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1 | ***A Path of Just Sitting: Zazen as the Practice of the Bodhisattva Way***

Shohaku Okumura

A Personal Reflection on *Zazen* Practice in Modern Times

Problems we are facing

The 20th century was scarred by two World Wars, a Cold War between powerful nations, and countless regional conflicts of great violence. Millions were killed, and millions more displaced from their homes. All the developed nations were involved in these wars and conflicts. In a sense this violence goes along with a process of change in which separate nations have become one vast world society linked by economics, technology, communication and transportation.

Secular materialism based on economics, science, and technology has been a driving force. At the beginning of the 21st century, although there are great differences in wealth and standards of living, all nations are bound up in an interdependent relationship. No one can live apart from the influence of other parts of the world.

My own journey towards truth

When I was a teenager in the 1960s, the basic message I received at school and in the wider Japanese society was that, as an outgrowth of technological development, humanist education, and democracy, our world was getting better. The optimistic beliefs of secularism and materialism were rooted in the 17th and 18th century, Europe's so-called the age of Enlightenment. People believed that through science and rationality we could control nature, and make a world free from the suffering of poverty, sickness, and discrimination.