

Religious Experience in the Light of Zen Buddhism Zen Buddhism in the Light of Religious Experience

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Rather than a lecture, let this be a meditation, a chance to ponder, to open up to the fundamental truth that is Buddhism. In Zen Buddhism, koans help to illumine this truth. A koan can be considered a religious problem, especially when it has become an ultimate challenge. The Japanese term *genjō-kōan* can be understood as this religious problem manifest here and now. To make this clear, I will give several examples. But let me begin with an ancient story from the time of Gotama Buddha as recorded in the Pali scriptures.

Yasa was the son of a merchant in the holy city on the Ganges River called Varanasi, also known as Benares. Yasa's father was so wealthy that he gave his son three mansions to live in, one for each season: hot, cold, and rainy. Comfortable behind these walls, fine foods were prepared for the young man and female musicians entertained him. He was, as we might now say, living the good life.

One night Yasa fell asleep after being entertained. His entourage, now no longer needed, did the same, some falling asleep where they were, with musical instruments still in hand. For whatever reason, in the middle of the night, while his entourage was still sound asleep, Yasa suddenly awoke. What did he see?

He was shocked at the disarray all around him, as if he had suddenly awakened in the land of the dead. Under the light of an oil lamp was a young woman who had been entertaining him just a few short hours ago. But now she was sprawled out in front of him in a most inelegant manner. Another was snoring, and another was drooling in her sleep.

Yasa was a sensitive young man. Seeing this, he thought to himself: What distress indeed! What affliction indeed!

The English translation is a bit stilted, but reflects Yasa's predicament as it is

related in the ancient Pali. In a word, Yasa got a stinging taste of Buddhism's first noble truth: self cannot avoid "dis-ease"; that is, self cannot come fully to rest – whether as a pauper or a prince.

We can well understand his experience, can't we? It was as if he had suddenly awakened to the mirror image of his pleasant life. And he did not like what he saw. In the slang of my Philadelphia youth: What a drag; major bummer. Perhaps today's youth might say: It all sucks!

Yasa decides to leave everything behind, for it means nothing now. He walks out of his mansion before sunrise. In the early morning he happens to come upon Gotama Buddha. Seeing the deeply troubled young man approaching, Gotama sits down in meditation. Without beating around the bush, Yasa walks right up to Gotama and states what could be called his *genjō-kōan*, the living problem manifest for him right there and then: How distressing it all is, what affliction indeed!

How does Gotama respond to this young man in this situation? How would you? How do you respond to one who comes to you deeply troubled? Gotama responds: This is not distress; here is no affliction.

What's going on here? Gotama and Yasa are in the same place at the same time. Yet their experiences are completely different – virtually contradictory. Is one of them crazy? I don't think so. Both of them speak honestly from their own experience. The point for us here and now is, what exactly is that experience?

Hearing these words from Gotama, Yasa takes encouragement. Yasa removes his golden sandals and Gotama teaches him. Not the direct, immediate teaching of Zen, but a gradual, progressive one. Before long Yasa – still a layperson – sees through it all, becoming the seventh Arhat or awakened one in the world (Gotama being the first, followed by his five fellow ascetics).

This simple, ancient story is extremely suggestive, isn't it? It contains Buddhism in a nutshell. Everything we need is there. To make its significance clear: Where was Yasa when he said what he said? And where was Gotama when he said what he said? Here is Buddhism, pure and simple: To realize – in ourselves – what Yasa realized, and actualize what Gotama actualized.

We will return later to this story of Yasa to make sure it is unmistakably clear.

Now it is time to introduce a koan from the Zen tradition. About 1,000 years after Yasa met Gotama in Benares, the Indian Buddhist master Bodhidharma arrived in China. There he sat in meditation facing a cave wall deep in the mountains, awaiting those hungry enough to find him. Eventually, a Chinese Buddhist monk makes the journey and succinctly states his *genjō-kōan*: I am not at peace; please, master, give me peace!

How different is this Chinese monk's *genjō-kōan* from Yasa's? Or yours? Is there anyone here who does not understand this?

How does Bodhidharma respond to that person there and then? How would you? Bodhidharma replies: Bring forth this self that is not at peace — then it will be! In other words, only by exhausting that very delusion, only in its dissolving, can true peace be found. English translations literally render what I have translated as “self” as mind, or heart. This misses the point, however, for it is not simply a problem of head or heart. It is the problem of self.

Bodhidharma did not ask the monk, for example, when did he first feel this problem, or how was his relationship with his father or mother. Not that these are unimportant concerns. On the contrary, they can be most significant. But not here. Why? I think you can already sense why: When one problem of the self is solved, what happens? That's right – another problem arises. That is the nature of self. The end of “dis-ease” can never be reached that way. Such a way of dealing with problems is itself a profound symptom – the endless, vicious cycle – of the self's “dis-ease.” Thus Bodhidharma's straightforward challenge – not to endlessly describe the varying symptoms, but to *see through* the source of the illness itself. This is the direct, immediate teaching of Zen Buddhism.

Unlike many Buddhist texts, Zen texts tend to be sparse. Few details are given. But the Chinese monk must have inquired exhaustively into this: What, where exactly is this self, this source of suffering? Is it something inside, outside, or in the in between? Eventually he returned to Bodhidharma and stated: I have searched for it and it is, finally, unattainable. To the uninitiated it may sound like the poor Chinese monk tried, but failed. On the contrary, the technical Buddhist term “unattainable” points to the most positive realization possible: that there is actually no thing whatsoever to attain, nor any self to attain it. Thus, Bodhidharma seals this encounter by concluding: Now there is peace!

This exchange is foundational. It is the beginning of the Zen tradition in China, for that monk went on to become the second patriarch. We will return to this koan of Bodhidharma's peace.

Let me introduce another exchange from the early Zen tradition in China. (I mean no disrespect to the great Chinese tradition, but I will use Japanese pronunciation since it is more familiar to most of you.) Bodhidharma lived around the year 500. About 200 years later, when Zen was first finding its feet on Chinese soil, Sekitō spoke of what has since become known as, "Mind itself is Buddha." What does this really mean? As already mentioned, it is not a matter of mind or heart, but of the self. Further, Buddha here does not refer to the historical Gotama but to our being awake to the truth. This is the meaning of Buddha: an awakened one – each one of us awake to the living truth. Thus, we can freely render Sekitō's statement not as "Mind itself is Buddha" but as "You are awake!" That is, at bottom you are free of all "dis-ease." What about this?

One of the monks then asked: But what about liberation? Perhaps this monk had practiced a good deal. He probably left home and family, had his head shaved, and made the arduous journey to study under Sekitō. Perhaps he thought he was close to his cherished goal of liberation. But the master pulled the rug clean out from under him by stating that he is already awake. You can well understand the monk's great doubt, can't you?

How does Sekitō respond at that time and place to this monk's *genjō-kōan*? But master, what about liberation?

Sekitō: Who binds you!

I trust you can see into the monk's state of mind when he asked his question; can you see into Sekitō's? Right here and now, who binds you? To rephrase it in the American idiom: I don't see any chains on you, brother! There could be no other question for the monk at that time – and there could hardly be a more thoroughgoing answer.

Actually, Sekitō's answer is itself a question. But a question that can put an end, once and for all, to all such questions. Is this different from Bodhidharma's challenge to bring forth the self that is not at peace? Or, for that matter, Gotama's statement that this is not distress, here is no affliction?

Let me leave Sekitō's "Who binds you?" for now and introduce one more koan, perhaps the most famous of all: Jōshū's "*Mu*." About 100 years after Sekitō, a monk asked master Jōshū whether or not a dog has Buddha-nature. Once again, the translations can confuse the point. What is actually being asked? A dog, probably one in front of them at the moment, must have brought home the monk's great doubt: The teachings clearly declare that all sentient beings have Buddha-nature, yet I just cannot see it there in that lowly animal. Perhaps it was a sickly, mangy mutt, we don't know. At any rate, he was asking if that dog is truly of the nature of awakening, free of all "dis-ease."

Was the monk simply asking about the true nature of a dog? Or was he taking up what was present at the moment in order to ask the most essential question about himself: Am *I* really free of all dis-ease? Does even someone like me possess this pure and peerless awakened nature?

Does the monk see that dog as less than a human – and a human like himself as less than a Buddha? Can you see the inevitability of his *genjō-kōan*? Naturally, a lingua franca and a Buddhist jargon are starting to develop. But if we can see into the inevitability of this monk's question – and make it our own – it can start to work as a living koan for us.

How does the master respond, at that time and place, to that person? Jōshū simply replied "*Mu*," that is, "Nope!"

This one-word response has become the most common koan in Zen history. Countless monks, nuns, and lay people have struggled with it over the centuries. To this day it is still assigned as a basic koan for monks entering a Rinzai monastery. When Jōshū says "Nope!" what exactly is being rejected? To put it the other way around: Where is Jōshū's "Nope!" coming from? We will return to this koan as well. But for now let me leave it with you.

Yasa and Gotama, the Chinese monks and Bodhidharma, Sekitō, and Jōshū – all are encounters between people. What are these encounters really getting at? Where are they coming from? Where are they going? To the uninitiated they can sound like nonsense, mere wordplay. They are not. Look at the unparalleled expressions of this truth in the spiritual culture that developed, including Zen

painting, calligraphy, poetry, and the like. But how can we, here and now, get more intimate with this truth?

Rather than continue with stories from foreign lands long ago, let's begin by looking a bit closer to home, at our own experience. Did you ever get lost in a beautiful sunset or sunrise? Did you ever lose yourself, for example in a musical performance – listening or yourself performing? Ever experience your team or group working seamlessly as one? Ever tangle with your lover as one? Ever hold a newborn baby in your arms?

As the title states, this lecture is about religious experience. Are these religious experiences? Maybe not. They are, however, experiences that we all have. So let's work from there, directly from the experience itself, not from conceptualizing it, not after self has reflected on it and turned it into something experienced: "That was great!" With those three words the experience has already been turned into something (*that*) in the past (*was*) which self has evaluated (*great*).

The question is: What is the experience itself – *as it is happening*? Not afterward. Not when we reflect after the fact, but at the moment when we are lost in awe at the picture or performance, one with it. What is it, before it is even "great"?

Forgive my clumsy description, but in the midst of such an experience isn't it as if we are somehow touching all that is true, good, and beautiful? Don't we sense something precious there, *beyond, prior to, value*? And what becomes of your "self" in that experience? Indeed, what becomes of the "world," of all the tensions and turmoil, the walls and barriers that seemed so real? In those experiences, our "self-confinement" spontaneously dissolves. Once we see those experiences for what they are, isn't it apparent that we are not at all what we think we were?

What of discursive thought, that inner dialogue you often have with yourself? In the experiences we have been talking about, it's gone without a trace. You know this because eventually it returns. Where did it go?

Don't we, in a very real sense, *lose our selves* in those experiences? And we find something infinitely deeper, truer, seamlessly connected with the ground of all. Thus, we often come away from those experiences feeling thoroughly refreshed, joyful, confident, full of love, thankful. Does anyone not know, from their own experience, what I'm talking about?

Let me ask here: Thankful for what? Let this be a sort of preliminary koan if you like. In those experiences, for what are we thankful? For our abundant blessings, for our good fortune, for the present moment, for a way out of suffering? These responses don't quite ring true, do they? It has been made clear by religious writers in all times and climes. Look at St Francis of Assisi, St. John of the Cross, the great female Sufi poet Rabia of Basra, Walt Whitman, just to name a few. They speak with one voice here: We are finally thankful *for all*. As Paul says in Ephesians 5:20: "Giving thanks always for all things." (This does not mean that we ignore social injustice or don't try to right wrongs. Not at all. But such attitudes and actions are grounded in thankfulness for all, not thinly veiled self-centeredness which only causes more disruption.)

Has the inevitable doubt arisen yet: Am I really thankful for all? Can self truly be thankful for all? Not just for what went well or what I wanted, but thankful for all. We sense that we must be; yet we know we are not. As children many of us recited each morning from Matthew 6:9: "Thy will be done." Not *my* will. Who can say, about all things, "Thy will be done"?

Now let's return to the final koan I introduced: Jōshū's "*Mu!*" or "Nope!" What is being rejected? Let me rephrase it: What prevents us from being thankful for all? To put it "zenistically," as my son would say, unless we actually *separate from all separation* we cannot begin to see, better yet *be*, this marvelous "*Mu!*" Nor, I suggest, can we be thankful for all.

Many are content just to get a taste, catch a glimpse, and then live the rest of their lives from there. For example, they may occasionally listen to or perform that favorite piece of music, take that weekly walk in the woods and watch the sunset, visit with that dear friend, or attend church or mass. For many people it is enough to occasionally peek through the window in the door and be reminded that, indeed, God is there, or even here. For them, sustained religious practice – what we're doing right now – might seem absurd, even repugnant. Why sit hours with legs wrapped up like pretzels or struggle with a koan? Why must I give my life, my very self, to God? How do we respond? We need to be clear, both for them, and for ourselves. If we look into profound religious experience, then it is clear.

(Although I speak of profound, I do not mean that such experiences are better. Ultimately, there is no better or worse here.)

Is profound religious experience so different from the experiences that we all have of losing ourselves in the sunset or the music? There *is* one significant difference: Instead of leaving us content, with our questions and doubts tentatively dissolved, the “profound religious experience” leaves us rather with a greater doubt, which could be expressed as, Where does *that* come from? What is the source? We are, in the words of the movie *Home Alone*, “hungry for more!”

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.” (Matthew 5:6) What is it to hunger and thirst for righteousness? What makes all things right? Like everyone else, we too have tasted. But for whatever reason – and there is no better or worse here – we hunger and thirst for the *source* of it all. Such a person tends to become a monastic, contemplative, home-leaver. Perhaps the person in whom a koan spontaneously arises – and must be resolved.

When a person decides to “leave the world” in pursuit of this truth, it can strike those left behind as a rejection of them and their world, as a slap in the face. Again, it is important, both for us and for those left behind, to be clear about this. If it is genuine, it is not simply a rejection of this world and of those left behind. It is *the inexorable need to return to – and live out of – that source*.

However, the desire to leave the world is often *not* genuine; it is often an unhealthy *escape* from something in that world or ourselves. Thus, it is not a simple matter to enter a real religious order; this ensures that the person is entering for the true purpose. Likewise, a monk applying at the entrance to a Rinzai monastery doesn’t just walk in. He must spend up to a week begging admission.

Having come this far, I trust it is clear that religious practice requires great care. There can be nothing more absorbing and compelling. Understanding this, the true intent of a koan should now be clear. Let’s return to the koan of Jōshū’s “Nope!”

That one word is challenging us to directly see what we – and everything else – are really made of. What are *you* really made of? What am “I” – before any division occurs? Forget dogs and Buddha-nature! Before a thought or anything

arises, right here and now, what are you really? Is there “dis-ease” or not? If there is, where does it come from, what is the source? This cannot help but become crystal clear in real Zen Buddhist practice. Look at the beginning of the Zen tradition, Bodhidharma’s “Bring forth this self that is not at peace, then it will be!”

I have spoken of what might be called “ecstatic experiences” in daily life, losing – and finding – oneself in the music or the sunset. However, not all experiences are ecstatic. The other extreme might be what has been called the “sick soul.” What happens here? I think it is also similar to our everyday ecstasies, but again with a significant difference. Rather than seamlessly connecting with all or effortlessly dissolving, the sick soul experiences the infinite gap between itself and the boundless Other (expressed as God or whatever). Rather than feeling at one, the sick soul feels infinitely separated, alienated, worthless, a mere nothing, full of guilt and sin. Again, there is no need to judge; but for whatever reason, it happens.

It is important, for all of us, to understand that this is also a religious experience. Perhaps a “negative” one, but a precious religious experience, as St. John of the Cross and so many others have made clear.

Since much work has already been done comparing Zen with the Catholic mystical tradition, I will instead turn to the Protestant faith for illumination. William James, in his classic *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, describes Protestant conversion as a kind of fundamental koan: “...the self that consciously *is* can do absolutely nothing. It is completely bankrupt and without resource, and no works it can accomplish will avail. Redemption from such subjective conditions must be a free gift or nothing, and grace through Christ’s accomplished sacrifice is such a gift.” James then quotes Martin Luther’s *Commentary on Galatians* and concludes, “...the more literally lost you are, the more literally you are the very being whom Christ’s sacrifice has already saved.”

Here is a good, solid entrance into koan practice – if any is needed – for the interested Protestant. (Not to mention for Shinran’s True Pure Land faith.) William James has made clear why serious religious reflection is necessary, and why practices such as penance and asceticism arise: Self cannot pull itself up by its own bootstraps, but we don’t know what else to do.

James also suggests the final impossibility of any kind of self-practice. It is, as the monk under Bodhidharma realized, *unattainable*. Look once again at this encounter: But what about liberation? Sekitō: Who binds you?

In a word, we must taste – better yet *be* – the marvelously unattainable. To use more traditional jargon, there is nothing whatsoever to attain – and *that* is what must be decisively attained, in the flesh! This, I believe, is one way to express the essential entrance into religious practice.

Zen interpreters sometimes speak of this in terms of a fundamental, existential doubt; a problem that must be resolved, but which the self cannot resolve. In other words, a koan. Kitarō Nishida, the father of modern Japanese philosophy – and a Zen layman – once wrote, “... if even for a moment we stop and seriously ponder this world we live in, or seriously try to live our life, we must inevitably arrive at such a doubt.”

It’s a nice quote. But the fact is, many of us *don’t* arrive at this fundamental doubt. And that’s fine; it certainly can’t be forced. The Japanese Zen master Bankei said: “People nowadays say they need to have doubt because people in the past did. So they cultivate a doubt. But that’s merely an imitation of a doubt, not a real one, so the day never comes when they arrive at a real resolution.” Amen.

But what about those of us who *do* arrive at this fundamental doubt? For better or for worse, some just cannot be content to peek through the window in the door. We feel the need to go through the door, to break through the barrier that we are. Someone who struggled with this once wrote: “These questions are the simplest in the world. From the stupid child to the wisest old man, they are in the soul of every human being. Without an answer to them, it is impossible, as I experienced, for life to go on.” That is Leo Tolstoy in his autobiographical work, *A Confession*.

From the outside, what do these questions look like? That’s right, like some metaphysical, convoluted, abstract, esoteric, new age hocus-pocus! But I can assure you, from inside – when it is your own living, burning doubt – it is most simple. Nay, unavoidable.

But it’s true: Such questions are usually passed over. Is that because they are so esoteric or abstract? Or could it be because they are so damned close we fail

to acknowledge them? If these questions still seem esoteric or complicated, perhaps that is because they have not yet been seen up close, seen into, *seen through*. Are they distant, or does self keep them at a distance?

Tolstoy makes another precious point in the above quote: These questions are not only the simplest, they are within us. We don't need a sacred book, a koan collection, or a Zen master to be introduced to them. We need to look deeply and honestly within ourselves. Tolstoy's final sentence above, and much of his confession, shows that finding a definitive answer to these questions is not a matter of mere curiosity but something that he could not live without.

How many people destroy their lives through alcohol, drugs, violence and so on – or end their lives – because they could not see beyond self, they could not see a way through? Is this not a great tragedy of the contemporary secular world? Is this an abstract, esoteric problem?

My choice of Tolstoy is admittedly an extreme case. But such cases illumine it just that much more clearly. In these cases the individual is driven. There is no place for discursive thought, emotion, or mere will power. Taken all the way, the doubting self finally collapses. Then what happens? To put it simply, the door that I had been banging and banging and banging desperately against does not budge. Finally, falling down exhausted in front of the door, what happens? Of its own accord, the door now swings open toward me. For it was never locked. This is the experience (not the mere concept) of grace. Thus we find, to put it in theistic terms, God was always there, available and waiting for us with open arms. Self – not God – was making the conditions, pressing the door shut.

Zen naturally does not speak in terms of grace (although the Pure Land Schools of Japanese Buddhism do). Zen speaks of it, for example, as a gateless barrier – the title of a classic Chinese koan collection. Doesn't that sound esoteric! Not at all. When the koan collection by that name was compiled almost 800 years ago, there was a very good reason to have a "great wall," both to keep attackers out and to control those within. It provided a natural and potent metaphor.

Those walls had gates so that, with the proper documentation, one could pass through. But Zen is a *gateless* barrier. Why? Viewed by self as something outside,

it does rise up as a kind of impenetrable barrier, incomprehensible, obscure. But what happens when we actually become that barrier – actualize it as our self, for example in true zazen? Then it can really be the gateless barrier. Not because there is no way for self to get in or out of it, but because all is now completely open on all sides. Reconsider in this light Gotama’s response to Yasa. Or Bodhidharma’s exchange with the Chinese monk. Or Sekitō’s reply to the monk. Or Jōshū’s marvelous negation.

Someone who remains standing on the sidelines might think: “Maybe so. But it sounds awfully difficult!” This misses the point, however. As Hafiz, the most beloved poet of Persia, put it: “Your separation from God is the hardest work in this world!” Our separation from who we truly are – what could be more trying than that? Face it: *Not* giving up self is the hard part, isn’t it? If you see this, then let me urge you, once and for all, to stop standing on the sidelines endlessly watching the game even though you’re bored with it. Stop wasting your time creating imaginary difficulties, walls and windows. Instead, in whatever religious tradition you are in, give your self fully to the real work and see it through to the very end.

You don’t need some special situation. In having a self, we’ve already been given all we need – in a sense, more than enough! It is not a matter of sometimes having this problem, doubt, or separation, sometimes not. Self does not *have* this doubt, this separation. Self *is* this doubt, this separation. That is really what self is at bottom. Look! That is why self cannot come to rest in itself, why self cannot avoid “dis-ease.” Genuinely working with a koan, genuine zazen itself, is the exhausting of that doubt. Once again, see into Bodhidharma’s peace. There is no need for anything else; simply stop avoiding the doubt at the center of your being. Instead, enter it completely. Then it can’t help but dissolve completely.

You may say, “But I don’t have such a great doubt.” In traditional Zen parlance, this is pleading innocence with the stolen goods in hand. Your offense is obvious; you’re adding another shackle to your chains. You don’t need someone else’s doubt. Just get to the bottom of your own.

To sum up: Where does Zen Buddhist experience end up? Where does it

culminate? In compassion. But even more fundamentally, it ends in ordinary life. No religious stink at all, no smell of *satori*-enlightenment. Let me ask you, why?

Anyway, I trust you have seen that these “bizarre” Zen expressions and koans are perhaps not so bizarre after all. Koan practice in Zen Buddhism is a means of solidifying the search, directing, focusing, taking it to the end, to the very source. First, we need to be one with our koan. Sustained zazen is most helpful for this, bringing our fundamental doubt to life in, and as, us.

Remember where living koans come from. They are not born in books! They begin as someone’s living, vital doubt. Instead of endlessly reading and ruminating over somebody else’s traditional koans, discover – uncover – your own living koan: That ultimate doubt that sticks in your gut. Then answer it through your life. No need to imitate anyone else. Just get to the very bottom of your “self.” Your own living koan can be the way.

Let me end with two quotes. The first is from David Abram’s *The Spell of the Sensuous*, where he states that it “...is not a set of finished stories and unchanging laws; it is not a static body of dogmatic truths but a living enigma that must be questioned, grappled with...” He was referring to the Old Testament. But he could have been speaking of Zen koans.

The second is from the poet Rainer Maria Rilke, from a letter about love, not about Zen. But perhaps he will forgive me – are the two so far apart?: “...be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the *questions themselves*...*Live* the questions now.”

Thank you for listening so intently.

Endnotes

For the story of Yasa, see *The Book of the Discipline(Vinaya-Piṭaka)*, Volume IV(*Mahāvagga*) translated by I. B. Horner (London: Luzac & Company, 1971) pp. 21-26.

For Bodhidharma’s peace, see case 41 of the Chinese koan collection *Gateless Barrier* in the

Zenkei Shibayama translation. Also see case 1 of the Japanese koan collection *Entangling Vines* in Thomas Yūhō Kirchner's translation.

For Sekitō's "Who binds you?" see *Zen Dust*, pp. 300-302.

For Jōshū's "Mu" see case 1 of the *Gateless Barrier*.

Quotes from William James' *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (London: Penguin Books, 1985) pp. 244-245.

Quote from Kitarō Nishida's "On the Doubt in Our Heart" *The Eastern Buddhist* Vol. XVII No.2 (Autumn 1984) p. 9.

Quote from Bankei's *The Unborn* translated by Norman Waddell (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1984) p. 130.

Quote from Leo Tolstoy's *A Confession* is from William James' translation from the French as found in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* p. 155. Compare the translation in *A Confession and Other Religious Writings* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1987) p. 34.

For the poem from Hafiz, see *Love Poems from God* translated by Daniel Ladinsky (New York: Penguin, 2002) p. 176.

Quote from David Abrams' *The Spell of the Sensuous* (New York: Vintage, 1997) p. 244.

Quote from Rainer Maria Rilke's *Rilke on Love and Other Difficulties* translated by John Mood (New York: Norton, 1975) p. 25.

Revised transcript of lectures and talks given:

January 13, 2006 Luther College (Iowa) study abroad program, main hall, Hanazono University, Kyoto, Japan.

February 15 Insight Meditation Group, Princeton, New Jersey.

February 16 course on Zen Buddhism, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

February 16 (evening) Clearwater Sangha, Levittown, Pennsylvania.

April 7-9 weekend retreat for Zen Buddhist Association of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark.

April 13 seminar for Department of Theology & Religion, University of Durham, England.

April 18 lecture and discussion for Department of Theology & Religion, University of Durham, England.

April 21-22 weekend retreat for Sangha of Aarhus Zen Center, Aarhus, Denmark.

April 27 *Zendo De Kern*, Duizel, Holland.

May 2 *Het Graalhuis*, Utrecht, Holland.

May 3 *Zen onder de Dom*, Utrecht, Holland.

May 5-7 & May 11-14 retreats for *Zen onder de Dom*, Steyl Mission House, Steyl, Holland.

May 20 seminar for The Belgian Centre for *Daseinanalyse*, Brussels, Belgium.

May 26 *Zen in Zeeland*, Middelburg, Holland.

June 2-3 weekend retreat for *Zen Group De Romaanse Poort*, Catholic University of Louvain (Leuven), Belgium.

June 6 Rinzai Zen Center, Oslo, Norway.

June 8 public lecture, University of Tromsø, Tromsø, Norway.

June 9 public seminar, City Center, Tromsø, Norway.

June 20 Westtown (Pennsylvania) Friends School exchange program, *Roukoan* Hermitage, Kyoto, Japan.

June 30 public lecture & discussion (with German interpretation), *Schlosskeller*, Saarbruecken, Germany.

July 1-2 weekend retreat for Saarbruecken Zen group, Saarbruecken, Germany.

July 5 lecture & discussion (with French interpretation), for Association *S'asseoir* (Dominican Priory), Strasbourg, France.

July 13 lecture & discussion for Department of Religious Studies, Hannover University, Hannover, Germany.

July 21 *Kannon-do* Zen Group, University of Innsbruck, Austria.

August 4 public lecture (with Hungarian interpretation), Shambhala Buddhist Center, Budapest, Hungary.

August 5-6 weekend retreat, One-Drop Zendo, Budapest, Hungary.

September 12 Inter-cultural symposium (with Spanish interpretation), *Post Escuela de Post Grado de la UNA*, Puno, Peru.

September 13 lecture (with Spanish interpretation), *Universidad Andina*, Juliaca, Peru.

September 13(evening) lecture (with Spanish interpretation), *Centro Cultural Peruano Norteamericano*, Puno, Peru.

September 20 lecture (with Spanish interpretation), *Universidad Andina*, Cuzco, Peru.

September 28 International Colloquium on East-West Encounter, sponsored by Japan Foundation, Sao Paulo, Brazil.

September 29 Post-graduate seminar on Japanese Philosophy, sponsored by Japan Foundation, Sao Paulo, Brazil.

October 8 Shambhala Buddhist Center, Media, Pennsylvania.

October 13-15 weekend retreat for Philadelphia Buddhist Association, Pendle Hill, Wallingford, Pennsylvania.

October 20 lecture for Syracuse Zen Center, Hendricks Chapel of Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.

October 22 Dharma talk for Syracuse Zen Center, Syracuse, New York.

October 24 public lecture, Department of Religion, Luther College, Decorah, Iowa.

October 25 course on Buddhism, Luther College, Decorah, Iowa

November 3-4 lecture & one-day retreat, Buddhist Sangha of Bucks County, Yardley Friends Meeting, Pennsylvania.

November 15 Princeton Insight Meditation Group, Princeton, New Jersey.

November 19 Empty Hand Zendo, New Rochelle, New York.

December 6 special lecture, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Maryland.

December 8-10 weekend retreat for Zen Center of Washington, Dupont Friends Meeting House, Washington, D. C.

December 13 public lecture, St. Mary's College, St. Mary's, Maryland.

January 13, 2007 Soto-Rinzai Encounter, Hartford Street Zendo, San Francisco Zen Center, San Francisco.

January 16 Japan Culture Center, Everett Junior College, Seattle, Washington.

January 23 Socratic Society, University of Arkansas, Little Rock, Arkansas.

January 24 Religion & Global Context course, Hendrix College, Conway, Arkansas.

January 24(afternoon) Tibetan Buddhism course, Hendrix College, Conway, Arkansas.

January 25 Honors College, University of Central Arkansas, Conway, Arkansas.

January 25(evening) public lecture, Department of Religion, Hendrix College, Conway, Arkansas.

January 26 Buddhist-Christian Dialogue, Department of Religion, Hendrix College, Conway, Arkansas

January 26(evening)-27 retreat for Ecumenical Buddhist Society, St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Conway, Arkansas.

February 16-20 retreat for *Zen onder de Dom*, Steyl Mission House, Steyl, Holland.

February 23-25 retreat for Zen Group *De Romaanse Poort*, Catholic University of Louvain (Leuven), Belgium.

February 27 Psychology Faculty, Catholic University of Louvain (Leuven), Belgium.

March 2 public lecture for the Rinzai Zen Center, *Deichmanske Bibliotek* (Public Library), Oslo, Norway.

March 3-4 weekend retreat for the Rinzai Zen Center, Oslo, Norway.

March 5 public lecture, Department of Cultural Studies & Oriental Languages, University of Oslo, Norway.

March 9 public lecture (with Hungarian interpretation), Buddhist College of Budapest, Budapest, Hungary.

March 10-11 weekend retreat for One-Drop Zendo, Budapest, Hungary.

March 14 monthly public lecture for The Buddhist Society, London, England.

May 23 MBA Program, China Europe International Business School, Shanghai, China.

June 8 Socio-Cultural Lecture Series, Japan Foundation, Osaka, Japan.

August 24 Choboji Zen Center, Seattle, Washington.

September 4 Won Buddhist Temple, Glenside, Pennsylvania.