

SANKON-ZAZEN-SETSU

(Zazen Theory for Three Personal Types)

I. Introduction

Keizan-Zenji wrote this treatise while at Yokoji Temple in Ishikawa prefecture. It is related closely to Dogen-Zenji's "Fukan-Zazengi". In Zazen-Yojinki, Keizan elaborated on Dogen's basic work. In Sankon-Zazensetsu, Keizan provided instructions for three types of persons.

For the most superior person, Zazen is natural behavior embodying enlightenment. It is sleeping when tired and eating when hungry. The Zazen of a less superior person, according to Keizan, suspends relations with myriad things and occasionally concentrates on a Koan. The Zazen of an ordinary person withdraws from the Karma of good and evil, and expresses the basic nature of the Buddha with the mind itself.

Manuscripts of this work stored for many years in Daijoji Temple, Yokoji, and Sojiji Temple. But no one knew of their existence until Manzan rediscovered the work in 1680 while at Daijoji Temple. Adding a prologue and epilogue, Manzan published the work the following spring together with Keizan-Shingi (Keizan's Monastery Rules)

II. TEXT (Sankon-Zazen-Setsu)

The Zazen of the most superior person does not concern itself with questions about why the Buddha appeared in this world. He does not think about the excellence that even the Buddhas and patriarchs cannot transmit. When hungry, he eats; when tired, he sleeps. He does not insist that all appearances are the self. He stands above both enlightenment and delusion. Naturally and effectively, he just does right Zazen. And despite of this, the myriad things are not dualistically considered. Even if differentiations would arise, the most superior person does not let them enslave him.

The Zazen of the less superior person foresakes all things and cuts off all relations. In the 12 hours there is no idle moment. As he inhales and exhales, he meditates each moment on truth. Or picking up a single koan, he focuses his eyes on the tip of his nose. His natural face is not conditioned by life and death or by going and coming. The superior truth of the eternal reality and Buddha-nature cannot be grasped by the discriminating mind. While not thinking dualistically, he is not unenlightened. The wisdom clearly and brightly radiates from ancient times to now. The head sharply illuminates the 10 directions of the world; the whole body is manifested individually in all phenomena. (continue)

The Zazen of ordinary person weighs myriad relations and breaks free from the karma of good and evil. Our mind itself expresses the basic nature of the various Buddhas, Our feet are linked to the Buddha's position, and we stay away from evil places. Our hands are held in the meditative sign. There is no sutra in our hands Our mouth is sewn shut, and our lips are sealed. Not even one doctrine is preached. Our eyes are open, but neither wide nor narrow. We do not differentiate the myriad things; we do not listen to the voice of good or evil. Our nose does not discriminate between good and bad smells. Our body does not rely on things. We abruptly stop all delusive activities. With no delusions stirring up our mind, sorrow and joy both drops away. Like a wooden Buddha, body and form naturally harmonize with truth. Even though various deluded and inverted thoughts arise, they do not take possession. It is like a clear mirror that holds no waving shadows. The five precepts, the eight precepts, the great precepts of Buddhisattvas, all the the precepts of monks, 3000 behaviors, the 80,000 through practices, the superior true law of the various Buddhas and patriarchs-----all these arise from zazen limitlessly. Within the sphere of training, Zazen alone is the most superior practice.

If we practice Zazen and accumulato even a single merit, it is better than to build 100,1000, or innumerable halls and towers. In short, do zazen continually and don't give it up. We free ourselves from birth and death forever and penetrate to the Buddha in our own mind, The four activities of going, staying, sitting, and lying are nothing but natural and unexcelled functions. Seeing, hearing, perceiving, and knowing, are all the light of original nature. There is no choice between the beginning mind and ripened mind. Knowledge and ignorance are not open to argument. Just do Zazen wholeheartedly. Do not forget it and lose it.