Introduction To Zen Buddhism With The Ancient Masters
Commentary On Zen Scripture

by A.E. Abedi
Taoist-Books.com
DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to ancient zen masters who took great pains to get their philosophy across the ages to future generations. Thank you.
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Introduction

When people think of Buddhism it is normally of robbed figures sitting in front of statues of an emaciated figure meditating. In fact, most of the encounters the western world has had with Buddhism, till the Dalai Lama was forced into exile, is of a culture similar to Hinduism which is of no coincidence. No writings seem to exist (at least none have been found) dating back to when Siddhartha was teaching.

Bodhidharma

You can’t start a discussion of Zen without referring to Bodhidharma, the man credited with bringing Zen to the east (China & Japan). Very few scholars will trace its origin to Siddhartha or “The Buddha” as many seem to believe he may be a mythical figure. While Zen is seen as a uniquely Far Eastern concept derived from the Tao. Yet Zen is a form of Buddhism, as it draws it sources of inspiration from him (even Bodhidharma is said to have quoted the Buddha's sutras), making the Buddha a part of it's story. The Diamond Sutra is said to be Buddha's entire teaching in a short and simple form. If so, then maybe Bodhidharma simply took Siddhartha’s teachings and adapted them for the culture he was dealing with. This means the basic ideas of zen are apparent in Buddhist scriptures themselves and can be understood with just a little explanation. That's what I've attempted in Chapter 7
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after a walkthrough various zen scriptures including the world's oldest zen poem\(^1\), the Tao Te Ching.

**Siddhartha: The Forest Sage With A New Idea**

Siddhartha (Buddha) was taking part in a very old discussion that had been going on in the Indian intellectual and ascetic class for centuries, which had been compiled together in a collection called the “Upanishads”. The Upanishads represent the culmination of centuries of thought upon which the intellectuals and yogis of India would meditate and seek to comprehend reality as their ancestors once did.

Buddha followed the normal path of the “knowledge seeker class” that emerged in India called the Yogis. He followed normal ascetic procedures which included a heavy regimen of meditation and thinking about the philosophy of the Upanishads (which were probably just teachings from other yogis in his time), while having heavy discussions with other yogis, i.e. following what hundreds of thousands probably did on a regular basis. What he learned was implemented in his practice.

Siddhartha’s enlightenment wasn’t a spiritual one in the way non-Indian cultures perceive spirituality to be. It wasn’t a God-like blessing or “anointing” but an ordinary realization of the truth of existence. It was both philosophical and practical to one experienced in meditation.

\(^1\) Paraphrase of a quote from Alan Watts, zen scholar.
When Siddhartha started teaching he called his path “the middle path”, because of it being between the hard asceticism of the yogis and the complete immersion in living life of the populace, was actually just the ending of the game of stories (mythology) that we like to play with ourselves.

So while the intellectuals of India had been arguing for centuries that this story we create is happening to a well defined self or person (their story of what we truly are is that we are ‘a self that is almost divine in nature’). Siddhartha turned around and said there was no self. The self was an illusion. Till now it was just the world that had been an illusion called Maya in Sanskrit. A world that was happening to a self that was a piece of the divine. After Siddhartha, the self itself began to be seen as an illusion. To the Indian mind, heavily steeped in metaphysics, this may not have been a popular approach which is why Buddhism ultimately left India in ancient times not to return till the days of British Colonialism, instead finding it’s home in the far east.

**What did Siddhartha mean by ‘there is no Self’?**

The normal person lives by a story which consist of his or her accomplishments, name, genetic lineage, heritage, and so on. These elements are all combined together by an individual to give meaning to their lives in whatever perspective on life they may have at the time. A depressed person will have linked elements of his story together in a way that enhances the negative perspective they have chosen. Or a successful confident person, at whatever level, will also string together elements of his or her life which explains how they got to
where they are and how they must behave because of it and so on.

In other words, you create a story that you live by and think by. Every person does. Without a story you can't give meaning to your life. Giving meaning to your life is an act of storytelling or, in other words, giving meaning to your life is an act of the mind.

In Zen (the Japanese pronunciation of the yogic meditation techniques called “Dhayana”), you let go of all stories you may have about yourself or the whole and just experience life directly without interference from your mind and meaning making ability. “You” cease to exist.

In other words, Siddhartha took a set of already well established techniques that had been around for thousands of years (making zen/dhayana the oldest spiritual technique taught in high civilization) and added his own explanations to it. An explanation which is so corresponds to the practice of zen as inherited by the cultures with the writings of Lao Tzu that I sometimes wonder if the Tao Te Ching was written by somebody familiar with Siddhartha's teachings or Siddhartha was simply restating a fact so old that it has already spread and embedded itself in Ancient Chinese civilization as the Taoists.

**Some Historical Context**

The earliest texts, called the Pali Canon/Texts, were written down about 500 years after Siddhartha died. By this time the
Buddha’s teachings were so enmeshed in the mythological perspective of the Indian culture that it’s actually impossible to separate what he taught from the stylistic and poetic religious texts that constitute the earliest books of the Buddhists.

What many people don’t know is that there are actually two basic forms of Buddhism. The Southern forms of Buddhism are the more religious types while the Northern forms of Buddhism are offshoots, not of the religious aspect of Hindu culture & mythology, but of its philosophical aspects known as “Vedanta”.

What we know of Siddhartha (later called The Buddha) was that he was an Indian Prince living around 500 BC who was disenchanted with his life & set out in search of truth or rather ‘the meaning of life’, which is called Enlightenment or Nirvana. After years of searching and experimenting he arrived at some insights which were somewhat different from the other forest yogis of his age. Given that his teachings were developed after years of meditating with the forest yogis or ascetic teachers (a common sub-culture of his time) and probably after learning and discussing their philosophy (written down in the Indian Texts called Upanishads) it is possible to outline outlooks and perspectives that Siddhartha must have had but maybe in another book.

Siddhartha was probably a forest yogi who taught between 530-480 BC. Like other teachers of his time. Since his was a culture of yogic teachers it would be useful to see his age as a time when many philosopher/yogis discussed their insights into nature and man and their experiences with yoga. In fact it probably wouldn't be too far off to imagine the forest yogic
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teachers like some sort of university where scholars learnt new ideas, discussed these ideas and then wrote papers for publishing. The only difference being that there was no central location such as a University Campus, instead the whole region was their school premises (often covered in forests thus the term “forest yogi” – the mountain yogis tended to be more solitary and hard to find) and the ideas discussed were purely philosophical in nature and the work done was on oneself in the form of meditation techniques called yoga (& related ascetic practices) and the papers published was teaching any unique insights either directly or through some form of allegory or metaphor that was appropriate to their students culture.

Given that this was the culture of this time it makes sense that after the Buddhist texts of the Southern form of Buddhism were written down in the South of India, and began to spread northwards towards the center of this forest sage culture where Siddhartha taught, the yogi teachers of the area were probably surprised by the sudden popularity of this new monastic and religious culture, which to them must have been a perverted form of the Upanishadic teachings in the form of a new religion with Hindu mythological aspects that was never a part of the forest yogi teachings to begin with. It would be like discovering that one of the ancient teachers teachings had found popular support amongst some people far away from it’s origin, only their popular support was like the local forms of religion that already existed and was looked down upon by the yogis as the activities of children. When this cult began to find root and spread gaining support and thereby reaching the status of a religion (as all major religions were seen as cults when they first started to the people of their time) the yogi philosophers of the Buddhist school who, till now, were content
to follow the ancient tradition of teaching to new arrivals in their forest yogic culture, decided it was time to distill this corrupted form of Siddhartha’s teaching to it’s more original form (the earliest texts of which are probably lost for good). These new texts, written around 100 AD, was the philosophical approach of Buddhism called Mahayana Buddhism and the Buddhism of the South (Pali Canon) became known as Hinayana Buddhism.

You can get an idea of how violently the ancient forest teachers must have reacted to the spread of the Buddhist Monastic religion of the Pali Texts by the fact that Buddhism literally ceased to exist in India after a few hundred years and only returned in the mid 19th Century during the British Raj as it was adopted by the lower classes as an Indian form of religion that gave them relief from the cultural oppression of the Indian Caste system.

So, if the goal of the ancient forest Buddhist type sages was to stomp out this new monastic culture derived from their teachings they did eventually succeed. Siddhartha’s teaching and insights were probably welcomed in the forest yogic culture as simple specific teachings of a great sage and/or accomplished yogi. So maybe this reaction to the more religious forms of Buddhism came from the Brahmin (cultural and religious leaders) of Ancient India.

As it is, a monastic culture will, by its very nature, stop the development of culture and civilization as its adherents would reject getting involved in life and would lead to disenchantment of whole segments of the population and like ‘the Dark Age’ would simply lose its vibrancy and affirmation of life. In fact,
this may even be why the once popular religion of Jainism is also now just a minor religion which is still in decay (i.e. not spreading).
Chapter 1

Introduction To Zen

The Many Views Of Zen

We have all heard the story of the 5 blind men and the elephant. It goes something like this; When encountering an elephant for the first time one blind man touched his leg and declared that an elephant was like a tree trunk. Another blind man grabbed the elephant's trunk and declared that an elephant was like a snake. The third his tail and thought an elephant was a rope. The fourth his ears and decided he was like a bird and the fifth his belly and decided he was like a cow. Each blind man had a different understanding and perspective of an elephant depending on his perspective.

Since zen is an experience and not a philosophy (though philosophy certainly seems to be a part of it) a person can develop a different understanding of zen based on their experience. So this section examines zen from many perspectives to make it as easy to comprehend as possible while trying not to fit it within any particular category permanently.
Zen As A Philosophy Of The Mind

Sometimes I choose to describe Zen as a philosophy

I call zen “a philosophy” in the original sense of the word as ‘the love of wisdom’ and a philosopher being ‘a lover of wisdom’. True Wisdom, of course, is indefinable or as Socrates put it, "The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing“. By these definitions Zen certainly does seem to qualify as a philosophy.

Wisdom in zen is learning to live in a way that is most conducive to a peaceful state of mind that is accepting of all the good and bad that happens in life which you can rarely do anything about. Zen is not about knowledge or know “the truth of existence” or having any sorts of answers to these sorts of questions.


“Zen Buddhism is a way and a view of life which does not belong to any of the formal categories of modern Western thought. It is not religion or philosophy; it is not a psychology or a type of science. It is an example of what is known in India and China as a ‘way of liberation’, and is similar in this respect to Taoism, Vedanta, and Yoga.”

Siddhartha (AKA The Buddha) taught a ‘path of liberation’ in other words, if you follow these certain principles you will achieve this goal i.e. “enlightenment” or “nirvana”. It’s like saying if you hold a baseball bat in a certain way then you will
achieve a certain distance for that ball providing you hit the ball thrown at you in a certain way. A slow moving strike of the bat gets you a ball that moves away from you (in the direction of your hit) at a low velocity while hitting the ball harder will get you a higher velocity hit, maybe even a home run if struck just right. The point is that you know that certain actions, when done precisely, will achieve certain specific goals.

In the same way, what Siddhartha was simply teaching (which later came to be called “Buddhism”) was just a set or rules that included moral and ethical principles with philosophical insights to help a ‘seeker after truth’ to focus their minds and find the peace of mind that they were seeking. The ethical and moral rules were for mental balance and not meant to be followed like they were commandments from any God. It was simply advice from a teacher to his students.

Thus;

Zen isn’t a religion

Buddhism has neither creed, code, nor cult. There is nothing that is binding upon the Buddhist, nothing they are supposed to believe in. There is no authoritative code, and there is no positive doctrines that the believer has to ascend to, It’s true that Buddhists do observe certain precepts of moral and ethical behavior, however they don’t regard the observation of them as following a divine will. It’s simply a pledge you take to yourself. And, furthermore, Buddhism has no particular cult. That is to say, there are no specific sacraments or forms or worship that are binding upon all Buddhists. You might then say that Buddhism is a form of philosophy, but again this
would not be quite correct because what we understand by philosophy in the west is the elaboration of certain ideas, certain theories about the nature of the universe, the nature of man of or the nature of knowledge. And Buddhism is not particularly concerned with elaborating ideas.

The nearest thing in our culture to Buddhism, although it isn’t exactly the same, is probably psychotherapy. And the reason is that what constitutes the essence of Buddhism is not beliefs, not ideas, not even practices, but a way of experiencing” Allan Watts – Buddha and Buddhism

Where I differ from Alan Watts and why:

While “philosophy” is not Alan Watt’s chosen word for the zen path. when he tries to connect it to a modern example, I think it is an appropriate name for zen for our time as having a philosophy to deal with life in an effective and, dare I say, BALANCED manner… requires a personal philosophy. It’s all about how we, as a culture, "see" it, i.e. our “philosophy” about it. Psychotherapy as a modern science has lost all the credibility that it had in Alan Watts time and no there is no cultural position, at the moment for philosophers, so let finding and teaching paths of liberation be the new way of describing philosophy. At least for this book.

In Alan Watts time psychology was at the cutting edge of mental science. Hypnosis was entering its modern form. Carl Jung’s ideas had spread. A man named Timothy Leary and used an unknown drug called LSD to prove that he could use it to have rehabilitation success rates for prisoners that, until that

2A lecture from 1960
time, were simply unheard of (and probably still are). In any case, Timothy Leary spent a decade in jail for having a pinch of marijuana on him (which is now legal in several States) and that & LSD was banned.

As psychology was brought to a halt from Big Government on drug research and it’s effect on human psychology, another front for psychotherapy opened up which also emerged with unheard of success rates called Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP), which led to the modern popularity Hypnosis. Turns out this is something most people can learn in a weekend (the Ancient Greeks had dream temples based on a self-hypnosis concept that was unregulated whatsoever) and one can become pretty good at hypnosis and NLP in just a few months. The techniques work irrespective of theories in textbooks one has about a patients neurosis. Thus making it unprofitable - to the extreme - for big companies. Fortunately, NLP has been around for so long that many people in the psychology profession use it though not in psychiatry as their trade is in drugs and like how everything looks like a nail to a hammer, all the solutions of a psychiatrist's involves drugs.

Here is an extract from a more mainstream source of information;

**Article:**

*Why Psychiatry Holds Enormous Power in Society Despite Losing Scientific Credibility* It helps to be funded by Big Pharma.³

³ Alternet January 6 2015
While Big Pharma financial backing is one reason psychiatry is able to retain its clout, this is not the only reason. More insidiously, psychiatry retains influence because of the needs of the larger power structure that rules us. And perhaps most troubling, psychiatry retains influence because of us—and our increasing fears that have resulted in our expanding needs for coercion.

But before discussing these three reasons, some documentation of psychiatry’s lost scientific credibility in several critical areas.

Psychiatry’s Lost Scientific Credibility

DSM Invalidity. In 2013, the American Psychiatric Association’s diagnostic bible, the DSM, was slammed by the pillars of the psychiatry establishment. Thomas Insel, director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) and the highest U.S. governmental mental health official, offered a harsh rebuke of the DSM, announcing that the DSM’s diagnostic categories lack validity, and he stated that “NIMH will be re-orienting its research away from DSM categories.” Also in 2013, Allen Frances, the former chair of the DSM-4 taskforce, published his book, Saving Normal: An Insider’s Revolt against Out-of-Control Psychiatric Diagnosis, DSM-5, Big Pharma, and the Medicalization of Ordinary Life.

Psychiatric Treatments May Cause Increased Suicide. The FDA—despite protests by the psychiatric establishment—has

http://www.alternet.org/why-psychiatry-holds-enormous-power-society-despite-losing-scientific-credibility
issued “black box warnings” about the potential for increased suicidality for patients under the age of 25 who use antidepressants. In 2014, AlterNet reported about a University of Copenhagen study comparing Danish individuals who committed suicide to matched controls between the years 1996 and 2009. The researchers found that taking psychiatric medications in a prior year was linked to a 5.8 times increase in suicide; contact with a psychiatric outpatient clinic was associated with an 8.2 times increase; visiting a psychiatric emergency room was linked to a 27.9 times increase; and admission to a psychiatric hospital was linked to a 44.3 times increase in suicide.

While correlation by itself does not necessarily mean causation, an accompanying editorial in the same journal where the article was published pointed out that associations with the features detailed in this particular study indicate a good possibility of a causal relationship. Among the reasons why psychiatric treatment could well cause increased suicide, besides the adverse effects of medication, is the stigma and trauma of treatment, as the editorial authors state: “It is therefore entirely plausible that the stigma and trauma inherent in (particularly involuntary) psychiatric treatment might, in already vulnerable individuals, contribute to some suicides.”

Corruption of Psychiatry by Big Pharma. Big Pharma heavily funds university psychiatry departments, sponsors conferences and continuing education for psychiatrists, advertises in their professional journals, and pays well-known clinicians and researchers to be speakers and consultants. I documented in 2007 and updated in 2012 how virtually every
way the public and doctors get information about mental health has been corrupted by drug company dollars. In 2008, congressional investigations of psychiatry revealed that major psychiatric institutions such as the American Psychiatric Association and several “thought leader” psychiatrists, including Harvard psychiatrist Joseph Biederman, were on the take from drug companies, creating obvious conflicts of interest and further damaging psychiatry’s credibility.

For all the above reasons, and others, I differ with Alan Watts on calling Zen ‘like psychotherapy’. Philosophy seems to have no positive of negative connotations in our culture, in our time, as it simply doesn’t exist on a basic educational level so no one has had a chance to destroy it yet. So philosophy is the best word for our time, I think.

**How Zen Differs From Traditional Views Of Philosophy**

Since this is a path of mental liberation it is meant to be experienced and only talked about enough so that it CAN be experienced.

A philosophy, while originally meaning the love of wisdom (which is an infinite search for knowledge, i.e. with no end in sight if Socrates wisdom is anything to judge by), it is now about beliefs that are wrapped around something the “philosopher” has taken to be an inarguable fact (to students of philosophy who generally exist as a tiny minority in college populations).
Descartes, for example, began his philosophy with the assumption that “I think therefore I am” and goes on from there piling one assumption upon the other. Clearly Descartes hadn’t heard of meditation in his time. Millions of people have learnt how to stop their endless mind chatter and silence the mind since Descartes time. Add the science of meditation to the facts available to us and Descartes philosophy falls apart like a game of Jenga where the foundation stick, holding everything together has been pulled out thus making the entire structure fall.

Philosophy rests on assumptions and is often subject to such problems. To begin with Descartes stops thinking when asleep and consequently ceases to exist every night. So his philosophy had many holes in it but for people of his time, all high on coffee and conversation as their main past times, this must have been acceptable. Zen also rests on assumptions but the end point isn’t a theory of the universe or of existence but one of experience.

Since the experience of Zen is the same, even if a different set of assumptions are used to gets you to that experience, it can be said to have a fluid philosophy in that how it is taught differs greatly from teacher to teacher and time to time.

Zen is about letting go of thoughts and often includes meditation practice of no-mind and no-thoughts. Descartes wouldn’t exist in Zen, or at least his philosophy wouldn’t or couldn’t exist. Yet I can put zen practice into words and thus have formed my own philosophy of how to explain zen (or

4 Meditations on First Philosophy by Rene Descartes (1641)
‘dhayana” in meditation, i.e. it’s originally a meditation technique extended to all aspects of life). In other words, just because Zen doesn’t fit the format of philosophy doesn’t mean it can’t be talked about and explained in a philosophical manner that gets the meaning across.

The Difference Between Spirituality In The East VS The West

In the east, particularly Ancient China, spirituality is about a mental attitude that is maintained. While in the west, spirituality has this otherworldly tinge around it. A Saint in the west is “Holy”, a “Man/Woman of God”, “Untouchable by the Devil” etc. A Saint in Ancient China of the Taoist or Zen path are often represented by smiling and laughing individuals who are even portrayed being clumsy or drunk. In the west the idea of “holy” separates the individual from ordinary acts and he is often portrayed with a halo around his head with everyone around him in awe or being clumsy or caught up in the world. This idea of holy doesn’t seem to have existed in Ancient China beyond a form of ancestor worship common to ancient tribal peoples, i.e. one respected and revered ones lineage, both personal lineage and cultural lineage. If you compare and contrast these two concept of holiness you realize that one is “holy” while the other is just human.

That is the basic point to be understood here, Taoist “spirituality”, which has been carried on by zen, is distinctly human in every way. While the west reveres its spiritual leaders as holy men or women, in the east they are revered as accomplished human beings who have learned to flow with
life. In the west the spiritual people are above the people. In the east the “spiritual” people are more human than anyone else. They lack the basic inhibition trained into people as youths so they live instinctively rather than through a belief system.

I have been putting spiritual in the parenthesis like this “spiritual”, because the differences between east and western conceptions of spirituality is so large that I feel uncomfortable using the same word as it doesn’t convey the meaning of the words in it’s context.

**Zen Can’t Be Described Thus, ‘Those who know do not speak’**

Many People will recite as if by rote that, “One who knows does not talk. One who talks does not know.” suggesting that a true zen practitioner says nothing.

I would like to point out to those individuals that this quote that they think describes all of zen is chapter number 56 of the 81 chapter Tao Te Ching… so the source document contradicts them on this claim. Also, the rest of the stanza goes something like this:

1. *One who knows does not talk. One who talks does not know. Therefore the sage keeps his mouth shut and his sense-gates closed.*

In other words, what this ancient zen POEM is describing, what seems to be, a meditation technique and probably is one
of the source documents for the “vow of silence” practice that some monks are famous for. A look at the rest of the chapter suggests that the writer is describing a meditation technique based on the idea of ‘words can cloud your experience’ and what a person can gain from this practice and what sort of results one can observe for such a person;

2. "He will blunt his own sharpness, His own tangles adjust; He will dim his own radiance, And be one with his dust."
3. This is called profound identification.
4. Thus he is inaccessible to love and also inaccessible to enmity. He is inaccessible to profit and inaccessible to loss. He is also inaccessible to favor and inaccessible to disgrace. Thus he becomes world-honored.

OR

He who knows (the Tao) does not (care to) speak (about it); he who is (ever ready to) speak about it does not know it.

Another, more poetic, translation of the same chapter of the poem;

He (who knows it) will keep his mouth shut and close the portals (of his nostrils). He will blunt his sharp points and unravel the complications of things; he will attemper his brightness, and bring himself into agreement with the obscurity (of others). This is called 'the Mysterious Agreement.'

(Such an one) cannot be treated familiarly or distantly; he is
beyond all consideration of profit or injury; of nobility or meanness:--he is the noblest man under heaven.

Clearly the point of chapter 56 out of 81 of the world’s oldest zen poem isn’t that one can’t speak about zen but more along the lines of, ‘one shouldn’t be talking as much as practicing it’.

“Zen Is So Mysterious”

Other people will say that zen is so mysterious that you have to talk in it in the negative, i.e. describe what it’s not like rather than what it is like because there are no words to describe the experience. Problem of just talking in the negative is that you are still using words and words convey a conception so you are providing a person with mental impressions you have just chosen to accept these descriptions as the right way to give a person mental impressions about zen.

You can talk about zen by describing it just like just like you can describe the taste of strawberries by saying sweet and tangy. You still can’t convey the accurate experience of eating a strawberry but you can provide mental impressions (words/descriptions) that indicate the right direction to look in, like a finger pointing towards the moon.

Words lack the ability to convey the experience of eating and tasting a strawberry. In the same way you can never understand zen by words alone because it must be experienced.
“Were language adequate, it would take but a day to fully set forth the Tao [The Path Of Zen]. Not being adequate, it takes time to explain material existences. Tao is something beyond material existences. It cannot be conveyed either by words or by silence” Chang Tzu

The Concept Of The Self (Or Lack Of It) In Zen

In ancient India a concept developed called Maya which means illusion, i.e. since the world is considered to be impermanent (constantly changing) and you can interpret the world in any way with your mind, it is considered to be an illusion.

For example a tree can be seen just as a separate plant or as something which connects with the earth and sky and the animals around it; (i.e. a tree can be seen as an object OR as a pattern of the environment which will disappear when the pattern changes such as a change in the weather patterns which can change patterns of growth from green regions to desert and back again as it does in changing ice ages).

Thus a common though ancient perspective on attachment was formed that if you hold onto your psychological and mental foundations, your images to reality, you are holding onto something that will dissolve away… eventually. SO you are holding on to something which in inherently unstable, whether it be life which comes and goes with birth and death or the features of the landscape around you.
Even mountains grow or shift and/or erode over time, though generally too slowly to notice unless man changes its nature, by say, cutting all the trees then a safe mountain can become a mudslide hazard and fall apart etc.

This understanding of the fluidity of life and living life, not as a Utopia but an ever changing pattern, is at the root of the ancient psychological position of learning to be ‘detached’ from the world (the practice of non-attachment).

Siddhartha (AKA The Buddha) essentially agreed with this philosophical position of ancient Indian philosophy but took it one step further by saying that not only is the world an illusion but so is the self (the part of us that we refer to when we say “I”).

To put it in other words, you are not the person you were a year ago, you can probably see the ways in which you have changed or grown in the last year or 10 years or 30 years. You probably see the world in a different way than you did a year ago or 10 years ago or 30 years ago. Since you see the world differently you have a different image of yourself as well in relation to the world. You, at the very least, DEFINE (see) yourself differently than you did a year or 5 or 10 or 20 or 30 years ago.

What you are capable of, what you are, what you like most… all of these definitions tend to change for every person given enough time or given changes in circumstances of life.
The ancient philosophers noticed that as soon as you ‘imagined’ an event happening to you or your role in any situation, you first have to PLACE yourself IN it;

i.e. you have to imagine your role or character, then you decide what to do or how to feel. Now, this tends to happen very fast for most events as your story and behaviour has already been established over time.

In other words, every time you imagine yourself or a situation that you are in, you are, in a sense, recreating yourself (which is what a Zen practitioner means when they say “death & rebirth”).

In the Scientific American MIND magazine an interview with neuroscientist Eric Kendal also proves the same concept of Siddhartha’s which is now a fundamental part of Mahayana Buddhism or simply ‘Zen Buddhism’.

Here is how Eric Kendal defines the memory you have of your “self”:

Scientific American Mind magazine in an interview with the Nobel laureate Neuroscientist Eric Kandel:

Mind: We tend to think of memory as a kind of library that holds a record of events and facts that can be retrieved as needed. Is this an accurate metaphor?
Kandel: No, memory is not like that at all. **Human memory reinvents itself all the time.** Every time you remember something, you modify it a little bit, in part dependent on the context in which you recall it. That is because the brain’s storage is not as exact as written text. It is always a mixture of many facades of the past event: images, pictures, feelings, words, facts and fiction—a “re-collection” in the true sense.

Modern neuro-science agrees with the Zen Buddhist idea of an impermanent self. As Eric Kandel points out that, “Every time you remember something, you modify it a little bit, in part dependent on the context in which you recall it.” In other words you recreate your image of yourself to fit the new situation. If the self was something permanent and real, then your image of yourself would always remain the same. The fact that you can consciously or unconsciously change your image of yourself and react to situations in a new way - or just create a new you - proves that the self is something you make up as part of living in society.

**What does this mean?** This means that you are not limited to being any particular ’self’ or person. If you feel like you have low self-esteem you can change that self. If you feel like you are not comfortable in social situations, you can change that image too. Any limiting image you have of yourself can be changed as you create your ’self’ or how you want to be.

This is how Alan Watts described the illusory self from a zen perspective which was illuminating for me and may it be for you too;
“The ability of a pattern to contain elements that represent its former states is what we call memory. In engineering language we would call it feedback, because feedback is the system whereby any system of energy is enabled to record the results of its own action so that based upon that record it can adapt, and as it were, make plans for the future. It can in other words, correct its action. So because human beings have memory, the capacity of the pattern of the nervous system to record its former states, the human being can make predictions about the future and in general control its activity.

But from this extraordinary marvelous ability there arises a confusing by-product. And that is this feeling that here is a constant entity, like the screen of a television. In other words, because a certain element of permanence runs through these changing patterns, this permanent behavior of the pattern, or permanently repeating behavior of the pattern, gives the impression of some substantial mind stuff or mind entity underlying the pattern and upon which the pattern is recorded. It’s the same sort of illusion that arises when, for example, I take a flashlight and rotate it in the dark, and you see a continuous circle of light. It appears that the light leaves a track behind it because the moving light leaves a memory upon the retina of the eye, and that is what gives us the illusion of seeing a constant circle of light.

And so a similar illusion arises from the repetitive pattern of the nervous system, and gives us the impression that there is this constant thing, the experiencer, who lasts, and endures like a substance from the past, through the present, and into the future.” Alan Watts – Lecture on Mahayana Buddhism
Zen Is Iconoclastic

Iconoclastic means a person who likes to break idols. A zenist likes to break mental idols.

Since everything has its being in a mental conception (a belief or a label to categorize experience is what gives an object its meaning), there is nothing zen can’t go beyond. Nothing in the material world is meant to last and ideas are from the material world so they aren't meant to last as well.

In Religion of the Samurai⁶, Kaiten Nukariya writes;

*The Scripture is no more nor less than the finger pointing to the moon of Buddhahood. When we recognize the moon and enjoy its benign beauty, the finger is of no use. As the finger has no brightness whatever, so the Scripture has no holiness whatever. The Scripture is religious currency representing spiritual wealth. It does not matter whether money be gold, or sea-shells, or cows. It is a mere substitute.*

And;

*Zen is completely free from the fetters of old dogmas, dead creeds, and conventions of stereotyped past, that check the development of a religious faith and prevent the discovery of a new truth. Zen needs no Inquisition. It never compelled nor will compel the compromise of a Galileo or a Descartes. No*  

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⁶The Religion of the Samurai, by Kaiten Nukariya, [1913] - Chapter 3: The Universe If The Scripture Of Zen

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excommunication of a Spinoza or the burning of a Bruno is possible for Zen.

On a certain occasion Yoh Shan (Yaku-san) did not preach the doctrine for a long while, and was requested to give a sermon by his assistant teacher, saying: "Would your reverence preach the Dharma to your pupils, who long thirst after your merciful instruction?" "Then ring the bell," replied Yoh Shan. The bell rang, and all the monks assembled in the Hall eager to bear the sermon. Yoh Shan went up to the pulpit and descended immediately without saying a word. "You, reverend sir," asked the assistant, "promised to deliver a sermon a little while ago. Why do you not preach?" "Sutras are taught by the Sutra teachers," said the master; "Çastras are taught by the Çatra teachers. No wonder that I say nothing." This little episode will show you that Zen is no fixed doctrine embodied in a Sutra or a Çstra, but a conviction or realization within us. To quote another example, an officer offered to Tüng Shan (To-zan) plenty of alms, and requested him to recite the sacred Canon. Tüng Shan, rising from his chair, made a bow respectfully to the officer, who did the same to the teacher. Then Tüng Shan went round the chair, taking the officer with him, and making a bow again to the officer, asked: "Do you see what I mean?" "No, sir," replied the other. "I have been reciting the sacred Canon, why do you not see?" Thus Zen does not regard Scriptures in black and white as its Canon, for it takes to-days and tomorrows of this actual life as its inspired pages.

What Is Nirvana?
Nirvana is a very revealing word. It simply means to *extinguish* or to *blow out*. In other words, it’s let go of yourself and experience the world directly without ego or any story to explain the world whatsoever, thus having ‘blown out” the structure that was holding your world view together, setting you free of ignorant beliefs.

Put another way, Nirvana is to live without an ego or even a personality as it has extinguished. You live directly from the mind. You live “at cause” with the world, you being the one being “caused” to do things, as described in the yoga sutras, “for those beings who are merged in unitive consciousness, the world is the cause”. How can it be any other way? When you personality and attachment to desires and results is gone you can’t help but pick up stuff from the outside to fill the void. You live like the description in the Tao Te Ching managing your *affairs without doing anything*, as you have no desire for or against managing your affairs.

**What is “Enlightenment”?**

Enlightenment has been described as a mental trick that takes you from being a frustrated member of the rat race to just a person living life. Bodhidharma simply defines enlightenment as ‘*awareness, supreme awareness*’.

Other’s will describe it as ‘*being aware of and living from your Original Mind*’, for example zen scholar D.T. Suzuki uses the word “Reason” as the proper translation for the ‘tao’ in his translation of the Tao Te Ching indicating he thinks Tao refers

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7 Chapter 2 verse 3 of the Tao Te Ching as translated by J. Legge in 1891

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to the zen state. Suzuki also described enlightenment as “the same as ordinary every living except you are two inches off the ground”. He’s referring to the mental weight of one’s worries or beliefs being released. It’s like discovering you were walking around in lead shoes and you feel lighter after taking off the lead shoes and walking around.

In zen, enlightenment can come to anyone at any time. As one writer explains about attaining enlightenment or awareness of the Original mind or “mushin”:

_in the attainment of this state of mind (mushin), some are quicker than others. There are some who attain to a state of mushin all at once by just listening to a discourse on the Dharma, while there are others who attain to it only after going through all the grades of Bodhisattvaship\(^8\) such as the ten stages of faith, the ten stages of abiding, the ten stages of discipline, and the ten stages of turning-over. More or less time may be required in the attainment of mushin, but once attained it puts an end to all discipline, to all realization and yet there is really nothing attained. It is truth and not falsehood. Whether this mushin is attained in one thought or attained after going through the ten stages its practical working is the same and there is no question of the one being deeper or shallower than the other. Only the one has passed through long ages of hard discipline._

Basically it says that no matter how much you meditate or don’t meditate, ‘when you get it, then you get it’. Since zen is a state of mind which is natural, it simply has to be understood to be practiced and thus the smart ones will get enlightened

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8 In this context it just means an apprenticeship
fast and the slow witted will get it slowly or never. But once zen is attained, it is the same for everyone in it’s basic understanding and experience.

One ancient master describes the enlightened philosopher in this manner:

_Knowest thou that leisurely philosopher who has gone beyond learning and is not exerting himself in anything? He neither endeavours to avoid idle thoughts nor seeks after the Truth; [For he knows that] ignorance in reality is the Buddha-nature, [And that] this empty visionary body is no less than the Dharma-body._

What is reincarnation?

In zen, death & rebirth (reincarnation) is seen as a psychological phenomenon following from the illusion of the self.

An ancient Zen Scholar, Hui-Neng’s Tan Ching, Writes;

_What is Paramita? This is a Sanskrit term of the Western country. In Yang it means "the other shore reached". When the meaning (artha in Sanskrit) is understood, one is detached from birth and death. When the objective world (visaya) is clung to, there is the rise of birth and death; it is like the waves rising from the water; this is called "this shore". When you are_

9 Yoka Daishi’s “Song Of Enlightenment” - Manual of Zen Buddhism by Suzuki
detached from the objective world, there is no birth and death for you; it is like the water constantly running its course: this is "reaching the other shore". Hence Paramita.¹⁰

The idea being expressed here: When you cling to the world you have to create to create a self to deal with each new situation, thus you experience ‘death and rebirth’ (of the ego). When you let go and dwell in the zen state your consciousness stays steady and thus you don’t experience birth and death (of the ego).

For example: When you try and do good deeds you are trying to create a new self. By working on being better and better, you are destroying an old way of being (the old ‘self’) and you are creating a new one. Your ‘self’, i.e. how you define or imagine yourself to be, is going through death and rebirth.

A Quick Introduction To Zen With Bodhidharma

Bodhidharma is the founder of Zen (& martial arts!) in China and, thus by transmission, Japan. So any in depth look at zen should begin with his writings which are simple, to the point and devoid of any mystical mumbo jumbo. As long as the translations are accurate, what he said 1500 years ago is understandable today. (some of the stuff here is repetitive but it fits and thus provides another useful perspective on important information).

A few quotes from Bodhidharma extracted from a very lucid translation of Bodhidharma’s sermons by Red Pines¹¹;

¹⁰ Hiu Neng’s Tan Ching - Manual Of Zen Buddhism by Suzuki

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Bodhidharma: What is the mind? You ask. That’s your mind I answer. My answer is your mind. If I had no mind how could I answer; If you had no mind how could you ask. That which asks is your mind.

What he is saying is that the act of perceiving anything be it question a thought or an image or anything else, that is an act of the mind. If you ask for a definition of the mind it is your mind that is asking for that definition.

So you got your answer, anything you say, do ask, want or imagine that is the mind itself.

Definition of the mind in more detail;

Your mind creates your thoughts. If you try to describe your mind then that is basically you using your mind to describe your mind.

In other words, your mind is creating images and thoughts to describe itself so it can only do so by analogy and if your mind is engaged in any task that an earlier analogy did not take into account then your mind has to come up with a new analogy.

So any description your mind comes up with an image of itself is like a camera looking into the lens of another camera and constantly moving backward in a sort of infinite regression. If you try to conceptualize an end mind, it's like the woman who believed the world was set on a large turtle and when asked what was underneath ‘the turtle that held the world up’, she replied; ‘nice try. It’s Turtles all the way down.’

In other words, as soon as you imagine something about the mind, the mind is distancing itself from itself to describe itself and you can do this forever. Ultimately you discover the mind can’t be understood, only experienced.
Bodhidharma says: But the mind has no form and its awareness no limit.

This means that any form or image you can imagine is a creation of your mind and since it is a creation of your mind, the mind itself has no form, i.e. the mind isn’t a thing that you can find like a stone, it is formless as it is not made of matter.

Bodhidharma: All appearances are illusion. They have no fixed existence or constant form. They are impermanent.

People grow old and mountains erode over the millennia by the wind and rain (or a strong rainfall). In other words, given a large enough perspective on time, everything you can see, touch, smell, feel or hear is impermanent. In fact a sound or the taste of something or a smell is by its very nature impermanent. Everything in the material world exists as a flow of information to our senses that is ever changing.

Bodhidharma: “The mind’s capacity is limitless, and its manifestations are inexhaustible. Seeing forms with your eyes, hearing sounds with your ears, smelling odors with your nose, tasting flavors with your tongue, every movement or state is all your mind. At every moment, where language can’t go, that’s your mind.”

Anything you experience can be remembered in the mind thereby making its capacity seem limitless. Anything you can name or classify is a “manifestation” and you can make up anything on and on forever making it seem limitless. What you sense by smell or touch is sensed by your mind. Where language can’t go (such as explaining the taste of strawberries), that too is the mind.
Bodhidharma: “And as long as you’re subject to birth and death, you’ll never attain enlightenment.”

In zen death & rebirth is seen as a psychological phenomenon following from the illusion of the self.

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What is Paramita? This is a Sanskrit term of the Western country. In Yang it means "the other shore reached". When the meaning (artha in Sanskrit) is understood, one is detached from birth and death. When the objective world (visaya) is clung to, there is the rise of birth and death; it is like the waves rising from the water; this is called "this shore". When you are detached from the objective world, there is no birth and death for you; it is like the water constantly running its course: this is "reaching the other shore". Hence Paramita.

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Definitions drawn from Bodhidharma's sermons;

12 Hiu Neng’s Tan Ching - Manual Of Zen Buddhism by Dr. Suzuki

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Enlightenment = heightened awareness that can be maintained constantly

Nirvana = a state where the self (or yourself that you create in your mind) ceases to exist and all the world is experienced directly.

**Bodhidharma:** “To search for enlightenment or nirvana beyond this mind is impossible.”

Recognizing and living in the mind is by itself enlightenment. Enhanced awareness is one of the effects of said enlightenment.

The idea here is that as soon as you begin ‘seeking’ an experience, you have put that experience into a category and separated it from yourself.

Then you chase this conception you have of what ‘enlightenment’ or ‘nirvana’ should be. As long as you have an image to chase, i.e. your mind is chasing something it has created; you will be like a donkey with a carrot forever just out of reach, going round and round attaining nothing. Why? Because all enlightenment/ nirvana are attributes of your mind itself (it is your “original mind” to be more precise). You already have what you seek. So looking for what you already have is pointless.

**Going deeper;**

To know that an object you perceive is a tree is a conception you have that you have created in your mind and imposed on it. What you’re perceiving could just as easily be called an air filter or a lung of the earth or a home for the spirits and every such definition is accurate in its particular context in that it is an image the mind has of its surroundings.
Thus noticing an object without defining it is your mind in a state of direct experience… which can be fun, like when you are engaged in a game or boring like if you are waiting in line. The key is not to go meta on what you are experiencing, i.e. if you are having fun, don’t think about the fun you’re having, just stay involved in enjoying yourself without any self-reflection, pondering or imagination – daydreaming or in any way being mentally not there which can included thinking of others opinions which take you away from your own experience.

Same goes for if you are bored. Enjoy the boredom as it helps differentiate the boring time from the fun times. You could go ‘meta’ (outside of the experience of the situation) by imagining how bored you are and what a waste of time it is or go into an escape made by fantasizing doing something else (like daydreaming to pass time) but don’t. Simply experience waiting in line as waiting in line without imposing any value judgment such as fun or boring, good or bad, and you are experiencing waiting DIRECTLY without any mental wanderings. That is a form of zen. Practice it and waiting can serve as a meditative practice, as can work as keeping your mind on your task is easier if your whole body is engaged. That’s probably why Monks in Zen Monasteries had so many chores and physical practices, i.e. as a form of mediation.

In short just experience. Notice and observe without conception, i.e. without thinking of anything in particular. Take the example of a baby, they have no conception of right or wrong, up or down, male or female – so they experience life directly and respond to it without imposing conception of how things are and THEN responding to how they think is appropriate (and I mean non-habitual behaviors as well).
Chapter 2

Sage & Warrior: The Two Zen Models

This chapter covers the training format used to train people in Zen. The first one was made in Japan and was used by warriors (Samurai) and the second was created by Chinese monks and was used by people pursuing the path of the Sage.

Zen by itself is just a technique. Whether one makes it spiritual or a means to help a warrior, it is a life path/culture choice and not something that comes prepackaged in Zen. Tao Te Ching actually has chapters that talk about both paths, which I like to classify as "Path Of The Samurai" and "Path of the Sage" talked about in chapter 4, with the word warrior often used as the Tao te Ching was written before the Samurai existed.

While both paths claimed that one could reach enlightenment immediately upon hearing the explanation of zen or slowly or never, their approaches are distinct from one another. The Samurai method involves learning to attain spontaneity and has thus emerged in all art forms in Japan that are Japanese by tradition. The Sage method also has that goal but in addition to this has additional training to “purify” the mind that is deemed necessary before one properly experiences zen.
The Path Of The Samurai\textsuperscript{13} and The Path Of The Sage\textsuperscript{14} - Side By Side Using The 10 Oxherding Pictures

**Key:** The Cow or Ox represents the mind. The Person is you or the one seeking to learn about the mind and experience zen (which is a mental experience and thus includes meditation). You can imagine the cow/ox as a bicycle or a car and get an idea of the learning process these series of images seek to explain.

1

Path of the Samurai - 1:

*The first picture, called 'the Searching of the Cow,’ represents the cowherd wandering in the wilderness with a vague hope of finding his lost cow that is running wild out of his sight. The reader will notice that the cow is likened to the mind of the student and the cowherd to the student himself.*

13 The Religion of the Samurai - A Study of Zen Philosophy and Discipline in China and Japan By Kaiten Nukariya [1913]
14 Manual Of Zen Buddhism - Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki

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"I do not see my cow,  
But trees and grass,  
And hear the empty cries  
Of cicadas."

The person is unaware of his or her mind except as a word or something they have been told they “possess”.

One is embedded in communal life, following societies norms of what’s right and wrong. Including what one should hope for, think or dream about i.e. following what they are told without any thought except where allowed by society itself. The person reacts to life instinctively like an animal in its natural habitat.

“To be conscious of the original mind, the original nature-
Just this is the great disease of Zen!”

Zenrin

Example - If the mind were a bike or a car: This is the time when you know nothing about riding a bike or driving a car.

Path of the Sage - 1;

1. Undisciplined
With his horns fiercely projected in the air the beast snorts, Madly running over the mountain paths, farther and farther he goes astray!

A dark cloud is spread across the entrance of the valley, And who knows how much of the fine fresh herb is trampled under his wild hoofs!

The Sage path sees the mind in its natural SOCIETAL state as dangerous. The mind roams around causing problems (trampling the grass).

Path of the Samurai - 2;

The second picture, called 'the Finding of the Cow’s Tracks,' represents the cowherd tracing the cow with the sure hope of restoring her, having found her tracks on the ground.
"The grove is deep, and so
Is my desire.
How glad I am, O lo!
I see her tracks."

Here one begins to learn about the mind (themselves). You figure out what you mind is composed of by what you react to in fear, pain or pleasure. You learn that all senses feed the mind with information. You know you can think logically about stuff and thus logic is an aspect of the mind. In other words, one learns about their mind by learning what sorts of behaviours, thoughts and actions count as mental activity. These are the footprints of the mind

**The mind is:**

*Like a sword that cuts, but cannot cut itself;*
*Like an eye that sees, but cannot see itself.*

Zenrin

**If the mind were a bike or a car;** Now you begin to learn how the bike or car operates without actually beginning to learn
how to operate one yourself. You learn about riding a bike and driving a car intellectually (mentally) first.

You cannot get it by taking thought;  
You cannot seek it by not taking thought.  
Zenrin

Path of the Sage 2;

2. Discipline Begun

I am in possession of a straw rope, and I pass it through his nose,  
For once he makes a frantic attempt to run away, but he is severely whipped and whipped;  
The beast resists the training with all the power there is in a nature wild and ungoverned,  
But the rustic oxherd never relaxes his pulling tether and ever-ready whip.

Discipline is the rope you have which which you can begin to control the mind. You learn how to discipline the mind.

To save life it must be destroyed.
When utterly destroyed, one dwells for the first time in peace.
One word settles heaven and earth;
One sword levels the whole world.

Zenrin

3

Path of the Samurai - 3;

The third picture, called 'the Finding out of the Cow,' represents the cowherd slowly approaching the cow from a distance.

"Her loud and wild mooing
Has led me here;
I see her from afar,
Like a dark shadow."
The more you study the philosophy of the mind or engage in discussions about the mind and its attributes, the clearer becomes your understanding of it.

Being able to see your cow means you are beginning to get an idea of what your mind is. In other words, the mind is getting to know itself.

Note: A Samurai is already well trained in physical activities so has a good level of concentration already established (this often includes relaxation and at least one meditation technique) so training the mind - exclusively - isn’t their focus.

If the mind were a bike or car; Here you begin to learn how to ride a bike or drive a car by practicing regularly.

Path of the Sage -3;

3. In Harness

Gradually getting into harness the beast is now content to be led by the nose,
Crossing the stream, walking along the mountain path, he follows every step of the leader;
The leader holds the rope tightly in his hand never letting it go,
All day long he is on the alert almost unconscious of what fatigue is.

The discipline is bearing fruit and the mind is becoming “domesticated” or “purified” of lazy/bad habits and habitual instinctual behavior. As you can see the head of the ox/cow is turning white signifying that the mind is getting trained and is at about 1/15 trained after much discipline. The mind being trained or ‘purified’ means that the mind is beginning to cause less damage to themselves and to others, i.e. the stuff called bad in normal religions is beginning to get cleansed away (such as greed, envy or jealousy… stuff that ‘clouds the mind’ or is like ‘dust on a mirror’).

4

Path of the Samurai - 4;

The fourth 'picture, called 'the Catching of the Cow,' represents the cowherd catching hold of the cow, who struggles to break loose from him.
"Alas! it's hard to keep
The cow I caught.
She tries to run and leap
And snap the cord."

You seek to take control of the mind. You understand you have to silence it but it keeps chattering on. You discover trying to grab ahold of the mind with the mind is like a snake eating it’s tail (a catch-22 situation). It’s like how difficult it is to quiet the mind when you first learn how to meditate. in fact, learning to meditate and fight while not letting the mind get in the way of fighting (sparring/practice) was probably the technique being employed. A basic meditation technique, called zazen, would also be a part of the Samurai’s practice here.

If the mind were a bike of a car; Now you are beginning to get the hang to riding the bike or driving the car.

Path of the Sage - 4;

4. Faced Round

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After long days of training the result begins to tell and the beast is faced round,
A nature so wild and ungoverned is finally broken, he has become gentler;
But the tender has not yet given him his full confidence,
He still keeps his straw rope with which the ox is now tied to a tree.

After much training a turning point is reached and the mind begins to become compliant to your wishes and begins to bend to the disciplinary practices as it is supposed to. The cow is half white which means that the mind has been half ‘purified’ with intensive training in meditation.

5

Path of the Samurai -5;

The fifth picture, called 'the Taming of the Cow,' represents the cowherd pacifying the cow, giving her grass and water.
"I'm glad the cow so wild
Is tamed and mild.
She follows me, as if
She were my shadow."

You have begun to gain control of your mind. You can sit in meditation for a while. You can change bad habits into good habits. You can flow when working (or fighting if a Samurai) or doing any activity to some extent. You move smoother and your reflexes are faster. You have a mind that you have some control over.

If the mind were a ike or a car; You have become a fairly good bicycle rider or car driver by now. You drive easily and freely wherever you want to go.

Path of the Sage - 5;

5. Tamed
Under the green willow tree and by the ancient mountain stream,

The ox is set at liberty to pursue his own pleasures;
At the eventide when a grey mist descends on the pasture,
The boy wends his homeward way with the animal quietly following.

After much discipline the mind is so ingrained in its habits that it’s almost tame and follows you around, i.e. it wants to follow the discipline as it’s become domesticated to the path of the Sage. The cow is $\frac{2}{3}$ white signifying the mind is 75% ‘purified’. There is still more meditative training to do.

Path of the Samurai - 6;

The sixth picture, called 'the Going Home Riding on the Cow,' represents the cowherd playing on a flute, riding on the cow.
"Slowly the clouds return
To their own hill,
Floating along the skies
So calm and still.

You have a complete grasp of zen philosophy and practice. You have attained “the flow”. You can do your meditation easily and it feels as if no time passes because you’re enjoying it. You can fight (or engage in your profession) without thinking, having become an expert. You can change your mind, in accord with circumstance, instantly. Habits are easy to change.

If the mind were a bike or a car; You are now so good at your bike and/or car that you can do tricks. You now have real skill.

Path of the Sage - 6;

6. Unimpeded
On the verdant field the beast contentedly lies idling his time away,
No whip is needed now, nor any kind of restraint;
The boy too sits leisurely under the pine tree,
Playing a tune of peace, overflowing with joy.

The mind is now completely trained/domesticated to your specifications. You want to discipline yourself with meditation all day? You can do that and not feel any different. The Ox has almost become completely white signifying it’s almost completely trained now and under your control. Just a little more meditative training to go.

**If the mind were a bike or a car;** You are now so good at your bike and/or car that you can do tricks. You now have skill.

**Path of the Samurai - 7;**

*The seventh picture, called 'the Forgetting of the Cow and the Remembering of the Man,' represents the cowherd looking at the beautiful scenery surrounding his cottage.*
"The cow goes out by day
And comes by night.
I care for her in no way,
But all is right."

One has mastered zen in daily life and can now do all the daily activities and chores that is normal to everyday life as if one were on vacation or if the the mind has no attachments (non-attachment is mastered). You just do what needs to be done.

If the mind were a bike or a car; You can do really good tricks on your bike or in your car. The bike has become an extension of your body as if you and the bike were one.

I obtained not the least thing from unexcelled, complete awakening, and for this very reason it is called “unexcelled, complete awakening”. - The Buddha in the Vajracchedika

Path of the Sage - 7;
7. Laissez Faire

The spring stream in the evening sun flows languidly along the willow-lined bank,

In the hazy atmosphere the meadow grass is seen growing thick;

When hungry he grazes, when thirsty he quaffs, as time sweetly slides,

While the boy on the rock dozes for hours not noticing anything that goes on about him.

The mind has been mastered by fully training it in harsh discipline & much meditation over many years. There is nothing wild left in the mind (signified by the bull/ox having gone completely white). The mind is completely tamed or cleansed of impurities, ‘like a mirror shining bright’.

The body is the Bodhi Tree;
The mind like a bright mirror standing.
Take care to wipe it all the time,
And allow no dust to cling.

Shen-hsiu
**Comparison:** The sage also lets go and flows with life and lives its activities without any thought as the Samurai but have been through allot more specific mental and emotional training around feelings of empathy, compassion and “harmlessness” and thus the zen is experienced as some jacked up state of ecstasy or a combination of peace and contentment that has been ingrained in the mind with hard training so it can remain completely unmoved if that’s what the person chooses while radiating love/compassion (as that’s what the mind has been trained to do as is proper to The path Of The Sage).

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8

The Path of the Samurai- 8;

The eighth picture, called 'the Forgetting of the Cow and of the Man,' represents a large empty circle.

"There's no cowherd nor cow"
Within the pen;
No moon of truth nor clouds
Of doubt in men."

You attain the supreme flow of zen where both you and your mind don’t exist. You just live in the world as if it were an extension of you.

Here you see beyond the categories and labels created by your mind to explain things. Everything just is.

Rather than using the mind to control the mind one just lets go. Without the mind to create a conception of the self, the self no longer exists. Without the mind creating labels to structure observation (the impressions from the senses) there is no external world. The external world has no meaning, it’s an illusion.

If the mind were a bike or a car; You and the car don’t even exist. Well, the analogy breaks down here but the idea is that you transcend both yourself and the world, mentally, i.e. it’s a meditation technique result called dhyana in Yoga and Zen in Japanese.

There never was a Bodhi Tree.
Nor bright mirror standing.
Fundamentally, not one thing exists,
So where is the dust to cling?
Hui-neng

Path of the Sage -8;
8. All Forgotten

The beast all in white now is surrounded by the white clouds,
The man is perfectly at his ease and care-free, so is his companion;
The white clouds penetrated by the moon-light cast their white shadows below,
The white clouds and the bright moon-light-each following its course of movement.

Exactly the same level as the Samurai but with a different training program, i.e. you attain the supreme flow of zen where both you and your mind don’t exist. You just live in the world as if it were an extension of you.

One has completed the mental training of the sage. The emotions that have been ingrained into your mind-body are compassion and discipline in a focused meditative state that is now a permanent living reality allowing the sage to completely emerge in the flow of life or to completely withdraw from it. It doesn’t matter. No more training is needed.
Path of the Samurai - 9;

The ninth picture, called 'the Returning to the Root and Source,' represents a beautiful landscape full of lovely trees in full blossom.

"There is no dyer of hills,  
Yet they are green;  
So flowers smile, and titter rills  
At their own wills."

You consciousness is irrevocable changed by the meditative experience but as come down from your state of meditative ecstasy you discover that nothing has changed. the world is the same as it was before. There is no deep meaning to life or events. No gods or goddesses or angels. Everything just is as it is.
If the mind were a bike or a car; You discover the bike/car exist. Despite disappearing they have returned. You drive/ride when you need to.

The blue mountains are of themselves blue mountains;
The white clouds are of themselves white clouds
Zenrin

Path of the Sage - 9;

9. The Solitary Moon

Nowhere is the beast, and the oxherd is master of his time, 
He is a solitary cloud wafting lightly along the mountain peaks; 
Clapping his hands he sings joyfully in the moon-light, 
But remember a last wall is still left barring his homeward walk.

One has purified the mind with discipline till one is nothing but a sage. One lives in a state of ecstasy and joy as has been trained into him by years of training like an olympic athlete but for meditation.

Sitting quietly, doing nothing, 
Spring comes, and the grass grows by itself. 
Zenrin

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Path of the Samurai - 10;

*The tenth picture, called 'the Going into the City with Open Hands,' represents a smiling monk, gourd in hand, talking with a man who looks like a pedlar.*

"The cares for body make
That body pine;
Let go of cares and thoughts,
O child of mine!"

As human beings we tend to be communal in nature and the full experience of learning comes when we cease to become the student and become the teacher. In other words we complete a natural human cycle of learning a skill and passing it on to the next generation. Once a person learns zen one teaches zen. That is the path.

The Samurai is a part of his community and thus the zen that developed in the Japanese culture is about learning and then
teaching or giving back to the community. So even their professionals, who follow the teachings of zen, will teach zen to their students so they get the true “flow” of their craft and their own individual flavor or doing things can be seen in their work. Once a person learns zen one teaches zen. That is the path.

We have come full circle in this simpler and more natural path of learning about zen, how to dissociate from the world and the labels we impose on it to returning back to the world.

If the mind were a car or bike; Now you teach what you have learned.

Path of the Sage -10;

10. Both Vanished

Both the man and the animal have disappeared, no traces are left,

The bright moon-light is empty and shadowless with all the ten-thousand objects in it;

If anyone should ask the meaning of this,
Behold the lilies of the field and its fresh sweet-scented verdure.

One is now completely emerged in the zen state 24/7 but life goes on as before.

“We eat, excrete, sleep, and get up; This is our world. All we have to do after that-Is to die.”
Ikkyu

People don’t even know there is a sage amongst their midst as the sage lives from his or her original mind which is basically just human nature.

“Entering the forest he moves not the grass; Entering the water he makes not a ripple.”
Zenrin

If the mind were a car or bike; Both bike/car and person no longer exist. The analogy no longer works.

When a monk asks, “What is the buddha?” the master may raise his fist; when he is asked, “What is the ultimate idea of Buddhism?” he may exclaim even before the questioner finishes his sentence15, “A blossoming branch of the plum,” or “The cypress-tree in

15Seeking to interrupt over intellectualization
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The point is that the Answering mind does not “stop” anywhere, but responds straightaway without giving any thought to the felicity of an answer.  

The zen master:

Neither avoids false thoughts nor seeks the true,  
For ignorance is in reality the Buddha Nature,  
An this illusory, changeful, empty body is the Dharmakaya  
Cheng-tao Ke

I obtained not the least thing from unexcelled, complete awakening, and for this very reason it is called “unexcelled, complete awakening”. - The Buddha in the Vajracchedika

In other words, it’s one’s own cultural conceptions that dictate the best path and means for training a new student to zen. In the ancient Chinese system the path of the Sage was taught. One had to purify their mind-body with meditation and culturally accepted forms of asceticism. In Japan they had a feudal system and it was the Samurai that first adopted zen. Since the Samurais ruled Japan in the early days their religion of zen eventually reached every level of the Japanese culture making Japanese Zen the path of the warrior as their training system was about hardening the person for battle and learning to let go and flow in fighting as only zen can teach a person.

16 The Way of Zen by Alan Watts pg 139  
17 Dharmakaya means to transcend the senses & become a Buddha i.e. the poet is saying that the body itself IS transcendence and the Buddha.
Chapter 3

An Introduction To Meditation Techniques

Mastering meditation is key to zen practice. While it refers to only a couple of techniques used traditionally (listed at the end of this chapter), meditation by itself is a rapidly growing field and even includes the fluid meditation styles of Qigong/Chigung spreading through our culture that are not that well known but are very effective as meditation forms. This chapter provides a basic introduction to meditation so you can begin exploring the mind but in a more modern, and faster, way.

There are many types of meditation beginning with simple breathing to using visualizations and images to help focus and/or relax the mind and body. Learning about them makes you become familiar with how the mind works and the better you can do them, the more mastery of your mind you will have. Meditational exercises can help you give your brain a "charge", helping enhance your memory, focus and ability to relax, as touched upon in an article from Time Magazine;
One recent study found evidence that the daily practice of meditation thickened the parts of the brain’s cerebral cortex responsible for decision making, attention and memory. Sara Lazar, a research scientist at Massachusetts General Hospital, presented preliminary results last November that showed that the gray matter of 20 men and women who meditated for just 40 minutes a day was thicker than that of people who did not. Unlike in previous studies focusing on Buddhist monks, the subjects were Boston-area workers practicing a Western-style of meditation called mindfulness or insight meditation. "We showed for the first time that you don't have to do it all day for similar results," says Lazar. What's more, her research suggests that meditation may slow the natural thinning of that section of the cortex that occurs with age.

The forms of meditation Lazar and other scientists are studying involve focusing on an image or sound or on one's breathing. Though deceptively simple, the practice seems to exercise the parts of the brain that help us pay attention. "Attention is the key to learning, and meditation helps you voluntarily regulate it," says Richard Davidson, director of the Laboratory for Affective Neuroscience at the University of Wisconsin. Since 1992, he has collaborated with the Dalai

http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1147167,00.html#ixzz2K4m1s48a
Lama to study the brains of Tibetan monks, whom he calls "the Olympic athletes of meditation." Using caps with electrical sensors placed on the monks' heads, Davidson has picked up unusually powerful gamma waves that are better synchronized in the Tibetans than they are in novice meditators. Studies have linked this gamma-wave synchrony to increased awareness.

The best way to understand meditation is to experience it for yourself and the best way to learn how to do meditation is to practice it regularly. You’ve probably heard that ‘practice makes perfect’ and meditation is no different. Once you have practiced it – regularly – for at least 3 weeks, then it becomes a part of you i.e. accessing the meditative state becomes a habit.

Since the best way to understand what meditation is, is to experience it, let's begin;

**Breathing**

Learning to pay attention to your breathing, taking slow deep inhales and exhales, is the first step to any meditation method. The best way to breathe meditatively is the same way a baby breathes. A full breath in and full breath out with no pause. Doing this simple breathing pattern will re-energize your body.
To practice just put your hand on your belly and breathe in deeply then exhale fully and repeat.

Remember to breathe slow and deep. Fast breathing leads to hyperventilation. Slow, deep breathing is often the solution to hyperventilation as it slows down your body’s metabolism.

By following this you will fill your entire lungs. You don’t actually breath into your stomach but expanding your belly as you breath helps fill your lungs.

"Take a deep breath. Now exhale slowly. You're probably not aware of it, but your heart has just slowed down a bit. Not to worry; it will speed up again when you inhale. This regular-irregular beat is a sign of a healthy interaction between heart and head. Each time you exhale, your brain sends a signal down the vagus nerve to slow the cardiac muscle. With each inhale, the signal gets weaker and your heart revs up. Inhale, beat faster. Exhale, beat slower. It's an ancient rhythm that helps your heart last a lifetime. And it leads to lesson No. 1 in how to manage stress and avoid burnout." from Time Magazine's "The Brain: 6 Lessons for Handling Stress"

**Progressive relaxation for relaxing your body**
Most people who do not practice meditation or yoga don’t know how to properly relax their body.

The easiest way to relax your body quickly is to tense each muscle group (each part of your body) and then relax it. For example: tense your hand then relax, tense your arm then relax, tense your head then relax, same for your neck all the way down to your toes.

By consciously tensing your muscles and relaxing them you are helping your body relax deeper as you are defining tense and relaxation – and indicating to your body how you want to feel i.e. relaxed.

Do this while following the breathing pattern of deep inhales and exhales.

**Creating a peaceful scene for mental relaxation**

This is a simple visualization technique that is commonly used in meditation to enhance mental relaxation.

All you have to do is to imagine something that makes you feel calm and relaxed. I like to imagine myself at the beach, a lake or in a beautiful garden. The key to make this technique work for you is to imagine your chosen scene of relaxation in vivid
detail. For example: if you choose the beach then imagine how the sun would feel, what the wind and sand would feel like, imagine the smell of the ocean and even the seagulls in the distance. Take your time and imagine that you are actually on the beach i.e. make yourself feel like you are on the beach and surrounded by the sights, sounds and smells of the beach. You could also imagine a peaceful lake as in the picture above.

This technique will help you relax your mind and prepare you to meditate deeply.

**Combining the techniques learned so far:**

Breathe deep and slow (1 minute)

Relax your body while breathing deeply.(2 minutes) Continue the deep and slow breathing throughout your practice.

Imagine the peaceful scene.(2 minutes)

That's it.

**Building You Meditation Practice**
1. **Counting Breaths Meditation**: A great way to clear the mind by providing a mental focus. As you breathe in deeply and slowly count to yourself "1". And exhale, feeling the breath leave your body. (Thinking "1 exhale" if you like, or just "1"). Inhale again, saying to yourself, "2". And slowly exhale. and so on. Take 3-7 seconds on the inhale and exhale (depending on your lung capacity), keeping the inhale and exhale time the same and enjoy.

2. **Nature Energy Meditation**: Imagine light from the sun all around you and entering the top of your head and flowing down through your body and exiting your feet, into the earth... all the way to the center of the earth. Pull energy from the center of the earth through your feet and out of your head. Fill your body with energy from the sun on inhale and feel your cells absorb the sun's energy as you exhale. Then inhale energy straight from the center of the earth, into your body and exhale while feeling it absorb into your body. You can modify the technique by imagining roots from your feet deep into the earth. Enjoy the breathing and visualizations for as long as you like.

3. **Mental Rehearsal**: Professional Athletes spend time not only practicing but also mentally rehearsing their moves.¹⁹

¹⁹ For Olympians Seeing In Their Minds Is Believing It Can

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Studies have shown that this mental rehearsal improves actual performance\textsuperscript{20} and sports psychologists teach it all the time\textsuperscript{21}. Think of an activity that you would like to excel at. Spend time visualizing each move exactly how you want to do it. Do this in detail. Then repeat several times before and after trying out the activity you want to improve your skill at and making adjustments as you need to.

4. More Advanced Meditation: "The Empty Mind" or Zen Preparation Meditation

Preparation: The key to this meditation is to focus on your breathing and every time you notice your mind straying to any thought just bring your attention back to your breathing.

Relax your body completely by visualizing each major muscle group relax and let go.

Now do a 4 to 1 count as follows: Take in 4 deep breaths, repeating "4" to yourself as you exhale. Then take 3 deep breaths, repeating "3" when you exhale. Now take 2 deep

\textsuperscript{20}Study link: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20479480

\textsuperscript{21}Peak Endurance Report
breaths, repeating "2" when you exhale. Finally, take 1 deep breath, repeating "1" as you exhale.

Meditation aid: Imagine that you are a passive observer of something very relaxing where there is repetitive motion. For Example: relaxing on the beach, watching the waves go back and forth or just lying in the grass and watching as the clouds move by overhead.

Finally, now you want to cause your mind to go completely blank. As you are focusing on this repetitive movement, begin to envision a blank form. Maybe this blank form will arise as 'gaps' in your thoughts. I.e. there are always gaps in thought, become aware of yours. Allow these gaps to expand. If you get lost in thought and notice, then you are already succeeding in the meditation. As you NOTICED getting lost. . Allow each thought to pass as easily as it came in, expanding your awareness of the 'gaps'.

5. **Golden Bubble Breathing Visualization**: Imagine you are sitting in a golden bubble of pure, light and healing energy. Breathe in this energy with slow deep breaths and luxuriate in it. Great to close a meditation session with.

**Tips:**
Start off the first couple of days learning how to relax deeper and deeper with each session. Use only relaxing imagery and progressive relaxation exercise to relax your body and mind.

Next day add techniques and ideas from affirmations or self-hypnosis techniques and practice them during each meditation session – after you are physically and mentally relaxed.

If you have practiced all your planned techniques or you don't want to work on techniques, then just spend you meditation session doing deep breathing exercises with peaceful visualizations with the proper format of a countdown and countup (see below) to make this the countdown a habitual pattern through reinforcement, so that whenever you do a meditation countdown you can reach your meditative state on command. (makes your meditation more effective/powerful).

NOTE: For all meditation techniques, whether lying down or sitting (sitting in a firm chair is preferred when training to keep form falling asleep), keep your spine straight and arms and legs uncrossed. Easiest position is to sit in a chair with your back straight and your hands, palms down, on your knees or upper thighs.

Recap:

The best way to learn meditation is to practice it regularly. You’ve probably heard that ‘practice makes perfect’ and
meditation is no different. Once you have practiced it – regularly – for at least 2-3 weeks (for each level), then it becomes a part of you i.e. accessing the meditation becomes a habit.

If you follow a specific pattern, when you start and end a meditation or self-hypnosis session, then that little ritual you have created becomes an anchor to attain a deep meditative state fast.

This means that any time you want you can count down and go into a deep meditative state and count up to refresh yourself. It will be a skill that is a part of you like driving a car or riding a bicycle.

**The format for a meditation practice**

1. Follow the basic physical and mental relaxation technique as outlined in the explanation of meditation. When you have done this then do the following:

Say “I will countdown from 10 down to 1 and with each descending number I will relax more and more”.

Then say “10, I am relaxing more and more, 9, I am relaxing more and more…” and so on all the way down to one.
This serves as a mental anchor associating a 10-1 count down with deep relaxation. You could also imagine standing at a staircase of 10 steps and each step down makes you more and more relaxed (in this method imagine taking each step down after you say the number). You could also imagine that you are writing each number on a blackboard and erasing it for the next one. Whatever works best for you.

2. When you have done your 10-1 countdown after your basic relaxation practice you are in a very relaxed state of mind and body. At this point you could set an anchor, such as by using three fingers of either hand (by pressing them together, lightly), or just the thumb and forefinger like a more traditional meditation posture.

You could also do one of the visualization techniques (see recommended list below) to create an even better inner state and anchor that state. You can set the anchor as many times as you like i.e. after each technique you do. This will make your anchor very strong. Later when you need to access calm, confident and happy states of mind all you will have to do is press your three fingers together (triggering your anchor), take a deep breath and imagine your chosen peaceful scene. That's it. Instant stress relief.
3. When you are done relaxing, anchoring, affirmations and visualizations and are ready to end your meditation/self-hypnosis practice do a 1-5 ‘count up’ with the intent of becoming fully alert and re-energized when you are done. This counting also serves as an anchor for you as you get used to becoming fully alert and aware at the end of it.

Start by saying, “I am going to count from 1 to 5 and with each ascending number I will become more alert and aware ready and able to have a wonderful day/ evening”. Then start by saying “1 more alert and aware, 2 feeling refreshed and reenergized (imagine golden energy fill you up and energize you), 3, …5, alert and feeling wonderfully refreshed”. Open your eyes when you say 5 then say the last affirmation are you’re done.

NOTE: For all meditation techniques, whether lying down or sitting (sitting in a firm chair is preferred when training to keep form falling asleep), keep your spine straight and arms and legs uncrossed. Easiest position is to sit in a chair with your back straight and your hands, palms down, on your knees or upper thighs. Do each session 1 to 2 times a day to start and build it to at least 2 times a day on a regular basis (3 times a day if you want an extra boost). Work your way up from 5 minutes to 10 minutes and then stick with at-least 10 minutes or more per session. You could meditate for an hour twice a day if you want.
Binaural Beats for Meditation And Relaxation

Binaural beats is the name of a sound technology that uses two different frequencies of sound (one in each ear) to ‘entrain’ the brain to the frequency desired. Using this technology it is possible to go into deep relaxed meditative states in minutes as opposed to months of practice.

To fully understand what binaural beats are and how you can use them, you need to first understand what ‘entrainment’ is and what we know about our brainwave states.

Entrainment simply means to follow along. When you are listening to a piece of music that you like and you tap or hum to the music you are entrainment to the beat of the music. It has been discovered that your brainwave frequency will imitate the beat or rhythm of the music precisely.

For example sitting on a beach hearing the soft splash of the waves will make you feel relaxed and maybe even sleepy. This is because the rhythm of the waves is low and your brain follows along with that rhythm so you slow down mentally.

In the same way if there is lots of construction going on – even if you are somewhat sheltered from the noise – it will be...
irritating and may even give you a headache. This is because of the irregular rhythms and variations in sound volume. Your brain follows along but it’s following an erratic sound pattern so the experience isn’t soothing.

The whole process of following along with external sound is called entrainment.

Basically, if we are in an environment with fast paced music then we will tend to get more active. While if we are surrounded by slow music there will be a corresponding slow down in our mental activity. Of course, this is assuming you are listening to the music or its so loud that you can’t ignore it and are going with the flow.

In other words, your brain responds to external stimuli by following along. So if you hear a regular beat then the brain will follow along after a short while i.e. it will entrain itself from it’s current frequency to the one in its environment. This is called the “frequency following response”.

The next thing you need to understand to know how binaural beats can help you concerns what we know about brainwave frequencies and how they affect your mind and body.

What scientists have discovered about brainwave frequencies using EEG measurements devices is that certain types of
behaviors correspond to certain brainwave frequencies. For example; if you are asleep your brainwave frequency will be below 4 hertz. If you are exercising or playing a sport your brainwave frequency will be above 14 hertz. If you are relaxing then it will be between 10 and 14 hertz. Meditation states also occur around 7 hertz to 14 hertz.

Brain Frequency distribution:

40 hertz: Gamma Waves: Active mentally, intense emotions such as anger of joy, solving problems

13 - 40 hertz: Beta Waves- Active concentration, general active lifestyle

7 - 13 hertz: Alpha Waves- Relaxed state, light meditation level, perfect for stress relief

4 - 7 hertz: Theta Waves-Deep meditation, REM sleep, dreams

0 - 3 hertz: Delta Waves- Deep dreamless sleep

The interesting part is that not only will these activities lead to the corresponding brainwave state but you can also induce the brainwave frequency to get to the optimal mental state for the activity you want to engage in. For example if you want to relax you can play some white noise and the sound of a
babbling brook and it will help you relax to a level below 14 hertz.

You can do this even more precisely using the sound technology of binaural beats.

You can experience and utilize binaural beats for yourself at anytime using a free software program called Brainwave Generator.

You can download it here: http://www.bwgen.com

Simply install the software and read the help menu after you have installed it to get an idea of how to use it.

**Benefits of Using Alpha**

Helps the body and mind relax very quickly.

Enhances creativity.

Enhances learning.

It helps synchronize your left and right hemispheres bringing more of your brain ‘on-line’, making this very good for deep thinking.

With some practice you can enter and use Alpha whenever you like.

Alpha helps create an overall healthy state of mind and body.

*Note: Signs of deep relaxation...*
When you are deeply relaxed your tear ducts may also relax. In fact, you relax deeply enough your tear ducts WILL relax and a tear or two... or with some people even a stream of tears is common. As you become more alert after a session your tear ducts will stop naturally. (basically if you tear up while feeling all relaxed and good... that's normal!)

Note: Also, Sometimes when your muscles release tension it may jerk. I have seen some overly stressed out (or wound up) individuals literally jump with the force of the release of tension in a muscle. Generally, if you do have a a tension release where your muscles "jump" it's followed by even deeper relaxation than before.

"The link between alpha and meditative states seems real enough. According to Psychologist Joe Kamiya of San Francisco's Langley Porter Neuropsychiatric Institute, an early pioneer in the field, Zen masters produce more alpha when they are meditating than when they are not, and they are quick to learn how to switch it on and off. Artists, musicians and athletes are also prolific alpha producers; so are many introspective and intuitive persons, and so was Albert Einstein. Alpha researchers report that subjects enjoy what Psychologist Lester Fehmi of the State University of New York at Stony Brook calls the "subtle and ineffable" alpha experience. Its pleasure, theorizes Kamiya, may come from the fact that alpha "represents something like letting go of..."
9 More Meditations Worth Practicing

1 Breathing In Colors: Sit in a comfortable position with your back straight. Then choose a color. You can pick any color you like, from blue, to gold, to red. Breathe in each color till it feels like your body and mind are filled with the color. Continue to meditate on colors that make you feel wonderful or relaxed or peaceful.

2 Your Special Place: Pick a place you feel safe and comfortable. Visualize this place clearly and step in, following the steps in Exercise 10. Spend some time meditating as if you are actually there.

3 A Deep Pond: Imagine a deep blue pond. Notice some fish below the surface darting around. Take a silver coin from your pocket and toss it into the center of the pond. As the coin slowly drifts down allow yourself to relax.

4 Walking Meditation: While walking start becoming aware of your breath. Expand this awareness to include the feel of the clothes on your body and the feel of your feet on the ground. While continuing your awareness of your breath and body, become aware of the place you are walking and the scenery around you. Finally, being aware of breath, body and surroundings add the huge dome of the sky above you and the
earth below you. Breathe deeply and relish this expanded sense of awareness.

5 Eating Meditation: It helps to be grateful before you eat as this prepares your mind to enjoy the meal. Take each bite consciously and enjoy the taste and texture. Chew slowly and take your time.

6 Candle Flame Meditation: Light a candle and sit comfortably in front of it. Focus only on the flame allowing any thoughts arising to just pass by. Watch how the candle dances. Then close your eyes and continue to focus on the flame in your minds eye. If you lose the image open your eyes and gaze at the candle again. If you like you can imagine any thought arising to go and burn up in the flame. This will help you attain a focused meditative state.

7 Breathing In A Smell: Smell is very important to us and easily alters our internal states. Pick a flower or food that smells extremely good to you. Breath in this smell deeply and slowly. Take your time enjoying the feeling of the smell "fill" your body.

8 Mirror Meditation: Get a mirror and sit comfortably in front of it. Look into your eyes and repeat any affirmation you would like to meditate on. For example, "I feel relaxed" or "I am confident" and so on.

9. Smile Meditation: Studies have shown that a genuine smile releases endorphins into your bloodstream, relieving stress and even rejuvenating your entire mind and body. The smile meditation is easy to do and very effective at feeling really
good, quickly. Think of something funny to start you smiling. It could be an event, a movie, a cute baby or even a puppy. Anything to bring a good smile on your face. Imagine this smile spreading over your face, down your neck and into your body. Meditate on the smile till your whole body begins to feel like a big smile.:-)

Two traditional meditation techniques from *The Religion Of The Samurai* used to attain dhayana (zen):

Zazen, or the Sitting in Meditation.--Habit comes out of practice, and forms character by degrees, and eventually works out destiny. Therefore we must practically sow optimism, and habitually nourish it in order to reap the blissful fruit of Enlightenment. The sole means of securing mental calmness is the practice of Zazen, or the sitting in Meditation. This method was known in India as Yoga as early as the Upanisad period, and developed by the followers of the Yoga system. But Buddhists sharply distinguished Zazen from Yoga, and have the method peculiar to themselves. Kei-zan describes the method to the following effect: 'Secure a quiet room neither extremely light nor extremely dark, neither very warm nor very cold, a room, if you can, in the Buddhist temple located in a beautiful mountainous district. You should not practise Zazen in a place where a conflagration or a flood or robbers may be likely to disturb you, nor should you sit in a place close by the sea or drinking-shops or brothel-houses, or the houses of widows and of maidens or buildings for music, nor should

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22 The Religion of the Samurai, by Kaiten Nukariya, [1913] - Chapter 8

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you live in close proximity to the place frequented by kings, ministers, powerful statesmen, ambitious or insincere persons. You must not sit in Meditation in a windy or very high place lest you should get ill. Be sure not to let the wind or smoke get into your room, not to expose it to rain and storm. Keep your room clean. Keep it not too light by day nor too dark by night. Keep it warm in winter and cool in summer. Do not sit leaning against a wall, or a chair, or a screen. You must not wear soiled clothes or beautiful clothes, for the former are the cause of illness, while the latter the cause of attachment. Avoid the Three Insufficiencies—that is to say, insufficient clothes, insufficient food, and insufficient sleep. Abstain from all sorts of uncooked or hard or spoiled or unclean food, and also from very delicious dishes, because the former cause troubles in your alimentary canal, while the latter cause you to covet after diet. Eat and drink just to appease your hunger and thirst, never mind whether the food be tasty or not. Take your meals regularly and punctually, and never sit in Meditation immediately after any meal. Do not practise Dhyana soon after you have taken a heavy dinner, lest you should get sick thereby. Sesame, barley, corn, potatoes, milk, and the like are the best material for your food. Frequently wash your eyes, face, hands, and feet, and keep them cool and clean.

'There are two postures in Zazen—that is to say, the crossed-leg sitting, and the half crossed-leg sitting. Seat yourself on a thick cushion, putting it right under your haunch. Keep your body so erect that the tip of the nose and the navel are in one perpendicular line, and both ears and shoulders are in the same plane. Then place the right foot upon the left thigh, the left foot on the right thigh, so as the legs come across each other. Next put your right hand with the palm upward on the
left foot, and your left hand on the right palm with the tops of both the thumbs touching each other. This is the posture called the crossed-leg sitting. You may simply place the left foot upon the right thigh, the position of the hands being the same as in the cross-legged sitting. This posture is named the half crossed-leg sitting.

'Do not shut your eyes, keep them always open during whole Meditation. Do not breathe through the mouth; press your tongue against the roof of the mouth, putting the upper lips and teeth together with the lower. Swell your abdomen so as to hold the breath in the belly; breathe rhythmically through the nose, keeping a measured time for inspiration and expiration. Count for some time either the inspiring or the expiring breaths from one to ten, then beginning with one again. Concentrate your attention on your breaths going in and out as if you are the sentinel standing at the gate of the nostrils. If you do some mistake in counting, or be forgetful of the breath, it is evident that your mind is distracted.'

Chwang Tsz seems to have noticed that the harmony of breathing is typical of the harmony of mind, since he says: "The true men of old did not dream when they slept. Their breathing came deep and silently. The breathing of true men comes (even) from his heels, while men generally breathe (only) from their throats." At any rate, the counting of breaths is an expedient for calming down of mind, and elaborate rules are given in the Zen Sutra, but Chinese and Japanese Zen masters do not lay so much stress on this point as Indian teachers.
The Breathing Exercise of the Yogi.--Breathing exercise is one of the practices of Yoga, and somewhat similar in its method and end to those of Zen. We quote here Yogi Ramacharaka to show how modern Yogis practise it: "(1) Stand or sit erect. Breathing through the nostrils, inhale steadily, first filling the lower part of the lungs, which is accomplished by bringing into play the diaphragm, which, descending, exerts a gentle pressure on the abdominal organs, pushing forward the front walls of the abdomen. Then fill the middle part of the lungs, pushing out the lower ribs, breastbone, and chest. Then fill the higher portion of the lungs, protruding the upper chest, thus lifting the chest, including the upper six or seven pairs of ribs. In the final movement the lower part of the abdomen will be slightly drawn in, which movement gives the lungs a support, and also helps to fill the highest part of the lungs. At the first reading it may appear that this breath consists of three distinct movements. This, however, is not the correct idea. The inhalation is continuous, the entire chest cavity from the lower diaphragm to the highest point of the chest in the region of the collar-bone being expanded with a uniform movement. Avoid a jerking series of inhalations, and strive to attain a steady, continuous action. Practice will soon overcome the tendency to divide the inhalation into three movements, and will result in a uniform continuous breath. You will be able to complete the inhalation in a couple of seconds after a little practice. (2) Retain the breath a few seconds. (3) Exhale quite slowly, holding the chest in a firm position, and drawing the abdomen in a little and lifting it upward slowly as the air leaves the lungs. When the air is entirely exhaled, relax the chest and abdomen. A little practice will render this part of exercise easy, and the movement once acquired will be afterwards performed almost automatically."
Chapter 4

Commentary On A Few Chapters Of The Tao Te Ching

Bodhidharma taught a taoistic version of zen. Alan Watts, a student of D.T.Suzuki, called The Tao Te Ching “the worlds oldest poem”. This chapter has commentary on a few selection from the Tao Te Ching from the Zen buddhist perspective, to show that the Tao Te Ching contained both models of zen, from sage to warrior.

Zen Buddhist translation by DTS (D.T. Suzuki)²³;

1. Reason’s Realization.²⁴


24 DTSuzuki: The phrase 'yiu ming, "having name" (or simply ming, "name") means that which the definition of a name involves, and as such the term represents the actualized types of things. However wu ming, "not name" or "the Unnamable," corresponds to Plato's conception of the prototype of things before they have been actualized. Lao-tze speaks with reverence of the Unnamable, which closely corresponds to the "Ineffable" of Western mystics.

The words "these two things" apparently refer to the Unnamable and the Namable.

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1. The Reason that can be reasoned is not the eternal Reason. The name that can be named is not the eternal Name. The Unnamable is of heaven and earth the beginning. The Namable becomes of the ten thousand things the mother.

Therefore it is said:

2. "He who desireless is found
The spiritual of the world will sound.
But he who by desire is bound
Sees the mere shell of things around."

3. These two things are the same in source but different in name. Their sameness is called a mystery. Indeed, it is the mystery of mysteries. Of all spirituality it is the door.

Commentary;

1. D.T. Suzuki translates “Tao” as Reason (Reason being another way of saying “Zen”). The idea here is that if you can think about reason then you are using the mind to think about the mind and thus you aren't living directly from your mind. In other words, using your reasoning faculty to think about

What Lao-tze calls "the Name" or "the Namable" is in Spinoza's language *natura naturata*, while "the Unnamable" is *natura naturans*. In either system the two are one; they are two aspects of one and the same thing which in Lao-tze's taoism is the Tao and in Spinoza's cosmotheism is God as the eternal substance. [See also Chapters 32 and 41]
reasoning means you aren't living directly from your reasoning part of your (mind).

Said another way, ‘The Tao that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Tao.’ or the reasoning ability that you can think about isn’t your true direct experiencing faculty of Reason that is the direct perception of the mind without any sort of introspection.

If the mind can be used to describe the mind then you are not in unitive consciousness (the zen state). So if you can name something then you are living out of your thinking ability and are not in the zen state of direct experience. Thus, ‘The name that can be named is not the eternal Name’

Finally, since naming something puts a person in a mental state of categorizing the world around you so you can describe it, i.e. not naming something means everything just is as it is while naming it you separate an object from everything else by giving it a category or label for the object to fit in. Thus a tree that was just an object connected to earth and air can now be separated into 3 different things, i.e. tree, earth and air.

So by naming things and putting them in categories you have created knowledge or language. In other words, ‘The Namable becomes of the ten thousand things the mother.’

Note: The 10,000 things is the buddhist way of saying the infinite number of objects and categories that exist once you start naming stuff.
2. Within the poem like chapter there is a rhyming verse set which explains the basic yogic and zen idea of dhayana or learning to maintain your awareness free of attachment to things around you.

Literally its; The person who can maintain a desireless state of non-attachment will reach the height of spirituality (as defined by ancient zen and taoist masters). On the flip side, if you are attached to the world around you you will see the world in a superficial way i.e. you will see only it’s “shell” or outer appearance.

The idea here is expressed by this story;

*There was a farmer whose horse ran away. All his neighbors came by to say how sorry they were at his misfortune. All he said was, "We shall see". Next, his horse returns fallen by a group of wild horses. His neighbors congratulate on his good fortune and the farmer once again says, "We shall see". Then his son falls off the same horse and breaks his leg. The neighbors once again exclaim at his misfortune and once again he says, "We shall see". In a few days the army comes by collecting young men for a war. The farmer's son was ignored as his leg was broken. His neighbors congratulate him and all he says is, "We shall see".*

Notice that in this story every event of the day or week did not make the farmer giddy with happiness or depressed at having a bad day because he wasn’t attached to the world through desire, i.e. he existed in a state of non-attachment.
3. Here is the most amazing statement, i.e. that both of the statements (1 & 2) are two different techniques for the same goal.

In the first statement Lao Tzu described the simple zen way of seeing things as I outlined in my voluminous introduction to zen, i.e. simply by shutting of conception you can see beyond conception and without self-reflexive thought (unitive consciousness). In the second statement he explains that to see beyond the distractions which can take you away from unitive consciousness as described in the simple first technique it to learn and practice non-attachment (as is at the foundation of zen buddhism and yoga itself).

So, together, these two techniques open the door to the zen state of being, i.e. ‘of all spirituality it is the door’.

**Standard translation by James Legge:**

1. *The Tao that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Tao. The name that can be named is not the enduring and unchanging name. (Conceived of as) having no name, it is the Originator of heaven and earth; (conceived of as) having a name, it is the Mother of all things.*

2. *Always without desire we must be found, If its deep mystery we would sound; But if desire always within us be, Its outer fringe is all that we shall see.*
3. Under these two aspects, it is really the same; but as development takes place, it receives the different names. Together we call them the Mystery. Where the Mystery is the deepest is the gate of all that is subtle and wonderful.

2. Self-Culture.  

1. Everywhere it is obvious that if beauty makes a display of beauty, it is sheer ugliness. It is obvious that if goodness makes a display of goodness, it is sheer badness. For;

2. "To be and not to be are mutually conditioned.

25 DT Suzuki: The first sentence reads literally, "Under the heavens [i.e., all over the world, or everywhere] all know [i.e., it is obvious], if beauty acts beauty it is only ugliness." The verb "acts" is to be taken in the same sense as it is used in English, viz., "making a display or show of." We deem our present rendering an improvement on our former version.

According to a notion of the early Christians the devil would like to play the part of God, as Tertullian says, Satanas affectat sacramenta Dei. On Lao-tze's theory the nature of the devil consists exactly in the attempt of acting the part of God.

The close interrelation of goodness with badness and of beauty with ugliness suggests the quotation on opposites. It sets forth the coexistence of contrasts, and their mutual dependence is more obvious to the Chinese than to other nations, because in their word-combinations they use compounds of contrasts to denote what is common in both. Thus a combination of the words "to be" and "not to be" means the struggle for life, or the bread question; "the high and the low" means altitude; "much and little" means quantity, etc. But what originally seems to have been the trivial observation of a grammar-school teacher acquires a philosophical meaning when commented upon by Lao-tze.
The difficult, the easy, are mutually definitioned.  
The long, the short, are mutually exhibitioned.  
Above, below, are mutually cognitioned.  
The sound, the voice, are mutually coalitioned.  
Before and after are mutually positioned."

3. Therefore

The holy man abides by non-assertion in his affairs and conveys by silence his instruction. When the ten thousand things arise, verily, he refuses them not. He quickens but owns not. He acts but claims not. Merit he accomplishes, but he does not dwell on it.

"Since he does not dwell on it
It will never leave him."

Commentary:

1. The idea here is that pride of showing off can turn something beautiful into something ugly. For example; A girl who knows she is beautiful and makes a display of her beauty displays ugliness in the pride she displays. (An example that I think applies to the culture the Tao te Ching was written in if not ours). Seen from another angle, if you know what beauty is then you have an idea of what ugliness is as well as you wouldn’t be able to know something is beautiful without being able to label something else as ugly.

This same idea also applies to being good or acts of goodness which is probably more understandable to western/abrahamic
cultures. If someone pretends to be humble then it isn’t humbleness but pride. If someone pretends to be good when they are not they are hypocrites. Conversely, it can be seen as ‘if you can perceive good then you already have an understanding of what evil is or you wouldn’t have even been able to perceive good in the first place’.

2. This part is rhyming poetry and goes something like this; You know that something exists by having an idea of what non-existence might be like. You know something is difficult because you know what easy is. You know something is long because you know what short is. That fact that you can define something as “up” or “down” means you have these opposite concepts in your head to begin with. Even music attains the ability to sound good by the contrast between the different notes thereby, together, creating a melody. You know what is before you by defining something as being after the said conception.

In other words, this sounds very much like one of Socrates dialogues in its content. The idea that one can only know something is long relative to something that is short and these are all ideas one has in their heads to define absolutes which don’t exist in nature without our additional labeling. Ideas from Plato’s dialogues in the Tao Te Ching written roughly the same time? Doesn’t seem that far fetched to me. The people in the ancient world seemed to travel quite a bit.

3. Since the world doesn’t exist in absolutes, the Sage is content with a non-authoritative (or more maternal) approach to dealing with daily affairs. Allowing people to go about their business and leading by example where he/she can.
When the many distractions of the world arise the Sage doesn’t refuse or ignore them nor does he seek them out. He does what needs to be done without laying claim to the fruits of his actions. He does “good” deeds but he doesn’t care about that as it was just something that had to be done. Since he doesn't try and own it, or hold on to it, whatever he did is with him always and just adds to his skill set.

The idea here is that the Sage learns to be IN the world but not OF it and can thus flow with the ways of the world in his culture.

**Standard translation;**

1. All in the world know the beauty of the beautiful, and in doing this they have (the idea of) what ugliness is; they all know the skill of the skilful, and in doing this they have (the idea of) what the want of skill is.

2. So it is that existence and non-existence give birth the one to (the idea of) the other; that difficulty and ease produce the one (the idea of) the other; that length and shortness fashion out the one the figure of the other; that (the ideas of) height and lowness arise from the contrast of the one with the other; that the musical notes and tones become harmonious through the relation of one with another; and that being before and behind give the idea of one following another.

3. Therefore the sage manages affairs without doing anything, and conveys his instructions without the use of speech.
All things spring up, and there is not one which declines to show itself; they grow, and there is no claim made for their ownership; they go through their processes, and there is no expectation (of a reward for the results). The work is accomplished, and there is no resting in it (as an achievement).

The work is done, but how no one can see; 'Tis this that makes the power not cease to be.

3. Keeping The People Quiet

26 DT Suzuki: In former editions we have translated the verb shang by its common meaning "to exalt," but here it is obviously a reflex verb meaning "to exalt oneself" or "to brag, to boast."

The word fu means literally "stomach" or "the interior," but it may also mean "soul," for according to Chinese ideas the soul has its seat in the stomach.

The idea that the belly is the noblest part of the body where tender sentiments dwell was quite common among early peoples. Thus, e. g. the Hebrew rakhamim, [רַחֲמִים] which originally means "entrails," is used in the sense of "compassion" and "love." In Japan that death was considered most worthy in which the first attack upon life was made upon the seat of the properly psychic faculties; therefore the victim of hara-kiri rips open his belly and is then beheaded by his best friend so as to shorten the pain of death. It is, however, quite probable that Lao-tze in this connection really means what he literally says, viz., that the holy man, when he governs, empties the people's hearts of desires, but takes care of their bodily wants, i. e., "fills their stomachs and strengthens their bones."

The word kuh might be translated (as in former editions) "backbone," but in the original it reads "bones." To make a man strong-boned means to render him steady in character. I prefer to translate the passage literally in all its roughness and will leave the interpretation of it to the reader.
1. Not boasting of one's worth forestalls people's envy. Not prizing treasures difficult to obtain keeps people from committing theft.

2. Not contemplating what kindles desire keeps the heart unconfused.

3. Therefore the holy man when he governs empties the people's hearts but fills their stomachs. He weakens their ambition but strengthens their bones. Always he keeps the people unsophisticated and without desire. He causes that the crafty do not dare to act. When he acts with non-assertion there is nothing ungoverned.

Commentary;

Here is a psychological theory of how to manage a society. You may notice the very tribal like values the poet advocates. Makes me think of this as a philosophical and poetical treatise on living in a world of zen like the ancestors who lived in the tribal and feudal days when society was less violent and corrupt as the hierarchical structures that emerge in an agricultural society of monarchy hadn’t yet emerged. In Lao Tzu’s day the agricultural town and it’s resulting ownership of land and accumulation of wealth amongst a few people led to a society fueled by greed and the whims of a few people at the very top of society. As a result people would often reminisce about the old ways. In some ways that’s what this treatise is beginning to remind me of. To get an idea of how things were in a tribal community and how things are in an agricultural community, consider this table;
The following table shows the basic differences in behavior between Takers (agriculturists) and Leavers (Tribal/Primitive societies) as described in Daniel Quinn’s book *My Ishmael*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Takers (Agriculturists)</th>
<th>Leavers (Tribal Societies)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Believe only their way is right</td>
<td>Don't believe only their way is right - it's right for them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The world would be better if people were better</td>
<td>You don't need to improve people to make their system work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can't develop a lifestyle that works (sustainable and inherited)</td>
<td>Lived in a working lifestyle for 100's of thousands of years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything is based on utopian ideals (government, school etc. assumes a type of person which is evolved)</td>
<td>Based on human nature and tradition with years of evolution of their particular tribal law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force others to follow their way - believe their way is best</td>
<td>Believe their way is best for them, others can live their own way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annihilate others in war</td>
<td>Fight to show their metal and be unpredictable - not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get products and give products</td>
<td>Get support and give support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialization; smaller and smaller family units till the breakup of nuclear family is complete</td>
<td>Complete cradle to grave support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laws prohibiting stuff - people know laws will be broken and this divided society into law breakers and upright citizens</td>
<td>No laws prohibiting as it doesn't take into account that humans will break laws - so the laws are to minimize the effects of damage to society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribal security exchanged for money - a kind of substitute for the sense of tribal community that our species evolved with for 10,000s of thousands of years.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So when looking at what Lao Tzu is talking about when he starts outlining his ideas of how to manage a society you have to keep in mind that this is his theory of how to return to a
more human friendly tribal type culture where people are just people. The poet is getting poetic.

With that introduction, let's look at the verses again;

1. By not placing one person above another person you can’t create society crippling envy. Not placing too much value on objects keeps them from being seen as so valuable that they bestow status of wealth on someone thus making it an object of envy or jealousy which can lead to theft.

2. Not thinking about the 10 thousand things (distractions) you keep the head clear.

3. Thus the Sage ruler (or “Philosopher King” if looking at it using Plato’s words) governs the people by keeping them satisfied equally. He discourages competition that would result in the perception of any person being better than anyone else but keep the population healthy and strong. He guides the people to practice non-attachment so that they can control thier desires and not be led by them. All the while helping people live fully engaged in daily life with full stomachs and happy hearts. Thus there is no reason for people to be clever or crafty in deception as it wouldn’t be needed in such an environment (though there would probably always be trouble makers of some sort, but by this logic the trouble makers would be a part of the tao and thus good/normal).

The key to a well functioning society is to have a governor so skilled at government that through a non-assertive (maternal) approach, everything that needs to get done, gets done without the governor having appeared to have done anything.
Standard translation:

1. Not to value and employ men of superior ability is the way to keep the people from rivalry among themselves; not to prize articles which are difficult to procure is the way to keep them from becoming thieves; not to show them what is likely to excite their desires is the way to keep their minds from disorder.

2. Therefore the sage, in the exercise of his government, empties their minds, fills their bellies, weakens their wills, and strengthens their bones.

3. He constantly (tries to) keep them without knowledge and without desire, and where there are those who have knowledge, to keep them from presuming to act (on it). When there is this abstinence from action, good order is universal.

4. Sourceless.27

27 DT Suzuki: The word tsung,"arch-father," translates a Chinese term which means "patriarch, or first ancestor, founder of the family," and is frequently used with reference to Shang Ti, the Lord on High, in the sense of God.

The word ch’an, "dust," is a Buddhist term which means the worry of worldliness, and it is possible that this usage antedates Buddhism and that the word was current in the same sense in the time of Lao-tze. If that be so, if ch’an means the troubles of life, the travailing of the world, we offer the following alternate translation of the verse in which the word occurs:

"It will blunt its own sharpness,  
Will its tangles unravel;  

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1. **Reason is empty, but its use is inexhaustible. In its profundity, verily, it resembleth the arch-father of the ten thousand things.**

2. "**It will blunt its own sharpness,**
   *Will its tangles adjust;*
   *It will dim its own radiance*
   *And be one with its dust."

3. **Oh, how calm it seems to remain! I know not whose son it is. Apparently even the Lord it precedes.**

**Commentary:**

1. Reason or the *Original Mind* is obviously empty. It doesn’t contain anything yet it can perceive everything and name everything thereby creating the ‘10,000 things’. From the mind all concepts are created and all things are defined. Since Tao is defined as the Path of Zen, the poet is saying, ‘like the Mind, the Tao (path of the mind,) is empty as it’s not matter but it can define matter into categories making it useful and explainable thus it can be seen as the source of all conceptions and things. The idea being that if you have no conceptions or ideas of things then everything just exists as it is without definition. That is the Tao, i.e. everything just flowing with life with no definition attached to it.

   **It will dim its own radiance**
   **And conform to its travail."

The same holds good in Chapter 56, where the same verse is quoted.
2. This verse describes the Mind (Reason) as something which dims (becomes less sharp with age) and then it dissolves into nothingness at death.

3. The Original Mind by itself is peaceful and calm and since all conceptions arise from the mind itself the Mind precedes everything (God and the angels etc. are seen as mentally created things i.e. fantasy or imagination at work).

This chapter seems to try and define the Mind/Tao as other zen practitioners do in their explanations to prepare a person to understand and practice zen. Only here it’s done in poetic form and long before the word zen even came into use.

What the poet seems to be doing is describing Samadhi as an aspect of the Tao, i.e. the result of practicing the meditation technique called dhayana in yoga where are definitions are dissolved to keep the mind silent and focused (or unfocused) and empty of all thought. After being empty of all thought to think again and to define things into categories is like creating the world from scratch. In other words, it’s like ‘creating the 10,000 things’.

**Standard translation;**

1. *The Tao is (like) the emptiness of a vessel; and in our employment of it we must be on our guard against all fullness. How deep and unfathomable it is, as if it were the Honoured Ancestor of all things!*
2. We should blunt our sharp points, and unravel the complications of things; we should atemper our brightness, and bring ourselves into agreement with the obscurity of others. How pure and still the Tao is, as if it would ever so continue!

3. I do not know whose son it is. It might appear to have been before God.

This analysis should be enough to show that The Tao Te Ching is the world's oldest Zen poem explaining what it’s like to be a sage. Now lets see what advice it has for warriors;

Tao Te Ching’s Advice For Warriors

The Tao Te Ching begins with advice for warriors in Chapter 67 verse 5 as, “the compassionate will in attack be victorious, and in defence firm. Heaven when about to save one will with compassion protect him.” i.e. the poet advocates a way of compassion for the warrior.

The standard translation comes out roughly as;

Gentleness is sure to be victorious even in battle, and firmly to maintain its ground. Heaven will save its possessor, by his (very) gentleness protecting him.

With such a belief it’s no wonder martial arts such as Aikido have emerged that seek to win a fight without hurting the opponent where possible and if not then not killing him where possible. The idea of the Sage Warrior amongst the Samurai
with their elaborate King Arthur & The Knights of the Round Table like code of conduct can also be attributed to inspiration from this text.

The following are the chapters outlining the basics of the warrior path of zen followed by other related chapters to show how that the sage of the Tao Te Ching considered and wrote about both the sage and warrior paths of zen;

68. Complying With Heaven

1. He who excels as a warrior is not warlike. He who excels as a fighter is not wrathful. He who excels in conquering the enemy does not strive. He who excels in employing men is lowly.

2. This is called the virtue of not-striving. This is called utilizing men's ability. This is called complying with heaven-since olden times the highest.

Commentary:

1. The best warrior is not warlike, i.e. he doesn’t like war but fights only if he absolutely has to. One he decides to fight he fights to win but not out of anger or vengeance. The person who truly defeats his enemy does so naturally without pushing for their way. The one who is best is getting good service from people working for him/her is a person who is humble.

2. This is the zen way of fighting the enemy. You don’t fight the enemy with passion but with tactics when and where
appropriate and then you accept the results. Striving is the continuous seeking after results when you know not what will work. Such striving is often pointless like looking for a particular grain of sand on a beach. This method of fighting without passion is so ancient is goes back as far as we can imagine.

Standard Translation;

He who in (Tao's) wars has skill
Assumes no martial port;
He who fights with most good will
To rage makes no resort.
He who vanquishes yet still
Keeps from his foes apart;
He whose hests men most fulfil
Yet humbly plies his art.

Thus we say, 'He ne'er contends,
And therein is his might.'
Thus we say, 'Men's wills he bends,
That they with him unite.'
Thus we say, 'Like Heaven's his ends,
No sage of old more bright.'

69. The Function Of The Mysterious

1. A military expert used to say: 'I dare not act as host [who takes the initiative] but act as guest [with reserve]. I dare not advance an inch, but I withdraw a foot.'
2. This is called marching without marching, threatening without arms, charging without hostility, seizing without weapons.

3. No greater misfortune than making light of the enemy! When we make light of the enemy, it is almost as though we had lost our treasure—[compassion].

4. Thus, if matched armies encounter one another, the one who does so in sorrow is sure to conquer.

Commentary:

1. An expert war master doesn’t seek to advance every foot possible but to retreat and let the enemy calm down. Having the most territory isn’t the same as having the most wealth or the best trade wealth. A humble approach to foreign relations is what is advised here.

2. This way a true warrior keeps balance within his army is by preparing them to fight in the right way mentally and winning through positive propaganda alone.

3. Never underestimate the enemy. Always put in careful thought and preparation when dealing with the enemy.

4. Here the poet says the one that engages in a war not in fear or anger or vengeance or greed but with sorrow (implying this is a duty that must be done and is being done as a last resort) is the one that will win.
A master of the art of war has said, 'I do not dare to be the host (to commence the war); I prefer to be the guest (to act on the defensive). I do not dare to advance an inch; I prefer to retire a foot.' This is called marshalling the ranks where there are no ranks; baring the arms (to fight) where there are no arms to bare; grasping the weapon where there is no weapon to grasp; advancing against the enemy where there is no enemy.

There is no calamity greater than lightly engaging in war. To do that is near losing (the gentleness) which is so precious. Thus it is that when opposing weapons are (actually) crossed, he who deplores (the situation) conquers.

War Is Always A Last Resort

31. Quelling War

1. Even victorious arms are unblest among tools, and people had better shun them. Therefore he who has Reason does not rely on them.

2. The superior man when residing at home honors the left. When using arms, he honors the right.

3. Arms are unblest among tools and not the superior man's tools. Only when it is unavoidable he uses them. Peace and quietude he holdeth high.
4. He conquers but rejoices not. Rejoicing at a conquest means to enjoy the slaughter of men. He who enjoys the slaughter of men will most assuredly not obtain his will in the empire.

Commentary:

1. Weapons are one of the worst of man’s inventions. “It would be best if we had never invented a weapon” the poet laments. So zen/tao doesn’t depend upon weapons.

2. This is an interesting way of arranging the concepts of peace and war. I’m sure that left’s aversion to weapons and the right propensity for war in our time is just a coincidence. That said, the fact that a Taoist when peaceful is of ‘the left side’ and when functioning as a warrior is of ‘the right side’ is something that should be easily understandable by an American audience.

3. Here the poet makes it clear that while weapons are the worst inventions of man and are not used by the “Superior” man (Taoist/zen practitioner), if there is no other choice than using weapons (going to war/fighting) is fine. You don’t go out hunting a tiger for the sake of hunting it but if attacked or under threat by a tiger then you have to take up arms to not only repel it but to kill it so it doesn’t strike/eat someone else. Same applies to other situations in everyday life or once in a lifetime wars/battles.

4. A zenist who fights, who has to fight, does so with no joy in
what he has to do. If a person enjoys killing then he reveals a flaw in his character. A person who enjoys killing can’t build an empire that lasts because his own attitude of enjoyment in death comes back to get him.

**Standard Translation:**

Now arms, however beautiful, are instruments of evil omen, hateful, it may be said, to all creatures. Therefore they who have the Tao do not like to employ them.

The superior man ordinarily considers the left hand the most honourable place, but in time of war the right hand. Those sharp weapons are instruments of evil omen, and not the instruments of the superior man;--he uses them only on the compulsion of necessity. Calm and repose are what he prizes; victory (by force of arms) is to him undesirable. To consider this desirable would be to delight in the slaughter of men; and he who delights in the slaughter of men cannot get his will in the kingdom.

On occasions of festivity to be on the left hand is the prized position; on occasions of mourning, the right hand. The second in command of the army has his place on the left; the general commanding in chief has his on the right;--his place, that is, is assigned to him as in the rites of mourning. He who has killed multitudes of men should weep for them with the bitterest grief; and the victor in battle has his place (rightly) according to those rites.
Winning the War

67. The Three Treasures

1. All in the world call me great; but I resemble the unlikely. Now a man is great only because he resembles the unlikely. Did he resemble the likely, how lasting, indeed, would his mediocrity be!

2. I have three treasures which I cherish and prize. The first is called compassion. The second is called economy. The third is called not daring to come to the front in the world.

3. The compassionate can be brave; the economical can be generous; those who dare not come to the front in the world can become perfect as chief vessels.

4. Now, if people discard compassion and are brave; if they discard economy and are generous; if they discard modesty and are ambitious, they will surely die.

5. Now, the compassionate will in attack be victorious, and in defence firm. Heaven when about to save one will with compassion protect him.

Commentary:

1. You are amazing because of being unusual not because you are usual. If you resembled all the things people call great then you are just like other great things and thus just mediocre.
in nature and not great at all! (poet is saying that things aren't as they often appear to be).

2. The three things the poet cherishes and prizes as valuable is the ability to feel empathy for other living beings or "compassion". The second treasure is the ability to be frugal and careful in living and the third is to be satisfied without the fame of living in the limelight. In other words, the poet claims there is benefit to gain from remaining in the shadows, so to speak.

3. Compassion can make you brave as you try to help the less fortunate. Being careful with expenditure means that when needed you can be generous with you accumulated wealth. Those who can remain in the shadows rather than residing in the limelight can be the perfect instruments of implementing the will of the people.

4. - If people are brave without being compassionate i.e. fighting for a cause rather than fighting to help people. - If they aren't careful with expenditure YET are generous in giving (thereby giving more than you have which can lead to other problems) - If people discard modesty but seek stuff through ambition (thus seeking to boost their own ego by accomplishing stuff) then you surely walk the path of mental and spiritual death.

5. The compassionate person will be victorious in attack for all eternity and in defense will hold out forever. (even if one loses the battle one wins the war, so to speak). Even the universe of life itself seem to help the compassionate man succeed while protecting him.
**Standard Translation:**

*All the world says that, while my Tao is great, it yet appears to be inferior (to other systems of teaching). Now it is just its greatness that makes it seem to be inferior. If it were like any other (system), for long would its smallness have been known!*

*But I have three precious things which I prize and hold fast. The first is gentleness; the second is economy; and the third is shrinking from taking precedence of others.*

*With that gentleness I can be bold; with that economy I can be liberal; shrinking from taking precedence of others, I can become a vessel of the highest honour. Now-a-days they give up gentleness and are all for being bold; economy, and are all for being liberal; the hindmost place, and seek only to be foremost;--(of all which the end is) death.*

*Gentleness is sure to be victorious even in battle, and firmly to maintain its ground. Heaven will save its possessor, by his (very) gentleness protecting him.*
Chapter 5

Commentary On Bodhidharma’s *The Transmission of The Lamp*

The following is a translation of the entire Sermon of Bodhidharma on which Far Eastern Zen is founded called “Transmission Of The Lamp”. This particular translation is by Zen scholar D.T.Suzuki found in his work, ‘A Manual of Zen Buddhism”. I thought I was extremely fortunate to find this very lucid translation, from the Zen Buddhist perspective, in the public domain here in United States28 and have added a commentary to a few selections from it to make it more understandable. It is my hope that with the introduction so far Bodhidharma’s thoughts will become understandable.

Note: The Tao = The Path (of mental liberation that is Zen)

The translation is in *italicized bold text* and my commentary is in normal text.

28 AEAbedi: Manual of Zen Buddhism by Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki. [1935]

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Bodhidharma On The Twofold Entrance To The Tao

i.e. Bodhidharma on how to attain the zen state

There are many ways to enter the Path, but briefly Speaking they are of two sorts only. The one is "Entrance by Reason" and the other "Entrance by Conduct".

This opening sentence makes it clear that this is a method that requires intellectual understanding (not faith as in the religious systems most people are familiar with) and this intellectual understanding needs to be coupled with behaviour (probably to stabilize the mind from desire like one trains the body before an athletic competition).

We know in our age that mind and body are so connected we might as well call them mind-body. In ancient China this was the normal understanding of the human being. The separation of mind from body is an intellectual concept that exists in Ancient Indian, Middle Eastern, Pagan and Ancient Greek philosophy which has been passed down to the present.

By "Entrance by Reason" we mean the realization of the spirit of Buddhism by the aid of the scriptural teaching.
What this sentence is saying that to enter the path of the Tao/Zen one has to understand - with their mind - what exactly the Buddha was saying and how it applies to them in everyday life.

Note:

Scripture in Ancient China (& to a degree in Ancient India, i.e. only the philosophical texts) was written to help the people achieve the results the writers had achieved or to pass on the knowledge that the writers had understood or figured out.

The “spiritual” approach was actually more like a doctor's prescription, i.e. it had an outline of the problem, the source of the problem the best cure for the problem and how to implement that cure. In western religions it’s “God’s grace” that brings a person “close to God” and creates a “Holy Man”. In the east it was the individual who attained their goals themselves with their own efforts. So while religious figures or holy men/women in the west were otherworldly the holy ones of the east were accomplished practitioners of thier art (yoga or zen) and are more comparable to professional sportsmen than to western holy men spouting rhetoric according to their belief & blind faith.

*We then come to have a deep faith in the True Nature which is the same in all sentient beings.*

This is the perfect example of the difference between zen and normal religions.
In the religion one sees the world as sinful or a fall from grace i.e. something which has to be overcome.

In zen the pure state of mind is something one shares with all living beings because it’s the natural state of mind.

In other words, spirituality in zen is about finding your most natural way of being while in western religions or even in yoga, it involves transcending yourself completely so nothing recognizable as “normal” remains.

*The reason why it does not manifest itself is due to the overwrapping of external objects and false thoughts.*

This concept is explained in the introduction under …. . In short, your idea of reality isn’t necessarily reality itself.

In other words, the world has already been labeled and explained to whatever degree in the culture you were born in. These labels were created to get around in the context of that culture.

For example, we only have a few names for snow and it’s enough for us to get around in our culture. We got “snow” & “sleet” and maybe “hail”. That it. Eskimos have over 70 different words for snow. Why do the eskimos have so many words for snow? Because snow can come down as flakes that you can see as little shapes (pic), in can come down with many flakes stuck together, as tiny little balls of snow as sleet etc. To an eskimo, whose entire life is lived in snow and ice, these little differences are noticed and named as it affects their
lives. We don’t care. We don’t hunt in the arctic so we don’t need to know what kind of snow is falling to plan out hunting trips and so on.

Basically, the words we create and use helps us navigate our lives within our culture and way of life. Yet these words are made by categorizing the world in an arbitrary way.

Bodhidharma is saying that these definitions and labels that we use for navigation are false and in a way they are because they are arbitrary and do not reflect the true essence or context of the object in the universe but only in the particular culture that the word was created in.

What Bodhidharma is saying is that when you have all these labels and ways of categorizing the world you fail to see the world as it is (as Emerson pointed out in his essay on Nature) and thus a person has overlapped “external objects” with “false thoughts” or concepts.

When a man, abandoning the false and embracing the true, in singleness of thought practises the Pi-kuan 31 he finds that there is neither self nor other, that the masses and the worthies are of one essence, and he firmly holds on to this belief and never moves away therefrom.

If conceptions (words) can ‘wrap’ themselves around external objects becoming ‘false thoughts’, then how do you extricate yourself from these false thoughts? Here is where we discover Bodhidharma’s meditation technique called wall gazing which

31 the wall gazing technique or zazen

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must be pursued with single minded purpose to achieve results.

The technique is probably to literally sit in front of a wall and practice meditation. The type of meditation normally practiced in zen circles involves sitting in a comfortable position and focusing only on your breathing, eyes half closed. Some meditate with eyes closed. The wall gazing technique or traditional za-zen technique (outlined at the end of chapter 3) is probably what he did, i.e. sit in front of a wall and meditate to reduce the possibility of distraction and when he taught, he taught what he knew to work for him.

When practicing this technique Bodhidharma asks you to see everyone as the same/equal/conscious-beings-only.

_He will not then be a slave to words, for he is in silent communion with the Reason itself, free from conceptual discrimination; he is serene and not-acting. This is called "Entrance by Reason"._

After unpacking the earlier statements you can notice how clear and direct Bodhidharma is being in his explanation.

Instead of being caught by in words and conceptions you will be set free from ‘conceptual discrimination’ of one thing being better or worse than another.

With all the labels categorizing your experience gone, all just is as it is.
Now Bodhidharma begins to describe the approach of ‘practical living’ that helps one attain zen. This explanation is written for the Sage although this was adopted by the Samurai as well as the pure dhayana or zen state would make the following an easy task

By "Entrance by Conduct" is meant the four acts in which all other acts are included. What are the four?

1. To know how to requite hatred;
2. To be obedient to karma;
3. Not to crave anything; and
4. To be in accord with the Dharma.

Taking each number separately;

1. What is meant by "How to requite hatred"? He who disciplines himself in the Path should think thus when he has to struggle with adverse conditions: "During the innumerable past ages I have wandered through a multiplicity of existences, all the while giving myself to unimportant details of life at the expense of essentials, and thus creating infinite occasions for hate, ill-will, and wrongdoing. While no violations have been committed in this life, the fruits of evil deeds in the past are to be gathered now. Neither gods nor men can foretell what is coming upon me. I will submit myself willingly and patiently to all the ills that befall me, and I will never bemoan or complain. The Sutra teaches me not to worry over ills that may happen to me. Why? Because when things are surveyed by a higher intelligence, the
foundation of causation is reached." When this thought is awakened in a man, he will be in accord with the Reason because he makes the best use of hatred and turns it into the service in his advance towards the Path. This is called the "way to requite hatred".

This paragraph explains how one needs to think on the path of zen. It begins with ‘during innumerable past ages I have wandered through multiplicity of existences’ which I think needs to be unpacked.

In zen there is a concept of the Self that is something you have to create and maintain by continuously recreating the Self (I've gone into this in more detail in the introduction).

So looking at this paragraph as a psychological technique, Bodhidharma is saying ‘in the many stories I have created of myself, which are like many lives, there have been many instances for me to get angry and do things motivated by anger. I understand that everything has a cause, either in myself through my own bad actions at some time in the past or through a cause and effect at work in society and in the culture which creates the effect I am observing now’.

In other words, this technique involves coming through conclusions through reason and observation, that help you explain the cause of whatever situation you are dealing with. When you understand it, it loses some of its power over you and gives you the ability to release your anger as you have gained distance on it.

Note:
In zen, death & rebirth (reincarnation) is seen as a psychological phenomenon following from the illusion of the self.

An ancient Zen Scholar, Hui-Neng’s Tan Ching, Writes;

*What is Paramita? This is a Sanskrit term of the Western country. In Yang it means "the other shore reached". When the meaning (artha in Sanskrit) is understood, one is detached from birth and death. When the objective world (visaya) is clung to, there is the rise of birth and death; it is like the waves rising from the water; this is called "this shore". When you are detached from the objective world, there is no birth and death for you; it is like the water constantly running its course: this is "reaching the other shore". Hence Paramita.*

The idea being expressed here: When you cling to the world you have to create to create a self to deal with each new situation, thus you experience ‘death and rebirth’ (of the ego). When you let go and dwell in the zen state your consciousness stays steady and thus you don’t experience birth and death (of the ego).

For example: When you try and do good deeds you are trying to create a new self. By working on being better and better, you are destroying an old way of being (the old ‘self’) and you are creating a new one. Your ‘self’, i.e. how you define or imagine yourself to be, is going through death and rebirth.
2. By "being obedient to karma" is meant this: There is no self (atman) in whatever beings are produced by the interplay of karmic conditions; the pleasure and pain I suffer are also the results of my previous action. If I am rewarded with fortune, honour, etc., this is the outcome of my past deeds which by reason of causation affect my present life. When the force of karma is exhausted, the result I am enjoying now will disappear; what is then the use of being joyful over it? Gain or loss, let me accept the karma as it brings to me the one or the other; the Mind itself knows neither increase nor decrease. The wind of pleasure [and pain] will not stir me, for I am silently in harmony with the Path. Therefore this is called "being obedient to karma".

This is saying that life is as it is. Good things in life happen and bad things in life happen. Your good actions can lead to good things (such as working to make money gives you the ability to buy things, i.e. “good” actions leads to good results, and so on). The goal of this paragraph seems more to detach a person from the sense of profit and loss that people associate with living due to their attachment to life.

This idea is expressed by this story:

There was a farmer whose horse ran away. All his neighbors came by to say how sorry they were at his misfortune. All he said was, "We shall see". Next, his horse returns fallen by a group of wild horses. His neighbors congratulate on his good fortune and the farmer once again says, "We shall see". Then his son falls off the same horse and breaks his leg. The neighbors once again exclaim at his misfortune and once
again he says, "We shall see". In a few days the army comes by collecting young men for a war. The farmer's son was ignored as his leg was broken. His neighbors congratulate him and all he says is, "We shall see".

Notice that in this story every event of the day or week did not make the farmer giddy with happiness or depressed at having a bad day. This is the goal Boddhidharma is asking the reader to strive for.

3. By "not craving (ch'iu) anything" is meant this: Men of the world, in eternal confusion, are attached everywhere to one thing or another, which is called craving. The wise however understand the truth and are not like the ignorant. Their minds abide serenely in the uncreated while the body moves about in accordance with the laws of causation. All things are empty and there is nothing desirable to seek after. Where there is the merit of brightness there surely lurks the demerit of darkness. This triple world where we stay altogether too long is like a house on fire; all that has a body suffers, and nobody really knows what peace is. Because the wise are thoroughly acquainted with this truth, they are never attached to things that change; their thoughts are quieted, they never crave anything. Says the Sutra: "Wherever there is a craving, there is pain; cease from craving and you are blessed." Thus we know that not to crave anything is indeed the way to the Truth. Therefore, it is taught not "to crave anything".
As in basic yogic philosophy *craving* is considered to be the source of all mental ills affecting society and man. Thus the concept of non-attachment to the world is a central pillar of zen buddhism and of practicing zen itself. I’ve covered this concept in the introduction.

Bodhidharma is saying that since your concepts and stories change with your imagination and how you label the world changes with how you categorize it… why crave anything in the world at all? Clearly you attachment to the world is what cause pain and anguish to begin with. Even heightened pleasure followed by the low is a sort of pain as you wish you could have that heightened feelings again and are thus back in attachment of craving of the world.

4. By "being in accord with the Dharma" is meant that the Reason which we call the Dharma in its essence is pure, and that this Reason is the principle of emptiness (sunyata) in all that is manifested; it is above defilements and attachments, and there is no "self", no "other" in it. Says the Sutra: "In the Dharma there are no sentient beings, because it is free from the stain of being; in the Dharma there is no 'self' because it is free from the stain of selfhood." When the wise understand this truth and believe in it, their lives will be "in accordance with the Dharma".

In other words, Bodhidharma is saying that if you live life from zen (the emptiness of zen, i.e. non attachment and alert awareness) then dharma, or doing your duty, becomes easy. Life is easier when you aren't constantly chasing it. Reminds
me of the verse in the Tao Te Ching ‘the sage does everything while doing nothing’.

As there is in the essence of the Dharma no desire to possess, the wise are ever ready to practise charity with their body, life, and property, and they never begrudge, they never know what an ill grace means. As they have a perfect understanding of the threefold nature of emptiness, they are above partiality and attachment. Only because of their will to cleanse all beings of their stains, they come among them as of them, but they are not attached to form. This is the self-benefiting phase of their lives. They, however, know also how to benefit others, and again how to glorify the truth of enlightenment. As with the virtue of charity, so with the other five virtues [of the Prajnaparamita]. The wise practise the six virtues of perfection to get rid of confused thoughts, and yet there is no specific consciousness on their part that they are engaged in any meritorious deeds. This is called "being in accord with the Dharma".

Describes what living a life of zen is like.

Note on enlightenment: Once you understand Zen you are “enlightened”. It’s not something you seek to practice forever as such striving tends to become the goal in and of itself. As one writer explains: “That followers of Zen fail to recognize the Buddha is due to their not rightly recognizing Where their own Mind is. They seek it outwardly, set up all kinds of exercises which they hope to master by degrees, and themselves work out diligently throughout ages. Yet they fail to reach enlightenment. No works compare with an immediate awakening to a state of mushin itself” 33

33 HUANG-PO'S SERMON, FROM “TREATISE ON THE ESSENTIALS OF THE TRANSMISSION OF MIND” ( DENSHIN HOYO)
Chapter 6

Zen Poetry with Commentary

A couple of extracts of Zen Poetry from the Manual Of Zen Buddhism translated by D.T. Suzuki that, I think, encapsulate zen as taught by the ancient zen masters.

This poem summarizes the zen experience in a very taolike manner that brings together zen and taoism so smoothly you can see how easily this philosophy can be adopted to any way of living and thus how it was adopted and used to great effect by the Samurai and the culture they spawned in Japan through their promotion of Zen.

Note: The translation is in *italicized bold text* and my commentary is in normal text.

**On Believing In Mind (Shinjin-No-Mei)**

34 By Seng-t'san (Sosan in Japanese). Died 606 C.E. Mind = *hsin*. *Hsin* is one of those Chinese words which defy translation. When the Indian scholars were trying to translate the Buddhist Sanskrit works into Chinese, they discovered that there were five classes of Sanskrit terms which could not be satisfactorily rendered into Chinese. We thus find in the Chinese Tripitaka such words as *prajna, bodhi, buddha, nirvana, dhyana, bodhisattva*, etc., almost always untranslated; and they now appear in their original Sanskrit
1. The Perfect Way knows no difficulties
Except that it refuses to make preferences;
Only when freed from hate and love,
It reveals itself fully and without disguise;
A tenth of an inch's difference,
And heaven and earth are set apart;
If you wish to see it before your own eyes,
Have no fixed thoughts either for or against it.

Stop imagining/conceiving of stuff to live beyond the feelings of being for or against something.

2. To set up what you like against what you dislike--
This is the disease of the mind:
When the deep meaning [of the Way] is not understood
Peace of mind is disturbed to no purpose.

To create “good” and “bad” is like a mental illness.

form among the technical Buddhist terminology. If we could leave hsin with all its nuance of meaning in this translation, it would save us from the many difficulties that face us in its English rendering. For hsin means "mind", "heart", "soul", "spirit"--each singly as well as all inclusively. In the present composition by the third patriarch of Zen, it has sometimes an intellectual connotation but at other times it can properly be given as "heart". But as the predominant note of Zen Buddhism is more intellectual than anything else, though not in the sense of being logical or philosophical, I decided here to translate hsin by "mind" rather than by "heart", and by this mind I do not mean our psychological mind, but what may be called absolute mind, or Mind.
3. [The Way is] perfect like unto vast space,  
With nothing wanting, nothing superfluous:  
It is indeed due to making choice  
That its suchness is lost sight of.

The path is smooth and open.

4. Pursue not the outer entanglements,  
Dwell not in the inner void;  
Be serene in the oneness of things,  
And [dualism] vanishes by itself.

Go beyond duality and don’t get caught up in distractions.

5. When you strive to gain quiescence by stopping motion,  
The quiescence thus gained is ever in motion;  
As long as you tarry in the dualism,  
How can you realize oneness?

You can’t attain spontaneity if you dither between opposites.

6. And when oneness is not thoroughly understood,  
In two ways loss is sustained:  
The denying of reality is the asserting of it,  
And the asserting of emptiness is the denying of it.  

35This means: When the absolute oneness of things is not properly understood, negation as well as affirmation tends to be a one-sided view of reality. When Buddhists deny the reality of an objective
Emptiness being at the heart of everything is attributing a concept to a description of the indescribable (cause it’s an experience). By creating an image of the way of zen you are not describing zen. If instead you deny all descriptions then you are experiencing zen.

7. Wordiness and intellection--
The more with them the further astray we go;
Away therefore with wordiness and intellection,
And there is no place where we cannot pass freely.

The more you seek to describe something the further away from direct experience you stray.

8. When we return to the root, we gain the meaning;
When we pursue external objects, we lose the reason.
The moment we are enlightened within,
We go beyond the voidness of a world confronting us.

Objects are a distraction and take us away from our true being. When enlightened we go beyond the empty labels we ascribe to things.

world, they do not mean that they believe in the unconditioned emptiness of things; they know that there is something real which cannot be done away with. When they uphold the doctrine of emptiness this does not mean that all is nothing but an empty hollow, which leads to a self-contradiction. The philosophy of Zen avoids the error of one-sidedness involved in realism as well as in nihilism.
9. Transformations going on in an empty world which confronts us
Appear real all because of Ignorance:
Try not to seek after the true,
Only cease to cherish opinions.

Changes in the world that may scare you are just an illusion. Ignore opinions of others and live without trying to seek answers to things,

10. Abide not with dualism,
Carefully avoid pursuing it;
As soon as you have right and wrong,
Confusion ensues, and Mind' is lost.

If you stop putting things on scales like good and bad or right and wrong or long and short then you live beyond categories. If you imagine such stuff then you mind is imagining stuff and thus is confused.

11. The two exist because of the One,
But hold not even to this One;
When a mind is not disturbed,
The ten thousand things offer no offence.

The differences in things exists because we imagine them to exist. When the mind isn't imagining things the world can offer no offense.
12. *No offence offered, and no ten thousand things; No disturbance going, and no mind set up to work: The subject is quieted when the object ceases, The object ceases when the subject is quieted.*

When you are in the zen state, in a state of dhayana, you are at rest and at ease with the world around you.

13. *The object is an object for the subject, The subject is a subject for the object: Know that the relativity of the two Rests ultimately on one Emptiness.*

Reflectivity depends on the perception of the mind.

14. *In one Emptiness the two are not distinguished, And each contains in itself all the ten thousand things; When no discrimination is made between this and that. How can a one-sided and prejudiced view arise?*

The writer is being poetic and using the poetic licence he’s describing the same idea from many different angles, as is probably apparent by now, so I thought just a line of commentary here and there will suffice for this poem as the essential concepts have been covered earlier.

15. *The Great Way is calm and large-hearted,*

36 The Mind = the Way = the One = Emptiness.
For it nothing is easy, nothing is hard;
Small views are irresolute,
The more in haste the tardier they go.

Everyone can walk the path of zen just learn not to be in haste.

16. Clinging is never kept within bounds,
It is sure to go the wrong way;
Quit it, and things follow their own courses,
While the Essence neither departs nor abides.

If you are attached to things you will never be able to control it and it will lead you down the wrong path. Let things be and don’t seek to control them.

17. Obey the nature of things, and you are in concord with the Way,
Calm and easy and free from annoyance;
But when your thoughts are tied, you turn away from the truth,
They grow heavier and duller and are not at all sound.

Follow the spontaneity of life and you live freely. When you tie up your mind in thoughts life becomes heavier and less fun.

18. When they are not sound, the spirit is troubled;
What is the use of being partial and one-sided then?
If you want to walk the course of the One Vehicle,
Be not prejudiced against the six sense-objects.

Not exactly sure what he is saying here but it’s definitely along the concept of letting go of attachments that the senses can get caught up in but not being against them, i.e. don’t pursue or reject stuff or don’t have strong feelings for or against things (basic idea of ‘things are as they are’).

19. When you are not prejudiced against the six sense-objects,
You are then one with the Enlightenment;
The wise are non-active,
While the ignorant bind themselves up;
While in the Dharma itself there is no individuation,
They ignorantly attach themselves to particular objects.
It is their own mind that creates illusions--
Is this not the greatest of all self-contradictions?

When you let go of the world and just live in it without pursuing or rejecting it then you are enlightened. The wise aren’t actively pursuing things while the ignorant bind themselves up in thoughts of goals and ambition and such. All of these are actions derived from attachment to things.

20. The ignorant cherish the idea of rest and unrest,
The enlightened have no likes and dislikes:
All forms of dualism
Are contrived by the ignorant themselves.
They are like unto visions and flowers in the air;
Why should we trouble ourselves to take hold of them?
Gain and loss, right and wrong--
Away with them once for all!

The ignorant seek pleasure and avoid pain while the wise take things as they are

21. If an eye never falls asleep,
All dreams will by themselves cease:
If the Mind retains its absoluteness,
The ten thousand things are of one Suchness.37

If you are always alert and without thought then all dreams will cease. If you retain your zen perspective then all just is as it is (Suchness).

22. When the deep mystery of one Suchness is fathomed,

37The Masters and Disciples of the Lanka also quotes a poetical composition of So-san on "The Mysterious" in which we find the following echoing the idea given expression here:
"One Reality only--
How deep and far-reaching!
The ten thousand things--
How confusingly multifarious!
The true and the conventional are indeed intermingling,
But essentially of the same substance they are.
The wise and the unenlightened are indeed distinguishable,
But in the Way they are united as one.
Desirest thou to find its limits?
How broadly expanding! It is limitless!
How vaguely it vanishes away! Its ends are never reached!
It originates in beginningless time, it terminates in endless time."
All of a sudden we forget the external entanglements; When the ten thousand things are viewed in their oneness, We return to the origin and remain where we ever have been.

A description of zen from another perspective. The more perspectives you use the better chance you have of getting the idea of an experience across. Like describing the taste of strawberries in as many ways as possible so a person has an idea of what it is like before the actual eating of a strawberry for the first time. Yet, just like zen, describing the indescribable will leave out the essence of what eating a strawberry if like as words can’t get across an experience.

23. Forget the wherefore of things, And we attain to a state beyond analogy; Movement stopped and there is no movement, Rest set in motion and there is no rest; When dualism does no more obtain, Oneness itself abides not.

Once again, the writer is saying to reach beyond dualism to experience zen,

24. The ultimate end of things where they cannot go any further Is not bound by rules and measures: In the Mind harmonious [with the Way] we have the principle of identity,
In which we find all strivings quieted;
Doubts and irresolutions are completely done away with,
And the right faith is straightened;
There is nothing left behind, There is nothing retained,
All is void, lucid, and self-illuminating;
There is no exertion, no waste of energy--
This is where thinking never attains,
This is where the imagination fails to measure.

A description of what zen is like (like trying to describe the taste of strawberries).

25. In the higher realm of true Suchness
There is neither "self" nor "other":
When direct identification is sought,
We can only say, "Not two".38

In zen you are beyond categories so there is no self or other.

26. In being "not two" all is the same,
All that is is comprehended in it;
The wise in the ten quarters,
They all enter into this Absolute Reason.

Being in a non-dual state everything is connected to everything else and seems to be just one entity. Entering this state (of zen) is true Reason.

27. This Absolute Reason is beyond quickening [time] and extending [space],

38I.e. Tat tvam asi.]
For it one instant is ten thousand years;  
Whether we see it or not,  
It is manifest everywhere in all the ten quarters.

The Original Mind (Absolute or Pure Reason) exists beyond time and space (as time and space are concepts created by the mind).

28. Infinitely small things are as large as large things can be,  
For here no external conditions obtain;  
Infinitely large things are as small as small things can be,  
For objective limits are here of no consideration.

Everything is one in a mental state beyond categories (zen).

29. What is is the same as what is not,  
What is not is the same as what is:  
Where this state of things fails to obtain,  
Indeed, no tarrying there.

This is a state of spontaneity.

30. One in All,  
All in One--  
If only this is realized,  
No more worry about your not being perfect!

Attain this state and you will have no more worries.
31. Where Mind and each believing mind are not divided, 
And undivided are each believing mind and Mind, 
This is where words fail; 
For it is not of the past, present, and future.

When you live in a state of a mind undivided (zen state) then all is one. Words, time and space cease to exist as the mind no longer thinks in those categories and ceases to use labels to describe things altogether (being ‘undivided’).

Poetry with a different approach to explaining and/or viewing zen;

Yet another look at the zen state through a poem but saying that everything and all the mind can imagine is Buddha rather than the common technique used thus far, i.e. that there is nothing beyond and it’s conceptions/imaginations. In toher words, if the person insists there there is a “Buddha”, i.e. something greater than himself then you respond by saying ‘fine, then all is Buddha”. In other words, ‘all is Divine’.

Note: The word Samadhi is the Indian word for a meditational experience of zen. Mahayana is the philosophical type of zen buddhism as opposed to the more religious southern styles of Buddhism.

Hakuin’s “Song Of Meditation”
Sentient beings are primarily all Buddhas:
Everyone is a Buddha

It is like ice and water,
Apart from water no ice can exist;

A human and a Buddha are like ice and water, i.e. they are basically the same

Outside sentient beings, where do we find the Buddhas?

It is only humans that are buddha like anyways

Not knowing how near the Truth is,
People seek it far away,--what a pity!

People have a tendency to search for truth far away when it is in thier own minds rather than outside of them.

They are like him who, in the midst of water,
Cries in thirst so imploringly;

They are like the story of the man who travelled to India to ‘find himself’ and when he finally found a person he believed to be a wise yogi he told him ‘I have come to find myself’. The yogi took one look at him and replied, ‘well, here you are. now what?’
They are like the son of a rich man
Who wandered away among the poor.

It’s like a person who has rejected a safe home by clueless wandering away into the wilderness.

The reason why we transmigrate through the six worlds
Is because we are lost in the darkness of ignorance;

The reason we got through cycles of experience (as if the history of our lives were repeating themselves) is because we are ignorant.

Going astray further and further in the darkness,
When are we able to get away from birth-and-death?

How can we live in the zen state when we constantly create selves by which to live by.

As regards the Meditation practised in the Mahayana,
We have no words to praise it fully:

Zen Buddhism has the best form of meditation.

The virtues of perfection such as charity, morality, etc.,
And the invocation of the Buddha’s name, confession, and ascetic discipline,
And many other good deeds of merit,—
All these issue from the practice of Meditation;

Meditation clears the soul and helps make a person moral.

Even those who have practised it just for one sitting
Will see all their evil karma wiped clean;

Even one meditation session can clear your head of evil thoughts.

Nowhere will they find the evil paths,
But the Pure Land will be near at hand.

Meditation will lead you to purity.

With a reverential heart, let them to this Truth
Listen even for once,
And let them praise it, and gladly embrace it,
And they will surely be blessed most infinitely.

This truth will help people if they listen to it even once with faith.

For such as, reflecting within themselves,
Testify to the truth of Self-nature,
To the truth that Self-nature is no-nature,
They have really gone beyond the ken of sophistry.
Those have realized their is no self (or that the go is a creation of the mind) has reached beyond the illusions of the mind.

*For them opens the gate of the oneness of cause and effect,*

*And straight runs the path of non-duality and non-trinity.*

By practicing meditation you reach beyond the illusions of division the mind creates you discover all is one.

*Abiding with the not-particular which is in particulars,*

*Whether going or returning, they remain for ever unmoved;*

When you find your center (in zen) you will always be able to keep centered.

*Taking hold of the not-thought which lies in thoughts,*

*In every act of theirs they hear the voice of the truth.*

By understanding the abstraction that exists in thoughts they can always see beyond the words.

*How boundless the sky of Samadhi unfettered!*

*How transparent the perfect moon-light of the fourfold Wisdom!*
The meditative state is amazing! (very very cool)

At that moment what do they lack?
As the Truth eternally calm reveals itself to them,

The zen state of meditation (samadhi) is the center of eternal calm.

This very earth is the Lotus Land of Purity,
And this body is the body of the Buddha.

Earth IS heaven.
Introduction: This is a very famous piece of scripture from Zen Buddhism called The Diamond Sutra or The Diamond Scripture. Given all the explanation covered so far in this book I believe I can offer a commentary that makes sense of this in a very down to earth and easy to understand way. But first;

In reading this keep in mind that honorifics are just that and are simply idioms of respect from a long lost culture of philosophical debate and it’s relation and applications to yoga practice.

If you remove the stuff like ‘King of the worlds’ or ‘Lord’ what you find in this ancient sutra is a very plain analysis on psychology of zen. With your knowledge of zen from this book you can probably understand it better than many zen Buddhists today.

Note: The translation is in italicized bold text and my commentary is in normal text.

Terms used:
Bhikkhus - People seeking truth or enlightenment (beginners/ascetics)
Bodhisattva - People on the Buddhist path with some skill
Tathagatas - Term Buddha uses to refer to himself & others like him ('one who has arrived' at awakening)
Buddhahood - Enlightenment
Subhuti - A person asking about Siddhartha’s path
“Lord Buddha” - Siddhartha teaching after his enlightenment
Paramita - Perfections

The Diamond Sutra

(Vajracchedika Sutra)

THUS HAVE I HEARD. Upon a memorable occasion, the Lord Buddha sojourned in the kingdom of Shravasti, lodging in the grove of Jeta, a park within the royal domain which Jeta, the heir-apparent, had bestowed upon Sutana, a minister of state renowned for his charities and benefactions. With the Lord Buddha there were assembled twelve hundred and fifty mendicant disciples, besides many who had attained to eminent degrees of spiritual wisdom.

Setting the scene.

As the hour for the morning meal approached, Lord Buddha attired in a mendicant’s robe and carrying an


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alms bowl, walked towards the great cry of Shravasti which he entered to beg for food. Within the city he went from door to door and received such gifts as the good people severally bestowed. Concluding this religious exercise, the Lord Buddha returned to the grove of Jeta and after bathing his sacred feet partook of the frugal meal which he had received as alms. Thereafter he divested himself of the mendicant’s robe, laid aside the alms bowl and accepted the seat of honor which his disciples had reserved for him.

Not only do his disciples (students) have a ‘seat of honor’ for Siddhartha, the writer of this sutra himself has a very Godlike image of Siddhartha. Part of the effect is probably how language was used for teachers in his time.

The venerable Subhuti, who occupied a place in the midst of the assembly, rose from his seat, arranged his robe so that his right shoulder was exposed, pressing the palms of his hands together, and kneeling upon his right knee, respectfully bowed to the Lord Buddha, saying: "Thou art of transcendent wisdom, Honored of the Worlds! With wonderful solicitude thou dost instruct in the Dharma and preserve in the faith this illustrious assembly of enlightened disciples. Blessed One, may I beseech of you to discourse upon the theme: How should a disciple who has entered upon the path behave? How should he advance? How should he restrain his thoughts? How may he realise Buddhahood? What immutable Truth is there that shall sustain the mind of a good disciple, who is
seeking to attain supreme spiritual wisdom, and bring into subjection every inordinate desire?"

One student, Subhuti, has a question on the path of Buddhism and how to attain enlightenment in Siddhartha teachings.

The Lord Buddha replied to Sabuti, saying: "Truly a most excellent theme. Attend diligently unto me and I will enunciate a Truth whereby the mind of a good disciple, whether man or woman, seeking to attain supreme spiritual wisdom shall be adequately sustained and enabled to bring into subjection every inordinate desire.

“Good question!” Siddhartha responds.

"Subhuti, it is by the Truth of emptiness and egolessness that enlightened disciples are to advance along the Path, to restrain their thoughts, to attain Budhahood. If they diligently observe the Paramitas, and fully enter into a realisation of the profound Prajna Paramita, they will attain the supreme spiritual wisdom they seek."

40Encyclopedia Britannica Explains: Pāramitā, in Mahāyāna ("Greater Vehicle") Buddhism, any of the perfections, or transcendental virtues, practiced by bodhisattvas ("Buddhas-to-be") in advanced stages of their path toward enlightenment. The six virtues are generosity (dāna-pāramitā); morality (śīla-pāramitā); perseverance (kṣānti-pāramitā); vigour (vīrya-pāramitā); meditation, or concentration (dhyāna-pāramitā); and wisdom (prajñā-pāramitā). Some lists expand the virtues to 10 by adding skill in the means of helping others (upāya [kauśalya]-pāramitās), profound resolution to produce enlightenment (pranidhāna-pāramitā), perfection of the 10 powers (bala-pāramitā), and practice of transcendent knowledge (jñāna-pāramitā).
Siddhartha explains that attaining an egoless state, as I attempt to explain in the intro to zen and then point out the zen state and the various explanations for it throughout the text, is all that is needed to attain enlightenment. The ‘egoless state of emptiness’ is the realization of there being no Self (or no “I”) except that which we create in our imaginations or with our ego. Externally we should be practicing the virtues or mode of conduct as outlined by Siddhartha.

*Dana Paramita (Ideal Charity)*: "*Subhuti, good disciples, whether man or woman, should thus arrange their thoughts. Every species of life whether hatched in an egg, formed in a womb, evolved from spawn, produced by metamorphosis, with or without form, possessing or devoid of natural instinct or intelligence,*--*from these changeful conditions of being, I urge you to seek deliverance in the transcendental concept of Nirvana. Thus shall disciples be delivered from the immeasurable, innumerable, and illimitable world of sentient life, but, in reality, there is no world of sentient life from which to seek deliverance. And why? Because, in the minds of enlightened disciples there have ceased to exist such arbitrary concepts of phenomena as an entity, a being, a living being, a personality.*"

Siddhartha says that everyone of his students needs to focus their thoughts along the paths he prescribes for enlightenment. He says to find a clue within the concept of “Nirvana” or “blowing out the self”. If you ‘blow out’ or extinguish the ego that strings together the stories you create to explain things
you find that all phenomena such as you being an ‘entity’ or even ‘living being’ is just an idea and you cease to use them. Same ideas as covered in the first 3 chapters but from a different angle or from the prism of another culture's perceptions.

(Subhuti, regarding the Dana Paramita--Ideal Charity, the Awakening of Faith Scripture teaches how disciples should practise charity. It says: "If persons should come to them and ask for something, they should as far as their means allow, supply it ungrudgingly and thus make them happy. If they see people threatened with danger, they should try every means for rescuing them and restore them to a feeling of safety. If people come to them desiring instruction in the Dharma, they should, as far as they are acquainted with it and according to their discretion, deliver discourses upon religious themes. And when they are performing these acts of charity, let them not cherish any desire for fame or advantage, nor covet any earthly reward. Thinking only of the benefits and blessings that are to be mutually shared, let them aspire for the most excellent, the most perfect wisdom.")

This part describes the standard spiritual definition of charity that all religions practice. Given that Siddhartha lived before Jesus, the Rabbinical Period and Mohammad, I have to wonder if these concepts simply originate from India and reached this far through trade and conquest.
The Lord Buddha resumed: "Moreover, Subhuti, an enlightened disciple in his acts of charity, ought to act spontaneously, uninfluenced by such things as form, sound, taste, odour, touch, discrimination, and favoritism. It is imperative that an enlightened disciple, in the exercise of charity, should act independent of phenomena. And why? Because, acting without regard to illusive forms of phenomena, he will realise in the exercise of charity a merit inestimable and immeasurable.

Siddhartha explains that not only should you have no thought of benefit for yourself in charity (which is a given if you have no Self/Ego to think about) he further illustrate the path of zen as already explained, i.e. be spontaneous, learn to live without being attached to any phenomenon (non-attachment). How does this approach help lead to balanced charity with no thought of oneself? By not thinking of oneself and acting spontaneously you do what is appropriate for the situation.

"Subhuti, what think you? Is it possible to estimate the distances that comprise the illimitable universe of space?"

Subhuti replied: "Blessed One! It is impossible to estimate the distances comprising the illimitable universe of space."

The Lord Buddha continued: "It is equally impossible to estimate the merit of an enlightened disciple who practises charity unperturbed by the disturbing influences
of Phenomena. Subhuti, the minds of all disciples ought thus to be taught."

Here Siddhartha uses an analogy that requires the student to imagine vast indescribable distances and then comparing it to the benefits of charity from a state of zen.

Sila Paramita (Ideal Behaviour)

The Lord Buddha addressing Subhuti, said: "What think you? If a benevolent person bestowed as alms an abundance of the seven treasures sufficient to fill the universe, would there accrue to that person a considerable merit?"

Subhuti replied, saying: "A very considerable merit; Honored of the Worlds! Because what is referred to does not partake of the nature of ordinary merit; in that sense the Lord Buddha rightly speaks of 'a considerable merit.'"

The Lord Buddha continued: "If a disciple studies and adheres with implicit faith to even a stanza of this Scripture, the intrinsic merit of such a disciple would be relatively greater. And why? Because, the Tathagatas who have attained supreme spiritual wisdom, all owe their beginning to the Truth of this sacred Scripture--the Truth of Emptiness and Egolessness."

Once again Siddhartha uses imagery to guide his student to see this sutra itself as very important to understanding so he or she will think about it extensively. That said, this may all just
be the over exaggerations of the later writer or writers who composed with scripture telling the reader to value this and thus helping it’s spread. In any case, this intro tells us what this scripture, the Daimond Sutra, is about i.e. the truth of emptiness and egolessness that sounds like it could be one of the first Taoist teachings. No wonder later Chinese zen masters trace their lineage to Siddhartha through Bodhidharma. Yet the Tao Te Ching expresses zen concepts as well and thus we are left with the feeling of mystery in the deep past.

"Very deep." Wrote Thomas Mann at the opening of his mythologically conceived tetralogy, Joseph and His Brothers. "is the well of the past. Should we not call it bottomless?" And he then observed: "The deeper we sound, the further down into the lower world of the past we probe and press, the more do we find that the earliest foundations of humanity, its history and culture, reveal themselves unfathomable." Joseph Campbell

(Regarding the Sila Paramita--Ideal Behavior--the Sutra says: "Lay members should abstain from all unkindness, stealing, unchastity, lying, duplicity, slander, frivolous talk, covetousness, malice, currying favor, and false teachings. Disciples, in order to disarm prejudice, should retire from the excitement of the worldly life and, abiding in solitude, should practise those deeds which lead to restraint and contentment. In the case of advanced bhikkhus, they have other rules to follow and should feel all the more shame, fear and remorse for any failure to

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observe the minor precepts. Strictly observing all the precepts given by the Tathagatas, they should endeavor, by their example, to induce all beings to abandon evil and practise the good."

Describes the practice in detail which sounds like it could have come from an ascetic in the ancient world from Ancient Greek to Essene to Christian.

"What do you think, Subhuti? If a disciple, whether man or woman, were to collect a store of precious gems as great as this universe and was to bestow them on the holy Tathagatas, would that disciple on the strength of his gift lay up a large stock of merit?"

Subhuti replied: "Yes, Blessed One, he would lay up a very great merit."

The Lord Buddha replied: "Subhuti, if another disciple after reading even one verse of this Scripture and observing it by living a good life, he will lay up a greater merit than the one who merely makes gifts in charity and continues his egoistic life. And why? Because, making gifts may or may not involve an advance along the Path that leads to Nirvana, but this Scripture points the way to the stages of Bodhisattvahood and the supreme spiritual enlightenment of the Buddhas. The disciple who sincerely reads this Scripture and lives a virtuous life is laying up merit immeasurable. But, Subhuti, a virtuous life, even the life of a Buddha, what is it? There is no such thing, it is only a name.
The writer says this sutra is more beneficial than jewels because it leads to understanding and enlightenment which is more precious than wealth and this sutra and help you achieve that.

"Subhuti, suppose a man had a body as large as Mount Sumeru, would he be counted a great man?"

Subhuti replied: "Exceedingly great, Honored of the Worlds!"

Analogy again. The analogies used are very dramatic and are designed to create a mental impression and then link it to the point the writer/Siddhartha seeks to make.

The Lord Buddha enquired: "Would his mind and heart be correspondingly great, Subhuti? What is it that makes a man great? Is it the size of his body? Is it his unusual personality? Is it the work he accomplishes? Or is it the wisdom and compassion and selflessness of this behavior? Subhuti, what is behavior? There is no such thing; it is something the mind imagines, just like body and personality; it is only a name.

Everything is that a label or category in the mind. It is just a name. Reminds me of the first verse of the Tao Te Ching;

“The Tao that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Tao. The name that can be named is not the
Then the Lord Buddha continued: "Nevertheless, if a good disciple, man or woman, studies this Scripture and thoughtfully observes even a verse of it, his merit will be very great. What words can express the merit of a disciple who, living with restraint and kindness, diligently studies and observes it! Such a disciple is attaining powers commensurate with the supreme and most wonderful Dharma. Wherever there is the hermitage of such a good disciple, it is the treasure-house of this sacred Scripture; it is a shrine of the Lord Buddha; and over it will hover uncounted Bodhisattvas of highest reverence and honor."

This sutra is a good one and studying, understanding and applying it will help people even if it is only a little bit such as one verse/stanza.

Kshanti Paramita (Ideal Patience)

At that time the Lord Buddha addressed Subhuti, saying: "If a good disciple, whether man or woman, devoted to the observance and study of this Scripture, is thereby lightly esteemed or despised, it is because, in a previous life there had been committed some grievous transgression, now followed by its inexorable retribution. But, although in this life lightly esteemed or despised, he bears it patiently, the compensating merit thus acquired
will cause the transgression of a former life to be fully expiated, and the patient disciple will be adequately recompensed by his final attainment of supreme spiritual enlightenment."

Here the idea of reincarnation comes up. Given how old this scripture is, the Indian culture itself and the time it took for the first writings of Buddha’s teachings (estimated at 300 years) there is no reason not to take later masters at their word when they say reincarnation is just the reemergence of the Self/Ego after it dissolves for a while in meditation or sleep or strenuous activity etc. An extract from an earlier chapter seems appropriate here:

An ancient Zen Scholar, Hui-Neng’s Tan Ching, Writes;

What is Paramita? This is a Sanskrit term of the Western country. In Yang it means "the other shore reached". When the meaning (artha in Sanskrit) is understood, one is detached from birth and death. When the objective world (visaya) is clung to, there is the rise of birth and death; it is like the waves rising from the water; this is called "this shore". When you are detached from the objective world, there is no birth and death for you; it is like the water constantly running its course: this is "reaching the other shore". Hence Paramita.42

The idea being expressed here: When you cling to the world you have to create to create a self to deal with each new situation, thus you experience ‘death and rebirth’ (of the ego). When you let go and dwell in the zen state your

42 Hiu Neng’s Tan Ching - Manual Of Zen Buddhism by Suzuki

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consciousness stays steady and thus you don’t experience birth and death (of the ego).

For example: When you try and do good deeds you are trying to create a new self. By working on being better and better, you are destroying an old way of being (the old ‘self’) and you are creating a new one. Your ‘self’, i.e. how you define or imagine yourself to be, is going through death and rebirth.

(Regarding this Kshanti Paramita--Ideal Patience--it is said in the Sutra: "If disciples meet with the ills of life they should not shun them. If they suffer painful experiences, they should not feel afflicted or treated unjustly, but should always rejoice in remembering and contemplating the deep significance of the Dharma.")

Basically, learn to see beyond bad events that happen to a positive frame of mind. Such as the old saying ‘when one door closes another door opens’ or as expressed in the old story;

There was a farmer whose horse ran away. All his neighbors came by to say how sorry they were at his misfortune. All he said was, "We shall see". Next, his horse returns fallen by a group of wild horses. His neighbors congratulate on his good fortune and the farmer once again says, "We shall see". Then his son falls off the same horse and breaks his leg. The neighbors once again exclaim at his misfortune and once again he says, "We shall see". In a few days the army comes by collecting young men for a war. The farmer's son was ignored as his leg was broken. His neighbors congratulate him and all he says is, "We shall see".
The Lord Buddha continued: "Numberless ages ago, Subhuti, before the advent of Dipankara Buddha, there were many other Buddhas and I recall my difficult experiences while serving them and receiving their religious instruction and discipline, but I endured it patiently and, because my conduct was entirely blameless and without reproach, I was reborn in the days of Dipankara Buddha. But in the ages to come, if a disciple faithfully study and put into practice the teaching of this Scripture, the merit that he will thus acquire will far exceed the merit of my service in the days of those many Buddhas.

Talking within the structure of thought that Subhuti is in Siddhartha is telling his to be consistent in study and practice.

"In a previous life, Subhuti, when the Prince of Kalinga severed the flesh from my limbs and body, because of the discipline I had undergone in the past I remained patient, I was oblivious to such ideas as phenomena as an entity, a person, a living person, a personality. If I had not been oblivious to such ideas, when my limbs and body were torn apart, there would have originated in my mind feelings of anger and resentment. I recollect, five hundred incarnations ago, that I was practising this Kshanti Paramita and, because of it, I got rid of such arbitrary ideas. Therefore, Subhuti, an enlightened disciple ought to discard, as being unreal and illusive, every conceivable form of hindering phenomena."
Using Subhuti’s beliefs, Siddhartha is trying to make him detach from his attachments using graphic illustrations. The idea is basically to see beyond the categories our mind creates.

*Subhuti, in aspiring to supreme spiritual wisdom, the mind ought to be insensible to every sensuous influence, and be independent of everything pertaining to form, sound, odour, taste, touch, or discrimination. There ought to be cultivated a condition of complete independence of mind; because, if the mind is depending upon any external thing, it is cherishing a delusion; in reality, there is nothing external to the mind. Even the whole realm of sentient life is ephemeral and illusory. Therefore, in the exercise of this Paramita, the mind of an enlightened disciple ought to be unperturbed by any form of phenomena."

Siddhartha is saying that you have to learn to have an independent mind that doesn’t get caught up in the world. Any attachment to desires for any external thing is a delusion. Thus the mind should not be affected by any phenomenon. This is covered in the chapter, ‘many views of zen’.

*The Lord Buddha addressed Subhuti, saying: "If an enlightened disciple in the exercise of this Paramita was patient in the face of external difficulties and steadily studied and observed this Scripture; and another disciple, realising that within the meaning and purport of it, there*
could be no abstract individual existence--no suffering, no one to suffer, no one to attain supreme spiritual enlightenment--and yet patiently accepts it and continues to perfect himself in its virtue, this disciple will have a cumulative merit greater than the former. And why? Because, he is unaffected by any consideration of merit or reward."

Siddhartha is saying to be patient and disciplined in their efforts to reach the (zen) state of mental liberation.

Subhuti enquired of the Lord Buddha: "In what respect are enlightened disciples unaffected by merit or reward?"

The Lord Buddha replied: "Enlightened disciples, having patiently accepted the truth of egolessness, do not aspire for supreme enlightenment in any spirit of covetousness or acquisitiveness; they never think of merit and its commensurate reward. But the Tathagata, because of his perfect wisdom, knows of their patience and knows that for them there is reserved a cumulative merit that is immeasurable and illimitable."

Here Subhuti is following the traditional religious societal belief that merit or reward is important. Many social structures, not to mention games/sports, are based on reward and merit. So Subhuti is asking the meditation master with his new innovative ideas (for his area?) in what areas reward is not important, of course assuming that reward will influence the meditation masters life. Siddhartha patiently explains that in the egoless of zen state there is no thought of merit or
supreme enlightenment or any conception whatsoever. So any conception you have you must leave behind.

I’m assuming in this commentary that the repetition of an idea is to explain it from many possible angles which would be necessary for something beyond the description of words such as enlightenment or strawberries as explained in the first chapter.

**Virya Paramita (Ideal Zeal)**

_The Lord Buddha said to Subhuti: "If within this universe a good disciple heaped together the seven treasures forming many elevations as Mount Sumeru, and entirely bestowed these treasures on the Tathagata as a gift in his exercise of charity; and another disciple sacrificed his life as many times as there are grains of sand in the river Ganges, would such disciples accumulate great merit, Subhuti?"

Here Siddhartha asks about Subhuti’s opinion on what would accumulate merit and uses extreme versions of what charity would be with the simple assumption that if a little amount of charity gives you merit then allot of charity would give you more merit. Note: Merit is the idea of “blessings” or “Divine favor” as is common in religious cultures. This particular culture had many gods and goddesses and accumulating merit meant you evolved along the path to freedom or liberation. In zen this freedom is interpreted as mental freedom and that is what seems to be in the Diamond Sutra as well though heavily
enmeshed in the views of the writer who may have seen Siddhartha as a legend more than a man.

Subhuti replied: "They would accumulate great merit, indeed, Blessed One."

Of course, given the choice he has Subhuti has to agree that giving away large amounts of treasure would accumulate merit in the spiritual world.

The Lord Buddha continued: "If a good disciple were to select a single verse of this Scripture, faithfully observe and study it, and then zealously explain it to others, he would relatively accumulate a greater merit."

And once again, Siddhartha takes the extreme analogy by which he has heightened the the expectations of his listener and then links it to spreading this sutra signifying that it is important and full of merit. Maybe by placing important concepts within this sutra and emphasizing its importance Siddhartha hoped to encourage its spread and with it’s spread the simple enlightenment of the sort of zen like awakening these ancient meditation masters seemed to be trying to spread.

(Regarding this Virya Paramita--Ideal Zeal-the Sutra says: "In the practice of all good deeds, disciples should never indulge in indolence. They should recall all their great mental and physical sufferings that they have undergone
in the past on account of having coveted worldly objects and comforts during former existences and which did not give the least nourishment to their physical lives. They should, therefore, in order to be emancipated in the future from these sufferings, be indefatigably zealous and never let even the thought of indolence arise in their minds; but steadily and persistently out of deep compassion endeavor to benefit all beings. They should dauntlessly, energetically, uninterruptedly, six watches, day and night, pay homage to all the Buddhas, make offerings to them, praise them, repent and confess to them, aspire to the most excellent knowledge, and make sincere vows of unselfish service. It is only, thereby, that they can root, out the hindrances and foster their root of merit.

More detail of how devoted a student must be using local methods of practicing the yogis path of that time.

"Subhuti, if a disciple takes pleasure in a narrow and exclusive form of doctrine, or is attached to false ideas as to an entity, a being, a living being, a personality, he cannot receive with profit the instruction of this Scripture nor can he find delight in its study. This Scripture is intended for those who are entering upon the path, as well as for those who are attaining the highest planes of spiritual wisdom. If a disciple zealously observes, studies and widely disseminates the knowledge of this Scripture, for such an one there will be cumulative merit, immeasurable, incomparable, illimitable, inconceivable. All such disciples will be endowed with transcendent spiritual wisdom and enlightenment."
If a person is attached to conceptions then he won’t find this sutra useful. This scripture (sutra) is intended for people who actually intend to follow the (zen) path. A person who carefully studies and teaches/spreads this sutra will gain in “merit”. Thus the writer gets the idea of spiritual gain just from spreading the sutra which will appeal to the common man and the seeker after truth or student of spiritual philosophy who will understand what Siddhartha is saying and pass it on.

Basically, the idea here is to pass this on like Bodhidharma’s shorter explanation in “Transmission of the Lamp” (Chapter 2) which seems to be titled after the idea of transmission in this sutra.

*The Lord Buddha continued: “What think you? May an enlightened disciple ponder within himself, saying, 'I will create numerous Buddhist Kingdoms?''*

*Subhuti replied: "No, Honored of the Worlds! And why? Because, such thoughts would be incompatible with the Virya Paramita, and kingdoms thus imagined would not, in reality, be Buddhist Kingdoms. Such a phrase as 'the creation of Buddhist Kingdoms,' is merely a figure of speech."

Here you see that Subhuti has gained some understanding and when asked if an enlightened person can creates heavens he responds ‘don’t be silly, to create Buddhist heavens is merely a figure of speech’. In other words, enlightenment is, as
Bodhidharma so eloquently put it, “Nothing special” and Subhuti gets that.

The Lord Buddha continued: "What think you, Subhuti? Do you imagine that the Tathagata reflects within himself, 'I will bring salvation to all beings'? Entertain no such delusive thought. And why? Because, in reality, there is no such dharma as 'salvation' for any one; and there is no such thing as a living being to whom 'salvation' can be brought. What is referred to as an entity, a being, a living being, a personality, is not so in reality--it is only so understood by ignorant and uneducated people."

Siddhartha further presses the point of the enlightened not being Saints. He also presses the point that the whole personality and self you think exists doesn’t (it’s just a story the ego creates etc). Since all conceptions as just conceptions and not real, NO idea of what an enlightened person is like. The conceptions a person has of Saints or Gods doesn’t apply to Siddhartha’s path.

The Lord Buddha enquired of Subhuti, saying: "May a disciple who has 'entered the stream' which bears on to Nirvana, thus moralise within himself: I have attained the fruits commensurate with the merits of one who has 'entered the stream'?"

Subhuti replied: "No, Honored of the Worlds! And why? Because, 'entered the stream' is simply a descriptive term. A disciple who avoids the seductions of form,
sound, odour, taste, touch, and their discriminations, is merely called, 'one who has entered the stream.'"

Now we see Subhuti gets it, i.e. that any description of enlightenment or “Nirvana” (which just means “to extinguish” or “blow out” referring to the ego, i.e. ‘extinguish the ego’) is just that a description that one uses to communicate. In other words, Subhuti gets that describing strawberries is not the same as tasting strawberries. No matter how much you try and describe the taste of strawberries or however you can imagine strawberries to be, ultimately you have to taste a strawberry to know a strawberry.

The Lord Buddha again enquired of Subhuti, saying: "What think you? Is a bhikshu who is subject to only one more reincarnation, to muse within himself, 'I have obtained the fruits in agreement with the merits of "a once returner"?' Subhuti replied, saying: "No, Honored of the Worlds! And why? Because, 'a once returner' is merely a descriptive title denoting only one more reincarnation; but, in reality, there is no such condition as 'only one more reincarnation.' 'A once returner' is merely a descriptive title."

He carries this further attacking the very foundation of the societal belief in reincarnation making one wonder if reincarnation even exists or it’s just a conception. As I have shown earlier, later zen masters clearly saw reincarnation to be a psychological state and not a literal one and so we can assume that that is probably the point Siddhartha tried to make those many ages ago.
The Lord Buddha once again enquired of Subhuti, saying: "What think you? May a bhikshu who has attained so high a degree of spiritual merit that he is never again to be reincarnated, may he thus reflect within himself, I have obtained the fruits which accord with the merits of one who is never to return to this world of life-and-death?"

Subhuti replied, saying: "No, Honored of the Worlds! And why? Because, 'a never returner' is merely a designation, meaning, 'immunity from reincarnation'; but, in reality, there is no such condition, hence 'a never returner' is merely a convenient name."

Here it’s even clearer that at the heart of Buddhism there should be no concept of reincarnation except as a psychological state. Repeating what I outlined before:

An ancient Zen Scholar, Hui-Neng’s Tan Ching, Writes;

What is Paramita? This is a Sanskrit term of the Western country. In Yang it means "the other shore reached". When the meaning (artha in Sanskrit) is understood, one is detached from birth and death. When the objective world (visaya) is clung to, there is the rise of birth and death; it is like the waves rising from the water; this is called "this shore". When you are detached from the objective world, there is no birth and death for you; it is like the water constantly running its course: this is "reaching the other shore". Hence Paramita.43
The idea being expressed here: When you cling to the world you have to create to create a self to deal with each new situation, thus you experience ‘death and rebirth’ (of the ego). When you let go and dwell in the zen state your consciousness stays steady and thus you don’t experience birth and death (of the ego).

For example: When you try and do good deeds you are trying to create a new self. By working on being better and better, you are destroying an old way of being (the old ‘self’) and you are creating a new one. Your ‘self’, i.e. how you define or imagine yourself to be, is going through death and rebirth.

Zen Buddhism is not about religious beliefs but the lack of them, i.e. you cleanse yourself of ALL conceptions. So any religious belief would automatically get purged as a misconception, illusion, cultural superstition etc.

The Lord Buddha yet again enquired of Subhuti, saying: "What think you? May a Bodhisattva who has attained to absolute tranquillity of mind thus meditate within himself: I have obtained the position of an Arhat?" Subhuti replied, saying: "No, Honored of the Worlds! And why? Because, in reality, there is no such condition synonymous with the term Arhat. If an Arhat thus meditates within himself, 'I have obtained the condition of an Arhat,' there would be the obvious occurrence to his mind of such arbitrary concepts as an entity, a being, a living being, a personality. When the Blessed One declared of me that in tranquillity of mind, observance of the Dharma and spiritual perception, I was preeminent among the
disciples, I did not think within myself: 'I am free from desire, I am an Arhat.' Had I thought thus, the Blessed One would not have declared concerning me: 'Subhuti delights in the austerities of an Arhat.' It was because I was perfectly tranquil and oblivious to all conditions, that the Lord Buddha declared: 'Subhuti delights in the austerities practised by the Arhats.'"

Once again the point is pressed that in the enlightened state there would be no conceptions/thought of anything. Further proving the point I’ve been making that zen, as we have learned from Chinese sources, seems to be the actual teaching of Siddhartha (Buddha).

The Lord Buddha added: "True, Subhuti! Enlightened disciples in the exercise of the Viya Paramita ought to maintain within themselves a pure and single mind; they should be unconscious of sensuous conditions and cultivate a mind that is independent of material circumstances. And why? Because, all sensuous conditions and material circumstances are only manifestations of mind and are alike dream-like and imaginary.

Here Siddhartha is teaching the traditional view of information from the sense that ascetics all over the ancient world held in common (from India to Greece).

"Subhuti, A Bodhisattva should have a heart filled with compassion for all sentient life, but if he should think
within his mind: 'I will deliver all beings,' he ought not to be called a Bodhisattva. And why? Because, in the first place, if there is no living being, no personality, then there is no one to be called a Bodhisattva. And in the second place, the Tathagata has declared: 'All beings are without self, without life, without personality.' Who then is to be delivered?

Here Siddhartha illustrate the idea that if a person thinks he is a “Bodhisattva” i.e. accomplished practitioner then he is living from a conception and thus it is fake. Since the self is a conception there is no need for deliverance, i.e. the idea of immediate enlightenment upon understanding is foreshadowed here and stated again by later zen masters;

In zen, enlightenment can come to anyone at any time. As one writer explains about attaining enlightenment or awareness of the Original mind or “mushin”:

In the attainment of this state of mind (mushin), some are quicker than others. There are some who attain to a state of mushin all at once by just listening to a discourse on the Dharma, while there are others who attain to it only after going through all the grades of Bodhisattvaship\footnote{In this context it just means an \textit{apprenticeship by a student}} such as the ten stages of faith, the ten stages of abiding, the ten stages of discipline, and the ten stages of turning-over. More or less time may be required in the attainment of mushin, but once attained it puts an end to all discipline, to all realization and yet there is really nothing attained. It is truth and not falsehood. Whether this mushin is attained in one thought or attained after going through the ten stages its practical working is the
same and there is no question of the one being deeper or shallower than the other. Only the one has passed through long ages of hard discipline.

Basically it says that no matter how much you meditate or don’t meditate, ‘when you get it, then you get it’. Since zen is a state of mind which is natural, it simply has to be understood to be practiced and thus the smart ones will get enlightened fast and the slow witted will get it slowly or never. But once zen is attained, it is the same for everyone in it’s basic understanding and experience.

The fact that Siddhartha assumes the person will have compassion in his heart suggests either that that is the natural human state (as suggested by zen from Chinese sources) or is practicing the path of the sage and the years of meditation have trained him to be compassionate, something which later masters have suggested is an effect of regular/constant practice of the zen path.

*If a Bodhisattva were to say: 'I will create many Buddha-lands,' he would say what is untrue. And why, Because, the idea of a Buddha-land is wholly imaginary, it is only a name.*

In a nutshell: A conception/idea is just a conception/idea. Nothing more.

"*But O Subhuti, the Bodhisattva who believes that all things are without selfhood, and still has compassion and*
faith, he is, indeed, a noble minded Bodhisattva, and is so considered by the all-wise Tathagatas."

In a nutshell: A person who can let go of the self/ego while retaining his humanity is considered to be the best of students.

**Dhyana Paramita (Ideal Tranquility)**

Subhuti enquired of the Lord Buddha, saying: "Honored of the Worlds! In future ages, when this scripture is proclaimed amongst those beings destined to hear it, shall any conceive within their minds a sincere, unmingled faith?"

The Lord Buddha replied, saying: "Have no such apprehensive thought. Even at the remote period of five centuries subsequent to the Nirvana of the Tathagata, there will be many disciples observing the monastic vows and assiduously devoted to good works. These, hearing this Scripture proclaimed, will believe in its immutability and will conceive within their minds a pure, unmingled faith. Besides, it is important to realise that faith thus conceived, is not exclusively in virtue of the individual thought of any particular Buddha, but because of its affiliation with the universal thought of all the myriad Buddhas throughout the infinite ages. Therefore, among the beings destined to hear this Scripture proclaimed, many, by the Dhyana Paramita, will intuitively conceive a pure and holy faith."
Subhuti asks a pointless question conceived in his imagination, i.e. ‘what about the future, will anyone understand your teaching in the future’. Clearly this was a concern of many people of that time if my reading is correct that the writer is adding his own explanations and reasons for spreading this sutra.

The response is, obviously, not to worry about the future as that too is a conception of your mind. Then Siddhartha (or the writer) seeks to console the reader who may lack the understanding with what he/she needs to hear, i.e. ‘sure people will understand this in the future, sure monks will exist, sure this teaching will be heard and applied’ and, interestingly enough, ‘there will be some people who figure this out intuitively after practicing dhayana (the Sanskrit word from which the word Zen is derived).

"Subhuti, the Tathagata by his prescience is perfectly cognisant of all such potential disciples, and for these also there is reserved an immeasurable merit. And why? Because, the minds of these will not revert to such arbitrary concepts of phenomena as an entity, a being, a living being, a personality, having qualities or ideas coincident with the Dharma, or existing apart from the principle of the Dharma. And why? Because, assuming the permanency and reality of phenomena, the minds of these disciples would be involved in such distinctive ideas as an entity, a being, a living being, a personality. Affirming the permanency and reality of qualities or ideas coincident with the Dharma, their minds would inevitably be involved in resolving these same
definitions. Postulating the inviolate nature of qualities or ideas which have an existence apart from the Dharma, there yet remains to be explained these abstruse distinctions—an entity, a being, a living being, a personality. Therefore, enlightened disciples ought not to affirm the permanency or reality of qualities or ideas coincident with the Dharma, nor postulate as being of an inviolate nature, qualities and ideas having an existence apart from the concept of the Dharma.

A teacher is aware of the potential of his students. Then there is a repetition of how conceptions are a wrong way of viewing the world and people who base their conceptions on Dharma (duties of living/life) are also involved in mistaken notions as these ideas are not real but just conceptions the mind has created.

"Thus enlightened disciples are enabled to appreciate the significance of the words which the Tathagatas invariably repeat to their follows: 'Disciples must realise that the Dharma is presented to your minds in the simile of a raft.' If the Dharma—having fulfilled its function in bearing you to the other shore—must be abandoned together with all its coincident qualities and ideas, how much more inevitable must be the abandonment of qualities and ideas which have an existence apart from the Dharma?"

Here Siddhartha says something interesting, that society’s guide to life (one’s dharma or “duty”) is just meant as a raft to take you to the other side. It this case, it’s meant as a means to get through the initial stages of life from childhood to
householder. Ultimately, when you reach the other shore (enlightenment) you can abandon all the ideas and concepts that got you there because they were just a tool, like a raft, and once the job is done (stream is crossed) it is no longer of any use.

The Lord Buddha continued: "If a disciple had an amount of treasure sufficient to fill the illimitable universe and bestowed it upon the Tathagata in the exercise of charity, and if another disciple, having aspired to supreme spiritual wisdom, selected from this Scripture even a stanza of four lines only, observed it, diligently studied it and with zeal explained it to others, the cumulative merit of such a disciple would be relatively greater than the merit of the former. But, Subhuti, the attitude of his mind in which he explained it is important. It should be explained with a mind filled with compassion but free from any assumption as to the reality of an entity, a being, a living being, a personality, or as to the permanency or reality of earthly phenomena, or as to the validity of any ideas concerning them. And why? Because the phenomena of life are like a dream, a phantasm, a bubble, a shadow, the glistening dew, a lightning flash; thus should they be contemplated by an enlightened disciple. His mind should, at all times, be resting in the blessedness of tranquillity which invariably accompanies the practice of the Dhyana Paramita."

Understanding is better than charity. The Stance of the mind must be the same as “dhayna” or zen. these two short sentences should explain the entire paragraph above if I’ve
(Regarding the Dhyana Paramita--Ideal Tranquillity--the Sutra says: "The beginner should consider and practise Dhyana in two aspects: as cessation of the mind's intellectual activities, and as realisation of insight. To bring all mental states that produce vagrant thinking to a stand is called cessation. To adequately understand the transitory and emptiness and egolessness of all things is insight. At first each of them should be practised separately by the beginner, but when, by degrees, he attains facility, and finally attains perfection, the two aspects will naturally blend into one perfect state of mental tranquillity. Those who practise Dhyana should dwell in solitude and, sitting erect, should remain motionless, seeking to quiet the mind. Do not fix the thoughts on any definite thing that you have sensed or discriminated, or memorised; all particularisations, all imaginations, all recollections, are to be excluded, because all things are uncreate, devoid of all attributes, ever changing. In all thinking, something precedes that has been awakened by an external stimuli, so in Dhyana one should seek to abandon all notions connected with an external world. Then in thinking, something follows that has been elaborated in his own mind; so he should seek to abandon thinking. Because his attention is distracted by the external world, he is warned to turn to his inner, intuitive consciousness. If the process of mentation begins again, he is warned not to let his mind become attached to anything, because, independent of
mind they have no existence. Dhyana is not at all to be confined to sitting erect in meditation; one's mind should be concentrated at all times, whether sitting, standing, moving, working; one should constantly discipline himself to that end. Gradually entering into the state of Samadhi, he will transcend all hindrances and become strengthened in faith, a faith that will be immovable.

A more detailed description that is explained in pieces in the commentary on the yoga sutras which shows from one of the sources teachings Siddhartha’s teaching are influenced by and amounts to, basically, “practice zen”.

The Lord Buddha resumed his words to Subhuti, saying: "What think you, Subhuti, are the atoms of dust in the myriad worlds which comprise the universe, are they very numerous?"

Subhuti replied: "Very numerous, indeed, Blessed One."

The Lord Buddha continued: "Subhuti, these atoms of dust, many as they are, are not in reality 'atoms of dust,' they are merely termed so. Moreover, these 'myriad worlds' are not really worlds, they are merely termed so because of ignorance.

"Subhuti, if a good disciple were to take these infinite worlds and reduce them to exceedingly minute particles of dust and blow them away into space, would the so-called 'infinite worlds' cease to exist?"
Subhuti replied: "The Blessed One has already taught us that 'myriad worlds' is only a name; how can that which is only a name, cease to exist?"

Then the Lord Buddha continued: "True, Subhuti, but if it were otherwise, and the infinite worlds were a reality, then it would be asserting the unity and eternality of matter, which every one knows is dream-like, changing and transitory. Unity and eternality of matter, indeed! There is neither matter, nor unity, nor eternality--they are merely names. Belief in the unity and eternality of matter is incomprehensible; only common and worldly minded people, for purely materialistic reasons, cling to that hypothesis. Subhuti, enlightened disciples must thoroughly understand that emptiness and egolessness are characteristic of all Truth. The Dhyana Paramita can be successfully practised only from that viewpoint."

A repetition of what has been said before many times already both in this sutra and in this book.

Then the Lord Buddha continued: "If a disciple should affirm that the Tathagata had enunciated a doctrine that the mind could comprehend the idea of an entity, a being, a living being, a personality, or any other discrimination, would that disciple be interpreting aright the meaning of this Scripture?"

Subhuti replied: "Blessed One, that disciple would not be interpreting aright the meaning of the Lord Buddha's discourse. And why? Because, Blessed One, when you
discoursed on belief in the reality of an entity, a being, a living being, a personality, it was plainly declared that there were no such things; that they were entirely unreal and illusive; that they were merely words."

The Lord Buddha continued: "Subhuti, the disciples who aspire to supreme spiritual wisdom ought thus to know, to believe in, and to interpret all phenomena. They ought to eliminate from their minds every seeming evidence of concrete objects; they ought to eliminate from their minds even the notions of such things; and become oblivious to every idea connected with them. And why? Because, so long as he cherishes ideas of and concerning an entity, a being, a living being, a personality, his mind is kept in confusion. He must even become oblivious to the idea that there is any one to whom the idea of sentient life can become oblivious. If he were to think within his mind, 'I must become oblivious to every idea of sentient life,' he could not be described as being wholly enlightened. And why? Because, within the bounds of reality there is no such thing, no entity, no being, no living being, no personality, nothing whatever that can be discriminated, and therefore, there can be no reality to ideas concerning them, for all these things are merely manifestations of the mind itself."

Restating in a new way that all is a creation of the mind and the descriptions Siddhartha (the Buddha) is using are meant as allegories or analogies and not literal fact (as people often interpret scripture to be).
Subhuti enquired, saying: "Blessed One, in the ages to come, will sentient beings destined to hear this Dharma, awaken within their minds these essential elements of faith?"

Subhuti asks again about the future. Asking if any intelligent people will hear this teaching in the future and get it. The reply is kinda funny...

The Lord Buddha replied, smiling: "Subhuti, it cannot be asserted that there are or will be any such things as sentient beings, nor can it be asserted that there will not be. At present there are none, they are merely termed 'sentient beings.'

Siddhatha says, smiling, that there is no proof that there exits any intelligent beings nor can it be proven that there are not any. But there are any we just call people intelligent. At least, that what it sounds like to me.

And as to any one being saved: how can there be one to find it by seeking, or to know it if it is ever found?

Here it is clear Siddhartha is returning to the idea that conceptions are an illusion of the mind and thus how can you be saved when you have to conceive of a state of being saved which is a creation of your mind and thus an illusion...
One cannot gain self-realisation of Prajna Paramita without transcending the conscious faculty. To fully realise emptiness, egolessness, imagelessness by the use of the discriminating mind is futile. It is only by practising the Dhyana Paramita, by identifying oneself with emptiness and egolessness, that emptiness and egolessness is to be realised. In the exercise of the Dhyana Paramita, unless the mind of the enlightened disciple is independent of all phenomena, he is like a person lost in impenetrable darkness, to whom every object is invisible and himself helpless. But an enlightened disciple practising the Paramita with a mind independent of every phenomena, is like unto a person to whom suddenly the power of vision is restored, and he sees every thing as in the meridian glory of the sunlight.

... and thus one must practice zen.

The Lord Buddha said:
"Not by means of visible form,
Not by audible sound,
Is Buddha to be perceived;
Only in the solitude and purity of Dhyana
Is one to realise the blessedness of Buddha."

Siddhartha said (my best guess); 
Not through sight
Nor through sound
Can enlightenment be experienced
Only by practicing zen with purity of mind in a quiet place (for meditation)
Can a person experience the bliss of Nirvana

*Prajna Paramita (Ideal Wisdom)*

The Lord Buddha addressing Subhuti, said: "What think you? When in a previous life I was a disciple of Dipankara Buddha, did I eventually become a Buddha because of some prescribed teaching or system of doctrine?"

This is meant to be a method of communication through analogy so when people get caught up in the concept of reincarnation itself they miss the point of Siddhartha’s or even Bodhidharma’s teachings. Instead of a lesson in history this should be seen as an analogy to test the students understanding of what has been taught and repeated thus far. So the question is simply: Is this some ancient doctrine from some mysterious source?

Subhuti replied: "No, Blessed One. When the Lord Buddha was a disciple of Dipankara Buddha neither prescribed teaching nor system of doctrine was communicated to him, whereby he eventually became a Buddha."

The answer is simple and accurate. No system of doctrine has been passed on to Siddhartha, i.e. this is not some ancient but secret mystical teaching.
The Lord Buddha continued, saying: "In my discourses have I presented a system of doctrine that can be specifically formulated?"

Siddhartha asks if he has outlined any system to attain enlightenment.

Subhuti replied: "As I understand the meaning of the Blessed One's discourses, he has no system of doctrine that can be specifically formulated. And why? Because, what the Blessed One adumbrates in the terms of the Dharma is, in reality, inscrutable and inexpressible. Being a purely spiritual concept, it is neither consonant with the Dharma, nor synonymous with anything apart from the Dharma; but it is exemplified in the manner in which Bodhisattvas and holy Buddhas have regarded intuitive self-realisation as the highest law of their minds and by it have severally attained to different planes of spiritual wisdom."

Subhuti replies that the experience of enlightenment (zen) is beyond words and is best understood intuitively within your own experiences.

The Lord Buddha endorsed these words, saying: "True it is; Subhuti! True it is. There is no dharma by means of which Buddhas attain supreme spiritual wisdom. Wisdom is attained only by self-realisation through the practice of the Dhyana Paramita. If there had been such a Dharma, Dipankara would not have prophesied when I was a
disciple of his: 'In future ages, my boy, you will become Shakyamuni Buddha.' And why? Because in the concept Buddha every dharma is wholly and intelligibly comprehended. How could there be a Dharma by which that all-inclusive state could be attained? The supreme spiritual wisdom to which Buddhas attain, cannot, in its essence, be defined as either real or unreal. That which is commonly spoken of as the Buddha Dharma is synonymous with every moral and spiritual dharma. Subhuti, what are spoken of as 'systems of dharma,' including even the so-called Buddha Dharma, are not in reality systems of dharma, they are merely termed 'systems of dharma.'"

Siddhartha says “correct!” Enlightenment is only attained by practicing zen/dhayana. Basically, that's it.

(Regarding the Prajna Paramita--Ideal Wisdom--really, there is no such thing. Prajna Paramita transcends all ideation, all knowledge, all wisdom; It is Noble Wisdom in its "suchness" and its self-nature is manifested in the transformation-bodies of the Tathagatas.)

There is no such thing as ideal wisdom because wisdom can’t be conceived only experienced or known. Reminds me of stuff Socrates would say, once again indicating a continuum of belief & practice from Ancient India to Ancient Greece;

To know, is to know that you know nothing. That is the meaning of true knowledge.

Socrates

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Subhuti enquired of the Lord Buddha: "In attaining supreme spiritual wisdom did the Lord Buddha, then, attain nothing definite and tangible?"

Here Subhuti asks what is actually gained from enlightenment.

The Lord Buddha replied: "In attaining supreme spiritual wisdom, not a vestige of dharma nor doctrine was obtained, that is why it is called 'supreme spiritual wisdom.'

Siddhartha replies that in attaining enlightenment I obtained nothing describable and that’s why it’s supreme wisdom.

This is also translated as ‘supreme unexcelled enlightenment’ as achieving it is the goal and yet it is nothing special. Ultimately the meaning is the same, i.e. there is no “truth” in enlightenment, no knowledge which can be passed on, it is just the experience of life and that’s what makes it ‘supreme spiritual wisdom’ because it is nothing. In other words, true wisdom is nothing special. Once again reminding me of the sayings of Socrates.

The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing. 
Socrates

Prajna Paramita is universal, coherent, indivisible; it is neither above nor below; it excludes all such arbitrary
ideas as an entity, a being, a living being, a personality, discrimination, ideation; but it includes every dharma pertaining to the cultivation of wisdom and compassion. And even these, when defined and thought about, are not in reality 'dharmas of wisdom and compassion'; they are only termed 'dharmas of wisdom and compassion.'

Wisdom is knowing all is a conception or idea of reality rather than reality itself. Even calling something wise is just a label. OR True wisdom is beyond definition.

"Do not think that the Tathagatas consider within themselves: 'I ought to promulgate a system of Dharma.' Have no such irrelevant thought, Subhuti. and why? because by so thinking the disciple would expose his ignorance and defame the Tathagatas. In reality there is no 'system of Dharma' to promulgate; it is only termed 'a system of Dharma.'

Siddhartha further explains that there is no real Universal Teaching or Absolute Spiritual Truth taught by the enlightened. Saying ‘I am teaching you a method to reach enlightenment’ is just a bunch of words to describe mental conceptions. No true enlightened person tries to construct a scripture for enlightenment. They just explain things as best they can for the people of their time and culture. In reality there is no religion of or for enlightenment that anyone could possibly spread.
"What think you? Can the Tathagatas be perceived by their perfect material bodies, or by any physical phenomena?"

Subhuti replied: "It is improbable that a Lord Buddha can be perceived by his perfect material body, or by any physical phenomena; because, in reality, there is no such thing as a material body, nor physical phenomena; they are only terms that are in common use."

This is like saying you cannot perceive whether someone is enlightened just by looking at their body. That said, part of this is based in the common belief of that culture and time that the world was an illusion. All Siddhartha added to that popular belief was that if the world is an illusion then so is the self or “I” with which you perceive the world, i.e. it’s all an illusion. (covered in the introduction)

Then the Lord Buddha said: "Why is the Tathagata so named? It is because he manifests the essential nature of reality. 'He who thus comes,' comes from nowhere. He symbolises the emptiness of qualities, the egolessness, the imagelessness, of ultimate reality. He symbolises the un-born, the un-originate, the truly eternal because the ultimate. And yet, Subhuti, if anyone should affirm that by the Tathagata ultimate Wisdom is manifested, he would speak an untruth, he would slander me by his limited knowledge. That which is manifested by the Tathagatas is neither truth nor falsehood: it is no-thing-ness; and yet it is inconceivable Oneness, because it is Prajna Paramita, because it is the essence nature of Buddhahood."
Here Siddhartha, interestingly enough, seems to describe the Tao as described in the Tao Te Ching and then adds to that the any conception of who I am would be a lie just like Socrates might say ‘any conception of wisdom isn’t wisdom itself’.

"Subhuti, the plane of thought to which the Buddhas attain and which the Tathagatas manifest, cannot be expressed in terms of reality or in terms of non-reality. Their utterances are neither extravagant nor chimerical; they are true, credible, immutable, but can never be expressed in the limits of words and doctrines.

This sounds like it could have come right out of Plato’s dialogues. The particular part of Plato’s dialogues has come to be known as ‘the allegory of the cave’ and it goes something like this;

Imagine a civilization that has spent it’s entire existence in a cave lit by a fire. This society believes that the shadows on the cave wall, that is cast by the fire, is actually themselves and their friends and family. They believe they are the shadows on the cave wall because they are chained to the ground and their face is locked in a position facing the wall.

Now imagine one person breaks his/her chains and steps out of the cave. This person sees color for the first time. Even sees his/her own hand for the first time as the chains are gone. Now this cave of shadows escapee has a serious problem…how do you explain to people who have never seen
anything but shadows what color is? How can you explain a

tree or even the blue dome of the sky? You can’t. They won’t
even have words for the color blue or red since they live in the
black, white and gray world of shadows.

Plato’s theory is that like a cave dweller who has stepped into
the sunlight, the wise man too has stepped out of society and
culture. When he comes back to his people to explain what he
has learned, he discovers that there are no words in the
language to define what he knows. So he must talk in riddles
and parables.

Or as Siddhartha might put it the words of the wise can never
be put into the limited framework of words, i.e. “can never be
expressed in the limits of words and doctrines”.

*Then the Lord Buddha enquired of Subhuti, saying: "Are
Tathagatas to be recognised by the works they do and the
effects they produce?"

Subhuti replied: "No, Blessed One; a Buddha is not to be
known by his works, else would a great world-conquering
King be a Buddha."

The Lord Buddha said: "Just so, Subhuti. It is not by a
great show of erudition, nor by the building of anything,
nor by the destruction of anything, that the Tathagatas are
to be known. It is only within the deepest consciousness
of Bodhisattvas through the self-realisation of the Prajna
Paramita, that the Tathagatas are to be realised."
There is no way in the world for you to recognize an enlightened person because it is not something that is external to the mind that it could categorize and examine but internal to the mind and thus can't be observed in the external world. So no acts, good or bad, can indicate whether someone is enlightened. Only an enlightened person could probably recognize another enlightened person.

Then the scripture closes praising Siddhartha/Buddha as is traditional in the Indian tradition of Master (Teacher) & Disciple (Student). Another reason to assume that this scripture (sutra) contains the teaching of Siddhartha distilled through the eyes of a much later expounder of the Buddhist path who may have a view of Siddhartha as a legend and thus glorifies him or simply does so to conform with cultural norms for what a scripture is supposed to sound like. In any case, by stripping all the excess stuff (conceptions/ideas) as is recommended by the Buddha in this very Sutra, it is possible to simply ignore all the glorification's of Siddhartha as a cultural thing rather than an intended one by Siddhartha himself and that is why I like this sutra so much.

The Lord Buddha continued: "What think you, Subhuti? Does the Tathagata possess a physical eye?" Subhuti assented, saying: "The Blessed One truly possesses a physical eye."

"What think you, Subhuti? Does the Tathagata possess the eye of enlightenment?" Subhuti assented, saying: "The Blessed One truly possesses the eye of enlightenment."
"What think you, Subhuti? Does the Tathagata possess the eye of Wisdom?" Subhuti assented, saying: "The Blessed One truly possesses the eye of Wisdom."

"What think you, Subhuti? Does the Tathagata possess the eye of Compassion?" Subhuti assented, saying: "The Blessed One truly possesses the Buddha eye of Compassion."

Basically, you are the coolest enlightened man ever. Something the writer must have added in competition with other teachers of his age, i.e. of all the teachers in our age you are the greatest.

The Lord Buddha continued: "If there were as many river Ganges as there are grains of sand in the river Ganges, and if there were as many Buddha-lands as there are grains of sand in all the innumerable rivers, would these Buddha-lands be numerous?"

Subhuti replied: "Buddha-lands are innumerable."

A seemingly irrelevant comment. Basically asking if allot is allot and getting an affirmative ‘yes allot is allot’. 

The Lord Buddha continued: "Subhuti, within these innumerable worlds are every form of sentient life with all their various mental capacities, dispositions, and
temperaments, all alike are fully known to the Tathagatas, and the Tathagatas are filled with compassion for them.

A glorification of the followers of Buddha’s path to attract more students.

Nevertheless, what are referred to as mental capacities, dispositions, and temperaments, are not in reality mental capacities, dispositions and temperaments; they are merely termed such. Dispositions of mind, modes of thought, whether relating to the past, present or future, are all alike unreal and illusory.

Restating that all conceptions of mental capacities are just imaginary ideas and not real in and of themselves.

"Thus should the Noble Prajna Paramita be explained. Thus should a young disciple, whether man or woman, thus should the highest Bodhisattva, understand and explain the Prajna Paramita. Everything should be seen as solitude, as egoless, as imageless; everything should be seen as the sky, as sunlight, as darkness, as a phantom, as a dream, as a flash of lightning, as a bubble. Thus is Prajna Paramita to be conceived and to be explained."

Basically: In conclusion, this is how the path of wisdom should be explained.
Then the venerable Subhuti, hearing the text of this sacred Scripture expounded by the Lord Buddha, and realising its profound meaning, was moved to tears and, addressing the Lord Buddha, said: "Thou art of transcendent wisdom, Blessed One! In thus expounding this supreme Scripture, thou hast surpassed every exposition previously given. True it is that all things and all phenomena and all definitive ideas are transitory, empty, egoless, imageless and dream-like! Only Prajna Paramita abides."

Subhuti achieves enlightenment and is moved to tears. A great conclusion for a scripture teaching “enlightenment” to the masses. Of course, just because Subhuti gets it doesn’t mean other will and thus the constant entreaty to learn, even if just one verse, and to practice it and the constant bribery of merit in reading and passing on this scripture to encourage the student to learn.

The Lord Buddha assenting, said: "Subhuti, in future ages, disciples destined to hear this Scripture, discarding every arbitrary idea, neither becoming perturbed by its extreme mode of thought, nor carried away by its lofty sentiment, nor fearful as to realising its noble sentiment, who faithfully and zealously study it, observe its precepts, and patiently explain it to others, their intrinsic merits will excite superlative wonder and praise. Moreover, as they gain in realisation of this profound Prajna Paramita through the practice of Dhyana, they will eventually become wholly enlightened, wholly compassionate--themselves revealed as Buddha."
People in the future, not caught up in conceptions of their minds, will study this scripture, understand it and pass it on. In fact, as they practice dhayana/zen they too will eventually become like me, i.e. enlightened.

All in all a repetition of the basic ideas Siddhartha seeks to get across as his raft for others to make the journey to ‘the other side’ is contained in this closing.

Subhuti enquired of the Lord Buddha: "Blessed One, by what name shall this Scripture be known, that we may regard it with reverence?"

The Lord Buddha replied: "Subhuti, this Scripture shall be known as THE DIAMOND SCRIPTURE, because, by its Transcendent Wisdom all sentient life shall reach the other shore. By this name you shall reverently regard it, always remembering that what is referred to as Transcendental Wisdom is only a name,--Prajna Paramita transcends all wisdom."

Basically: This sutra (scripture) shall be known as The Diamond Scripture and shall be a means of reaching enlightenment for all beings. But always remember that enlightenment is only a name and the actual experience of enlightenment transcends all names as all experiences transcend the words that are used for them (the strawberry example in the introduction to Zen - chapter 1)
Appendix 1:  
*Sutra of Transcendental Wisdom*

The following sutra (or “scripture of wisdom”) talks about zen from another perspective condensing it into a very short form. Something to contemplate.

*Sutra of Transcendental Wisdom*  
*(Maha-prajna-paramita-hridaya)*

THUS HAVE I HEARD. At one time the Blessed One together with a number of the highest Bodhisattvas and a great company of bhikshus was staying at Rajagriha on Mount Gridhrakta.

The Blessed One was sitting apart absorbed in Samadhi, and the noble Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara was meditating on the profound Prajna-paramita, thinking thus: Personality is made up of five grasping aggregates--form, sensation, perception, discrimination and consciousness--all of which the Blessed One has taught us are by nature dream-like and empty.

Then the venerable Sariputra, influenced by the power of the Blessed One absorbed in Samadhi, spoke thus to the noble Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara: "If a son or daughter of good
family wishes to study the profound Prajna-paramita, how is he to do so?"

The noble Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara replied to the venerable Sariputra: "If a son or daughter wishes to study the profound Prajna-paramita, he must think thus: Personality? What is personality? Is it an eternal entity or is it made up of elements that pass away?

"Personality is made up of five grasping aggregates which are by nature empty of any self-substance. Form, or matter, is emptiness; emptiness is not different from form, nor is form different from emptiness; indeed, emptiness is form. In like manner: sensation is emptiness; emptiness is not different from sensation, nor is sensation different from emptiness; indeed, emptiness is sensation. In like manner: perception, discrimination and consciousness are also emptiness.

"Thus, O Sariputra, all things having the character of emptiness, have no beginning nor ending; they are neither faultless nor not faultless; they are neither perfect nor imperfect. Therefore, in emptiness there is no form, no sensation, no perception, no discrimination, no consciousness. There is no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no sensitiveness to contact, no mind. There is no form, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch, no mental process, no object, no knowledge, no ignorance. There is no destruction of objects, no cessation of knowledge, no cessation of ignorance. There is no decay and no death, nor is there any destruction of the notions of decay and death. There is no Noble Fourfold Truth--no pain, no cause of pain, no cessation of pain, nor any Noble Path to
the cessation of pain. There is no knowledge of Nirvana, there is no obtaining of Nirvana, there is no not-obtaining of Nirvana.

"Why is there no such thing as the obtaining of Nirvana? Because Nirvana is the realm of no-thing-ness. If the ego-soul of personality is an eternal entity it cannot attain Nirvana. It is only because personality is made up of elements and is, therefore, empty of an ego-soul, that it may attain Nirvana. So long as man is approaching Ultimate Wisdom, he is still dwelling in the realm of consciousness. If he is to realise Nirvana, he must pass beyond the realm of consciousness. In highest Samadhi when consciousness has been transcended, he has passed beyond discrimination and knowledge, beyond any reach of change or fear. He is already enjoying Nirvana.

"The perfect understanding of this and the patient acceptance of it is the Ultimate Wisdom that is Prajna-paramita. All the Buddhas of the past, present and future, having attained highest Samadhi, awake to find themselves realising this highest perfect Wisdom.

"Therefore, every one should seek self-realisation of Prajna-paramita, the Truth of Perfect Wisdom, the unsurpassable Truth, the Truth that ends all pain, the Truth that is forever True. O Prajna-paramita! O Transcendent Truth that spans the troubled ocean of life-and-death, safely carry all seekers to that other shore. Thus, O Sariputra, should a Bodhisattva teach all seekers the profound Prajna-paramita."

When the Blessed One had risen from Samadhi, he gave approval to the words of the noble Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, saying: "Well done! Well done, Noble Son! So, indeed, must
Thus spoke the Blessed One with joyful mind, and the noble Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara and the venerable Sariputra and the whole company of bhikshus praised the words of the Blessed One.
Appendix 2
Chapter 8 from Religion OF the Samurai
(full text at Taoist-Books.com)

The Training Of The Mind & The Practice Of Meditation

1. The Method of Instruction Adopted by Zen Masters.--Thus far we have described the doctrine of Zen inculcated by both Chinese and Japanese masters, and in this chapter we propose to sketch the practice of mental training and the method of practising Dhyana or Meditation. Zen teachers never instruct their pupils by means of explanation or argument, but urge them to solve by themselves through the practice of Meditation such problems as--'What is Buddha?' 'What is self?' 'What is the spirit of Bodhidharma?' 'What is life and death?' 'What is the real nature of mind?' and so on. Ten Shwai (To-sotsu), for instance, was wont to put three questions to the following effect: (1) Your study and discipline aim at the understanding of the real nature of mind. Where does the real nature of mind exist? (2) When you understand the real nature of mind, you are free from birth and death. How can you be saved when you are at the verge of death? (3) When you are free from birth and death, you know where you go after death. Where do you go when your body is reduced to elements? The pupils are not requested to express their solution of these problems in the form of a theory or an

45 The famous three difficult questions, known as the Three Gates of Teu Shwai (To Sotsu San Kwan), who died in 1091. See Mu Mon Kwan, xlvii.
argument, but to show how they have grasped the profound meaning implied in these problems, how they have established their conviction, and how they can carry out what they grasped in their daily life.

A Chinese Zen master\textsuperscript{46} tells us that the method of instruction adopted by Zen may aptly be compared with that of an old burglar who taught his son the art of burglary. The burglar one evening said to his little son, whom he desired to instruct in the secret of his trade: "Would you not, my dear boy, be a great burglar like myself?" "Yes, father," replied the promising young man." "Come with me, then. I will teach you the art." So saying, the man went out, followed by his son. Finding a rich mansion in a certain village, the veteran burglar made a hole in the wall that surrounded it. Through that hole they crept into the yard, and opening a window with complete ease broke into the house, where they found a huge box firmly locked up as if its contents were very valuable articles. The old man clapped his hands at the lock, which, strange to tell, unfastened itself. Then he removed the cover and told his son to get into it and pick up treasures as fast as he could. No sooner had the boy entered the box than the father replaced the cover and locked it up. He then exclaimed at the top of his voice: "Thief! thief! thief! thief!" Thus, having aroused the inmates, he went out without taking anything. All the house was in utter confusion for a while; but finding nothing stolen, they went to bed again. The boy sat holding his breath a short while; but making up his mind to get out of his narrow prison, began to scratch the bottom of the box with his finger-nails. The servant of the house, listening to the noise, supposed it to be a mouse gnawing at the inside of the box; so she came out, lamp in

\textsuperscript{46} Wu Tsu (Go So), the teacher of Yuen Wu (En Go).
hand, and unlocked it. On removing the cover, she was greatly surprised to find the boy instead of a little mouse, and gave alarm. In the meantime the boy got out of the box and went down into the yard, hotly pursued by the people. He ran as fast as possible toward the well, picked up a large stone, threw it down into it, and hid himself among the bushes. The pursuers, thinking the thief fell into the well, assembled around it, and were looking into it, while the boy crept out unnoticed through the hole and went home in safety. Thus the burglar taught his son how to rid himself of overwhelming difficulties by his own efforts; so also Zen teachers teach their pupils how to overcome difficulties that beset them on all sides and work out salvation by themselves.

2. The First Step in the Mental Training.--Some of the old Zen masters are said to have attained to supreme Enlightenment after the practice of Meditation for one week, some for one day, some for a score of years, and some for a few months. The practice of Meditation, however, is not simply a means for Enlightenment, as is usually supposed, but also it is the enjoyment of Nirvana, or the beatitude of Zen. It is a matter, of course, that we have fully to understand the doctrine of Zen, and that we have to go through the mental training peculiar to Zen in order to be Enlightened.

The first step in the mental training is to become the master of external things. He who is addicted to worldly pleasures, however learned or ignorant he may be, however high or low his social position may be, is a servant to mere things. He cannot adapt the external world to his own end, but he adapts himself to it. He is constantly employed, ordered, driven by sensual objects. Instead of taking possession of wealth, he is
possessed by wealth. Instead of drinking liquors, he is swallowed up by his liquors. Balls and music bid him to run mad. Games and shows order him not to stay at home. Houses, furniture, pictures, watches, chains, hats, bonnets, rings, bracelets, shoes—in short, everything has a word to command him. How can such a person be the master of things? To Ju (Na-kae) says: "There is a great jail, not a jail for criminals, that contains the world in it. Fame, gain, pride, and bigotry form its four walls. Those who are confined in it fall a prey to sorrow and sigh for ever."

To be the ruler of things we have first to shut up all our senses, and turn the currents of thoughts inward, and see ourselves as the centre of the world, and meditate that we are the beings of highest intelligence; that Buddha never puts us at the mercy of natural forces; that the earth is in our possession; that everything on earth is to be made use of for our noble ends; that fire, water, air, grass, trees, rivers, hills, thunder, cloud, stars, the moon, the sun, are at our command; that we are the law-givers of the natural phenomena; that we are the makers of the phenomenal world; that it is we that appoint a mission through life, and determine the fate of man.

3. The Next Step in the Mental Training.--In the next place we have to strive to be the master of our bodies. With most of the unenlightened, body holds absolute control over Self. Every order of the former has to be faithfully obeyed by the latter. Even if Self revolts against the tyranny of body, it is easily trampled down under the brutal hoofs of bodily passion. For example, Self wants to be temperate for the sake of health, and would fain pass by the resort for drinking, but body would force Self into it. Self at times lays down a strict dietetic rule for
himself, but body would threaten Self to act against both the letter and spirit of the rule. Now Self aspires to get on a higher place among sages, but body pulls Self down to the pavement of masses. Now Self proposes to give some money to the poor, but body closes the purse tightly. Now Self admires divine beauty, but body compels him to prefer sensuality. Again, Self likes spiritual liberty, but body confines him in its dungeons.

Therefore, to got Enlightened, we must establish the authority of Self over the whole body. We must use our bodies as we use our clothes in order to accomplish our noble purposes. Let us command body not to shudder under a cold shower-bath in inclement weather, not to be nervous from sleepless nights, not to be sick with any sort of food, not to groan under a surgeon's knife, not to succumb even if we stand a whole day in the midsummer sun, not to break down under any form of disease, not to be excited in the thick of battlefield--in brief, we have to control our body as we will.

Sit in a quiet place and meditate in imagination that body is no more bondage to you, that it is your machine for your work of life, that you are not flesh, that you are the governor of it, that you can use it at pleasure, and that it always obeys your order faithfully. Imagine body as separated from you. When it cries out, stop it instantly, as a mother does her baby. When it disobeys you, correct it by discipline, as a master does his pupil. When it is wanton, tame it down, as a horse-breaker does his wild horse. When it is sick, prescribe to it, as a doctor does to his patient. Imagine that you are not a bit injured, even if it streams blood; that you are entirely safe, even if it is drowned in water or burned by fire.
E-Shun, a pupil and sister of Ryo-an\(^47\), a famous Japanese master, burned herself calmly sitting cross-legged on a pile of firewood which consumed her. She attained to the complete mastery of her body. Socrates' self was never poisoned, even if his person was destroyed by the venom he took. Abraham Lincoln himself stood unharmed, even if his body was laid low by the assassin. Masa-shige was quite safe, even if his body was hewed by the traitors' swords. Those martyrs that sang at the stake to the praise of God could never be burned, even if their bodies were reduced to ashes, nor those seekers after truth who were killed by ignorance and superstition. Is it not a great pity to see a man endowed with divine spirit and power easily upset by a bit of headache, or crying as a child under a surgeon's knife, or apt to give up the ghost at the coming of little danger, or trembling through a little cold, or easily laid low by a bit of indisposition, or yielding to trivial temptation?

It is no easy matter to be the dictator of body. It is not a matter of theory, but of practice. You must train your body that you may enable it to bear any sort of suffering, and to stand unflinched in the face of hardship. It is for this that So-rai\(^48\) (Ogiu) laid himself on a sheet of straw-mat spread on the ground in the coldest nights of winter, or was used to go up and down the roof of his house, having himself clad in heavy armour. It is for this that ancient Japanese soldiers led extremely simple lives, and that they often held the meeting-of-perseverance\(^49\), in which they exposed themselves to the coldest weather in winter or to the hottest weather in summer. It is for this that Katsu Awa practised fencing in the middle of

\(^47\) Ryo an (E-myō, died 1411), the founder of the monastery of Sai-jo-ji, near the city of Odawara. See To-jo-ren-to-roku.
\(^48\) One of the greatest scholars of the Tokugawa period, who died in 1728. See Etsu-wa-bun-ko.
\(^49\) The soldiers of the Tokugawa period were used to hold such a meeting.

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night in a deep forest.\textsuperscript{50}

Ki-saburo, although he was a mere outlaw, having his left arm half cut at the elbow in a quarrel, ordered his servant to cut it off with a saw, and during the operation he could calmly sit talking and laughing with his friends. Hiko-kuro (Takayama)\textsuperscript{51}, a Japanese loyalist of note, one evening happened to come to a bridge where two robbers were lying in wait for him. They lay fully stretching themselves, each with his head in the middle of the bridge, that he might not pass across it without touching them. Hiko-kuro was not excited nor disheartened, but calmly approached the vagabonds and passed the bridge, treading upon their heads, which act so frightened them that they took to their heels without doing any harm to him.\textsuperscript{52}

The history of Zen is full of the anecdotes that show Zen priests were the lords of their bodies. Here we quote a single example by way of illustration: Ta Hwui (Dai-ye), once having had a boil on his hip, sent for a doctor, who told him that it was fatal, that he must not sit in Meditation as usual. Then Ta Hwui said to the physician: "I must sit in Meditation with all my might during my remaining days, for if your diagnosis be not mistaken, I shall die before long." He sat day and night in constant Meditation, quite forgetful of his boil, which was broken and gone by itself.\textsuperscript{53}

4. The Third Step in the Mental Training. -- To be the lord of mind is more essential to Enlightenment, which, in a sense, is the clearing away of illusions, the putting out of mean desires and passions, and the awakening of the innermost wisdom. He

\begin{footnotes}
\item[50] Kai-shu-gen-ko-roku.
\item[51] A well-known loyalist in the Tokugawa period, who died in 1793.
\item[52] Etsu-wa-bun-ko.
\item[53] Sho-bo-gen-jo-zui-mon-ki, by Do-gen.
\end{footnotes}
alone can attain to real happiness who has perfect control over his passions tending to disturb the equilibrium of his mind. Such passions as anger, hatred, jealousy, sorrow, worry, grudge, and fear always untune one's mood and break the harmony of one's mind. They poison one's body, not in a figurative, but in a literal sense of the word. Obnoxious passions once aroused never fail to bring about the physiological change in the nerves, in the organs, and eventually in the whole constitution, and leave those injurious impressions that make one more liable to passions of similar nature.

We do not mean, however, that we ought to be cold and passionless, as the most ancient Hinayanists were used to be. Such an attitude has been blamed by Zen masters. "What is the best way of living for us monks?" asked a monk to Yun Kū (Un-go), who replied: "You had better live among mountains." Then the monk bowed politely to the teacher, who questioned: "How did you understand me?" "Monks, as I understood," answered the man, "ought to keep their hearts as immovable as mountains, not being moved either by good or by evil, either by birth or by death, either by prosperity or by adversity." Hereupon Yun Kū struck the monk with his stick and said: "You forsake the Way of the old sages, and will bring my followers to perdition!" Then, turning to another monk, inquired: "How did you understand me?" "Monks, as I understand," replied the man, "ought to shut their eyes to attractive sights and close their ears to musical notes." "You, too," exclaimed Yun Ka, "forsake the Way of the old sages, and will bring my followers to perdition!" An old woman, to quote another example repeatedly told by Zen masters, used to give food and clothing to a monk for a score of years. One
day she instructed a young girl to embrace and ask him: "How do you feel now?" "A lifeless tree," replied the monk coolly, "stands on cold rock. There is no warmth, as if in the coldest season of the year." The matron, being told of this, observed: "Oh that I have made offerings to such a vulgar fellow for twenty years!" She forced the monk to leave the temple and reduced it to ashes.  

If you want to secure Dhyana, let go of your anxieties and failures in the past; let bygones be bygones; cast aside enmity, shame, and trouble, never admit them into your brain; let pass the imagination and anticipation of future hardships and sufferings; let go of all your annoyances, vexations, doubts, melancholies, that impede your speed in the race of the struggle for existence. As the miser sets his heart on worthless dross and accumulates it, so an unenlightened person clings to worthless mental dross and spiritual rubbish, and makes his mind a dust-heap. Some people constantly dwell on the minute details of their unfortunate circumstances, to make themselves more unfortunate than they really are; some go over and over again the symptoms of their disease to think themselves into serious illness; and some actually bring evils on them by having them constantly in view and waiting for them. A man asked Poh Chang (Hyaku-jo): "How shall I learn the Law?" "Eat when you are hungry," replied the teacher; "sleep when you are tired. People do not simply eat at table, but think of hundreds of things; they do not simply sleep in bed, but think of thousands of things."  

A ridiculous thing it is, in fact, that man or woman, endowed with the same nature as Buddha's, born the lord of all material
objects, is ever upset by petty cares, haunted by the fearful phantoms of his or her own creation, and burning up his or her energy in a fit of passion, wasting his or her vitality for the sake of foolish or insignificant things.

It is a man who can keep the balance of his mind under any circumstances, who can be calm and serene in the hottest strife of life, that is worthy of success, reward, respect, and reputation, for he is the master of men. It was at the age of forty-seven that Wang Yang Ming⁵⁶ (O-yo-mei) won a splendid victory over the rebel army which threatened the throne of the Ming dynasty. During that warfare Wang was giving a course of lectures to a number of students at the headquarters of the army, of which he was the Commander-in-chief. At the very outset of the battle a messenger brought him the news of defeat of the foremost ranks. All the students were terror-stricken and grew pale at the unfortunate tidings, but the teacher was not a whit disturbed by it. Some time after another messenger brought in the news of complete rout of the enemy. All the students, enraptured, stood up and cheered, but he was as cool as before, and did not break off lecturing. Thus the practiser of Zen has so perfect control over his heart that he can keep presence of mind under an impending danger, even in the presence of death itself.

It was at the age of twenty-three that Haku-in got on board a boat bound for the Eastern Provinces, which met with a tempest and was almost wrecked. All the passengers were laid low with fear and fatigue, but Haku-in enjoyed a quiet sleep during the storm, as if he were lying on a comfortable bed. It was in the fifth of Mei-ji era that Doku-on; lived for some time in the city of Tokyo, whom some Christian zealots

⁵⁶ The founder of the Wang School of Confucianism, a practiser of Meditation, who was born in 1472, and died at the age of fifty-seven in 1529.
attempted to murder. One day he met with a few young men equipped with swords at the gate of his temple. "We want to see Doku-on; go and tell him," said they to the priest. "I am Doku-on\textsuperscript{57}," replied he calmly, "whom you want to see, gentlemen. What can I do for you?" "We have come to ask you a favour; we are Christians; we want your hoary head." So saying they were ready to attack him, who, smiling, replied: "All right, gentlemen. Behead me forthwith, if you please." Surprised by this unexpected boldness on the part of the priest, they turned back without harming even a hair of the old Buddhist.\textsuperscript{58}

These teachers could through long practice constantly keep their minds buoyant, casting aside useless encumbrances of idle thoughts; bright, driving off the dark cloud of melancholy; tranquil, putting down turbulent waves of passion; pure, cleaning away the dust and ashes of illusion; and serene, brushing off the cobwebs of doubt and fear. The only means of securing all this is to realize the conscious union with the Universal Life through the Enlightened Consciousness, which can be awakened by dint of Dhyana.

5. Zazen, or the Sitting in Meditation.--Habit comes out of practice, and forms character by degrees, and eventually works out destiny. Therefore we must practically sow optimism, and habitually nourish it in order to reap the blissful fruit of Enlightenment. The sole means of securing mental calmness is the practice of Zazen, or the sitting in Meditation. This method was known in India as Yoga as early as the Upanisad period, and developed by the followers of the Yoga

\textsuperscript{57} Doku On (Ogino), a distinguished Zen master, an abbot of So-koku-ji, who was born in 1818, and died in 1895.  
\textsuperscript{58} Kin-sei-zen-rin-gen-ko-roku, by D. Mori.
But Buddhists sharply distinguished Zazen from Yoga, and have the method peculiar to themselves. Kei-zan\(^\text{60}\) describes the method to the following effect: 'Secure a quiet room neither extremely light nor extremely dark, neither very warm nor very cold, a room, if you can, in the Buddhist temple located in a beautiful mountainous district. You should not practise Zazen in a place where a conflagration or a flood or robbers may be likely to disturb you, nor should you sit in a place close by the sea or drinking-shops or brothel-houses, or the houses of widows and of maidens or buildings for music, nor should you live in close proximity to the place frequented by kings, ministers, powerful statesmen, ambitious or insincere persons. You must not sit in Meditation in a windy or very high place lest you should get ill. Be sure not to let the wind or smoke get into your room, not to expose it to rain and storm. Keep your room clean. Keep it not too light by day nor too dark by night. Keep it warm in winter and cool in summer. Do not sit leaning against a wall, or a chair, or a screen. You must not wear soiled clothes or beautiful clothes, for the former are the cause of illness, while the latter the cause of attachment. Avoid the Three Insufficiencies—that is to say, insufficient clothes, insufficient food, and insufficient sleep. Abstain from all sorts of uncooked or hard or spoiled or unclean food, and also from very delicious dishes, because the former cause troubles in your alimentary canal, while the latter cause you to covet after diet. Eat and drink just too appease your hunger and thirst, never mind whether the food be tasty or not. Take your meals regularly and punctually, and never sit in Meditation immediately after any meal. Do not practise Dhyana soon after you have taken a heavy dinner, lest you

59 See Yoga Sutra with the Commentary of Bhoja Raja (translated by Rajendralala Mitra), pp. 102-104.
60 Kei-zan (Jo-kin), the founder of So-ji-ji, the head temple of the So To Sect of Zen, who died at the age of fifty-eight in 1325. He sets forth the doctrine of Zen and the method of practising Zazen in his famous work, entitled Za-zen-yo-jin-ki.
should get sick thereby. Sesame, barley, corn, potatoes, milk, and the like are the best material for your food. Frequently wash your eyes, face, hands, and feet, and keep them cool and clean.

'There are two postures in Zazen--that is to say, the crossed-leg sitting, and the half crossed-leg sitting. Seat yourself on a thick cushion, putting it right under your haunch. Keep your body so erect that the tip of the nose and the navel are in one perpendicular line, and both ears and shoulders are in the same plane. Then place the right foot upon the left thigh, the left foot on the right thigh, so as the legs come across each other. Next put your right hand with the palm upward on the left foot, and your left hand on the right palm with the tops of both the thumbs touching each other. This is the posture called the crossed-leg sitting. You may simply place the left foot upon the right thigh, the position of the hands being the same as in the cross-legged sitting. This posture is named the half crossed-leg sitting.

'Do not shut your eyes, keep them always open during whole Meditation. Do not breathe through the mouth; press your tongue against the roof of the mouth, putting the upper lips and teeth together with the lower. Swell your abdomen so as to hold the breath in the belly; breathe rhythmically through the nose, keeping a measured time for inspiration and expiration. Count for some time either the inspiring or the expiring breaths from one to ten, then beginning with one again. Concentrate your attention on your breaths going in and out as if you are the sentinel standing at the gate of the nostrils. If you do some mistake in counting, or be forgetful of the breath, it is evident that your mind is distracted.'
Chwang Tsz seems to have noticed that the harmony of breathing is typical of the harmony of mind, since he says: "The true men of old did not dream when they slept. Their breathing came deep and silently. The breathing of true men comes (even) from his heels, while men generally breathe (only) from their throats."\textsuperscript{61} At any rate, the counting of breaths is an expedient for calming down of mind, and elaborate rules are given in the Zen Sutra\textsuperscript{62}, but Chinese and Japanese Zen masters do not lay so much stress on this point as Indian teachers.

6. The Breathing Exercise of the Yogi.--Breathing exercise is one of the practices of Yoga, and somewhat similar in its method and end to those of Zen. We quote here\textsuperscript{63} Yogi Ramacharaka to show how modern Yogis practise it: "(1) Stand or sit erect. Breathing through the nostrils, inhale steadily, first filling the lower part of the lungs, which is accomplished by bringing into play the diaphragm, which, descending, exerts a gentle pressure on the abdominal organs, pushing forward the front walls of the abdomen. Then fill the middle part of the lungs, pushing out the lower ribs, breastbone, and chest. Then fill the higher portion of the lungs, protruding the upper chest, thus lifting the chest, including the upper six or seven pairs of ribs. In the final movement the lower part of the abdomen will be slightly drawn in, which movement gives the lungs a support, and also helps to fill the highest part of the lungs. At the first reading it may appear that this breath consists of three distinct movements. This, however, is not the correct idea. The inhalation is continuous,
the entire chest cavity from the lower diaphragm to the highest point of the chest in the region of the collar-bone being expanded with a uniform movement. Avoid a jerking series of inhalations, and strive to attain a steady, continuous action. Practice will soon overcome the tendency to divide the inhalation into three movements, and will result in a uniform continuous breath. You will be able to complete the inhalation in a couple of seconds after a little practice. (2) Retain the breath a few seconds. (3) Exhale quite slowly, holding the chest in a firm position, and drawing the abdomen in a little and lifting it upward slowly as the air leaves the lungs. When the air is entirely exhaled, relax the chest and abdomen. A little practice will render this part of exercise easy, and the movement once acquired will be afterwards performed almost automatically."

7. Calmness of Mind.--The Yogi breathing above mentioned is fit rather for physical exercise than for mental balance, and it will be beneficial if you take that exercise before or after Meditation. Japanese masters mostly bold it very important to push forward. The lowest part of the abdomen during Zazen, and they are right so far as the present writer's personal experiences go.

'If you feel your mind distracted, look at the tip of the nose; never lose sight of it for some time, or look at your own palm, and let not your mind go out of it, or gaze at one spot before you.' This will greatly help you in restoring the equilibrium of your mind. Chwang Tsz\(^\text{64}\) thought that calmness of mind is essential to sages, and said: "The stillness of the sages does not belong to them as a consequence of their skilful ability; all

\(^{64}\text{Chwang Tsz, vol. v., p. 5.}\)
things are not able to disturb their minds; it is on this account that they are still. When water is still, its clearness shows the beard and eyebrows (of him who looks into it). It is a perfect level, and the greatest artificer takes his rule from it. Such is the clearness of still water, and how much greater is that of the human spirit? The still mind of the sage is the mirror of heaven and earth, the glass of all things."

Forget all worldly concerns, expel all cares and anxieties, let go of passions and desires, give up ideas and thoughts, set your mind at liberty absolutely, and make it as clear as a burnished mirror. Thus let flow your inexhaustible fountain of purity, let open your inestimable treasure of virtue, bring forth your inner hidden nature of goodness, disclose your innermost divine wisdom, and waken your Enlightened Consciousness to see Universal Life within you. "Zazen enables the practiser," says Kei-zen⁶⁵, "to open up his mind, to see his own nature, to become conscious of mysteriously pure and bright spirit, or eternal light within him."

Once become conscious of Divine Life within you, yon can see it in your brethren, no matter how different they may be in circumstances, in abilities, in characters, in nationalities, in language, in religion, and in race. You can see it in animals, vegetables, and minerals, no matter how diverse they may be in form, no matter how wild and ferocious some may seem in nature, no matter how unfeeling in heart some may seem, no matter how devoid of intelligence some may appear, no matter how insignificant some may be, no matter how simple in construction some may be, no matter how lifeless some may seem. You can see that the whole universe is Enlightened and

⁶⁵ Za-zen-yo-jin-ki.
penetrated by Divine Life.

8. Zazen and the Forgetting of Self.--Zazen is a most effectual means of destroying selfishness, the root of all Sin, folly, vice, and evil, since it enables us to see that every being is endowed with divine spirituality in common with men. It is selfishness that throws dark shadows on life, just as it is not the sun but the body that throws shadow before it. It is the self-same selfishness that gave rise to the belief in the immortality of soul, in spite of its irrationality, foolishness, and superstition. Individual self should be a poor miserable thing if it were not essentially connected with the Universal Life. We can always enjoy pure happiness when we are united with nature, quite forgetful of our poor self. When you look, for example, into the smiling face of a pretty baby, and smile with it, or listen to the sweet melody of a songster and sing with it, you completely forget your poor self at that enraptured moment. But your feelings of beauty and happiness are for ever gone when you resume your self, and begin to consider them after your own selfish ideas. To forget self and identify it with nature is to break down its limitation and to set it at liberty. To break down petty selfishness and extend it into Universal Self is to unfetter and deliver it from bondage. It therefore follows that salvation can be secured not by the continuation of individuality in another life, but by the realization of one's union with Universal Life, which is immortal, free, limitless, eternal, and bliss itself. This is easily effected by Zazen.

9. Zen and Supernatural Power.--Yoga\textsuperscript{66} claims that various supernatural powers can be acquired by Meditation, but Zen does not make any such absurd claims. It rather disdains

\textsuperscript{66}‘Yoga Aphorisms of Patañjali,’ chap. iii.
those who are believed to have acquired supernatural powers by the practice of austerities. The following traditions clearly show this spirit: "When Fah Yung (Ho-yu) lived in Mount Niu Teu67 (Go-zu-san) he used to receive every morning the offerings of flowers from hundreds of birds, and was believed to have supernatural powers. But after his Enlightenment by the instruction of the Fourth Patriarch, the birds ceased to make offering, because he became a being too divine to be seen by inferior animals." "Hwang Pah (O-baku), one day going up Mount Tien Tai (Ten-dai-san), which was believed to have been inhabited by Arhats with supernatural powers, met with a monk whose eyes emitted strange light. They went along the pass talking with each other for a short while until they came to a river roaring with torrent. There being no bridge, the master bad to stop at the shore; but his companion crossed the river walking on the water and beckoned to Hwang Pah to follow him. Thereupon Hwang Pah said: 'If I knew thou art an Arhat, I would have doubled you up before thou got over there!' The monk then understood the spiritual attainment of Hwang Pah, and praised him as a true Mahayanist." "On one occasion Yang Shan (Kyo-zan) saw a stranger monk flying through the air. When that monk came down and approached him with a respectful salutation, he asked: 'Where art thou from? 'Early this morning,' replied the other, 'I set out from India.' 'Why,' said the teacher, 'art thou so late?' 'I stopped,' responded the man, 'several times to look at beautiful sceneries.' Thou mayst have supernatural powers,' exclaimed Yang Shan, 'yet thou must give back the Spirit of Buddha to me.' Then the monk praised Yang Shan saying: 'I have come over to China in order to worship Maņjuśrī68, and

67 A prominent disciple of the Fourth Patriarch, the founder of the Niu Teu School (Go-zu-zen) of Zen, who died ill A.D. 675.
68 Maņjuśrī is a legendary Bodhisattva, who became an object of worship of some Mahayanists. He is treated as a personification of transcendental wisdom.
met unexpectedly with Minor Shakya,' and, after giving the master some palm leaves he brought from India, went back through the air.'"\textsuperscript{69}

It is quite reasonable that Zenists distinguish supernatural powers from spiritual uplifting, the former an acquirement of Devas, or of Asuras, or of Arhats, or of even animals, and the latter as a nobler accomplishment attained only by the practisers of Mahayanism. Moreover, they use the term supernatural power in a meaning entirely different from the original one. Lin Tsi (Rin-zai) says, for instance: "There are six supernatural powers of Buddha: He is free from the temptation of form, living in the world of form; He is free from the temptation of sound, living in the world of sound; He is free from the temptation of smell, living in the world of smell; He is free from the temptation of taste, living in the world of taste; He is free from the temptation of Dharma\textsuperscript{70}, living in the world of Dharma. These are six supernatural powers."\textsuperscript{71}

Sometimes Zenists use the term as if it meant what we call Zen Activity, or the free display of Zen in action, as you see in the following examples. Tüng Shan (To-Zan) was on one occasion attending on his teacher Yun Yen (Un-gan), who asked: "What are your supernatural powers?" Tüng Shan, saying nothing, clasped his hands on his breast, and stood up before Yun Yen. "How do you display your supernatural powers?" questioned the teacher again. Then Tüng Shan said farewell and went out. Wei Shan (E-san) one day was taking a nap, and seeing his disciple Yang Shan (Kyo-zan) coming into the room, turned his face towards the wall. "You need not, Sir,"

\textsuperscript{69} Hwui Yuen (E-gen) and Sho-bo-gen-jo.
\textsuperscript{70}The things or objects, not of sense, but of mind.
\textsuperscript{71}Lin Tsi Luh (Rin-zai-roku).
said Yang Shan, "stand on ceremony, as I am your disciple." Wei Shan seemed to try to get up, so Yang Shan went out; but Wei Shan called him back and said: "I shall tell you of a dream I dreamed." The other inclined his head as if to listen. "Now," said Wei Shan, "divine my fortune by the dream." Thereupon Yang Shan fetched a basin of water and a towel and gave them to the master, who washed his face thereby. By-and-by Hiang Yen (Kyo-gen) came in, to whom Wei Shan said: "We displayed supernatural powers a moment ago. It was not such supernatural powers as are shown by Hinayanists." "I know it, Sir," replied the other, "though I was down below." "Say, then, what it was," demanded the master. Then Hiang Yen made tea and gave a cup to Wei Shan, who praised the two disciples, saying: "You surpass Çariputra72 and Maudgalyayana73 in your wisdom and supernatural powers."74

Again, ancient Zenists did not claim that there was any mysterious element in their spiritual attainment, as Do-gen says75 unequivocally respecting his Enlightenment: "I recognized only that my eyes are placed crosswise above the nose that stands lengthwise, and that I was not deceived by others. I came home from China with nothing in my hand. There is nothing mysterious in Buddhism. Time passes as it is natural, the sun rising in the east, and the moon setting into the west."

10. True Dhyana.-- To sit in Meditation is not the only method of practising Zazen. "We practise Dhyana in sitting, in standing, and in walking," says one of the Japanese Zenists. Lin Tsi (Rin-Zai) also says: "To concentrate one's mind, or to

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72 One of the prominent disciples of Shakya Muni, who became famous for his wisdom.  
73 One of the eminent disciples of Shakya Muni, noted for his supernatural powers.  
74 Zen-rin-rui sku.  
75 Ei-hei-ko-roku.
dislike noisy places, and seek only for stillness, is the characteristic of heterodox Dhyana." It is easy to keep self-possession in a place of tranquillity, yet it is by no means easy to keep mind undisturbed amid the bivouac of actual life. It is true Dhyana that makes our mind sunny while the storms of strife rage around us. It is true Dhyana that secures the harmony of heart, while the surges of struggle toss us violently. It is true Dhyana that makes us bloom and smile, while the winter of life covets us with frost and snow.

"Idle thoughts come and go over unenlightened minds six hundred and fifty times in a snap of one's fingers," writes an Indian teacher\(^76\), "and thirteen hundred million times every twenty-four hours." This might be an exaggeration, yet we cannot but acknowledge that one idle thought after another ceaselessly bubbles up in the stream of consciousness. "Dhyana is the letting go," continues the writer--"that is to say, the letting go of the thirteen hundred million of idle thoughts." The very root of these thirteen hundred million idle thoughts is an illusion about one's self. He is indeed the poorest creature, even if he be in heaven, who thinks himself poor. On the contrary, he is an angel who thinks himself hopeful and happy, even though he be in hell. "Pray deliver me," said a sinner to Sang Tsung (So-san).\(^77\) "Who ties you up?" was the reply. You tie yourself up day and night with the fine thread of idle thoughts, and build a cocoon of environment from which you have no way of escape. 'There is no rope, yet you imagine yourself bound.' Who could put fetters on your mind but your mind itself? Who could chain your will but your own will? Who could blind your spiritual eyes, unless you yourself shut them up? Who could prevent you from enjoying moral food, unless

\(^{76}\) The introduction to Anapana-sutra by Khin San Hwui, who came to China A.D. 241.  
\(^{77}\) The Third Patriarch.
you yourself refuse to eat? "There are many," said Süeh Fung (Sep-po) on one occasion, "who starve in spite of their sitting in a large basket full of victuals. There are many who thirst in spite of seating themselves on the shore of a sea." "Yes, Sir," replied Hüen Sha (Gen-sha), "there are many who starve in spite of putting their heads into the basket full of victuals. There are many who thirst in spite of putting their heads into the waters of the sea." Who could cheer him up who abandons himself to self-created misery? Who could save him who denies his own salvation?

11. Let Go of your Idle Thoughts. --A Brahmin, having troubled himself a long while with reference to the problem of life and of the world, went out to call on Shakya Muni that he might be instructed by the Master. He got some beautiful flowers to offer them as a present to the Muni, and proceeded to the place where He was addressing his disciples and believers. No sooner had he come in sight of the Master than he read in his mien the struggles going on within him. "Let go of that," said the Muni to the Brahmin, who was going to offer the flowers in both his hands. He dropped on the ground the flowers in his right hand, but still holding those in his left. "Let go of that," demanded the Master, and the Brahmin dropped the flowers in his left hand rather reluctantly. "Let go of that, I say," the Muni commanded again; but the Brahmin, having nothing to let go of, asked: "What shall I let go of, Reverend Sir? I have nothing in my hands, you know." "Lot go of that, you have neither in your right nor in your left band, but in the middle." Upon these words of the Muni a light came into the sufferer's mind, and he went home satisfied and in joy.  

78 Hwui Yuen (E-gen).  
79 A famous Zenist, Mu-go-koku-shi, is said to have replied to every questioner, saying: "Let go of your idle thoughts."  
80 'Sutra on the Brahmacarin Black-family,' translated into Chinese by K' Khien, of the Wu dynasty (A.D. 222-280).
to attach to all things is Dhyana," writes an ancient Zenist, "and if you understand this, going out, staying in, sitting, and lying are in Dhyana." Therefore allow not your mind to be a receptacle for the dust of society, or the ashes of life, or rags and waste paper of the world. You bear too much burden upon your shoulders with which you have nothing to do.

Learn the lesson of forgetfulness, and forget all that troubles you, deprives you of sound sleep, and writes wrinkles on your forehead. Wang Yang Ming, at the age of seventeen or so, is said to have forgotten the day 'on which he was to be married to a handsome young lady, daughter of a man of high position. It was the afternoon of the very day on which their nuptials had to be held that he went out to take a walk. Without any definite purpose he went into a temple in the neighbourhood, and there he found a recluse apparently very old with white hair, but young in countenance like a child. The man was sitting absorbed in Meditation. There was something extremely calm and serene in that old man's look and bearing that attracted the young scholar's attention. Questioning him as to his name, age, and birthplace, Wang found that the venerable man had enjoyed a life so extraordinarily long that he forgot his name and age, but that he had youthful energy so abundantly that he could talk with a voice sounding as a large bell. Being asked by Wang the secret of longevity, the man replied: "There is no secret in it; I merely kept my mind calm and peaceful." Further, he explained the method of Meditation according to Taoism and Buddhism. Thereupon Wang sat face to face with the old man and began to practise Meditation, utterly forgetful of his bride and -nuptial ceremony. The sun began to cast his slanting rays on the wall of the temple, and they sat motionless; twilight came over them, and night wrapped them
with her sable shroud, and they sat as still as two marble statues; midnight, dawn, at last the morning sun rose to find them still in their reverie. The father of the bride, who had started a search during the night, found to his surprise the bridegroom absorbed in Meditation on the following day.  

It was at the age of forty-seven that Wang gained a great victory over the rebel army, and wrote to a friend saying: "It is so easy to gain a victory over the rebels fortifying themselves among the mountains, yet it is not so with those rebels living in our mind."  

Tsai Kiün Mu (Sai-kun-bo) is said to have had an exceedingly long and beautiful beard, and when asked by the Emperor, who received him in audience, whether he should sleep with his beard on the comforters or beneath them, he could not answer, since he had never known how he did. Being distracted by this question, he went home and tried to find out how he had been used to manage his beard in bed. First he put his beard on the comforters and vainly tried to sleep; then he put it beneath the comforters and thought it all right. Nevertheless, he was all the more disturbed by it. So then, putting on the comforters, now putting it beneath them, he tried to sleep all night long, but in vain. You must therefore forget your mental beard that annoys you all the time.

Men of longevity never carried troubles to their beds. It is a well-known fact that Zui-o (Shi-ga) enjoyed robust health at the age of over one hundred years. One day, being asked whether there is any secret of longevity, he replied affirmatively, and said to the questioner: "Keep your mind and body pure for two weeks, abstaining from any sort of impurity,

81 O-yo-mei-shutsu-shin-sei-ran-roku.  
82 Ibid.  
83 This famous old man died in A.D. 1730.
then I shall tell you of the secret." The man did as was prescribed, and came again to be instructed in the secret. Zui-o said: "Now I might tell you, but be cautious to keep yourself pure another week so as to qualify yourself to learn the secret." When that week was over the old man said: "Now I might tell you, but will you be so careful as to keep yourself pure three days more in order to qualify yourself to receive the secret?" The man did as he was ordered, and requested the instruction. Thereupon Zui-o took the man to his private room and softly whispered, with his mouth close to the ear of the man: "Keep the secret I tell you now, even at the cost of your life. It is this-don't be passionate. That is all."84

12. 'The Five Ranks of Merit.'--Thus far we have stated how to train our body and mind according to the general rules and customs established by Zenists. And here we shall describe the different stages of mental uplifting through which the student of Zen has to go. They are technically called 'The Five Ranks of Merit.'85 The first stage is called the Rank of Turning86, in which the student 'turns' his mind from the external objects of sense towards the inner Enlightened Consciousness. He gives up all mean desires and aspires to spiritual elevation. He becomes aware that he is not doomed to be the slave of material things, and strives to conquer over them. Enlightened Consciousness is likened to the King, and it is called the Mind-King, while the student who now turns towards the King is likened to common people. Therefore in this first stage the student is in the rank of common people.

The second stage is called the Rank of Service87, in which the

84 Se-ji-hyaku-dan.
85 Ko-kun-go-i. For further details, see So-to-ni-shi-roku.
86 Ko in Japanese.
87 Bu in Japanese.
student distinguishes himself by his loyalty to the Mind-King, and becomes a courtier to 'serve' him. He is in constant 'service' to the King, attending him with obedience and love, and always fearing to offend him. Thus the student in this stage is ever careful not to neglect rules and precepts laid down by the sages, and endeavours to uplift himself in spirituality by his fidelity.

The third stage is called the Rank of Merit\textsuperscript{88}, in which the student distinguishes himself by his 'meritorious' acts of conquering over the rebel army of passion which rises against the Mind-King. Now, his rank is not the rank of a courtier, but the rank of a general. In other words, his duty is not only to keep rules and instructions of the sages, but to subjugate his own passion and establish moral order in the mental kingdom.

The fourth stage is called the Rank of Co-operative Merit\textsuperscript{89}, in which the student 'co-operates' with other persons in order to complete his merit. Now, he is not compared with a general who conquers his foe, but with the prime-minister who co-operates with other officials to the benefit of the people. Thus the student in this stage is not satisfied with his own conquest of passion, but seeks after spiritual uplifting by means of extending his kindness and sympathy to his fellow-men.

The fifth stage is called the Rank of Merit-over-Merit\textsuperscript{90}, which means the rank of meritless-merit. This is the rank of the King himself. The King does nothing meritorious, because all the governmental works are done by his ministers and subjects. All that he has to do is to keep his inborn dignity and sit high.

\textsuperscript{88} Ko in Japanese.
\textsuperscript{89} Gu-ko in Japanese.
\textsuperscript{90} Ko-ko in Japanese.
on his throne. Therefore his conduct is meritless, but all the meritorious acts of his subjects are done through his authority. Doing nothing, he does everything. Without any merit, he gets all merits. Thus the student in this stage no more strives to keep precepts, but his doings are naturally in accord with them. No more he aspires for spiritual elevation, but his heart is naturally pure from material desires. No more he makes an effort to vanquish his passion, but no passion disturbs him. No more he feels it his duty to do good to others, but he is naturally good and merciful. No more he sits in Dhyana, but he naturally lives in Dhyana at all times. It is in this fifth stage that the student is enabled to identify his Self with the Mind-King or Enlightened Consciousness, and to abide in perfect bliss.

13. 'The Ten Pictures of the Cowherd.'\(^1\) -- Besides these Five Ranks of Merit, Zenists make use of the Ten Pictures of the Cowherd, in order to show the different stages of mental training through which the student of Zen has to go. Some poems were written by Chinese and Japanese teachers on each of these pictures by way of explanation, but they are too ambiguous to be translated into English, and we rest content with the translation of a single Japanese poem on each of the ten pictures, which are as follows:

The first picture, called 'the Searching of the Cow,' represents the cowherd wandering in the wilderness with a vague hope of finding his lost cow that is running wild out of his sight. The reader will notice that the cow is likened to the mind of the student and the cowherd to the student himself.

91The pictures were drawn by Kwoh Ngan (Kaku-an), a Chinese Zenist. For the details, see Zen-gaku-ho-ten.
"I do not see my cow,
But trees and grass,
And hear the empty cries
Of cicadas."

The second picture, called 'the Finding of the Cow's Tracks,' represents the cowherd tracing the cow with the sure hope of restoring her, having found her tracks on the ground.
"The grove is deep, and so
Is my desire.
How glad I am, O lo!
I see her tracks."

The third picture, called 'the Finding out of the Cow,' represents the cowherd slowly approaching the cow from a distance.

"Her loud and wild mooing
Has led me here;
I see her form afar,
Like a dark shadow."

The fourth 'picture, called 'the Catching of the Cow,' represents the cowherd catching hold of the cow, who struggles to break loose from him.
"Alas! it's hard to keep
The cow I caught.
She tries to run and leap
And snap the cord."

The fifth picture, called 'the Taming of the Cow,' represents the cowherd pacifying the cow, giving her grass and water.
"I'm glad the cow so wild
Is tamed and mild.
She follows me, as if
She were my shadow."

The sixth picture, called 'the Going Home Riding on the Cow,' represents the cowherd playing on a flute, riding on the cow.
"Slowly the clouds return
To their own hill,
Floating along the skies
So calm and still.

The seventh picture, called 'the Forgetting of the Cow and the Remembering of the Man,' represents the cowherd looking at the beautiful scenery surrounding his cottage.

"The cow goes out by day
And comes by night.
I care for her in no way,
But all is right."

The eighth picture, called 'the Forgetting of the Cow and of the Man,' represents a large empty circle.
"There's no cowherd nor cow
Within the pen;
No moon of truth nor clouds
Of doubt in men."

The ninth picture, called 'the Returning to the Root and Source,' represents a beautiful landscape full of lovely trees in full blossom.
"There is no dyer of hills,  
Yet they are green;  
So flowers smile, and titter rills  
At their own wills."

The tenth picture, called 'the Going into the City with Open Hands,' represents a smiling monk, gourd in hand, talking with a man who looks like a pedlar.

"The cares for body make  
That body pine;  

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These Ten Pictures of the Cowherd correspond in meaning to the Five Ranks of Merit above stated, even if there is a slight difference, as is shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The 5 Ranks</th>
<th>The 10 Pictures</th>
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<td>1. The Rank of Turning</td>
<td>1. The Searching of the Cow.</td>
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<td>2. The Finding of the Cow's Tracks.</td>
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<td>3. The Rank of Merit</td>
<td>5. The Taming of the Cow.</td>
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<td>10. The Going into the City with Open Hands.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
14. Zen and Nirvana.--The beatitude of Zen is Nirvana, not in the Hinayanistic sense of the term, but in the sense peculiar to the faith. Nirvana literally means extinction or annihilation; hence the extinction of life or the annihilation of individuality. To Zen, however, it means the state of extinction of pain and the annihilation of sin. Zen never looks for the realization of its beatitude in a place like heaven, nor believes in the realm of Reality transcendental of the phenomenal universe, nor gives countenance to the superstition of Immortality, nor does it hold the world is the best of all possible worlds, nor conceives life simply as blessing. It is in this life, full of shortcomings, misery, and sufferings, that Zen hopes to realize its beatitude. It is in this world, imperfect, changing, and moving, that Zen finds the Divine Light it worships. It is in this phenomenal universe of limitation and relativity that Zen aims to attain to highest Nirvana. "We speak," says the author of Vimalakirtti-nirdeça-sutra, "of the transitoriness of body, but not of the desire of the Nirvana or destruction of it." "Paranirvana," according to the author of Lankavatara-sutra, "is neither death nor destruction, but bliss, freedom, and purity." "Nirvana," says Kiai Hwan, means the extinction of pain or the crossing over of the sea of life and death. It denotes the real permanent state of spiritual attainment. It does not signify destruction or annihilation. It denotes the belief in the great root of life and spirit." It is Nirvana of Zen to enjoy bliss for all sufferings of life. It is Nirvana of Zen to be serene in mind for all disturbances of actual existence. It is Nirvana of Zen to be in the conscious union with Universal Life or Buddha through Enlightenment.

15. Nature and her Lesson.--Nature offers us nectar and
ambrosia every day, and everywhere we go the rose and lily await us. "Spring visits us men," says Gu-do,93 "her mercy is great. Every blossom holds out the image of Tathagata." "What is the spiritual body of Buddha who is immortal and divine?" asked a man to Ta Lun (Dai-ryu), who instantly replied: "The flowers cover the mountain with golden brocade. The waters tinge the rivulets with heavenly blue." "Universe is the whole body of Tathagata; observed Do-gen. "The worlds in ten directions, the earth, grass, trees, walls, fences, tiles, pebbles-in a word, all the animated and inanimate objects partake of the Buddha-nature. Thereby, those who partake in the benefit of the Wind and Water that rise out of them are, all of them, helped by the mysterious influence of Buddha, and show forth Enlightenment."94

Thus you can attain to highest bliss through your conscious union with Buddha. Nothing can disturb your peace, when you can enjoy peace in the midst of disturbances; nothing can cause you to suffer, when you welcome misfortunes and hardships in order to train and strengthen your character; nothing can tempt you to commit sin, when you are constantly ready to listen to the sermon given by everything around you; nothing can distress you, when you make the world the holy temple of Buddha. This is the state of Nirvana which everyone believing in Buddha may secure.

16. The Beatitude of Zen.--We are far from denying, as already shown in the foregoing chapters, the existence of troubles, pains, diseases, sorrows, deaths in life. Our bliss consists in seeing the fragrant rose of Divine mercy among the thorns of worldly trouble, in finding the fair oasis of Buddha's
wisdom in the desert of misfortunes, in getting the wholesome balm of His love in the seeming poison of pain, in gathering the sweet honey of His spirit even in the sting of horrible death.

History testifies to the truth that it is misery that teaches men more than happiness, that it is poverty that strengthens them more than wealth, that it is adversity that moulds character more than prosperity, that it is disease and death that call forth the inner life more than health and long life. At least, no one can be blind to the fact that good and evil have an equal share in forming the character and working out the destiny of man. Even such a great pessimist as Schopenhauer says: "As our bodily frame would burst asunder if the pressure of atmosphere were removed, so if the lives of men were relieved of all need, hardship, and adversity, if everything they took in hand were successful, they would be so swollen with arrogance . . . that they would present the spectacle of unbridled folly. A ship without ballast is unstable, and will not go straight." Therefore let us make our ship of life go straight with its ballast of miseries and hardships, over which we gain control.

The believer in Buddha is thankful to him, not only for the sunshine of life, but also for its wind, rain, snow, thunder, and lightning, because He gives us nothing in vain. Hisa-nobu (Koyama) was, perhaps, one of the happiest persons that Japan ever produced, simply because he was ever thankful to the Merciful One. One day he went out without an umbrella and met with a shower. Hurrying up to go home, he stumbled and fell, wounding both his legs. As he rose up, he was overheard
to say: "Thank heaven." And being asked why he was so thankful, replied: "I got both my legs hurt, but, thank heaven, they were not broken." On another occasion he lost consciousness, having been kicked violently by a wild horse. When he came to himself, he exclaimed: "Thank heaven," in hearty joy. Being asked the reason why he was so joyful, he answered: "I have really given up my ghost, but, thank heaven, I have escaped death after all." A person in such a state of mind can do anything with heart and might. Whatever he does is an act of thanks for the grace of Buddha, and he does it, not as his duty, but as the overflowing of his gratitude which lie himself cannot check. Here exists the formation of character. Here exist real happiness and joy. Here exists the realization of Nirvana.

Most people regard death as the greatest of evils, only because they fear death. They fear death only because they have the instinct of self-preservation. Hereupon pessimistic philosophy and religion propose to attain to Nirvana by the extinction of Will-to-live, or by the total annihilation of life. But this is as much as to propose death as the final cure to a patient. Elie Metchnikoff proposes, in his 'Nature of Man,' another cure, saying: 'If man could only contrive to live long enough--say, for one hundred and forty years--a natural desire for extinction would take the place of the instinct for self-preservation, and the call of death would then harmoniously satisfy his legitimate craving of a ripe old age.' Why, we must ask, do you trouble yourself so much about death? Is there any instance of an individual who escaped it in the whole history of mankind? If there be no way of escape, why do you trouble yourself about it? Can you cause things to fall off the
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earth against the law of gravitation? Is there any example of an individual object that escaped the government of that law in the whole history of the world? Why, then, do you trouble yourself about it? It is no less silly to trouble yourself about death than you do about gravitation. Can you realize that death, which you have yet no immediate experience of, is the greatest of evil? We dare to declare death to be one of the blessings which we have to be thankful for. Death is the scavenger of the world; it sweeps away all uselessness, staleness, and corruption from the world, and keeps life clean and ever now. When you are of no use for the world it comes upon you, removes you to oblivion in order to relieve life of useless encumbrance. The stream of existence should be kept running, otherwise it would become putrid. If old lives were to stop the running stream it would stand still, and consequently become filthy, poisoned, and worthless. Suppose there were only births and no deaths. The earth has to be packed with men and women, who are doomed to live to all eternity, jostling, colliding, bumping, trampling each other, and vainly struggling to get out of the Black Hole of the earth. Thanks to death we are not in the Black Hole!

Only birth and no death is far worse than only death and no birth. "The dead," says Chwang Tsze, "have no tyrannical king about, no slavish subject to meet; no change of seasons overtakes them. The heaven and the earth take the places of Spring and Autumn. The king or emperor of a great nation cannot be happier than they." How would you be if death should never overtake you when ugly decrepitude makes you blind and deaf, bodily and mentally, and deprives you of all possible pleasures? How would you be if you should not die when your body is broken to pieces or terribly burned by an
accident--say, by a violent earthquake followed by a great conflagration? Just imagine Satan, immortal Satan, thrown down by the ire of God into Hell's fiery gulf, rolling himself in dreadful torture to the end of time. You cannot but conclude that it is only death which relieves you of extreme sufferings, incurable diseases, and it is one of the blessings you ought to be thankful for.

The believer of Buddha is thankful even for death itself, the which is the sole means of conquering death. If he be thankful even for death, how much more for the rest of things! He can find a meaning in every form of life. He can perceive a blessing in every change of fortune. He can acknowledge a mission for every individual. He can live in contentment and joy under any conditions. Therefore Lin Tsi (Rin-zai) says: "All the Buddhas might appear before me and I would not be glad. All the Three Regions\(^{96}\) and Hells might suddenly present themselves before me, and I would not fear. . . . He (an Enlightened person) might get into the fire, and it would not burn him. He might got into water, and it would not drown him. He might be born in Hell, and he would be happy as if he were in a fair garden. He might be born among Pretas and beasts, and he would not suffer from pain. How can he be so? Because be can enjoy everything."\(^{97}\)

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96 (1) Naraka, or Hell; (2) Pretas, or hungry demons; (3) beasts.
97 Lin Tsi Luk (Rin-zai-roku).