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## **2.3.4 Illuminations: Moments of Enlightenment**

During the phase of deepening, initial small experiences of enlightenment may already occur.

In Zen Buddhism, such insights are called Kenshō in Japanese. Kenshō literally means “seeing one's true nature” and refers in Zen to an initial enlightenment - a direct realization of the true nature of the self.

Christian mystics refer to such moments as illuminations or spiritual insights.

These insights have a different quality than purely intellectual realizations that arise from understanding content or logical connections.

**They far surpass intellectual understanding in their clarity and transformative power.**

Spiritual truth cannot be grasped by the intellect alone. It is revealed through divine illumination — this is the Christian understanding, and it also corresponds to my personal experience.

**Such illuminations are sudden awakenings to spiritual reality.**

They often happen during meditation, but they can also occur in everyday situations. Such experiences touch us deeply at the core of our being – sometimes to the point of tears or emotional overwhelm.

For example, during my morning exercises – which for me are also a mindfulness practice – I had a kenshō experience.

In a clarity I had never known before, I became aware that I am not the thinker within me. I am something entirely different – what Buddhism refers to as the true self. In ordinary consciousness, we are completely identified with our thinking, feeling, and willing.

I have known this for 30 years – but I had never experienced the expansion of consciousness with such intensity.

I will share more about this kind of enlightenment and similar experiences later on.

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