass, the real Ram Dass, the Swami Ram Dass who died many years ago in India.

The reason, again, that I brought this up is that the mere physical act of giving up something is not renunciation. Give up

attachment, give up attachment to it, and weaken greed, anger and delusion. Others may not know it. One time I was riding in the north of India with a man who called himself Bramachari. He was a Yogi. He would drive this borrowed old Indian car. But he would not eat food unless it was *prasad*, that is, unless it had been dedicated at a temple. So we went for long periods of time without eating, which didn't make me too happy. We were driving along and we saw a man walking down the road with just a little something around him here [Justin gestures], and he had ashes all over and on several spots on his forehead. And I said, "What is he doing?" And Bramachari said, "Oh, he's doing *tapas*, he's doing austerity, he's saying to the world – I am living the height of asceticism, austerity." And I said, "I don't think that really is austerity or asceticism." If he would have put on a suit and a tie and had the marks underneath where nobody could see them and carried on the life of austerity, then he'd really be an ascetic. But it wouldn't be any fun, would it, if nobody knew about it? As soon as you start to advertise it... There was one man from a religious order who explained to me about different orders, and he said, "We are tops in humility." "I'm very humble and very virtuous." One fellow, who was a very clever guy, was telling me, "My master's more serene than your master."

I think there was something in *Truth Journal* by Roy [Eugene Davis] about universal mind. I'm a little skeptical about the term, "universal mind," so I'd like to talk about it from the standpoint of void and from the standpoint of mind. First of all, the Chinese word *hsin* (usually written h-s-i-n and pronounced shin) can be translated as "heart, mind or spirit." In Japanese, it's *kokoro*, or heart, mind, spirit. They say "*Kokoru aruhito*." Is that the expression? A man of heart. They're not referring to the physical heart, which is *shinzo*; they have a special term for the spiritual heart. He is a man with heart; we use that expression; we're talking about something quite different. *Hsin* means heart, mind, and spirit. And when they began translating – I don't know who was first but it might have been Suzuki – from the Chinese into English, he chose to use the word "mind." So whenever we read about Zen, "there is one mind," it confuses people because they think of the thinking apparatus. But here we have universal mind. If you had to pick one of these three, I think it would've been much better if he had picked "universal spirit," or the three together, "heart-mind-spirit," because with "universal mind," there is

nothing but this one quiescent mind, which is wisdom, energy. It's very confusing. I think it either should be left as *hsin* or it should be spoken of as spirit. Do you follow me? It's because so much has been lost in translation. This is why I like Mishra's, *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. Mishra told me he grew up in a household where Sanskrit was spoken, which is almost unheard of. But he did, so the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, considered the Bible of Yoga, was written in Sanskrit. In the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, Mishra shows each word literally translated. Well, you can't really literally translate; then he goes on to give a true translation after the translation has changed it. For instance, if I said to you, "I today downtown to go will I think," you might have a little difficulty. But that's the literal translation of a Japanese sentence. By giving you a literal translation, you can decide for yourself what he meant. Then he gives you his translation of it. But so many of these points are spoiled by poor translation. There are over a hundred translations of the *Tao Te Ching* of Lao Tzu into English, and in one of them, a man translated "Tao" as "God." I didn't know that God had a positive and a negative aspect, but if every time the word "Tao" is used in Chinese literature, if you substitute the word "God," it's going to be very confusing, particularly since to the Chinese there is a god of the toilet, a god of the kitchen, a god of this, a god of that. It's hardly what we mean in the Western sense. So translation can be very misleading.

The other thing you'll find here is *shunya*, which in Indian means emptiness, void. The Buddhist changed it to *shunyata*, which refers to having a void type of personality, that is, living in the voidness. But what is meant by void? This is a very deep point, and it really isn't appropriate here, but I think if you're going to read it, then you should know it. One time, I saw a teacher do this [Justin gestures.] "What is void?" and you have to demonstrate void to him. This is a kill-or-be-killed confrontation, and you just sort of looked, and the teacher said, "Let's see you grasp the void," and you go like that [Justin gestures again.] That's literal, that's terrible, that's no answer at all. He said, "I'll show you how to grasp the void." And he grabs your nose and twists it; that is grasping the void. Then you understand that void is not lack of something. He will tell you that within this void are mountains, streams, people, the moon, the sun. How could they be within the void? The meaning of void, from a Buddhist standpoint, is void of self-nature. Nothing has its own nature that is independent of

anything else. Void of self-nature. How do you explain that? You explain it with this statement: "This arising, that arises." We have dampness and we have shade, we have rain and a little bit of sunshine, and then we have redwood trees because these circumstances are perfect for redwood trees to grow. Wherever the circumstances are right.... It's like the camera tripod with three legs – if you take away one leg, the other two fall. One cannot exist without the other. This would, of course, be the real meaning of one world. What is it that ties everything together? It is one essence. If you are aware of the essence, then you can be perfectly aware of the individual, of what the Chinese call "the ten thousand things." To know that none of these stands alone... It's contrary to most religious teaching that says, "You are an eternal soul, you have always been and always will be." This is quite different from the "void of self-nature." So when you read "void," don't think of it as being a lack of something or a lack of everything. It means "lack of self nature." Once that is understood, many problems in life are solved. The thought of death doesn't become overwhelming and terrifying. Void simply means "void of self-nature." Most Westerners writing about Zen or Buddhism don't understand this, and they take void to mean being away from everything, having everything eliminated. Once you are aware of the voidness of self-nature, you realize that it includes you.

I saw a businessman from New York I'd known long ago and he suddenly realized what his age was (he's the same age I) and said, "It all seems like a fast dream." And I said, "If you understood what you are saying, you are much closer to the truth than you know." But he meant it's as though he woke up and it had all happened so quickly. When you say "like a fast dream," you're in accord with what my Indian teacher said, "Don't take this life too seriously." But the students didn't understand. That would imply there is more than just the circumstance of this life. This New York businessman reproached me once and said, "You don't take money very seriously do you?" I thought about it for a while. "No, I guess I don't." To him, it was the most serious thing in the world. As you read something like "universal mind," remember that void means "void of self-nature" and "mind" is not mind, it's *hsin*.

To get back to what was said, "This mind itself is Buddha" and "Not mind, not Buddha." Actually, those are not two contrary statements, although they seem to be. He's talking on an entirely

different level because he said, "Not mind, not Buddha" when answering a question in which a monk had said, "Is there one thing which has never been talked about?" And the teacher said, "Yes, there is." He said, "What is that?" and the teacher said, "Not mind, not Buddha." He was giving a negative answer. It is not mind; it is not Buddha. He is eliminating the two very bulwarks of Buddhism – mind and Buddha. This is like the statement, "When the water is clear, the moon appears." It's true, the moon does appear on the clear water. "When the water is clear, the moon disappears." Now he's talking on an entirely different level, the level of "Not mind, not Buddha." He didn't say, "It is this, it is this." He was taking the Indian way of *Neti*, which means, "Not this, not that." That is the highest form of Yoga in India, called *Jnana* Yoga. It's never come to the West. *Jnana* Yoga is the Yoga of discrimination, "Not this, not that." It teaches how to find the real by eliminating everything that is unreal. And if you find it, let me know about it, will you? Drop me a card.

Are there any questions or statements on what I've just said, or on anything I've said today?

Questioner: About *hsin*... There's also a Hebrew letter *shin* that's used as a symbol of God; it's put on doorposts and so on. That Tao symbol is also *shin*.

Justin: The *I Ching* says that about the Tao: there's only one thing that's unchangeable, and that's change. Only one thing is permanent.

Questioner: One day when I was meditating, my wife said, "I've just had an inspiration about that childhood song – row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream, merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, life is but a dream."

Justin: [Laughs] That's true. Very good. You can row upstream if you want; you can do it the hard way. I don't know anything that brings more unhappiness in modern life than the fact that people set a standard of life and determine to live by that standard. I am thinking of one particular person – you know which one I am thinking of Carmen [Brocklehurst]. Somebody says, "In order to live the way we want, we have to have \$50,000 a year." But they don't earn \$50,000 a year. So it's a moot point. Then they make themselves miserable trying to live at a \$50,000 a year standard while they're making \$35,000. Why not conform to the circumstance and live at a \$35,000 or \$15,000? Refusing to recognize – trying to put a round peg in a square box – can bring

unhappiness. Then people try to solve the problem by "beating the cart rather than the horse." (It's symbolic; I'm not advocating animal cruelty.) If the horse and the cart don't move, which do you beat? Most people beat the cart, that is, they beat the problem trying to find a solution. But why is there a problem? Their nature has caused the problem. It's at the root that it must be solved because even if you could solve it, the same problem would come back in another form.

Questioner: What were saying about giving up greed or anger or delusion, maybe rather than use money, use our children....

Justin: I'm not talking about greed....

Questioner: No, I was thinking of other things – like you expect your children to do one thing and then they do something different. And you have a choice of accepting it and having a relationship with them, or maybe never seeing them.

Justin: You have the choice of whether or not you are attached to your children's life or letting them live their own life. It's hard to say because it's misunderstood: Attachment to family is attachment. It may be a wonderful, golden attachment, but it is an attachment. It is an attachment that can bring great grief.

Questioner: Yes, if you let it, that's what I meant. But just say that's the way they are, but I'm still going to be close to them. And you just accept that you can't change it.

Justin: You sound as though you're speaking from experience. If you think through greed, anger and delusion, you'll find that they're the same thing. Greed is not merely trying to accumulate money, which is very much respected in this country. Look at the headlines about Warren Buffett, who is worth four billion dollars. He's a great investor, constantly makes money, and has great influence on what other people invest. I think if I had four billion dollars I'd be content to stop. Devoting your life to making money sounds more like a cancer than a way of life because you can't stop. At some point you've gotten to where you have enough to live and do anything that you want, even perhaps to helping others. But, ah, it's the pleasure of playing the game and winning. So that's an attachment.

There are also those who are attached to nonattachment. When I tried working with Father Charley Moore (a Catholic priest on the Monterey peninsula who was feeding the hungry), I was very surprised when he said, "Some of these people have had some bad experiences, and you're trying to overcome a lot of opposition, a

lot of apathy," and he went on, "So-and-so is in love with poverty. He's attached to poverty. So if you show him a way out of it, he doesn't want to get out of it because he's not going to feel sorry for himself then." That's a very difficult thing. When I'd just gotten back from India I met a very fine man in Los Angeles who was trying to lead a life of *sanyasi*. He was sleeping on a rooftop. (A friend who lived in an apartment allowed him to go up there with a sleeping bag.) And I said, "Aren't you ever hungry?" and he said, "Yes, I often go to bed hungry." And I said, "You're not going to keep your health very long." Someone would buy him a cup of coffee. I always found some excuse to buy him something. I'd say, "I'm too busy. Could you go and get this food for us," and he'd bring it back and we'd eat together. He didn't have money to take streetcars so he would walk huge distances. I said, "Why are you living that way? You have a university education. You're a very bright guy." And he answered, "I don't want to become part of the system." I had great sympathy for him. I could understand: here is a sensitive person who didn't want to play the game and conform to it. But that is not freedom. Freedom is found within the rules, not by breaking the rules. Smoking pot in a Zen temple in Los Angeles is not the way to show your freedom. When the Zen Roshi found out about it, he went through the roof threw them all out. "Get your stuff and get out!" "Roshi, everybody's..." "Get out!" "It's against the law." Period. If the government would take that stand with athletes who are constantly brought up with addiction charges... You are breaking the law. Instead, if you're a famous athlete, we'll give you five more chances (so we make a lot more money through you). But that is not freedom. The idea of being able to do anything at any time, to me, is neither freedom nor joy.

When there is a growth of certainty inside, when you feel the essence in your life, you will know how to act. You will know what is right for you to do. And it may not be what everybody else wants you to do. I had that experience today when Steve asked me to do something, and I said, "No, on principle I can't do it. I would like to, but on principle I can't." I think he understood what I was talking about.

We've wandered over a great many things. But basically I would say there are two important things: Be aware of essence right in the world of the senses, and to do that, don't let your attachments grow. There is nothing wrong with making money or not making money, doing this or doing that. There's nothing wrong

with driving a good car; I see no difference between driving a good car and a bad car, except that you'd probably have a lot more fun with the good car than the bad car. But if you're attached to the car... if somebody said they'd take it away from you, what would you do? The greatest help you can give your life is this: Being aware of essence. You don't have to be worried that this essence is going to make mistakes. Essence doesn't make mistakes. Be aware of the essence, and don't be attached to what is not of essence. Don't allow yourself to become attached to what is of the senses, and therefore ephemeral, that which would come and go. "I married a beautiful wife, I have two lovely children, I have a car and a pool, and my business is very prosperous. My wife will always be beautiful, my children will always be obedient, and I will always do well in business. Nothing can ever happen." Does life work like that? Senzaki, the Japanese monk, said: "It is better to discipline yourself than to have life do it for you."

Thank you. That's it.

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Many thanks to all who brought these words to print.