

## Chapter II

### Self Coextensive with the Universe

#### 1 Self Coextensive with the Universe

For today I propose to explain the reason why *an individual self as the perceiver* : 覚 (*wakari*) can be as comprehensive as the entire universe. In fact you are watching a whole scene appear before your eyes. This world of eyesight is awareness you have of it, while from the standpoint the other way around, the whole is identified with your individual self that acts as experiencing agent.

Now will you please turn your look quickly towards another direction. The new world of eyesight is equally an awareness of yours which, though it may contain new kinds of objects this time, is nothing more or less than your individual self as an experiencing agent. Can it be assumed then that no sooner you look in another direction than your own self slides into the brain and reappear in the sphere of vision following the first? I should like you to grasp fast the fact as it is.

The range of vision widens as you go along a road or in the fields, but is it because the subjective self slips into the brain, gets out of it and reappears in rapid succession in the next field of view as you make your way? When viewed in that light, it may be concluded that you leave behind the self as a perceiving agent at every turn and the self remains in whatever places you may go to. You who perceive a sight when looking in a certain direction can also see another sight as you look that way. From this fact it follows that even when you look ahead, your self is present behind you all the same as experiencing agent from the first.

On our way here from home, we had a good view from the train

windows of rural landscapes which abound with fields, hills and rivers. But all of them are nothing more than our own self as an experiencing agent. In this way the self as the seer and hearer is present everywhere in the universe. Suppose a novel type of aircraft is developed, thanks to the progress of scientific technology, that is capable of ranging the universe, by taking free advantage of gravity attraction and repulsion. Traveling in that aircraft to various heavenly bodies with a storage of oxide which lasts for ten thousand years, we see changing sights of the universe in succession.

It is believed that after we travel about four hundred miles from the earth, we will penetrate into the interior of the jet-black space. Though we can see nothing in it, we perceive the darkness notwithstanding. The field of view, which comes and goes, is nothing but our own self as an experiencing agent. In this way the real identity of the universe originates within the perceiving self. Hence the self is one with the universe.

You are deluded so long as you remain unawakened to this deathless self, the absolute self. The awakening to the absolute self is described in Buddhist terms as entrance into the unhindered light of grace. I am sure you can readily understand the plain fact that an individual self as experiencing agent is co-extensive with the universe. None of you may doubt this plain fact.

I gave elsewhere an account of what happened to Hara Seimin Shōnin, who on being awakened to his absolute self, became able to see and hear everything inside himself and to recognize intuitively his own mental action even in a puff of wind he heard, and in a stream of water he saw. Then the self is no longer an individual ego, but the absolute self that identifies itself with the entire heaven and earth.

Though it may sound incredible, it is an indubitable fact. Therefore the self as an experiencing agent or the absolute self is the one and only being, which is not capable of being divided into parts, and can be described as an unchangeable and imperishable self, the real self. Such is the case with the universe, for it is complete in

itself, not divisible into two halves, one perishable and the other deathless. The great universe exists, or ceases to exist as a complete whole. This is described as "*Chūdō* (middle way)" in Buddhism.

The import of the above statement is conveyed in the following lines. "On a great ocean of the whole creation unchangeable and permanently pure, there comes and goes not a day when waves of immutability and those of changeableness, subject to activation by a contributory cause, do not rise by turns." "Pure" in the first clause means "undefiled by illusion."

The great universe appears to be immutable, permanent and imperishable in an aspect, while in another, changeable, changing and perishable, subject to activation by contributory causes. As I referred to it before this, those who are awakened to the unchangeable and absolute self are qualified to enter into the unhindered light penetrating all things. On fully receiving the Pure Light and the Light of Wisdom of Nyorai, they become aware of their deathless real self as is described in a poem by Ben-nei Seija, as follows ;

I owe what I am to the incalculable Light and  
Life of Nyorai, who is the absolute and  
endless self incarnate.

Viewed in this light, we originate in the absolute self. But it is a matter of fact that we are not the Nyorai Himself with His infinite Light and Life, and are merely aware of ourselves as egos. On hearing something bang down, all we take notice of is a sound it makes.

It is not until you give enough thought to the matter that you realize that a sound which is heard is nothing but an awareness of it. It takes much time for you to come to a full realization of that fact. In *Yu-ga-ron* (The Discourse on Meditation) it is stated that human beings rely so exclusively on the power of speech to express themselves, that they pay too much attention to the representation of objects. Because of this they do not give heed to perception to which, in fact, they owe their existence. Since we are yet to be fully awakened to the absolute self, we hardly deserve a welcome from

Nyorai.

According to the Zen teachings, on coming to a full realization of the truth of perception and of the unchangeable self in the light of life experience, you receive recognition that you have attained enlightenment. But you should not rest content with that much, for it is only a limited enlightenment, even if it certainly is enlightenment. Hakuin Zenji once observed that he attained divine enlightenment eighteen times over during his life time, while minor enlightenment was attained an infinite number of times.

Unless you maintain your completely awakened state, you will be unable to cope with an emergency at the critical moment. You should be awake to the real self all the time. Or you can not cope with the emergency. Even when your body falls down the roof of your house, you should keep yourself awake. The moment you identify yourself with the absolute self by means of Samadhi, you are freed from the bond of death and birth. On reaching that stage, you deserve a welcome from Nyorai. In the Zen Sect the immediate goal for the followers to attain is the awakening to the absolute self by means of Egen wide open. Varieties of terms are in use to denote the real self.

I shall cite a number of instances from the writings by the Zen Teacher who attained perfect enlightenment. In the Zen Sect the state above referred to has traditionally been described as "The original aspect of being prior to the birth of one's parents." And Master Priest Rinzai Gigen, who founded the Rinzai Sect, observed, in reply to a question as to where the Buddha is present, that he is the self that listens to the sound produced in your presence. This is written in his *Rin-zai-roku* (Rinzai Register), collected discourses on the Rinzai faith.

In the former state of mind, you used to consider the hearing agent to exist in the brain, but by now I believe you no longer think of it as you used to. The hearing self exists in the place where a sound is heard, and that is, in truth, the absolute self, the unchangeable and imperishable self. The *Rin-zai-roku* (Rinzai Register)

contains the following passages :

Your flesh which is composed of four elements does not know how to preach a sermon or hear one. Neither the spleen, stomach, liver nor the gall is capable of preaching a sermon or hearing one. Space is unable to preach or hear a sermon. Then what can preach and hear a sermon? It is when you appear as a solitary light in an expanse of pure transparency by letting your entire body fuse into emptiness, that you are able to preach and hear a sermon.

Four elements means earth, water, fire and wind. Earth produces hardness; water creates moisture; fire causes heat and wind is responsible for motion. Modern science explains matter in terms of seventeen elements. A solitary light refers to the one and only beingness\* complete in itself, with no body going by its side, because the body fuses into emptiness.

It might be easier for you to get a correct understanding of the gist of the passage quoted above, if you substitute "to hear a sound" for the original phrase, "to preach and hear a sermon." Then it reads "your body cannot in all possibility hear sounds." This is taken as an outspoken criticism aimed at the popular view that it is the bodily ears and the nervous system that hear sounds. Neither the internal organs such as spleen, stomach, liver, gall nor the space can hear sounds. The phrase that follows supplies a decisive answer to the question about the experiencing agent by definitely stating that it is that which appears clearly and distinctly before your eyes, a solitary lightness which is formless and immaterial, just *an awareness* 覚 (*wakari*) that can hear sounds.

A passage is found in a book called *Den-kō-roku*, a collection of sermons by Keizan Zenji, the first master priest of Sōjiji, head temple of the Sōdō Sect. A passage in which he addressed his audience as follows :

All of you must realize the beingness in which no speech, no

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\* beingness : real existence, essence

mouth, nor eyes exist. It is not only that but also none of six sense organs, not even a particle of the four elements exist in it. And yet it is neither empty nor immaterial.

It is not with these eyes and these ears that you see things and hear sounds ; it is this non-apparent beingness that see things and hears sounds.

This is a terse but forcible description of the absolute self which strikes its truth home to your mind.

## 2 *Udāna • Parayana • Nyo-ze-go*

Regarding this, Shakyamuni Buddha himself preaches in the *Udāna*.

*Udāna* is a sutra better known as the *Mumon Jisetsu Canon*, the sutra of the voluntary and original teachings of the Buddha, and most highly esteemed among all sutras, in that it is a collection of the original preachings of the Buddha, instead of his observations made in answer to the questions his disciples asked him. It is a sutra that reveals his enlightened state of mind in which he preaches the absolute truth for their own sake.

The sutra carries a famous passage in which he describes a beautiful sight of Nirvana as the Land of Bliss undefiled by worldly desires, and remote from matter and mind, pain and pleasure. Then he goes on to say that there exists the world of *Mushō* (non-birth), *Muken* (non-appearance), *Musa* (non-production) and *Mujū* (non-assemblage), and asks how those who are born, appear, are produced and assembled in this world could be released and freed from changeable world ?

On the contrary, it is because the realm of non-birth, non-appearance, non-production and non-assemblage does exist, that those who are born, appear, are produced and assembled can be liberated from bondage and transcend the changeable world. Non-birth means that which originally exists by itself instead of being produced from something else. Non-appearance signifies that which

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never disappears, because it makes no appearance. *Musa*, not being produced. We are composed of as many as seventeen elements. Non-assembling means that which is not assembled.

Accordingly non-birth, non-appearance, non-production and non-assemblage refer to the true nature of the absolute self, that is synonymous with the universe. We are apt to conceive of the universe as divisible into many different parts, but the absolute self is a complete unit which is not capable of being divided into parts, simply because it is by no means composed of parts assembled.

And being remote from worldly desires means *Gedatsu*, the freedom from the bond of illusion. In the *Parayana*, the Buddha preaches on the absolute self. *Parayana* is a most valuable scripture which conveys the Buddha's original teachings, its authenticity being established by modern historical researches and unbiased inquiries. The *Parayana* is now available in English translation. The following passage in Japanese is translated from the English version, which I undertook on my self counting on whatever knowledge I have of that language. I ask you to excuse me if it does not make enough sense. The Buddha states in elucidation of his view on enlightenment that he who hides himself makes no appearance, so that there is nothing that indicates his presence where he is taken to be.

Once a disciple asked him a question as to whether one becomes a being of no mind, on reaching the state of freedom from the bond of birth and death. The Buddha observed in reply that it was no question of mind or no mind, for when he reached that state he was released from not only his mind but also from his flesh, and lost his individual existence. "Mind" in this case means a certain state of mind, such as hatred, sorrow, joy and so on.

This individual named Sasamoto who is now in your sight is not free from the round of birth and death, and can be said to have his individual existence. One that is liberated, however, from the perpetual repetition of birth and death, is the one who identified oneself with the absolute self by being released both from mind and body. Then he exists as an absolute awareness, and becomes one with the

universe, transcending his individual existence.

Thereupon his disciple asked him another question, "Does he who is freed from the round of birth and death turn into void or does he hide himself?" The Buddha replied that he hid himself. By that he meant that he was no longer a being whom it was possible to perceive by means of the five sense organs. "You cannot see him with your eyes or touch him with your hands." It is in this sense that the Buddha speaks of him who is hidden from sight and makes no appearance, so that there will be nothing that indicates his presence where he is taken to be present; this is the faithful rendition of his original teachings.

In *Dai-ne-han-gyō*, the relationship between ego and the absolute self is explained in the light of that which self bears to non-self, which, in truth, is one and the same with the former in substance. Substance means identity, while one and the sameness signifies the state in which there is no distinction between the two, but only the middle way. It is in the middle way that the thing in itself exists, for when a sound is heard flop, the sound and the perception of it are not independent from each other but one and the same in substance.

The relationship of the absolute self and ego is compared with that of water and ripples. A number of leading religious thinkers have attempted to approach the point at issue by comparing the relationship between the absolute self and ego to that which water bears to ripples, following the example of the *Ki-shin-ron* (A Discourse on the Awakening of Faith), in which the comparison originates. So I think fit to follow in their wake and try to explain it in the light of the relationship between water and ripples.

On a sea beach, various forms of waves are seen breaking against it. Waves as such are so changeable fleeting. But even though waves as such disappear, the water continues to exist. In the natural world nothing is permanent and unchangeable; all things in nature may be compared to waves in their changeableness and fleetingness.

On the other hand, as far as the subjective self as an experienc-



ing agent is concerned, it neither comes nor goes; it is neither same nor different, neither permanent nor changeable, neither produced nor perishable. An individual ego which one identifies with one's own self ordinarily is likened to a wave which disappears at any moment. Though a wave disappears, the water never ceases to exist, to which the absolute self may be compared.

The *Nyo-ze-go* (words of thusness), a record of the original words of the Buddha as they are, is a sutra of greatest significance in the Buddhist canon, which is esteemed as a faithful transmission of the law from the Buddha. About the authenticity of this sutra which is believed to carry the original preachings by the Buddha, directly transmitted from him, with no later additions, none of modern researchers call in question.

There have been handed down to us a large number of sutras as well as works of Buddhist fiction and philosophy, attributed to later writers which were published after the demise of the Buddha. But the *Nyo-ze-go* is a faithful and incorrupt version of the Buddha's original sermons. There is an invaluable sutra known as *Itivuttaka* in Pali, meaning "the past lives of the Buddha's disciples." It represents one of the nine types of scripture, and Genjō Sanzō translated into Chinese the two thirds of the sutra under the title of *Hon-jī-kyō*, a collection of the Buddha's teachings as sacred words. Later the rest of the scripture was rendered into English and German. A passage in the latter version reads as follows:

My monks, one speaks of *Fushō* (non-birth), *Fujō* (non-becoming), *Musa* (non-being produced) and *Mui* (non-causation). If it were not for non-birth, non-becoming, non-being produced and non-creation, there could have been nothing to rely on for birth, becoming, being produced and created. My monks, it is non-birth, non-becoming, non-being produced, non-causation that you can rely on for birth, becoming, being produced and being created.

Birth means being brought into existence from the original state of non-beingness. Becoming, in other words, being built up, being

gradually completed. Being produced means being produced by an external causal agency. Causation refers to a causal power which operates to create objects. We have a cause within us by which we are made to be what we are.

The Buddha teaches us that there are in us that which changes and that which is unchangeable. No matter how closely we may search ourselves for it, we can find nothing unchangeable in us. What we take to be our individual self in our usual life, is ever changing not only in flesh but also in mind, whereas the Buddha tells us that though we are changeable in some respects, we are unchangeable in others which the Buddha describes as *Fushō* (non-birth), *Fujō* (non-becoming), *Musa* (non-being produced) and *Mui* (non-being caused). In short, the four qualities of *Fushō*, *Fujō*, *Musa* and *Mui* are conditions of unchangeableness and permanency, whereas *Shō* (birth), *Jō* (becoming) *Sa* (being produced) and *Ui* (being caused) are responsible for mutability and uncertainty of life.

The implication the *Nyo-ze-go*, Buddha's Sacred Words, carries is that it is just because what is not born and therefore is permanent and imperishable does exist that impermanence attributable to perpetual repetition of birth and death can be recognized as such. It is because what is permanent (water) exists that waves which are changeable can rise. But for that which is permanent (water), what is changeable (waves) could never rise.

On turning our look to take a view of this world, we find it filled with that which is ever changing, due to perpetual repetition of birth and death. But then there should be what is permanent (water) to which what is changeable owes its being, for it is because what is unchangeable exists, that it is possible for changes (waves) to occur. That which is permanent (water) and what is changeable (wave) are in no way two different and independent entities, but simply two alternative aspects of one and the same substance, which have a relation neither too close to nor too remote from each other. The relationship between the ego which is changeable and the absolute self that is permanent is comparable to wave and water.

Non-birth, non-becoming, non-being produced and non-being caused are exemplified in the state in which water exists. A saying that no individual self really exists refers in most cases to the phenomenal ego as above described. A wave of ego may disappear but the absolute self comparable to water never ceases to exist. In case of a blast of wind blowing against the water, it will certainly cause waves to rise on its surface. Then what can cause a wave of ego to rise? And where does it exist?

The truth is that we are creating fresh causes one after another for ourselves day and night, that are called Karma (deeds) and *Bonnō* (evil passions). Karma means deeds. A scholar defines the nucleus of our personality as the habitual operation of volitional power. As you are repeatedly provoked to anger, you acquire a habit of taking offence quickly, until at last you come to be put down by others as a hothead that falls easy prey to passion. Such a habit is named *Gō*, which is responsible for *Bonnō*, evil passions. Then the *Bonnō* operates as a cause in its turn to create a second *Gō*, a deed which incurs inevitable retribution.

In effect, as long as we live in this world, we are creating Karma and *Bonnō* day and night, which work by turns as a causal power which is likened to that of the wind which causes waves to rise one after another. It is this wind that blows against the water of the absolute self causing a second swash of waves. And the second uprising of waves which replaces the first is defined as rebirth. We have no idea what we will be like when we are reborn after we end our worldly life, and what the second uprising of waves will be like. As a matter of course, all is clear to Nyorai, who is conversant with the laws and rules of the past, present and future, though we unenlightened mortals never know.

The present form in which we appear is a wave which is known as a human being. It happens to appear as a cat or a dog at one time, while at another it may show itself in the figure of a demon or a hungry ghost. For there are six different forms in which the round of birth and death is perpetually repeated. This is termed *Rinne*,

rebirth in the six migratory states of existence, hell, the abode of hungry ghosts, the animal world, asura world, the human world and heaven, respectively.

*Rinne*, or palingenesis, means the cycles of life, the six realms of existence we make the rounds of, just as the wheels of a carriage turn unceasingly round, in which birth and death follow each other in endless succession. A wave of ego disappears but all does not come to an end, for another uprise of waves will infallibly follow it. No matter what form may a wave rise in, however, it remains to be water ; it turns into nothing else. In the same way, no matter whatever may one be reborn, one's absolute self remains one and the same forever. The Buddhist teachings lay down the law that a self has to pay for his own deeds and another must for what he does. This is defined as *Inga-ōhō* (the law of cause and effect).

When you see it in the light of these facts, you can easily understand that, by "the self" above referred to, I meant the absolute self, on which I have dwelled these few days. One suffers for one's evil deeds, while a good deed never goes unrewarded. Varieties of causes are responsible for a deed which is comparable to a wave. Any one has to pay for his own deed. In like manner we mortals have been transmigrating in the six worlds of existence, repeating birth and death, from the beginningless past. When we reach the stage, however, in which we can bathe in the light of Nyorai's grace, by devotedly applying ourselves to the practice of the Nembutsu, we will be awakened to the absolute self. And being liberated from the bond of perpetual repetition of birth and death, we are able to attain freedom from illusion and suffering.

After having considered the problem at some length, I believe you have by now been persuaded that you have within you that which is unchangeable. Let us stop to ask ourselves whether we are really aware of what is permanent that we have within us, in other words, whether we have reached the stage in which our conscious self becomes one with the real self, the absolute self. I am afraid we have not yet got so far. But what is the reason why we are unable

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to discover that which belongs to us? It is not something that you have to go all the way to a remote place like the South Sea Islands to find it.

As I have repeatedly referred to it, the Buddhist teachings preach "All is nothing more than mind." On giving more thought to the matter in the light of the ascertained facts, you will realize that this very blackboard is simply a thought. Not only the sun, the moon, hills and rivers, but also all the rest of objects in heavens and on earth are nothing but thought. Not merely all things in nature that are conceived of as material but also the transparent luminosity before our eyes are nothing but thought. Only we give little heed to this truth. We take it for granted that all things in nature are material objects.

Now I propose to explain the matter by means of another parable. If I am to describe the present state in which we are, I should say that our mind can be likened to gold ore, an unwrought metal fresh from the mine, in which pure gold is still combined with impurities. No matter how you may break it into pieces, you will be unable to find pure gold in it. In case, however, it is brought into the furnace, pure gold is isolated from the impurities to appear in its full golden radiance.

In the same way, the absolute self in us combines with other impurities, so that no matter how hard we may try to search our mind for it, we are unable to trace it to where it originates. We are received, however, into the light of grace, by applying ourselves devotedly to invocation of the sacred name and our mind is enkindled with Nyorai's compassion.

In other words it is just then that gold of the absolute self is smelted from the ore of ego in the bellows of Amida's compassion. The moment pure gold is refined, we distinctly recognize the real self, unchangeable and endless, within our mind. Then the individual self becomes one with the absolute self and the very cosmos, and we attain an endless life and permanent peace, completely liberated from the odious bond of death and saved from the sad fate of

transmigration in the six realms of existence.

### 3 Eka Mondō (Dialogue) • Ikesue Mondō

I shall describe the state in which an individual finds himself, on being awakened to the absolute self, and explain the significance of the attainment of divine enlightenment. Darma Daishi, one day during his stay in China, received a visit from a man by the name of Eka, while sitting in meditation with his legs crossed.

The visitor entreated him to place him as a pupil under his care. But Daishi continued to sit in meditation with his back to Eka without speaking a word in reply until at last night began to fall. On the next day Eka came back to see Daishi and repeated his supplication but in vain. Presently it began to snow and the snow lay thick on him, who was waiting outside for Daishi's answer, but none was forthcoming.

Thereupon Eka made up his mind at last to mutilate his own body and brought with him his amputated arm to Daishi to show his unflinching determination. Then Daishi gave Eka permission to study under his personal guidance, probably persuaded of his seriousness of purpose by this striking witness to his resolution.

Eka was greatly encouraged to carry on his practice of Zen meditation with undivided attention, but it was far from easy for him to win recognition from his master that he obtained enough merit for divine enlightenment. Then appealing to Daishi for advice, he gave an account of the state of mind he reached by means of Zen meditation to which he devoted himself.

He said, "I have now nothing to pay attention to, and there is nothing any more that is transmitted to my mind." When you look at an object, your attention is directed to it. It is only when you are in sleep that nothing is transmitted to your mind, that is to say, no mental action responds. While fast asleep, you do not even feel the warmth of your bedclothes. At the words of his disciple, Daish came

out with a counter question. He said, "Do you mean by that all disappears, or that you have fallen fast asleep? Eka replied," Nothing ceases to exist. "Then Daishi asked" What evidence is there to show it?"

At that Eka confidently replied, "I am so distinctly conscious of it that I deem it needless to express it verbally." On hearing these words of Eka, Daishi pronounced, "this is verily the manifestation of the Buddha-nature. You must see to it that you feel no doubt of it." It was then that Eka received from the master delayed recognition of what was his due. This was *the state of spiritual awakening*: 覚 (*wakai*) Eka reached.

A constant state of serene and distinct awareness is a most invaluable achievement. In that state the mind is directed to no particular objects, and is empty of its contents as I have so far referred to it. And yet it differs from the state of being fast asleep. This doubly clear state of consciousness means the attainment of divine enlightenment, and a manifestation of Buddhahood. This state of pure consciousness is the absolute self which is coextensive with the entire universe; the real self, unchangeable and endless, complete in itself, indivisible into parts. This is the state of the attainment of divine enlightenment.

The *Han-nya-shin-gyō* preaches, "Phenomena are Sunya and Sunya is phenomena," which can be condensed into one word, Sunya, emptiness. It is possible, in other way around, to enlarge Sunya to the dictum, "Phenomena are Sunya and Sunya is phenomena." In Buddhism form, or phenomena means material objects. Form implies distinction, since material objects differ, because they are objects of the five different senses-forms, sounds, smells, tastes and touches. The Buddhist theorem that defines as Sunya an infinite variety of forms, which serve as means of discrimination, conveys the fundamental idea of non-discrimination and equality of all beings. As I have so far referred to it repeatedly, it can be compared to the relationship between water and waves. Did I make myself clear to you?

Shōnin : Mr. Ikesue, do you follow me ?

Ikesue : Though I can believe that an infinite life exists, I don't think it has any meaning to me.

Shōnin : Is that so ? Very well, when it does come home to your heart, you are awakened to infinite life. If you think it may come true, I take that my lecture has achieved its aim.

Some of you may get an impression that some types of doctrine contained in the Buddhist teachings are hard to understand. It may be so when they are viewed in the light of reason and worldly experience, but on receiving the light of Nyorai's grace, the true significance of the sacred teachings will be revealed to you before your eyes. Though it may be difficult to comprehend, when you depend solely on reason, it will be an easy matter, when you throw yourself upon the compassion of Nyorai, who is ready to help you awake to the truth in his light of grace.

As I make the place-to-place rounds of the country, I meet with a good number of Buddhist believers who have been awakened to infinite life in virtue of their single-minded devotion to the Nembutsu practice. Once awakened to the truth, it appears just before your eyes. Do you think of my lecture as the mere expression of a personal opinion of mine ? I know it is no question of opinion ; it is only the unbiased truth that really matters.

With my hands clasped in prayer,  
and repeating ten times the sacred  
name of the Buddha.