

Warrior of the Spirit

Interview With Michel Abehsera

by Michael Rossoff

Michel Abehsera is best known for his numerous writings. *Zen Macrobiotic Cooking* was among the earliest macrobiotic cookbooks published in America. His close friendship with Ohsawa, his comradeship with Michio Kushi ("We were like brothers"), Herman Aihara and others pre-dates nearly all of the younger generation of teachers who have followed.

He wrote two other cookbooks, *Cooking For Life* (1970) and *Cooking With Care & Purpose* (1978). Meanwhile he translated, edited and published three books, *Biological Transmutation* by Kervan (1972), *Healing Ourselves* by Murmoto (1973), and *Our Earth, Our Cure*, by Dextreit (1974). Abehsera also wrote a small book called *The Healing Clay* in 1976.

We met at his home in the early summer for this interview. As I walked to his house through the unique atmosphere of the Jewish community in Brooklyn, I thought back to the last time I saw Michel. It was a late winter's day in 1971, when he gave his last lecture in Boston at the Arlington Street Church. As Michio introduced him, the audience of over 100 young macrobiotic students waited expectantly. When Michel arose, his tall, thin, bearded look gave the combined appearance of being a Jew and a macrobiotic. With his strong French accent, resounding—yet loving—voice, he spoke for over an hour. I, along with the entire audience, was spellbound. I could not recall what he said, but I deeply remember the feeling; there was an intensity, even urgency, to his words with compassion in each syllable. At the end, everyone was silent.

I had not seen Michel since that evening. As I entered the house, many people were talking loudly from the dining room. As he stepped over to meet me, his vitality, warmth and openness were instantly apparent. To

An early and charismatic voice in the American macrobiotic movement speaks of its lost revolutionary spirit, its absence of Godliness and its vital place in today's world.

my surprise, he appeared as young, thin and bearded as fourteen years earlier, except for some recent gray hairs. At fifty years old, his voice had those same qualities, and his eyes sparkled with curiosity.

He greeted me like a true friend. Michel obviously enjoys people and his close relationships. He chooses his words with clarity and speed. His awareness of you and all that is going on around him is as sharp and immediate as that of anyone I have known. His Hasidic Jewish heritage plays a central part in his life and the way he lives. Having been informed that there was a crisis needing his immediate attention, I waited, absorbing the atmosphere of his home.

The small, white house seemed crowded with people and furniture. In the kitchen, Michel's wife and daughter were cooking large pots of food. Soon Michel returned and we went upstairs. We walked along a short hallway past two bedrooms and a bathroom before coming to his bedroom. It is in this small house that he and his wife, Esther, live with five of their seven children. Their youngest is a three-year-old girl; their two oldest daughters are married, one with a young child.

As Michel sat in front of the bedroom window overlooking the front yard, I prepared for the interview. After three and a half hours, we were done. I asked to take pictures, and soon all of the family was assembled in the backyard. With joking and playfulness, they enjoyed having their pictures taken.

This interview is the first widely published expression from Michel Abehsera in eight years. He is constantly active, living what he espouses, remaining true to his Jewish traditions and the movement of his spirit.

—M.R.

When did you start macrobiotics and how?

In 1961. An engineer I was working with came to me and he said, "I've been watching you for the last few months. You look awful. I know what you need," and he brought a cookie like you are eating now. I thought he was going to give it to me but he didn't. It was for his lunch! He just showed it to me. And he left. He said, "You need to eat healthy, wholesome . . . this cooking." The color of the cookie inspired me. And thank God, it started. It didn't start very quickly then. Not right away because he sent me to a store and the store was closed—bankrupt. So, six months later I was getting worse and worse. When I walked I had to put my arm over the shoulder of my fiancée; I couldn't walk because I was so sick. I fainted almost every day. My body was completely shot with arthritis, rheumatism, bleeding ulcers; my intestines were full of holes; I had scoliosis; I couldn't stand, I couldn't sit, I couldn't sleep. The pain was shooting non-stop for 15 years. My hair fell out. What can I say? I really was a mess, bleeding from my nose almost everyday for any reason, any movement, I just bled. And then one day I had my arm around my fiancée's shoulders. I could no longer walk after one point and I had to stop. I put my arm on a low window; I looked in and it was a macrobiotic restaurant. So, I went in and I said, "Quick! Quick!" [Laughter]

Where was this?

This is in Paris. The people there were extremely fanatic; they thought they were the holders of truth. They hardly gave me any advice at all. At a macrobiotic store a 60-year-old man told me to go on brown rice for ten days. I said, "Fine." But he didn't tell me that you have to cook brown rice 50 minutes. My mother cooked it for 15 minutes; I went 10 days with hard-stone brown rice. I lost 25 pounds in the process, because I couldn't chew it. Nobody ever told me about miso soup, soups, and vegetables. And even after I knew about it, nobody ever told me that you can drink sometimes a little beer or have a little apple. Nothing like that. I was strict for one year and a half. But results were very quick.

Did you meet Ohsawa in Paris?

I missed him in Paris. That was a pity. But then I saw him here in 1963, 1964, 1965. I was with him often, travelling with him. Great man. He was a chief—Indian chief.

How did you see yourself in terms of macrobiotics? Were you teaching? Were you starting to write by then?

I was a civil engineer, but being a civil engineer was not the thing I wanted to do. I did it because it was urgent that I take care of my parents; my working was their only support. But, of course, my life was always literature. Since I was 13, I couldn't breathe without it. At 13 I didn't know much about literature, but I wrote poetry all day. It was the only way for me to survive. When I came to America, I wanted to find out if America existed, if it was real or not. I had read all the American writers—Hemingway, Faulkner, Dos Passos. I wanted to come to the country where I imagined Hemingway washed dishes. I said, "I have to wash dishes. A writer has to wash dishes, to suffer." So I left my engineering position, I came here, and I *did* wash dishes.

But nothing was calculated; we [Michel and his wife] just put our hands in the dough and started kneading. We had a small apartment on the West Side, in the Village. In the afternoon it was a house and in the evening it became a restaurant. All sorts of interesting people came—artists, musicians. I hadn't cooked an egg in my life. We announced, "I am the cook," and in an instant I became a cook. For the next 6 to 8 months I didn't sleep. I just was thinking how to make people mad from impossible recipes. None of these recipes are in my books. I cooked to make people extremely happy and it got better. The presentation alone did the healing.

I wasn't prepared to give a message, not at all. It would have been against my grain. It would have been unnatural, akin to brainwashing. We were in the kitchen and we heard people screaming from the room, "It's too much, it's too good!" And this we have done for the last 20 years. We have this food every night, every night. And that does away with a lot of junk, a lot of talk, just present the food, give it. No charge, of course—it's a house. We suffered very much running restaurants, because you can't be friends with anybody. You see him as \$10 coming in and then you have a conflict. I tell him, "Don't eat fish," because I see he's not well—he shouldn't eat fish. But fish is what makes the bill swell. I tell him to eat brown rice, do this, eat only this and of course the manager says, "Michel, you can't do that." I said, "I can't?" So in 1967 I closed the restaurant. It was called L'Épicerie, "the grocery store" in French. Then I wrote the book *Zen Macrobiotic Cooking very fast*. It wasn't my title—what do I care about being Zen? I'm a Jew. My title was "The Cook is Yang."

I assume that book did very well.

That book and *Cooking For Life* are still selling. People tell me to this day, "These books

*I wrote Zen
Macrobiotic
Cooking very fast.
It was the
publisher's title.
What do I care
about being zen?
I'm a Jew!*



make us happy. You talk to us." They're not severe recipes, not for sick people. I assumed that in order to get healthier one ought to have a mild diet and let his spirit do the rest. Don't only count on the biological, because when you count too much on the biological there is no end to that. Then the ego starts building up. You develop so much ego you forget about God. And that's what has happened to many people in macrobiotics.

You were very close with Ohsawa in that time and also close with Herman and Michio. How did you see macrobiotics then? How did you want it to develop?

Most important for me is life. I don't care if the person is sick or healthy. If he is healthy and has no humor, for me, he is dead. He is standing up but he is not living!

When Ohsawa came, he was full of life. He said, "My thing is not macrobiotics. My thing is philosophy, life." I saw a very wise man. I said, "Wow, this man—I have something with him." You have to understand, I am a Jew; I don't follow anyone outside of my tradition. He is the only person I sat with and listened to. All gurus give me the creeps. I see the false. I see how the holy has been swapped. My tradition has provided me with a built-in radar; I don't always have to think to judge a situation. You just have to look at their faces to be assaulted by a host of unholy ghosts. I saw Ohsawa—nothing happened. I loved the man. He was a warrior. I saw his faults, I saw his qualities. And I loved even more his faults. His faults were very, very beautiful, very human. He was not a leader; he wasn't trying to save the world; he was a poet. He loved writing and being with people.

To give you an idea of the man, I had a young macrobiotic friend who committed suicide. Ohsawa knew him. I felt very bad, because during the last weeks when he was by himself in a hotel room, he had wanted to be with me. But I had two rooms; it was packed. My brother and children were living with me in the same room. I felt very guilty. Now everybody macrobiotic would say that he was too yang. But the man was 18—a man with a beautiful heart and a beautiful mind. You don't kill him with too much yang or too much yin, or whatever. Ohsawa said, "I cried for this man. I felt. I loved this young man. How did he come to this decision of suicide?" He spoke like a patriarch, as if the young man was his own son. I was flabbergasted by the difference of the reactions.

Anyway, there is the man, Ohsawa. He would come to a lecture and not try to prove anything. He'd just come to say, "Life is beautiful, isn't it?" To his death! He would speak about the tree or he would ask a ques-



Michel Abehsra surrounded by his seven children and two sons-in-law. His wife Esther holds their youngest child in her lap. Their grandchild is in the front center.

tion. "If you were president of the United States, what would you do?" People would say, "I would do this, I would do that." A young woman said, "I would ban sugar." Ohsawa said, "You are stupid. You're taking the freedom of choice from the people? What do you mean banning sugar? This is madness. Sugar should be on. Everything should be on." So he breathed life.

Just to give you a little bit of the spirit I lived in then . . . There was a young man with beautiful long hair, playing guitar. He was a great poet. Very rare kind of poetry—sweet, clean. And it had direction; I saw he was going to do something with it. Then he became macrobiotic, and he dried up. I said, "Gee, what's happening to you?" He said, "I don't know. I can't go back anymore. I lost track. I lost my memory. I don't know where I came from." I said, "Come back!" He said, "I can't. I'm dead inside. Something is dead." So I said, "I don't care if you are healthy. Just write! Write, for Heaven's sake. Who cares about the diet? When you write you can get healthy, don't worry. It will pick you up somewhere."

In those days, Herman, Alcan Yamaguchi, Michio were the students of Ohsawa. Everybody had his character, and I loved them all, very much. When we sat together, I saw tradition. I saw things that would work, where nothing, no teaching enters yet. Just words, sitting, talking. It's beautiful to see. It was an exchange of culture.

They didn't know I was a religious Jew. Once Herman, Alcan and Cornelia came one Friday night and stepped into Shabbat. Now these people didn't know that Shabbat exits. On Shabbat I had to return to my tradition—I had to cook white. I made couscous —



Esther and Michel Abehsera

white, bread—white, nothing “officially” macrobiotic. I have never seen them eating seconds. They ate seconds, thirds, fourths. They ate and ate and ate. They finished all the bread and all the couscous. I said, “What happened to you?” They said, “In Japan also it’s white on holidays.” And I said, “But I never saw you eat so much.” They said, “It is holy food.” They said they felt the holiness of Shabbat.

Now, hours had passed. I realized they’re not smoking! I said, “Herman, how come you’re not smoking?” He said, “We figure you are a smoker, too. If there is no ashtray on the table, that means tonight the Jews don’t smoke.” I said, “You figured that out?” He said, “Yeah, it’s obvious.” So, you see the friendship we had. We were very close.

It aches me that I had to leave all that because something happened to me along the way. When I was lecturing somewhere in the mid-West, this rich woman wanted to offer me a house, a car, everything; I felt very uneasy. And one day (while I was giving a lecture) she put her hand on my shoulder and said, “Master.” I said, “Master? Do you know what a Master is? In my tradition, “Master” is for very holy, holy people. They don’t make one mistake. That word, please don’t use it with me. I am not a master.” And I stopped lecturing. I saw, here we are, a bunch of young kids, taking advantage of America, I quit to think what to do next. I came back to my home and stopped lecturing one year or two.

When was this?

1969, 1970. Then I received many letters saying, “Michel, we need you to be on the road. We don’t want to hear only one voice. We want to hear other voices.” I said, “you guys are taking care of the macrobiotic movement. It’s growing. People are very great—much better than I.” In terms of medicine, they had become experts. So I had to come back. But instead of taking the reins of a leader, I chose to become a raconteur, a clown, to tell stories, to make people happy, to make room for them, to make revolution, tell them how to revolt, not to go by the rules. Because we go by the rule only when it is God’s rule. When it is a rule of man, we have to break it, question it all the time.

In the early 70’s when you were no longer with the movement, what were you doing and were there some special experiences that brought you to where you are now?

In 1969 I was with a friend of mine, a dentist. I was singing a very beautiful, very old song, and my memories were waking up. I said, “I’ve got to go back to my tradition.” So, I moved to Binghamton, where I stayed for four years, and I solidified my life as a Jew. In the process of that, I saw the macrobiotic movement changing and becoming a totally different thing. I saw people drying up. That’s the worst thing to see. And of course when someone has a little bit of knowledge, he becomes arrogant.

What do you feel most caused that to occur?

Because God was out of it. They took God out of macrobiotics.

Who is “they?”

The macrobiotic movement. Some people have done it intentionally, because God is a father—a psychological father figure, and the father figure is very sweet to the soul. You have to know how to face that figure. You have to know how to speak to it. They just couldn’t do it.

At least in the earlier years, there were a lot of Jews who were attracted to macrobiotics, and some have stayed in leadership positions. Do you have any thoughts on why, at least in a certain phase, more Jews seem to be attracted?

Because the Jew, whether he is in the religion or out of the religion, wants to be bound by some law. He looks for that. Macrobiotics has law. Also the Jew, by nature, is a doctor, a healer. In Judaism this is the noblest of all professions. Those are the main reasons.

Tell me more about your life now.

Now, when I finish a book . . .

What's the book?

It's called *The Possible Man*. It took me seven years to write, and it was on my mind for 30 years.

When is it going to be published?

I hope this winter, this fall.

Are you going to publish it?

No, I don't have the time. And business, forget about it! I am broke every day. I just can't think of two things at the same time—like doing business and talking to the soul. When you talk to the soul, you sink in it. You can't think in terms of business. However, if business flourishes by itself because you have done something that nurtures you in that way, fine. But to be a businessman and to work as a seller of the soul—no, I can't do it.

So your book is . . .

I try to explain that the real adventure is in the known, not the unknown, that the possible is more difficult than the impossible. I tried to widen the frontiers of the possible, in the eyes of the reader. The depressed, either the depressed clinically or the latently depressed, don't believe in the possible anymore. They see no beauty in it, so they escape—into a religion, into ideas, into ecstasy, into nirvana, into everything. But the possible is exactly where God wants to dwell. He wants that little place where you stand. You make a place for Him—in the possible. And making room for Him is the whole story of the world.

Is it written for a particular audience, like a Jewish audience, an American audience?

For everybody. That's why it is so hard. If it were written for a Jew, I could write it in six months. But I had to write for everybody. You know, when you are into healing, into medicine, you don't make a difference between patients. A patient is a patient. It's a book about healing, about the medicine for the soul, for the spirit.

Macrobiotics has had a lot of focus on healing of very serious sicknesses. What is your opinion of that as a main thrust of where macrobiotics has gone, practically?

It's a treat from Heaven! It puts macrobiotics into its place. Take care of medicine. Don't make it into a philosophy. Don't take care of the spirit. You don't know anything about the spirit. Only God knows about the spirit. When it comes to organizing the thinking of the people, I put macrobiotics in the same bag as any movement—manmade, like

est. In healing, it excels. It is the best diet, especially now that it is becoming more mild—more soft, not so cooked. I think it is a very noble position; it *should* be the doctor of the world. Why not? Keep them occupied so they don't have to govern the world.

Well, that brings up another direction in macrobiotics, with its congresses and its future goal of a world congress. Tell me more of your views of the philosophical and political interests expressed in macrobiotics.

First of all, let's define the macrobiotic movement. Who are they? The masters, the leaders of the world are very holy people. There are no holy people in macrobiotics. We have plenty of chewers. We diagnose well the body. But who among us is fit to go into the world?

When you heal a person's body, you have, of course, an influence on him; you have changed darkness into light. So you think, "I am fit to lead. I have given life to this person." Especially if you do it with a lot of people. "Look, because of me, 100,000 people are living. So I own already one millionth of the world; they are mine." When you save a person's life it's like you created him or her. It's a political act. Heaven is playing a trick on you. So, what happened?

Macrobiotics as an ecological movement is on the top, because if there is anything that knows about ecology, it is macrobiotics. A technologically inclined, ecological movement is just saying, "Don't pollute the river." But do you know how they pollute the river? They drink Coca-Cola, eat meat. They're just talking. It's all conceptual.

Macrobiotics says, "Eat the top of the carrot, cut like this, eat like this, eat brown rice." This is living ecologically and showing the world how to save the world. You are in a great position, and your ego swells behind the scenes.

Marx said, "Everything is economy." He was right, but his philosophy died out. Nothing held. Macrobiotics could very well turn into a biological communism. It could be just a fashion. Success will last until God says, "Return to work. Don't forget about me. I'm the one who makes every blade of grass move, makes the trees. Don't be arrogant. I'm the One who holds the decision of life and death." And macrobiotics has the chutzpah to think, since it gives life through food, that it has the answer. But the answer is in the faces. You look at people's faces and they are as dead. These are people who cannot inspire much confidence, even less govern the world. They have no humor, they have no kindness, they have no life. Even if they were, in the next 10 years, to bring love into

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Food couldn't be everything. The SS were vegetarians. Cruelty comes from something very deep.

their lives, that love would still be synthetic. You can't add love to your philosophy. You can't fake anything as good as that. What's worse is that no one seems to mind it. Everyone seems to be happy with his new face.

And somehow, it so happens that you scratch the surface of someone and you find a tiger inside—a killer. Food couldn't be everything. The SS were vegetarians. Germans were vegetarian before they became killers. Like Ohsawa says, "A monkey eats fruit yet he's very, very cruel." Cruelty comes from something very deep. Just eating grains can't get you a soul; it is too slow to go deep into the being and erase the memory of a killer. The spirit gets in—anytime! And there's the problem. Macrobiotic eating has gone through one first layer of humanity. It has miles to go.

But, I think macrobiotics will grow faster and bigger than ever, because it is the will of God that people become healthy. The best prophecy, according to Judaism, has to happen through nature. God wants things to match the laws of nature. It's one of God's ways to invite everyone, rich or poor in spirit, to join Him. Macrobiotics is almost there, a few laps away from the truth.

Can the movement embrace the true meaning of spirit? Or is a movement, by definition, incapable of doing that?

Incapable for the time being. First of all, everything is Divine Providence. I once asked Ohsawa, "Mr. Ohsawa, how did you cure yourself?" He said, "Well, I did this, I did that and that, and . . ." I said, "No, no. Tell me the truth. How were you cured?" He looked at me and said, "Divine Providence." If anybody thinks that macrobiotics was done by man, they are really crazy. Ohsawa was a godly man. He was clean—no fooling around. He never took advantage of anybody. He died broke. He practiced what he taught.

You should put macrobiotics in its place. It's a good dish. Macrobiotics could be the place where the spirit begins, providing that blessings are said over food. Macrobiotics is taking advantage of the situation where you have a number of people who want to believe in something other than God.

The philosophical side of macrobiotics, which might be broadly called yin/yang philosophy. . . .

There is no philosophy.

Then, what is your attitude and opinion about the use of yin/yang as a tool for understanding nature and one's relationship to nature?

Broadly speaking, yin and yang is an awareness of mechanical doings of the world. As

imperative as yin and yang may be, there's not a speck of kindness in it, and no love either. The Kaballah gives human attributes to yin and yang: Kindness is yin; justice is yang. Yin and yang speak like intelligent people. You can draw from them—the cure for the body and the soul. However, yin and yang is a good tool for someone who is poor in spirit. It works as an emergency, so why not use it? It has everything you need—a little water, a little fire, not so much idol worship. It's not so obvious, yet.

Now, what is idol worship? It is to draw your strength from someone other than God. You turn and you say, "God does not answer me, so I draw my strength from elsewhere." Macrobiotics draws 99% of its strength from food. One percent is undefined entity. No one is sure what it is. They think, "Anyway, the infinite starts from anywhere, so I start from food." It's a very young philosophy.

You're also saying that macrobiotics doesn't need to be a movement. Isn't there another side where people want some guidance to get themselves together, get on a more straight direction in life?

People who are still awake should cling to each other and start a revolution.

But, perhaps some people in macrobiotics want some kind of organization towards providing that guidance. Cannot the spiritual aspect merge within that?

As of now, it cannot. It will merge if it can find the road, if it can find the vessel. There is always a vessel. The person is that vessel, but they do not merge. Spirit will meet you anytime, anywhere, providing that you can make room for it. Macrobiotics is a Pandora's box that is hermetically closed.

First of all, macrobiotics comes from Japan. So, it's a problem right there. I don't say that derogatorily. You can't prevent people from thinking. "Is macrobiotics Japanese, or is it universal?" Maybe macrobiotics is bread and olives. It could be anything. Now, it has Japanese taste. So, we can say, "Thank you, Japan, for having come upon history, where the Occident is wounded. You come with your needles and your moxas, and your brown rice, and your miso, and your giving. You are giving a little spoonful to the beast, to the dragon, America. Thank you very much. Now, the dragon is cleaning his feathers. He's back on the track. Okay, thank you."

You can do one thing. Get together, everybody—the ex-macrobiotics, the seniors, the juniors—everybody. Define macrobiotics. Okay, it's the fastest growing movement in America—helping the body,

helping the mind, helping to recover the memory. All this is true. But let's have the modesty of saying that only God heals. It is written in the Torah, "The best of doctors goes to hell because he thinks he cures." Macrobiotics is that doctor now.

Let me change the subject to your cook-books. In your writing you emphasize the importance of women's role in the kitchen and the beautiful things they can do. Yet, you obviously do a lot of cooking and love doing it. How do you see that?

I remember in the beginning of macrobiotics, unlike it is now, the woman was treated like a slave. She was in the kitchen all the time. One day, I was giving a lecture in Cooper Union. There was a large audience, like a thousand people. A woman got up and said, "Mr. Abehsera, how come you're giving a lecture while your wife is in the kitchen?" I answered, "Since when cooking is a low thing? And since when being a writer and a lecturer is 'it'? I didn't come here like a Nobel prize. I just came here to speak. I'm a shlepp. Don't see me on the stage like I have 'made it.'"

Now, the safest place for the woman is the kitchen. I mean that as a compliment. Why? Because, that's where we drive the world; that's the will of the Boss. And it's a very great responsibility.

Are you happy being in Brooklyn, or have you thought about moving to Israel or Morocco, or . . .

I want to leave, but people here need first-aid help. We are staying here against our will, and that's part of the freedom of it. Because inside, inside, it's what we want. Your littlest desires tell you to move right, move left, go to Israel, the holiest place. My dream is to go there, but I can't go. I'm looking for the place where I'm most needed. The great war is being fought right here.

War?

War. I'm a warrior. No blood, please! I can't stand the sight of blood! That kind of war doesn't help anyone. War meaning war against stupidity, arrogance, vanity, idol worship. Where it is, I go and fight it. So, that's my kind of battle.

You were talking earlier about the undertones and overtones of macrobiotics as a Japanese diet. What is most important in seeing that element change, or is it not important for that to change?

Very good question. I like that question. It's not very urgent, because it is ego that wants to change right away. We have to go slowly. We deserve that the Japanese teach us a lesson. Japan comes to us and tells us we

blew it, this is the way we should do it. Okay then; without ego, modestly, we have to accept it. Now it will happen, if it is the will of God, that people will find their own way, develop another way of macrobiotics. Or something better. And, it is the nature of people to have a bad memory, to forget about the rules of macrobiotics, and still live very, very healthy with just a few things they think in their mind. But macrobiotics will have served as a springboard.

The thing is, America doesn't have the ingredients for it yet. The land is not alive. The land doesn't have the energy to develop that yet. But little by little, people will develop. We may find the way to feed or cure ourselves with something else than miso soup, pickle, seitan, or umeboshi. A different version but with other ingredients, where the spirit is king.

Any last thoughts that you would like to share with MACROMUSE readers?

Watch out not to worship an idol. Right now the biggest idol worship is money. And unfortunately, a lot of people fall into it, even macrobiotic. Ohsawa used to say, "Vivere parvo," and he practiced it all of his life. He wrote best sellers; he could have been very rich. But Ohwasa died not owning one thing. He rented houses, and he died in a little apartment.

Idol worship could be a thought, a train of thought. And the idol, once you build it, becomes very fascinating. You no longer have a focus on God, because that's what the idol does. The idol believes in God, but it wants its share in the belief. It says, "Look, God doesn't answer always. Look at me a little bit. I'll do the job for a while."

The idol has a sweet, haunting voice that speaks the language of the times. Macrobiotics is a good candidate to become the idol, even though it preaches freedom. I wish people could develop the sense of revolt they have lost. It is the will of God that we revolt against the establishment when it becomes heavy on our shoulders. I wish people would make macrobiotics the great medicine that it is, that they would help people with it, and that they would always include God in the cure. That will broaden their intelligence. That will keep them humble. Their faces will reflect the divine.

I know ailing individuals who have enough life in their eyes to give health to the entire world. These eyes are holding the world together, even though the body is aching. If we could only have the humility to quit thinking that we could save the world without the help of God who owns it, then we will begin to redeem this world.

We go by the rule only when it is God's rule. When it is a rule of man, we have to question it all the time.

