

# On the *Record of Rinzai*

## PART FOUR

HISAMATSU SHIN'ICHI

### *The Mind is Without Form and Pervades the Ten Directions*

In my last talk I discussed the One True Person without Rank. Today I want to examine Rinzai's discourse entitled "The Mind is without form and pervades the ten directions":

The Master addressed the assembly, saying:

"Followers of the Way, it is urgently necessary that you endeavor to acquire true insight. Then you can stride boldly in the world without letting yourselves be deceived by delusive fox spirits. [One who has] nothing to do is the noble person. Simply don't strive—just be ordinary. Yet you go and run hither and thither outside yourselves and make inquiries, looking for some helper. You're all wrong!

"You only try to seek Buddha, but Buddha is merely a name. Don't you know what it is that runs around seeking? The buddhas and patriarchs of the three periods and the ten directions appear only in order to seek Dharma. You followers of the Way who are the students of today, you, too, have only to seek Dharma. Attain the Dharma and you're all done. Until then, you'll go on transmigrating through the five paths of existence just as you have been.

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\* This is the fourth installment of a series of talks by Hisamatsu Shin'ichi begun at the fall sesshin of the FAS Society in September 1962. The original text of these talks is found in the *Collected Works of Hisamatsu Shin'ichi*, Volume VI, *Kyōroku-shō* (Risōsha, 1973), pp. 243–66. The translators have used Ruth Fuller Sasaki (tr.), *The Record of Lin-chi* (Kyoto: Institute for Zen Studies, 1975), pp. 10–11, 22–23, and Irmgard Schloegl, *The Zen Teaching of Rinzai* (Shambhala, Berkeley, 1976); portions have been adapted.

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**“What is Dharma? Dharma is mind-dharma. Mind-dharma is without form; it pervades the ten directions and is functioning right before your eyes. Since people lack sufficient faith [in this], they accept names and phrases, and try to speculate about Buddha Dharma from written words. They and Dharma are as far apart as heaven and earth. [pp. 10–11]**

Rinzai tells the assembly what they must do. They must “endeavor to acquire true insight.” Steer clear of all mistaken, hindering views and “acquire true insight.” This insight is no mere orthodox interpretation or a true understanding. It is none other than satori, the self-awakening of Buddha-nature, which is not found apart from our True Self. “Acquire,” then means to awaken to the True Self.

Rinzai tells the monks to “stride boldly in the world.” “Stride boldly” can mean to go as one pleases. Here it means to walk through the land, to ‘strut’ under heaven—freely and without hindrance. We must act, live on, otherwise we will be deceived by delusive fox spirits. We are tricked by evil mountain and river spirits. One might take such spirits as external, but countless internal things deceive us as well. Get yourself free from all internal and external deception. Otherwise, you can neither maintain true subjectivity nor live genuinely in the world. If you acquire Rinzai’s “True Insight,” you can stride free and unhindered, without being deceived by anything. But if you do not, the evil spirits of mountains and rivers, and the buddhas and patriarchs you usually revere, will ultimately confuse you. If buddhas and patriarchs stand outside us, they lead us astray; if self and other are two, we are deluded. “Sentient beings and Buddha are not two, Buddha and ordinary humans are one.” If buddhas and patriarchs exist apart from us, they are neither true buddhas nor true patriarchs. The importance Zen places on this is evident in Rinzai’s penetrating words:

**Meeting a buddha, killing the buddha;  
Meeting a patriarch, killing the patriarch.**

All buddhas and patriarchs divorced from the self cause confusion: they must be destroyed and cast aside. A “sentient being” is one who is confused about Buddha and considers it a transcendent “other.” But Zen does not, for it clearly recognizes that in the true Buddha, sentient beings and Buddha are one, not two.

In such writings as "Essentials of the Transmission of Mind," we run across expressions like "The sambhoga-kāya is not the true Buddha," and "The nirmana-kāya is not the true Buddha." People are apt to take the manifested forms of the Buddha for the true Buddha. Zen strongly rejects this. Zen, and Buddhism in general, regard the Buddha as the dharma-kāya, and the other two forms as its functioning. A dharma-kāya seen as estranged from the other two bodies is not the true Buddha, though. The Diamond Sutra and other scriptures drive home the point that any buddha we can see with our eyes, hear with our ears, or touch with our hands is not the true Buddha: the Tathāgata is beyond the functioning of consciousness. Our realization of this true Buddha constitutes true insight. With this insight, we are never confused, even if a buddha or patriarch should appear before us. It is the wisdom with which we can distinguish truth from falsehood, and right from wrong. This discerning insight must come alive in us with great vigor, and this is why Rinzai repeatedly admonishes the assembly to acquire "true insight."

Rinzai says that "he who has *nothing to do* is the noble person." This oft-quoted statement appears in the superb calligraphy of Zen men, and others like the Shingon priest Jiun Sonja (1718–1804). Many people take this expression in a passive sense. It appeals to those who yearn for a life with no troubles, emancipated from worldly matters, to those who live with their noses to the grindstone, tossed about by worldly affairs. Others wish they could experience such a feeling, if even for a moment. Were we to display these words on a busy street corner, people would surely become quite enthralled by them, but only passively. Of course, this "noble person who has *nothing to do*" does not refer to a temporary peace of mind or composure. Nor does it indicate apathy or an attitude of peace-at-any-price. Only when we free ourselves from all entanglements and stride boldly do we have nothing to do. As the true Person with nothing to do, we then can face adverse circumstances and yet remain unencumbered by them. Only this way of being is the truly noble Person. Of course, this Person is beyond all distinctions of class or race, and in it there is no difference between buddhas and ordinary humans. That is why if buddhas and patriarchs exist outside me, I am not this Person with nothing to do. The word "noble," then, is not antonymous with "ignoble" or "poor." Rather, it indicates a higher dimension of nobility beyond high and low. As this noble person, we do not refrain from acting—we have nothing to do while engaging ourselves in all sorts of complex situations.

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"In matters, no-mind; in the Mind, no matters" is a famous statement of Tokusan's. It was a favorite of Nishida Kitarō. He often chose it for his calligraphy. Bodhidharma tells us: "Severing all external connections, stilling all hankerings in the mind, making the mind like trees and rocks—one should thus enter the Way." Both of these remarkable statements get to the heart of having "nothing to do."

"Simply don't strive." Don't scheme this or that, make discriminations between things, or search outside yourself for the Way or the Buddha. When we have nothing to do, we never strive. Striving means to have something to do. Not striving means to be no-minded, to have *nothing to do*.

Rinzai continues. All you have to do is "just be ordinary. Yet you go and run hither and thither outside." The monks look for the Self outside themselves. The admonition, "Just be ordinary," comes from Nansen's statement, "The calm and constant ordinary Mind is the Way." This was his response when he was asked, "What is the Way?" It was the occasion whereby Jōshū encountered the living Dharma and opened up satori. Nansen's reply is thus often quoted. But do *you* know what this calm and constant Mind is? If your mind does not get beyond distinctions of past and present, or east and west, it falls far short of the truly calm and constant Mind. So does an unsettled, transmigrating mind.

The calm and constant Mind is everywhere, in every time and place. Nowhere is it lacking. It pervades all things. Unless it permeates one's body and mind, it cannot be considered the calm and constant Mind. Only when this Mind is our own do we have nothing to do and confront life-and-death and good-and-evil without becoming bewildered. In Zen we have an expression: "Being born and dying, coming and going, is the true subjectivity." This true human subjectivity is the calm and constant Mind. This Self dies and lives without becoming confused in the midst of the manifold complications of human life. Any "mind" standing in distinction to body as consciousness or psyche differs from the calm and constant Mind, which Zen refers to in the expression, "The transmission from Mind to Mind." This true Mind is anything but the normal mind which never stays calm and constant.

Rinzai scolds his students: "Just be ordinary. Yet you go and run hither and thither outside and make inquiries." In Chinese, "hither and thither" means a family or house other than one's own. We look outside ourselves and run around searching for someone to help us, ignorant of the fact

that our true “helper” is here close at hand. It is one's own matter—the True Self. We usually look for the True Self outside. But when we do, we are heading in the wrong direction, like when Yajñadatta searched for his head. Looking hither and thither is a great mistake.

“You're all wrong. You only try to seek Buddha, but Buddha is merely a name.” Rinzai chides us for seeking Buddha outside ourselves. Buddha is then merely a name, a phrase, like any other of our discriminations. No matter how finely we distinguish something as Buddha, it will always fall short of the True Buddha. The sought Buddha is never the true one.

Nansen said that “the calm and constant Mind is the Way.” With these words, he provided an opportunity for Jōshū to encounter the living Dharma. He also added, “If you try to seek it, you immediately turn against it.” Ordinary Mind isn't found where we search. Now you might wonder how you can practice without seeking, but there isn't any room for doubt in what Nansen says. Whenever we search for Buddha and satori, we go against them. From the perspective of the Self, what we seek are mere names and phrases. But Truth itself has nothing to do with language.

Rinzai asks his disciples, “Don't you know what it is that is running around seeking?” Everyone seeks Buddha, the Way, or the Self, but what is it that is scurrying about looking? You must turn your light in upon yourselves. That is to say, you must step back, not forward, and return to your source, to center in the Dharma-nature. Then you return to the Self that is prior to the birth of *all* things, not just “prior to your birth from your parents.” Whenever we forget the source from which all our discriminations arise, we turn to things apart from us. But that source is not other than us—it has to be the absolute Self, functioning right here. It is the calm and constant way of being, the One True Person without Rank. We must return to this True Self from which all discriminations emerge.

And yet we continue to search outside ourselves. However long we search, we cannot find our heads, for the searcher is the head itself. That is why Rinzai asks, “Don't you know what it is that is running around seeking?” We are all seeking. But what are we after? With this question, Rinzai guides people across the sea of birth-and-death.

Rinzai continues. “The buddhas and patriarchs of the three periods and the ten directions appear only in order to seek the Dharma.” To seek the Dharma is to realize what runs around searching. “You followers of

the Way who are the students of today"—you who are assembled and endeavoring here—"you, too, have only to seek the Dharma." There is nothing else to do. All followers of the Way should just wholeheartedly seek the Dharma, with no distracting thoughts of other things. This, of course, is extremely difficult. It's one thing to be deluded about buddhas and patriarchs, but yet another to be hindered by external disturbances and internal delusions. If we are hindered by them, we cannot seek the Dharma singlemindedly, and if we don't seek it singlemindedly, nothing is brought to fulfilment. Buddhas and patriarchs, on the other hand, *come only to seek the Dharma.*

Shakyamuni said, "Concentrating one's mind on a single matter, nothing is left unrealized." In discussing *dhyāna*, Buddhism stresses concentrating one's mind in one place. *True dhyāna* isn't merely a matter of controlling the mind, but it does have such an aspect. If our mind fails to become composed and settled, our practice does not reach completion. If we don't truly turn inward and concentrate the mind, our attention will drift outward as we try to ascertain what it is that seeks. In this unsettled condition, "our mind is constantly running around like a horse," "scrambling about like a monkey." If we stop at the point where our legs and shoulders hurt, we will never concentrate the mind and realize that which seeks. If we focus the mind, all inner and outer disturbances resolve themselves naturally. When we try to resolve them, they only become more tenacious. But if we sit and concentrate our minds on one thing—on that which seeks, the source of our seeking—our minds will naturally stop being distracted, even if we don't worry about our legs hurting or our attention drifting.

There is a Zen saying, "Kenshō comes first." This expresses the "one-mind" precept. We don't open satori by observing the precepts to the letter. When we do open up satori, all precepts are contained in it. The "formless one-mind precept" appears in the Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch, and Daitō Kokushi mentions it in one of his expositions on the Dharma. Those who think they can't achieve satori because of their sensual desires are told not to worry: if you achieve kenshō, such concern will disappear of itself, whether you try to resolve it or not. Even if you observe one, five, ten, three hundred, or eighteen-hundred precepts, you will never achieve kenshō. Kenshō is immediate—there's no reason why it should be hard to attain. When we suddenly awaken to the Self, we see into our Original Nature. Of course, there is no need for us to become

awakened—we already are.

“You, too, have only to seek the Dharma. Until then, you’ll go on transmigrating through the five paths of existence.” When one achieves kenshō, all transmigration is “turned over” and transformed into Dynamic Functioning. We transmigrate through the five paths or realms—hell, the land of hungry spirits, the animal kingdom, the human world, and heaven—tossed about by temporal and spatial matters. But we don’t need to extricate ourselves from this. A line in one of Kanzan’s poems reads, “Ah! Transmigration in the three worlds.” This is not ordinary transmigration, but transmigration in which we stride boldly through the world. Ordinary transmigration has turned into free and unhindered activity.

Rinzai asks the assembly, “What is the Dharma?” He has discussed our searching for the Dharma, and now he asks about the Dharma itself. What sort of thing is the Dharma? What do *you* make it out to be? According to Rinzai, “The Dharma is the mind-dharma.” The word “mind” is crucial here. Rinzai doesn’t mean “mind” in the usual sense. When he says the Dharma is the dharma called “mind,” his words would have no impact if he himself were not this very mind-dharma; they would become mere terms and phrases. But he himself is this mind-dharma, and that which is genuine in his discourses is springing forth here with great vitality.

“The mind is without form; it pervades the ten directions and is functioning right before your eyes.” These aren’t written words—the mind is boldly presenting itself and Rinzai is asking his disciples if they can see it. He is in effect saying, “Without form, it’s pervading the ten directions and manifesting itself right here before us. . . . Do you see? It’s no different from what runs around doing the seeking. It is revealing itself right here, right before your eyes. But you can’t see it with your eyes. Even so, it’s manifesting itself and functioning right in front of you.”

Rinzai goes on to say that “people lack sufficient faith in this” We don’t understand that which is functioning right before us. Our lack of faith stems from not noticing it and not becoming it, from its not *being present as us*. So this is not a matter of ordinary faith or devotion. It is no matter of believing or not believing, knowing or not knowing, or even experiencing or not experiencing in the usual sense. Rinzai isn’t pointing to a lack of belief or the negative consequences arising from it. Since we haven’t awakened to the Self, we “accept names and phrases” and get caught up

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in mere words.

The assembly is told that they “try to speculate about the Buddha Dharma from written words.” “Written words” are not simply something on paper, but anything distinguished. Not only scriptures and the records of patriarchs, but all discriminated things, discriminated nothingness included. We turn to them and from them are try to speculate. In making precise distinctions and comparing various possibilities, we end up speculating about the Buddha Dharma, in the sense of gauging and conjecturing. This is no different from a lack of faith, for it separates us from the mind-dharma that is the true Buddha Dharma. In such speculation, the person and the Dharma drift as far apart as heaven and earth. It’s like going east when you want to go west, or down when you want to go up. You’re heading in the wrong direction, barking up the wrong tree.

“The Mind is without form; it pervades the ten directions and is functioning right before your eyes.” Isn’t this the absolutely formless Self? I think that’s enough for today.

### *YOU, the Follower of the Way Right Now Before My Eyes Listening to the Dharma*

In my talks until now, I have discussed the True Buddha. I have stressed its formlessness. Today I will continue that theme with an examination of the following discourse in the *Record*:

Followers of the Way, the true Buddha has no shape, the true Dharma has no form. All you are doing is fashioning models and creating patterns out of illusory transformations. Anything you may find through seeking will be only a wild fox spirit; it certainly won’t be true Buddha. It will be the understanding of a heretic.

The true student of the Way has nothing to do with Buddhas, nothing to do with Bodhisattvas or Arhats. Nor has he anything to do with what is held to be excellent in the three realms. Having transcended these, in solitary freedom, he is not bound by things. Even if heaven and earth were to turn upside down I wouldn’t have a doubt; even if all the buddhas of the ten directions were to manifest themselves before me, I wouldn’t have any joy; even if the three hells were to suddenly yawn open at my feet, I would be fearless. Why is



this so? Because, as I see it, all dharmas are empty forms; when transformation takes place they are existent, when transformation does not take place, they are non-existent. The three realms are mind-only, the ten thousand dharmas are consciousness only. Hence these illusory dreams, flowers in the sky—why trouble to grasp them!

Only you, the follower of the Way right now before my eyes listening to the Dharma, only you enter fire and are not burned, enter water and are not drowned, enter the three hells as if strolling through a pleasure garden, enter the realms of the hungry ghosts and the beasts without suffering their fate. How can this be? There are no dharmas to be disliked. If you love the sacred and hate the secular, you'll float and sink in the birth-and-death sea. The passions exist dependent on mind: have no-mind, and how can they bind you? Without troubling to discriminate or cling to forms, you'll attain the Way naturally in a moment of time.

But if you try to get understanding by hurrying along this byway and that, after three asamkhyeya kalpas you'll still end up in the round of birth-and-death. Better take your ease sitting crosslegged on a meditation chair in a corner of the monastery. [pp. 22-23]

All you followers of the Way. All of you studying and practicing Zen. The True Buddha has no shape. The True Dharma no form. The True Buddha is what Rinzai calls the "True Person," the "Dharma called Mind." Our true way of being, the way of being truly human, has no shape. It is beyond all shapes. It has no form whatsoever. When we use special terms, like Buddha, Nirvana, or Tathatā, we tend to think of it as something apart from or transcendent of us. Here, "True Self" is so immediate and close at hand we can't even say it is "close." Inasmuch as such words as Buddha and Dharma are apt to delude us, they are in this respect hindrances. Rinzai indicates our true way of being with such direct expressions as "True Person" and "True Self." It is independent of words or letters, and transmitted apart from scriptural teaching. Buddhism doesn't really need scriptures. It is just our direct awakening to the Self—here we find the source of the Buddha Dharma. Rinzai indicates this when he declares that there is no Buddha and no Dharma apart from "YOU the person who is listening" to the Dharma here at this moment. This person has no shape, no form, no root, no source, and no abode, and yet it is functioning here with great vitality in all circumstances.

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Responding actively to all possible circumstances, the place where it is carried on is no-place. Although we speak of a place of the True Person's functioning, even that *place* does not exist. It is no-place. Hence Rinzai warns, "When you look for it, it retreats farther and farther. When you seek it, it turns more and more the other way. This is called the 'Mystery'." The Sixth Patriarch said that "the Mystery is right where you are." To search for an external Mystery outside oneself is far wide of the mark. It isn't something separate from us. It is not found apart from the freely functioning shapeless and formless Self.

This mystery is never hidden. Rinzai, borrowing a Confucian expression, says, "I hide nothing from you." He means there is no mystery apart from the "person who is listening to the Dharma," the Person manifesting itself right before our eyes. Nevertheless, basing ourselves on false things, we grope about in the dark. Even if we should find something, it will be only a "wild fox spirit," an unreal apparition. Neither "Buddha" nor "Dharma" is the True Self, so if we should find either of them outside ourselves, it will be nothing but the spirit of a wild fox. In taking it to be the Buddha or Dharma, we will be followers of "wild-fox" Zen. Rinzai tells his disciples that it "won't be the true Buddha," it will be the understanding of a heretic. Truth or true reality is far beyond the understanding of anyone who deviates from the Way.

"The true student of the Way has nothing to do with Buddhas." When we truly study and practice the Way, we don't seek or attach to any clay, wooden, metal, or conceptualized buddhas external to our True Self. Nor has the true student anything to do with what is held to be excellent in the three realms. There are countless excellent things in the three worlds. The true seeker has nothing to do with them. They are mere apparitions. Even if the brilliant gold figure of a buddha suddenly appeared, the seeker would know it for what it is, a wild fox spirit, and would not be deluded by it.

"Loftily emancipated from these, in solitary freedom, he is not bound by things." "Loftily emancipated" means to be liberated from all restrictions. This is how the true Buddha with no shape, the true Dharma with no form, is formless, empty, and dependent on nothing. And this itself is true existence. Since such a person is solitarily emancipated and non-dependent, he neither becomes attached to things nor reveres anything external to himself. This is the meaning of "without holiness" in Bodhidharma's celebrated answer to Emperor Wu's question about

sacred truth: "Vastly open without holiness." In contrast, the "sacred truth" in the Emperor's question is a transcendent holiness, belonging to the dichotomy of the mundane and the holy. True holiness involves no distinction between the mundane and the holy, or between ordinary, unawakened humans and Buddha, the awakened one. True holiness is formless and solitarily emancipated, never bound by things.

"Even if heaven and earth were to turn upside down, I wouldn't have a doubt." I am the Self that doesn't even begin to doubt when the world is turned upside down. This does not refer to doubting something objectively—my very Self is doubtless. It might best be called "the doubtless." Here there is neither doubting nor even no doubting, so I am totally free from doubt, no matter what happens.

Even if all the buddhas of the ten directions were to manifest themselves right before Rinzai, he says he would "have no joy." Such manifestations are no cause for rejoicing. Whoever experiences joy over such a thing has neither seen nor awakened to the formless True Buddha. Of course, we are apt to be deluded by the mysterious appearance of such manifestations. But the formless Self is not bewildered. It doesn't mistake them for the True Buddha. Only in this total emancipation does the True Buddha appear.

When we penetrate the formless Self, we experience no joy and no grief: for this very reason, we can speak of total, eternal, true joy. Only in this "formless joy" is true joy found. It bears no resemblance to joy in the usual sense. We open up satori and exult, yet it is foolish to view such exultation as the mark of satori: to be without joy or grief is the true state of awakening.

"Even if the three worlds were to suddenly yawn open at my feet, I would be fearless." If the three hells of covetousness, anger, and ignorance were to appear suddenly before Rinzai, he wouldn't feel a bit afraid. There is no room for fear to enter him. He neither fears nor does not fear. Again, this lack of fear does not indicate not fearing at certain times as opposed to fearing at others. The way of being in which one neither fears nor does not fear is the true "fearlessness," the true state of "having-no-fears" spoken of in the *Heart Sutra*. If we fail to attain to such fearlessness, we cannot speak of being truly without fear.

Fear does not disappear through our eliminating individual fears one by one. Having no fear is simply a way of being, one aspect of the true Buddha or true human being. It is essential to realize that neither our

lack of fear nor our lack of joy constitutes the true Buddha. True formlessness does not come from negating something in ourselves. Since our True Self is formless, all things are negated and affirmed once—through the presence of the Formless Self. Zen uses the term “immediate” for this, meaning that all things are negated and affirmed simultaneously, not little by little as in gradual practice and gradual satori.

This total negation-affirmation does not take place in the future or apart from us—it is the true present. This is critical in our practice. We tend to search outside ourselves or within ourselves, but if inside and outside are themselves not the Self, they remain outside us. Rinzai stresses this point and indicates the Self with his words, “YOU who are listening to the Dharma.”

Why is this so? Why is there no thought of joy, grief, or fear? “Because, as I see it,” Rinzai says, “all dharmas are empty forms; when transformation takes place, they are existent, and when transformation does not take place, they are non-existent.” When we awaken to emptiness as the characteristic of all that exists, we realize that all things are empty (*śūnyatā*) of self-nature. This emptiness is the true way of being of the Formless Self, for the characteristic of emptiness is to be formless. Rinzai tells his disciples that “when transformation takes place, they [dharmas] are existent, and when transformation does not take place, they are non-existent.” We usually think that whatever doesn’t change exists, and whatever changes doesn’t exist. But from the standpoint of emptiness, nothingness that is neither existent nor non-existent—in other words, that which is formless—is eternal. Being or existence, on the other hand, is that which is subject to change. True Being, however, is not being of this kind, nor is True Nothingness this kind of nothingness. The emptiness of all things means that when nothingness changes, it is being, and when being changes, it is nothingness. In terms of true emptiness, there is freedom of being and nothingness: not caught up in either, both being and nothingness are manifestations of the total functioning of the True Self. Accordingly, there is no reason to grieve if one is nothingness or rejoice if one is being.

“The three realms are mind-only, the ten thousand dharmas are consciousness-only.” Now if we take this “mind-only” and “consciousness-only” to be that of the usual Buddhist theories of mind-only and consciousness-only, we will fail to grasp what is actually expressed. “Mind-only” must be the True Self. The same goes for “consciousness-only.” The

three worlds and the myriad dharmas arise from the True Self. Unless we awaken to the formless mind-only we live amid the three worlds and myriad things which arise and disappear in endless transformation. This is extremely important. From our perspective, Rinzai's statement that "the three worlds are mind-only, the ten thousand dharmas are consciousness-only" expresses the true Dharma-world. This is a world free of thoughts of joy or fear, which freely manifests itself in accordance with all things. Since mind and consciousness usually are not seen in this way, they cannot be anything but the world of birth-and-death, the discriminated world of form. We must "turn over" the mind and consciousness so they may become the mind-only and consciousness-only that is the source of actuality. We have to turn over the eight consciousnesses, die to our usual mind and consciousness. Only then do we attain the true mind and true consciousness, the mind and consciousness of the True Person. In this attainment, the eight consciousnesses, which are but wild fox spirits, turn over and become the four wisdoms. The four wisdoms are the true world of actuality.

There is constant danger of viewing the eight consciousnesses as the true mind or true consciousness. Zen has always made much of Jōshū's statement, "Cut down with a sword into the field of the eight consciousnesses." The "field" or foundation called the eight consciousnesses—including ordinary consciousness and the unconscious—is our "mind-field." From this mind-field arise all our discriminations. We must rid ourselves of this field by striking down into it.

The Chinese priest Engō (1063–1136) says, "There is nothing much to my functioning." There really isn't anything special about the functioning of the True Zen Person. We annihilate the eight consciousnesses with one stroke of the sword. This is immediate awakening. The eight consciousnesses "turn over" and become the four wisdoms, and the nest of binding passions and delusions is destroyed.

"Hence, these illusory dreams, flowers in the sky—why trouble to grasp at them?" They are all negated with ease. And when needed, they are used freely. When we gain new life through death, illusory dreams and flowers in the sky change into the true form of reality.

"Only YOU, the follower of the Way right now before my eyes listening to the Dharma"—this person is right here. Nothing is hidden. This listener has no form. It is the Formless Self, the person of the Way who is solitarily emancipated and non-dependent.

"Only you enter fire and are not burned, enter water and are not drowned, enter the three hells as if strolling through a pleasure garden." In Buddhist terminology, "pleasure garden" usually refers to a place of holy seers. It is not necessarily akin to the realm of hermits, though—it is the true world. The person of the Way disports himself in this true world without joy or despair. He goes freely through heaven and hell.

Rinzai tells us that this follower of the Way "enters the realms of the hungry ghosts and the beasts without suffering their fate." He wanders among beasts without descending to their level, totally unaffected by them. He is emancipated from all adverse circumstances and goes in and out of them at will. Emancipation and affirmation are realized by only one agent; this YOU who is listening to the Dharma talk. What is this listener?

In addressing his disciples, Rinzai often says such things as "How can this be? There are no dharmas to be disliked." We find similar expressions in the *Shinjinmei* (*Hsin Hsin Ming*; "Inscriptions on Faith in Mind"): "Just avoid picking and choosing" and "When mind does not arise, the ten thousand dharmas have no fault." There are no things to be disliked. This has nothing to do with liking or disliking something. Nor is it a matter of loathing ordinary humans and seeking the holy, or of detesting hell and searching for heaven. To dislike one thing and search for another is the very source of birth-and-death and sinful karma. That which is thus confused about the Buddha and searches about for it is a sentient being. That which has awakened to the Buddha is a buddha, an awakened one. Birth-and-death arises from our confusion about the Buddha. Because we have not grasped the true way of being of the Buddha, anything we take as the Buddha only becomes an obstruction to practice, a hindrance to our realization of the true Buddha. We need to cut away and discard our attachment to the Buddha and the Dharma. Not to be caught up in the Buddha or the Dharma is the true stance to have in practice, and the consequent nonarising of mind is our True Self. Therefore, "if you love the sacred and hate the secular," you will give rise to birth-and-death and forever fail to find you way out of it.

"The passions exist dependent on mind: be no-minded and how can they bind you?" Passions arise in any mind that picks and chooses. Without such a selective mind, how can passions bind you? Actually, our very passions are awakening,—they turn over and become awakening, so there is no reason to hate passions and no need to seek awakening. When

you realize this, you will discover true Awakening.

“Without troubling to discriminate or cling to forms, you’ll attain the Way naturally in a moment of time.” If we neither like nor dislike things, if we are not caught up in things, the Way will be realized of itself without a moment’s delay. Of course, we don’t attain it—it is unattainable. The Way is presencing itself right now. This is its true way of being. If you wait a moment to grasp it, you will be too late. The Way is the self-effecting Dharma. It is not made to be as it is by something else—it is as it is from within by its very nature. Actually, there is nothing which makes it so and nothing which is so. This is the true self-effecting Dharma, and precisely this is the True Self. Without seeking anything, the True Self is present here as the manifestation of absolute truth.

Rinzai continues: “But if you try to get understanding by hurrying along this byway and that, after three asamkhyeya kalpas you’ll still end up in the round of birth-and-death.” We cannot part from the world of birth-and-death and attain the Way by running all over the place. Since we often mistake the source of birth-and-death for the True Self, we cannot extricate ourselves from that world. The birth-and-death we “end up in” is not birth and death in a literal sense. It is the world with existent things and non-existent things, things with value and things without value. We cannot readily extricate ourselves from that world.

Therefore, you had “better take your ease sitting crosslegged on a meditation chair in a corner of the monastery.” “Take your ease” like Rinzai’s “noble person who *has nothing to do*.” This is the realm of one who has gone beyond birth-and-death, who has “gone back home and sits calmly,” who has returned to the True Self. I don’t mean to imply that this is some sort of existent realm—it is no-thing. This no-thing, this having “nothing to do,” isn’t a passive approach to life, either. Rather, it is true, unrestricted functioning. Acting without restriction and yet not acting; involved in many things, yet having nothing to do; having nothing to do yet engaging oneself in many matters: such is the “nothing to do” spoken of here. It isn’t something passive, as in the command to “stop fretting and sit down.” On the contrary, it is the ultimate realm of awakening.

The “monastery” Rinzai speaks of is actually the world. “Sitting crosslegged” must be the sitting (*za*) of the walking, standing, sitting, and lying indicated by the expression, “Walking, too, is Zen; lying, too, is Zen.” Otherwise it is not yet truly having nothing to do. Rinzai tells

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his disciples to reach the true realm of having nothing to do. Actually, you don't have to arrive at that realm—it is YOU just as you are.

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