

# The Vow of Humankind:

Talks by Shin'ichi Hisamatsu

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## Keeping Calm and Composed, Let Us Awake to Our True Self

### I

In the seven years since the establishment of the FAS Society, we have been studying and practicing the way to Awakening, the ultimate great Way mentioned in the first section of the Principles of the Society. Our work has now matured and resulted in the Vow of Humankind. Perhaps we individual members were not clearly aware of the Vow, but it matured in the depths, of our hearts in a nebulous form. During those long years it fermented in a condition not unlike chaos or obscurity; now it has been realized in a clear form by our organization. Although the Vow was obscure, when it reached completion, we ascertained in our society that it was the ultimate great Way we had been searching for. This is, so to speak, the Awakening of the FAS Society.

It is said that Shakyamuni practiced asceticism for six years in the Himalayas and then experienced a Great Awakening. In this way, Shakyamuni awakened to the Way as an individual. In our organization, however, awakening is not an individual's awakening, but rather the awakening of the whole group. It is realized through the mutual diligence of numerous members of the FAS Society. We thus must conceive of the establishment of the Vow of Humankind as a social phenomenon, as a matter of the society of humanity we are representing, never a society composed of merely a few people. This is why it is called the "Vow of *Humankind*."

The vow of the FAS Society must be the Vow of Humankind. Given the character of the Vow, our Society must make the Vow its own vow. And at the same time we clearly assimilate the Vow of Humankind, we must have all human beings make this Vow with us. In this way, the eternal influence of the Vow comes to be the mission of our organization.

For these reasons, this *betsuji-gakudô* (or *sesshin*), occurring at such an important turning point of our organization as this, must be highly significant retreat. Aware of this, we should consider this *betsuji* a most important, epoch-making event. In this frame of mind we come to the Vow of Humankind and must discern the depths of its foundation.

We first must grasp the opening phrase of the Vow: "Keeping calm and composed." How far along the path must we go to be able to say that we are "calm and composed"? There seem to be various types and levels of "Keeping calm and composed." But what kind of composure is involved in awakening to the True Self? It must be such that when we truly become composed, we can awaken to the True Self, and that when we awaken to the True Self, we can truly

become composed. Simultaneously, we must become the True Self with "fully compassionate" functioning. Precisely this is the Absolute Way. We must become the Absolute way, or, expressed in Buddhist terminology I like, we must become the "compassionately functioning awakened Self" (*chitaihiyū*). The goal of our sitting (*za*) lies in this. The ultimate great Way must be that which is conveyed by the Buddhist expression, "creating without parting from Awakening."

## II

At this time, I would like to delve further into the expression I mentioned earlier, "Keeping calm and composed." It is the important task of us FAS members to dig down to and grasp the source of these words rather than to look merely at their surface meaning. I want to consider "Keeping calm and composed" in terms of a metaphor, the metaphor of a bottomless abyss filled with water. When one exists as the waves as the agitated surface, as opposed to the bottomless abyss, one cannot become calm and composed. No true "composure" emerges when waves merely collide from opposite directions and settle down. Afterwards waves once again arise. All that has happened is that colliding waves have settled and resulted in new waves. As long as one exists as a wave, one does not become "calm and composed." The collision of waves and the progressive settling into new waves results in a temporary composure, but this cannot be said to be true composure; it is merely a particular instance of composure in a given time and place.

Yet there is not only composure in the horizontal direction, but also composure in the vertical direction in which waves become water. The horizontal composure in the transition from waves to waves corresponds to a so-called dialectical synthesis. In Buddhist terminology, this amounts to karma. This synthesis becomes a new thesis which awaits its anti-thesis and then forms a new synthesis. This kind of synthesis can be a temporary state of security, but no matter how much of an ordinary way of being this is, it is not true security. The direction of this kind of security, involving the progression from security to insecurity, insecurity to security, constancy to inconstancy, inconstancy to constancy, is the "composure of actual history. True security cannot be found in that direction. Rather, it is found in the vertical direction of the shift from waves to their source. In this, the self, heretofore existing as waves, quiets down and becomes bottomless water. The self-awakening of the bottomless abyss itself is the "highly composed True Self." The self that exists as waves is the actual self, but the self-awakening of the fundamental water is the "awakening to the True Self."

In Buddhism we encounter the expression, ["Tathagata Treasury."](#)<sup>1</sup> The "Treasury" (*garbha*) is a womb, a "mother body," and its self-awakening must be the Self, the True Self. In this there is no longer any beginning or end as in waves. And yet, as the functioning of that which has neither beginning nor end, waves arise. From infinite silence, infinite stability, and bottomless depth appear countless waves. In certain cases these waves may become raging billows. Silence bears absolute activity within itself, and infinite waves, large and small, arise as a functioning without beginning or end.

The dimension of only the condition of the waves is the world of history. Our actuality is the mere self-realization of waves, and to shift from these waves to the self-awakening of their source, water, is to become "calm and composed." Such words as formless or nothingness refer to the difference between waves and water: waves have form, water does not.

Waves and water constitute a metaphor here, but as this is a metaphorical expression of my way of being, it is no mere metaphor. If something is a mere metaphor, it is empty. The

metaphor spoken of here is no mere metaphor, for it includes the fundamental concrete elements that make a metaphor a living metaphor. This concrete element must be embodied by us. In other words the statement, "Keeping calm and composed, let us awake to our True Self," must become something living and concrete, not simply words.

We do not become highly composed if there is a place of composure and a place lacking in composure. We must realize the composure that encompasses every time and every place. But, in what kind of condition are we when we become the composure encompassing time and space? As long as we have not become totally unlimited selves, we have not become such composure. As completely unlimited selves we exist as the source of all our limitations, free from all limitations. The composed self is determining and not determined. When we become this self we realize our True Self. This self-realization is to "awaken."

When the "True Self" is discussed, people are apt to think of it as an object of research. When it is studied and some kind of conclusion is reached, the Self is considered objectively. This constitutes knowledge about one self, but this knowledge is entirely objective; it is the concept or idea of the self, not the True Self itself. More than the word "self," such words as "I" or "we" seem appropriate for expressing the True Self. I, the True I, am not the I which is studied objectively; the True I is the I which can never be objectified. It is the unobjectified Self. This kind of self is True Life.

This life is beyond all limitation and at the same time is the I which is the source of all limitation. Ordinarily, what we refer to as "I" is a limited I. The unlimited I is unknown to us. (In this case, "known" does not mean objectively known, but awakened unto.) The usual "we" is our existing as a limited "we". The development from the limited "we" to the unlimited "we" is the absolute negation of the former. This is not a logical negation, but an absolute existential negation, an absolute subjective negation. That is to say, it is an absolute negation of the limited I itself.

In Christianity it is said, "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever on my account loses his life will find it." From the standpoint of our organization, "whoever finds his life will lose it" means that as long as one is concerned with, attached to, and dwelling in the limited I without discarding that perspective, one loses True Life. In our organization, the I of "whoever loses his or her life for 'I' will find it" is nothing other than True Life, the True I. The unlimited I is never an objective Buddha or God; it is the closest and most intimate thing to us. "Intimate" does not mean that I am something and the "I" is close to what I am. I *am* "I." Further, the "for 'I'" means "for the establishment of True I," "for the awakening unto the True Self." To that end, the actual ego-self is negated and lost. Subjectively speaking, this amounts to losing one's life for the true "I." For this reason, one who does not lose one's life cannot find it. Again, from the standpoint of the FAS society, the "I" of "for 'I'" is the True Self. No Buddha or God is found outside of this I. The objective Buddha and objective God are neither True Buddha nor True God. In this respect, Buddha and God are never absolute "otherly" entities.

In Buddhist terminology, the limited "we" is referred to as "ordinary humans" (*bonpu*). The True I is the negation of that kind of ordinary being. At the same time, the True I is the negation of the objective Buddha. Herein we meet the expression, "Worldly passions fallen away, I am empty of all holy intent." The True I is the I which has reached this point. In our organization, the True Self is the simultaneous negation of the human and God, of "ordinary humans" and Buddha.

We usually turn to God or Buddha, but this must be stopped. To be "empty of all holy intent" is essential here. Nevertheless, *usually* people strip away worldly passions and turn toward that which is sacred or holy. This is because the holy is absolute and other than oneself. In such situations, one faces Buddha and discards oneself. One becomes nothing in the face of Buddha and through this obtains one's life. Herein, Buddha and God become, in all respects, something other than us, standing in opposition to us. In the FAS Society, however, it is not a matter of discarding oneself and thereby becoming nothing in the face of God or Buddha. In our organization, "becoming nothing" is the change from the limited I to the unlimited I. This unlimited I is in no way an "otherly" entity; rather, it is the most closest thing to us (*mottomo ji-naru mono*). There is nothing which is more my True "I" than this. Herein there is no self/other polarity. If I possess something other than and external to myself, that thing is not the True I. Therefore, no-self or selflessness here does not refer to selflessness resulting from the normal I becoming nothing, but is the selflessness in which there is no other. This very selflessness is the True Self. Because it is "I," it is called "Self," and because it is unlimited, we say "no-" "-lessness" (*mu*). Therefore, selflessness is absolute independent existence. This is the "I" that is reborn after death.

It goes without saying that the actual I must be negated, but the transcendent Buddha and God must be negated as well. Therein, for the first time, we "awake to our True Self," realize the highly composed self, and become the Self which is the water of the bottomless abyss. To the extent that I am "I," there is no separation from the Self. Where I am not "I," there is separation. The True I exists constantly throughout time and space. The following phrases all express it: "Creating without parting from awakening"; "Without abiding anywhere, the Mind arises"; "Becoming master of every situation"; "Without parting from the Dharma, one manifests oneself as an ordinary being."

We can all arrive at this True Self, become truly composed, and in a real sense attain security. Security is not a state of consciousness, nor emotion, will, or thought. Real security must be existential and Subject-ive (*shutaiteki*). Ordinary security is merely a feeling of relief, an emotion, or a state of consciousness. But this is not the security I am speaking of. True security is constantly acting while not acting, constantly moving without moving. If composure is separate from free action, it is not composure but a type of feeling. Composure is neither a composed mind nor composed consciousness. That which is composed must be me. Standing, sitting, walking, running, sleeping, rising, crying, laughing, thinking, desiring -- all of these must be composure. True Composure is never lost. True Composure and the True Self are not two different things. Such is true zazen. There is no zazen other than this. Zazen seems to be something which does not involve movement, but [the four cardinal behaviors](#)<sup>2</sup> and the acts of perception and cognition must be our sitting practice (*za*). At the point where our practice becomes this zazen, we can speak of "Zazen of the Greater Vehicle." What is not so is not true zazen. We must obtain this true zazen. We must sit this zazen. Should we fail to achieve the way of being where we "kill Buddha, kill the Patriarchs" and where "worldly passions (have) fallen away, (and we are) empty of holy intent," we will not realize True Composure.

\*\*\*To be continued\*\*\*

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1. *Nyoraizô: Tathagata-garbha*, the true face of Tathagata before birth.
  2. Going, abiding, sitting, lying

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## Keeping Calm and Composed, Let Us Awake to Our True Self

### V

Why must "awaken to the True Self"? The way of being of the "True Self" answers this question for us. In other words, when we have awakened to the "True Self," the necessity of truly awakening to it and the fact that awakening is true for us become clear in and of themselves for the first time, like when we learn coolness and warmth by touching. There are many reasons for and "moments" involved in the human search for salvation and emancipation, but, generally speaking, we have to be saved because we are, after all, absolutely negative entities. That is, human beings are in a deep sense nihilistic. Only when we truly recognize this do we clearly realize that we must be saved. At that point, we reach an impasse, and, as a compelling religious desire, the so-called "seeking of the Way" arises in us. In this, the objective reason why the religious demand inevitably arises in nihilistic human beings becomes clear.

Why are human beings nihilistic? Generally speaking, human beings are "something," *etwas*, limited or restricted beings. That humans "are something" means that we are absolutely negative. Because we are "something," we are bound and shackled by that "something." As expressed in the *Mumonkan*, we are "spirits dependent on grass and attached to trees." Spirits or spirit refers more to human existence than to the human soul. We are an existence that relies on grass and clings to trees. Grass and trees refer to the "something" that we are. Expressed more concretely, to be "something" is to be mental and physical, the concrete forms in which humans are "something." Because we are mental and physical, we must extricate ourselves, we must realize the "dropping off of body and mind." Through the dropping off of body and mind, Dôgen went from being "something," that is, a mental and physical human being, to being a human extricated from mind and body, a true human being awakened to the True Self.

We usually cannot conceive of a self without a mind or body. There are, however, many historical records of selves where mind and body have fallen away, especially in the East. This is conveyed by such expressions as Emptiness, Nothingness, Suchness, the Dharmakaya, not-a-single-thing, and "vastly open without holiness." These expressions are not produced by thinking with our heads. Rather, they are grounded in the actual Self-Awakening, in the awakened way of human being, and express the condition of that way of being. When we arrive at that condition, such terminology is understood as obvious and in no way strange.

The self where mind and body have dropped off is the self that is liberated from mental and physical restrictions. It is the extricated self, which is nothing at all, *no thing* at all. In the Self-Awakening of such a self, salvation and emancipation are brought about. Salvation and emancipation are necessarily established upon such a self, which, being beyond restriction by anything at all, is a body of emancipation, an emancipated Subject. The Sixth patriarch said, "Originally, not-a-single-thing, so where is the dust to cling?" Even things so minuscule as the "dust of dust" do not exist on this self. It is a self of complete nothingness, quite like a clearly polished mirror. When this self awakens unto itself, all dust disappears on its own. Just as the sun rises and darkness recedes, that self awakens and we are emancipated. There is an expression, "A snowflake on a red-hot kiln." Like when snow falls into a starlet fire and immediately melts away, this self is no "spirit dependent on grass, attached to trees." It is stuck to nothing, As it is no-thing, it cannot be restricted by anything.

Salvation is never a matter of being saved from the outside or being helped by an "other." Salvation or emancipation is accomplished in our way of being, not through being saved by God or Buddha. Salvation occurs when we "awaken to the True Self," and this emancipation is confirmed in our way of being. In this direction lies the path of Kegon Buddhist called *gegenmon*, the "Gate back to the source." This return to the source is the Awakening to the True Self. This corresponds to the "Going Aspect" (*ôso*) of Pure land Buddhism. In Tendai Buddhism, the *shi*[*samatha*, to concentrate the self] or *shikan* [kan: *vipasyana*, contemplation, insight] indicates the same things as the Kegon *gegenmon*. Zen calls this *sôtômon*[*sô*: to sweep, *tô*; to eliminate, to melt away, *mon*: gate], the "sweeping-away gate," indicating the sweeping away of all dust. In the end, this amounts to absolute negation, the movement from a mental and physical self to the self where mind and body have fallen away. It is what Zen refers to as the One Great Death. In the saying of the Sixth Patriarch, "Without thinking of good and evil, what is your original face?" What is at issue is not merely good and evil, for this expression means that one must not be "something." If one is goodness, one is something; and, of course, one must not be evil. This diverges from not thinking about good and evil or merely not thinking -- it is the falling away of mind and body. Through this falling away of mind and body, not only good and evil but *all* things are not thought about. This is so-called "non-thinking" (*hishiryô*). Where there is mind and body there is thought, but no non-thinking. Of course, non-thinking does not signify merely not thinking -- it necessarily presupposes the negation of the existence of the thinking subject. In other words, non-thinking corresponds to not being "something," so true non-thinking is Awakening. As this is the Awakening where mind and body have fallen away, it is "thinking of that which is non-thinking." Since this thinking results from the self-awakening of non-thinking, it of course differs from normal thought. Since ancient times, *zazen* has been practiced in the East as a method for arriving at this state. *Zazen*, however, must be the *zazen* of the falling away of mind and body. The I which is no-thing is the self that truly sits. When one "awakens to the True Self," true *zazen* comes forth for the first time; and when true *zazen* comes forth, one "awakens to the True Self."

Yuishiki Buddhism (*vijnapti-matrata*, the Yogachara school) relates closely to Yoga. Yoga is generally a centering of the mind, so-called *samadhi*. But if the concentrating on and becoming one with an object involves something external, it will fall short of ultimate Yoga. True Yoga emerges when we cease to be "something," and to cease to be "something" is to become one. In this way, the self in which mind and body have fallen away is true Yoga. Therefore, true Yoga is the concentration with nothing concentrating and nothing concentrated on, nothing determining and nothing determined. This is not merely the absence of determination, of noema and noesis; this is the *self-awakening* to the nonexistence of noema and noesis. The Awakening with absolutely nothing determining or determined, the

self-awakening which is One, is true Yoga. This is *sunyata-samadhi*, or *raja-samadhi* (Royal *Samadhi*). Ultimately, the *shiof shikan* expresses this *raja-samadhi*.

If *raja-samadhi* is simply a self that is not something, it is not the True Self. True *raja-samadhi* is the True Self, the true subject, so it functions unobstructed in all things; it functions *as* all things. This constitutes its tree functioning. Constantly, this is emptiness, and, moreover, existence. In other words, this is "fallen-away mind and body," expressed in the Heart Sutra, "emptiness is form." In Kegon Buddhism, this is expressed by such terminology as "functioning arising from the Self" and "Emergence Gate." This "Emergence Gate," the opposite of the "Gate back to the Source," emerges here, as do the *kan* of *shikan* in Tendai Buddhism and the "Return Aspect" in Pure Land Buddhism. In Zen, this is "Rebirth in Death." Through the "One Great Death," we pass through the "Equality Gate," and then, in being "reborn in death," we emerge through the "Discernment Gate." Or, in opposition to the Sweeping-Away Gate stands the "Creation Gate". This is a "via positiva" standing in opposition to the "via negativa."

This is no mere emptiness or nothingness; it is functioning emptiness and functioning nothingness, and this is what the true nature of emptiness must be. Accordingly, Buddhism views emptiness as *tai* (Self) and functioning as *yû* (activity) . Because this *tai* is the Subject, it is never anything else. Because it is the Self, there is no separation from it. In other words, because it is always the subject, it is always *you*. The True Self is no longer "something." And because of this, it is unborn and undying. This is also expressed by such expressions as eternal, unchanging, beyond time and space, filling the ten-dimensional world, extending throughout past, present, and future. The eternal Self, the unborn-undying Self: this is the Original Face. The Self which neither has been born nor dies is the eternal present, the infinite space, *here*.

Thus, our sitting, true *zazen*, must be that which has no direction and no time. And, as its functioning, all distinctions arise in it.

By what method can we awaken to the True Self? *Zazen* is one method, although not the sole one. As I mentioned earlier, however, *zazen* is apt to degenerate into a mere oneness or equality without functioning. Koans constitute another method of awakening, but they can degenerate into mere functioning. In a true method, the Going Aspect and Return Aspect are consummated simultaneously, and dying and being reborn are experienced in a true sense. Since long ago, Buddhism has produced many forms of this type of method. The founders of sects all devised their own distinctive methods, but when such methods are established, certain evils appear.

At present, to find or create a true method is a crucial problem for us. The most important task of this Society is thoroughly realizing the Going Aspect and Return Aspect while simultaneously searching for a way all people can realize them. We must all work on this. I will next present a proposal for a way of accomplishing this.

## VI

In my last talk I presented my view of a key phrase in the Vow of Humankind: "awaken to the True Self." Awakening to the True Self is not something I have merely thought about in my head or felt; I have experienced this with all my body and mind. The content of this experience, the True Self, is an internal self-realization. It becomes self-evident that this must be both my way of being and the way of being of all humankind. We plumb our actual human way of being and at the bottom confront a so-called absolute aporia; we break through this

way of being from within and confirm a newly-reborn self. We awaken to our Self, and this awakened Self then functions as a true "mother-body." This amounts to dying absolutely and being reborn, to being reborn through death. I can express this with the words, "Cornered, one passes through; passing through, one changes." From my perspective, this is a more appropriate way of expressing Awakening than the usual wording: "Cornered, one changes; changed, one passes through."

As delineated in Pure land Buddhism, one dies to actuality and attains the going-aspect, enters Nirvana to fulfill this aspect, and then comes out of Nirvana in the return-aspect. These three stages correspond to the three stages of "become highly composed," and in awakening to the True Self, we must pass through all three. If any state is missing, we have not truly awakened to the True Self. But how do we, "in" our selves and bodies, pass through these three stages?

If the three stages of awakening to the True Self are merely explained to me, I will fail to go through the process and awaken to the True Self. Yet how do we awaken to the True Self? Inevitably, we seek after a method of awakening to the True Self. This is not easy. In the past, our predecessors struggled with the problem of establishing a method, and this is the most important problem for religion. The method must be universal, so that the whole world can practice and thereby arrive at the "True Self." It must be a public method, a method anyone can practice, a method that can, without fail, bring all practitioners to the True Self. In short it must be a public and certain method in this sense. I suppose many of you here have devised your own methods, but in the true method, at the same time you "awaken to the "True Self," you must have others awaken as well. Accordingly, this is a problem we must face squarely, not only for ourselves but for all people. Whether this method is established or not depends on whether a path is opened through which we truly become religious. Whoever seriously considers the human way of being faces no greater problem than this.

How should we establish this method? I would like to present a personal proposal for a method of awakening to the True Self. This method includes all three stages without omission, which in unison constitute a way of Awakening to the True Self. After I discuss my idea, I would like to hear your criticism.

This is my own personal proposal, but I wish to establish this method as a "public proposal" (*kōan*). Ultimately, this is a method that truly leads to absolute negation. Through this method, one drives oneself further and further into a corner and then runs up against the wall. Driven to a total impasse, we thereupon extricate ourselves. This desperate impasse is our way of being as something, and it is an absolutely negative position. It is the place where we become absolutely negative. We drive ourselves to this place, extricate ourselves from it, and become the Self which is not anything at all. Expressed in terminology used before, we enter the second stage from the first, and simultaneously, at the third stage, the self that is no-thing freely functions. I am considering a method where these three stages are actualized simultaneously.

Zen uses Jōshū's Mu koan as such a method. Although I cannot discuss this koan in detail now, it does not constitute a true method. Such koans as "What is your original face before you were born from your parents?" come closer to what I am talking about. Of course, our parents gave birth to us, but what is the Self existing before our parents gave us birth, the Self that possesses neither body nor mind? What is your original face before you were born from your parents? I am not speaking in terms of genealogy. What is the self that is not the body borne by your parents?



This is the self in which mind and body have fallen away. The self of one's parents' child is physical and mental, but what is the nature of the Self existing before that kind of self, the Self where mind and body have dropped off? As a koan or subject of inquiry, this problem amounts to the task, "Drop off mind and body!" or "Become your original face existing before you were born from your parents!" This is one method.

But how do mind and body fall away? We devise a method, mind and body drop away, and we become our original face before our birth from our parents, so we can speak of this as a method through which we enter the second stage from the first stage. There is an expression, "Breaking one's bones, one returns them to one's father; cutting up one's body, one returns it to one's mother; one then has one's original face reveal itself." If we make this our task, it asks us what we become after we break our bones and return them to our fathers, cut ourselves to pieces and return them to our mothers. This is one way we extricate ourselves from our actual selves.

There is also the *Kyôgen-jôju* koan. If you climb a tree, take hold of a high branch with your teeth, let your feet dangle in the air, grab nothing with your hands, and then are asked, "What is the meaning of Bodhidharma's trip east from India into China?" how do you answer? If you open your mouth and answer, you will fall to the ground and certain death. If you do not answer, you rudely disregard the questioner. This *Kyôgen-jôju* koan thus creates the dilemma of choosing between death and defiance; through this method you are driven into a corner and must discover a way to extricate yourself from the dilemma. This is not, however, a complete method for bringing about what is indicated by the expression, "Cornered, one passes through; passing through, one changes." I cannot criticize this koan in detail at this time, but, for a clear reason, I can assert that it falls short of a complete method. Zazen is also said to be a method for the falling away of mind and body, but this is an incomplete method as well.

Therefore, the problem is that of the kind of method that is at least nearly complete. I would like to establish a method for "Cornered, one passes through; passing through, one changes" in the simple form, "Right now, if nothing whatsoever of yourself will do, what do you do?" If all our ways of being and all our actions are no good, what do we do? "All our actions" refers to our total actuality, but the situation where nothing will do is an absolute predicament, the last extremity. Faced with the query, "what do you do?" one is reborn from that absolute predicament if one can do something. In response to this, we might say, "Is that all there is to it?" But, in fact, this is anything but easy. If we can accomplish this, however, we can truly be reborn after death.

This can serve as a question regardless of the situation one is in. Whether sitting, standing, thinking about things, reading books, eating, or going to the bathroom, one's way of being in each place and time becomes an opportunity. If, when sitting, sitting is no good, what do you do? If, when standing, standing is no good, what do you do? When our sitting is no good, perhaps we stand. When standing is unacceptable, we probably walk. When walking is no good, we run. Or we say something, ask something, or eat something. If we continue in this way, no matter how much we are told that our action is of no avail, there is always some kind of way out. But when everything is wrong, what do we do? If we fail to do something when nothing is of any avail, we will never truly break free from all our ways of being, from our existing as "something."

All of the aforementioned actions are discriminations. Sitting is a discrimination; it is "something." Standing is a discrimination, for it is something, too. The same is the case with thinking. Even if a human being extricates himself or herself from that something -- for

example, shakes free from sitting and then stands -- the person still is something. In order to depart from every "something" and become no-thing, we must extricate ourselves from all things. Because we must break free from all of our ways of being in one stroke, we ask, "If nothing whatsoever will do, what do you do?"

This question, "what do you do?" encompasses "passing through, one changes." As expressed in the "The rat in the corner bites the cat" and "Take one step forward from the top of a hundred-foot pole," we are driven to the wall, reborn from that place, and gain new life; we climb to the top of the pole and then, from a place where we cannot do anything, we take one step forward. Then and there, true functioning emerges. In that place lies true emancipation and true salvation. We must actually clarify this subjectively in our functioning.

This method only works when I proceed subjectively. When I am sitting and am asked what I do in case my sitting will not do, because it is I that am doing all this, I stand if sitting is no good. In this case, "If sitting is no good, what do you do?" refers just to one situation, but when "sitting is no good" includes the totality of action, we can no longer stand. At that point we can neither sit nor stand. We are driven to the wall by this subjective dilemma. What do we do then? When we are truly cornered, we break through and new functioning appears. But, when we are not truly against the wall, such functioning does not come forth. If in the four cardinal behaviors we bring ourselves to an impasse, such functioning will emerge. When we truly penetrate this subjective koan of being cornered and passing through, without omitting any of the three stages mentioned before, we can "awaken to the True Self" in one stroke.

\*\*\**To be continued*\*\*\*

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## **The Vow of Humankind:**

**Talks by Shin'ichi Hisamatsu**

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### **(3) MAKING FULL USE OF OUR ABILITIES ACCORDING TO OUR RESPECTIVE VOCATIONS**

Last time we proceeded up through the section of the *Vow of Humankind*, "being fully compassionate humans." Because this section is inexhaustible, like a spring which renews itself, we have yet to explore it completely. Leaving that for the time being, however, I turn to "making full use of our abilities according to our respective vocations." The section of the Vow from this line to the end elaborates upon the initial section. "Calm and composed, awakening to our true self" is contained in "making full use of our abilities according to our

respective vocations," as is "being fully compassionate humans," but "making full use of our abilities" amounts to individual functioning or, so to speak, specialization and personalization.

Being "fully compassionate humans" is *common* or *general* in the sense that all people must uniformly become such humans. On the other hand, "according to our respective vocations" is a matter of our individual functions. Like being fully compassionate humans, the understanding on which this functioning is based spans from shallow, general understanding to the most profound. Whatever the depth, in reality individuals "awakening to our true self" and "being fully compassionate humans" must then "make full use of our abilities according to our respective vocations." This is the truly ultimate way of being. We must all carry out this "Return-Aspect" functioning or Bodhisattva functioning in a profound sense.

It is not at all easy, however, to hold off on our work until we awaken to the true self and are fully compassionate humans. Not doing anything special until we reach that point becomes a problem here. Of course, that final point is the way of being in which true Bodhisattva functioning accomplishes the ultimate mission of an individual and all individuals, but I think we must perform our vocations in the world while simultaneously working on the path to becoming ultimate individuals. In terms of process, we cannot advance without such a dual approach.

By a dual approach I am not referring to merely accomplishing one's everyday vocation or making the best use of one's individuality. We must also penetrate the true self and then be fully compassionate human beings. In terms of religion, this is the direction of the "Going Aspect." Ordinary work in this world is not necessarily the carrying out of Going-Aspect living, and people do not necessarily realize the necessity of that work. Yet this is a crucial direction of living which we must not neglect, for all humans must carry out this practice.

Although I speak of practice here in a very broad sense, we must move forward with such practice, and to do so without negligence is a significant characteristic or ideal of our organization. The individual work of "making full use of our abilities according to our respective vocations" is what is demanded in response to the question of what we do after "awakening to our true self" and "being fully compassionate humans." It becomes the functioning or content of the person awakened to the true self and fully compassionate. Awakening to the true self and being compassionate is very important, but if this is all we do, it is hollow. In Kant's terminology, this is form without content and it is empty. This emptiness is apt to get stuck in what is called a "religious stage," and it corresponds to what Pure Land Buddhism terms "going forever" and what Zen calls "attached emptiness," "empty emptiness," or "shallow satori."

The Going Aspect must contain the Return Aspect. They are not two separate entities -- they are one. Existing together as a single entity is the true condition, so we should not suppose that only the Going Aspect exists. The Going Aspect is always one with the Return Aspect. The Emptiness and Nothingness spoken of in Zen must become identical to Zen functioning. Historically, people have criticized the "Zen of silent illumination," for it amounts to contentless form that falls short of ultimacy. Therefore, we must by all means possess this content, this single functioning made up of the two aspects.

Inversely, merely "making full use of our abilities according to our respective vocations" lacks a foundation, and it results in dissolution and dispersion, for omitted here is the basic One or most pristine One in all humankind. Lacking this One, we live our human lives

without form. Such is the way of human life without the Going Aspect. This "content without form" can rightly be called blindness.

That which is neither hollow nor blind, which has true form and content, is truly singular. In the condition delineated by the Buddhist expression, "Equality just as it is, is discrimination," equality lies at the bottom of discrimination and discrimination certainly exists upon equality. Without separating, they become One, a singular true Reality. By virtue of the whole lying at the base of our respective vocations, we can for the first time possess our vocations in life.

Without such a One or whole in everyday living, the words "respective vocations" do not become manifest. Precisely because "vocation" in this case finds significance in and upon the One or whole, it cannot be established without this ultimate One. Numerous stages constitute any given vocation and slight differences emerge between these stages, yet the ultimate foundation of the vocation must be an absolute One or true whole. We must locate this foundation in the ultimate place of the true self. Up until that point, nothing is ultimate, so we must at all costs push ourselves forward to that place, to the ultimate place. If we do not go all the way to the place of the true human way of being, we cannot comprehend the final goal of our vocations.

Therefore, when we say that we find life worth living, this worth must not be something individual or idiosyncratic. It cannot be something that exists along the way, for if we fail to proceed to the end point, we fail to understand thoroughly the true worth of living. In short, we must advance to the place of religion.

Usually we find life worth living through participation in an actual group or community, such as a nation, the contemporary world, or humankind. We cannot, however, stop at that point. Unless we descend to the foundation of our human nature, we cannot discover ultimate worth in living. The source of that true worth lies in living in a place that transcends normal reality, time and space, history, and humans ("humans" here referring to ordinary humans differing from humans that are fully compassionate in a deep sense). In that place transcendent of actual humans resides our true worth in living.

Speaking from the standpoint of our organization, a human awakening to the true self and being fully compassionate is that which has transcended human beings as we normally conceive of them. As I have been saying, however, this is not a mere transcendent entity: it is a true human being. To us, this is not an ordinary, transcendent God, for true humans become something that corresponds to "God."

This final place, which can be called a living place, is the source of the worth we find in living. Kitarô Nishida used the term "place" (*basho*), and his expression "logic of place" occupies a central position in his philosophy. We are apt to think of "place" as something static, and this is how certain people actually interpret Nishida's concept. But "place" is never static: it is a living whole or One. Moreover, "place" is the basis or source of the Return Aspect. Viewed from a slightly different angle, it is the source of functioning, the source of absolute functioning. As such, it is the place of creation as well. This way of construing it is congruent with Nishida's view.

The word "place" invites misunderstanding, and some people do in fact misunderstand this term, but the place of which I am speaking is a truly living place. If seen simply as a place or ground, "place" suggests something static. In Buddhism as well, the term "Emptiness" makes the reality it denotes appear static, but Emptiness is in no way static; it comes into motion and

becomes the source of living and actuality. It is the ultimate source of the meaning of our living and, simultaneously, the place from which our functioning emerges. Accordingly, it is the source of value and, at the same time, it is also the source of existence.

At this point, "making full use of our abilities according to our respective vocations" comes down to the question of what a human awakened to the true self and highly compassionate makes into his or her vocation in life. In Buddhism, this vocation becomes Bodhisattva functioning or Return-Aspect functioning. It is never a halfway point in the Going Aspect or the mere conduct of actual life. Rather, it is the goal of our so-called daily lives. This is an ideal goal, and as I mentioned in passing earlier, the individual here becomes the self-limitation (*jiko-gentei*) of a human that has awakened to the true self and is fully compassionate. We become the self-limitation of an absolute, fundamentally subjective awakening. That fundamental subjectivity does not separate from its source -- it is the fundamental entity itself and cannot become something different or nonexistent.

This amounts in Zen terminology to "becoming master of every situation." "Every situation" has to do with particular, distinctive things, but "master" entails generality and totality. This generality and totality, and this particularity as well, do not separate from "master." This master becomes particular and functions.

Discrimination, vicissitudes or change, and appearance-extinction or birth-death are examples of particularity. Appearance-extinction, birth-death, become eternal through our becoming master, that is, through our becoming the entirety of birth-death while living and dying. In that place, there are no discriminations, no vicissitudes, and no birth-death. Accordingly, birth-death, just as it is, is no birth-death; discrimination, just as it is, is equality; change, just as it is, is constancy; time, just as it is, is eternity.

We often say that our actual life *comes into contact with* or *connects with* the Absolute through our religious life, or that the individual is *linked to* the whole, but I am convinced that what is expounded by this mode of expression is incomplete and non-exhaustive. Actually, we in no way connect with such things; we are not connected from here to there; we are not contacting something absolute; time is not in contact with eternity.

If we believe we are in such contact, eternity and the Absolute exist transcendentally "over there," which means they are not a subject "here." For this reason, "contact" and "connect" still designate incomplete conditions, for eternity and the Absolute do not come into contact with us: their entirety is the true self, and they must be awakened true self. A true state exists when eternity and the Absolute are the true self. That which "establishes all things from its source of non-abiding" (a line from the *Vimalakirti Sutra*) is the true self. From this fundamental self emerges various kinds of functioning.

Since all functioning becomes the functioning of this non-abiding self, the source of non-abiding fills and extends throughout all established things. We should not, however, view that non-abiding self as existing only inside that functioning: while functioning, it is extricated from that functioning. That is to say, the true self pervades functioning and, at the same time, is not restricted by that functioning, for it is always free from all functioning.

Insofar as the true self makes things without being restricted by them, it constantly makes everything without making anything at all. Moreover, while separating from what is made, it constantly makes things. Making things in this way, the true self possesses a character of

newness. It maintains itself without being shackled by the past. Along these lines, we can conceive of things being extricated from so-called karma.

Generally, "karma" consists of our acts of creation throughout countless past eons extending up to the present and our now being restricted by what we ourselves have created. To be free, while creating, from what we have created, is to be free from karma. And in being emancipated from karma, we arrive at autonomy and freedom from obstruction.

An eternal thing is always new and always functions. An eternal subject that is constantly creating is a truly constant, fresh foundation. Through such subjectivity, through our being such a subject, we can be said to be truly creative. In always being new, we must constantly die and part from the past. That is to say, we must negate the past. We can arrive at this absolute or eternal newness through a total act of dying or an absolute death, not through partial dying from moment to moment.

In reality, this must become the true creation of history, which is quite different from what we usually call the creation of history. In this historical creation, value and ordinary historical creation are converted subjectively. In Christian terms, the "end" of eschatology becomes present.

Even in Christianity, from the "end" starts true history, but the "end" in Christianity is the eternal future and never present. Even if one claims it is present, it is distant from here. Though the present is linked to it or connects with it, the "end" never becomes the present. What I am conceiving of differs from Christianity in this respect. The Buddhist view expressed as "all dharmas are established from the foundation of non abiding" and "creating without parting from awakening" differs from the Christian way of thinking. In "without parting from awakening," "from the foundation of non abiding," and "without discarding the Dharma that is the Way," the "end" Christians speak of as being in the future is present. In this regard, the present is the world of religious creation, the world of Bodhisattva functioning. Likewise, the world of God's creation is neither God's creation of the world in the past nor the beginning of the Kingdom of God in the future -- it is the new world of God's creation constantly becomes manifest in the present.

Things have not settled into some static or fixed state of creation; rather, they are constantly created, moment to moment. They must possess this dynamic character, in which fixedness changes into dynamic, fresh creation.

The world I have just described is a religious world, yet it never separates from history. It becomes historical creation in which the subject of history is, so to speak, God. Herein, appearance-extinction, change and discrimination become the functioning of the Absolute, the creative aspect of the Absolute. Accordingly, this differs radically from the usual world of appearance-extinction, the world of change, and the world of discrimination.

"Making full use of our abilities according to our respective vocations," which is an absolute, universal activity, amounts to all of us limiting ourselves and functioning. Therefore, "making full use of our abilities according to our respective vocations" constitutes both the worth we find in living and everything else's worth in living. Herein, the living of the whole and the living of the individual become one. This is neither totalitarianism where the individual is sacrificed for the whole nor individualism, egocentrism, or democracy in which individuals merely function individually for themselves. Rather, one's living is for the whole and the living of the whole is for oneself. The whole is not sacrificed for the individual and the

individual is not sacrificed for the whole. The living and sustenance of the individual amounts to the living of the whole and the living of the whole amounts to the living of the individual; in a manner of speaking, the society characterized by such a way of being becomes manifest.

The same situation holds for self-benefit and the benefit of others. Engaging in neither mere egocentrism nor mere altruism, we exhibit the way of being in which self-benefit, as it is, becomes the benefit of others, and the benefit of others, as it is, becomes self-benefit. The functioning of Bodhisattvas must take such a form, for therein lies the true meaning of a Bodhisattva's being fully compassionate. The "perfection of the benefiting of self and others" is first achieved in that way of being. I would suggest that "between thing and thing no obstruction" (*jiji-muge*) indicates a perfected individual, the kind of individual we are considering today.

Our attainment of this way of being is our "making full use of our abilities according to our respective vocations." Our vocations can be divided into two types. First, there is the vocation, the functioning, in which all people are "awakening to our true self; being fully compassionate humans." In its actual aspect, this combines with ethical, moral, or religious edification. This is necessary in humans, and I believe educators and religionists have such a vocation.

Second, there is the participation in actual work where people engage themselves in production, culture, and so forth. Through the fulfillment of these vocations we find life worth living. To accomplish our vocations, our preparation -- the means or method of functioning -- must be secured without restriction. In this regard, we must make such efforts as studying and applying our studies. Through this we can for the first time make "full use of our abilities according to our respective vocations." These two types of vocation are linked to the *Vow of Humankind's* "discerning suffering both individual and social," and "humankind's deep desire for emancipation." Moreover, they are closely related to "construct[ing] a world which is true and happy."

\*\*\**To be continued*\*\*\*

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## **Become fully compassionate humans**

## II

The content of a compassionate heart is described in many ways by Buddhism, but the most highly compassionate heart, that is to say, most compassionate in the deepest sense, is often conveyed by such expressions as "Objectless Great Compassion" (*muen no daihi*). The highly compassionate heart awakened to the True Self must be this Objectless Great Compassion. A person awakened to the True Self and a person with a highly compassionate heart in the sense of Objectless Great Compassion are intimately related; one cannot emerge without the other. To become a subject with Objectless Great Compassion we must, in Buddhist terms, awaken to Buddha Nature. If this Buddha Nature is something internally or externally transcendent, it is not yet and cannot become Objectless Great Compassion. The awakening of Buddha Nature in us must be our awakening to Nirvana. We must truly attain Buddhahood, the ultimate goal of Buddhism. The expression, "a human being who has attained Buddhahood," might seem peculiar for those who think that one who has attained Buddhahood is no longer a human being. But the view that upon attaining Buddhahood our human form in this actuality disappears, that we must die in order to attain Buddhahood, diverges from the original standpoint of Buddhism. A human being realizes Nirvana or attains Buddhahood while in the body created by his or her parents without destroying that body. Such humans who have attained Buddhahood are both possible and exist. In Buddhism this is not an impossible condition, a goal in distant eternity, or an ideal state; attaining Buddhahood in actuality is a person's true or original way of being, and any other way of being falls short. "Attainment of Buddhahood in this body" (*sokushin jōbutsu*) is construed in various ways, but it signifies becoming a human awakened in actuality to Buddha Nature. In this sense it means awakening to the True Self as our true or ultimate way of being.

As mentioned earlier, there are various levels in the True Self, but awakening to the True Self in the ultimate sense is not an ordinary human self-realization: it involves becoming "an awakened one" (*kakusha*), someone awakened unto Buddha Nature. We should not relate to the awakened one as a kind of transcendent entity which becomes a subject "other" to us. The awakened one, expressed intimately, is me. I am the awakened one and the awakened one is me. The true I is the I that is the awakened one. Self-awakening in this sense is the human who has awakened to the True Self as delineated in the Vow of Humankind. Our becoming that awakened one is an absolute requirement for becoming a human with a fully compassionate heart.

Let us now consider why objectless Great Compassion -- a fully compassionate heart in the true sense -- must be such an awakened one. Generally speaking, salvation is the functioning of the deeply compassionate heart. Various kinds of salvation exist, differing in terms of content and degree. In Buddhist terminology however, ultimate salvation must be our true emancipation. In all cases the desire for this originally lies within us, but we cannot readily comprehend where this desire arises. If the true desire for emancipation has not arisen in us, we cannot ascertain which desire for emancipation is the true desire, the living and concrete desire. If we do not personally know this true desire for emancipation, we cannot determine the nature of others' desire for emancipation or give rise to that desire in others. Because we cannot indicate to others where the desire for emancipation or its essence lies, we must first understand the desire for emancipation in ourselves. We must arouse the desire for emancipation in people without such desire and advance toward emancipation with them. If we have not actually experienced this in ourselves, we cannot sympathetically experience the inevitable suffering from which we must be extricated. We must first clearly know the desire for emancipation in ourselves and personally taste the actual suffering from which we must be extricated, and through that, feel the suffering of others. But in merely knowing such suffering



we do not know the direction of extrication, so we must at that point become emancipated. And through our emancipation we must emancipate others.

A fully compassionate heart is thus possible and possessing this is not merely a state of possessing it, for by virtue of it we save others. In this regard we must truly become emancipated humans and experience the route by which we came to be emancipated. Without this understanding, both possessing a fully compassionate heart and emancipating others are impossible. That is to say, awakening to The True Self in the deepest sense is a necessary condition for having such a highly compassionate heart.

In one's original condition, however, there is no salvation. That is to say, fundamentally there is no saving and no being saved. Saving and being saved, seen from the standpoint distinguishing Expedient Dharma (*gonjitsu*) from true dharma, are Expedient Dharma. Clearly realizing that one is originally saved, that saving and being saved are originally nonexistent, and then saving those who do not realize this fact -- this amounts to Objectless Great Compassion. Therefore, if unawakened to the True Self, we cannot understand this point and in this ignorance we are convinced we must be saved. In this misunderstanding exists a savior and, consequently, one who is saved, an awakened being and an unawakened being. Both persist in this standpoint, and the original non-existence of the savior and the saved, the awakened and the unawakened, fails to be comprehended.

When we misunderstand salvation in this way, we fail to ascertain our true condition. Insofar as we diverge from this true condition, any salvation we attempt to bring about falls short of true salvation. Because it is as a subject unawakened to the True Self that one tries to save an unawakened object, no true salvation is achieved. Although this might be called salvation, it is attached compassion, compassion based on the belief that there is someone to be saved. Therefore, true salvation can be thought of as the nonexistence of salvation, and in this regard it is the "provisionally expedient gate," something temporary. Despite the fact that being deluded is not our true condition, we objectify this false condition -- that is, we try to save others we perceive to be deluded -- and for this reason the salvation achieved is only temporary.

The savior spoken of in Pure Land Buddhism emerges in the true sense of "awakening, to our True Self" in the Vow of Humankind. If we do not arrive at the consummation of the Going Aspect (*ôśô*) and then begin to function from that place, we cannot become a true savior. In the positing of Amida as the central savior, the desire to save humankind is set up as a temporary gate, and this gate, originating in the midst of the attainment of Nirvana, delivers all humankind to awakening. By means of this merciful wish, all humankind moves toward salvation. This is the method established in Pure Land Buddhism.

In my opinion, anyone can become awakened, and everyone must do so. It is very fortunate that Buddhism not only stresses but also exhibits this fact. Human beings must awaken at an ultimate level to Nirvana, to the True Self. This is the true way of being of human beings, and having others enter Nirvana becomes our compassionate vow. We head in this direction and open up a gate to salvation. This desire or merciful wish must be aroused in each of us. All people must possess this in themselves and give rise to it in others. If we truly enter Nirvana, we cannot help giving rise to this great compassionate vow. Such internal inevitability holds sway here.

I think of Amida as an example or model of one who has brought about this desire; I do not want to think that whoever can give rise to this wish when we cannot is a unique individual or

that this desire arises for the first time through the action of another. I am the one who awakens to the True Self and arouses the compassionate vow to save humankind. The desire for all people to be this way, even if they are actually quite different, must emerge in us. I am convinced that all people must have the desire to awaken to the True Self and possess a highly compassionate heart. And this is not merely a matter of wanting or having to possess this: we must give it practical effect.

Being calm and composed, awakening to our True Self, becoming fully compassionate human beings, and then functioning constitutes the ultimate way of being. Many such true humans must emerge. To my way of thinking, there must be great number of human beings like Amida, though from the standpoint of certain people this would involve numerous problems. In this way, the people making up this world are made into Buddhas -- they become Buddhas. This is crucial in both Buddhism and religion in general. Even if we cannot actually become such a person, many of us must at least desire to become such a person. To those of us who have not done so, awakening to the True Self and becoming a highly compassionate human being comprise a kind of subjective belief or desire. We set our sights on this. The ultimate goal is keeping highly composed, awakening to our True Self, and becoming highly compassionate human beings. That is to say, we become Amida. In becoming Amida, a new path of salvation opens up. In this way, a living Amida comes forth and this is something we greatly long for.

Someone with the same character as Amida must be a "person of religion" (*shūkyōka*). To me, one who pursues this goal as one's occupation in life is a true person of religion. Leaving aside the question of whether this is done as a specialty, I believe all people must become this kind of person. We can either approach this as specialty, or function without pursuing it as a specialty. That is, there are two approaches: functioning to have all people enter Nirvana and, inseparable from that, functioning in a worldly rather than religious manner. Also, in all people becoming Amida there must be, for example, those who are engaged in industry and those who devote themselves to the arts; such occupations arise in human life. In this, the subject is the same but the way of functioning and the object upon which one acts differ. The functioning of Amida must include not only the aspect of having all people enter Nirvana -- granted this is quite or even central -- but also the aspect of external functioning in the world. Expressed slightly differently, the functioning of Amida must encompass both other-worldly functioning and worldly functioning. They are essential when viewed in light of the structure of human beings, the world, or the dharma world. Merely awakening all people is not enough, though. In Buddhism the religious aspect of functioning has been strongly asserted, but the worldly aspect has not been stressed. If we classify this in terms of specialization, the primary concern of persons of religion is the other-worldly side of salvation. Speaking in terms of Buddhism as a whole, however, salvation does not end there, for worldly salvation must be carried out as well. For this reason I believe we can divide people into "persons of religion" (*shūkyōka*) and "religious individuals" (*shūkyōsha*). All people must be religious individuals or, from the Buddhist standpoint, Buddhistic individuals. This group of Buddhistic individuals includes those who work toward emancipation, that is, persons of religion, and those who function in the worldly direction, religious individuals. Both kinds of functioning are work or duty and neither can be omitted. At this point, we also need to rectify the idea that religious individuals need not do worldly things; although persons of religion are not impelled to pursue this as a specialty, religious individuals cannot neglect it. Religion thus takes on an extremely broad and inclusive meaning.

At this point "emancipation" becomes problematic. Emancipation in the phrase of the Vow of Humankind, "humankind's deep desire for self-emancipation," involves two aspects. It

indicates our emancipating humankind from the agony both individual and social, and this agony includes both religious agony in which we desire to be saved religiously and worldly agony in which we desire to be saved in a worldly manner. These two aspects never separate. Standing alone, "religious" is empty and "worldly" is blind. Without both, a religious world cannot come into existence. If the particular (*ji*) and the universal principle (*ri*) fail to become one, no true salvation occurs. Emancipating humans from agony that is fundamentally a whole -- but herein separated for the time being into worldly agony and other-worldly agony -- amounts to the "emancipation of humankind." We can view religious agony as, so to speak "deep" agony, and worldly agony as "broad" agony. Desiring emancipation from this agony with depth and breadth becomes the way of functioning of the highly compassionate heart, and this highly compassionate heart must function in both directions. Functioning without both directions is incomplete.

Returning to the question of specialty, I believe that in making "full use of our gifts according to our respective vocations in life," we establish one world in a living, integrated way. But because the most fundamental element of this is being calm and composed, awakening to our True Self, and possessing highly compassionate hearts, we must first become such human beings. This involves one's salvation and the desire for others to be saved; and from this issues "self-benefit and the benefit of others." What is indicated by expressions like "self-benefit and the benefit of others" or "self-awakening and bringing others to awakening constitutes the perfect awakening and functioning" is equivalent to being highly composed, awakening to our True Self, and becoming humans with fully compassionate hearts. As previously mentioned, being highly composed is the path leading to Nirvana. Many stages are conceivable, but being highly composed is advanced in Buddhism the direction leading to the tranquillity of Nirvana.

\*\*\**To be continued*\*\*\*

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**By HISAMATSU Shin'ichi**

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### **(4) DISCERNING SUFFERING BOTH INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL, AND ITS SOURCES**

#### **I**

Having considered "making full use of our abilities according to our respective vocations," I would now like to focus on "discerning suffering both individual and social, and its sources."

When we "make full use of our abilities" and pursue our vocations, inevitably we must ask ourselves what sort of "vocation" we should pursue. Our vocation usually will take as its goal the saving of people from "suffering both individual and social," which in the final analysis amounts to "bringing to realization humankind's deep desire for emancipation." In other words, to save people from "suffering both individual and social" is to satisfy "humankind's deep desire for emancipation." For us to be able to save people from "suffering both individual and social" we must first discern the source from which this suffering arises. Then, by eradicating that source, liberation from that anguish naturally follows, and for this reason we must investigate the nature of our anguish and penetrate to the bottom of its source. Obviously, the phrase, "discerning suffering both individual and social, and its sources," must appear in the Vow of Humankind.

We human beings suffer "suffering both individual and social." Without a human, anguish has no subject, and subjectless anguish is impossible. Anguish is experienced by individual people, but in terms of types of suffering, we can distinguish individual and social anguish. Granted, social anguish is the anguish of individuals, but for the time being we can make a distinction between individual and social anguish.

Individual anguish is the anguish that we suffer alone, that we cannot discuss with others, that other people cannot help us relieve. Such anguish does not derive from others or from society; it comes from oneself as an individual. We can designate this as individual anguish, but in some cases further scrutiny reveals it to be social anguish. In other words, we sometimes encounter individual anguish that seems at first glance to be unrelated to social anguish but actually derives from society. Discerning the origin of anguish is crucial, though often difficult. We must give careful thought to whether specific forms of anguish are purely individual or not. Because purely individual anguish arises from within individuals, we cannot remedy the situation without focusing on the individual. For example, when a person suffers from a disease, that person is ill, not other people or society. This illness is individual anguish. But insofar as this disease can be cured by others, the suffering, while individual, becomes suffering alleviated by doctors or other people, and hence it cannot be called purely individual suffering.

We can also conceive of mental anguish as distinguished from physical anguish such as disease. Examples of this abound, but we can for the time being divide this mental suffering into sensual anguish and moral anguish. Sensual anguish is seen, for example, in failing in a business enterprise and, although not feeling moral responsibility, losing possessions, or losing one's fortune and grieving desperately; this anguish is also seen when someone suffers lost love. In moral anguish, however, the problems of individual responsibility and sin come to the fore. While sensual anguish does not link directly to sin, moral anguish is the anguish of sin, and people must endure this anguish individually.

Sin constitutes a relatively pure form of human suffering. In terms of the intensity of anguish, the anguish experienced in one's failure at business or loss of love can be stronger than the anguish experienced in a moral problem, depending on the person. Yet in terms of objective validity, because moral anguish inevitably possesses the objective validity of "a thing over which one ought to suffer," it presses upon us more strongly than anything else.

In all cases sin must be borne by oneself, so it stands as highly individual anguish. Some people think that their sin is not their own responsibility, that the reason for their moral sinning lies in society. They trace all sin back to society. This is an extremely complex issue.

I, however, cannot trace sin back entirely to society. The autonomous action that we will to perform -- action for which we must bear responsibility -- never ceases to occur. Were it to disappear, the reasons for and significance of individuality and independence would disappear as well. Moral responsibility, individual moral responsibility, inevitably exists in human beings. Consequently, when we do something bad we are conscious of having done so, and we feel responsibility. This does not disappear in us.

This moral responsibility, in other words, the anguish of sin, becomes truly human anguish, the non-sensual anguish of conscience. How one can eradicate suffering and be saved from it becomes a great moral problem, and in this problem we discover the necessary relation that leads morality to religion. The eradication of suffering constitutes a central issue in higher religions, and though the eradication of sensual suffering is important, the eradication of characteristically human suffering inevitably is an issue of the eradication of sin. In lower religions, the eradication of sensual suffering occupies a central position, but higher religions focus on the eradication of sin, because for those who are most characteristically human, sin is the most unbearable thing. Sin is a problem of the consciousness of norms, which carries great importance in human life. Accordingly, although sensual suffering is certainly lamentable and demanding of sympathy, it fails to become as objectively strong as the anguish of the consciousness of sin.

We can thus view sin as purely individual anguish. By atoning for sin through morality, becoming better, and gradually becoming moral, we are relieved of this anguish. In other words, we eradicate moral sin through morality. But, when we penetrate moral anguish, we discover something that cannot be dealt with morally, something that transcends the domain of morality. What we discover is religious anguish.

I have viewed anguish in the direction leading from moral anguish to religious anguish, but anguish is not limited to this direction alone. Be that as it may, religious anguish is individual anguish, and it possesses the universality of all people suffering from it. It is individual suffering and, at the same time, universal individual suffering.

## II

Last time I considered the general meaning of "discerning suffering both individual and society, and its sources," focusing mainly on individual anguish. As I stated then, various forms of individual anguish exist, but anguish generated by the consciousness of norms is objective anguish. Moreover, anguish is not merely sensual, for it can give rise to the consciousness of sin in us. In other words, it becomes the anguish of sin that emerges when we act contrary to conscience in a broad sense.

Moral conscience in a narrow sense is included in norm consciousness as one of its parts. Norm consciousness also includes the desire for objective validity. Scholarship, art, and morality in a narrow sense all involve such consciousness of norms. To oppose this norm consciousness is to feel anguish that "ought to be suffered." The character of this anguish diverges considerably from that of "selfish" anguish. Moral anguish is not restricted to the sensual world. It is the most characteristically human anguish, because searching for objective validity is the most characteristically human desire. It is an essential desire, for the characteristic humanness of people lies not in obeying selfish desires but in obeying the consciousness of norms. The anguish of going against norm consciousness exists only in humans, and it is the most characteristically human form of suffering. Insofar as one works to eliminate this anguish, one is living in a characteristically human way. Eradicating this anguish amounts to obeying conscience in a broad sense and living accordingly. Living in

a way that does not oppose consciousness is the paramount goal, the ideal, of human living. And eliminating within ourselves that which does not obey consciousness is the way of eradicating anguish. For this reason we must stress respect for norms.

Respect for "norms" in this case means obeying the consciousness of norms, not an individual or particular rule. Doing so, we find autonomy. We obey an autonomous rule, not a heteronomous one. Confucius's "I obey what the heart desires, not overstepping the norm" becomes the goal here, the ideal. This constitutes the completion of human nature, but at this point we must address the question of whether people actually reach this goal.

We can say that there is *anguish more advanced* than the anguish -- thought to be the deepest or final anguish -- of the sin of going against norm consciousness. This more advanced anguish is that of the impossibility of attaining the human ideal of ceasing to be unconscientious. This anguish, seen for the time being as the final human anguish, cannot be eliminated through a moral method. For humans, this anguish is deeper and more serious than moral anguish. In other words, humans do not ultimately arrive at true humanity; in the world of morality, moral anguish is eliminated through morality, but this anguish becomes something that cannot be eradicated by morality. This is the fundamental anguish of human beings, what one might call the despair of human nature. It is in this way that true religious anguish inevitably emerges in humans.

This ought to be called religious anguish as opposed to moral anguish, and it is expressed by such terminology as "original sin" and "evil of the gravest nature." These expressions are interpreted in various ways, but I would like to view them as referring to what I am calling religious anguish. This anguish must be eradicated in some way. The method to do so, however, is a distinctive method, a religious method. Religious salvation comes to signify the eradication of this anguish. There are many ways of eliminating this anguish; Christianity and Buddhism have their own respective methods, which are not necessarily the same. These methods must not simply be moral methods, for a method diverging from morality is called for here. Generally, two methods function in religious salvation: salvation through the power of an "other" and extrication of oneself from such anguish through an awakening to a deeper self. We can for the time being think of the former as the method of Christianity and the latter as the method of Buddhism.

The "emancipation of humankind" includes both religious and social emancipation, but religious emancipation does not necessarily end in the release from individual anguish, for within social anguish there is what we can call socio-religious anguish. The world of the eradication of socio-religious anguish is, so to speak, a religious world. The "Kingdom of God," "Pure Land," and "Dharma world" all correspond to this religious world. These terms indicate that emancipation is not solely a matter of individuals being saved, for those saved members of the world establish the religious world, and in this way both individuals and society are truly established. This society, however, is not merely a society established by its saved members. A mere assemblage of saved individuals falls short of society in the true sense: society consisting of those members must become organically established. We can call this society a religious society. The anguish that yearns for this society is socio-religious anguish. Simply put, in the case of religious anguish, both individuals and society want to be emancipated.

Individual religious anguish and its eradication are inseparable from socio-religious anguish and its elimination. When we view "religious" anguish as an individual matter, we fail to consider socio-religious anguish. But in religion, individual and social affairs are closely

linked. Individuals and society are intimately related -- no society comes into being without individuals and no individuals come into being without society. Religion is based in the inseparable relationship between individuals and society, and in this relationship we are able to conceive of salvation from individual religious anguish and social religious anguish.

We can conceive of various kinds of socio-religious anguish. For example, this anguish becomes manifest when we desire salvation not only for ourselves but for others as well. Buddhism brings about the salvation of humanity in which one saves not only oneself but others. One saves others without limitation and actualizes the world of all saved people. We lift up as a vow, "however innumerable sentient beings are, I vow to save them," and religion thereby effects not only salvation for oneself but also social salvation that includes others. In this type of religion one desires to save all members of society and pursue the work of society. In Christianity, too, the desire to save all individuals carries great weight.

Saving individuals generally involves saving members of society one by one, but the salvation of society does not end there. The saving of individuals one by one is not enough: the saving of society, socio-religious salvation, is essential. And because this comes down to creating a saved society, we need to consider history. The salvation of history, the salvation of the history of human society, becomes necessary.

Again, salvation does not terminate in individuals being saved. Of course, the salvation of individuals is important, but this does not accomplish social salvation, or what I am calling socio-religious salvation. For this reason, Christianity views the end of the world, the post-eschatological world, as a completed religious society. Buddhism never ignores the religious salvation of the historical world, either. From my perspective, the Pure Land must be the place of that salvation, not something in a time or place separate from the historical world. Indeed, the Pure Land must amount to the salvation of history. The establishment of such a world is the goal of history, and it is the religious salvation of the world.

Until now, I have argued that we can distinguish individual religious anguish and social religious anguish and that these two forms of religious anguish are closely related. Moreover, in both individual anguish and social anguish we can distinguish religious suffering and non-religious suffering. Non-religious suffering in individuals is either sensual suffering or conscientious moral suffering in a broad sense, and this holds true for social, non-religious suffering as well. Moreover, both for humans and society, moral anguish, not sensual anguish, is true anguish. Not being saved from that anguish is the most basic anguish in human society, and there is no way it can be eradicated by a moral method. This is where we encounter socio-religious suffering.

### III

Last time I discussed individual and social anguish, including so-called religious anguish. Religious anguish exists in individuals, but not exclusively, for society experiences religious anguish, too. Though individual religious anguish and social religious anguish are interrelated, for the time being we can distinguish them. One can, on one's own, solve individual religious suffering, but social religious anguish is not solved through the resolution of individuals' religious anguish. Conversely, even when we extinguish social religious anguish, individual religious anguish has not necessarily been resolved.

There are two religious methods for eradicating anguish: one resolves religious anguish individually and the other resolves it socially. Some religions exhibit a completely individual character, others an entirely social one. Further, certain religious beliefs or practices resolve

religious anguish through a sinking into the depths of the individual, while others work out religious anguish through some sort of social means. These two approaches can be labeled individual religion and social religion.

In terms of eliminating religious anguish socially, while we might conceive of a social solution at the level of society, we cannot eliminate religious anguish by a social method in which "social" refers to "social," "worldly," or "actual" in their usual senses. Since the problem of religious anguish exists in and with society and cannot be solved "socially" in the usual sense of the term, we can conceive of social religion, of that which is "socially trans-worldly" or "supra-actual." Fundamentally speaking, we cannot eradicate religious anguish through history, that is, through the workings of actual history. Religious anguish is not a problem in history -- rather, it transcends history and can, accordingly, be designated a suprahistorical problem.

We cannot readily comprehend the notion of something being "transcendent of history," but I believe there are problems that transcend history and cannot be solved through its workings. We can designate them as historical religious problems in the same way we can call something a social religious problem. The foundation of our ability to conceive of the end of history lies here. The end of history seems ungraspable, yet a theory of the end of the world exists in Christianity. History is construed as temporally ending in the future. We believe the end of history will come after millions of years, yet what I am considering here is not a problem of the temporal future but a problem of the fate of history itself, the question of whether all problems can be solved by history. The source of history itself contains, in terms of logic, contradiction, in terms of emotion, suffering, and, in terms of will, dilemma. This is the character of history.

Though these problems exist in actual history, they are relative dilemmas, never absolute ones. They are particular, and in a certain respect they both are and are not dilemmas. Both being and not being a dilemma constitutes a dilemma, too. History includes such relative dilemmas which, although appearing to be dilemmas, are not absolute ones. This holds true for contradiction and suffering, yet the ultimate problem lies in history's fate, in its *grenz* limitation or extreme limit.

In other words, there is absolute contradiction in history, and this absolute contradiction cannot be overcome by history. History is therefore negated, and one despairs of history. Here resides the end of history. The end of history lies not in the future -- it ultimately exists in the source of history itself. This absolute contradiction also exists in an individual's subsistence and life, and the method that overcomes this absolute dilemma is a true religious method. People might wonder whether the individual's absolute dilemma and history's absolute dilemma differ, but they don't. They converge at the place called humanity. Humanity includes both individuals and society, and the absolute dilemmas of humans and history together constitute the fate of humanity and return to that place. Absolute contradiction is absolute contradiction at the bottom of humanity. When seen in an individual, it is thought of as individual, and when seen in history, it is thought of as historical; but, at the place of returning, the individual's absolute contradiction and history's absolute contradiction are one, not two. In the end, religious anguish is rooted in the absolute suffering, dilemma, and contradiction at the bottom of humanity.

As I said before, as a problem, religious anguish cannot be solved by a so-called worldly method in actuality. To suppose that we can solve our suffering through some sort of working in actuality is to fail to recognize the problem at this depth of human nature. Humanism



thought of as the "ism" that exhaustively takes up and solves all human problems has not yet recognized the source of true human nature. Those who wrestle with religious anguish cannot depend upon or abide in humanism.

The contemporary way of thinking that considers all problems solvable through the workings of history has yet to pierce human nature to any great depth. If we do not achieve absolute security or absolute peace and resolve the problems I am describing here, our peace of mind is nothing more than something relative. Even when security is present, insecurity comes threatening in its wake and the repetition of security and insecurity continues, negatively and unrestrictedly forever.

We must resolve the absolute contradiction lying at the base of humanity. For humans, the consciousness of norms is exalted. In another high place, however, religion is demanded. Religious anguish is not merely individual subjective anguish; it is the anguish at the root of human nature and the world created by humans. Whether that anguish has been realized depends on the person, history, or the particular epoch. In certain situations, this anguish is not noticed at all, but it is merely unnoticed, and we are forced to conclude that this anguish lies at the root of humans and history. Accordingly, this anguish is never something subjective. In solving religious anguish, humans secure the place in which they ought to stand, a stable base of human existence. The work to secure this base is, so to speak, religious life. This religious life, as conceived in "making full use of our abilities according to our respective vocations," heads in the direction of eradicating religious anguish and the direction of eliminating the suffering of everyday actuality.

A religious person functions religiously while simultaneously functioning in the world. That is to say, at the foundation of the place where humans function in the world we find not mere worldly functioning but religious functioning as, if you will, its metal reinforcement. Everyday life becomes religious life. Or more exactly, at this place your mundane life and religious life are one. A large division of labor appears between functioning to make the world or others religious and functioning to improve everyday life. Both are "work" in actuality, but one makes the world and others religious while the other improves actuality. Through these two types of working, religious people emancipate humankind. "Humans' deep desire for emancipation" is achieved by emancipating humans from religious anguish and eliminating worldly suffering. Merely solving problems or the anguish of actuality does not result in total emancipation of humankind.

This organization [FAS Society] recognizes both types of anguish and strives to resolve them simultaneously. In our respective vocations in life, the situations where the person of religion -- which we must all be -- functions as a religionist and situations where the person functions to resolve worldly anguish diverge in a division of labor. Working out both of these -- one alone will not suffice -- becomes the functioning and goal of this organization. In response to religious anguish and worldly suffering, we must ascertain the source from which they arise and the method by which we can eliminate them.

*[Translated by Chris Ives]  
\*\*\*To be continued\*\*\**