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INSTITUTE**

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On 26th May, the eighth symposium held by the Japanese Civilization Institute took place at Japan University of Economics campus in Shibuya, Tokyo on the theme of “Zen and Mindfulness.” The panelists were Mr. Issho Fujita, director of the Soto Zen Buddhism International Center, who is deeply acquainted with both zen and mindfulness and who has taught zen for 17 years in the United States, Ms. Kimiko Bokura-Shafe, founder of the MiLI (Mindful Leadership Institute), and is introducing an employee orientation program developed by Google’s head office based on neuroscience and mindfulness to Japanese companies, and writer and director of Japanese Civilization Institution Naoki Inose, who moderated the panel. Mr. Fujita and Ms. Bokura set time aside for meditation during the first and second half of the event. Please enjoy learning about the differences between zen and mindfulness.

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Greetings

Ms. Kimiko Tsuzuki—Chairperson of Japanese Civilization Institute

We have continued to hold our series of symposiums, and have now reached our eighth round. When we announced the theme of this eighth event, “Zen and Mindfulness,” on the internet, we received such a huge response from people who were eager to attend that we had to limit attendance today. We were delighted to receive such a wonderful response, but also saddened that we could not accommodate everyone who wanted to join us.

The Tsuzuki Education Group celebrated its 60th anniversary last year. The theme we chose to mark our anniversary was “*Wakon Eisai*” (Japanese Spirit, Talented Scholars). Today, we hope to hear an incisive discussion between such talented scholars, Professor Issho Fujita and Professor Kimiko Bokura-Shafe, who are both spreading the Japanese spirit and soul in which we take such pride around the world in the English language. I hope all of you in the audience will not just passively receive information from this event today, but will also actively take part and think about the theme with us together. Please enjoy today’s panel to the very end.

“Transmitting Japanese Civilization—The Drama of the Pioneers.”

Toshio Goto, President

I would personally like to position this symposium as part of the story of “Transmitting Japanese Civilization—The Drama of the Pioneers.” With the Meiji Restoration, Japan entered an era of “*Wakon Yosai*” (Japanese Spirit combined with Western learning), receiving influences from outside cultures, and particularly from the cultures of the West. However, the Japanese of that day did not just submissively receive culture from abroad. There were also Japanese who worked strenuously to transmit the fine aspects of Japanese culture to the outside world. I call these people the “Pioneers who Transmitted Japanese Civilization,” and I have assembled a list of some of them to

share with you today. There was, for example, Manshi Kiyozawa. In 1893, a World Exposition was held in Chicago to commemorate the 400th Anniversary of Christopher Columbus discovering the Americas. At around that same time, Kiyozawa’s book about Japanese religion was translated into English, and attracted attention at the Parliament of the World’s Religions held in Chicago that same year. By the way, Daisetsu Suzuki, who we will hear about later, also attended this conference.

Other famous names of people who have worked to introduce Japan to the world include Kanzo Uchimura, Inazo Nitobe and Tenshin Okakura. An exceptional case

might be Yonejiro Noguchi, the father of architect Isamu Noguchi, who strove to introduce Japanese fine arts abroad, beginning with Japanese poetry, verse and haiku. The individuals mentioned above all transmitted their information in English, and ultimately spread the word about the positive aspects of Japan to the outside world. They then returned to Japan themselves. I would like to share with you the fact that pioneers like these individuals existed more than 100 years ago, and that even today, the finest aspects of Japanese civilization are still the focus of attention from many diverse perspectives in countries across the globe.

Zen and mindfulness

Issho Fujita

(Soto zen priest)

vs.

Kimiko Bokura-Shafe

(entrepreneur and mindfulness instructor)

MC

Naoki Inose

(director of Japanese
Civilization Institute)

The two Suzuki's and the prehistory of mindfulness

Inose: Daisetsu Suzuki's book "Zen and Japanese Culture" was published outside Japan in Showa 10 (1935). It has been read continuously ever since.

Daisetsu Suzuki is well known as the Buddhist scholar who spread zen culture to the outside world before and after WWII. Yet actually, there were "Two Suzuki's" in the U.S. at the time, another one being a priest named Shunryu Suzuki who established the San Francisco Zen Center. In the 1970s, members of the Beatles were inspired by Eastern philosophy, while the hippy movement emerged on the U.S. West Coast. These kinds of movements were said to have been influenced in part by Shunryu Suzuki.

As the furthest evolution in this trend, today we see words like "zen" and "mindfulness" spreading quickly to innovative companies like Google and Facebook in Silicon Valley. These companies are now incorpo-

rating ideas derived from zen in their orientation programs for new employees.

Mr. Issho Fujita provided guidance in zen in the U.S. for 17-and-a-half years. Today, he conducts research in zen here in Japan. Meanwhile, Ms. Kimiko Bokura-Shafe is working to introduce Google's employee orientation program back here in Japan. Because mindfulness is spreading in foreign countries, zen—which has been an integral part of Japanese tradition to the modern day—is now coming in for re-examination even in Japan itself.

We hope that the audience gathered here today can let themselves relax and listen to our discussion. So to begin, we would like to ask Ms. Kimiko Bokura-Shafe to show us just how relaxing the method used at Google can be.

Bokura: Okay. How is everybody's mental state today?

Maybe you all rushed to get to this venue on time, have soothed yourselves down a bit, and are feeling clearer now? Or perhaps you haven't

quite settled down yet? So now, let's take a moment to think.

If you tilt a snow globe, you see white snow scattering inside. The best thing to do to make that snow settle is to put the globe down. Your soul is just the same. You need to put down your feelings, your responsibilities, and your emotions so they can settle. Now I would like to show you some easy steps to enter "mindfulness."

You need to do just three things. Firstly, "put your consciousness in the moment. Gather your attention to "this moment."

At the same time, "relax."

Then, still in this state, put your consciousness into your next breath." Just try these three things.

Before you begin, however, relax your posture. You can close your eyes or leave them open. Pay attention to the moment, relax, and focus your attention on the next breath you're going to breathe. Continue to place your attention on your breath for maybe three breaths.

Please continue. Your might find that your mind is thinking of other things besides your breath, like,



Kimiko Bokura-Shafe

“What am I going to do with the things I left behind at work,” or “What shall I eat afterwards?” If you notice that you’re thinking about something else, “Begin again.” Just go back to the beginning and concentrate on your next coming breath.

Good! Now take a deep breath, try to maintain that state, and concentrate on the following discussion.

Inose: When you say, “a relaxing posture,” what do you mean?

Bokura: Your backbone is naturally curved. It’s not standing straight up against gravity. Find the posture that is most relaxing for you. Often your shoulders are hunched forward rather than pointed sideways during your everyday life. The most relaxing posture where you can breathe most easily is when you lift your shoulders and drop them down from behind. Your head is on you neck, but try and find the most relaxing position for your head against gravity as well.

Inose: We slouch a lot in our daily life, like when we’re using computers and mobile phones. I’ve heard that the average head weighs approximately seven kilograms, so that’s like balancing a bowling ball on your neck. Having our heads placed in such an awkward position, it’s no wonder we get shoulder aches.

Bokura-Shafe: When we find the

best position for our head, it leads us to raise and straighten our pelvis. But if I tell people that first, before everything else, our bodies will unconsciously shrink as they try to straighten up, so instead I want you to just loosen up first and find your most relaxed position.

Inose: Mr. Fujita. In your book “*Zen no kyoshitsu*” (Lessons on Zen), you write that a good posture is when you think of aligning your ears and shoulders and your nose and navel.

Fujita: That is the result of “finding” the right pose. When we’re told in words how to pose correctly, we tend to create models. Instead of asking our bodies to try and come up with the correct pose from the inside, we create an ideal mold on the outside and try to adapt ourselves to it. The ideal shape and goal comes first, and we try to come as close to that as we can. It’s the kind of head-centered approach that we all tend to follow in our everyday lives. In zen, we take particular caution to avoid these kinds of artificial approaches.

In other words, there is no such thing as an ideal posture that applies equally to every single person. Indeed, a good posture for you today might not even be a good posture for you tomorrow. There’s a relaxing pose for every person.

Note that when I say “relaxing” I don’t mean a lazy posture. I mean a pose that awakens the consciousness and prepares us for the conditions that emerge accordingly. We learn how to create a new, proper pose on a day-to-day basis, not learn to make a single proper pose for all occasions. In zen we value this distinction.

To settle the soul and trying to settle the soul are two different things, as different as straightening the back and actually growing taller. It’s similar to that. There’s only a slight difference, but the landscape that the person in question is able to see changes completely. I think zen’s



Issho Fujita

most important characteristic lies in this tiny difference.

Inose: Why do you think mindfulness is so popular in Silicon Valley today?

Fujita: The word “mindfulness” has been around for some time now. I moved to the U.S. in 1987, and came across the word mindfulness for the first time in the book “Being Peace,” written by the Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh.

Inose: Ms. Bokura, you published “*Mindfulness for Businesspersons*,” but how do you actually see the situation today? I hear that Google’s facility is quite luxurious, with cafeterias in which you can eat as much as you like, creative offices, even playgrounds leisure lands and game centers. We get a lot of information like that at the surface level, but I think that in reality Google must be extremely harsh. Only 1 in 50 students can pass the exams to enter Harvard University, but only 1 in 1,000 succeed in entering Google. Even if you do succeed in getting in, you’re surrounded by brilliant people and you have to work long hours everyday competing ruthlessly with them. Silicon Valley is probably one of the most stressful environments to work in the world today.

Bokura: Exactly right. For example,

a company like Google deals in massive amounts of information, so you get requests such as, “I want you to double the speed of information processing in three months.” A team of about 10 people works furiously on that and somehow achieve it, because you have top engineers gathered from all around the world. But even if you accomplish your project and are still getting your breath back, in a few months time you’re given another mission: “double the speed again in three months.” You reach out and achieve your goal again, but then you get yet another assignment that requires reaching even further.

Of course we’re all receiving huge benefits from technological development, but the people who are at the forefront of actually creating these innovations are working under very severe conditions.

Fujita: What happens if you can’t achieve your goal?

Bokura: Then someone else comes in and takes your place.

I think there’s also a self-motivation to create something—something new—that these workers possess that comes before the external pressures placed upon them. Yet even so, because people really are wearing themselves out in that kind of environment, some workers fall ill from stress, or their family life collapses, or they get addicted to drugs or alcohol. Yet if you can only relax your soul through mindfulness, your suffering diminishes, and you also see an indirect increase in work performance. I think that’s why mindfulness has spread among people in the Valley the way it has.

Inose: By the way, Mr. Fujita. What did Shunryu Suzuki actually do in the U.S.?

Fujita: Before I go into that, I would first like to go back a little further in history.



During the Meiji Restoration, Japan invested a lot of money in inviting numerous scholars to come to Japan from abroad. Among them was (Ernest) Fenollosa, who was amazed by what he found upon reaching Japan. He had thought he was coming to a region in the Far East that was far behind in terms of civilization, but he found that wasn’t the case at all. He realized the splendid quality of Japanese Buddhist art and education, and brought back numerous examples of Buddhist art to the Boston Art Museum. In this way zen culture was quickly accepted outside of Japan.

Then Daisetsu Suzuki attended The Parliament of the World’s Religions in Chicago with Soyen Shaku, his master who was then the chief abbot of Enkakuji Temple in Kamakura. From there, he remained in the U.S. and started proselytizing Buddhism in English. When he was 27, he wrote “Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism” and in the 1950s he spread interest in zen philosophy to intellectuals through his books. For the most part, Daisetsu Suzuki tried to express the concept of “satori” (the Buddhist term for awakening, comprehension and understanding) in English.

Western intellectuals realized instantly that the content of Daisetsu’s books transcended conventional Western dualism. Artists, philosophers and theorists were the first to be inspired by his words, and from there, it started to spread to the public.

Inose: Originally, English itself is somewhat dualistic in nature, with the words “I” and “You” as a prime example. We Japanese usually speak without mentioning the “I.” Daisetsu introduced the West—a place where everyone communicated in dualism—to a world in which the “I” and the “You” blended together.

Fujita: That’s correct. In Buddhism, we separate the “self” and the “other” and the “soul” and the “heart.” It’s called “bunbetsu” (discretion). In our everyday life we separate good and bad, superiority and inferiority, beautiful and ugly from our own viewpoint. We even convince ourselves that we’re doing it objectively. In Buddhism, we call this “*komou bunbetsu*” (false discrimination). We think that there’s a distinction being drawn that’s forced upon. There is no such way of thinking in the West, because in those cultures making distinctions is a natural thing to do. Daisetsu explained a world that transcends *komou bunbetsu* using episodes from the lives of various zen masters. People who had already realized that the dualistic way of thinking was the basis of various problems welcomed this philosophy as a new method that could possibly be a breakthrough for addressing these issues.

In the 1960s, the U.S. became the world’s most powerful country and, with that, various new problems emerged. Young people at the time began to question simply accepting

the American values that their parents had created before them. They were fascinated by Daisetsu's teachings of a state of "satori" (revelation) that transcended *komou bunbetsu*.

Then, in the early 1960s, a *Soto-shu* zen priest named Shunryu Suzuki—already in his fifties—arrived in the U.S. to take up the position of head priest at Sokoji Temple, a zen temple for Americans of Japanese descent in San Francisco. Unlike the temple's previous head priests, Shunryu had a desire to spread zen, not just to the Japanese-American community but also to all the American people. This coincided with a concentration of liberal youth who had an active desire to learn to practice zen in San Francisco during the sixties so there was a fortuitous encounter there. The people who practiced zen at the time have become the leaders of the mindfulness movement today. I think we can call this the "prehistory" of mindfulness.

Kojikyumei— search our inner selves

Bokura: That's very true. There are many leaders of the mindfulness movement today who were pupils of zen teacher Shunryu. The method combining mindfulness and neuroscience that emerged at Google is known as SIY (Search Inside Yourself). Mark Lesser, a *Soto-shu* priest who served as CEO of the project, was a disciple of Shunryu Suzuki. Also, Norman Fischer—a priest at the San Francisco Zen Center—talked to graduates about mindfulness in a Baccalaureate address given at Stanford University. In the U.S., zen and mindfulness are never separated.

Fujita: Yes, I knew both of these priests. In Japan, a Rinzai School priest is training right now to master the SIY program.

Inose: Exactly what kind of program is SIY?

Fujita: I'm sure that all of you here today are aware of Google's search engine. In zen there is the term "*kojikyumei*," which means, when we translate it into English, "to search inside yourself."

Bokura: In other words, it means to search for our inner selves.

Inose: And how does Google's staff do this on a regular basis?

Bokura: I'm not sure how often they practice it, but Google offices in every country make it a routine to hold a 2-day SIY program, with a seven-week follow up. People who want to take part volunteer and get assigned to the program. Enrollment is done online, and the list fills up immediately. There's a line of applicants waiting for cancellations so they can get in. I hear that about 10% of Google staff have or are now taking the program.

Inose: I realize that it might be difficult to explain here, but how do you actually make a program out of breath control and "*zazen*" (seated zen meditation)?

Bokura: Firstly, there's the approach of EQ (Emotional Intelligence Quotient), in which you apply emotional intelligence in leadership.

Inose: IQ is known as Intelligence Quotient. In which case, EQ is Emotional Quotient? You're saying emotional ups and downs are obvious as quotients?

Bokura: That's right. The ultimate goal is to control one's emotions and build sympathy in your interpersonal relations, but in order to do that you first need to recognize the self. That's why that name "Search Inside Yourself" becomes so important. We



Naoki Inose

apply the method of trying to find out what is happening to the self at the present moment.

Research performed up until now clarifies that there is a demonstrable link between EQ and improvement in job performance. So we practice mindfulness to heighten EQ, and when EQ is heightened you're able to manage the self. As a result, your performance at work, and your leadership skills, both improve.

Inose: How do you distinguish this from mental health therapy?

Fujita: Therapy is provided to people who are aware that they're psychologically ill or have mental issues. These people go to therapists who assist them to manage those issues themselves. In contrast, mindfulness programs are meant to heighten your interpersonal skills and human qualities so that you're better able to get over the emotional ups and downs you experience on the job. It's more like acquiring human interactional skills through practice than it is therapy.

Inose: You mean it's like exercise?

Fujita: Exactly. In the field it's even called a "mental workout."

Bokura: I referred to the term "EQ" for emotional intelligence, but if we phrase it differently, we could say, "human qualities," just as Issho said.



There is a need to improve human qualities here in Japan, too, right? But zen can seem too hard for beginners to explore. On the other hand, the mindfulness method feels more open to beginners to try.

Inose: So you fractionized what you couldn't reach before, and succeeded in standardizing it this way, correct? Issho has experienced this, and has written about it as well. Yet they say that when people apply to study at a zen temple, they're left waiting at the entrance for a few hours before they get an answer. Honestly, I don't know what that's got to do with human quality! (Laughs)

Fujita: Perhaps they learn persistence! (Laughs). Seriously though, that practice is close to just being rote performance nowadays. Yet originally, the priest's did this so the applicant could and would reflect on the reasons why he or she had come to the temple in the first place. It was a way for the zen teachers to express that they were not interested in people who came to study zen just for fun.

Inose: I would imagine it's also a way to express that the Buddha's teachings about *satori* and the understanding that the universe and the self are all one is not something that can simply be taught, but requires study and discipline..

In the first few pages of Daisetsu

Suzuki's book "Zen and Japanese Culture," there is a story going back to the 12th Century. The son of a burglar asks his father to teach him how to break into a house, so his father takes him to someone's house to rob it. The father places his son in a large chest, closes it and shouts "Thief!" and runs away. The son—who is locked in—leaps out as soon as the owner opens the chest, drops a stone down a well so people will think he has jumped into it, and makes a narrow escape. When he reaches home, his father says to him, "Now you know how to do it."

The message here is probably that you have to learn how to do things for yourself, but it's such an absurd tale. Yet if a story like this is included in a zen book, it most likely means that, like burglary, zen is not something to be taught. It's something you have to master yourself.

Fujita: That this tale has been passed down across generations is proof that it's significant in zen to acquire the method yourself. We humans have a tendency to rely on tangible things, and to take short cuts whenever we can. But there are some things that you cannot acquire if you depend too much on others. Using more modern, more "rational" ways of thinking, you may let things slip. In Buddhism, one of the most important values is "*shorou byoshi*" (the four inevitable aspects of human life—birth, aging, illness, and death). For exam-

ple, when we are face to face with death, what use can any method thought out by humans be to us?

Feel another dimension of existence through *zazen* meditation

Inose: You have written your own book titled "Modern Lectures on *Zazen: The Way to Shikantaza*." What exactly does "*shikantaza*" mean?

Fujita: "*Shikan*" means "simply," and "*taza*" means "sitting." In other words, simply sitting down. If *zazen* is nothing more than "sitting down," then you don't need to worry about other things. No goals, no returns. Simply sitting. I describe *shikantaza* as "taking a break from human behavior."

Inose: A break from human behavior?

Fujita: Humans walk on two legs. It's one of our distinguishing characteristics. We have hands with which we use tools, have mouths with which to talk and minds with which to think. But when we do *zazen*, we cross our legs and put our hands together. We neither move nor talk. We don't think about the thoughts that float up in our mind, but instead we let them go until they disappear.

In other words, when we do *zazen*, for a short period we put every human characteristic on hold. We're still homo sapiens, but we're not acting like humans, so I call it "a break from human behavior." Our lives as humans recommence the moment we stand up again, but *zazen* enables us to reexamine our lives once we've taken a break from human behavior. In the human world, we have our ups and downs. We're always busy and we usually don't get things our way. Let's take a break from all that

and create a deliberate pause. There's the zen phrase, "useless use," but it's this "useless" gap that enables us to get through an everyday life that has become so demanding. Meanwhile, the mindfulness method guides us to manage ourselves as human beings. If you can improve your human qualities through mindfulness, then that is good because you need to improve your skills to get along smoothly at work and at home. But there are areas that you cannot reach with human qualities alone, which is where zen comes in. So in zen there is a method to get along well in human society, and there is the experience of touching other dimensions and existence like *shorou byoshi*. Like a double-feature movie program, I hope we can include both.

Inose: In zen, they say you're a part of the universe and that *satori* is when you realize that you're unified with the universe. It's rather complex, isn't it?

Fujita: It's complex if you think it is (laughter). But actually, you just have to sit down..

There was a monk who jokingly phrased it as, "to remove the difference." Yet you actually could say put it that way if you think of sitting *za-zen* as removing the difference between the self and the world. In other words, it's the act of putting a stop to "reasoning"—something I mentioned earlier. However, because we use words and exist in time, we're not able to completely stop reasoning. The act of releasing that, to not move our hands and legs with reasoning, is what we're doing in *zazen*.

Inose: Is that the same as achieving a state of "*mu*" (nothingness)?

Fujita: *Mu* is a state of having no bond or parting. It's not the same as being empty and having nothing inside. It's closer to "zen" (all, everything). In other words, limitlessness.

Inose: There are zen phrases like "is-shokuta" (the one and the many) and "*tasokuitsu*" (the many and the one).

In Daisetsu Suzuki's book, it says the great haiku poet Basho Matsuo's famous haiku, "*Furuike ya, kawazu tobikomu mizu no oto*" (Old pond. frog jumps: Plop!)¹ is like a zen *koan* riddle. But most people see it as a portrayal of an actual sight.

Fujita: In the case of this haiku, I think that the boundary between the inner world and the outer world is removed. Basho was probably powerfully moved when he came up with this particular haiku, but that occurred not on the outside, but on the inside—within Basho himself. It was this stirring within that formed the haiku. There's a hidden message that lies beneath the information provided on the surface.

Inose: It's been said that there is vast area of the unconscious mind existing beneath the conscious mind. The words we use in everyday conversations are words we've scraped off just a little closer to the surface, correct? Daisetsu Suzuki, who lived in the same era as Carl Jung, includes words like "collective consciousness" in his books. Does this mean that if we speak using not only the conscious world but also the unconscious world, it would be more "zen-like"?

Fujita: I think so. zen stories are just someone else's story, told just the way it is. It's merely information, which the zen master provided when his apprentice asked him a question. But when you start understanding the story, the deep flavor of it starts to ooze out like when you're eating "*surume*" (dried cuttlefish), and what used to be someone else's story starts to become your own story.

Sometimes it can reach the inner deep psyche that forms the self—which is usually closed off to us—like the collective unconsciousness. A zen story is a device designed for that

purpose. Stories that can make that possible have been examined and transmitted down across generations. In the Rinzai school of Zen, we call these "*koan*" (catechetic questions for meditation).

Koan ask people constantly how they can best come to terms with the situation that they're facing at that particular moment. For instance, maybe there are a few people here who are sleepy and are in the midst of choosing whether to stay awake or fall asleep (laughter).

A *koan* is exactly how you respond to every moment in life, in whatever situation you're in. In the case of *koan*, you are asked questions—which you can't answer logically with your head—so you can thoroughly feel that you are being questioned this way in every moment of your life. These are the kinds of methods that were invented in zen.

Horizontal mindfulness—vertical zen

Inose: So there are various stories that act as devices for people to comprehend zen, which seems so difficult to tackle at first glance. Now, it seems that "mindfulness" has standardized that completely, to the point that anyone can easily understand it.

Bokura: But you must remember that the people who practice that standardized form are still individuals. There is of course a framework for mindfulness, but it's only a 2-day program with a seven-week follow-up period. So these people who have experienced that first opening have got to explore it further on their own., which I think is close to practicing zen.

Inose: Earlier, Ms. Bokura demonstrated relaxing breathing methods. Could you please show us how you do it, too, Mr. Issho?

Fujita: Then, first let's all stretch.

When I say that, I see that almost every one of you here takes the same pose. Are you really sure that that's the stretch that your body is longing for? In stretch classes, we're taught to raise our hands in the air, but zen approaches gives us time to search for our own ways to stretch.

In fact, we all know how instinctively how to stretch. My cat is an expert at stretching. Even an embryo stretches and yawns inside the mother's womb, most likely because it's cramped inside and it needs to move to relax itself.

However, we've been suppressed into thinking that it's rude to stretch and yawn in public, so we have forgotten how to freely move about and stretch naturally ourselves without thinking about it in our heads.

So, now that I've inspired you, let's try stretching again.

You see how, when we really stretch, our state of mind changes dramatically?

Next, let's feel ourselves sitting down on our chairs. The thing that's important when you assume a pose is "groundedness"—the sense that you're supported firmly by the ground, the floor and the chair. If you're nervous, your muscles will be raising your body unnaturally, so you need to release that nervousness. Let the weight shift downwards. You don't try to "do" groundedness. Instead you try to stop "doing" it, and then you are able to do it as a result of letting go.

Feel the support from below.

At the same time, feel the vertical line of uprightness.

Approaching it from both ways is the key.

Try and ask your own body. In what kind of line does your body drop down onto your ischial bone? Is it leaning forwards, or backwards? If you sense a signal from your body that it's leaning too far back, then relax. There is a point in which you will not have to strain yourself.

Inose: You're saying that we should feel and search ourselves for our own best pose?

Fujita: Find the place that you can hold forever. Kimiko mentioned it earlier as well, but our arms have a tendency to lean forward. So slowly raise your scapulars, your shoulder blades, turn them intentionally outwards, and then let them relax downward. Let your body and gravity decide where they fall.

This is a funny way of putting it, but just practice being "natural." Right now, your arms are hanging down, right? The weight of your arms expands the chest.

When I say that, you might then deliberately try to expand your chest. But expanding your chest naturally and expanding it deliberately are two very different things. We love reactions. The ego likes that triumphant feeling of "Yes! I'm doing it!" But you've gone too far if you find that you're satisfying your ego. Try and aim for "non-reaction." The ego is unsatisfied with making no effort, so you may find yourself feeling that you want to sleep or immerse yourself in thoughts, but try and avoid that.

Now slowly bend your arms from the elbow. In *zazen* we bring our hands together in front of stomach. Place your left hand over your right hand, place four of your fingers on top of each other, and place your thumbs so they lightly touch each other. This, too, should not be done "deliberately." If you relax, you should naturally find yourself forming this shape.

We often turn the palms of our hands outwards in our everyday life, but that kind of hand is for handling tools and changing the world. It's my personal interpretation that the palms of our hands that we turn upwards in *zazen* are a sign that we are accepting the world as it is.

Now, place this hand where it can

relax. In *zazen* we have our legs crossed, so place it above your legs. We're sitting on chairs right now, so today place it at a point roughly below your stomach. The clavical comes right above the ischial bone, and the ischial bone, clavical and ears form a line. The navel should be right below your nose. This is the balanced position. If the head—which as Mr. Inose said before weighs about seven kilograms—is not tucked inside that line, your neck and back muscles will stiffen as they support the head. That state will not be able to last for long. There is a line you can find for yourself in which the weight of your head disappears altogether.

Also, close your mouth lightly, and loosen your lower jaw. Your lower jaw should drop in a relaxing manner. But don't open your mouth wide. Don't breathe with your mouth. Let your upper and lower lips lightly touch.

When we are enduring stress, we bite our lips. That creates tension, which stimulates the brain. That makes us start to think again, so instead try to release excessive tension and avoid letting too much stimulation reach your brain.

This explanation doesn't cover every detail, but it's a way of explaining it.

Now next, close your eyes lightly, and try and feel inside your body. Feel, but do your best to avoid "monitoring" your body, because if you do that, then you and what is being monitored will be separated. Try to see the whole indirectly. The goal is to quite seriously assume a pose of not doing anything at all. Sometimes when you're told not to do anything, you could become lazy, but that won't do, either.

Inose: At first glance, being lazy seems pretty relaxing.

Fujita: Actually, it's harder to breathe when you do that. If one

part of the body is relaxing, then the other parts of the body have to cover for it with a more demanding pose. In the zen meditation pose, the whole body is cooperating in supporting the body efficiently. Muscles on the outside can relax. Imagine your skeleton as you sit down. Think of how you can avoid making an undue effort. It's the opposite of what we often imagine when we hear the word "discipline."

Inose: So while it looks as if you're undergoing difficult training, it's actually the opposite. You're doing it to relax.

Fujita: That's correct. The great zen Buddhist monk Dogen said, "*Zazen wa anraku no homon nari*" (Zazen is the way to comfort). Buddhism is formed when you've transcended asceticism.

I'm sure that right now all of us here are able to hear, even if we aren't thinking of hearing. We don't need to make an effort to hear; we just leave it to our ears to capture sound. I don't think we can use our senses to smell and taste all that much at this moment, but leave them open so you can smell and taste anytime. In Buddhism, we think of these as the sensory organs.

Now we feel the thoughts that arise and disappear in our minds. Most of the time we fall asleep or fail to see what is going on within ourselves when we relax thoroughly, but because this is a training session, please stay quietly awake and experience deeply what is happening. Then, slowly open your eyelids as if rolling up a bamboo blind. Take in the amount of light that matches your mental state. Open yourself up and try to evenly absorb all the different information brought to you by your six sensory organs. Just as a mirror reflects whatever passes before it. Don't twist it, enlarge it, or make it small. Just let it be as it is.

If you doze off or become im-

mersed in your thoughts, then your posture will have collapsed. So start again by straightening your pose. Start again, and yet again, until you are able to maintain the pose for some time. Names, gender and age don't exist here. Just a life that's trying to live.

Inose: What are the six sensual organs?

Fujita: Eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. These are the six sensual organs that are written in the *Hannya Shingyo* (The Heart of Perfect Wisdom Sutra). The "body" is the physical sense, while the "mind" is the soul. In Buddhism it's these six. A printing machine combines four to five colors to print in a whole range of different colors, correct? If someone who is unaware of this sees the print-out, they will probably think there are all kinds of colored ink in the machine, but that's not true. According to the Buddha, all our various experiences are printed with these six cartridges. That you be aware of what's going on is the basis of mindfulness.

Bokura: Mindfulness is the act of realizing what's happening at the present moment using your five sensual organs plus your mind, and to live each moment with self-awareness.

Inose: Other than the various *koan* stories themselves, I think that the hidden messages of zen are included in art and culture, like the blank space in a Buddhist painting or a "*karesansui*" garden (a traditional dry landscape garden, often using raked white pebbles). Yet are we actually able to "see" the results of mindfulness?

Bokura: There are research results that show how the brain is different before and after practicing mindfulness for a few weeks. Neuroscientific differences have been reported from before and after mindfulness training.

Fujita: Unlike in the past, we are now able to know in real time what goes on when we meditate, like how the blood flow in our brain increases, or if our body temperature rises. We're living in an era when we can follow up with objective neuroscientific data those things that meditation practitioners used to report based on their own personal experience.

Bokura: There are major research centers examining this at Harvard University and the University of Wisconsin. Of course the brain is complex, so we cannot clarify everything. For example, there's a small organ called the amygdala in the brainstem that rules our emotions. The amygdala tends to stop reacting so aggressively and getting irritated when we practice meditation.

Also, the insular cortex at the far end of the ear is the organ that enables us to realize what is going on with our bodies. There are research results that show that, through meditation, this organ becomes thicker and may possibly develop improved skills for intuition and abilities for better sensing our bodies.

And one more thing. We have the impression that we are relaxing when we're watch TV and fiddling with our mobile phones. In fact, however, it's now known that these activities activate the brain's default mode network (DMN) and you're actually wearing your brain out when you're doing that.

Fujita: So you're saying we're exhausting our brains without realizing it?

Bokura: That's correct. But when we meditate with mindfulness, the irritating, flickering state caused by the default mode network eases. When we're in the DMN state, we're often thinking about the same thing. Most of the time, we're thinking "I'm...", or "I'm going to...", building circles of our own stories. But when we



keep repeating our own stories about what is happening, we tend to amplify the impression they make on us and ultimately create something very different from reality. We tend to separate our own image of ourselves that we create in our heads from the real self, which is quite adaptable in society. Mindfulness is effective in ameliorating that effect.

Fujita: The real world doesn't spin with you at its center. But when you're in the DMN state you lose the ability to distinguish between the real world and the imaginary world you create in your head. Therefore, you become unable to see the real world and become aggressive and depressed, which can sometimes lead to deeper depression or aberrant behavior like stalking.

Inose: Then these developments in neuroscience have confirmed the zen philosophy that unites people with the universe, which Buddha preached long before the emergence of Christianity.

Fujita: Based on their own personal experience, people believed in geocentric theories that the universe revolved around the Earth, but logically examined, the heliocentric theories turned out in fact to be true. This is what is known as being "counter intuitive," in which our prejudices derived from our experience—experiences that often seem to oppose our intuition—are overturned. Having said that, however, we can't just suddenly change our vision overnight. So, in order to help address that contradiction, we in Buddhism try to remember that we are not separate from the world, and that we and the world are one.

Inose: Ultimately, we humans all live with the overarching precondition that someday we are going to die. The indiscreet world of *satori* is probably close to dying or blending into nature.

Fujita: You may be right. The act of dying is simply returning once more to that place where you once thought you were closed off. It's no

longer frightening if you think of it that way.

Inose: I guess it would be a moment of *satori* if you could see it that way.

Fujita: Various waves come and go at sea—big waves, small waves, choppy waves. I think we can compare that to ourselves. We think of ourselves as the crests of these waves. Simply put, to practice Buddhism is to reexamine where we come from, just like realizing that the sea is made up of waves. zen's path is from the crest of that wave to deep down into the sea. The new mindfulness methods may also have other goals. To maintain the shape of the wave, for example, or to make it larger or more beautiful.

Mindfulness makes us look horizontally, so we can search our identities in order to get along intelligently in the real world. There is that kind of difference when you compare mindfulness to zen.

Yet I don't think we should try to get rid of the waves and go back to a sea that's still and flat. We should be

aware that our roots lie in the deep, vast ocean, and aim to exist as one individual—as one wave. Don't forget that our personal identities only exist when we're bound to that sea. Horizontal mindfulness and vertical

zen do not contradict one another.. Instead, I hope that these two dimensions of mindfulness can co-exist and spread widely among people everywhere.

(Reprinted from “*Shukan Dokushojin*,” August 4th, 2017, No. 3201)

*1 the translation of the famous British philosopher Alan Watts.

The panelists

Issho Fujita

Soto-shu priest, international missionary and head director of the Soto Zen Buddhism International Center.

Issho Fujita was born in Ehime Prefecture, Japan in 1954. After completing his studies at Nada High School in Kobe, he went on to study educational psychology at Tokyo University. From there he began graduate work in developmental psychology and during that time became seriously involved with *zazen*. At the age of 28 he withdrew from his doctoral course and entered Antaiji, a Zen training monastery. He became a priest the following year. At 33 he left for America and for the next 17 and a half years provided guidance in *zazen* at Pioneer Valley Zendo in Western Massachusetts. He returned to Japan in 2005, and is currently based at the Chizanso Retreat in Hayama, Kanagawa Prefecture, where he conducts research and offers instruction in *zazen*. He wrote “*Modern Lectures on Zazen: The Path to Shikantaza*” and is the co-author of “*Buddhism 3.0: An Update*,” “*Update on Buddhism*,” “*Lessons on Zen*,” and “*A Discourse With Antaiji Zen Priests*.” He has also translated numerous works into Japanese, including Thich Nhat Hanh’s “*Zen Keys*,” “*Opening the Heart of the Cosmos: Insights on the Lotus Sutra*” and “*Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind 2*.”

Kimiko Bokura-Shafe

Founder and chairman of the MiLI (Mindful Leadership Institute). After graduating International Christian University (ICU) and acquiring her MBA from Boston University, she worked in brand management at major global companies, and achieved high market shares for the products she represented in such as perfume, soap and skincare. She moved to the U.S. in 2000, started up her own company, and has since moved on to lecturing and coaching on better communication and leadership skills around the country. In 2013, she established the Mindful Leadership Institute (MiLI). She is the first Japanese to be selected as a lecturer for Google’s employee orientation program “Search Inside Yourself (SIY)” at Google’s main campus. She is currently working to use her global connections and information to introduce what she has learned to Japan. She is the co-author of “*NLP Innovation*,” “*Innovations in NLP*” and “*Walking Until Your 100 Years Old*.” Her book, “*Silicon Valley-esque Methods to Balance your Heart and Mind*” will be coming out soon.

Naoki Inose

Author. Born in 1946. In 1986, he received the Souichi Ooya Nonfiction Award for his book “*Mikado no Shozo* [Portrait of the Emperor].” In 1996, he received the Bungeishunju Readers’ Award for his book “*Nipponkoku no Kenkyu* [A Report on Japan].” Since then, he has actively worked to abolish and privatize government-affiliated corporations. In June 2002, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi appointed him to the Promotion Committee for the Privatization of the Four Highway-Related Public Corporations. He included the story of his battle to achieve this in his books, “*Doro no Kenryoku* [Authority of the Road]” from Bunshunbunko and “*Doro no Ketchaku* [Settlement of the Road],” also from Bunshunbunko. In October, 2006, Inose was appointed Research Professor at the Tokyo Institute of Technology and from June, 2012, served as Vice Governor of Tokyo. He served as Tokyo Governor from December 2012 to December 2013.

Translation: Ayako Karino

In the United States, President Trump is leading his nation with the slogan “America First,” while in Europe the United Kingdom is in the process of leaving the EU. It seems the world order is collapsing, with the basic framework of the nation-state crumbling in the face of globalization and rising nationalism. Here in Asia, the threat of North Korea’s ICBM development incites growing anxiety, while Prime Minister’s Abe’s strong and committed political base—long regarded as impregnable—is starting to sway. Prime Minister Abe is making an all-out effort to revise Japan’s Constitution before the end of his political career, but is this really possible? With the great upset scored by the new Tokyo Metropolis Residents First party in the recent Tokyo Assembly elections, can the Liberal Democratic Party reinvent itself to allay the peoples’ distrust of its motives?

Japan Civilization Institutes ninth symposium welcomes Soichiro Tahara, who served as a panelist for our very first symposium entitled “The characteristics of Japanese civilization 70 years after World War Two,” together with Lully Miura, an energetic scholar of international politics, and Naoki Inose, the director of Japanese Civilization Institute. Japanese Civilization Institute is now entering its third year, and we are grateful for your support.

► Panel discussion:

Realism and the Nation-state

What should Japan believe in, when a new world order in transition?

Soichiro Tahara

Journalist



Lully Miura

Scholar of international politics. Lecturer of
Tokyo University's Policy Alternatives
Research Institute (PARI)



MC :

Naoki Inose

Author, Director of Japanese
Civilization Institute



Date: 21st August, 2017, 7 p.m.-9 p.m. (doors scheduled to open at 6:30 p.m.)

Venue: Japan University of Economics, Tokyo Shibuya
Campus Hall (the hall seats approximately 100 people)

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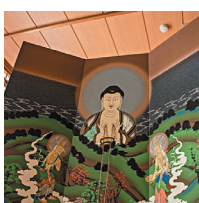
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Messages from Director

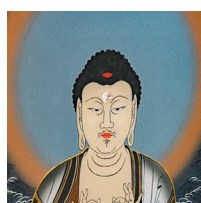
Japanese Civilization Institute has been introducing and selling traditional crafts of Japan. Although it is said that there is approximately 1,200 types of traditional crafts in Japan, its production is declining. As part of our activities, we hope to discover valuable traditional crafts spread across the nation, enjoy Japanese craftsmanship and its beauty inherited over the centuries, and develop it with you.



Tsumami Kanzashi
(Crepe)



Folding Screen
(half size)



Folding Screen
(full size)



KYO-YAKI
Earthenware



Japanese Bamboo
Basket Tokyotrad



Odoshi -
Samurai Armor