

*Subtitle: Punk Rock Commentaries on Buddha, God, Truth, Sex, Death, & Dogen's Treasury of the Right Dharma Eye*

According to Tendo Nyojo, zazen was its own end, and the mere practice of zazen was enlightenment itself.

Life is just action in the present moment. [...] The only real facts are those at the present moment. [...] The world where we live is existence in the present moment.

The best way to truly experience the world just as it is, is through the daily practice of zazen. [...] It is absolutely impossible to understand Buddhism without the practice of zazen.

“You can never notice your own enlightenment.” -- Nishijima Sensei

The world will never behave the way we think it should behave, but that isn't so terrible because the self that thinks the world should behave according to its wishes doesn't really exist.

Self is just a mental construct, an idea, a way of understanding reality, a slot within our heads into which we place a certain portion of what we experience.

We're no more than a transitional phase of a particular glob of matter and energy within the vast universe. Yet the vast universe is as much a part of us as we are a part of it.

What I call “me” may be a little more than an organ the universe uses to experience itself.

We can't notice reality any more than a fish can recognize water. No one can ever notice his or her own enlightenment.

The state of ambiguity -- that messy, greasy, mixed-up, confused, and awful situation you're living through right now -- is enlightenment itself.

Zazen isn't something you do in the dark.

The correct physical posture is the single most important part of the practice of zazen.

Buddhism makes no distinction between body and mind. Physical balance is mental balance. [...] Zazen is a balance between tension and relaxation.

There are two basic kinds of thought. There are thoughts that pop up unannounced and uninvited. These are just the results of previous thoughts and experiences that have left their traces in the neural pathways of our brains. The other kind of thought is when we grab on to one of these streams of energy and start playing with it.

To practice "thinking not thinking," all you need to do is ignore the first kind of thoughts and learn how not to instigate the second type. [...] Learn what it feels like just to stop generating more and more stuff for your brain to chew on.

Effort is far more important than so-called success because effort is a real thing.

Zazen is the purest form of action. [...] Zazen is just sitting there.

In Buddhism we make no distinction between mental and physical.

When the physical body is right, the mind naturally follows suit.

Look at what you really are right now.

Might our beliefs be just beliefs, without some entity called "self" behind them and somehow creating them?

Thoughts are nothing more than electrical activity, changes in the organic chemistry of the brain.

(The self) is just another thought. The thought of self appears and disappears just like any other thought.

You are not what you think of as “you” because you are everything. You are everything because there is nothing else you can be.

(Note) the difference between how I think things should be and how they actually are. Within this gap the fiction known as “me” appears and reacts.

When there is no “you,” there is nothing for “you” to get angry about and no one outside yourself to get angry at.

What you call your self or your personality is just a collection of habits.

Emptiness is reality itself when we see it as it is, which is to say, when we see it as “empty” of our concepts about it -- and that includes the concept of emptiness.

The concept of karma includes the idea that action always produces results. According to Buddhist theory the laws of cause and effect are not just limited to the physical world. They apply equally to the realm of mind.

Everybody is subject to cause and effect. [...] Real causes and real effects are not ever the same as our images of cause and effect.

Consciousness is just what happens when the stuff we call “mind” interacts with the stuff we call “matter.”

There is only one continuous and undivided whole stretching on through infinite space and infinite time. [...] Every action affects the entire universe.

Sense number six is just your ability to detect thoughts and other mental phenomena.

Dogen believed in the instantaneous creation and destruction of the universe in every moment. [...] And something new takes its place all the time. [...] **You exist now. That's it.**

It's not that our experiences have meaning, it's that all experience *is* meaning. You understand this meaning by using your whole body and mind and by using the entire universe. [...] Real understanding comes when you actually see things for what they are without the intercession of your *ideas* about what they are.

We may not know just what reality is. But this is the way we're experiencing it right now.

Religions are in the death business: preparing people for death, pretending to send them off after they've died, making believe they know what happens afterward, and explaining to the dead person's relatives where they think their loved one might be now. Without death most religions don't have a whole lot to live for.

There is one thing, the universe.

**Not a single one of your thoughts or perceptions is true.** [...] Every thought is nothing more than electricity bouncing around in your brain.

You cannot die because you were never born to begin with. [...] Your fear of death is nothing more than your ego trying to establish and maintain itself.

“God is the Universe. The Universe is God” -- Gudo Nishijima

God is what you get when you take everything in the universe as a whole and call it by one name. And God is also you and me in the sense that we

are the means by which God observes his creation. [...] The law of cause and effect *is* God.

The truth of the universe *is* the universe itself.

The mind changes from moment to moment. It can't possibly be that "self" we view as permanent and unchanging.

If you sincerely want to know who and what you truly are -- then you're going to find it sooner or later.

The sounds you hear and the forms you see are it. They -- and you -- are the body and mind of the universe itself.

Being just what you are right now is the very definition of success in zazen.

Not only are we alone in the universe, but no one else even knows we're here. [...] We are alone in the universe because the total universe is us. [...] We're just one aspect of the totality and at the same time you are that totality itself.

Whatever affects one part of the universe affects the whole thing.

Control is an illusion.

Words cannot capture what your life really is. [...] All humankind's problems today stem solely from our inability to see that words are just words.

When you can really understand that the concepts you carry around in your brain are no more than mere concepts, the entire universe changes completely.

(Dogen maintained) there is no difference between practice and enlightenment, that the moment you sit on your cushion and do a bit of zazen you are enlightened already. [...] Enlightenment is not something you

can achieve; it's something you *do* every single moment of every single day. Becoming calmer, more easygoing, less neurotic, even gaining a deep and profound understanding of what you and the universe actually are -- these are nothing but side effects, little perks.

Even the very action of your approaching or turning away from the truth is nothing other than the truth itself. **The truth is inescapable.**

Real enlightenment is not an experience. Real enlightenment is the ongoing work you do to keep from getting caught up in your experiences. [...] The ability to understand that you do not understand is what real enlightenment is all about.

Everything you ever do is always, always, always a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

To a Buddhist everything is alive. The only things that aren't alive are those fantasies in our heads. [...] True mindfulness is the awareness that everything you encounter is a vigorous expression of the same living universe as you.

You are not just a thing that inhabits this moment. You *are* this moment.