

PART THREE

RIGHT UNDERSTANDING

"Our understanding of Buddhism is not just an intellectual understanding. True understanding is actual practice itself."

TRADITIONAL ZEN SPIRIT *"If you are trying to attain enlightenment, you are creating and being driven by karma, and you are wasting your time on your black cushion."*

The most important things in our practice are our physical posture and our way of breathing. We are not so concerned about a deep understanding of Buddhism. As a philosophy, Buddhism is a very deep, wide, and firm system of thought, but Zen is not concerned about philosophical understanding. We emphasize practice. We should understand why our physical posture and breathing exercise are so important. Instead of having a deep understanding of the teaching, we need a strong confidence in our teaching, which says that originally we have Buddha nature. Our practice is based on this faith.

Before Bodhidharma went to China almost all the well-known stock words of Zen were in use. For instance, there was the term, "sudden enlightenment." "Sudden enlightenment" is not an adequate translation, but tentatively I will use the expression. Enlightenment comes all of a sudden to us. This is true enlightenment. Before Bodhidharma, people thought that after a long preparation, sudden enlightenment would come. Thus Zen practice was a kind of training to gain enlightenment. Actually, many people today are practicing zazen with this idea. But this is not the traditional understanding of Zen. The understanding passed down from Buddha to our time is that when you start zazen, there is enlightenment even without any preparation. Whether you practice zazen or not, you have Buddha nature. Because you have it, there is enlightenment in your practice. The points we emphasize are not the stage we attain, but the strong

confidence we have in our original nature and the sincerity of our practice. We should practice Zen with the same sincerity as Buddha. If originally we have Buddha nature, the reason we practice zazen is that we must behave like Buddha. To transmit our way is to transmit our spirit from Buddha. So we have to harmonize our spirit, our physical posture, and our activity with the traditional way. You may attain some particular stage, of course, but the spirit of your practice should not be based on an egoistic idea.

According to the traditional Buddhist understanding, our human nature is without ego. When we have no idea of ego, we have Buddha's view of life. Our egoistic ideas are delusion, covering our Buddha nature. We are always creating and following them, and in repeating this process over and over again, our life becomes completely occupied by ego-centered ideas. This is called karmic life, or karma. The Buddhist life should not be karmic life. The purpose of our practice is to cut off the karmic spinning mind. If you are trying to attain enlightenment, that is a part of karma, you are creating and being driven by karma, and you are wasting your time on your black cushion. According to Bodhidharma's understanding, practice based on any gaining idea is just a repetition of your karma. Forgetting this point, many later Zen masters have emphasized some stage to be attained by practice.

More important than any stage which you will attain is your sincerity, your right effort. Right effort must be based on a true understanding of our traditional practice. When you understand this point you will understand how important it is to keep your posture right. When you do not understand this point, the posture and the way of breathing are just a means to attain enlightenment. If this is your attitude, it would be much better to take some drugs instead of sitting in the cross-legged position! If our practice is only a means to attain enlightenment, there is actually no way to attain it! We lose the meaning of the way to the goal. But when we believe in our way firmly, we have already attained enlighten-

ment. When you believe in your way enlightenment is there. But when you cannot believe in the meaning of the practice which you are doing in this moment, you cannot do anything. You are just wandering around the goal with your monkey mind. You are always looking for something without knowing what you are doing. If you want to see something, you should open your eyes. When you do not understand Bodhidharma's Zen, you are trying to look at something with your eyes closed. We do not slight the idea of attaining enlightenment, but the most important thing is this moment, not some day in the future. We have to make our effort in this moment. This is the most important thing for our practice.

Before Bodhidharma, the study of Buddha's teaching resulted in a deep and lofty philosophy of Buddhism, and people tried to attain its high ideals. This is a mistake. Bodhidharma discovered that it was a mistake to create some lofty or deep idea and then try to attain it by the practice of zazen. If that is our zazen, it is nothing different from our usual activity, or monkey mind. It looks like a very good, a very lofty and holy activity, but actually there is no difference between it and our monkey mind. That is the point that Bodhidharma emphasized.

Before Buddha attained enlightenment he made all possible efforts for us, and at last he attained a thorough understanding of the various ways. You may think Buddha attained some stage where he was free from karmic life, but it is not so. Many stories were told by Buddha about his experiences after he attained enlightenment. He was not at all different from us. When his country was at war with a powerful neighbor, he told his disciples of his own karma, of how he suffered when he saw that his country was going to be conquered by the neighboring king. If he had been someone who had attained an enlightenment in which there was no karma, there would have been no reason for him to suffer so. And even after he attained enlightenment he continued the same effort we are making. But his view of life was not

shaky. His view of life was stable, and he watched everyone's life, including his own life. He watched himself, and he watched others with the same eyes that he watched stones or plants, or anything else. He had a very scientific understanding. That was his way of life after he attained enlightenment.

When we have the traditional spirit to follow the truth as it goes, and practice our way without any egoistic idea, then we will attain enlightenment in its true sense. And when we understand this point we will make our best effort in each moment. That is true understanding of Buddhism. So our understanding of Buddhism is not just an intellectual understanding. Our understanding at the same time is its own expression, *is* the practice itself. Not by reading or contemplation of philosophy, but only through practice, actual practice, can we understand what Buddhism is. Constantly, we should practice *Zazen*, with strong confidence in our true nature, breaking the chain of karmic activity and finding our place in the world of actual practice.

TRANSIENCY *"We should find perfect existence through imperfect existence."*

The basic teaching of Buddhism is the teaching of transiency, or change. That everything changes is the basic truth for each existence. No one can deny this truth, and all the teaching of Buddhism is condensed within it. This is the teaching for all of us. Wherever we go this teaching is true. This teaching is also understood as the teaching of selflessness. Because each existence is in constant change, there is no abiding self. In fact, the self-nature of each existence is nothing but change itself, the self-nature of all existence. There is no special, separate self-nature for each existence. This is also called the teaching of Nirvana. When we realize the

everlasting truth of "everything changes" and find our composure in it, we find ourselves in Nirvana.

Without accepting the fact that everything changes, we cannot find perfect composure. But unfortunately, although it is true, it is difficult for us to accept it. Because we cannot accept the truth of transiency, we suffer. So the cause of suffering is our non-acceptance of this truth. The teaching of the cause of suffering and the teaching that everything changes are thus two sides of one coin. But subjectively, transiency is the cause of our suffering. Objectively this teaching is simply the basic truth that everything changes. Dogen-zenji said, "Teaching which does not sound as if it is forcing something on you is not true teaching." The teaching itself is true, and in itself does not force anything upon us, but because of our human tendency we receive the teaching as if something was being forced on us. But whether we feel good or bad about it, this truth exists. If nothing exists, this truth does not exist. Buddhism exists because of each particular existence.

We should find perfect existence through imperfect existence. We should find perfection in imperfection. For us, complete perfection is not different from imperfection. The eternal exists because of non-eternal existence. In Buddhism it is a heretical view to expect something outside this world. We do not seek for something besides ourselves. We should find the truth in this world, through our difficulties, through our suffering. This is the basic teaching of Buddhism. Pleasure is not different from difficulty. Good is not different from bad. Bad is good; good is bad. They are two sides of one coin. So enlightenment should be in practice. That is the right understanding of practice, and the right understanding of our life. So to find pleasure in suffering is the only way to accept the truth of transiency. Without realizing how to accept this truth you cannot live in this world. Even though you try to escape from it, your effort will be in vain. If you think there is some other way to accept the eternal truth

that everything changes, that is your delusion. This is the basic teaching of how to live in this world. Whatever you may feel about it, you have to accept it. You have to make this kind of effort.

So until we become strong enough to accept difficulty as pleasure, we have to continue this effort. Actually, if you become honest enough, or straightforward enough, it is not so difficult to accept this truth. You can change your way of thinking a little bit. It is difficult, but this difficulty will not always be the same. Sometimes it will be difficult, and sometimes it will not be so difficult. If you are suffering, you will have some pleasure in the teaching that everything changes. When you are in trouble, it is quite easy to accept the teaching. So why not accept it at other times? It is the same thing. Sometimes you may laugh at yourself, discovering how selfish you are. But no matter how you feel about this teaching, it is very important for you to change your way of thinking and accept the truth of transiency.

THE QUALITY OF BEING *"When you do something, if you fix your mind on the activity with some confidence, the quality of your state of mind is the activity itself. When you are concentrated on the quality of your being, you are prepared for the activity."*

The purpose of zazen is to attain the freedom of our being, physically and mentally. According to Dogen-zenji, every existence is a flashing into the vast phenomenal world. Each existence is another expression of the quality of being itself. I often see many stars early in the morning. The stars are nothing but the light which has traveled at great speed many miles from the heavenly bodies. But for me the stars are not speedy beings, but calm, steady, and peaceful beings. We say, "In calmness there should be activity; in activity there

should be calmness." Actually, they are the same thing; to say "calmness" or to say "activity" is just to express two different interpretations of one fact. There is harmony in our activity, and where there is harmony there is calmness. This harmony is the quality of being. But the quality of being is also nothing but its speedy activity.

When we sit we feel very calm and serene, but actually we do not know what kind of activity is going on inside our being. There is complete harmony in the activity of our physical system, so we feel the calmness in it. Even if we do not feel it, the quality is there. So for us there is no need to be bothered by calmness or activity, stillness or movement. When you do something, if you fix your mind on the activity with some confidence, the quality of your state of mind is the activity itself. When you are concentrated on the quality of your being, you are prepared for the activity. Movement is nothing but the quality of our being. When we do zazen, the quality of our calm, steady, serene sitting is the quality of the immense activity of being itself.

"Everything is just a flashing into the vast phenomenal world" means the freedom of our activity and of our being. If you sit in the right manner, with the right understanding, you attain the freedom of your being, even though you are just a temporal existence. Within this moment, this temporal existence does not change, does not move, and is always independent from other existences. In the next moment another existence arises; we may change to something else. Strictly speaking, there is no connection between I myself yesterday and I myself in this moment; there is no connection whatsoever. Dogen-zenji said, "Charcoal does not become ashes." Ashes are ashes; they do not belong to charcoal. They have their own past and future. They are an independent existence because they are a flashing into the vast phenomenal world. And charcoal and red-hot fire are quite different existences. Black charcoal is also a flashing into the vast phenomenal world. Where there is black charcoal there is not red-hot charcoal. So black charcoal is

independent of red-hot charcoal; ashes are independent of firewood; each existence is independent.

Today I am sitting in Los Altos. Tomorrow morning I shall be in San Francisco. There is no connection between the "I" in Los Altos and the "I" in San Francisco. They are quite different beings. Here we have the freedom of existence. And there is no quality connecting you and me; when I say "you," there is no "I"; when I say "I," there is no "you." You are independent, and I am independent; each exists in a different moment. But this does not mean we are quite different beings. We are actually one and the same being. We are the same, and yet different. It is very paradoxical, but actually it is so. Because we are independent beings, each one of us is a complete flashing into the vast phenomenal world. When I am sitting, there is no other person, but this does not mean I ignore you, I am completely one with every existence in the phenomenal world. So when I sit, you sit; everything sits with me. That is our zazen. When you sit, everything sits with you. And everything makes up the quality of your being. I am a part of you. I go into the quality of your being. So in this practice we have absolute liberation from everything else. If you understand this secret there is no difference between Zen practice and your everyday life. You can interpret everything as you wish,

A wonderful painting is the result of the feeling in your fingers. If you have the feeling of the thickness of the ink in your brush, the painting is already there before you paint. When you dip your brush into the ink you already know the result of your drawing, or else you cannot paint. So before you do something, "being" is there, the result is there. Even though you look as if you were sitting quietly, all your activity, past and present, is included; and the result of your sitting is also already there. You are not resting at all. All the activity is included within you. That is your being. So all results of your practice are included in your sitting. This is our practice, our zazen,

Dogen-zenji became interested in Buddhism as a boy as he

watched the smoke from an incense stick burning by his dead mother's body, and he felt the evanescence of our life. This feeling grew within him and finally resulted in his attainment of enlightenment and the development of his deep philosophy. When he saw the smoke from the incense stick and felt the evanescence of life, he felt very lonely. But that lonely feeling became stronger and stronger, and flowered into enlightenment when he was twenty-eight years old. And at the moment of enlightenment he exclaimed, "There is no body and no mind!" When he said "no body and no mind," all his being in that moment became a flashing into the vast phenomenal world, a flashing which included everything, which covered everything, and which had immense quality in it; all the phenomenal world was included within it, an absolute independent existence. That was his enlightenment. Starting from the lonely feeling of the evanescence of life, he attained the powerful experience of the quality of his being. He said, "I have dropped off mind and body." Because you think you have body or mind, you have lonely feelings, but when you realize that everything is just a flashing into the vast universe, you become very strong, and your existence becomes very meaningful. This was Dogen's enlightenment, and this is our practice.

NA T U R A L N E S S *"Moment after moment,
everyone comes out from nothingness. This is the
true joy of life."*

There is a big misunderstanding about the idea of naturalness. Most people who come to us believe in some freedom or naturalness, but their understanding is what we call jinen *ken gedo*, or heretical naturalness. *Jinen ken gedo* means that there is no need to be formal—just a kind of "let-alone policy" or sloppiness. That is naturalness for most people. But that is not the naturalness we mean. It is rather difficult to explain,



but naturalness is, I think, some feeling of being independent from everything, or some activity which is based on nothingness. Something which comes out of nothingness is naturalness, like a seed or plant coming out of the ground. The seed has no idea of being some particular plant, but it has its own form and is in perfect harmony with the ground, with its surroundings. As it grows, in the course of time it expresses its nature. Nothing exists without form and color. Whatever it is, it has some form and color, and that form and color are in perfect harmony with other beings. And there is no trouble. That is what we mean by naturalness.

For a plant or stone to be natural is no problem. But for us there is some problem, indeed a big problem. To be natural is something which we must work on. When what you do just comes out from nothingness, you have quite a new feeling. For instance, when you are hungry, to take some food is naturalness. You feel natural. But when you are expecting too much, to have some food is not natural. You have no new feeling. You have no appreciation for it.

The true practice of zazen is to sit as if drinking water when you are thirsty. There you have naturalness. It is quite natural for you to take a nap when you are very sleepy. But to take a nap just because you are lazy, as if it were the privilege of a human being to take a nap, is not naturalness. You think, "My friends, all of them, are napping; why shouldn't I? When everyone else is not working, why should I work so hard? When they have a lot of money, why don't I?" This is not naturalness. Your mind is entangled with some other idea, someone else's idea, and you are not independent, not yourself, and not natural. Even if you sit in the cross-legged position, if your zazen is not natural, it is not true practice. You do not have to force yourself to drink water when you are thirsty; you are glad to drink water. If you have true joy in your zazen, that is true zazen. But even though you have to force yourself to practice zazen, if you feel something good in your practice, that is zazen. Actually it is not a matter of

forcing something on you or not. Even though you have some difficulty, when you want to have it, that is naturalness.

This naturalness is very difficult to explain. But if you can just sit and experience the actuality of nothingness in your practice, there is no need to explain. If it comes out of nothingness, whatever you do is natural, and that is true activity. You have the true joy of practice, the true joy of life in it. Everyone comes out from nothingness moment after moment. Moment after moment we have true joy of life. So we say *shin ku myo u*, "from true emptiness, the wondrous being appears." *Shin* is "true"; *ku* is "emptiness"; *myo* is "wondrous"; *u* is "being": from true emptiness, wondrous being.

Without nothingness, there is no naturalness—no true being. True being comes out of nothingness, moment after moment. Nothingness is always there, and from it everything appears. But usually, forgetting all about nothingness, you behave as if you have something. What you do is based on some possessive idea or some concrete idea, and that is not natural. For instance, when you listen to a lecture, you should not have any idea of yourself. You should not have your own idea when you listen to someone. Forget what you have in your mind and just listen to what he says. To have nothing in your mind is naturalness. Then you will understand what he says. But if you have some idea to compare with what he says, you will not hear everything; your understanding will be one-sided; that is not naturalness. When you do something, you should be completely involved in it. You should devote yourself to it completely. Then you have nothing. So if there is no true emptiness in your activity, it is not natural.

Most people insist on some idea. Recently the younger generation talks about love. Love! Love! Love! Their minds are full of love! And when they study Zen, if what I say *does* not accord with the idea they have of love, they will not accept it. They are quite stubborn, you know. You may be amazed! Of course not all, but some have a very, very hard

attitude. That is not naturalness at all. Even though they talk about love, and freedom or naturalness, they do not understand these things. And they cannot understand what Zen is in that way. If you want to study Zen, you should forget all your previous ideas and just practice zazen and see what kind of experience you have in your practice. That is naturalness.

Whatever you do, this attitude is necessary. Sometimes we say *nyu nan shin*, "soft or flexible mind." *Nyu* is "soft feeling"; *nan* is something which is not hard"; *shin* is "mind." *Nyu nan shin* means a smooth, natural mind. When you have that mind, you have the joy of life. When you lose it, you lose everything. You have nothing. Although you think you have something, you have nothing; But when all you do comes out of nothingness, then you have everything. Do you understand? That is what we mean by naturalness.

EMPTINESS "When you study Buddhism you should have a general house cleaning of your mind."

If you want to understand Buddhism it is necessary for you to forget all about your preconceived ideas. To begin with, you must give up the Idea of substantiality or existence. The usual view of life is firmly rooted in the idea of existence. For most people everything exists; they think whatever they see and whatever they hear exists. Of course the bird we see and hear exists. It exists, but what I mean by that may not be exactly what you mean. The Buddhist understanding of life includes both existence and non-existence. The bird both exists and does not exist at the same time. We say that a view of life based on existence alone is heretical. If you take things too seriously, as if they existed substantially or permanently, you are called a heretic. Most people may be heretics.

We say true existence comes from emptiness and goes back again into emptiness. What appears from emptiness is true existence. We have to go through the gate of emptiness. This

idea of existence is very difficult to explain. Many people these days have begun to feel, at least intellectually, the emptiness of the modern world, or the self-contradiction of their culture. In the past, for instance, the Japanese people had a firm confidence in the permanent existence of their culture and their traditional way of life, but since they lost the war, they have become very skeptical. Some people think this skeptical attitude is awful, but actually it is better than the old attitude.

As long as we have some definite idea about or some hope in the future, we cannot really be serious with the moment that exists right now. You may say, "I can do it tomorrow, or next year," believing that something that exists today will exist tomorrow. Even though you are not trying so hard, you expect that some promising thing will come, as long as you follow a certain way. But there is no certain way that exists permanently. There is no way set up for us. Moment after moment we have to find our own way. Some idea of perfection, or some perfect way which is set up by someone else, is not the true way for us.

Each one of us must make his own true way, and when we do, that way will express the universal way. This is the mystery. When you understand one thing through and through, you understand everything. When you try to understand everything, you will not understand anything. The best way is to understand yourself, and then you will understand everything. So when you try hard to make your own way, you will help others, and you will be helped by others. Before you make your own way you cannot help anyone, and no one can help you. To be independent in this true sense, we have to forget everything which we have in our mind and discover something quite new and different moment after moment. This is how we live in this world.

So we say true understanding will come out of emptiness. When you study Buddhism, you should have a general house cleaning of your mind. You must take everything out of your room and clean it thoroughly. If it is necessary, you may

bring everything back in again. You may want many things, so one by one you can bring them back. But if they are not necessary, there is no need to keep them.

We see the flying bird. Sometimes we see the trace of it. Actually we cannot see the trace of a flying bird, but sometimes we feel as if we could. This is also good. If it is necessary, you should bring back in the things you took from your room. But before you put something in your room, it is necessary for you to take out something. If you do not, your room will become crowded with old, useless junk.

We say, "Step by step I stop the sound of the murmuring brook." When you walk along the brook you will hear the water running. The sound is continuous, but you must be able to stop it if you want to stop it. This is freedom; this is renunciation. One after another you will have various thoughts in your mind, but if you want to stop your thinking you can. So when you are able to stop the sound of the murmuring brook, you will appreciate the feeling of your work. But as long as you have some fixed idea or are caught by some habitual way of doing things, you cannot appreciate things in their true sense.

If you seek for freedom, you cannot find it. Absolute freedom itself is necessary before you can acquire absolute freedom. That is our practice. Our way is not always to go in one direction. Sometimes we go east; sometimes we go west. To go one mile to the west means to go back one mile to the east. Usually if you go one mile to the east it is the opposite of going one mile to the west. But if it is possible to go one mile to the east, that means it is possible to go one mile to the west. This is freedom. Without this freedom you cannot be concentrated on what you do. You may think you are concentrated on something, but before you obtain this freedom, you will have some uneasiness in what you are doing. Because you are bound by some idea of going east or west, your activity is in dichotomy or duality. As long as you are caught by duality you cannot attain absolute freedom, and you cannot concentrate.

Concentration is not to try hard to watch something. In zazen if you try to look at one spot you will be tired in about five minutes. This is not concentration. Concentration means freedom. So your effort should be directed at nothing. You should be concentrated on nothing. In zazen practice we say your mind should be concentrated on your breathing, but the way to keep your mind on your breathing is to forget all about yourself and just to sit and feel your breathing. If you are concentrated on your breathing you will forget yourself, and if you forget yourself you will be concentrated on your breathing. I do not know which is first. So actually there is no need to try too hard to be concentrated on your breathing. Just do as much as you can. If you continue this practice, eventually you will experience the true existence which comes from emptiness.

READINESS, MINDFULNESS *"It is the readiness of the mind that is wisdom."*

In the Prajna Paramita Sutra the most important point, of course, is the idea of emptiness. Before we understand the idea of emptiness, everything seems to exist substantially. But after we realize the emptiness of things, everything becomes real—not substantial. When we realize that everything we see is a part of emptiness, we can have no attachment to any existence; we realize that everything is just a tentative form and color. Thus we realize the true meaning of each tentative existence. When we first hear that everything is a tentative existence, most of us are disappointed; but this disappointment comes from a wrong view of man and nature. It is because our way of observing things is deeply rooted in our self-centered ideas that we are disappointed when we find everything has only a tentative existence. But when we actually realize this truth, we will have no suffering.

This sutra says, "Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara observes that

everything is emptiness, thus he forsakes all suffering." It was not *after* he realized this truth that he overcame suffering—to realize this fact is itself to be relieved from suffering. So realization of the truth is salvation itself. We say, "to realize," but the realization of the truth is always near at hand. It is not after we practice zazen that we realize the truth; even before we practice zazen, realization is there. It is not after we understand the truth that we attain enlightenment. To realize the truth is to live—to exist here and now. So it is not a matter of understanding or of practice. It is an ultimate fact. In this sutra Buddha is referring to the ultimate fact that we always face moment after moment. This point is very important. This is Bodhidharma's zazen. Even before we practice it, enlightenment is there. But usually we understand the practice of zazen and enlightenment as two different things: here is practice, like a pair of glasses, and when we use the practice, like putting the glasses on, we see enlightenment. This is the wrong understanding. The glasses themselves are enlightenment, and to put them on is also enlightenment. So whatever you do, or even though you do not do anything, enlightenment is there, always. This is Bodhidharma's understanding of enlightenment.

You cannot practice true zazen, because you practice it; if you do not, then there is enlightenment, and there is true practice. When you do it, you create some concrete idea of "you" or "I," and you create some particular idea of practice or zazen. So here you are on the right side, and here is zazen on the left. So zazen and you become two different things. If the combination of practice and you is zazen, it is the zazen of a frog. For a frog, his sitting position is zazen. When a frog is hopping, that is not zazen. This kind of misunderstanding will vanish if you really understand emptiness means everything is always here. One whole being is not an accumulation of everything. It is impossible to divide one whole existence into parts. It is always here and always working. This is enlightenment. So there actually is no par-

ticular practice. In the sutra it says, "There are no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body or mind. . . ." This "no mind" is Zen mind, which includes everything.

The important thing in our understanding is to have a smooth, free-thinking way of observation. We have to think and to observe things without stagnation. We should accept things as they are without difficulty. Our mind should be soft and open enough to understand things as they are. When our thinking is soft, it is called imperturbable thinking. This kind of thinking is always stable. It is called mindfulness. Thinking which is divided in many ways is not true thinking. Concentration should be present in our thinking. This is mindfulness. Whether you have an object or not, your mind should be stable and your mind should not be divided. This is zazen.

It is not necessary to make an effort to think in a particular way. Your thinking should not be one-sided. We just think with our whole mind, and see things as they are without any effort. Just to see, and to be ready to see things with our whole mind, is zazen practice. If we are prepared for thinking, there is no need to make an effort to think. This is called mindfulness. Mindfulness is, at the same time, wisdom. By wisdom we do not mean some particular faculty or philosophy. It is the readiness of the mind that is wisdom. So wisdom could be various philosophies and teachings, and various kinds of research and studies. But we should not become attached to some particular wisdom, such as that which was taught by Buddha. Wisdom is not something to learn. Wisdom is something which will come out of your mindfulness. So the point is to be ready for observing things, and to be ready for thinking. This is called emptiness of your mind. Emptiness is nothing but the practice of zazen.