# Chapter 6: Zen Resort

## Mumbai

I walked out of the hotel and the hot polluted air of Pune slammed into me like a wall. The city suffered year-round from the smog of exhaust fumes, due to chronic traffic congestion, and to this endemic problem was now added a 42-degree heat wave arriving at the end of an over-extended hot season. Even though I was prepared for it, the oppressive, foul air made shocking contrast to the pleasantly chilled atmosphere from which I’d just emerged.

## The dry leaf

## The wind

All that you have to do is understand the languages of existence. You know the language of man, but they are not same languages of existence. Existence knows only one language and that is the language of silence.

If people start approaching reality without anybody leading them, without anybody telling them what is good and what is evil, without anybody giving them the map that they have to follow, millions of people will be able to understand the existence- because our heartbeat is also heartbeat of the universe, our life is part of life of the total. We are not strangers, we are coming from somewhere else; we are growing with existence. We are part of it, an essential part of it. We just have to be silent enough so that we can hear that which cannot be said into words: the music of existence, the immense joy of existence, the constant celebration of existence.

*Put the alchemists universe here*

## The spring blossom

In right season everything will come.

## About Children

To be a parent is a difficult job, so unless you are ready to take that difficult job, don’t become a parent. People simply go on becoming fathers and mothers not knowing what they are doing. You are bringing a new life into existence; all the care in the world will be needed.

## Desires

A point arrives, then, when it’s clearly understood that all one’s intentional acts- desires, ideals, stratagems – are in vain. In the whole universe, within and without, there is nothing whereon to lay any hold, and no one to lay any hold on anything. This has been discovered through clear awareness of everything that seemed to offer a solution or to constitute a reliable reality, through the intuitive wisdom called *prajna,* which see into relational character of everything. With “eye of *prajna”,* the human situation is seen for what it is- a quenching of thirst with salt water, a pursuit of goals which simply require the pursuit of other goals, a clutching of objects which the swift course which the swift course of time renders as insubstantial as mist. The very one who pursues, who sees and knows and desires, the inner subject, has his existence only in relation to the ephemeral objects of his pursuit. He sees that his grasp upon the world is his strangle-hold about his own neck, the hold which is depriving him of the very life he so longs to attain. And there is no way out, no way of letting go, which he can take by effort, by a decision of the will…but who is it that wants to get out?

## Zen and Laughter

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The anecdotes cannot be explained without their effect. In some respects they are like jokes which do not produce their intended effect of laughter when the punch line requires further explanation. One must see the point immediately or not at all.

## Success

The logic of this is so simple that one is tempted to think it over-simple. The temptation is all the stronger because it upsets the fondest illusion of human mind, which is that in the course of time everything may be made better and better. For it is the general opinion that were this not possible the life of man would lack all meaning and incentive. The only alternative to a life of constant progress is felt to be a mere existence, static and dead, so joyous and inane that one might as well commit suicide.

To succeed is always to fail – in the sense that the more one succeeds in anything, the greater is the need to go on succeeding.

## Self an idea

Because the idea is so much more comprehensible than the reality, the symbol so much more stable than the fact, we learn to identify ourselves with our idea of ourselves. Hence the subjective feeling of a “self” which “has” a mind, of an inwardly isolated subject to whom experiences involuntarily happen. With its characteristic emphasis on the concrete, Zen points out that our precious “self” is just an idea, useful and legitimate enough if seen for what it is, but disastrous if identified with our real nature. The unnatural awkwardness of a certain type of self-consciousness comes into being when we are aware of conflict or contrast between the idea of ourselves, on the one hand, and the immediate concrete feeling of ourselves, on the other.

The knower no longer feels himself to be independent of the known; the experiencer no longer feels himself to stand apart from the experience. Consequently the whole notion of getting something “out” of life, of seeking something “from” experience, becomes absurd. To put it another way, it becomes vividly clear that in concrete fact I have no other self than the totality of things of which I am aware.

## Free will

We feel that our actions are voluntary when they follow a decision, and involuntary when they happen without a decision. But if decision itself were voluntary, every decision would have to be preceded by a decision to decide-an infinite regression which fortunately does not occur. Oddly, enough, if we had to decide, we would not be free to decide. We are free to decide because decision “happens”. We just decide without having the faintest idea of how we do it. In fact, it is neither voluntary nor involuntary.

## Clouds

To the Taoist mentality, the aimless, empty life does not suggest anything depressing. On the contrary, it suggests the freedom of clouds and mountain streams, wandering nowhere, of flowers in impenetrable canyon, beautiful to no one to see, and of the ocean surf forever washing the sand, to no end.

## Haiku

But the non-Japanese listener must remember that a good haiku is a pebble thrown into the pool of the listener’s mind, evoking associations out of the richness of his own memory. It invites the listener to participate instead of leaving him dumb with admiration while the poet shows off.

## Garden

It consists of five groups of rocks laid upon a rectangle of raked sand, backed by a low stone wall, and surrounded by trees. It suggests a wild beach, or perhaps a sea scape with rocky island, but its unbelievable simplicity evokes a serenity and clarity of feeling so powerful that it can be caught even from a photograph.

Because the rock must look as if it had always in same position, it must have air of moss covered antiquity, and rather than try to plant moss on the rock, the rock is first set for some years in a place where the moss will grow by itself and thereafter is moved to its final position.

## Now

Awareness of the “eternal now” comes about by the same principle as the clarity of hearing and seeing and the proper freedom of the breath. Clear sight has nothing to do with trying to see; it’s just the realisation that the eyes will take in every detail all by themselves, for so long as they are open one can hardly prevent the light from reaching them. In the same way, there is no difficulty in being fully aware of eternal present as soon as it is seen that one cannot possibly be aware of anything else –that in concrete fact there is no past or future.

So, too, one cannot get away from the eternal present by trying to attend to it, and this very fact shows that, apart from this present, there is no distinct self that watches and knows it.

## What one wants

An imagined good life is found to contain at least four ingredients, of which the first is sense of security. In the second place there must be absence of worry, which to most men means an absence of that fruitful cause of worry, responsibility. Thirdly, there must be an absence of strife, or conflict; and fourthly, there is a powerful sense of comfort, involving a ‘comfortable’ income, good health, a happy home…..Such a conception is a lie, utterly selfish, and impossible of achievement.

# Chapter 7: Himalayas