

# *Roar of the Tigress*

VOLUME II



# Roar of the Tigress


*The Oral Teachings of Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett:  
Western Woman and Zen Master*

VOLUME II

*Zen for Spiritual Adults*

Lectures Inspired by  
the *Shōbōgenzō* of Eihei Dōgen

Edited and with a Preface by  
Rev. Daizui MacPhillamy

 SHASTA ABBEY PRESS  
MOUNT SHASTA, CALIFORNIA

First Edition—2005  
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Frontispiece: Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett in  
Meditation Hall at Shasta Abbey.

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*Printed in the United Shasta of America*

ISBN: 0-930066-24-3  
Library of Congress Control Number: 00-131505

The TransIndic Transliterator font used to  
print this work is available from  
Linguist's Software, Inc., PO Box 580,  
Edmonds, WA 98020-0580 USA, tel (425) 775-1130.

Dedicated in grateful memory  
to Rev. Master Hōun Jiyu-Kennett

*“The Light of Buddha is increasing in brilliance  
and the Wheel of the Dharma is always turning.”*

*The Gift of the Dharma excels all other gifts.*  
This book has been donated for free distribution.

The production and printing costs of this book were donated in gratitude for the teaching of Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett and the hard work and dedication of Rev. Master Daizui MacPhillamy, who wished to pass on her teaching.

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## Preface

I would be sitting in the mediation hall, my fellow trainees meditating quietly beside me, when on occasion Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett would enter, offer incense, ascend the Dharma seat, recite the Triple Refuge, and announce, “Right, today I would like to talk on a chapter in Great Master Eihei Dōgen’s *Shōbōgenzō*.” A silent rush of energy would stir the hall, for we knew that she was going to speak on the deeper meanings of Zen. I would increase my efforts to keep my attention alert and to drop off mental chatter quickly, for I knew that both her words and those of Master Dōgen were to be heard by an open heart and not to be filtered through an analytical mind.

It is a selection of these advanced lectures that I wish to offer to you here, in the second volume of *Roar of the Tigress*. It is not uncommon, when a Zen master wishes to speak of the deeper things of Zen, that he or she will draw inspiration from masters of old. Dōgen himself often does this in the chapters of the *Shōbōgenzō*, citing passages, poems, and dialogues from his ancestral teachers, using their words as a springboard from which to take off and give the teaching which he knew from his own experience. Rev. Master Jiyu did the same with Dōgen’s chapters from the *Shōbōgenzō*. Therefore, what you will find in the pages to follow are often three layers of teaching: passages of teaching from the Buddha or ancient Zen masters, what these teachings have inspired Master Dōgen to say, and what both have inspired Rev. Master Jiyu to say.

There is a richness and concentration of teaching in this type of material that has implications for how best to



read it. This is not a book to be read quickly from cover to cover for entertainment or information. I would suggest a slow reading, allowing time for portions of it to sink in before proceeding to the next section, with a minimum of several days between chapters to permit their content to be digested. As editor, I have tried to make sure that you are not forced to re-read passages simply in order to make sense of them, but you may well wish to re-read some in order to allow their meaning to deepen and broaden.

The lectures upon which this book is based were meant for mature religious trainees. Some of the talks were given solely to monastics, others to both monastics and householders, but all assume that the listeners are committed to a religious practice and have some years of experience in doing it on a daily basis. While the first volume of *Roar of the Tigress* contains material specifically selected to form an introduction to Zen training, this volume is “Zen for spiritual adults.”

I should say a bit more about the *Shōbōgenzō*. It is the collected writings and Dharma talks of the great Japanese master, Eihei Dōgen, who brought Sōtō Zen from China to Japan in the Thirteenth Century. These are difficult texts, often written in a convoluted and even coded style of writing. Although they are generally regarded as the most important writings in all of Japanese Sōtō Zen, they are also acknowledged to be hard to penetrate. It is likely that some of the chapters in this book will also be difficult for a given reader, while other chapters may seem to flow or even “sing” directly to the heart. I would advise patience with the former, neither trying to force more meaning from them nor feeling badly because they don’t seem to be speaking to you. One often finds, with these things, that time and perspective on

religious training changes what works as teaching. A chapter that speaks to you today may not do so next year, and one that is confusing now may speak clearly in the future.

The advanced nature of the chapters of the *Shōbōgenzō*, and of the talks which they inspired Rev. Master Jiyu to give, does not arise because the topics which they address are intellectually complex or spiritually esoteric: it comes from the fact that they are trying to speak of things which are difficult to put into words. For example, while it is relatively easy to give instructions on the postures conducive to good meditation or to outline the basic principles of the Buddhist Precepts, it is another matter altogether to explain how to bring the mind of meditation to bear upon all aspects of life or to show how the spirit behind the Precepts is inherent in all things. It is reasonably simple to explain the Buddha's teaching of *anicca*, the nature of all things to change and be impermanent, but it is quite something else to explore in detail the implications of this for human experience and for the nature of the universe itself.

Because these things are difficult to speak of, the words which are used here, whether by the Ancestors, by Great Master Dōgen, or by Rev. Master Jiyu, are words which speak primarily to the spiritual intuition, the "heart," rather than to the intellect. This is another reason why the chapters to follow should not be read quickly or casually. It takes time for such words to reach an open heart rather than be filtered through a critical mind. In fact, this unhurried, open-hearted way of reading is what makes this a volume for mature trainees, since understanding these chapters does not so much depend upon a familiarity with Buddhist terms, or even a background in spiritual experience, as it does upon the ability of the reader to suspend categorizing and

judging and to allow the words to communicate directly from heart to heart.

Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett believed that there was a common core and spiritual essence within all of the world's great religions. Therefore, while these lectures were given to listeners who were within the Zen Buddhist tradition, the heart-to-heart message which they provide should be accessible to any person of faith. It should also be accessible to people who, while they may be relatively new to religious practice, can nonetheless simply suspend the critical mind and just listen with openness to what is spoken in these pages. Spiritual adulthood is not always a matter of the number of years on the path.



Now for the technical information. You know: the sort of information which editors feel a need to tell readers even when many readers would rather not bother with it. If you are one of them, just skip this section.

Since, in selecting material for this volume, I have chosen lectures where Rev. Master Jiyu was inspired by the writings of Dōgen to “take off” and express her own understanding of the Buddha Dharma, rather than simply to comment on the text, not all of each chapter of the *Shōbōgenzō* will be relevant, and therefore not all of it will be quoted. Quotes from the *Shōbōgenzō* will be identified by being inset in block quotes, in italic type. Readers who find themselves particularly drawn to a given chapter of Dōgen's work are urged to read it in its entirety, without interruption, allowing his words to “sink in” in their own way, independently of the words of Rev. Master Jiyu. Readers whose path in Buddhist

training is that of Sōtō Zen may wish to read several of the English translations of these chapters of the *Shōbōgenzō*, since I believe that the depth and range of Dōgen's meaning cannot be fully encompassed in any one translation.

Information about Rev. Master Jiyu and her life can be found on pages 277–282 of this volume. In the first volume there is fairly extensive information about the process of selecting, transcribing, and editing the lectures which form the basis of the work. A similar process was used in this volume, so with regard to most of these matters, I simply refer the reader to the Introduction to Volume I. However, there are two complications to the editing process for this volume. The first of these comes from the fact that, when Rev. Master Jiyu quoted English translations of the *Shōbōgenzō* during these lectures, she used several different works. Some of these were fairly rough translations by current standards and others were from translation sets that contained some chapters of the *Shōbōgenzō* and not others. Because of this, and also because it was sometimes necessary to quote long passages, it seemed wise that the quotations given in this book be all from one translation and that I use a translation which Rev. Master Jiyu herself would have liked to use. I have therefore made use solely of the translations done by Rev. Hubert Nearman in his first three volumes of the *Shōbōgenzō*. Rev. Hubert is a senior disciple of Rev. Master Jiyu and a translator of long experience. Having had the privilege of serving as his editor for many years, I have complete confidence in the quality of his work. I deeply appreciate his willingness to have substantial sections of his work reproduced here.

There is just one difficulty with this approach: while Rev. Master Jiyu urged Rev. Hubert to undertake these

translations, she never had the opportunity to lecture on them because most had not been completed at the time these lectures were given. Thus, I was faced with the task of not only converting from the translations she used to his version, but also of editing her remarks in such a way that they would follow naturally from the words used in his translation. This has resulted in a more extensive editing process than I used in the first volume and has inevitably introduced more of my own words into this work.

The second complication which arose for me comes from the “in-house” nature of some of the lectures. Unlike the material for the first volume, which was taken almost entirely from lectures done publicly, some of the talks used in this volume were given only to the monastic community in Rev. Master Jiyu’s monastery. In some ways, monasteries are like tribal villages: each develops its own ways of speaking of things, even its own mini-vocabulary. In addition, most of the trainees listening to this sort of lecture would have been Rev. Master Jiyu’s personal disciples or students, and she developed a shared terminology and way of speaking with them that might be difficult for others to access. Rather than utilize too many of these “in-house” terms and turns of phrase, trying to explain their meanings with extensive footnotes (I’m told I generate quite too many of those anyway!), I decided to convert some of them to more generally-used Buddhist terminology. Some, however, carry a flavor which I simply could not express with more conventional terms. These I left alone. Since one of the interesting properties of “in-house” terminology is that it tends to shift over time, where I left the original terms unchanged I did at least standardize them so that the same word would be used throughout the book to refer to the same

thing. An example of this is the word “Unborn,” one of several terms for the ultimate reality of Zen which Rev. Master Jiyu tended to use in her later teachings. I have used this term in Volume II instead of the term “Eternal,” which is an equivalent word that I used in Volume I and which she tended to favor earlier in her career.

And, speaking of ultimate realities, I should say something about how I have used initial capital letters in referring to such things. I am thinking here of usages such as “the Unborn,” “Truth,” “the Real,” “True Nature,” and the like. Sometimes when you encounter this type of capitalization in religious writings it means that the author believes that there is one, and usually only one, doctrinally valid view on the subject (a view which generally corresponds to that of the author). That is not my intent here. I use these initial capitals because I need a way of pointing to religious ultimates that are beyond the opposites of any view or doctrine. For instance, “Truth,” as used here, refers to something that lies beyond truth and falsehood; “the Real” refers to something that transcends reality and unreality. While I believe, as did Rev. Master Jiyu, that human beings can access such ultimate things through religious training, I also believe that such understandings inevitably occur in the context of our mutual humanity. In other words, while Truth may be ultimate, my understanding of it is not. Or, as Rev. Master Jiyu put it, we each see Truth through our own window. Seen in this way, if one were asked to put that Truth into words, the very last thing which would come out of one’s mouth would be a neatly packaged doctrinal position. And, at the same time, one would have no problem in asserting with the confidence of one’s own experience that Truth exists. Of course, I also have used initial capitals in

their standard ways, such as for proper names, titles, honorifics, etcetera.

Finally, there were some passages of text that were clearly meant as teaching for specific individuals or groups of trainees, or as responses to specific situations going on in the monastery at the moment, and these I omitted. I hope that in all of this editing, I have kept faithful to the intent and meaning of my master. To the extent that her words ring out clearly and are of benefit to those with ears to hear them, the credit belongs solely to her. To the extent that I have muddled things, inserted too much of myself in a misguided attempt to clarify matters, or made her words into something less than she may have intended, I apologize both to her and to the reader.

I would like to thank the various people who transcribed the lectures for this volume. They are: Patti Brady, Scott Brant, Linda Casey, Rev. Meian Elbert, Michele Feist, Brian Grady, Kathleen Kistler, Karen Mann, Paul Schofield, Victor Stepan, and Megan Sutherland. My thanks also extend to the abbots and communities of Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey in the U.K. and Shasta Abbey in the U.S., who provided me with the support and facilities necessary to do much of this work. The remainder was done at my own little mountain temple, the Fugen Forest Hermitage, and I wish to express my gratitude to my disciples at that temple, Revs. Hugh Gould and Vera Martin, for their assistance and support.

Furthermore, I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Rev. Oswin Hollenbeck of the Eugene Buddhist Priory and Rev. Meikō Jones of the Portland Buddhist Priory, who each gave me extensive help with the footnotes and references, and who helped me to refine and clarify my

editing. In order to avoid intrusive reference footnotes and other reference materials in the text, I have greatly restricted footnotes and placed them at the end of each chapter. Quotations of passages outside of the *Shōbōgenzō* which Rev. Master Jiyu gives in the course of her talks are referenced in Appendix 3 at the end of the book. Also in the Appendix you will find a list of abbreviations used to simplify the various reference citations and a brief glossary where foreign words and technical terms are explained. Words listed in the glossary will be noted with a “dagger” symbol (†) the first time that they appear in the text. The final Appendix entry is a rather extensive reference note on the various terms used in Zen and related schools of Buddhism to refer to the ultimate realities of our faith. Finally, my grateful thanks to Shasta Abbey Press, and to Rev. Shikō Rom, who undertook the mysterious task of turning my manuscript into a book.



In conclusion, I should like to add a personal note. As I write this preface I am faced with the fact that I have recently been diagnosed with a serious illness and that this volume may be the last of my master’s works which I shall be able to bring forth as her editor. If this be so, then I am content that I have done what I may, in service both to her and to you. In my life, I have encountered nothing more precious than the teachings of Lord Buddha, and I have found nothing which points to these teachings so directly as the words of my master. I hope that this offering of them may be of use.

The editing of this work is also my way of expressing my gratitude to the many of you who have offered me merit



and well wishes, both directly and indirectly. The support which this has given me is truly immeasurable, and I can say that this book would not be in print without it. Let this book, then, also be a testimonial to the power of merit and to the value of spiritual friendship.

Rev. Daizui MacPhillamy  
Shasta Abbey  
February, 2003

#### ADDITION TO THE PREFACE

When Rev. Master Daizui wrote the above preface he was undergoing chemotherapy in an attempt to treat lymphatic cancer. During the months of January and February of 2003, the treatments were going quite successfully. This allowed him to continue on with his daily training with less pain and more energy than when he was first diagnosed with the cancer in mid-December. Most of that energy he focused on continuing the editing of this book in addition to being with his disciples and the general monastic community at Shasta Abbey.

In early March his health took a turn for the worse and on March 15th he was admitted to a hospital for further treatment. For a couple of weeks he and his doctors worked vigorously to curb the spread of the cancer, but ultimately there was nothing that could be done. It was at this time that he switched to palliative care. During his three weeks in the hospital, Rev. Master Daizui received dozens of visits from monks of our Order, lay congregation members and friends. In addition to the hospital staff, a group of monks and laity

assisted, both physically and spiritually, with his round-the-clock care. On the morning of April 4th, Rev. Master Daizui was transported by ambulance back to his room in the Hotei House at Shasta Abbey. Surrounded by old friends, both monastic and lay, he spent the day resting and meditating. As the afternoon wore on he went more deeply into meditation and in the early evening, very quietly and peacefully he passed away. As was his wish, he was cremated a few days later and according to his rank it was our honor to observe the full seven-day funeral retreat for him.

Preparing this book meant a great deal to Rev. Master Daizui and he often would be seen working on it during the day and into the evening. He told many of us that it was very important that he complete the editing. Relative to his illness, and whether he would be able to finish, he would say, 'You just never know.' It was just before he was admitted to the hospital on March 15th that he did complete enough of the editing that the book could be easily finished by others. It was deeply moving to all to see his dedication to doing the best he could to present the words and teachings of his master in a way that conveyed the depth and beauty of her teachings.

We offer this wonderful book to you with deep gratitude to Great Master Dōgen, Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, and Rev. Master Daizui MacPhillamy.

Rev. Hugh Gould  
Fugen Forest Hermitage  
March, 2004

# Introduction

From Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett's  
Introduction to a Lecture Series on the *Shōbōgenzō*

First let me tell you a little about the *Shōbōgenzō*. Eihei Dōgen Zenji was a very great admirer of how Buddhism was practiced in China. In fact, by comparison, he regarded Japan as a nest of barbarians. We're talking about the Thirteenth Century now, and for all I know he may have been right. Since he felt that the only civilized Buddhist practice was to be found in China, he was constantly infuriating the Japanese by telling them how wonderfully everything was done in China and how barbaric they all were. It is hardly surprising he did not have very great success in keeping monks peaceful, and he spent a very large time founding one small monastery after another, and then leaving when he felt he could not teach the monks there. Eventually he learned to stop doing things this way, and the great monastery of Eihei-ji was founded and remained a stable place of training.

Even so, his admiration for China still continued, and it will show in the style of his writing in the pages that we're going to be studying. It took 200 years for Sōtō Zen to begin to really spread well in Japan, and it was his great grand-disciple, Keizan Jōkin Zenji, who deeply loved his own culture and people, that made it happen. He said that the Japanese no longer needed Chinese things and could go about doing Zen practice in their own way. Keizan certainly did not wish to throw out the teachings of Dōgen (although some have accused him of this), but rather made those

teachings into the blood and bones of Japan. Keizan, therefore, took out a lot of the bewildering aspects of Chinese Zen from what Dōgen wrote and added instead a lot of the Japanese mystery that we presently associate with Zen. I am not sure, but it is perhaps true that if Zen is to make an even greater impact upon the West than it has already, it may be necessary for another Keizan, a Western Keizan, to rise and make Zen especially Western.

If that is to happen, then I think that the mystery will have to be removed to a very large extent from Dōgen's teachings, because Westerners like to have all the information "out on the table." They get very upset if they are told one thing in one passage of a text, and in the next section they discover there's something else that appears to contradict the first, and in the next passage there's something else again. They begin to wonder if the teaching is being changed or if it is nonsense. But, because of the Chinese style of expressing things, Dōgen often does exactly that. I will try to help you unravel this way of doing things and see through the mystery to the plain truths which Dōgen is trying to communicate.

It will help, however, if you know that he often works in this way: within the same chapter he will state something, then negate it, then go beyond it in one way, then in another, often to come back to where he started. The same is true of how different chapters relate to one another. They do not form a neat, logical, linear sequence. They are more like pieces of a great tapestry, with similar threads weaving in and out between them all. Therefore, whether within a chapter or across the whole of the *Shōbōgenzō*, you have to try to see all of his points together as a whole which transcends the apparent opposites which he presents to you. If

you keep open a door of faith that leads beyond these opposites, and if you let what he says sink into your heart rather than analyzing it with your mind, then you will be able to read or listen to Dōgen to your great benefit.

Next, I should explain a few things about my own style of speaking. In many of the chapters of Dōgen which we will study, he refers to the ultimate things of Zen. These things are notoriously difficult to speak of, and, like each teacher who attempts to speak of them, both he and I have our particular ways of doing so. Mine will not be the same as his, and I hope that each of our ways will help clarify the other, pointing to something that lies beyond the words of either of us. I have taken my approach from one of the oldest Buddhist texts in existence, wherein there is a passage where Shakyamuni Buddha speaks of “an unborn, an unbecome, an unmade, an uncompounded.” This was how the Buddha spoke of that which is ultimate in our religion. I find that the first of those terms works well for me, and so I shall speak of the Unborn. But you should know that It has been given many names over the centuries in the different traditions of Buddhism, names such as “the Nature of Supreme Enlightenment,” “Buddha Nature,” “Cosmic Buddha,” “Mu,” “Vairochana Buddha,” “the Absolute,” “the Uncreate,” “the Dharmakaya,” and “the Eternal.”

In Christianity and Judaism there is God, in Islam there is Allah, and in Hinduism there is Brahma, but what we Buddhists are referring to when we speak of the ultimate should be distinguished from the father-figure idea of a God with which we are familiar in the West. What I call the Unborn is not something that is a father image, or a mother image. It contains both of these, but it is not them, for it goes beyond all such relative images and spiritual beings. If

you wish, you may think of It as a life force in which every single one of us shares, a force which runs not only through living beings but through every part of the universe. Some have called it “Mu,” “nothingness,” or “the Void.” I avoid such words because they are too nihilistic to describe something that is so full of love and joy and wisdom. And yet it is wrong to call it “something,” which is the danger in using positive words such as the Unborn. Thus we have the problem of describing something that can only be safely described by what it is not, yet which is nevertheless a positive and not an atheistic or nihilistic thing. And, ultimately, It is no “thing” at all.

Because the ultimate of Zen sometimes appears as a universal reality and sometimes as something intimately part of you and me, I will adopt two terms for the purposes of these lectures: “the Unborn” and “Buddha Nature.” Both have a long history of use in Zen and other forms of Mahayana Buddhism.<sup>1</sup> Generally, I will refer to the Unborn when I am speaking of the ultimate reality of Buddhism in such a way that it appears to transcend all aspects of individuality. Of course, It is always “mine” (in the non-possessive sense of the term), for It excludes nothing, but sometimes it seems good to describe It in ways that are completely universal. I am reminded of an old Christian saying: “I am not God, and there is nothing within me that is not of God.” I am not the Unborn, so it does not seem good to use that term when I speak of That which is inherent or felt within me, lest I somehow seem to limit It.

And yet, there is nothing in me that is not of the Unborn, so I must have a way to refer to this fact. Therefore, I use the term “Buddha Nature” when It appears within the individual and has the intimate feeling of “being mine”

(again, not in any possessive, selfish, or exclusive way). No Zen master, no true priest of any religion, ever says that he or she *is* God or Buddha, but each does recognize that all things, animate and inanimate, have the *nature of* God or Buddha. So do not think of the Unborn and the Buddha Nature as two separate things. They are not two separate things; they are one thing, each looked at from a different aspect. And, since the ultimate cannot be neatly divided into “universal” and “individual,” sometimes I’m afraid I will just have to use the two terms interchangeably.

That is the first thing that you need to know: how I talk about the ultimate. The second is the way in which I speak about how things are known to me. A Zen master is supposed to only speak with certainty of what he or she knows from personal experience. Therefore, we tend to use words like “I believe it is so” when we are speaking of a piece of information of which we do *not* have our own personal certainty. Usually this will be something that is according to Buddhist teachings which the master has not yet proven true for himself. You should remember that the Buddha Himself said that we should not believe anything simply because He said it, but rather should test it by experience and prove it true for ourselves. Therefore, if I say, “According to Buddhist teaching...” or “I believe it to be...” I am saying that this is what the Buddha or an ancient master taught, but I do not know it of my own personal experience. If, instead, I do not preface my statement with some such words, I am telling you straight out that I know this to be true for me. But just because I am sure of it within myself, I am not requiring you to believe me. The certainty which you sometimes hear within my words is not intended to coerce you; it is intended to convey truly the state of my

own understanding of something. I cannot deny that some things are clear to me, and I will not pretend that I know things which I do not.

While it is never my intent to coerce you into believing something, it is also important that, if I say something which you feel to be untrue for you, you do not immediately reject it. What you should do is what the Buddha taught his own disciples to do: keep an open mind on all things. There is always another option besides belief and disbelief: just leave it there and wait and see. You do not have to reject something because you cannot believe it at the present time. Actually, I learned a tremendous number of things from my own master in just that way: I did not force myself to believe or disbelieve. I held them in my mind as possibilities, trusted in his good faith, gave them my best effort, and waited until I had proven them for myself. So, please do not feel obliged to believe what I am going to tell you in these lectures, and if you can't believe that's just fine. Wait a few years, who knows? Things may change. You may never come to believe a particular teaching, and that's all right. Just do not worry about it, just leave it there. And when you can believe it on the basis of further training and experience, then do; and if you can't, no one is going to force you into doing so. Nor will that stop you being a Buddhist, which is why Buddhism has so many different schools and so many different ways of looking at things.

In order for you to benefit from listening to these lectures, the only thing that is required, if "required" is the right word, is that you recognize that at all times there is a place beyond the opposites. I am now referring to something more than simply the opposites of belief or disbelief; I mean *all* opposites, all conceptual thinking. Listening to



Dōgen is a little bit like working with a classical Zen kōan. What is presented to you is kaleidoscopic; it is not flat and two-dimensional. It requires that you drop off “either-or” thinking and allow your mind to open to new ways—and not just new ways of thinking, but new ways of seeing and being. People have difficulty with the kōan system of Zen training when they try to understand kōans from the point of view of the opposites, which is the normal way in which people think. “If one answer is wrong then there must be another answer that is right,” but that is not so. Both can be right and both can be wrong, on the simplest level, depending upon the state of being from which they are approached. There is in all these things—in all of the “impossible questions” that are posed by kōans and by life—a place beyond the opposites and beyond the limits of ordinary thinking. The reason for the impossibility of kōan questions is to drive the trainee into finding that place, into jumping out of the opposites.

When you are listening to the teachings of Dōgen, especially these more advanced chapters of the *Shōbōgenzō*, some portions may make absolutely no sense to you unless you listen to them with this open and kaleidoscopic mind, continually being willing to set aside the opposites that your thinking mind will present to you, and having faith that there *is* a place beyond these opposites. In the beginning, faith in such a place is all it can be. You have to trust that there is such a possibility for, if you do not admit of it being possible, you will never find it. You have to trust that maybe something in you could change. After all, what is the point of spiritual training if not to open ourselves to changes in how we see ourselves and the world? If you are willing for such changes to occur, are willing to have a measure of trust

or faith, are willing to set aside two-dimensional thinking, and are willing to neither reject what you hear nor require yourself to believe it blindly, then Dōgen can speak to your heart. And I shall do my best to do likewise.

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<sup>i</sup> For references on historical uses of these and related terms see Appendix 4.

# 1.

## *Existence, Time, Flow*

From lectures on *Ūji*,  
“Just for the Time Being, Just for a While,  
For the Whole of Time is the Whole of Existence”

In this chapter, Dōgen Zenji explains enlightenment by exploring the nature of time. Time is not only past, present, and future but, more importantly, it is something that keeps going through the whole of it, which he called the flow. There are a million ways you can say this, but time itself is existence and flow. There is a flowing that moves throughout all time and all being. We put the concepts of past, present, and future upon it, but there is that which is beyond these limited human ideas. This flow is none other than the Unborn. It is the undying, the unchanging, the always-there-but-ungraspable. It can only be found by something intuitive and instinctive inside of oneself, through direct experience. The purpose of Zen training is to find this. Dōgen found It, and he tried to explain It in this chapter by speaking of the flow of time and existence rather than by using more traditional Buddhist concepts. That makes this chapter rather special among the works of Dōgen, and it provides a framework for understanding much of the rest of his teaching.

People have sometimes regarded *Ūji* as his unique discourse on the theory of time. Theory of time, my foot! It is his trying to explain Reality in a way that people could understand. As Kohō Zenji<sup>1</sup> said to me, Dōgen was no more

interested in time, as such, than the next man. He was trying to point out that everything which is past is part of a flow, that everything which is present is part of a flow, and everything which is in the future is part of a flow. And, he was telling us not to get caught up in periods of time, not to get caught up in appearances, not to get caught up in anything—just be one with the flow that encompasses all of existence. To think of the Unborn as a flow is perhaps better than using the term “Unborn,” because it conveys the sense that there is just a constant going on, an unending going on.

Dōgen has done a brilliant job of explaining the flow, the Real, in this chapter, provided, of course, that those who read it already know from their own experience what he is talking about! This was something else that Kohō Zenji explained to me: people write their “chapter” once they have had a deep realization of the Truth, and everyone who also has had a realization of It reads it and says, “Wow! They’ve got it; that’s so terrific!” And those who haven’t yet found It wonder what in the world they’re talking about. Well, if people didn’t write their chapters, then others wouldn’t get clues about how to find It; they wouldn’t be helped. And one simply can’t refuse to share It, because to know the Unborn is the most wonderful of things.

Dōgen may have been inspired to write *Ūji* while he was sitting in a ship off the coast of China. He was watching the coast go by and realizing that it was the ship that was actually moving and not the coast. Having recently had a *ken-shō*,<sup>†</sup> and thus being in a spiritually open and sensitive state, this relationship of relative motions made a deep impression upon him. In some of his writings, he uses the metaphor of the apparent movements of a boat and the shoreline directly; in others, such as this one, he makes use of it indirectly by

questioning the reality of, and pointing to the mutual relations between, space, time, existence, and experience.

The chapter starts with a poem.

*A former Buddha once said in verse,*

*Standing atop a soaring mountain peak  
is for the time being  
And plunging down to the floor of the Ocean's abyss  
is for the time being;  
Being triple-headed and eight-armed  
is for the time being  
And being a figure of a Buddha  
standing sixteen feet tall or sitting eight feet high  
is for the time being;  
Being a monk's traveling staff or his fountain scepter  
is for the time being  
And being the pillar supporting the Temple  
or a stone lantern before the Meditation Hall  
is for the time being;  
Being the next-door neighbor or the man in the street  
is for the time being  
And being the whole of the great earth  
and boundless space  
is for the time being.*

Already you begin to get the picture that there is far more to “for the time being” than what people understand by it as a common expression. Later in the chapter, Dōgen will make it more clear that all of existence is encompassed within it, and that it flows in an eternal “now.” For this reason, when I translated this chapter, I went directly to that meaning and rendered “Ūji” as “existence, time, flow.”

This poem, by Master Yakusan Igen, states that *all* is within the flow of “time being.” And what is within the flow is within the Unborn, for the Unborn *is* the flow. Sometimes we see existence, sometimes we see time, sometimes we do not; but always, everything is within the Unborn. Thus Yakusan is saying that standing atop a soaring mountain peak is to see It. In the usual sense of time, sometimes we are atop the mountain peak and sometimes we are not. To get beyond the time when we are on top of the mountain and when we are not—this is to find the essence of being upon the mountain, which is the same as to be one with it and with the Truth. And this is to *always* be atop the mountain peak. And, if we so wish, we are also simultaneously always on the floor of the Ocean’s abyss, and we know that both the mountain and the Ocean (and all of “the great earth and boundless space”) are within the flow.

You have to understand that “the now” embraces all of these various times he speaks of. For instance, when he speaks of the time of being “triple-headed and eight-armed” (in other words, of being Kanzeon Bodhisattva<sup>†</sup>) and of being “a figure of a Buddha standing sixteen feet tall,” Dōgen is not saying that there *was* a time of being Buddha and there *was* a time of being Kanzeon. You can say that, of course, but you can also quite easily turn it around and say that there *was* a time of being Buddha and there *is* a time of being Kanzeon, or there *is* a time of being Buddha and there *was* a time of being Kanzeon. And there *is* the time when being Buddha *is* the time of being Kanzeon, and so forth. Do you understand what I’m doing with the tenses of the verbs here? In this place, all of them include each other. It is like the line from the morning scriptures, “The white snows falls upon the silver plate, the snowy heron in the

bright moon hides.” Within them, we can distinguish one from other; thus Buddha can be seen within Kanzeon Bodhisattva and Kanzeon can be seen within Buddha. Combining them, we can distinguish one from other. But there is no time when they are truly separate from each other. There is a time when we *were* eight or sixteen feet tall and there is a time when we *are* eight or sixteen feet tall. And, whether we are five feet or six feet tall now, it is still the same time as when we are eight or sixteen feet tall.

This is not a different “now” from the time when we were crossing a river or climbing a mountain. If you think that you are separate from that time, then you cannot understand the law of impermanence, *anicca*.<sup>†</sup> For you are the sum of all these things. Change happens; the “water” of existence flows on, but the depth of the water remains the same. The change is on the surface. If you think that there is a difference between you and Shakyamuni Buddha and that you are in a separate body and that Shakyamuni Buddha is in a separate body, then you are never going to understand Buddhahood. “Preserve well for you now have; this is all.” There was never a time when you were not Buddha and never a time when you were not becoming Buddha. *Ūji* flows and yet is still.

Time is far more than simply what passes by, for when the mountains and the rivers are crossed, not only am I myself present but so also is time. As I am—now, here—time and I are one. Even should time not include coming and departing, journeying and going, the eternal now is *still* the very moment when the mountain is climbed. And, should time include coming and departing, then I am the eternal now, and this too is *Ūji*: existence, time, flow. There is a danger, of course, in getting stuck with the word “flow,” because you have to push your understanding onwards beyond any word.

In one sense, time itself never flows, for the Kanzeon of yesterday *is* our very existence, time, flow. Time appears to be “out there,” but it is actually here and now. In this sense you can never really say that there will be a time when I will do something. There is only “doing,” not “a time when.”



Following the poem, Dōgen’s first comment is very important.

*The phrase ‘is for the time being’ implies that time in its totality is what existence is, and existence in all its occurrences is what time is.*

Since there is nothing which is outside of the totality of time and the occurrences of all existence, this statement means that nothing exists other than the flow of existence/time. In short, there is no reality aside from this flow. Furthermore, because this present moment is “for the time being” (that is, it is eternally passing away even as we speak), all of reality is always passing away. And this means that, just as the Buddha taught, impermanence is a basic property of our universe. I’m sure you know that lovely piece from the *Diamond Scripture*,

Thus shall ye think of all this fleeting world:  
A star at dawn, a bubble in a stream;  
A flash of lightning in a summer cloud,  
A flickering lamp, a phantom, and a dream.



Everything is passing away, but to know the Unborn is to know the flow within this. You cannot hold It in your hand. Just as when you put your hand in a river, you can feel the water running through your hand but, when you try to take some in your hand, there is no water there. What Dōgen calls “the whole of time and existence,” what I call “the Unborn,” is therefore the fullness of emptiness. And, believe me, It is the fullest emptiness you will ever find. If you keep your hand in the river and do not try to grasp it, it flows through your fingers and you know it intimately. This is to know the Unborn, to see It in all things, to know that what is around you (which you define in terms of space and time) is unreal. To know the Real within impermanence—this is to know Ūji. Dōgen was trying to explain how to see the Real; what he is saying here is not different from the *Diamond Scripture*.

He continues:

*Thus, ‘being a golden body sixteen feet tall’ refers to a time. And because it is a time, its time will have a wondrous luminosity—a point that we will be studying and learning about during the present twenty-four hours. ‘Being one with three heads and eight arms’ [the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion, Kanzeon] also refers to a time. And because it is a time, it will be one and the same as the present twenty-four hours. Granted that we may not yet have measured the length of these twenty-four hours as to whether they are ever so long or short as a sigh, still we speak of them as ‘the twenty-four hours of our day’. The traces of this time having come and gone are clear, so people do not doubt that these hours have occurred. But, though people have no doubt about time having occurred,*

*the past may be something that they have not known through their direct experience. And, just because sentient beings are always having their doubts about anything and everything that they have not directly experienced, this does not mean that what they may have previously doubted is the same as what they may now have doubts about, for doubts themselves are merely 'just for the moment' kinds of time, and nothing more.*

Do you see how beautifully Dōgen has made all of this look so ordinary and harmless, and then he quietly slips the rug out from under you? I remember that when the implications of Ūji were first explained to me in the Far East, my eyes were almost bugging out of their sockets. Even our doubts themselves are simply part of the flow! However, if one knows the flow, then doubt does not even arise. You just watch as all things come and go, and all things are simply a decoration of the eternal flow. Sometimes you are aware of this and sometimes you are not; it is like the fact that just as whether the lights are on or whether they are not, there is still the same amount of electric current. To know that there is the same amount of electricity, and to be one with that flow of current, puts all things in their true perspective. From this perspective, even life and death are of no great importance. And selfish ambition certainly goes out the window when you find this place of the Unborn. The desire for wealth and fame, and the greed for all things, all fly out the window as well; for who, when they have the whole universe, would want anything more? The Japanese language, by the way, is interesting on this question of us being able to “have” things. For instance,

you do not say, “I have a cat” or “I have a dog.” Instead you say, “There is with me a cat,” “There is with me a dog.” It is a nice way of putting it.

And what if doubt does arise? Even if it does, doubt itself is only a part of the flow. There is an old Chinese motto that used to be engraved on the rings of monks<sup>ii</sup>: “It will pass.” There is a time of doubt and a time of certainty, as there is a time of life and a time of death. If we allow the doubt to worry us, then we are as one who is clinging to the rocks and the grasses in the river as we go downstream. If we let go of them—“Yes, there are doubts; they don’t matter”—and go on in the flow, then they pass and certainties come. And certainties pass, as they pass into deeper certainties; and deeper certainties pass into a faith which lies beyond all certainty. If you cling to anything, especially if you try to hold onto a handful of the flowing river, you will not be able to go in the flow.

It’s surprising what can give you clues to the eternal flow if you are deeply meditating. Anything—sitting in a car, sitting in the garden, sitting in your house, lying in bed—can give you clues as to what is going on. It is entirely up to you how deeply you meditate. Once you really try to do so, then all things seem to reach out and help you. It is as though the True Nature of all things, the Buddha Nature, is overjoyed that you want to be one with It, and therefore all things want to show you their True Nature in order to help. The whole universe becomes your teacher, out of sheer joy. This same joy overflows in you, too, and you want to share it with everyone and everything. So, one writes one’s “chapter.” This, of course, is a very different thing from trying to impose one’s understanding on others, trying to proselytize them.

When I write of these things, I do not do so in the way Dōgen has done in *Ūji*, but this is Dōgen's chapter, not mine. But I am glad that he has written it this way, for there are a lot of people whom this chapter can really help, especially ones with convoluted brains who try to define "reality." In the passage I just quoted, Dōgen first leads one into thinking about these things in conventional ways by referring to the twenty-four hours of the day, and then he smashes that apart. In the next section, he does the same for our notions of the reality of both external things and of the self:

*Since we human beings are continually arranging the bits and pieces of what we experience in order to fashion 'a whole universe', we must take care to look upon this welter of 'living beings' and 'physical objects' as 'sometime' things. Things do not go about hindering each other's existence any more than moments of time get in each other's way. As a consequence, the intention to train arises at the same time in different beings, and this same intention may also arise at different times. And the same applies to training and practice, as well as to realizing the Way. In a similar manner, we are continually arranging bits and pieces of what we experience in order to fashion them into what we call 'a self', which we treat as ourself: this is the same as the principle of 'we ourselves are just for a time'.*

You see, from the point of view of the doubting or egocentric self, there truly is no refuge: whatever we grasp is doomed to fall apart. "Living beings," "physical objects," even "we ourselves, are just for a time." This is the basic

reason for the First Noble Truth that life is unsatisfactory. Only within the True Nature, the Buddha Nature, can a real refuge be found within the flow of impermanent existence. This distinction between the egocentric self and the True Nature is an important one. When the former ceases to be in charge, then the True Nature takes over. Do not think of the egocentric self as something bad, for it is the self that we are training and the self which trains. Through that training, in the end you find the True Nature, which is the same as the egocentric self once it is cleaned up, once attachments to greed, hate, and delusion have been set aside. And all of this is within the eternal flowing now, which cannot be held onto.

I sometimes like to think of the Unborn as being like the beautiful lakes and rivers with all the “crud” we throw into them. If we would only clean them up, we’d have this beautiful sparkling water again. That is what we have done with the True Nature: we have put so many theories, ideas, notions, and wants onto the true, beautiful Nature that we cannot see It. All we know are the theories and ideas and wants. We call that collection of crud our “self,” and it is from that place that we know “time” and “existence.” When we can give up all of this and just be still in the place of meditation, then we find the Real, which was pure from the very beginning. Be careful of grasping onto any of this with your thinking mind, for then “True Nature” becomes simply another “thing” to be attached to. In the famous words of the Sixth Zen Ancestor, “Originally there is not a single thing: where can dust alight?”

This, by the way, is the reason why in Buddhism there is nothing like the Christian concept of original sin. Everyone is born with Buddha Nature; what you inherited

by way of karma,<sup>†</sup> what you were taught by parents and teachers, what you have grasped and held onto—that is what has to be cleaned up, that is “existence” and “time.” But the flow is unborn, unbecome, unmade, uncompounded. Until we realize this we add convolution to convolution, and think that it will be better tomorrow! But we have to get rid of all this stuff, and know its unreality; we have to be still and find the flow. This is why when you sit in meditation you do not try to think and you do not try not to think: you just sit still, so that you may find the Unborn. And then, as I said, we tend to create a “True Nature,” a “Buddha Nature,” an “Unborn,” “enlightenment,” and the like, as things we want and which we try to get. All we really have to do is just sit down and be still! It is so much simpler than we make it out to be.

Do you know the lovely bit in the Bible which says, “Be still, and know that I am God”? I have often wondered why so few people seem to hear that! It’s one of the most valuable pieces in the whole book. “*Be still*, and know that I am God”—that is so exquisite! Instead, we generally busy ourselves with generating “ourself”; we create it and we do not sit still long enough to find the Truth. It is terribly important to *be still*; do not keep generating more and more noise.



Next, Dōgen points out that all the myriad things of this earth are one and inseparable, and all are within the flow.

*Because of this very principle of the way things are, the earth in its entirety has myriad forms and*

*hundreds of things sprouting up, each sprout and each form being a whole earth—a point which you should incorporate into your study of the Way, for the recognition of the coming and going of things in this manner is a first step in training and practice.*

No matter how different things may appear, everything exhibits the Unborn, if you are looking for It truthfully and sincerely. All you have to do is really look. I can remember being told that by Kohō Zenji, when I complained to him once that the mats in the Meditation Hall weren't too clean. "Well," he said, "can you still sit on them?" I said, "Yes, of course." "Then don't look with jaded eyes! The job of the mat is to serve for sitting on; that is its Buddhahood. Buddhas get grubby with time." Do not look with jaded eyes; look for the Buddhahood in things. And do not worry about external appearances.

Dōgen makes another very important point in this passage: this way of looking at things is "a first step in training and practice." It is when you have reached the realization that everything is within the eternal flow of Buddhahood, and thus is doing the finest job it can of being a Buddha, that you are open enough and positive enough to be able to do really good training. While you are always nagging and grumping, grouching and griping, about everything—while you preoccupy yourself with your own thoughts and emotions—you are just spinning your wheels and wasting the time of your teachers. But when you set aside your own concerns and start looking at people and seeing that they are manifesting Buddhahood each to the best of their ability, and when you start seeing the carpet as a nice warm thing to sit upon instead of seeing the spot on it—when you start

seeing the good, the Buddhahood, in things—then true training can commence, for you have begun to set aside self.

This seeing beyond oneself to the unity of all things is also important with regard to the Buddhist Precepts. While the Precepts are only rules that bind you, they don't really help all that much (which is the danger of the "Thou shalt not..." idea). But once you understand them from the point of view of "For the benefit of all beings, I will train myself to refrain from..." once you have got to the positive side, then true preceptual training can commence. So long as *any* aspects of training and practice are things which bind you, so long as they are more ideas and opinions to fight, then not much can happen in those areas. When you give up all that, then you can really undertake training.

*When you reach such a fertile field of seeing the way things really are, then the earth in its entirety will be 'one whole sprouting, one whole form'; it will be comprised of forms that you recognize and forms that you do not, sproutings that you recognize and sproutings that you do not. It is the same as the times we refer to in 'from time to time', which contain all forms of existence and all worlds. So take a moment to look around and consider whether there is any form of being or any 'world' that does or does not find expression at this very moment of time.*

I like that! One can sense what a "fertile field" this Buddhist training is, when one undertakes it completely. All things begin to be recognized as a greater whole, though some are known and some are unknown, some are recognized as Buddha and some are not yet so. Thus does the Unborn



come to be seen darkly, and then training becomes a very exciting thing. People do not realize that the contemplative religious life is an extremely exciting thing; not exciting in the normal way in which people get excited—not the titillating version—but genuinely exciting.



The text then goes on to describe some of the ways in which we customarily regard time and existence: time passes, separate “things” exist, and “I” experience their being and their passing. But, says Dōgen, this is by no means all there is to it, for:

*...Since time retains the characteristic of ‘coming and going, being continually in flux’, there is a flow of ever-present ‘nows’, each comprised of a time when an I exists. And this is what is meant by the phrase ‘just for the time being’.*

Thus “I” and all apparently separate “things” are

*...indeed a part of the ever-present now.... Do not look upon time as ‘something that just flies away’....*

Therefore don’t yearn for the past; don’t get stuck with it. Don’t yearn for the future; don’t get stuck with that. It’s amazing how incredibly alive and how incredibly long is the now. And I mean looong....

*In short, everything whatever that exists in the whole universe is a series of instances of time. Since*

*everything is for the time being, we too are for the time being.*

There is just one great flow which stands still in an ever-present now. I am the person who was born sixty-odd years ago, just as you are the people who were born thirty or so years ago. But all of us were born from out of the now, and out of the great 'I' of Shakyamuni Buddha—which is why we can meet together and understand in our hearts what is going on, although we may not be able to put it fully into words. I am neither older nor younger than you. And you are neither older nor younger than me. Unless you can understand that, unless you can get beyond appearances, you will never understand Buddhism.

Do not think that anything whatsoever is separate from the Unborn; do not think that there was a time when the Unborn was Kanzeon and a time when It was Buddha. There *was* a time when the Unborn was Kanzeon and a time when It was Buddha, but there was never a time when the Unborn was not present as the *whole* of the Unborn. That we see a Buddha today does not mean that there is more of the Buddha today than there was yesterday when we saw Kanzeon. It does not mean that, because we do not generally call the people in this room Buddhas, there is any less Buddha here in this room than there was at the time of Shakyamuni. I am looking at a room full of Buddhas! Buddhas that are to come, and Buddhas that are still fully representative of the Unborn Buddha Nature. If you cannot look at people no matter how they are dressed, no matter how degraded or important they have become in the world—if you cannot look at them and see Buddha, then you cannot see the Unborn. All must be seen as the Unborn, and not

only must It be seen, It must be known, felt, smelled, tasted, and touched in everything. It is not a thing of yesterday; It is not a thing of today; It is not a thing of tomorrow. It is the eternal flow, the still and yet non-static flow.

It is not static, but It is not changing. There is a difference between being static and being changing. The eternal flow never changes for it is still, but It is not static. People frequently think that constant change is a sign of being alive. I can remember having a roommate when I was in college who was constantly rearranging the furniture in the room and, when I asked her why, she informed me that it was to prove that she was still alive. All it did for me was make me fall over things when I came in late! A changing thing is something that is not constant, something upon which one cannot rely, in which one cannot take refuge; the Unborn is not like that. It is still; It is the True Refuge, and It is always flowing.



He now goes on to explain that Ūji implies a continuity of time and existence:

*Time has the virtue of continuity: it continuously flows from the today that we are talking about to a tomorrow, from a today to a yesterday, from a yesterday to a today. It flows from a today to a today and from a tomorrow to a tomorrow. Because continual, continuous flow is a function of time, past and present times do not pile atop each other nor do they form an accumulative line.*

Do not think that there is a difference between “today” and “tomorrow.” One of the things that really hit me in the monastery of Sōjiji† was the fact that, in Kohō Zenji’s day, there were absolutely no calendars. You had a rough idea of dates because on certain days somebody rang a particular bell or hit a piece of wood and it was time to shave your head, or the like. But those were your only clues, and even they didn’t really matter after a while. You got into this lovely state where gradually “yesterday” and “tomorrow” do not exist, and there is only the true existence of the flow. That doesn’t mean that you flee from the world or that you are using the temple schedule as a crutch to get away from something; it means that you are using everything possible to find the Truth; there is a big difference there.

*Yet, even so, Seigen (C. Ch’ing-yüan), too, represents a time, as does Ōbaku (C. Huang-po), and likewise Kōzei (C. Chiang-hsi) and Sekitō (C. Shih-t’ou) represent times. Because we ourselves and others, as previously stated, are already ‘beings for a time’, our training and practice are times, as well as is our awakening to Truth. Our ‘entering the mud or going into deep water’ is likewise a time.*

Unless you can understand that the ancient Zen masters are neither older than you nor younger than you and that their teaching is eternally the same as yours, you cannot understand them. Unless you can understand that the teaching of the present day Zen master and the future one is the same as yours, you cannot understand Zen. This is the same as what Dōgen was just saying about the time of being Kanzeon and the time of being the Buddha: all of these

positions stand in the flow, as ups and downs of the flow, but if you separate them off and think of them as separate from the flow you will never know the Truth.

Therefore, if any of these positions in time, as we understand the term “time,” frighten you, you will never be able to rely on the flow and allow it to carry you. In many respects, it’s like someone who’s afraid of the water when he swims. Unless you trust the water totally, you are going to fight and you may very possibly drown. If you try to analyze what the water is—“How do I know that it’s trustable? If I don’t know what it is composed of, how do I know it’s worth trusting?”—if you sit and argue like that, you will never be able to get into the water and you’re never going to learn to swim. You can believe that the water will carry you and that you won’t drown because other people tell you so. And I, as a Zen master, am telling you to get into this water; you won’t drown. But if you worry about it, you’ll never learn to make the strokes of swimming. And if you ask me what the water is, I can no more tell you than can Dōgen.

He continues:

*The opinions of ordinary, everyday people today—as well as the source of these opinions—are based on what these people perceive. But this is not what ordinary people consider as being how things operate. For them, the way things operate is that they have ‘simply come about for a while’.*

You see, the religious person stands outside of history, if you like, outside of three-dimensional time. Occasionally he or she bisects it, occasionally crosses it. Occasionally the religious person “comes into play,” but not by his or her

own will, because he or she is not caught up in it. That which I call “soap opera,” which is the average life of the average person of the world, is the day to day weight of what “happened yesterday.” In other words, people are caught in three-dimensional time, they are caught in history, because they look no deeper at things than to simply take for granted what has “come about for a while.” The Zen master, or any religious person who stands against the world in order to claim himself, is not caught within that history. He or she is not caught within time. When you undertake Buddhist training deeply, this is the same as having decided to stand outside of three-dimensional time, to stand within the flow of eternity. Of course, you occasionally step into “time,” as it arises naturally, but you do not step into it with the determination of “doing something.”

This is why, when I had finished my training in Sōjiji, I went and settled quietly in my little temple. I didn’t go out and proclaim from the hilltops, “I am enlightened, come and learn.” By accident somebody bumped into me who wished to learn from me. That is fine; it is not my problem when he wishes to learn, it is not my problem when he doesn’t wish to learn. My problem is that I stand against the world in order to train myself—and that I don’t try to step back into it. As soon as you try to step back into it, the weight is incredible upon you. So, by accident I came to America. And, by accident, you all came here. But I still do not go out and yell from a mountaintop. I want you to understand the danger of trying to step back into time, which is to try to manipulate religion. The world flows at the pace at which it does. One old Zen master says, “One speaketh as long as it is, and one speaketh as short as it is.”

In Japan they have comic books of the life of Dōgen, and you see these lovely cartoon pictures of him listening to his monks saying to him, “I want to train quickly and get a gorgeous purple robe and gold brocade kesa.<sup>†</sup> Then I can go off and teach and I can be a great monk.” Dōgen says, “How can I teach here in Kyoto? You’re all too involved in fame and gain.” But, what else is fame and gain other than three-dimensional time? They are one and the same thing. Understand the dangers of fame and gain in three-dimensional time, and understand that the true Zen master, or the true trainee, stands outside of that. In other words he or she stands outside of the way of gaining anything. One stands against the world in order to train oneself. As soon as you do anything else, then you get caught up in three-dimensional time. Then you cannot sit still within your own center, you cannot sit still and feel and know the stillness of life, the movement, the immaculacy. Unless you can be still you cannot understand that the time of the golden body of the Buddha, and the time beyond Buddha, and the time of you—all are one and now. This is why we meditate.

*Because these people have convinced themselves that this time and this existence of theirs is not related to the way things really operate, they conclude that a golden body [of the Buddha] sixteen feet tall could not possibly be theirs.... [But] for us to give proof of a golden body sixteen feet tall by our attaining a golden body sixteen feet tall is to manifest our initial spiritual intention, our training and practice, our realizing of enlightenment, and our experiencing the freedom of nirvana—all of which comprises what existence is and what time is. It is a complete realization that the*

*whole of time is what the whole of existence is, and that there is nothing more than this...*

Because we do not understand that training, practice, and the whole of existence is “the whole of time,” we try to run away from the Unborn because we think of It as the golden body of the Buddha, with which we have nothing whatsoever to do. But that is wrong. If you know that there is an unborn and unbecome, which is beyond the opposites of right and wrong, past and present, etc.—if you know that, then there is no need whatsoever to escape from anything. One of the tragedies of so many Zen books is that they talk about getting beyond the opposites but they do not explain how that is possible. It is possible because there is that which is unborn beyond those opposites, as the Buddha Himself said. You are not required to believe in the Unborn as an “entity”; but there *is* that which is unborn, unbecome, unmade, uncompounded. And there, one can take genuine rest; there, one can be beyond the opposites. People try to flee from God, or to escape the fact that their body is the golden body of the Buddha, but this is only because we do not know what the golden body of the Buddha truly is, only because our minds have been raped by theories. We know what It is not: It is not born, become, made, or compounded. And when we know what It is not, then we can be free of concepts of what It is, and we do not have to escape.

We have been trying, most of us, to get rid of the idea that we are Buddha ever since we started Buddhist training. If we truly wanted enlightenment we would have it. One of the strangest things of human nature, one of the strangest quirks, is that as soon as a person takes up religious training seriously, one of the things he works hardest at is making



sure that he or she does not get enlightenment. Because we are quite terrified by it. We like the idea of what we *think* it is, but when we begin to find out what it *really* is, we are terrified and we run in the opposite direction. So, instead of going onward into the unknown and unborn flow, wherein self must utterly lose control, we try to “stay in charge” and “make enlightenment happen.” We go around trying to find a bunch of trumpets sounding to tell us how marvelous we are. Well, you know, there is no way a truly religious person can go around in golden glory with everybody worshipping at his or her feet. Enlightened action leaves no “wake” behind it. There is no sign (of the kind that you can see), no speck of dust. And because enlightened action leaves no speck of dust, there is nothing for us to pick up that we can show for what we have done. When Dōgen got back from China the emperor asked him what he had learned. He said the only thing that he knew for certain is that on a face there are two eyes and a nose. You’re not going to be able to “dine out” on the fact that you know that on a face there’s two eyes and a nose. Many people going to monasteries, especially Oriental ones, are expecting to be able to earn a living as a result of it, but that is to walk away from Buddha.

Don’t get me wrong: we really do want enlightenment, we want to believe in it. We want to be different from what we are now. And we are convinced that enlightenment, nirvana, will be different from what we are now. That is all quite natural and, as far as it goes, it is quite all right. But “nirvana” is simply the opposite of “samsara”; he who wants nirvana is still caught in the opposites. This is the danger of being caught in wanting something better. We think all sorts of things about what enlightenment will be like. One of the

most common of these thoughts is that it will mean permanent happiness. Who the hell wants to be happy! A dog asleep in the sun is happy. Do you want to be content with being a dog? Enlightenment won't bring you happiness. It will bring you something totally different, but it won't be "happiness" as you think of the term. You might as well know that before you start. If you want happiness then go out there and get cash and become a millionaire and be miserable in comfort. No, enlightenment will not make you happy, but it will make you completely at peace with yourself and with the world. It will make you completely able to act without being caught up in three-dimensional time.

And so, Dōgen quite rightly says that we convince ourselves that time and existence are not related to the Truth, we insist that the golden body of the Buddha is not ours, and then we go about trying to free ourselves from the very fact that we *are* the golden body of the Buddha. We want religious truth to be what we want it to be, not what it is. This is why sometimes people get unnerved and have the feeling that something is falling away from them when they come to my lectures. I watch the way they build structures around themselves, and then I carefully get out a chain saw and saw them off at the bottom. (laughter) You know, I often get the feeling that I'm sawing away at people's scaffolding. I dream of it periodically: I'm out there sawing away—usually at the legs of monks—I'm sawing the legs out from underneath them so that they shall move on a bit. It's a very queer dream.



Farther into the chapter, Dōgen says more about how the flow of time and existence relates to doing our practical daily training.

*Even at a stage where it would seem that you have taken a false step, this condition will be a state of 'being'. Further, should you leave the matter at this, your condition will still constitute a persistence of 'a time being', which will include both a before and an after to this 'having taken a false step'. Dealing with thoughts and things while they persist, like a fish darting about through the water, is indeed what 'being just for the time being' is about. So, do not be upset over what is not, and do not be pressured by what is.*

That is a lovely summary of how to train. It speaks for itself. He then goes on to describe some of the limited ways in which people have defined for themselves what time and being are, and he explores how these ways limit our training since they fail to capture the true nature of existence, time, flow. And he asks,

*...Even if we comprehend that It is what persists, who can express in words what This is that we have realized? Even if, over a long time, we have found ways to express It in words, there is no one yet who has not groped for ways to make It be manifest before your very eyes. Were we to leave the matter of what 'being for the time being' means to the way in which ordinary persons understand the phrase, it would be a 'being for the time being' in which enlightenment and nirvana were, at best, merely passing characteristics.*

*The ever-present ‘time being’ of which I am speaking cannot be snared like some bird by net or cage: it is what is manifesting before us....*

There is a really important point implied by this passage. People sometimes say that they had an understanding of Zen, a kenshō, on some particular date, but that is not strictly true. That was simply the first date on which they became aware of the Unborn, that’s all. The understanding itself never ceases (unless they turn away from it); the Unborn *is*, within the flow of the eternal now. Do not try to “snare” It; do not limit your training in this way. Do not make your first true realization of Truth into a “merely passing characteristic.”

The same thing applies to all of your life. You have to get rid of three-dimensional time. You have to get free of its tyranny. For example, I watch all those schedules that get put up around our monastery. “We need a schedule for this, we need a rota for that.” Yes, we need them. And, for god-sake, don’t get caught in them. I infuriate a few of our temple officers with this. Every time they have a nice little rota worked up I come in and say, “Oh by the way we’re going to chuck this today because we have to do whats-it.” I am trying to stop them getting caught. And besides, we really do need to do whats-it. Yes, there is a benefit to having an agreed-upon, constructed way of dealing with our lives, but if we are bound by it then we will never understand how to be free of three-dimensional time.

It’s the difference between using your construct of “time” and “time” using you. We must never be used by it. I seem to blow to high heaven all the arrangements that are made in the monastery. That doesn’t mean to say the

arrangements don't have to be made. They do, and I am grateful for them; but we must not become bound by them. I remember somebody getting very annoyed one winter's night when I said that because of the snow nobody was going to get up early until it was light so that we can be sure of where we were walking on the way to the Meditation Hall. "But... what about the schedule?" The hell with the schedule! The schedule was invented to help people, not people to help the schedule. It's a mistake that's made in religions all down the line. "We must be careful that everything we say is according to the doctrine." Doctrine, my foot! Religion was invented to help human beings find their true home, not to keep the religion going.

Master Dōgen takes the implications of Ūji for our daily training further when he presents a famous poem by Meditation Master Kisei, one of the descendants of Rinzai:

*There is a time when intending has arrived,  
but not expressing,  
There is a time when the expressing has arrived,  
but not the intending,  
There is a time when both intending  
and expressing have arrived,  
And there is a time when both intending  
and expressing have not arrived.*

*Both 'intending' and 'expressing' are 'for the time being': both 'having arrived' and 'having not arrived' are 'for the time being'. Even though one may say that 'the time of arriving is not yet fully here', the time of having not arrived is here.*

There are times when the will (the “intention”) can do it but you can’t express it at all; there are times when you can somehow express it but the will isn’t ready to go; there are times when both are willing and ready, and times when neither is. Both will and words, however, should be understood as being within the flow of existence/time, and all should be understood as part of the Unborn. That they are ready or not does not mean that there is less Unborn at one time and more Unborn at another.

The same is true of “arriving” and “not arriving,” of coming and going, of hindrance and freedom, of adequacy and inadequacy: all are existence, time, flow. Do not think that when you are adequate then the Buddha Nature is present and when you are inadequate It is not. Whether you are adequate or inadequate, obstructed or unobstructed (as the world understands it—or as you understand it), Buddha Nature is as It is, as It always was and will be. These things are only your personal theories, only chimeras, things that pass away. Do not allow them to rob you of your inheritance. This point is of particular importance for women, who for centuries have been put down as spiritually inadequate people. Dōgen makes it very clear that full spirituality is equal in both men and women.<sup>iii</sup> This is one of the beauties of his teachings: he says it very clearly and loudly. Keep this in mind and the inadequacy goes very quickly.

However, do not hold onto adequacy either. When you think that you are Buddha, all you are is something sitting on an altar waiting to be dusted! Adequacy and inadequacy are both within the great flow. When there is adequacy we have not yet finished our training, and when we are inadequate we are nevertheless completed. Do not think that there is a time when I will be fully adequate and then I will

be trained. There is nothing but constant training. Always you have to go on in your training: “O Buddha, going, going, going on beyond and always going on beyond, always *becoming* Buddha. Hail! Hail! Hail!” I did not want to translate the last line of the *Heart Sutra* that way because I knew I was going to get into all sorts of trouble since everybody else translates it as “Gone, gone, gone beyond. Buddha, Hail!” Kohō Zenji got angry with me and asked me if I wanted the perfection of Zen or was following the scholars. So, that is how I translated it, and I’ve stuck by it ever since. After a while, I realized that he was right. “Gone beyond” what? It doesn’t make an awful lot of sense. Gone beyond the opposites is obviously one implication, but if your training is always *going* on, then every day is one of *becoming* Buddha, of exhibiting Buddhahood in this world, and then the scripture not only makes more sense but it comes alive. You, and your Buddhist training, are not something that is ever dead, static, finished with. And, after all, neither was Shakyamuni Buddha’s.

*...Arriving is hindered by ‘arrival’, but is not hindered by not having arrived. Having not arrived is hindered by ‘not having arrived’, but is not hindered by arriving.... When it comes to hindrances, we look at what is hindering as just a hindrance. It is a matter of ‘obstructions’ getting in the way of obstructions, all of which are ‘just for a time’ ....*

Note carefully where the single quotation marks come in this passage. I translated the first line of this part as, “They travel fastest who are not there.” The passage is exceptionally

difficult to translate, and Kohō Zenji, when he went through this one with me said, “That’s not what Dōgen wrote, but you’re dead right, that’s what he meant.” One who knows that he or she has more to do is one who is going to do it, but as soon as you think that you have made it, have “arrived,” you are in great danger. This is another reason to be careful of thinking of Zen understandings as “experiences,” or things that “happened to me one day.” Zen training can, and must, go always onward with the flow of existence, time. I have often warned people not to get stuck with “understanding.” Indeed, it is just after a kenshō that they are most likely to break the precepts in ways that can lead to profound regret. There was an old Christian parson whom I knew who said that the time he feared for his congregation the most was just after they had taken Holy Communion, for it was the time when they were least on the lookout for what they were doing. And the same is true in Buddhism. After an understanding of some sort, people often feel that they have become incapable of doing anything that will make new karma, and they tend to make some mistakes at that point precisely because it takes them a while to realize that they can indeed make further mistakes. Sadly, these mistakes are often made out of the sheer joy of wanting to share the understanding. That is why, in the Far East, a monk who has a deep realization is kept from teaching for several more years, until they have learned how to do so without making these kinds of mistakes. It makes a lot of sense.

I also like what he says about not letting obstructions get in the way of obstructions. This is how the flow of Ūji relates to karma. If we think of our karma or our old karmic tendencies as obstacles to the flow, we will never really



understand either them or the flow. As you go down a river, sometimes you bump into clumps of reeds or a rock. How karma appears to us within the flow depends on how we behave when we bump into the clump of reeds or the rock. Some of us cling to the rock and yell, “Help, I can’t get by it!” But the rocks of karma are to be learned from, not thought of as a reality to be clung to. Even if one does cling to them it cannot be forever, for at some point this gets sufficiently painful that one just has to let go and slip back into the flow. And, guess what? When we trust both the rock and the river, the flow carries us beyond. A lot of what Dōgen is trying to explain is how to trust.

Now, most of us go down the river banging into the rocks, pulling up the reeds, grabbing onto flowers, and generally fouling up the stream. And it is from this that we think we know that our experience of the river actually exists, which, when you think about it, is slightly backhanded. If we didn’t create karma, would we know that the Unborn existed? That is an interesting little question for you all to consider. It’s the same question as that posed in the kōan of the abbot who’s fanning himself on a hot day, and another monk asks why, since the wind is universally present, he needs to do so. For an answer, the abbot merely continued to use the fan. It is also the same as the story of the Zen master who turned up to do a tea ceremony and the monks had manicured the tea house and its grounds so much that it was unreal. He looked at the place and said, “I can’t do a tea ceremony in this,” walked up to a tree, shook it, a few leaves fell, and then he said, “Okay, now I can do your tea ceremony.” The question that I have posed has identically the same meaning as these.

But be careful that you do not go around deliberately “creating the signs of the Unborn,” because you’ll get your ears boxed by people who object to being manipulated, as well you should. All appears naturally within the flow. You remember I wrote in my diary, *The Wild, White Goose*, that a leaf goes wheresoever the wind blows, if it is not to disobey the wind. That which happens naturally is right. All the Zen master did was shake the tree; he did not pull off the leaves. Do you understand the difference? It is the difference between fanning oneself and getting out there and blowing like the wind. This can be a subtle and a very difficult point to get, but it is important. Manipulation is always wrong.

Dōgen concludes his chapter with this:

*In such a manner, coming to training, going on in training, training until you arrive, and training beyond arriving are at all times ‘just for the time being, just for a while’.*

You are in the flow whether you wish to be or not. Whether you stay in this monastery or whether you go elsewhere, whether you help this world or make millions in selling weapons, you’re still in the flow. You can like it or you can lump it. And I’m in it with you. Sure, there are moments when I’ve wanted to lump it, but “in it we all are,” and that’s the way you have to understand it. Would you have it any other way?

Now, if you want to really understand Zen, you should take each of the basic teachings of Buddhism and each of the other chapters of the *Shōbōgenzō* and see how they relate to Ūji, because they all come out of this flow. Their cause is within the flow and their meaning can only be truly

understood within the flow. All of these things, and indeed everything whatsoever, is the existence/time/flow of “for the time being.”

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<sup>i</sup> The Very Reverend Keidō Chisan Kohō Zenji (1879–1967) was Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett’s Transmission Master. He was the Chief Abbot of Dai Hon Zan Sōjiji, one of the two head temples of the Sōtō Zen School in Japan.

<sup>ii</sup> The term “monk” is used by Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett to refer to both male and female Buddhist monastics. She chose this usage because the term “nun” often carries with it an implication from Western monasticism that nuns are unable to become full priests whereas male monks are. In the Sōtō Zen tradition, both men and women are equal in monastic and priestly functions.

<sup>iii</sup> See “Respectful Bowing Will Secure for You the Very Marrow of the Way” (*Raihai Tokuzui*), *Shobo.*, 108–134; *Shushogi*, ZEL, 99 and 100; and *Bendowa*, Ques. 13, ZEL, 190.

## 2.

### *All is One AND All is Different*

From Lectures on *Genjō Kōan*, “The Spiritual Question as It Manifests Before Your Very Eyes”

*In that period of time when Buddhas give voice to the Teachings on existence in all its variety, there is talk of ‘delusion and enlightenment’, of ‘practice and training’, of ‘birth’, of ‘death’, of ‘Buddhas’, of ‘ordinary beings’: in that period of time when it is no longer relevant to speak of an ‘I’ along with its ‘whole universe’, there is no delusion or enlightenment, no Buddhas or ordinary beings, no being born, no extinction.*

When there is Buddhism, there is diversification; all things are seen to be unique in their differences. When you find That which is True, none of these things exist. Thus the Way of the Buddha includes, and also transcends, *both* unity and individuality, which I have sometimes expressed as, “All is One *and* all is different.” Do not remain forever within dualistic individuality, for you will never know the unity. And, do not try to stay within the unity, for you will not know the fullness of Truth. Know that you must go beyond both. Too often we look down upon the differences and idealize the unity. What we are speaking of in this chapter lies beyond both of them, yet embraces them. We may call it the Truth, we may call it Immaculacy, we may call it

That which we know within ourselves, but all of these names are wrong. All is One, yes, and you may see It within the all is different.

*Because the path to Buddhahood naturally springs forth from a feeling that there is 'too much' of one thing or 'not enough' of another, there is 'birth and extinction', there is 'delusion and enlightenment', there is 'ordinary beings and Buddhas'. Yet, even though this is the way things are, still, we feel regret at a blossom's falling and loathe to see the weeds envelop everything.*

All things in their diversity are signs of the Truth, all are part of the Truth, and it is the diversity which brings us to religious training. But if we get caught up with liking or disliking, then we are very far away from the Truth, and "isms" exist. You have to accept things as they are. That is why all-acceptance is the key to the "gateless gate" of Zen.

*To undertake enlightening the whole universe through one's training while carrying the burden of a self is a delusion: to enlighten oneself through training while urging all things onward is an awakening from delusion.*

When we say, "I am doing this," as opposed to allowing Buddha Nature, which is within, to do all, then we are deluded. I do nothing of myself, but the Buddhas and Ancestors (which taught me earlier, in the form of my own master) may act through me. Be very careful when

the certainty of realization comes to you. Be very careful of becoming God in your own mind.

*To have a great awakening to one's delusion is to be as all Buddhas are: to be greatly deluded within one's enlightenment is to be as ordinary people are.*

This shows the importance of humility. To know the Truth within yourself from seeing It within all things—that is enlightenment. But to say that *you*, personally, are doing it, then you are in great trouble, because then you have become God in your own mind. Let me relate this to the first chapter of the *Denkōroku*, which poses the question of whether Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment is personal or universal. This is known as “the question of the ‘I’ and the ‘with,’” for it arises from the statement made by Shakyamuni Buddha at His enlightenment that “I was, am, and will be enlightened instantaneously *with* the universe.”<sup>i</sup> It appears from this statement that the Buddha was saying that His enlightenment is both personal and universal. But is that really what He meant? In the *Denkōroku*, Keizan Zenji, the great grand-disciple of Dōgen, answers this by saying,

If it is said that you **were, are and will be enlightened** with *Shakyamuni* or *Shakyamuni was, is and will be enlightened with you, then it is not *Shakyamuni's* enlightenment and...cannot be the principle of enlightenment. If you want to understand the principle of enlightenment in detail, throw away *Shakyamuni* and you at the same time and know that they are “I.” The “I” and “with” in *Shakyamuni's**

first utterance **was, is and will be** the whole world, the universe and animate things; this “*I*” is not the old Gautama. Study in detail, think fully and understand “*I*” and “*with*.” Even if you can understand “*I*,” and you cannot realise “*with*,” you cannot understand fully; you see with only one eye.

Now, the “*I*” that is being spoken of in these passages is what does training and what realizes enlightenment through learning from all things. It is not the personal “*I*” of the self. In fact, this *I* is the “all is One”; the *with* is the “all is different.” It is not the “*I*” of “*I* am teaching and enlightening all things.” This new *I* is present when all things teach and enlighten us.

So, we start off in training from the place of the old *I*, which is the selfish “all is different” of duality. In the course of training with this *I*, we find the new *I* of the “all is One.” Then we must let go even of this, to find the *with*, which is the new “all is different” of “all is One *and* all is different.” If one fails to realize both the *I* and the *with*, one “sees with only one eye,” because if you cannot understand that the *with* (the new “all is different”) is also the *whole* of Buddhahood, you are not going to see the Buddha in the bum who walks through the door. If you are stuck with the old *I*, you are just going to see a bum, and what you will say is, “How can a bum be a Buddha?” If you are stuck with the new *I*, all that you can see is a Buddha and, because you refuse to discern the aspects of how he is being a bum, then you cannot help him. If you see a Buddha who happens to be a bum, then all things can teach and enlighten you.

One thing that a master finds out is that every single creature or person who walks through his or her door is a

teacher. If he does it by any other means then he is in great trouble and likely to become God in his own head. This is why I have pointed out on many occasions that I lose nothing whatsoever by taking advice from other people, or by asking their help. They can teach me. If you suffer from the idea that you “know” and nothing can teach you, then the Buddhas can’t help you. The *Genjō Kōan* goes right to the heart of the *Shakyamuni* of the *Denkōroku*. One is the explanation of the other. It doesn’t matter which one you start with: it’s the explanation of the other. So, when I hear that someone wants to be a monk so that they can be a parish priest or wants to do Zen training so that they can help the world, I know that this is not yet their real *I* speaking. It is the “I” of Prince Gautama; it is not the “I” of *Shakyamuni Buddha*.

Says Dōgen:

*Moreover, there are those folks who realize enlightenment on top of their enlightenment: there are those folks who are deluded within their delusion.*

It is perfectly true that once you have understood something you can never be as if you had not understood it. What Dōgen is saying is not a matter of, “My former enlightenment was not enlightenment.” It is a matter of, “My enlightenment is deeper now than it was then, and it will be deeper still tomorrow.” And, know that the “my” here, is not the “my” of self but rather the “my” of *Shakyamuni*. Some people are enlightened within enlightenment: it never stops, it deepens. Others are deluded within delusion. The fruit of delusion is compounded delusion. If you are in delusion and you act upon it, you can go deeper and deeper into



delusion, for it compounds itself when karmic consequence is not recognized as such. Dōgen is merely stating what is obvious: once you start to understand, you understand more and more, and you never stop understanding. Once you don't understand, you understand less and less, because you become harder and harder in your own mind. That is why it is necessary to keep in mind constantly the words, "I could be wrong; I could do harm." Those words are actually another version of the Three Pure Precepts: I will cease from all evil, I will do only good, I will do good for others.

*When Buddhas are truly Buddhas, They need not perceive that They Themselves are Buddha. Even so, having awakened to Their Buddha Nature, They will carry within Themselves Their confirmation of Their Buddha Nature.*

It may sound odd, but you really do not need to know when you are within enlightenment: it doesn't matter. When you are complete, when you are adequate in the real sense, knowing this doesn't matter. Nothing can detract from Buddha Nature and nothing can add to It. This is what it means in the Morning Service Scriptures when they say that "of cats there are some kinds, as also some white cows, that perfect are just as they are." Such a person does not need to be what they are not, because his or her adequacy is the fullness of Buddhahood, and that which is adequate needs nothing added and nothing taken away, including the knowledge of its own enlightenment.



*Since we are provided with both a body and a mind, we grasp on to the physical forms we see: since we are provided with both a body and a mind, we cling to the sounds we hear. As a consequence, we make ourselves inseparable from all things, yet we are not like some shadowy figure 'lodging' in a mirror or like the moon in water. Whenever we witness what is on the one side, its opposite side will be in darkness.*

Having thrown us into the deep end and found that we can swim, Dōgen is now starting to give us some practical instructions on our strokes. It is said in Zen that we must not mistake the finger pointing at the Moon for the Moon itself, and not mistake the reflection of the Moon within the water for the Moon itself. These two are common mistakes in training, and they arise because of our natural tendency to grasp at things. The first mistake is to get so distracted by the finger pointing at the Moon (by the words and means of teaching) that we mistake them for the Moon itself (for the Truth). The second is to get so drunk with ourselves that, when we see the reflection of the Moon in the puddle (that is, when we have some taste of religious experience), we try to grab at the reflection and we fall flat on our face in the mud. Neither of these are to know the Moon. What we should do, when seeing the Moon pointed to or reflected, is to be content and to share the Moon. At this point there is still duality, because there is "you" with the Moon inside you, but the wise trainee is content with the Moon. And, don't hang on to the reflection, otherwise you will never know the whole of the Moon. As soon as you interpose yourself between the Moon and its reflection, what you've got is just a muddy puddle. Let the reflection be there, and

be contented with the Moon. Be content to *be* a reflection, and use the light. Fair enough? If you try to do anything else, then you are trying to enlighten and teach all things. Just let everything teach and enlighten you. This is a practical instruction on how to get beyond both the old I and the new I.

*To learn what the path to Buddhahood is is to learn what the True Self is. To learn what the True Self is is to forget about the self. To forget about the self is to become one with the whole universe. To become one with the whole universe is to be shed of 'my body and mind' and 'their bodies and minds'. The traces from this experience of awakening to one's enlightenment will quiet down and cease to show themselves, but it takes quite some time for all outer signs of being awake to disappear.*

This is a beautiful passage and a most valuable guide to training. By and large, it speaks for itself; savor it. It is important to note, however, that Dōgen says that we must not only cast off “my body and mind” but also we must shed off “their bodies and minds.” It is easy enough to see that one needs to do something about oneself and shed “my” body and mind, but to see that you’ve got to cast off your notions about the body and mind of others is not so quickly or easily seen. “Yes, I know so-and-so has the Buddha Nature but it’s hard for me to see it now and then.” That is quite a normal state to be in, but it occurs because you have not as yet been able to fully “forget about the self”; you are holding on to your evaluations and opinions about others. And, if you can only shed your own body and mind, and not

the body and mind of others, then you can never be anything more than half-enlightened, for you'll never really see past your self.

*When someone first begins to search for the Dharma, he is very far from the realm of the Dharma: once he has had the Dharma passed on to him, he will quickly become one who abides in his Original State.*

Now, this requires a bit of explanation, because there is something implicit here that is not stated: generally when we start searching for the Dharma we look for it outside of ourselves. That is the reason that we are far from it, not because of the fact that we are searching or because of any inherent separation. This is one of those things that Dōgen probably didn't think needed stating because it was so obvious. It is like me never thinking, when over in England the first time after I returned from the East, to tell people to puff up their meditation cushions after each sitting period. It was obvious that people needed to do that because otherwise the cushions would become as hard as bricks. Why tell someone something which they obviously know? Then, one day after I had been quietly patting up my cushion, somebody came up to me and asked, "By the way, are we permitted to do that, too?" They'd been sitting for four days of sesshin without doing it, and I had this horrible feeling inside of realizing what it must have been like sitting on those hard bricks because they didn't know you were supposed, or permitted, to pat a cushion up. It was so obvious to my mind that it just never occurred to me to tell anybody. And the same thing is true here of Dōgen. When you first study, automatically you look outside yourself, because that is

what almost everybody does. So, Dōgen does not insult his disciples' intelligence by telling them that they're looking outside.

But sometimes if you don't run the risk of the insult, maybe hardly anyone is going to know what you're talking about. And if that happens, you then run the risk that the statement that Dōgen makes here can be badly misunderstood as meaning that it is only through the intervention of others (those who "pass on the Dharma") that we can train properly. So, I am going to state what may be obvious to some of you and say that this is not what it means. It means that we have to stop looking outside of ourselves and start turning within.

He now moves on to another practical topic. One of Dōgen's sayings that has always worried people because they feel that it's hard or cold is, "If life comes, it is life; if death comes, it is death: there is no reason whatsoever for a being to be controlled by either and hope should not be put within them." Here, he gives a further explanation of how to understand this teaching which, far from being cold, can yield great comfort and equanimity. He starts by using his favorite metaphor of a boat and the shore, reminding us of the relative nature of our perceptions of reality, and how the Real transcends them:

*When someone riding in a boat turns his gaze toward the shore, he misjudges the shore to be moving; when he fixes his eye firmly upon the boat, he will recognize that the boat is plowing on. Likewise, should you let your mind and body run riot, going along with what you perceive the world to be, you will make the mistake of thinking you have a permanently abiding*

*self-nature within your body and mind. If you commit yourself fully to traveling the Way and return to that Place within, the reason why there is no personal 'self' within the whole universe will become clear.*

Just be still and note the appearances of things without being caught up in them, he is saying, and know the Reality. Know that It presents all the characteristics of Buddhahood; sometimes one sees one characteristic, sometimes one sees another. This does not matter; what matters is to know It in Its Reality. Only for a very short time does It appear as one thing, and It appears so because of our limited vision which can only apprehend a portion of the flow of space/time/existence. Even our limitations are always changing. The principle of anicca is infinite. If we view all things bearing this in mind, the principle of anatta,<sup>†</sup> “the reason why there is no personal ‘self’ within the whole universe” soon becomes apparent. There can be no self because there is constant change; yet we must also have the recognition that Buddhahood *is* in all things and may be seen through the constant change. Do not think that, because It looks like one thing one day and something else another, It is no longer Buddha. Do not confuse the old I for the new I.

“Seeing things as they really are” is another term for being enlightened; it does not make things as you want them to be, it makes them as they *really are*. Do you understand what I’m getting at? People say, “I want enlightenment,” but what they are really saying is, “I want things to be better than they are right now and I’m convinced that that’s what enlightenment is.” But that is not Reality. Enlightenment is seeing things as they *really* are. Reality does not have to be pleasant. Reality is Reality; don’t suffer

from the idea that enlightenment is going to give you everything you want. As I have said, it will not necessarily make you happy. It might; I mean, maybe the Reality that you find is what you actually wanted to find anyway, regardless of your ideas and opinions. But you have to be prepared to accept that It is almost never as you *thought* you wanted things to be. The key to dealing with the kōan<sup>†</sup> of everyday life, the “genjō kōan,” is the acceptance of Reality. The solving of the kōan of everyday life is the finding of all-acceptance. When you accept what is, then your ego is out of the way and you will find samsara, this world, to be a beautiful playground. And in that place, even life and death are not a problem. Dōgen now goes on to explain how this works.

*A stick of firewood, once reduced to ashes, cannot once again revert to being a stick of firewood. Nevertheless, you should not hold on to the opinion that the ashes are the future of that which the stick was the past. What you need to understand is that, when firewood is persisting in the physical state of being firewood, there will be a before and there will be an after. Although there is a before and an after, there is a now which is cut off from ‘before’ and ‘after’. While ashes persist in the physical state of being ashes, they will have their ‘after’ and their ‘before’.*

Here he is saying that we should not think that death is simply the potential state of life. Within the acceptance of the flow of the eternal now of Ūji, death is simply death, and life is simply life. Each is complete and entirely

satisfactory just as it is. He speaks to this again later in the chapter when he says,

*...A fish in the ocean, wherever it swims, finds the water limitless; a bird in the sky, wherever it flies, finds the air unbounded. Nevertheless, fish and birds, from the very beginning, have always been one, respectively, with the water and the sky. To put it simply, when their need is great, their use is great; when their need is small, their use is small. Acting in this manner, they never fail to make the fullest use of their environs at all times, nor do they ever reject what they may find there. Even so, if a bird is pulled out of the air, in short order it will perish; if a fish is pulled out of the water, it will quickly die. You must have realized by now that ‘the water’ signifies ‘life’, just as ‘the sky’ signifies ‘life’. ‘A bird’ refers to ‘a life’, just as ‘a fish’ refers to ‘a life’. ‘Being alive’ should be taken to mean ‘the bird’, as well as ‘the fish’. Moreover, this should be taken one step further, since the situation is no different for spiritual practice and realization, or with the flow of life and the life in that flow....*

We all think that whatever we experience at the moment is all that there is, just like the fish views the water or the bird views the air. Therefore, some fear that death is an endless state, and some think that they are immortal when they are alive. Yet when we are “pulled out of our element,” we realize that there is change and, if we accept that change, then there is endless flow. In this way there is no less life in death than there is life in life. The element of fish is water; the element of birds is sky: when there is life there



is life; when there is death there is death. One is one element, the other is another element. There is no need to get involved with things like souls or with beliefs such as “we will rise again from the dead.” Simply, there are fish in water, there are birds in sky. If a bird tries to become a fish it will die. If a fish tries to become a bird it will die. In their own element, they *are*.

If someone thinks that there is nothing but death, and there is no escape from death, or there is nothing but life, and there is no escape from life, then he or she has not learned all-acceptance. If death comes there is only death; if life comes there is only life. You need not worry about life or death; what you must do is to stay still in the Buddha Nature, which all share. Do not worry about changing elements or changing seasons; one does not become the other; they are different things, each fully adequate just as it is. And, the Unborn is not them; It is not the elements. It is not life; It is not death; It simply *IS*.

*When you arrive at this Place, you will have been spiritually questioning what is before your very eyes by traveling the Way of the Buddhas and Ancestors; when you locate the path you have been following, you will discover that it is the spiritual question that has been before your very eyes as you have traveled the Way. This path and this Place are neither large nor small, neither ‘self’ nor ‘other’, nor something from the past, nor something revealed in the now: It is just as It is....*

This is how you put the teachings into practice: you must examine the question that is before your very eyes. It

is not a technique for when you've got nothing better to do, it is the practice for every hour of the day and night. Really, the meditation hall is a workshop where you are learning the practice of staying with this (often unspoken) question in your very guts. When Dōgen speaks of this question as having been always before your eyes as you have traveled the Way, he is not just referring to the time of your formal Buddhist training, for your entire life has been a "traveling of the Way." In kids this spiritual question has always existed. And, of course, kids live the question rather than asking it with their minds: that is their way of working on the kōan, for they have not yet developed their brain for reading and analyzing and all the rest of it. They don't have the ability to read all these brilliantly clever books, so they have no other alternative but to live within their spiritual question. That is what makes children natural. It is also what often makes the kōan so intense for them. They have the blessing and the curse of not knowing either the ways of convoluted thinking or the ways of practice; you have the blessing and the curse of knowing the ways of practice and also being able to be attached to your ideas about them. And, when you look back upon both of these times of training from the viewpoint of enlightenment, you will see that, fundamentally, all was pure training.

And what will you see about the training of the current moment, from the place of enlightenment?

*To be sure, having once realized the Place, you must not analyze It in order to understand It through discriminatory thought and, thereby, reduce It to fit your own opinions. When you have bored through to certainty, It all at once manifests before your very*

*eyes, yet That which is the most intimate will not necessarily take some visible form: 'manifesting before your very eyes' may or may not have a literal meaning.*

The Buddha may be enlightened, but “being enlightened” is not what He is aware of. He just does that which has to be done. Do not suffer from the idea that after enlightenment there will be trumpets blowing and people saluting you as the great and holy saint. You are going to look just as you are now. As the *Denkōroku* quite clearly points out about Shakyamuni Buddha, “Always He had the form and figure of an old monk.” Always He wore His robe and always He carried His begging bowl. In other words, a Buddha looks like a normal human being. Have you ever thought about the “the thirty-two marks of a Buddha”? Everybody has one or two of them. Somebody has long arms, somebody else has long ears, another has a mole on his chest, so it goes on. What these marks are really telling you is that *everybody* has the signs of Buddhahood. Don't go around suffering from the idea that enlightenment makes you special.

And especially don't go around suffering from the idea that after enlightenment you will know about it. Yes, in one sense you *will* know, but what you “know” is not that you “are enlightened.” One thing that you will know is that there is no “karmic wake” following behind your actions. As many of you know, I was in the Navy, so I sometimes think in nautical terms. If your action leaves behind it a broad and turbulent wake of disturbance to yourself and other people, then you may be sure that it is unenlightened action. But when a person is gliding through the water with no wake happening at all, when nothing special seems to be

going on, he or she may think, “How dull my life is.” But it may well be that those are the times when you’re doing exactly the right thing, because there is no wake following an enlightened act. Thus, everything you read in the newspaper is the story of unenlightened action and its karmic wake. When we ask what’s in the news today, what we are really saying is, “Who wasn’t enlightened today?” so that we can feel better because we were less deluded than they were. That’s a lovely delusion in itself, isn’t it? It is one of the reasons why Zen monasteries generally don’t have newspapers. News is not what is really important. Enlightened action *leaves no wake*.

Dōgen concludes the chapter with the famous story of Hōtetsu and his fan:

*Meditation Master Hōtetsu of Mount Mayoku (C. Makushan Pao-ch’ e), one summer day, sat fanning himself when a monk came up to him and said, “It is said that the nature of the wind always abides and that there is no place where it does not circulate, so why does my reverend monk fan himself?” The Master replied, “You are merely aware that the Nature of the Wind always abides, but you have not yet grasped the principle that nowhere is It not present and active.” When the monk then asked, “What is this underlying principle of Its being universally present?” the Master simply continued to fan himself. The monk respectfully bowed to the Master.*

Perfect description! How do you catch the fan, how do you catch the movement of the fan, how do you catch that which it fans, how do you hold onto your breath, how do

you hold onto life—without destroying it? Do not try to hold onto *anything*. Just look in the place we have been describing: the place of the Way, the place of training, the place of simply doing what is to be done, the place of ceasing from all evil whatsoever and of doing that which is good, the place of actions without wake. We have to train, otherwise we will not know this place. Thus it is good for the master to be using the fan. And, It is still present, It is still unborn. Ultimately, there is no way of expressing It, *and* we still train ourselves. And so Dōgen may conclude:

*...Because the Nature of the Wind is always abiding, the winds of training for our Buddhist family bring about the manifesting before one's very eyes of That which is the True Gold of the Great Earth, and bring to maturity the nourishing waters of the Greatest River.*

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<sup>i</sup> The name “*Shakyamuni*,” which Rev. Master Jiyu uses to refer to the Buddha after His enlightenment in her translation of *The Denkōroku*, is always placed by her in italics to indicate His enlightened state. Similarly, in this translation, when the words “*I*” and “*with*” appear in italics, they refer to the non-egocentric state of at-oneness with the universe. The translations of *The Denkōroku* referred to here are found in ZEL, 224–296 and in Denk.

### 3.

## *It is ENOUGH to know the Unborn*

From a Lecture on *Shin Fukatoku*,  
“The Mind Cannot be Grasped”

This particular chapter, *Shin Fukatoku*, points out the importance of not being stuck with scholarly ideas about words, of not being afraid of words, of not being afraid of people’s misinterpretation of what you say and, above all, of not being proud of yourself.

The character “shin,” in Japanese, translates as: “heart,” “heart-mind,” “mind,” “Mind,” “Buddha Nature” or even “soul.” In order to avoid being criticized for possibly holding a belief in a soul, most teachers of Buddhism throughout the centuries have preferred to translate “shin” as “mind.” Unfortunately, this does not tell the average listener what sort of mind is being talked about. When you simply say “mind,” the implication of the word is “thinking.” And that, in the end, becomes what “shin” means to many people, instead of their realizing that what is really being spoken of is something much deeper: our True Heart or Buddha Nature. So, in the very attempt to say that which will not be misunderstood, people often say that which is immediately misunderstood. I am going to try something different.

“Shin fukatoku,” which is usually translated as “the mind cannot be grasped,” could be translated as “the Heart

or Buddha Nature cannot be grasped.” In other words, we cannot know, we cannot weigh, we cannot understand our True Heart or Buddha Nature. I think that “Buddha Nature” is a lot better term than “Heart,” and certainly than “soul,” but the point is that It can be experienced, It can be known, but It cannot be held onto. Dōgen’s famous metaphor of putting one’s hand into the water and feeling the water flow through one’s fingers is highly applicable here: you cannot take your hand out of the water and hope to hold onto a handful of water. But when you have your hand in the water, you know what water is, as it flows past. And, for the true trainee, it is enough to know Buddha Nature. It does not *need* to be grasped, held onto, or attached to. All these lovely highfallutin’ philosophical words like “attachment” and “non-attachment” all sound so wonderful, but what matters is that it is *enough* to know Buddha Nature. It is *enough* to know the Unborn. Don’t try to hold on to It. Don’t try to grasp It. Just let It flow. And be content.

Dōgen starts the chapter like this:

*The Mind that cannot be grasped is what all Buddhas are, for they personally rely upon It as supreme, fully perfected enlightenment. The Diamond Scripture says, “The mind of the past cannot be retained, the mind of the present cannot be held onto, the mind of the future cannot be grasped.” This saying makes explicit the relying upon the Mind that cannot be held onto, which is what all Buddhas are. It is what they have come to rely upon, saying that It is the unretainable mind of past, present, and future, and that It is the ungraspable Mind of all thoughts and things.*

Now in this translation, the terms “Mind” and “mind” are both used, so pay close attention to whether there is a capital “M” or a small one. The former is used to refer to what I will call “Buddha Nature”; the latter for the ordinary thinking mind. This way works, but you have to be careful, because if you lose track of which is which, or become careless in copying things down, pretty soon you have lost that capital letter and can no longer distinguish whether we were speaking of the Buddha Nature or of a bunch of gray matter in our heads which has the ability to think.

What the passage is saying is that the only way to understand past, present, and future correctly is by using Buddha Nature. You do not use the ordinary mind for this; you do not think and analyze. One should only use Buddha Nature, for this is the mind of Ūji, the flow of the universe, which is the only way to really understand the flow of what we call “time.” In fact, the passage also says that Buddha Nature is the only thing that can really understand our ordinary mind, as well!

Unfortunately, because of the many uses of the term “mind” down the ages, it is very difficult to know just what is being spoken of in passages such as this one from the *Diamond Scripture*. This particular chapter of the *Shōbōgenzō* will speak of the monk Tokusan who, in his early days, had a swollen-headed, ordinary-mind understanding of the *Diamond Scripture*. Now, Tokusan later became a very great Zen master; in fact he is one of the two masters from which the word “Sōtō” is taken: Sōzan and Tokusan. Sometimes it is held to be Tōzan rather than Tokusan. People argue as to which of the two it is (I heard both opinions in the Far East), but it doesn’t really matter. What does matter is that these were people who eventually



taught the Truth. In this chapter we are mostly going to hear of Tokusan's mistakes, and we may be tempted to look down on him and think of him as kind of cute, but please don't do that.

*If we do not learn from the Buddhas what They are relying on which makes this matter clear, we will not directly experience It, and if we do not learn from the Ancestors what they are relying on, we will not be truly Transmitted.... If you do not learn the Way of the Buddhas and do not enter the quarters of an Ancestor, you will not see or hear about It nor will you understand It. The method for asking about It will be beyond you, and you will not understand the means for expressing It, even in your dreams.*

Another translation renders this passage in such a way that it points out that even Buddhist scholars are unable to conceive of It. We need meditation in order to “study” this, and we must not understand the words of the Buddhas and Ancestors in terms of the usual meanings of words, or the meanings which the world has put upon them. For the world usually sinks to the lowest common denominator. Therefore, scholarship, in the ordinary sense, is not enough. There has to be “scholarship plus,” otherwise Truth cannot be understood. And there must be no pride; it is *enough* for us to know the Unborn. The more we strive to put It into fancy words, to explain It, to sort It out—the more we do this, the less we understand. Be content. An ancient Zen saying advises that we not try to “jump beyond the Great Round Mirror.”

Dōgen now recounts the story of Tokusan's famous encounter with an old woman.

*When Tokusan (C. Te-shan), in his earlier days, was still not a solid fellow, he had excelled in the Diamond Scripture. People at that time called him Chou, Fully Perfected Lord of the Diamond Scripture. He was king among more than eight hundred scholars. Not only was he well versed in the commentaries by Ch'ing-lung in particular, but he had also edited a ton of writings, and there was no lecturer who could stand shoulder to shoulder with him. When he happened to hear that in the south there was an unsurpassed Buddhist Teaching that was being passed on from successor to successor, he went there, crossing mountains and rivers, loaded down with texts. He had stopped to catch his breath by the side of the road leading to [the temple of Master] Ryūtan (C. Lung-t'an), when an old woman came by. Tokusan asked her who she was. The old woman replied, "I am an old woman who sells rice cakes." Tokusan asked her, "Will you sell me some rice cakes?" The old woman said, "Reverend monk, why would you want to buy them?" Tokusan replied, "I would buy your rice cakes so that I might refresh my mind."*

*The old woman remarked, "Reverend monk, that load you're carrying with you is really something!" Tokusan replied, "Have you not heard of me? I am Chou, Fully Perfected Lord of the Diamond Scripture. I have so mastered this Scripture that there is nothing in it that I do not understand. What I am carrying with me are my commentaries on the Diamond Scripture."*

*Upon hearing him say this, the old woman asked, “Reverend monk, would you permit an old woman like me to put a question to you?” Tokusan replied, “Yes, ask whatever you may wish.” She said, “I once heard the part in the Diamond Scripture where it says, ‘The mind of the past cannot be grabbed hold of, the mind of the present cannot be grabbed hold of, the mind of the future cannot be grabbed hold of.’ Which mind do you think you are going to refresh with rice cakes? If the reverend monk is able to say, I will sell him some rice cakes. If the reverend monk is unable to say, I will not sell him any rice cakes.” Tokusan, at this moment, was so dumbfounded that he did not remember how he should respond, whereupon the old woman dismissed him with a flick of her wrist and left, in the end, not selling Tokusan any of her rice cakes.*

Since Tokusan did not yet know his True Nature and only thought of his own mind (his physical mind and his knowledge) as being the real Tokusan, since he had not yet found the Buddha Nature which every single person possesses, since he was trying to grasp the ungraspable, he had no ability to answer her question. It was on this occasion that he first made his famous comment that “a painting of a rice cake cannot satisfy one’s hunger.” And, of course, we have to remember that the old woman, herself, didn’t answer her own question. If she had, and had answered it correctly, we could have been sure of her understanding. As Dōgen goes on to point out, it is possible that she simply thought that the mind was something that could not be possessed or did not exist. There are all sorts of possibilities as to what was going on in her head.

This story is often thought of much too loosely and in much too cute a manner. If we would understand it, we must take into consideration that the old woman was possibly not enlightened either. So often, especially in the West, if one person is wrong the other person believes he's right, or if one person is right he believes the other one to be wrong. It never occurs to them that they could both be right or both be wrong. This has occurred to Dōgen, and he is the only person I know of who asks the question of how we know this old woman was right. No one knows it. This does not mean that he is looking down on a rice cake seller as being incapable of knowing. It is simply stated: we don't know if she knew or not. That is a very different matter. It also tells us of the danger of trying to sort things out in our heads instead of just being content to know the Unborn. There is really no point in trying to grasp such things, to analyze them, to take them apart: "should there be this, should there be that; should I understand this, should I understand that?" Just let it be enough to know the Unborn, and to feel It coursing through your veins. Don't try to do more. And when it is time to act, trust the Buddha Nature to guide you instead of trying to figure everything out with your mind.

When I was in the Far East, people were encouraged to write down what went on in their meditation. And the instant they became too analytical or too philosophical, they were "stuffed back into their shells" again with the words, "Be content." It is *enough* to know the Unborn. Do not try to analyze and sort out. Don't get me wrong: the mind that sorts and analyzes has its purpose when it comes to balancing your checkbook, but do not abuse it by trying to make it understand ultimate things. Just be content, and all the unnecessary thinking and worry will be washed out of you,

like so much dirt out of dirty linen. None of it matters. It is *enough* to know the Unborn. Who cares about “minds”—past, present or future? Just know the Unborn, and be content with that.

Dōgen goes on to talk about the possibility of reconstructing the story of Tokusan and the old woman. On the one hand, unless a person can show the Truth and exhibit compassion, he or she does not really understand Zen. This is true of them both. On the other hand, Tokusan was clearly swollen-headed and proud of his own knowledge. Neither showed compassion, love, or understanding. Therefore, do not think the old woman is superior to Tokusan. Do not make her into something she is not. Also, do not make her into something that she is not in the opposite direction. Remember, we do not know. We are not judges.

*...the old woman should say something more for Tokusan's sake. But she only gave him a flick of her wrist and left. Maybe there was a bee in her sleeve. Tokusan, for his part, does not even say, "I'm unable to say anything. Old woman, will you say something in my stead?" So, not only did he fail to say what he should have said, he also did not ask what he should have asked. What a pity!...*

Here was a wonderful opportunity to speak of Buddha Nature, and somehow it got all muddled with brains, bragging, and rice cakes. This is what so often happens when people do not know that it is enough to know the Unborn: arguments set in about rice cakes and about “if the Buddha gets in your way you should kill Him,” and “if the Master gets in the way you should kill him,” and “who is the true

Master,” and “what is this,” and “what is that,” and “what am I doing here,” and “why are we doing it”—and before you know it, you’ve packed your bags and you’ve left the temple because no sense is coming out of what is being said. Do not fall into this! We sit here in meditation to know the Unborn. *Be content!* It is *enough!* More you should not need, nor seek.

Tokusan stayed in the state that we have been talking about for a long time after this. But he trained diligently under the guidance of the Zen Master Ryūtan, until one night he dropped off mind and found Buddha Nature when, as they were walking together down a dark corridor, Ryūtan blew out his candle. It takes many years, if one is as stuck as Tokusan, to reach the stage when the mind, exhausted and fed up with trying to do that which it has no right to attempt, is “blown out” by the catalyst of a gutted candle.

The chapter concludes with this lovely paragraph:

*So, novices who are learning through their training should, beyond doubt, be diligent in their explorations. Those who have treated it lightly are not right. Those who have been diligent in their explorations are Ancestors of the Buddha. In sum, ‘the mind cannot grasp It’ is the same as saying that someone has bought a painting of a rice cake, then chewed it all up in one mouthful, savoring its flavor.*

Constantly take refuge in your fellow trainees, whether they be senior or junior to you, and do not be lazy. Do not avoid hardships and do not worry about those who misunderstand. These are part of this human life, part of the “suffering exists” of Shakyamui Buddha’s First Noble Truth.

Do not expect to avoid such things along the way to genuine Buddhist understanding. Do not seek to define “Mind,” or “Buddha,” or “Buddha Nature”; and do not be afraid of such words. Do not worry about concepts or theories. For you, it must be enough to know the Unborn, to know the Buddha Nature. Trying to grasp It is exactly the same as trying to eat a painting of a rice cake. And, as Dōgen points out above and in *Gabyō*, the final chapter in this series, do not devalue even a painting of a rice cake for, to the Unborn Buddha Mind, all things can nourish true training.

## 4.

### *The Lotus Flower of the Dharma*

From a Lecture on *Hokke Ten Hokke*, “The Flowering of the Dharma Sets the Flowering of the Dharma in Motion”

It is important, before I actually go into the details of this lecture, to remember one or two points. The first is Dōgen’s understanding of time, Ūji: that there is no past, present, or future. There is just That which has always been and always is: the eternally flowing now. The second point you need to remember is the verse in the *Diamond Sutra*, which is right at the end of it, which says,

Thus shall ye think of all this fleeting world:  
A star at dawn, a bubble in a stream;  
A flash of lightning in a summer cloud,  
A flickering lamp, a phantom, and a dream.

Once we are free of the tyranny of time and space and recognize the illusion of this fleeting world, then we can know what Master Dōgen will refer to in this chapter as the flowering of the Dharma. And, we will be in a position to understand how it is possible that this flowering not only enlightens us but we also are the very ones who set the Flower of the Dharma in motion. Then, also, *The Scripture of Great Wisdom* can truly come alive; in fact, it will flash like something greater than a million suns.



The third thing you need to remember is the teaching given in the *Lotus Sutra* of the One Vehicle rather than the three. You all know the parable of the burning house<sup>i</sup> and of the three little carts (representing the Three Vehicles<sup>†</sup> of Buddhism) that were offered to people to entice them out of the house, where they found waiting for them the one cart, the One Great Vehicle which transcends all “vehicles.” It is within this One Vehicle of training beyond any “isms” that the flowering of the Dharma occurs. If you would understand this chapter of the *Shōbōgenzō*, you must keep these three points well in mind.

These three things also explain, by the way, the reason and purpose for which we are sometimes given the privilege of knowing what we call our “past lives.” They are to teach us not only the causes of current conditions and what mistakes not to repeat in the future but also that there is no such thing as time or space and that all is but a dream.



Dōgen starts the chapter by introducing the Lotus Sutra and the appearance within it of Manjushrī Bodhisattva,<sup>†</sup> along with the Buddha Shakyamuni, both of whom cause the flowering of the Dharma to arise by their enlightened actions and their expounding of the Teaching. Of Shakyamuni, Dōgen says:

*...with Shakyamuni Buddha, there was His emerging in the world with His realizing that “only I recognize the true character of things, as is also so with Buddhas everywhere”. This is equivalent to the time when “I, along with all Buddhas everywhere, having*

*fully awakened to the True Matter, desire to help sentient beings open up to It, manifest It, awaken to It, and enter It."*

These two statements by Shakyamuni Buddha are examples of the flowering of the Dharma, of the manifesting in this world of Truth. If you would understand the place from which these statements come, you must first be able to see "this fleeting world" as "a bubble in a stream"; you must know that what appears as "reality" is not Reality as lived from the position beyond the opposites. Because, you see, if you would know the fact that now—this very here and now—is the *Lotus Sutra*, the lecture on Vulture Peak given by Shakyamuni Buddha, if you would know that you are one, simultaneously, with the "here" and "the Beyond," then you must realize that there is no such thing as time and space. In this place, all things—including what you regard as "reality" and what you think of as "past lives and visions"—are but dreams. Then, and only then, can such things as past lives or visions be helpful in Zen training, for they show you very clearly that you are both in what you believe to be "reality" and also simultaneously in a different reality. "Reality" is perhaps the wrong term here. These things make you question at a very basic level the nature of what you always thought of as being "just simply real." People argue and worry over whether visions and past lives are real, but this is completely beside the point. *All is a dream.* Only the Reality of the Buddhas and Ancestors—the Beyond, the Unborn—is the real Reality. And even this Reality cannot be grasped onto, as Dōgen will explore in more detail in his chapters *Muchō Setsumu* and *Gabyō*, which we will look at later. This is the state of awareness in

which you must come to live and move if the Dharma is to flower.

Unfortunately, society as we know it in this world likes to divide everything off into seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years. Therefore, the Buddhas and Ancestors say things such as that it takes millions of kalpas<sup>†</sup> to come to the state of awareness where a person is one with the Unborn, for They have to use common words to teach us. But how long is “millions of kalpas,” really? The answer is that it is as long as it takes to come to this awareness, for there actually is no time and no space. Thus also, Shakyamuni could say with perfect truth, “I am enlightened simultaneously with the universe, for before all the great masters and Ancestors were, I and they were.” You see how vital the *Diamond Sutra* and Ūji are to understanding this?

Next, Dōgen introduces the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra,<sup>†</sup> who also expounds the Dharma. Then he says:

*...Samantabhadra's proclaiming of the Dharma had not yet reached an end when the great assembly gathered on the Divine Vulture Peak to hear the Buddha give voice to the Dharma....*

This simultaneous appearance was possible for, again, there is no time and space.

*Shakyamuni's meeting with those in His assembly had not yet reached its midpoint when they experienced a flowering of the Dharma, which was set in motion by Mañjuśrī's affirmation of Maitreya's immanent realizing of Buddhahood.*

Remember that, although this realization of Buddhahood by Maitreya† is said to be going to occur some five billion years after the death of Shakyamuni, Maitreya comes here and now every time someone totally understands the meaning of true Reality and is one with the Unborn. Which is to say, Maitreya appears whenever the Dharma flowers in this world. When a person is looking with true eyes, it is obvious that all bodhisattvas (all true trainees) are extensions of the Buddha and thus they are Maitreya, for their training is what allows the Dharma to flower. And with ordinary eyes, they look just like ordinary people. It is essential to understand what is being said here, and to know the importance of not being subjugated by time, space, and physical existence. When I say that we must not be subjugated by physical existence, by the way, I am not advocating some sort of asceticism. In order to continue our training, our body has rights; just never allow it to order you around.

In the next few passages, Dōgen speaks of the teaching of the One Vehicle, a teaching which lies beyond distinctions such as those inherent in the view that there are three vehicles of training. This teaching is set forth by the *Lotus Sutra*, and he says of it:

*...Surely, this is being aroused by the flowering of the Dharma, when we say that this is what each Buddha alone, along with all other Buddhas, truly realizes in full. It is what those who succeeded the Buddha and what the Buddhas that have been Their successors have all opened up to, manifested, awakened to, and entered.*

*We also call this Scripture The Scripture on the Lotus Flower of the Wondrous Teaching, for it is the*

*Teaching that trains bodhisattvas. Because we refer to this Scripture as containing all thoughts and things, both the Divine Vulture Peak and the vast sky exist, as well as the great ocean and the great earth, with the Flower of the Dharma as their native land. As such, this Scripture describes how Truth appears: It is ‘just what is, as it is’.*

This property of being “just what is” is the same throughout all the centuries (as we call them), throughout all time (as we call it), for Truth stands outside of what we think of as time. I remember being at a lecture in Sōjiji when this was being discussed, and I kept marveling that, if what they were saying was indeed what the Buddha taught (and I didn’t doubt it), then *there was no time*. Time, as we think of it, is *completely irrelevant* to Buddhist training. This is an important point to remember, as we are apt to measure and judge our own training in terms of time. Do not do that: no time, no measuring, no judging.

*It is ‘the abode of the Dharma’ and ‘the invariable state of the Dharma’. It is ‘the impermanence of all actions’. It is ‘the reason for the one great matter for which we train’. It is ‘what the Buddha experienced directly’....*

Thus, when Buddha beholds Buddha, Buddha disappears and one fire springs up between two stones, the Fire of Reality. And this, too, is a flowering of the Dharma.

Great Master Dōgen then goes on to give an example of this from the life of the Sixth Chinese Patriarch, Great Master Daikan Enō. Remember that Daikan Enō was the

one who said, “Originally there is not a single thing; where can dust alight?” He might also have put it this way, “Since there is the Unborn, the Beyond, where can dust alight?” But, you see, as soon as you call it “the Unborn,” or “the Beyond,” then you are calling it something. So, he says there is “not a single thing.” That is true, and It is the fullest “nothing” that you will ever bump into. Seen from this position, there is also no such thing as a speck of dust, for this full “nothing” encompasses everything and could not have something that was outside of Itself alight upon It.

Dōgen gives an interchange between Daikan Enō and his disciple, Hōtatsu, in which the two explore the *Lotus Sutra* and its parable of the three carts which represent the three vehicles of Buddhist training. Enō summarizes the sutra and how to study it with a poem:

*When the mind wanders onto deluded paths,  
It is being set in motion by the flowering of the  
Dharma;  
When the heart awakens, the Dharma's flowering  
is set in motion.  
However long you recite this Scripture,  
should it be while still unawakened  
to the Self that is true,  
You then will create an enemy to its meaning.  
To read it without opinion's bonds is the proper way,  
But read it bound to fixed ideas, and it becomes  
error's way.  
When you cease to judge whether you are bound or not,  
You ride forever long within the cart by the White  
Ox drawn.*

But Hōtatsu has difficulty in fully accepting the scope and boundless generosity of the Dharma implied by Enō's poem:

*"...It is difficult for those of us who are not so highly gifted as you to escape from our doubts and skepticism. Further, in the Scripture it speaks of three vehicles, but what is the distinction between a large ox-cart and a cart drawn by a white ox? I pray that you, venerable monk, will once more favor us with your comments on these matters."*

Not only is he having difficulty accepting that even the deluded mind is not apart from being set in motion by the flowering of the Dharma, he is also still in the mind of the opposites with regard to the parable of the vehicles in the scripture. Let me explain a bit more about these vehicles. You should understand clearly that the teaching of the three vehicles does not mean that one vehicle is lower than the other, or higher than the other. They are three stages of development, and they all are needed. At first, as a shravaka,<sup>†</sup> one must truly hear and accept the precepts, recognize their importance, and live them not merely as rules but as something that is one's own blood and bones, which is also to understand training from the point of view of the twelve steps of dependent origination.<sup>†</sup> Then, as a pratyekabuddha,<sup>†</sup> we are not only shown what our karmic stream has done in the past, but also how it is dependent upon causation: how those twelve steps actually have operated in our own karmic past. It is important to see both the reality and the unreality of our own karma. Karma is not just to show you mistakes that have been made and that need help, it is also to show you

how time and space do not exist as well, and it is to make real to you the twelve steps of dependent origination. In this sense, we all go through the shravaka and pratyekabuddha states, and one should not think that one is lesser than another. They are simply states on the road of ongoing training, which is timeless and measureless. The third state is that of practicing as a bodhisattva, and the One Vehicle drawn by the White Ox is that which embraces them all.

Great Master Daikan Enō gives this response to his disciple's question:

*...“The intent of the Scripture is clear. It is just that you are wandering off on your own, turning your back on it. Your worry that those of the three vehicles are incapable of fathoming the Buddha’s spiritually wise discernment is due to your own way of measuring things. Even though their intellectual resources are being exhausted through their speculations, somehow they will arrive from however far away they may be. As the Lotus Scripture says, ‘Right from the start, the Buddha explained this for the benefit of ordinary people who are wandering in ignorance; He did not explain it for the benefit of Buddhas’. While not really turning their backs on their faith in this principle, people sometimes leave their seat of training, but even so, unbeknownst to them, they are sitting in the cart drawn by the White Ox, while they continue their search for the three vehicles outside the gate....”*

One of the ways in which people “leave their seat of training” is by distracting themselves with searching for the best form of it. Remember that going off to “other dusty



lands” does not necessarily give us what we seek. We can find it right here and now, in this very meditation hall. Now, some people enter a monastery as a means of escape, but a monastery is *not* a means of escape: it is a means of embracing Reality. And, in the end, no matter how long people may try to escape, “somehow they will arrive from however far away they may be,” for even their misguided attempts at training are still “set in motion by the flowering of the Dharma.”

Master Enō continues on, pointing out that the seeming three vehicles are but skillful means, all of which manifest within the One Vehicle, which is true training in the here-and-now. When we understand this, there is no need to even think of escape, for the “burning house” of self ceases to burn. The house that we have built is no more; our Real Home exists. Then, the very mind that has been beclouded for ever so long by delusion is seen in all its beauty. This is the manifesting of Buddha Nature, the flowering of the Dharma.

*That is how the account of Meditation Master Hōtatsu’s encounter with Sōkei [another name for Enō] went. The ‘flowering of the Dharma’ in such phrases as ‘the flowering of the Dharma sets in motion’ and ‘being set in motion by the flowering of the Dharma’ began to be used from the time of this event; such phrases had not been heard before then....*

The moment of this encounter between Hōtatsu and Enō is the same moment as that of the encounter on Mount Ryōju between Shakyamuni and Makakashyo, in which the Dharma flowered and was Transmitted when Shakyamuni

held aloft a flower and Makakashyo smiled. Right now you are here with Shakyamuni and all of the great Sangha. It is always thus when That which is Real is passed from heart to heart. This is the way of the true spiritual friendship of master and disciple. The true friend passes Truth from heart to heart and does not encourage emotionalism. The master is still the master and the disciple is still the disciple, however old and however great the understanding of the disciple, *and* the disciple stands upon the master's head, *and* still they both sit together within the great circle. This is how to stay in the place above the great round circle on the Ketchimyaku† and to know that when that circle is expanded fully, there you sit with all the Buddhas and Ancestors.

Dōgen continues:

*To clarify for yourself the fundamental meaning of 'the flowering of the Dharma', you need to realize fully what the Ancestral Master Enō opened up and revealed as the one great matter for which we train: do not try to amuse yourself by inquiring into the other Buddhist vehicles. Now, what the Ancestral Master set forth is the true nature of the real appearance, real innate nature, real embodiment, real strength, real cause, and real effect of what is set in motion by the flowering of the Dharma; before the Ancestral Master's time, this was something not yet heard of or even existing in China....*

In order to explore this great matter through our training, first we need to know what is the essence of Buddhahood, which is the same as the essence of preceptual teaching. Then we need to know why we are in this deluded

state through cause and effect down through the past lives of the karma we have inherited. And then, we need to know that *all* of this is but a dream, a “bubble in a stream.” To be in the Great Cart of the Buddha’s Wisdom is to live in the awareness of the illusion of what we have up to now believed to be reality. But this does not mean that we cut ourselves off from what the world regards as “reality”; rather, it means that “we live in the world as if in the sky.”

Now, this is a fairly long chapter, and Dōgen goes into many other aspects that are useful in understanding both the *Lotus Sutra* and the flowering of the Dharma. I recommend that you read it through carefully, at your leisure. Because that is all the time we have for today, I will simply read you one more passage and then skip to his concluding verse. Both of these provide good insights into the meaning of the flowering of the Dharma.

*What is called ‘the mind’s awakening sets the flowering of the Dharma in motion’ is synonymous with the turning of the flower-like wheel of the Dharma. That is to say, when the flowering of the Dharma has thoroughly exerted its influence in arousing us, we, in turn make manifest its influence, just as it is, in arousing ourselves. Our making this manifest is our setting the Flower of the Dharma in motion. Even though what the flowering of the Dharma in the past set in motion has continued on, unceasingly, even up to the present, we are, in turn, naturally setting the Flower of the Dharma in motion....*

*The mind's wandering is its being turned by the  
Flower of the Dharma:*

*The mind's awakening is its turning of the  
Flower of the Dharma.*

*If what we fully realize is like this,  
It is the Flower of the Dharma setting in motion  
the flowering of the Dharma....*

When the Flower of the Dharma appears, it sets into motion the Wheel of the Dharma.<sup>ii</sup> All visions and all reality have only empty colors and forms. And the Wheel turns eternally.

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<sup>i</sup> The burning house is a metaphor used in chapter three of the *Lotus Scripture*. [TLS, 77–109] It represents the human condition: impermanent, painfully ablaze, and consuming itself and all its contents.

<sup>ii</sup> The turning of the Wheel of the Dharma refers to the continual unfolding of Truth within the universe and the ongoing unfolding of It within the individual. It is, in a sense, the ongoing flowering of the Dharma both universally and individually. It will be discussed further in the next chapter.

## 5.

### *Beyond the Dream*

From a Lecture on *Muchū Setsumu*,  
“Giving Expression to a Vision from Within the Vision”

The character “mu,” which appears twice in the title, can be translated either as “dream” or as “vision.” In either case, we find ourselves with an English word that is less than satisfactory in conveying the full meaning of the Japanese or Chinese which, being a picture character, gives us a much clearer understanding if we know its derivation and all of what is actually implied. This chapter, then, is about a dream within a dream, or a vision within a vision. I am in six minds as to which is the better word, and I shall probably use them both, with “dream” referring to how we usually see our world and “vision” referring to that which goes beyond the dream. This usage will not always correspond to how the terms are used in the translation, which may be a bit confusing, but please bear with me.

Start by recalling what the *Diamond Scripture* has said about how we should view the reality in which we usually live: a dream, a bubble, a flash of lightning in a summer cloud—everything that is transient, for that is all that this world is. The True Reality lies beyond it. The True Reality we can call the Unborn, but do not think of It as eternality or any other “thing.” The vision within the dream, therefore, is That which is Real. Because It goes beyond our

usual everyday reality, It has the characteristic of seeming to be unreal from within the dream in which we presently live. When we have a glimpse of this Reality we call it a “vision” because, in our world of dreams, we have no suitable word in our vocabulary to describe That which is unborn, unbecome, unmade, and uncompounded. It is imperative to know from personal experience this vision within the dream.

In the code of ancient Zen writings, this Reality that lies beyond the dream is also sometimes called “the head.” Perhaps you have heard the old kōan which poses the question, “What do you do when a tiger chases you up to the head of a ten-foot pole?” Now, in this case, the tiger is a code term for the will to train. The pole is both the stem of the lotus of training and the physical spine. So, the question that has been posed by this kōan is not one of what to do when there is a large cat licking its chops at the bottom of a pole on top of which you are sitting. If you know the code it is, “When the will chases you to the ends of training and the spirit rises to greet the Unborn, what do you do?” And the answer is to be one with the Unborn, or “mu” (the character for “nothingness,” which is different from the “mu” of “dream”). The answer is to enter the vision within the dream, leaving aside what you “know to be real.” This is where Zen training will lead and this is the choice that we must make. You either remain within your dream, holding on for dear life to what you “know,” or you leap into the unknown, wherein lies the Unborn.

*Because the Truth that all the Buddhas and all the Ancestors have manifested in this world is something that has existed since before any thoughts or things have sprouted up, It is beyond anything that those*

*with false and empty notions argue over. Accordingly, within the bounds of the Buddhas and Ancestors there has been the meritorious functioning of That which goes above and beyond Buddhahood. Because it is independent of any specific occasion, it will even be beyond the span of whatever is living or has life—be it for a shorter or longer time—for it never ceases, and it will be far beyond any way of measuring found in the realm of ordinary folk. Further, the turning of the Wheel of the Dharma is the criterion for what has existed since before any thoughts or things have ever sprouted up. Since its great merit is beyond praise, it has served as a signpost and model in thousands of times past. Buddhas give expression to this as a vision from within a vision. Because it is Their seeing from within Their enlightenment what enlightenment is, They give expression to Their vision from within Their vision.*

This Truth does not depend upon the Buddhas and Ancestors to manifest It. It has no origin. It must not be thought of as an entity. It is neither born nor is It unborn, and It even goes beyond that, but we use the term “Unborn” for lack of anything better. It cannot be understood by the reasoning mind, let alone by the religious doctrines and theories that people put upon you in your childhood. Know that a full explanation of the Unborn is impossible, for It is without origin. Indeed, It goes “above and beyond Buddhahood.” It is independent of time as we measure it, being at one with the unending present flow of Ūji. Therefore all the words that I have said are inadequate and wrong in one sense, but they are an attempt to explain the inexplicable.

The turning of the Wheel of the Dharma is Its expression, and perhaps in some ways is therefore the nearest any of us can get to a description of the Unborn. The turning of the Wheel of the Dharma is what is set in motion when there is a flowering of the Dharma, a manifesting of Truth in our lives. For some people, there is a physical feeling that accompanies this, a feeling of overwhelming movement within stillness and awe, a rushing of spiritual energy like water. This turning of the Wheel is very difficult to describe. Here is what Dōgen says of it at a later point in this chapter:

*...The Wheel of the Dharma at such moments sometimes sets into motion the realm of the great Dharma Wheel, which is beyond measure, beyond bounds, and sometimes sets It in motion within a single mote of dust, for within each dust mote Its movement never ceases. The principle here is that no matter how the setting of the Dharma in motion brings about the experiencing of That Which Is, even the hostile will smile and nod. And whatever the place, because the setting of the Dharma in motion has brought about an experiencing of That Which Is, it is synonymous with the setting of graceful means in motion. As a result, the whole earth is, all at once, a limitless Dharma Wheel, and the universe throughout is undisguised cause and effect. For Buddhas, these two realms are the ultimate....*

When Buddhas give expression to this, says Dōgen, it is to see enlightenment within enlightenment, and this is called the realization of a vision within a vision. Yet, even while we still live in a world of dreams, we are able to catch



glimpses of this Reality. We call these a “vision” since we cannot hold It and cannot cause It to manifest Itself, yet we can know It for certain and be part of It. In our dreams It is presently not with us, *it would seem*, although truly *It is* with us. All of this is part of understanding a vision within a dream.

*The place where They are giving expression to Their vision from within Their vision is the domain of Buddhas and Ancestors: it is the assembly of Buddhas and Ancestors. The domain and assembly of Buddhas, as well as the paths and the Dharma assemblies of the Ancestors, are Their innate enlightenment giving rise to Their experiencing of enlightenment and Their subsequent giving expression to the vision that They are experiencing within Their vision. In encountering these sayings and expressions of Theirs, do not treat them as something apart from the Buddha’s assembly, for They are Buddhas turning the Wheel of the Dharma. Because this Wheel of the Dharma encompasses everywhere in all directions, the Great Ocean, Mount Sumeru,<sup>†</sup> all Lands, and all thoughts and things have fully manifested. This is the vision expressed within the vision, which existed prior to all dreamings. All that manifests within the whole universe is but a dream. This dream consists of all the hundreds of things that ever so clearly sprout up.... In exploring this through our training, the roots and stalks with their branchings and leaves, and the blossoms and fruits with their lustrous color and form, altogether comprise the great dream. But you must not confuse it with dreaminess....*

The place where the vision within a dream is most fully given expression is the assembly of the Sangha. As such, this assembly is the place of the greatest intimacy which humankind can experience, for it is the place of the sharing of Truth. It is the place of practice and the place of teaching, the place of the turning of the Wheel of the Dharma, the place of the flowering of the Dharma. When you are listening to teaching within the assembly of the Sangha, do not doubt that you are indeed within that assembly; do not look for something *beyond* what we are at the present time. Here we study Dharma so that we may soon know the Unborn for certain and be part of It for certain. But we *are already* part of It, whether we know this or not, for this very situation of training in which we are presently existing is a turning of the Wheel of the Dharma. The “Wheel of the Dharma encompasses everywhere in all directions” and thus does the True Reality emerge. As the dream subsides over the course of training, as we cease to be interested so much in the dream and become more and more interested in the True Reality, so the Truth emerges. We can know from our own living experience That which previously seemed to be but a pleasant dream within our dreaming, which is the Reality. And we can know that what we have, up to now, called “reality” is but a dream.

When we dream the vision of Reality, when we dream all forms of phenomena in their True Nature, these things all explain themselves and no further explanation is necessary. But it is important not to misunderstand this: unless one truly knows True Nature, all we have is nothing more than an ordinary dream. Do not play visualization games with this.

*‘A vision expressed within a vision’ is what all Buddhas are, and all Buddhas are ‘wind and rain, water and fire’. They accept and keep in mind the latter epithet and They accept and keep in mind the former epithet. ‘A vision expressed from within a vision’ is what the Buddha of old was. Riding within this treasured vehicle, He forthwith arrived at His sitting place, where He realized the Truth. ‘Arriving at His sitting place, where He realized the Truth’ is synonymous with ‘His riding within this treasured vehicle’ ....*

Recognizing the Buddha Nature in all things is the beginning of being able to understand the vision within our dream. We then go beyond this and simultaneously recognize their individuality, discerning the differences between “wind and rain, water and fire.” To see their True Nature while seeing their individuality, without being caught up in that individuality, is to see a vision within a vision. This is the same thing as seeing “All is One *and* all is different.” The “all is different” of duality is our usual dream. It is wonderful to get to the place where you can see that all is One, for that is the vision seen from within our dream. Whilst we are within the dream, if we refer to the Unborn as anything other than a vision, then we give It a form and limit It. But then you have to go on beyond the “all is One” to the Immaculacy of Emptiness, wherein “all is One *and* all is different,” if you would fully awaken to the vision within a vision. This is extremely difficult to explain and has to be considered with very great care and in great detail.

The last two sentences in the passage are deeply encoded. At their obvious level, they mean that it is through the vehicle of our training that we arrive at the place of

realization, and that is quite true. But “riding in the treasured vehicle” can also refer to the rising of the spiritual energy up the spine, another meaning of the “going up of the pole.” Sometimes the tiger chases you up to the head of the pole. “The sitting place” atop the pole is then the place of the Unborn. This sitting place is not something different than the leap into the unknown that I mentioned before. What is new here is that Dōgen points out that the going directly to the sitting place is *already contained within* the riding of the treasured vehicle, so do not think that you are separate from the Unborn and that training is a process of *going to* the Unborn. The Unborn is everywhere here and now and, in our dream state, we are trying to make little islands of ourselves, separate within the midst of the Unborn. Because going directly to the sitting place is already contained within the riding of the treasured vehicle, in this sense there are no dreams and there is nowhere to go. We must, therefore, take care to despise nothing, not even our little world of dreams.



I am now going to skip ahead in the chapter to the point where Dōgen relates the “vision within a vision” to the process of teaching the Buddha Dharma.

*Thus it is that the saying from the Diamond-cutting Scripture that “Buddhas and the supreme, fully perfected enlightenment of Buddhas all come forth from this Teaching of Mine” is also an expressing of a vision from within the vision wherein the Head habitually rests upon the head. When this Teaching gives*

*expression to a vision from within the vision, supreme enlightenment causes all Buddhas to come forth. And what is more, all Buddhas, being enlightened, give voice to this Scripture, which is decidedly Their expressing a vision from within the vision.... Accordingly, you need to know that there is the giving expression to a vision from within the vision—one that involves the experiencing of That Which Is—and there is the giving expression to a vision from within the vision by ‘such a person’, and there is the giving expression to a dream from within a dream—one that does not involve the experiencing of That Which Is—and there is the giving expression to a dream from within a dream by one who is not ‘such a person’.*

It is the duty of everyone who would aspire to being a master to learn how to “make the Buddhas come forth” when teaching others. It is necessary that such teachers shall be able to bring forth the Buddhas as real live people, real live beings, within their lectures and within their every action. For it is the Buddhas and Ancestors Who were the Head above heads at that time, and you who will be the Head above heads in the future. And, this “bringing forth” is not something that is done by will or by artifice.

This is one of the reasons why we study the Scriptures. There is no doubt that the Transmission of Truth from heart to heart goes beyond the Scriptures. But before we get to that point in training, our former and present spiritual friends, the Buddhas and Ancestors, must be brought forth so that They leap out and greet us (although we cannot necessarily see Them). Otherwise, how will we know how to train so as to be as They in the future? Therefore the study

of Scriptures is not a waste of time, as some teachers of Zen would have you believe. It would only be unnecessary if the teacher was “such a person,” that is, he or she were able to bring forth the living Buddha at the present time, for then there would be a living Buddha from whom to learn, rather than just a monk who is teaching dreams within a dream. But “such a person” would not say that the study of Scriptures is a waste of time. And, teachers who give limited teachings are still Buddha.

If the Buddhas and Ancestors leap out from the words of a Scripture, by comparing them with the present dream and by looking clearly beyond external things, we can see the Buddhas of the present time. Do not despise the Scriptures. And do not get caught up in clever words, cute statements, and game-playing. Learn from the truly great, from those within whose words and actions the Buddhas and Ancestors come alive for you. Compare your life to theirs, compare everyone’s life to theirs, but do not judge. Look beyond the external appearances of those lives and your own. By comparing them, we can “distinguish one from other” and learn something. Making such distinctions is a foundation of wisdom. Distinguish and discern, but do not discriminate, for all of them “hide within the bright moon.” All of them exist within Buddha Nature. Do not think that Buddha Nature lives only within some people. All live within Buddha Nature and It lives within all things. Do not think that there is anything within anyone that is not *of* Buddha Nature, for all *is* Buddha Nature. This, too, is the vision within the dream. To look at every person in this hall is to see the vision. It is also to have the dream. To make the Buddhas and Ancestors appear from the pages, to make them appear on glass in the windows, to be able to look

beyond the forms and the words, and be conscious of the vision, is to have the vision within the dream.

If, through direct experience, one is not certain of the Unborn (i.e., the origin of the vision), the fruits of the vision will not be clear and there will be muddles. Those who break the precepts cannot be fully aware of the Unborn, as the precepts are descriptions of enlightened action. It is for this reason that a person who has a *kenshō*, and then does not behave (or at least *try* to behave) as would a Buddha or an Ancestor, has not fully taken refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and should not be named as a Master. This is one of the criteria by which such things are decided. It is the reason for not giving the title for some time after realization. To see the Unborn is not enough; one has to behave in such a way that one wishes to see It eternally. Many people have flashes of realization; very few, it would seem, know what to do with them. In Christianity it is said, “Many are called, but few are chosen.” But in Buddhism it is more that all are called, but few answer.

If they do not answer, it is usually because they lack sufficient faith to believe in the vision instead of the dream. Herein lies the great “secret” that one master passes on to another. Without faith in the reality of the vision, the only “reality” that will be believed in will be the worldly dream. Thus there will be constant wandering and searching in *samsara* down the centuries. It is because we lose sight of the vision that we busily try to keep the dream as our reality, and try to force ourselves and the world to turn it into a real reality. That never works. Have you ever had a really good dream, and when you woke up you tried to keep it going because you didn’t want to lose it, and felt the intense sadness because the dream had ceased? This is the state in

which most of us live most of the time. You can see it in the desperateness with which people try to keep the dream called “my life” going, and in the urgency with which they distract themselves.

Those who know the vision do not worry in this way. And, paradoxically, because they do not worry about it, because they live within the true knowledge of the vision, the dream of physical existence needs very little help and, it would seem in many cases, what we call “our life” continues for a lot longer. Zen masters tend to live to a great old age. You see, a Zen master does not get the vision so that he or she can kick the bucket in a hurry and go straight off and enjoy it. He gets the vision, and has the faith in the vision, so that samsara ceases to be samsara and instead becomes a beautiful playground, or a great garden, in which he or she can wander and play and work, and help others to find the vision. But he cannot help them to find that vision if all they are concerned about is the physical dream. Please do not take this wrongly: obviously, if you need a doctor’s attention then you should have it. To refuse it, because of some notion that spiritually perfected ones don’t need it, is to pile delusion upon delusion, dream upon dream. But to be obsessed with your physical condition, beauty, or strength, or to try to prolong life again and again when it is obvious that one’s time has come to enter Parinirvana<sup>†</sup>—to do such things is unnatural, and proves a total lack of faith.

So, remembering this, do not worry so much about the dream; keep your perspective on what is vision and what is dream. We cannot keep the vision alive by putting a name to It, and we cannot keep the vision alive by holding onto It out of greed (for there is no thing to hold onto), but what we can do is to have faith in the reality of the Unborn and



know, through our continuous training, what is Real and what is but a dream.

*And you need to know that the principle being recognized here is dazzlingly clear, namely, that giving expression all day long to a vision from within the vision is what giving expression to a vision from within the vision is.*

*This is why a former Buddha once said, “For your sakes I am now giving expression to the vision from within the vision. The Buddhas of the three periods of time—past, present, and future—so express the vision from within the vision and the first six Chinese Ancestral Masters also so expressed the vision from within the vision.” You should clearly study these words.*

*‘Holding the flower aloft, with eyes atwinkle’ is giving expression to the vision from within the vision, and ‘respectful bowing securing for you the very marrow of the Way’ is also giving expression to the vision from within the vision....*

Here Dōgen is emphasizing the aspect of continuous training: we must give expression to the vision *all day long*, he says. Therefore it is very wrong to play games with *kyosakus*<sup>†</sup> and other holy things until you understand their purpose, for all actions must be a means of explaining the vision. Just going around hitting people with a *kyosaku* because it is the tradition of a temple is not the act of a Buddha. “In the beginning the mallet will strike the Buddha on the foot; later it will strike Him on the head,” says the mealtime verse. And one day the sword of Buddha’s wisdom will crash upon one’s third eye, and you will *know* the

meaning of the sword of Buddha's wisdom. Therefore, do not use its symbol as if it were a yardstick to measure people to see if they are sitting right, or to beat them if they are late. This is to make a mockery of holy things. In such a way must all holy things be thought of, whether they are the hossu,† or the nyoi,† or the slippers on one's feet, or one's robe. With all of these things one must be able to explain the vision without a word.

"Respectful bowing," says Dōgen, is another important means of expressing the vision. With the bow (monjin†) and the greeting with palms together (gasshō†) one may explain the vision without a word. And within bowing there is a mutual recognition of that vision. Someone once told me that she dreamed she was sitting at a meal in the temple, and everyone was making the gasshō, reciting the Scriptures, while she was sitting with her back to everyone, refusing to gasshō, and that this was how her daily life felt to her. I've often thought about that statement, and what a sad state such a person is in, for when someone does that they are not only turning their back on others, they are also turning their back on the vision.

Every action of a Buddha shows the Truth of the vision. Every action of a monk who will become a master must show the Truth of that vision. One cannot do this out of deliberate thought or with willful intent; it is something that one simply does, spontaneously, because one *knows* the Unborn. I have often said it is enough for me to know the Unborn, to recognize It, and (as it were) to salute It at every moment. If you would truly train, there is much more to training than just sitting meditation in the morning, doing morning service, sitting in the evening, and doing one's daily work. There is the making of *every movement* into the

movement of a Buddha. There is the making of the Buddhas and the Ancestors to *leap out* from within the office, *leap out* from the kitchen, *leap out* from the workshop. And, if you are a lay person and a guest in this temple, it is for you to make the Buddhas and the Ancestors *leap out* from the guest room to greet the Guestmaster. And both of you will find greater joy in the Unborn, together. To make the vision appear within the dream, although it is not a calculated or deliberate act, is an act of willingness and of faith. It is *essential*; it is your only true purpose for being here: to make the vision appear within the dream, and to know the truth and reality of the vision.

This is the type of enlightened action that you must strive for. And “strive” may be the wrong word. In fact, when I say that you must “make the vision appear within the dream,” perhaps “make” is the wrong word too, for you cannot *make* any of this happen in the sense that we normally think of. Do not try to *make* things happen. Just have faith in the Unborn, and *allow* all of your actions to *come* from the Buddha Nature, to come out of that faith. Go in and out with the Unborn: in every breath, in every inhalation and every exhalation. Go in and out with the Unborn: work with the Buddha Nature, sit with the Buddha Nature, eat with the Buddha Nature, read with the Buddha Nature. When you read with the Unborn Buddha Nature, the Buddhas and Ancestors come forth from the pages and dance with you for joy. They sit with you, and explain to you. What you must strive for, then, is not to “make” any of this happen but rather to stay true to your own faith and to get self out of the way. For when self is out of the way, *anything* can be the expression of the vision, no matter what the

act. Unless, of course, it is an act that harms another; but then, no act that harms other beings is pure and free of self.

Dōgen explains this giving expression to the vision further in a passage a little ways on in the chapter:

*If you have not reached equilibrium—and without arguing over how many ounces to a pound—you will not manifest balance. When you have achieved equilibrium, you will see what is in balance. When you have completely achieved equilibrium, you will not depend on what is being weighed or upon some scale or upon the way it functions. You need to thoroughly explore that, even though you may rely on That which is as unbounded space, if you have not attained equilibrium, you will not see what is in balance. When you yourself are relying on That which is as unbounded space, letting the objects you encounter float freely in space, it will be your giving expression to the vision from within the vision, and within the space, you will bodily manifest equilibrium....*

When he speaks of “equilibrium,” that is a bit of a code word. It means true harmony within oneself and all around oneself. When we are at one with the Unborn and when self is set down, then we are truly harmonious. We are, in other words, living within the vision instead of within the dream. Then our discernment is accurate and, when this is so, we naturally see the manifesting of Buddhas and Ancestors around us and all of our actions truly express a vision within the vision (which is what is meant by the phrase “what is in balance”). Note that he says that this will not happen if we are not truly harmonious, even though we

“rely on That which is as unbounded space.” In other words, faith alone is not enough; there *must* be a setting down of self, a “letting the objects you encounter float freely in space.” Then, and only then, are we free of the dream. Then, and only then, will true harmony be possible.

When we are living no longer in the dream, we will no longer depend on “weights and measures,” i.e., our ideas, opinions, and fears about how the world is. Fear is one of the greatest obstacles to going beyond the dream, by the way. Thus, in Japan, the *kyosaku* was used for driving people beyond fear. You gave someone sufficient physical pain so that he would find an inner place that was beyond his fear, being willing to live with the pain whilst living truly in the spirit. I’m not going to go any further into that one; that’s how it came out when it worked out well, but it is not a way for me to use. Too many people have tried to help the Unborn at Its job, forgetting that It’s rather better at it than they are. If one would become independent of the weights and measures of one’s mind, one has to do so as a volunteer. Ultimately, one cannot be forced or coerced into doing it. I can tell you about the necessity of letting go of these things from now till doomsday, but each one of you is going to have to do it for yourselves. And I *do not* intend to beat you into doing it. For a start, it wouldn’t work in the West. Secondly, it doesn’t work all that well in the East: I’ve seen too many people try. And, finally, I do not believe that it is truly the way of the Buddhas and Ancestors. The Buddhas want volunteers, not coerced followers.

It is significant that Dōgen says that we will manifest this harmony bodily. One must take care with the physical body, for it is through its aegis that we are able to sit in meditation and become still enough to know the Unborn.

And, in the end, we must not be dependent upon it, in the sense of being attached to it and frightened of the changes which will come to it. “Om to the One Who leaps beyond all fear,” says the Scripture.

We must also abandon evaluation and comparison, although in the beginning these have their place in deciding what path to commit ourselves to. And, we must have no base in either pride or inadequacy. Pride and ambition are some of the gravest obstacles to letting go of the dream. But if we do not recognize our potentiality to know the Unborn, then we will always think we are incapable and inadequate, and we will not do what needs to be done. So, in the beginning, we have to recognize our potential as the children of the Buddha. And we have to evaluate what is most important to us, the dream or the vision. In the end, we have to throw all of these things, and even our attachment to life itself, totally away. In this way, while still in the dream, the world becomes an “empty place” for us, and we are freed to study the true nature of harmony, which is the Unborn.

*There is nothing that is not a liberated expressing of the vision from within the vision. ‘Vision’ is synonymous with the whole of the great earth, and the whole of the great earth is synonymous with equilibrium. Therefore, the endless turnings of our head and the setting our brains in motion are nothing other than our accepting in trust and our acting in devotion by which we realize the vision within our dreams.*

Knowing that the vision is the entire universe in its true form, and knowing that the entire universe *is* the harmony, is the key to being able to live in this world as in a

beautiful garden or as in a lovely playground. You can see that harmony in all things, for the Buddha Nature in each of us does not stand against the Buddha Nature in anyone outside, nor against the One in your next-door-neighbor, nor against that which is external to you or internal to you, or above you or below you. Knowing *that* is to know the vision. And, our sincere efforts at training whilst in a dream, endlessly bumbling as they may seem to us, are acts of trust and devotion which *shall* lead us to the Truth.

When we recognize with our whole body and mind that Buddha Nature is in all things, we can enlighten the dream, we can make the vision become clear and light, for we do no action without Buddha Nature moving within that action, there being no separation whatsoever. So, as that happens within every single action, and as we recognize It within every single action, we enlighten the dream and turn it into the vision. We can believe, receive, respect, and follow that vision, for Shakyamuni and all the Buddhas and Ancestors are within that vision. They walk, speak, talk, lie down, and sit up with you and are never separate from you. Shakyamuni's eyes become your eyes and turn the Wheel of the Dharma; thus the Dharma flowers and a vision manifests within the vision.

Dōgen then quotes a poem by Shakyamuni Buddha in which He predicts that those who give voice to the Dharma will become as He, being kings of nations and adorned with a hundred blessings. Then Dōgen warns us as follows:

*...At the same time, seeing or hearing such phrases as 'in Their dreams They become a king of a nation', people of past and present have mistakenly understood it to mean that their nighttime dreams are*

*like this, due to the influence of this foremost Dharma having been voiced. Their understanding the phrase in this way means that what the Buddha was teaching has not yet fully dawned on them....*

There have always been those who have made this mistake, confusing the dream of worldly power with the power of the Dharma to transform beings and turn their hearts around. Such people count the numbers of their disciples and the numbers of their congregations, seek political power, seek to change countries and governments by exerting their influence upon them. Anyone who does this has totally misunderstood the vision and perhaps even has not truly seen the vision. It is our duty to perfect ourselves; then both we and the rest of the world shall see the vision naturally appearing before us. It is not for us to try to create our own notion of the Unborn and then force everyone to bow before It. That is as crazy as using the *kyosaku* to try to force enlightenment.

The Buddha Nature knows when to “strike the future Buddha on the head.” The Buddha Nature knows that “evil is vanquished and good prevails.” It is not Its business that we are impatient; it is not Its problem either. Our job is to follow the Way to the best of our ability, and the more of us that do that, the sooner will evil be vanquished and good prevail. There will always be some people, however, who wish to take upon themselves the role of the Unborn (and this is another reason why those who have become teachers must be watched with such great care by their masters since the most terrible thing that a master can hear is the statement, “What devil allowed you to become a monk? Look at what your disciples are doing!”). Such people form these



misconceptions because they have failed to clarify the true meaning of the Buddha's proclaiming of the Law.

The expressing of the vision is timeless:

*'Seven days' expresses a measure for how long it takes to attain the wisdom of a Buddha. Turning the Wheel of the Dharma to help sentient beings reach the Other Shore has already been described as the passing by of hundreds of thousands of millions of kalpas, for we should not speculate on the movements within a dream.*

“Seven days” is the code phrase for however long it takes to attain Buddhist wisdom. You “sit under your Bodhi tree for seven days.” Perhaps it's fifteen years or more before you come to a realization, but it is officially called your “seven days.” And then, as Shakyamuni Buddha did, you set in motion the Wheel of the Dharma, and keep It turning for the sake of all living things. “The wheel of the Dharma rolls constantly, lacks for nothing, and needs something,” says the *Kyōjukaimon*. What It needs is for each of us to exhibit It. It needs our willingness, and It needs our ability to bow, to hold up a flower, and to smile. It needs so many things, and yet It lacks for nothing. We cannot actually gauge the Real from within our dream, nor measure It with our notions of time. Let it be enough to know the Unborn.

*The Buddhas with Their bodies all in gold  
Are adorned with the marks of a hundred blessings.  
Hearing the Dharma and voicing It for the sake  
of all,  
Their existence is ever like a pleasant dream.*

*Clearly you have realized from this that ‘a pleasant dream’ has been demonstrated to be what Buddhas are. There is the Tathagata’s phrase, “Their existence is ever,” for They are not just some hundred-year dream. “Voicing It for the sake of all” is Their manifesting of Themselves in various forms. “Hearing the Dharma” is the sound that is heard by Their Eye, the sound that is heard by Their heart, the sound that is heard by old habits they have abandoned like an empty nest, the sound that was heard before time began.*

What is the dream that Buddhas have? The dream of all the Buddhas is a pleasant one, for Their existence is forever. This is one of the times that Dōgen actually openly speaks of the eternal aspect of the Buddhas. “‘Their existence is ever,’ for They are not just some hundred-year dream.” There is an unborn, unbecome, unmade, and un compounded.

*The Buddhas with Their bodies all in gold  
Are adorned with the marks of a hundred blessings.*

*This is saying that ‘a pleasant dream’ is the bodily existence of Buddhas, which is Their forthwith having arrived at the Now and doubting no more. Even though there is the principle that the instructions of a Buddha do not cease for one within the state of having awakened, the principle of the Buddhas and Ancestors complete manifesting is, of necessity, Their becoming a vision from within a vision.*

Notice how, here at the end of the chapter, Dōgen is beginning to use the terms “dream” and “vision” in ways that make us not quite so certain that we can distinguish one from the other. He speaks of the existence of Buddhas as being “a pleasant dream,” rather than as a vision, and he refers to Their complete manifestation as a “vision from within a vision,” which points us to there being something beyond even the vision, beyond the Real. This theme is carried further in his chapter called *Gabyō*, “A Painting of a Rice Cake,” in which he undercuts the attachments we may form to everything we know and everything we realize, even to That which we call “the Unborn.”

*You need to explore through your training not vilifying the Buddha's Dharma. When you explore through your training not vilifying the Dharma, the present words of the Tathagata will immediately come forth.*

With these words he concludes the chapter on a very practical note. We must take care that we do not slander the Buddhist Dharma. When we take care in this way in even the smallest ways, then will the eternal words of the Buddhas manifest. In other chapters of the *Shōbōgenzō* Dōgen points out that some of the best ways in which we can prevent ourselves from slandering the Buddhist Dharma are to avoid making great organizations, stay away from places of power, and stay clear of governments and great cities. On a more subtle level, to “not vilify the Dharma” is simply to practice our own true training, to keep to the Way. When we do this, the Way of the Tathagata inevitably shines forth. Do not be caught up in the dream of worldly things, do not forsake your own sitting place to wander by streams

and within mountains, keep away from the great and the worldly—this is the Way of the Buddhas and Ancestors. This is what will eventually bring to fruition what is predicted by the Buddhist Fourth Law of the Universe, which matters so deeply at this present time: in the long run “without fail evil is vanquished and good prevails.”

## 6.

### *The Great Ocean of Meditation*

From Lectures on *Kaiin Zammai*, “The Meditative State that Bears the Seal of the Ocean”

“Kaiin zammai” is the Japanese name given to what I have called the Great Ocean or Waveless Sea of Meditation. “Sagara mudra samadhi” is the more technical Sanskrit Buddhist term for the meditative “substance” that comprises that Sea. But don’t quote me in calling it a “substance” or somebody will call me the biggest heretic in existence. As a matter of fact, every word I say in this lecture is going to be heretical, all right? If we get that straight from the very beginning then I’m going to be safe if anybody ever gets their hands on this tape! (laughter) I say it is “heretical” because there is no way you can say anything about this topic that is going to come out the right way up. The only way you’re going to understand what we are speaking of here is if you play, as it were, nine-dimensional chess with every word I’m saying, running from one level to the next, up, down, round, sideways, and in and out—but with your guts, not with your intellect. This is why I’ve been arguing with myself as to whether to speak about this chapter at all.

It is, to a certain extent, the Sōtō explanation of the *Avatamsaka Scripture*,<sup>†</sup> which means that it is very subtle indeed. The kaiin zammai is said to be that meditation into which the Buddha entered while preaching the *Avatamsaka*.

But this chapter not only gives insight into the nature of this most sublime samadhi,<sup>†</sup> by extension it also tells us about the general nature of meditation and spiritual realization. It is, therefore, also about kenshō, about enlightenment, and about living within what I call “the Third Position” beyond all pairs of opposites.

Before we get into this, there is a term which Dōgen uses that requires a number of definitions, which I think we had better go into before we start. That term is “vanishing.” I’m going to give you Dōgen’s own explanation of it from this chapter, because his version is rather good. He uses the word to convey several profound meanings. First, it represents the Buddha’s

*...great, unsurpassed nirvana, which is spoken of as His ‘death’, which is described by some as ‘persisting in treating it as an eradication’, and which is described by others as ‘seeing it as a place of abiding’.*

So, when you hear of “vanishing,” you are *not* to be thinking of something that is completely and absolutely negative. The same is true when you hear the term “emptiness,” as it is applied to the sagara mudra samadhi, the Great Ocean of Meditation. You see, the ancients were stuck with words just as much as we are.

The second meaning of “vanishing” is “death,” or the passing away of life as we know it. So you’ve got to remember that it can be used in both of these ways, and in a much different one later on. And you have to apply whichever one of these is appropriate through feeling it out in your guts when you are “playing on these different chess boards,” all right?

Third, “vanishing” is a place of abiding; that is, it is the True Refuge as taught by the Four Noble Truths: the cessation of suffering. Kohō Zenji and I felt that for this reason one should use the term “purity” rather than “emptiness” when describing It. Now, purity is something you can latch onto, whereas emptiness is something you cannot, and that is a problem. The danger of using emptiness is that you immediately put nihilism and annihilation into people’s minds. A famous Tibetan master, when discussing this with me on one occasion, said that the best way he could describe this Refuge was to use the phrase “pure energy.” Which, of course, makes him as big a heretic as I am because immediately you can grab onto energy.

What this chapter is really trying to do is tell you what the Third Position is, so that you will be able to drop the opposites quickly and easily. If you know that life and death are not really of much importance, because they are simply two positions in time, then you naturally enter into the Great Ocean of Meditation. In that Place, Buddha Nature (the Essence of Buddha, the “vanishing” that is Nirvana) will be apparent as the Third Position. Now, there are many people who would say, “Well, two birds in the hand (i.e., life and death as we know them) are better than one in the bush (i.e., a Third one of which we have no certain knowledge). And yet, everyone *has* certain knowledge of the Third Position deep within them, and one of the things this chapter tries to prove is that there *is* that certain knowledge.

This Great Ocean of Meditation can be found, according to Dōgen, when “our thoughts and things” neither “depend on each other” nor “stand against each other.” When there is no opposition, our True Nature emerges. When “the obstacles dissolve”—going on beyond the obstacles and

blockages—“He is Nirvana,” says *The Scripture of Great Wisdom*. When there are no oppositional blocks, one can speed along at great, great speed. This is what is meant by not allowing the arising of obstructing mountains and great rivers, or by having cut the roots of the past karma which make it impossible to see across the river or around the corner. This is to unravel the endless twists and turns of the knot of string known as your life.

One of the first things they teach you in a Sōtō Zen monastery, by the way, is that you must not cut knots. I can remember being given a lot of presents when I first got to Sōjiji and noting the interest with which senior monks watched what I would do with the string. Now, I did not know that this was really a test that would decide whether I would go to a Rinzai temple or stay with Kohō Zenji; that was explained to me many years later. I looked at them and I liked the strings, they were attractive strings (I think they’d done this deliberately so as to sort of “load the gun” in my favor). Anyway, I spent a lot of time very carefully untying knots, and then I asked them if they would prefer me to cut them so as not to take so long. “Oh, no, no, no; that’s fine, you just take your time,” they said. So there I was, sitting around with this bunch of top seniors, working on the most fascinating knots, carefully undoing them all and winding up the strings. Each time I did they would grin more and more, which gave me nice feedback that it was being done the right way. Apparently if I had cut the knots they would have picked up their phone and sent me off to Myōshinji or another Rinzai temple, because the Sōtō way is to unravel the knots in the line of your life so that nothing should be left behind to damage you in the future. The Rinzai way does not unravel the knots. It relies on cutting



directly through things, or upon getting the person so taut, so tense, that one's life acts like a spring and suddenly uncoils into one long straight line. That was how it was explained to me.

Now, with that as an introduction, let us start back at the beginning of the chapter.

*All Buddhas and all Ancestors that have ever been are invariably synonymous with the meditative state that bears the seal of the Ocean. As They swam about in this meditative state, there were times when They were giving expression to the Truth, and times when They were experiencing the Truth directly, and times when They were putting It into their daily practice. The merits of Their doing Their practice upon the surface of the Ocean included Their doing a practice that penetrated to the very bottom of the Ocean. They made Their doing of Their practice upon the surface of the Ocean Their doing of a practice that plumbed the depths of the Ocean. To wishfully seek to make one's wandering about through birth and death return to the Source was not what Their mind's activities were concerned with. Even though, from the first, the breaking through of former obstructions as if one were passing through barrier gates or piercing through the joints in a cane of bamboo has been synonymous with what each and every Buddha and Ancestor is, They are various streams that have flowed into the meditative state that bears the seal of the Ocean.*

To live within the meditative state that bears the seal of the Ocean is the ultimate end of Zen training. It is the

ultimate goal, if you like, of Zen. I say the “ultimate end” because “goal” implies something you strive for, whereas “end” implies something that you’re bound to get. But I don’t mean that there is an end to training, okay? All Truth is at once reflected in this meditative state, just as all images are reflected in a quiet sea. It is, therefore, the highest form of insight. It is what is being described in some of those poetic Zen phrases: the Moon of Zen reflected in the sea, the green jade Moon of Zen, all these things about “moons” and “clouds,” reflecting in the sea. It is also referred to as the Dharma Cloud over the Silent Hall.

Whether, at any given moment, our practice is upon the surface of the Ocean or at Its depths, we are constantly washed in the Ocean every time we do that which is correct. So, although the bodhisattva lives in the world of samsara, he or she regards that world as a beautiful playground, or as a lovely garden. And still, the Great Ocean of Meditation is not interested in whether you get something out of It or not. It is not a matter of rewards or goals; you just do what needs to be done. And remember that, whether one goes straight into the Great Ocean or whether one decides to work for the Buddha while remaining in the world of samsara, one is still in the Great Ocean of Meditation.

Do not think that there is anything outside of the Great Ocean, and do not think that there is anything more than the Great Ocean. I have seen temples in the Far East which attempt to give a pictorial representation of this. They have every single tile on the walls and ceilings made with the image of a beautiful tiny Buddha sitting in a lotus. The floors, walls, and ceilings are all decorated as if one were in the sea. There is a sea of Buddhas seemingly everywhere: it’s not merely a sea that one sits on top of, it is also a sea

within which one sits. And somewhere in the middle of all of this is a colossal fifteen-foot-high Buddha or Bodhisattva. The Buddha, too, doesn't seem to be necessarily sitting on top of the sea or beneath it. The attempt is to show that the sea of meditation is full, it is not just a surface thing. How do you fill the universe with meditation? It's a depiction which is exquisite to see; it doesn't completely succeed, but it's a symbol that tries.

Even though within this practice and meditation there is no wishfully seeking for the Source, as Dōgen says, this pure activity of meditation is what “each and every Buddha and Ancestor is.” Now this is a terribly important point. In other words, the Great Ocean of Meditation is the Buddha Itself. Remember I said there is no such thing as a personal God. You can experience the *kaiin zammai*, you can experience Buddha, you can experience Buddha Nature, you can know the Third Position—whatever you like to call this thing (and I give it six dozen names so that you do not turn it into a god)—or you can say that you can experience God. But the Great Ocean of Meditation is not a personal God as in the Christian sense of the term. It's very important to remember that. The original form of Buddha *is* the Great Ocean of Meditation; every Buddha act *is* the Meditation of the Great Ocean.

*The Buddha once said in verse,*

*“Simply of various elements is this body of Mine  
composed.*

*The time of its arising is merely an arising of elements;  
The time of its vanishing is merely a vanishing of  
elements.*

*As these elements arise, I do not speak of the arising  
of an 'I',  
And as these elements vanish, I do not speak of the  
vanishing of an 'I'.  
Previous instants and succeeding instants are not a  
series of instants that depend on each other;  
Previous elements and succeeding elements are not  
a series of elements that stand against each other.  
To give all this a name, I call it 'the meditative  
state that bears the seal of the Ocean'."*

This poem is a description of pure meditation and an instruction in how to do it; study it well. The elements and instants which compose body and mind arise and vanish like waves on the surface of a sea, without depending upon each other and without the presence of an "I." And, within this very arising and vanishing is the stillness of the Great Ocean of Meditation. It is very important to live within this Meditative Place, otherwise one's life is perpetually ruled by insurance premiums, rent, food, clothing, and six dozen other things. In Christianity it is said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." In Buddhism, it is "I do not speak of the arising of an 'I'; I do not speak of the vanishing of an 'I.'" If you are worrying about self and things, then you have not found this Place, for such matters are not only of no importance, but they are actually unreal, being but a dream. Now, I know that some people are going to start yelling and screaming, "Oh, but we have to!" thinking that, unless they make these illusions into the reality, they are being foolish. But that is to fear the opposites; within the Meditation of the Great Ocean all things are possible without

attachment or fear. It is terribly important to keep this in mind. When you work in the kitchen, look at the cabbage and know what it will eventually become after it has been eaten. And, unless you can see its Buddha Nature, that makes life rough. But you *can* see its Buddha Nature, for that is the real thing, the real substance. Do not get so attached, do not get so frightened.

One of the ways that they teach you how to do this in the Far East is to teach you how to say “yes” at all times. The first lesson in this came for me when I was told not to expect too much. Later on I was told not to expect *anything*. Because of our past clinging, we have been “packaged,” as it were, into what we presently look like: we are a bundle of elements that are packaged to look like me or you or the cat or the dog on the floor. And our packaging makes us tend to expect that certain things will happen. Very few people realize that clinging and expectation have a tremendous common denominator, for expectation *is* a form of clinging. So, if you expect something, you are clinging to something. If you keep expecting something, then you cannot deal with the clinging. Giving up expectations is the first step in saying “yes” to all things.

Then you can remove the “but” which usually accompanies our “yes.” At Sōjiji, any time somebody put a “but” on the end of it, you knew there was going to be trouble. “Yes, but can I do so-and-so first?” “Yes, but I don’t know how.” “Yes, but what should I do?” Any time there was a “but,” you knew there was trouble coming from the senior monks who heard it. So you learned to get the “buts” out of the way. One day I realized what they were really trying to get at: they weren’t playing silly Zen word games, they weren’t trying to get you to do the impossible, they weren’t

trying to work you into the ground—they were trying to get you into a truly willing and unattached state.

The day I realized this was when I was working as *jiisha*<sup>†</sup> to the Director of Sōjiji, and he told me to take tea to the workmen who were mending the roof. Now, I'm not good on heights and the roofs of Sōjiji were very steep and high, and the workmen had pulled their ladders up onto the roof so they didn't get blown down. On that day, somehow, I just didn't fret about all that: I was perfectly willing to take tea to the men on the roof, the question was how it was going to get there. Before this, there would have been a "but" in my answer to him; on this particular morning something just clicked inside and I said, "Yes, Reverend Director; how do I do it?" He grinned and said, "Good, good. Now you've got what we're getting at." It is the *willingness* to go. And when my third *kenshō* hit, the thing that delighted me, and which was so incredibly valuable to me, was that frequently I was asked to do the impossible but I was willing to do it. "I am willing. How do I do this? Please show me, teach me. I will do." And immediately you *could* do, so it was not trying to get you to do the impossible. In addition, it was also trying to get you to recognize that you were not God, and not to make excuses because you thought you should be. This saying "yes" accepts *everything*, including your own humanity, and it is an essential element in the conditions which allow spiritual realization to take place.

*We need to make a diligent effort to fully explore these words of the Buddha. Attaining the Way and entering into the realization of the Truth do not necessarily depend on listening to someone else or talking with someone else. And those who have a broad knowledge*

*based on hearsay have been known to have attained the Way upon hearing four lines of Scripture, and those who have a knowledge as extensive as the sands of the Ganges have been known to have entered a realization of the Truth through a single line of Scriptural verse. And what is more, the Buddha's present words are not about seeking one's inherent enlightenment in what lies ahead, nor are they about grasping after one's first awareness of enlightenment within some experience. In general, even though the making one's inherent enlightenment manifest is a meritorious function of a Buddha or an Ancestor, the various kinds of enlightenment—such as one's first inkling of enlightenment or one's fully experiencing one's inherent enlightenment—are not what make a Buddha or an Ancestor what They are.*

Here he is referring to the various things that cause us to reach this state, the catalysts for realization, so to speak. If I were asked to say what was the one thing that caused more people to come to realization than any other, I would say it was the teaching of preceptual truth. We hear of all the kōans and how stones hit bamboo, how somebody stubbed his toe, etc., etc. You hear all of this, but what was it that set the thing going in the first place, so that suddenly something could act as a catalyst? There is a verse in the *Shushōgi* which says, “Whenever these Precepts are truly accepted, Buddhahood is reached... From these Precepts come forth such a wind and fire that all are driven into enlightenment.” That verse was the catalyst that projected me into the third kenshō, but what would have happened if I had not been studying the Ten Precepts themselves, in

detail, prior to that? The verse could not have been a catalyst; it would have had no meaning. What caused me to take up this detailed studying of the precepts at that point in my life? The fact that I was up to certain things that something in me kept saying, “You shouldn’t do that.” What was it in me that kept saying, “You shouldn’t do that” other than a trickle of the Great Ocean of Meditation?

Buddha begets Buddha in more ways than one. The catalyst is only a catalyst. It’s a stone hitting a bamboo or a toe that gets stubbed. And this suddenly sort of “jolts something off the shelf,” or “lines up a bunch of poles in one line,” or whatever way you like to look at it. But it is that tiny little voice, that tiny little drop of the Great Ocean samadhi, which gets the thing going. Through all the many twists and turns that enlightenment uses to find itself within our lives, these are, each and every one, its trickles. You know how, on a muddy road out there, you sometimes see a tiny little trickle of water coming down, and just that tiny little spot is not dust or mud, and everything around it seems to dry up quickly, but yet that little trickle of water somehow still keeps running? That’s how this is; because we are honestly trying to train, a little trickle from the Great Ocean of Meditation runs throughout one’s life. By looking at it from the back end, as it were, after realization has taken place, you can see where the trickle has been. Any time there is a trickle, and you see the possibility of going deeper in your training, of taking meditation and the precepts more fully into yourself, go with it. Because this is what eventually creates the situation in which all conditions are ripe for a catalyst to do its work. It is going with the trickle that makes this happen; do not go around looking for more and better catalysts. Any catalyst will do when all conditions are ripe.



Although, says Dōgen, the “making one’s inherent enlightenment manifest is a meritorious function of a Buddha or an Ancestor,” the various kinds of realization are not what “make a Buddha or an Ancestor what They are.” What does make Them what They are? The Great Ocean of Meditation is the Essence from which They, and we, come and go. It is the energy of which we are composed, as our Tibetan friend put it. Appearance and disappearance, arising and vanishing, are but dreams; they are but phenomena in time, as we think of it. They are nothing more than that. The real Essence has no time. The Great Ocean just *is*, which is why It is in a state of meditation, and why It does not get upset by all our twists and turns and twiddles, and why It cannot be bound by the sorts of moral codes that we put upon ourselves. We cannot conceive of a moral code so high that it can encompass the entire universe and yet tolerate the twists and turns of each and every one of us. But that is just what the Essence of the Precepts, which is the Essence of the Great Ocean of Meditation, is.

Dōgen now quotes the Buddha’s poem about the arising and vanishing of elements once again, and then he says,

*...On this occasion when the Buddha spoke about the meditative state which bears the seal of the Ocean, it was a time when there were simply various elements, which He expressed as there ‘simply being various elements’. This moment He called ‘the composing of this body of Mine’. The integrated form which is composed of the various elements He accordingly calls ‘this body of Mine’. He did not consider this body of His as a single unified form, for it was composed of*

*various elements. Thus, He spoke of this bodily composition as 'this body of Mine'.*

When you actually experience yourself and the world in this way, you experience every element of your body in more ways than one. Once, at a time of opening up to such a Place, I could even feel the pain in the springs of the passing cars. You can feel the stresses and strains of all the elements around you because you are sharing within their essence. And when you go past that, then you bask purely in the Meditative Essence. To experience the shared essence of the elements is, as it were, the last of the physical experiences before you enter into the pure state of meditation.

If you can understand that the physical form is, in fact, the dream and not the reality, then you will be able to experience the Reality. But do not think that It is a separate reality belonging to you. It is *not your personal, separate reality*. When the “dew drop slips into the shining sea,” it is no longer a dew drop, it is part of the shining sea. Do not think that there is a separate soul within you. So long as you want a separate soul, you’re sunk. You are clinging to body and mind or, in this case, to a shadow of body and mind. And, by the way, it is the shadows of body and mind that become the past lives, for they are that which we could not transcend at the moment of death.

In the poem which starts the chapter, it speaks of elements and instants which are “previous” or “succeeding.” Do not allow that to make you think in terms of ordinary time, for, as Dōgen puts it,

*...The time of arising is synonymous with 'these elements'; it does not refer to the twenty-four hours of a day....*

There is actually no time in pure meditation, for meditation is ever-present. Existence is time itself; existence just *is* and there is just a constant present. What else is time in its real form but a constant present? In some ways, this chapter is the forerunner of *Ūji*. People argue whether this chapter comes before *Ūji* or after it. You need to understand how to go beyond the opposites of time and space before you can enter the Great Ocean of Meditation, but you do not understand *Ūji* completely until you find that Great Ocean. You only have a relative understanding of time until then; you cannot help but think of a past and a future. This is why to dwell in the eternal present, and not to dwell in the past and not to worry about the future, is one of the biggest and most important doors into Zen training. We waste years thinking to ourselves, "Oh, how awful it was when this happened, or that happened, or what my third grade teacher did..." This is all to dwell in past time. Or we worry about what is going to happen in the future, "If I take this job what will take place?" Well, if you take the job such-and-such may take place, or it may not. You only have to live in the now. If you can learn to live in the now, and not worry about past and future, you have found one of the best gateways into Zen training, and one of the most frequently used.

*Another ancient Buddha once said, "What is this ceaseless time of arising and vanishing?"*

*Thus, in that the arising and vanishing is our experiencing the arising of an 'I' and our experiencing the*

*vanishing of an 'I', the process is unceasing. In entrusting the matter to Him, we need to discern the real meaning of His asserting the unceasingness of this process. We continually chop up this unceasing time of arising and vanishing into what constitutes the lifeblood of an Ancestor of the Buddha. In the unceasing time of arising and vanishing, who is it that arises and vanishes? As to the who that arises and vanishes, it is the who that is on the verge of being able to realize enlightenment within this body. That is, it is the who that manifests this body, the who for whom the Dharma is expressed, the who in the past who was unable to grasp what Mind is. It is 'You have gotten what my Marrow is,' and it is 'You have gotten what my Bones are.' Because the 'you' is the who that arises and vanishes.*

To sit still within the arising and vanishing, the appearance and disappearance, you and I, the constant coming and going: this is to be within the Great Ocean of Meditation within this human life. When we are dead (as we think of it), presumably we see It in a different way; I have no way of knowing. But I do know this: It is no different in life and in death. What matters is to *be* within the Great Ocean of Meditation.

When Dōgen speaks of “the who that arises and vanishes” in this particular passage, he is not talking of the reason for coming into physical existence at birth. Instead, he is talking of the “who” who trains and of the reason for living after one has had a realization of the Truth. This “who” is the new *I* of Shakyamuni Buddha, not the old “I” of Prince Gautama. Each and every one of us possesses the

“lifeblood of an Ancestor of the Buddha.” Even when we are the “who that was unable to grasp what Mind is,” our training is such that we are seeking the benefit of all sentient beings and are a vehicle for the flowering of the Dharma in all of the arisings and vanishings we call a life. This is the mind of the Bodhisattva. This is what the training of Ancestors of the Buddha is. All of that is implicit in what Dōgen is saying here.

Pure Buddha Nature, Bodhisattvahood, and Buddhahood are nothing other than the Essence of the Great Ocean, or what is sometimes called “non-substantial liberated Essence.” Do not think, by the way, that there is a difference between Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, *in essence*. There is a difference in appearance, because a Buddha is staying within That Place at all times and does not come out of It, whereas a Bodhisattva moves freely whilst His center is still. In essence there is no difference between them, but one must not confuse them in external appearance. Someone whose mind is stuck with the obstacles of the past, someone who has not made it to the Third Position wherein it is possible to ask, “What is my true purpose for living?” cannot grasp this meaning of being a Bodhisattva and therefore does not fully comprehend the Bodhisattva Vows.†

This is the point at which faith comes into it, the point of “entrusting the matter to Him.” It is an act of faith to remain in the Third Position and not get frightened by the arisings and the vanishings of the elements of body and mind. This is not the faith of blind belief: it is the faith of sitting still in the “meditative state that bears the seal of the Ocean.” This faith makes it possible to undertake the Bodhisattva Vows, which may seem impossible otherwise. In this place of faith, you also do not have to worry about

whether it is possible to follow other aspects of the Bodhisattva path. In the old days people used to debate endlessly whether “one can ever become a Bodhisattva because, if one has to become fully enlightened first that means one is a Buddha and when one becomes a Buddha it is ended so there’s nothing left to be a Bodhisattva, and if you become a Bodhisattva and you’ve not yet become a Buddha, how do you know that what you’re going to do is right”—which was all a lovely muddled way of thinking about it. If you know through faith what your True Nature is, it does not matter what the appearance is, whether it is that of Buddha or Bodhisattva or Arahant.†

There is a time of being a Buddha and a time of being an Arahant and a time of being a Bodhisattva. What is seen externally is a different thing in each case, but what is seen internally is identically the same thing. This is the higher level of the teaching of looking at everyone as the possessor of Buddha Nature and not worrying about their shortcomings, their external appearance, their sex, and “whether or not men can do it and whether or not women can do it,”...and so on. These things don’t count. What matters is that you know the non-substantial liberated Essence, the Buddha Nature, in the Third Position beyond the opposites. Sometimes the Essence appears as one thing and sometimes It appears as another, and none of these things stand against each other. It is not a matter of, for example, “How can the Bodhisattva teach, since He is giving up enlightenment?” Since he or she is one with enlightenment in true spirit, how can he *not* teach?

Viewing the arising and vanishing of the elements from the place of meditation makes it possible to go onward, not only through the fears that arise from attachment, but

also through the grief that arises in this sad world. Indeed, sometimes the world is cruel and unfair; sometimes it's downright terrible. These things are explained by the Law of Karma. Karma is cold comfort. I know, I've had to live with it. But if one stays still in meditation, gradually one sees over the years that the Essence is the supreme thing, that our little judgments and our little opinions do not really amount to so much as one hair on a dog's back.

It's very humbling to realize how great the design of the universe is, because it is not fully comprehensible by any of us. But one can have some glimpse of the colossal size of it and of how important and benevolent it actually is. Yes, all the suffering does go on, on an individual level, or so it seems, *and* so long as our faith stays true we can help that suffering by staying within the Third Position. That does not mean that we become cold-hearted, it doesn't mean that we become non-compassionate, it doesn't mean we can't grieve. The Zen master can both grieve and cry, but his grief does not overwhelm him so that he is incapable of acting, because he himself, or she, is rooted in faith and meditation. And the same can be true of every monk and lay person: if you are rooted in faith and living in the Third Position, then when the horrors of stupidity and ignorance come, you will not be overwhelmed by the suffering. Instead, you will want to renew your own efforts, both at helping and strengthening your own faith and in helping and strengthening the faith of others.

To do otherwise is to be immersed in the opposites, in ignorance of what is Real. Have you ever thought about the word "ignorance"? To ignore. We ignore what is really going on; we ignore the basic truth; we ignore the fact that the Unborn exists; we ignore that there is karma and that

one has to pay for that which happens. What happens in spring decides what happens in autumn. If you ignore what happens in spring, you will be surprised by the crop that turns up later. That is on a very practical level, and this is true of our own lives. If your faith is rooted in This Place, in the living meditative state that bears the seal of the Ocean, then, although there will be grief, although there will be pain, it will be bearable and we will not be so caught up in the emotionalism of the moment that we do not know what to do to alleviate the pain of self and others. We will, in fact, because we are not caught up in that emotionalism, be the most effective people possible. You must accept that, whilst we remain within this body, whilst the elements coalesce together, life will be painful. What we need to know is that we can sit still beneath it. The Zen master does not offer you magic that will turn off the pain of the world. He or she does show you how you can sit still beneath that pain so that you can help the world to make itself less painful. If you wish to think of that as “magic,” you may, but it isn’t. It’s very hard work. And that’s how it’s done: by sitting still in the place of meditation and allowing the Essence to flow through you. As Dōgen points out further on in the chapter, this is our True Refuge.

*...The Ocean of one’s being is not some abode of a worldly person nor is it some place beloved by a saintly person; it is oneself alone within the Ocean of one’s being. It is simply our constantly and openly giving expression to the Dharma. This ‘within the Ocean’ does not pertain to its center, nor does it pertain to its inside or outside; it is our endlessly dwelling constantly within it as we give expression to teachings*



*that are the flowering of the Dharma. Though we do not take up residence in the east, west, south, or north, we do return, our boat empty yet fully illumined by the moon's light. This genuine refuge is our returning to our Original Nature....*

Enlightenment is not a Place where you particularly want to be or don't want to be, it happens to be the Place where you *are*. You don't get a choice on that one. That's something that a lot of people haven't noticed. "Oh, how wonderful to be there, or how miserable not to be there." Nope: you just *are*. All these adjectives that we add to it are useless. *This is where we really are*, and Dōgen and all the great masters have told it like it is. They are not pretending with this stuff.

Next is told a famous dialogue between Great Master Sōzan (one of the monks for whom Sōto Zen is named) and a disciple:

*Sōzan Honjaku, posthumously called Great Master Genshō (C. Yüan-cheng), was once asked by a monk, "I have heard that it is said in Scriptural teachings that the Great Ocean does not give lodging to corpses. What kind of an ocean is this?" The Master responded, "It contains all that exists." The monk then asked, "Then why doesn't it give lodging to corpses?" The Master replied, "What has ceased to breathe is not connected with It." The monk asked, "Given that It contains all that exists, why is something that has ceased to breathe not connected with It?" The Master said, "The functioning of all that exists is something other than ceasing to breathe."*

Why aren't there any corpses? "The corpse" is a code word that refers to what is an illusion. This physical body, for example, is an illusion. Remember Shakyamuni Buddha's poem at the beginning of the chapter. But, when we can see that a corpse is pure in itself as a corpse, then there is no longer any illusion and it *is* contained within the Great Ocean of Meditation. When it is known to be changeless in its Pure Essence, and when we are seen in our Pure Essence, our unborn and undying state, we realize that *we* are contained in the Great Ocean of Meditation. And when are we in this Place? When we are sitting still in the waveless sea of meditation. And a corpse is in that state when its elements are in that waveless sea. So, nothing is outside of the waveless sea of meditation, and this is the true meaning of emptiness, or non-substantial liberated essence.

At the very end of the chapter, there is a most beautifully descriptive passage:

*...The journey before us and the journey behind us, which is part and parcel with all that exists, have their own functions, and ceasing to breathe is not one of them. In other words, we are like some blind person leading a mass of blind people. The fundamental principle of someone blind leading a mass of blind people includes 'one blind person leading one blind person' and 'a mass of blind people leading a mass of blind people'. When a mass of blind people are leading a mass of blind people, all contained things contain all contained things. Further, no matter how many Great Ways there are, they are beyond 'all that exists', for we have still not fully manifested our meditative practice,*

*which is the meditative state that bears the seal of the Ocean.*

In other words, don't try to get your brain so involved in this that you're trying to understand it. Sit still in meditation, right in the midst of the darkness of your own blindness, your own unknowing, and have faith; this thing *will* manifest. Dōgen is trying to tell you not to try to understand this intellectually. I've tried to explain it using words, as he has, but do not take it at the level of words. I'm a blind man leading blind men. Get on and do it, and then you'll know what I'm talking about.

That's really all I've got to tell you about this. It comes down again to sitting still and meditating, with bright hope which leads to faith, which leads to certainty, which leads to true liberation and the going in and out, the coming and going, arising and vanishing. Enlightenment is not escaping. It's not a two-dimensional thing; it is the Third Position. It is a permanent here-and-now thing, and those who truly understand it regard the world as a joyful place, as a place where they can do, and offer, incredible help as the pipelines of the Unborn. You cannot give that help while there is a "you" in the way and you cannot truly give it until you have found that incredibly peaceful Place of stillness.

What do you do if you want to help the world before you have found That Place? You give help anyway, with a pure heart, and you don't count the cost to yourself; you train and practice as though your hair were on fire, and one day—behold—you are in That Place. How can that be? It is because every time you sit down to meditate you are beckoning to the Great Ocean of Meditation. It is because every time you sit down to meditate the Great Ocean of Meditation

is beckoning to you. It is because every time you sit down to meditate you are all, blindly and unknowingly, aswim within the Great Ocean of Meditation.

## 7.

### *Live Fully; Die Fully*

From a lecture on *Zenki*,  
“Ever Functioning, Never Dormant”

The literal translation of “zenki” is “the activity of Zen” or “the activity of meditation,” and this chapter refers to That which is “ever functioning, never dormant” within that activity, namely Buddha Nature, True Nature, or what Dōgen calls True Self. To thoroughly explore this, says Dōgen, is to find the answer to the great problem of how to fully accept our life and our death.

*When one thoroughly examines what the Great Way of the Buddhas is, it is liberation from delusion and letting one's True Self manifest to the full. For some, this liberation from delusion means that life liberates us from life, and death liberates us from death. Therefore, both our getting out of birth-and-death and our entering birth-and-death are the Great Way, when thoroughly explored. Both our laying birth-and-death aside and our going beyond birth-and-death to the Other Shore are the Great Way, when thoroughly explored.*

This passage is quite straightforward, but be careful of the phrase “getting out of birth-and-death.” You cannot get

out of life and, now that you're in life, you certainly as heck can't get out of death! What you *can* do is find a Third Position where they don't get in the way of what truly matters and where one can enjoy both, fully. Thus, when I'm alive I'm fully alive, and when I'm dead I'm fully dead. That is to simultaneously "get out of" and "enter," to "lay aside" and "go beyond" both life and death by living in the non-substantial liberated essence at all times.

*Our True Self revealing itself to the full is what life is, and life is our True Self revealing itself. At the time of our True Self revealing itself, there is nothing that we can say is not a full displaying of life, and there is nothing that we can say is not a full displaying of death.*

We must be fully alive, in life. And fully dead, in death. Therefore, when we are alive, life is how Buddha Nature manifests Itself, and when we are dead, death is how Buddha Nature manifests Itself. Do not look for something outside of this, for life and death together are how Truth appears in this world.

Buddhist training is not a way to escape life and death. At first that may sound odd, given that the Four Noble Truths speak of finding the way to end suffering through ceasing our craving and attachment. That is perfectly true, but it does not result in an *escape* from anything; instead, the letting go of craving and attachment permits us to enter both life and death *fully*. I recall talking with someone at Blackfriars in Oxford, who was afraid of what his family would think if he meditated. He suggested that maybe if he did just a little bit each day, it wouldn't upset his family too

much. I quoted Martin Luther to him, “If you are going to sin, sin vigorously!” (laughter) Really do it: either get on and do Buddhist training or don’t do it at all! Piddling about doesn’t get you anywhere except to keep the “soap opera” side of your life going. True Nature can only reveal Itself in life and death if we are fully present within them, and at the same time free of attachment.

*It is the operating of this True Self that causes life to come about and causes death to come about. The very moment when one fully manifests this functioning of one’s True Self, it will not necessarily be something great or necessarily something small, or the whole universe or some limited bit of it, or something drawn out or something short and quick. Our life at this very moment is the True Self in operation, and the operating of our True Self is our life at this very moment.*

*Life is not something that comes, and life is not something that goes: life is not something that reveals itself, and life is not something that is accomplished. Rather, life is a displaying of one’s Buddha Nature to the full, and death is also a displaying of one’s Buddha Nature to the full. You need to realize that there is life and there is death within the immeasurable thoughts and things within ourselves....*

When Dōgen speaks of life, he means our full and true life, not the dream world within which we normally live. And when he speaks of death, he means our full and true death. The moment of fully manifesting this for the first time is the moment of realization, the finding of the non-substantial liberated essence. It is in this way that True Self,

or Buddha Nature, “causes life and death to come about.” This experience cannot be defined or limited by descriptions such as large or small, slow or quick. If you would fully live and fully die, you have to experience that non-substantial liberated essence for yourself, either during life or at the time of death. And, if you have not had any “rehearsals” beforehand, it is sometimes a little difficult to recognize it at the time of death, because there are a lot of other things going on. This is one reason why one meditates. If you do not realize It then you cannot enjoy dying, fully. Nor can you enjoy living, fully. This is because you will fear the one and long for the other, or vice versa. You can only be totally immersed in both when there is no attachment to either, and this comes about as a result of knowing That which is Real, the non-substantial liberated essence of Buddha Nature. Then, every day is a good day; every moment is a good moment. To get to this state one must live fully and absolutely, without attachment to life or to death.

*Life is, for instance, like a time when someone is on board a boat. I'm on this boat, I manipulate the sails, I handle the rudder, I push the punting pole; at the same time the boat is carrying me along, and there is no 'I' that is outside this boat. My sailing in a boat is what makes this boat be a boat. You need to do your utmost to explore through your training what is going on at this very moment. At this very moment there is nothing that is not the world of the boat. The sky, the water, the shore—all have become this moment of the boat, which is completely different from occasions not on a boat. Thus, life is what I am making life to be, and I am what life is making me to be.... What this*



*metaphor is saying is that life is what 'T' is, and 'T' is what life is.*

The boat here is also a metaphor for the human body. When man and boat, Buddha Nature and body, are in complete harmony, we are living in non-substantial liberated essence. The non-substantial liberated essence and the phenomena function together in this way—never despise the phenomena. All is One *and* all is different.

*The venerable monk Meditation Master Engo Kokugon (C. Yüan-wu K'o-ch'in), once said, "Life is a manifestation of one's entire being, and death is a manifestation of one's entire being."*

*We need to thoroughly explore this saying, and clarify what it means. As to what 'thoroughly exploring this saying' means, the principle that life is a manifestation of one's entire being is not concerned with beginnings and endings, for life is the whole of the great earth and the whole of unbounded space; at the same time, not only does this principle not stand against life's being a manifestation of one's entire being but it also does not stand against death's also being a manifestation of one's entire being. When death is also a manifestation of one's entire being, it is the whole of the great earth and the whole of unbounded space.... Hence life does not get in the way of death, and death does not get in the way of life. Both the whole of the great earth and the whole of unbounded space exist within life and exist within death as well....*

Do not think that life and death are opposites, nor that they are limited by our conceptions of time and space. They are your entire being; they are your True Nature manifesting before your very eyes at this moment. The Unborn *is*. Every sentient being exists within life and death, and it is through life and death that Buddha Nature manifests Itself.

Life and death are universally present within each moment. When I first studied meditation in the East, I was taught that “the incoming breath is life and the outgoing breath is death.” This is a metaphor, and don’t push it too far, but it leads to the recognition that life and death take place in every second and that That which comes in on the in-breath and goes out on the out-breath is the same thing. The Buddha Nature is in both. If one lives with the Buddha Nature, the moment our experience changes from “in” to “out” does not worry us and the moment it changes from “out” to “in” does not worry us. And the moment it changes from life to death does not worry us.

Recognize that It is always there. Do not think that winter flows into spring and spring into summer and summer into autumn. One thing does not “become” another thing. “A stick of firewood, once reduced to ashes, cannot once again revert to being a stick of firewood. Nevertheless, you should not hold on to the opinion that the ashes are the future of that which the stick was the past,” said Dōgen in the chapter *Genjō Kōan*. But That which they all possess, the non-substantial liberated essence, is constantly present and constantly renewing Itself. It has nothing to do with phenomena and everything to do with phenomena. Do not despise the phenomena of your life. Recognize the non-substantial liberated essence of Buddha Nature at all times. Recognize It in life; recognize It in death. Welcome It in life; welcome It in death.

## 8.

### *The Moon of Our True Nature*

From a lecture on *Tsuki*,  
“The Moon of One’s Excellent Nature”

The full Moon here has been translated as being synonymous with “one’s Excellent Nature,” which is to say, one’s Buddha Nature or True Nature. The moon, simply because of its shape and the fact that you have quarters and halves and fulls and the like, has been used in Zen as a metaphor for enlightenment. Someone is partially enlightened, someone is half-enlightened, someone is fully enlightened; the full moon always implies full enlightenment. But like all such things, don’t push it too far, because immediately you can say, “Well, the moon waxes and wanes as well...,” and you can start getting into false notions. Also, remember that the way in which Dōgen speaks of moons is the way in which someone would speak when astronauts have not walked on moons and spaceships don’t roar into the sky. We are in the thirteenth century here, therefore some of his conclusions are not exactly what present day conclusions would be. But the important thing to keep in mind is that when the term “Moon” is used in Zen Buddhism, it implies the full appearance of our True Nature.

*The full perfecting of our Moon is not only ‘three, and three before that’ and is not only ‘three, and three*

*after that', and our fully perfected Moon is not only 'three, and three before that' and is not only 'three, and three after that'.*

That is a little hard to understand. He is working on several levels at once here. He is saying that both the process of perfecting our understanding of the Unborn Buddha Nature and Its full manifestation are unbounded and beyond count. At the same time, using the metaphor of phases of the moon, he is saying that, whether you have a quarter of a moon showing or half a moon, that does not mean that you have only a half or a quarter of a Buddha Nature. Buddha Nature is always full and perfected; it is just that sometimes only a quarter or a half is showing.

*This is why Shakyamuni Buddha said,*

*"The true Dharma Body of the Buddha  
Is unbounded, like empty space.*

*It reveals Its form in accordance with an object,  
Like the moon reflected in water."*

Now, the word "koku," which has been translated here as "empty space," also has the meaning of non-substantial liberated essence. Therefore this poem also comes out as "The true Dharma Body of the Buddha is non-substantial liberated essence and is as the moon reflected in the water." If you listen to that sentence, you can almost hear the brightness in your own spirit.

*The ultimate reality expressed by 'like the moon reflected in water' can also be described as 'the Moon of the Water' or 'the Water as reality', as well as 'the*

*Moon as reality’, ‘being within reality’, ‘the reality within’. It is beyond expressing as reality what things are like: reality is what is. The real Dharma Body of the Buddha is just like unbounded space. Because this ‘unbounded space’ is this real Dharma Body of the Buddha that has been described as being ‘just like’, the whole earth, the whole of all realms, all thoughts and things—that is, all that manifests—are in themselves unbounded space. The hundreds of things that sprout up and the myriad forms that they take—all of which manifest before our very eyes—are what is ‘just like’ the Dharma Body of the Buddha and they are the real Dharma Body and they are like the moon in water.*

In Christian theology they have terms for the two ways of speaking about the nature of God: the apophatic and the cataphatic. In the former, one speaks of That which is beyond expressing by trying to say what It is not; in the latter, one tries to say what It is. Much of Buddhism uses the apophatic way, which is all very well but, when you have people with little faith, to use the method which sounds “empty” is a very dangerous thing. You also need to use terms that will excite and feed faith. There is time enough after there is faith to say, “We know that there is an unborn, unbecome, unmade, uncompounded; we cannot say more than that.” If you are always trying to describe the ultimate of your religion by saying what it is not, you can make faith die, or at least despair, or even cry. Don’t do that; don’t go into nihilism. At the risk of being complained at for saying what you know something to be, it is advisable to come out with a statement that brightens the mind rather than lowers it. This is why I use terms such as “the Unborn,” and why

Dōgen uses terms such as “the Dharmakaya”<sup>†</sup> (or “the Dharma Body of the Buddha”) and “Buddha Nature.”

It is important to take a look at the last two sentences here, because a lot of people say that the phenomena that appear in the world, which includes you and me, are not part of the Truth. They somehow believe that they are separate from the Dharma Body of the Buddha and that the goal of training is to find It. In other words, because they are aware of the limitations of the “all is different,” they try to eliminate it and have only “all is One.” The old Christian saying, “I am not God, and there is nothing in me that is not of God,” applies very much here. Dōgen is saying that the real Dharma Body of the Buddha *is* all of the “hundreds of things that sprout up” and that all of this, simultaneously, is as unbounded space. Buddha Nature exists in *all* things. Whether we are within the dream of ordinary mind, within the vision of enlightenment, or even within the rank delusion of hallucinations, Buddha Nature is still in existence. In their true nature, all things, all phenomena, as well as all wisdoms and all worlds, possess Buddha Nature. Do not cut something off and place yourself in a dualistic system. It is very easy to get yourself into this sort of duality. Many people in Buddhism have got themselves into duality without ever realizing that they are in it, simply by the words that they have used.

These problems are not limited to Buddhism, of course. There are almost no great scriptures of any religion that somehow or other do not skirt getting themselves into duality. It is inevitable if you are going to speak of ultimate things. I think that perhaps the only exception to this might be the Christian Athanasian Creed, which denies everything it has said immediately after it has said it! It runs from the

apophatic to the cataphatic, back and forth and back and forth, so that with any luck you catch That which lies beyond. That is what I'm trying to get you to do in this particular lecture. Do not look at anything and despise it: do not look down on dreams, do not look up (or down) on visions, do not look in horror at ignorance, delusion, or even hallucinations: there is Buddha Nature in *all* things. There is Buddha Nature in that which goes down the toilet, and there is Buddha Nature in that which we eat. It does not mean to say that we eat what goes down the toilet and put down the toilet... you get my point? You must discern and differentiate between these things; just don't discriminate between them. It is very important to understand this.

*Meditation Master Banzan Hōshaku (C. Pao-chi of Mount P'an-shan) once said,*

*“The Moon of our heart and mind is solitary  
and at the full,  
Its light swallows up all forms that arise.  
Its light is not something that illumines concrete  
objects,  
And concrete objects, in turn, are not something  
that truly exist.  
When Its light and objects both vanish,  
There is still That Which Is the What.”*

Now, if you have found this Third Position where “Its light and objects both vanish,” it does not have to be night for the Moon to shine forth; in this Place night is not necessarily dark. In this Third Position everything exists in non-substantial liberated essence. In this Place you do not make judgments, and you do not cling to anything. You

cannot cling to the Moon of Buddha Nature, for Its light vanishes along with objects. Therefore, you cannot own the Moon, and there is nothing in you that is not of the Moon. You cannot be independent and separate—a concrete object—for such things are but a dream; they do not truly exist. All the while, the Moon shines in the water, and also in the muddy puddle and in the window of the house, “Its light swallowing up all forms that arise.” The non-substantial liberated essence of the Moon of Buddha Nature is seen in all things, but do not think that you are a mere reflection. You are far more than a reflection; if you think of yourself simply as a reflection you will never know the Truth. Also, do not hold on to the light of yesterday’s Moon. Tonight’s Moon is not different from yesterday’s Moon, and it is totally different from yesterday’s Moon, and today’s Moon is totally different from tomorrow’s Moon, and totally the same. Thus the Moon is always new, and we never see the whole of It.

*What has now been expressed is that the Ancestors of the Buddha, as disciples of the Buddha, without fail have the Moon of their heart and mind, because they treat their Moon as their heart and mind. If their heart and mind were not the Moon, It would not be their heart and mind, and without a heart and mind, there is no Moon. ‘Solitary and at the full’ means that It lacks for nothing. Whatever is beyond ‘two or three’, we call ‘all things’. When all things are in the Moon’s Light, they are not all things, hence Its Light swallows up all things....*



You must not be afraid to use your own heart and mind, for it is through them that your True Nature manifests Itself. Yes, our heart and mind are phenomena and, if we are attached to them as separate “entities,” then they are part of the problem. But when you look at the phenomena around you with that same heart and mind, and you see the non-substantial liberated essence of all things, then the Moon is “at the full” and “Its Light swallows up all things.” I see the phenomena we call “you” in front of me, and I listen to what we call “the bulldog” snoring beside me<sup>i</sup> (laughter), and it is all the same Buddha Nature; thus all is One *and* all is different. Do not think that you have to despise the phenomena in order to know your True Nature. Do not think that you *can* despise the phenomena and still know your True Nature. Unless one understands through the gateway of the senses, how will one ever truly find what is True? That is why, in all existences, this human life is the highest: we are endowed with a heart and a mind, we can see and think and hear and smell and feel. These are the doorways through which the Moon’s Light penetrates all things. In fact, as Dōgen says, “without them there is no Moon.” Just don’t hold on to them.

*Because he [Master Banzan] had attained such a state, when people were on the point of being helped to reach the Other Shore by means of his Buddha body, he forthwith manifested his Buddha body and gave voice to the Dharma for their sake, and when people were on the point of being helped to reach the Other Shore by means of the physical body that he customarily manifested, he forthwith manifested that customary physical body and gave voice to the Dharma*

*for their sake, for at no time is it said that he did not turn the Wheel of the Dharma from within his Moon....*

Just think about that for a minute. There is no magic here: Banzan is not materializing different bodies or any such foolishness. He is making use of whatever is most helpful in the circumstance at hand. And that is what we must do also. We have to use phenomena in order to teach the Truth to phenomena; that is what is being said here. And we use the most appropriate form of phenomena for the situation. We do what works.

*Once when Shakyamuni Buddha was giving Teaching to the Bodhisattva Vajragarbha, He said, "Just as the moving eye, for instance, can make still waters seem to pitch and roll, and just as the steady eye makes fire seem to gyrate, so too, when clouds are hastening by, the moon seems to move in the opposite way, and when one's boat is departing, the shore appears to drift in a counterdirection."*

*We need to thoroughly explore and clarify what the Buddha has just now said concerning the hastening of clouds and the moving of the moon, as well as the departing of one's boat and the drifting of the shore. Do not study this in haste or try to make it accord with the sentiments of ordinary, worldly people.... As to the hastening of clouds and the moving of the moon, as well as the departing of the boat and the drifting by of the shore, of which the Tathagata just spoke, at the time when the clouds hasten, the moon moves, and at*

*the time when the boat sails off, the shore drifts by. The import of what this is saying is that the clouds and the moon are simultaneously moving at the same pace at the same time and in the same manner, which is beyond one beginning as the other ends and beyond one being before and the other after....*

This is where this particular lecture flows into the chapters which have come before it. Do not adhere to the opposites of time or space; accept the drifting clouds and moving boat as being complete as they are. Advance beyond limited ideas of what is real. Thus, when there is life, just accept life; and when there is death, just accept death; they go together as the moon and the clouds, as the boat and the shore. Go beyond this dream and live in What lies beyond it, which is, of course, the unlimited existence—the non-substantial, liberated essence of which I have been speaking. Remember that the clouds have nothing to do with direction and the moon is not related to night and day, old and new. None of these things are separate “things,” connected together. Therefore, do not think that life and death are “things,” connected together. There is a “simultaneous movement,” a flow, that is beyond beginning and ending. Thus, there is a time of being born and a time of dying, but if you are stuck with them as times, you will forever be in the world of opposites.

In truth, each seemingly connected “thing” stands alone, complete in itself, as a moment of the eternally flowing now of Ūji. As such, they really have nothing to do with each other. And, we can also know that That which forms their True Nature is identically the same as That which forms ours. In this way, we can love the “all is different”

and not despise it, for it is the means by which the Moon's Light can manifest Itself in this world. When the Moon's Light so manifests, the Dharma flowers before us. Do you see how all these chapters of the *Shōbōgenzō* are beginning to weave together into one huge tapestry?

Dōgen concludes this chapter with the following passage:

*Keep in mind that the pace of the Moon, even if it is at a gallop, is beyond having a beginning, middle, and end. This is why the first Moon has a second Moon. The first (which is Its Essential Nature) and the second (which is the way It appears) are, both alike, Moons. 'A good time for training and practice' is what the Moon is, and 'a good time for making offerings' is what the Moon is, and, with a swish of one's sleeves, taking one's leave to go to the Meditation Hall is what the Moon is. Its roundness or squareness is beyond the turning of the wheel of coming and going. Whether making use of the turning of the wheel of coming and going or not making use of it, the Master grabs hold of the deluded certainty of his trainees or lets them go on in their own way as he gives free reign to his graceful means, and so it is with many Moons.*

Sometimes we see the Moon as full, and our faith is strengthened; sometimes we don't seem to see It at all, and we are worried. But It is still there. Buddha Nature is not dependent upon day or night, upon moon or sun. Buddha Nature *is*. We see as much of It as we look for, and sometimes as much of It as may be wise for us to see. Remember

Dōgen's comment beforehand about how a Buddha appears: if it is of benefit to sentient beings for Him to take the form of Buddha, so will He appear, and if it is of benefit to take the form of an illusion which motivates us towards training and practice, He will do just that.

Training and practice, the life of making continuous offerings, sitting still in meditation, listening attentively to the teaching of the master (whether he or she confronts us with our delusions or walks steadfastly beside us, letting us encounter them in our own good time)—these are truly the ways in which our True Nature manifests Itself. They are “what the Moon is.”

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<sup>i</sup> Rev. Master Jiyu had several pet bulldogs in the course of her life. When she lectured informally, one would often accompany her, frequently falling asleep at her feet and snoring loudly.

## 9.

### *The Deeper Meaning of Precepts*

From a Lecture on *Shoaku Makusa*,  
“Refrain from All Evil Whatsoever”

Now, I’m going to “put the cat among the pigeons” today, with this particular lecture. Because, you see, Dōgen is going to speak about a very controversial topic: the ancient saying in Mahayana Buddhism that “keeping the Precepts of the Shravakas is the same as breaking the Precepts of the Bodhisattvas.”<sup>1</sup> This chapter, and this lecture, assume that you know that it is *essential* to keep the Buddhist Precepts. Furthermore, both Dōgen and I assume that you know the basic form which these precepts take and that you are practicing with a sincere effort to keep them on a daily basis. If you do not have such an understanding and keep to such a practice, then what follows will be useless to you. On the other hand, if you do have such an understanding and practice, what we are speaking of here may be of great value in deepening and maturing them.

“Shoaku” is a word that means “to refrain from” or “to cease from.” When you use it as “to cease from,” you should know that it is not referring to someone commanding you to cease, but rather to your own inner commitment to cease. The word “makusa” refers to that which is evil, unreal, or delusory: that which hides us from the Unborn. “Cease from evil; do only good; do good for others”: these

are the Three Pure Precepts of the Bodhisattvas. These precepts are what this chapter will explore in detail. Along the way, we will see why keeping these precepts at their deeper levels sometimes requires us to “break the Precepts of the Shravakas,” i.e., to do things that are not according to the letter of the various specific precepts.



Master Dōgen starts the chapter by considering the meaning of the first of these Pure Precepts: “Cease from evil.” He points out that, while “evil” has both universal and relative meanings, to refrain from evil is a basic principle of Buddhism and a necessity of our daily training.

*The Buddha of long ago said in verse:*

*Refrain from all evil whatsoever,  
Uphold and practice all that is good,  
And thereby you purify your own intentions:  
This is what all Buddhas teach.*

*These are the Precepts that the Seven Buddhas and all the Ancestors of our Tradition have held in common. They are passed down from a previous Buddha directly to the next Buddha: They are what a Buddha inherits from a preceding Buddha. This refers not only to the Seven Buddhas: They are what all Buddhas Whatsoever teach. You should examine Them with the mind of meditation and thoroughly investigate the principles They voice.*

*When mention is made of ‘the Dharma voiced by the Seven Buddhas’, it is doubtless a reference to this*

*Teaching which the Seven Buddhas have given voice to. What is passed on and what is inherited, moreover, is what is being communicated here through this Scriptural verse: it is ‘what all Buddhas teach’: it is what the hundreds of thousands of millions of Buddhas have been instructed in, what They have practiced, and what They have personally come to realize.*

*Among the three qualities of ‘being good’, ‘being evil’, and ‘being neutral’, the ‘all evil’ of which we are now speaking has the quality of ‘being evil’. This quality of ‘being evil’ is something that does not arise and perish, as thoughts and things do. Although the qualities of ‘being good’ and ‘being neutral’ are also beyond arising, as well as being without stain and bearing the characteristics of the Truth, these three, in each instance, are quite diverse in form and character.*

The “all evil whatsoever” of which Dōgen speaks means the evil aspects or the evil possibilities of our actions. And those aspects and possibilities are not limited simply to actions which people think of as being “evil,” but they can also be found in actions which are “good” and “neutral.” Believe me, in doing good there are always some evil possibilities, and sometimes even evil aspects. Furthermore, he states that these evil aspects or possibilities are not simply some relative or socially-determined thing: they also have an inherent or unconditioned nature. And yet each action will have its own particular form and circumstance, thus that which will appear evil at one time may appear good at another. So, good and evil simultaneously are both universal and relative; they are both constant and yet conditioned by time and existence, by social and political



structures. The “good and evil” which is seen by the judging eyes of human beings is not always the same as “that which is good” and “that which is evil” within the Unborn Buddha Mind.

*‘All evil’ is not exactly the same as what is considered wrong among us in the monastic community or wrong in the world of other humans, nor is it exactly the same as what was thought of as evil in the past or the present, nor is it exactly the same as what is considered evil among those in ‘celestial realms’ or among ordinary, everyday human beings. And vast indeed is the difference between the way that what is good, evil, and neutral are spoken of in Buddhism and the way they are spoken of in the world of ordinary, everyday people. What is good and what is evil depend on the time, but time itself is neither good nor evil. What is good and what is evil depend on what phenomenal thoughts and things they give rise to, but whatever arises is likewise inherently neither good nor evil. To the extent that thoughts or things are alike, they partake of good alike, and to the extent that they are alike, they partake of evil alike.*

This passage is incredibly important. What may be good in the Buddhist Way may not necessarily be perceived as such by the worldly mind. This chapter opens great vistas of possibilities and you should study it in detail, consider its implications for your actions, and seek the advice of the Sangha in putting it into practice. Taking refuge in your fellow trainees and in the precepts become ever more important as one lives beyond the boundaries of conventional

morality (of “what is considered...wrong in the world of other humans”).

As we saw in the chapter on Ūji, time and existence cannot partake of any opposites such as good and evil: they simply *are*. While there are fashions, as it were, or notions and theories about good and evil, about truth and delusion, the universe simply exists. It is, simply, the universe. It exists beyond the opposites. And (here I’m about to seem to contradict myself), it neither “exists” nor does “not exist.” We can appreciate this fully only when we know the Unborn. To study the matter of good and evil in this way opens a door beyond the opposites, and thus it opens a way to the Unborn.

*Nevertheless, while we are pursuing our study of That which is Absolute, Supreme Enlightenment, while we are listening to instructions on It, while we are training and practicing until we personally experience the fruits of realizing It, It seems something profound, something remote, something mysterious. We hear of this peerless Enlightenment from our good spiritual friends and we learn of It from Scriptures. And the first thing we hear is, ‘Refrain from all evil whatsoever’. If you do not hear it said to refrain from all evil whatsoever, it is not the genuine Dharma of Buddha: it will be the preaching of demons. You must understand that to hear ‘Refrain from all evil whatsoever’ is what the genuine Dharma of Buddha is.*

The first teaching that any master should give to a person is to refrain from all evil. There was a sad mistake made in this regard when my generation was beginning to study

Zen, because the Oriental teachers who came over, hearing that we students were Buddhists, naturally presumed that we had already heard and taken to heart this teaching. Therefore, many of them started at a more advanced level, teaching how Zen makes it possible to go beyond conventional morality and become completely and totally free. Now, that is true, but it is *only true once the Buddhist Precepts are already part of your blood and bones*. Unfortunately, since many of the students of my generation had never heard the teaching “refrain from all evil whatsoever,” the teaching of the freedom of Zen caused some of us to say, “Goody, goody; I can do what I please!” and get down to committing every dissolute act they could think of (plus a few that I’d never heard of). (laughter)

So, as Dōgen makes clear to everyone, the very first thing that one should hear as a Buddhist is “refrain from all evil.” That is the greatest of all teachings, for without this foundation nothing in the way of mature Buddhist training can be built. But before you can refrain from evil, you have got to know what it is. It’s like telling a child to beware of a bull. You have to know what a bull looks like, what it can do, and you also have to know the meaning of the word “beware.” Otherwise, you are working in ignorance, and ignorance, whilst we sometimes find it comforting in the short run, in the end doesn’t help us at all. In fact, all that it does is keep us continuously in bondage. This is why we study the Scriptures and take advice from the Sangha on the ongoing matter of what the precepts mean in our lives.

*...When...people turn themselves around upon hearing supreme enlightenment being talked about, they will wish to refrain from all evil whatsoever, and*

*will act to refrain from all evil whatsoever. Once they have arrived at the point where they are no longer doing all manner of evil, the strength from their training and practice will immediately manifest itself before their very eyes. This blossoming of strength will extend beyond all places, all realms, all times, all things. And the measuring of it will take 'refraining' as its yardstick.*

*Those who have arrived at this point in time may reside in some place where all manner of evil is going on or they may be traveling back and forth there, or they may be confronted with conditions where all manner of evil actions may be going on, yet they do not perform such evil actions themselves because they are clearly manifesting the strength from their self-restraint. They do not speak of evil actions as, in and of themselves, evil actions, for there is no such thing as a predestined 'tool for evil'. At such a point in time, the principle that 'evil does not break a person' will be understood: the principle that 'a person does not defeat evil' will be crystal clear.*

We should know that it is our pure intent, our constant attempt to refrain from evil, which is the greatest of all training. As I have said many times, one cannot have a great understanding of the Truth until one has rooted out the attachments. And this is actualized by the constant attempt to cease from evil, the will to cease from evil.

In the passage above you'll note that Dōgen speaks of self-restraint, not of attempting to destroy or defeat evil. We attempt to destroy things so as to be rid of them forever, but it does not work that way: we need to be able to learn to live

with them, with self-restraint. This is what I mean when I say that the attachments must be “rooted out”: I do not mean that the attachments shall never again arise. I mean that training is constant, practice is constant, refraining from all evil is constant. It is also very important to remember the principle that “evil does not break a person.” Nothing has the power to do that: training and practice are *always* possible. And, once refraining from evil has become our way of life, the “strength from our training and practice” make it possible for us to encounter all manner of situations without becoming distressed by them, judgmental of them, or corrupted by them.

*Rouse your heart and mind fully and do your training and practice, for when you rouse your heart and mind to do the training and practice, you will have already attained eight- or nine-tenths of the way. Before you know it, you will have ‘refraining’ always in the back of your mind....*

This is a wonderful thing: the great majority of refraining arises naturally when one rouses one’s heart and mind and simply does the practice. We also make use of our wise discernment and learn from our karma; these too should be understood as “rousing our heart and mind fully.” “Refraining from all evil whatsoever” is only an onerous task when we think of it as being imposed upon us by others. But if we understand the term “shoaku” as “I will refrain from” or “I will cease from,” then there will be no resistance to it, and very little need for conscious restraint, provided we stay true to our pure intent and commit ourselves wholeheartedly to Buddhist training.

Do not despise your body in the process of refraining from evil and giving up all attachments. The four elements and the five skandhas† which compose your body are just the four elements and the five skandhas; they are not, in themselves, either good or evil. They have come into existence conditioned by karma, and as Dōgen points out:

*The karmic consequences of our good and bad actions are what we are training with. That is, we try not to set karmic consequences into motion or try to stir things up. There is a time when karmic consequences are what cause us to do the training and practice. Once the true face of our karma has been made clear to us, this is what ‘refraining’ really is, for this is the Unborn: it is being impermanent, it is being subject to causality, and it is being free, because it is letting go. When we study the matter in this manner, we will bring about a state where we will completely refrain from all evil....*

When there is a cutting of the roots of karma and no new bad karma is created, the previous karma which brought this bunch of skandhas into existence begins to become apparent. And the kōan manifests itself more clearly, whether in the form of an awareness of past lives or simply in daily life. This, in turn, makes it easier to see how to continue to practice without being caught up in our habitual proclivities for making mistakes. For those proclivities exist because of the load of karma that brought us into existence. We all have these life-long tendencies which are conditioned by karma. They are weaknesses in our character which the compassionate nature of the Law of Karma allows

us to know of. But it is not just that we are allowed to know of them. We also want the Unborn to know of them, to know everything about us; we wish to hold back nothing from the sight of the Truth. We no longer want to be as we are. We *want* to cease from evil. In ceasing from evil, we are able to see that which conditioned our particular proclivities towards evil. And in cleaning that up, we are allowed to see our original face, to know the Unborn.

This accounts for eight- or nine-tenths of the process. What about the other bit? Here several other aspects of training come to the forefront. First of all, the will enters into it. We *are able* to refrain. There has to be both the intent and the actualization to do it. Secondly, if you would understand this clearly you'll need to study very carefully the chain of dependent origination, which makes it clear how harmful actions are produced by the interaction of ignorance and our intentions. Ignorance and selfish intent produce actions which are evil; wisdom and selfless intent produce actions which are good. More importantly, however, when one stays still in the mind of meditation, one can drop off both of these intents and be in a place where there is simply a non-creation of evil and a doing of that which is good. When one's actions are done from activity within this stillness of meditation, then one may "live in the world as if in the sky," be unaffected by whatever evil and delusion may surround us, and simply do what truly needs to be done without "evil" or "good" ever entering into the picture. This is to train in the Third Position beyond the opposites.

In the next section of the chapter, Dōgen takes us to this Place.

*It is not that there are no evils, it is only that there are things that one should not do. It is not that there are evils, it is only that there are things that one should not do. It is not that evils are empty of substance: it is simply that they are things not to be done. It is not that evils do have a form, simply they are things not to be done. Evils are not 'things that one should not do', they are simply things one does not do. For instance, it is not a matter of whether the spring-time pine has 'existence' or does not have 'existence', the pine tree is simply a thing that we do not invent.... Whether Buddhas exist or do not exist, there are things we do not do....*

When we see with the eyes of our Buddha Nature, there is neither “refraining from evil” nor “not refraining from evil.” It is here that we can see beyond the boundaries of conventional morality and of the letter of the precepts. In this Place there is simply being *One* in the Unborn. And there is beyond being *One*: there is acting from the *One* within the different. Therefore, in this Place (which is not different from the Great Ocean of Meditation) there are things which simply are not to be done. And there are things which simply are to be done. And they are obvious. When Silence exists, no more need be said. Within the Great Silence of our Buddha Nature we are *One* with the Dharma and *One* with the Unborn; the Dharma flowers *and* we do not do that which is not to be done. There is no need for discussion of “good” or “evil,” of “existence” or “nonexistence”: the things we do not do are as obvious as the pine tree growing in front of us. Do not try to come to a philosophical definition of “evil”; do not even worry about whether or not



you use that word at all; just remain in that Place, within the Silence wherein we refrain forever from those things which are not to be done.



With this understanding of “refrain from evil,” we are now ready to hear about the Second Pure Precept: “Do only good.”

*“Uphold and practice all that is good.” This ‘all that is good’ refers to the quality of ‘being good’ among the three qualities. Although all that is good resides within the quality of ‘being good’, this does not mean that what is good already exists somewhere and is waiting for someone to put it into operation. At the very moment when someone does good, there is nothing good that does not come forth. Although the myriad expressions of goodness are without an outer form, when good is done, it attracts goodness faster than a magnet attracts iron.... Even the strength amassed by the karma from the great earth with its mountains and rivers, as well as from the world with its nations and countries, will never hinder the accumulating of good.*

*Even so, what is good depends on what ‘world’ you are talking about, for it will not always be perceived as being the same thing, since people consider what is good from their own perspective. These circumstances are similar to those when Buddhas give voice to the Dharma in the Three Temporal Worlds. What They*

*give voice to is the same, but how It was voiced when Each was in the world has depended on the times....*

As with “things not to be done,” there is simply “that which is good to do,” and the power of doing this good cannot be overemphasized. And, as with “evil,” what is perceived as being “good” will vary according to the social structure of the time and the political situation. For example, what the monks of one monastery may do is sometimes thought of as good by one person and as not good by others. Some Buddhist religious orders go out and engage in political or social demonstrations. By some people this will be seen to be good; by others it will not be. As with “evil,” no act is “good” in an eternal and unmoving way, in the sense that it is so viewed by a God, for the Unborn *is* and neither judges nor views. And, there *is* the essence of “simply being good to do.”

The intent to do good, like the intent to refrain from evil, is an important part of this. Furthermore, the principle of doing good can run contrary to some of the prevailing theories of morality and law in a given country. At the same time, Buddhism has always taught respect for the laws of the land. If we perceive that a law operates against “what is good,” we work within that system to change the law, not to have a riot. The Truth can be voiced in all times and at all places: just Its manner and form are different according to circumstances.

Recognizing what is not to be done, recognizing what is good to do, and intending to do the good, we then act within the best of our ability. We may be wrong, but the Unborn does not hold this against one. Understand clearly, however, that this nonjudgmental property of the Buddha

Mind does not mean that one may play with holy things. Before taking action, one must remain very still, allowing awareness of the good and evil aspects of every act to arise. There must be a *genuine* attempt to cease from evil and a *genuine* attempt to do what is good. And still, we shall reap the karma of all that we do.

*This is why the good from the perspective of practicing in faith and the good from the perspective of practicing in accordance with the Dharma vary so widely, yet are not separate Teachings. For instance, it is like the situation of a shravaka's holding to the Precepts being a breaking of the Precepts in a bodhi-sattva....*

*Although, as I have said, the doing of what is good is what we uphold and practice, it is not something to be speculated upon or intellectually analyzed.... Whatever is good does not depend on something having existence or not having existence, of having form or being devoid of form, and so forth. It is simply what is upheld and practiced. No matter where it manifests, no matter when it manifests, it is what we uphold and practice, without fail....*

The Dharma is the Dharma and beyond all analysis, as is the Unborn and the Buddha Nature. The actualization of practice is simply “the doing of what is good,” whether this arises from faith or from experience. Simply to uphold and practice what is good is to be One with the Unborn. In the beginning we are shravakas, those whose practice depends upon the instructions of others, and our best way of knowing what is to be upheld and practiced is to study and follow

the precepts in detail, and to have faith in them. But when we get to the Place that Dōgen has just been describing, we have internalized the precepts into our blood and bones (thus being “bodhisattvas”), and we must not hold on tightly to forms, even the forms and letter of the precepts, lest we become judgmental and destroy their spirit. This is the freedom of Zen which was being spoken of by the Oriental masters to students of my generation. I hope that you can see that this teaching is a great and compassionate thing, a teaching for spiritual adults, and has utterly nothing to do with self-indulgence in the name of Zen.



Now let us look at the third of the Pure Precepts. There are two forms of this precept found in the ancient Buddhist Scriptures: “Purify your mind” (or, put more accurately into English, your heart or intentions) and “Do good for others.” I have generally chosen to use the latter; here Dōgen uses the former. Although the emphasis of these two forms differs, they have the same essence.

*In the statement, ‘You purify your own intentions’, the ‘you’ is the ‘you’ that refrains, the ‘purifying’ is the purifying by refraining, the ‘own’ is the ‘own’ of yourself, the ‘intention’ is the intention that you have. The ‘one’s own’ is the ‘one’s own’ that refrains; the ‘intention’ is the intention to refrain. ‘Intention’ is ‘the intention to uphold and practice’, ‘to purify’ is ‘to purify by upholding and practicing’, ‘your own’ is ‘your own adherence and practice’, the ‘you’ is the*

*'you that upholds and practices'. This is why it is said, "This is what all Buddhas teach."...*

Many of you, I'm sure, who have done something wrong and deeply regretted it, know the incredibly, beautifully, clean feeling that comes as a result of remorse. As it is often said, tears wash away what we have done wrong. Therefore, one should know that the true intent of refraining from doing evil and the purifying of the heart are one and the same thing. In refraining from doing evil there is the pure intention to do no evil. And if there is this pure intention and this refraining, then naturally there is not more rubbish being thrown into the immaculacy of the heart (which, by the way, we may feel in the *hara*<sup>†</sup> rather than in the physical heart). In this way, "the Moon can reflect naturally upon the water." The less evil we do, the less karmic rubbish we create, and the cleaner the water of our own spirit becomes, the clearer the Moon can shine. The Moon, remember, represents the reflection of the Unborn, the Buddha Nature which is in every one of us. When there is much karmic dirt, then the Buddha Nature cannot be reflected.

As we refrain from making more karma, gradually the very old karmic dirt which conditioned the arising of this life comes to the surface and is cleansed. It is an exquisitely clean feeling to have that stuff come to the surface and deal with it. The feeling of refraining and of purifying the heart is one of the most exquisite feelings there is. It is a feeling of becoming what some call "thinner," what others call "more ethereal," but which in the East is called "becoming more spiritual," "becoming more aware of the spirit." Since another way of referring to the spirit is the pure inner "water"

wherein the “Moon” of Truth is reflected, this is also known as “becoming full of Light.”

This is the reason why Dōgen says that to purify the heart is the very same as to refrain from evil. The refraining itself *is* the purification. So don’t worry about how to purify your heart, just refrain from evil. The purification will happen automatically, as a result of refraining and of meditation. We do not have to worry about the analysis of how or why, just refrain from that which is not to be done.



*The poet Haku Rakuten (C. Po Chu-i) of the T’ang Dynasty was a lay disciple of Meditation Master Bukkō Nyoman.... When Rakuten was governor of Hangchow, he trained under Meditation Master Dōrin (C. Tao-lin) of Chōka (C. Niao-k’o). He once asked Dōrin, “Just what is the major intention of the Buddha Dharma?” Dōrin replied, “Refrain from all evil whatsoever; uphold and practice all that is good.” Rakuten said, “If that’s all there is to it, even a child of three knows how to say that!” Dōrin said, “Though a three-year-old child can say it, there are old men in their eighties who still cannot put it into practice.” Upon hearing the matter put this way, Rakuten then bowed in gratitude....*

Haku Rakuten is making it very clear that he does not understand the true meaning of refraining from evil and practicing all that is good. He thinks of it only from the point of view of social conventions, rules, and moral codes. And he takes it merely on the level of words and conventional

phrases and does not realize that the will to do evil must arise before there is actual evil. It has always been believed in Buddhism (and, interestingly enough, also in Catholicism if I remember correctly) that up until the age of seven a child, although it may do wrong in the eyes of the world, in actual fact does no evil because it cannot form evil intent. A little girl of three or a little boy of three would not have that intent and so their words on the subject are simply a matter of repeating the forms that they have heard, without a real understanding of their full meaning. I'm not saying, by the way, that children of three do not have an inner sense of what is good, nor that they do not know how to annoy their parents, nor am I saying they cannot have the will and the intent to do "wrong" in the conventional sense of the term. I am saying that it is believed in Buddhism that up to around the age of seven the real intent is inherently pure. Perhaps in this day with everybody getting younger and younger at what they do, or especially with what they shouldn't do, the age may have lowered somewhat, I don't know. But, in any case, what Dōrin is saying here is that the statement "Refrain from all evil whatsoever; uphold and practice all that is good" is far more than simply a stock phrase which any child can repeat. In fact, there is such depth to it that, while a young child can *say* it, there are plenty of those in their old age who cannot *do* it.

Interestingly enough, I had an experience similar to Dōrin's when I was a young monk in Malaysia. I was asked to give a talk on basic Buddhism at Kuala Lumpur University, and during the question period I was asked what was the one basic teaching of Buddhism. I gave them a similar answer to what Dōrin gave to Rakuten, and immediately several people in the audience informed me, "Oh, we've

known that since childhood.” I saw Reverend Dr. Dhammananda,<sup>ii</sup> the chief Theravadin monk from the Maha Vihara temple nearby, who was in the audience and who had made the contact to ask me to speak there, smile at me, shrug, and walk out. I struggled on for a couple of hours, trying to get the point across, but without much success. They couldn’t seem to understand the distinction between knowing the words of conventional morality and practicing the spirit of something that transcends that morality.

*For the most part, both what we first learn of Buddhism from a good spiritual friend and what we bring to fruition through our diligent practice are one and the same. We describe this as ‘learning, from start to finish’. It is also called ‘the wondrous cause and the wondrous effect’, as well as ‘the cause of seeking Buddhahood and the effect of seeking Buddhahood’.*

When you see the terms “cause and effect” used in this way, you should understand that what is referred to is learning from one who knows the Dharma and practicing that which is to be done, that which is recommended by those who have studied the Dharma and know it. What Dōgen is pointing out here is that this, at its core, ends up being the same as that which diligent practice reveals to be simply “what is to be refrained from” and “what is to be done.” So, never neglect to take the advice of good spiritual friends. That is why we take refuge in each other, and even an abbot will ask his disciples’ advice on many things.

*Because Dōrin enunciated this principle, he ‘possessed’ the Buddha Dharma.*



As did Reverend Dr. Dhammananda in Kuala Lumpur.

*Were evil to pile upon evil and spread throughout the whole world, absorbing everything into its mass, ‘emancipation through refraining’ would still hold true. Since all good is already good—beginning, middle, and end—the nature, characteristics, form, and strength of upholding and practicing it will likewise be good.*

Therefore, evil can blanket the entire world with many layers and absorb all the elements of that world, and still we will be undisturbed by it and enjoy the merits of refraining from evil. Evil cannot touch us if we are unmovable within the Great Ocean of Meditation, wherein we understand the true meaning of refraining from evil, for this refraining *is* the purification of our heart.

*Rakuten had never walked in those footsteps, which is why he had said, “Even a child of three knows how to say that.” He said that because he was lacking in the strength to realize the Way. Poor, pitiful Rakuten, why did you say such a thing?...*

He said it because he lacked the understanding which comes from realizing the Way, in spite of his exquisite writings. When someone brings you an exquisite Buddhist writing, be careful. Do not just believe the words. Consult your heart; meditate with those words. And, if the Wheel of the Dharma turns within you and the Dharma Flowers before your very eyes as you read, then know that this one, perhaps, expresses the Truth.

Dōgen concludes the chapter as follows:

*Befuddled Rakuten had never heard what a three-year-old child had to say, and so he had never questioned himself as to what the Matter was, but made the kind of remark he did. He did not hear what Dōrin was voicing, though It resounded louder than thunder. In speaking of That which cannot be put into words, Rakuten had said, “Even a child of three knows how to say that.” Not only did he not hear the child’s lion roar, he also stumbled over the Master’s turning of the Wheel of the Dharma.*

*The Master, out of pity, could not give up on Rakuten and went on to say, “Though a three-year-old child can say it, there are old men in their eighties who still cannot put it into practice.” The heart of what he said exists in what a child of three can say, and this we must thoroughly investigate. Also, there is the practice which eighty-year-olds may not be doing, but which we must diligently engage in. What he has told us is that what the child is capable of saying has been entrusted to us, though it is not a task for a child, and what the old men were not able to practice has been entrusted to us, though it was not the task for old men such as these. In a similar way do we keep the Buddha’s Dharma in mind and take It as our foundation, so that we may make It our reason for training.*

Although a child may not fully realize what he or she is saying, yet there can still be Truth within his words. That Truth has been entrusted to you, to your own deep study and your own purification of your heart. The practice which

many old men neglect has also been entrusted to you, and it, too, depends on how deeply you study the Way. We must study the meaning of these things with great care. Know that to purify the heart is, indeed, to have the intention and practice of refraining from all evil whatsoever. Know that beyond “good” and “evil” there are simply things which are to be done and things which we do not do.

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<sup>i</sup> This saying has two levels of meaning. Literally, it refers to the historical dilemma of Mahayana monastics, who had taken the Bodhisattva Precepts of the *Scripture of Brahma’s Net (Brahmajala Sutra, SBN)* and also the traditional 250 bikkhu precepts or 348 bikkhuni precepts of the monastic vinaya. “Keeping the precepts of the shravakas”, i.e., the bikkhu or bikkhuni precepts, to the letter could sometimes mean breaking the Bodhisattva Precepts with their emphasis on the Bodhisattva vow of compassion to save all sentient beings. Thus, the Mahayana view was, and is, that it is more important to keep the Bodhisattva vow and Bodhisattva Precepts than to keep the “letter of the law” of the bikkhu/bikkhuni or shravaka Precepts. In a more general way, this phrase refers to the pitfall in practice of becoming attached to any precept in a manner that overrides the formative intent behind the precept or the underlying spirit of the Bodhisattva vow with its emphasis on compassion and skillful means. For further discussion, see Precepts and BW, 296–298, footnote.

<sup>ii</sup> The Most Venerable Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda Nakaya Thera is the chief Theravadin bikkhu in Malaysia (since 1965) and has served as the Chief Monk of the Buddhist Maha Vihara in Kuala Lumpur since 1952. He is a well-known speaker, world-renowned for his knowledge of Buddhism, and the author of many books and publications.

## 10.

### *The Practice of Mountains and Water*

From a Lecture on Sansui Kyō, “The Spiritual Discourses of the Mountains and the Water”

“*Sansui Kyō*” refers to mountains and rivers, and it is sometimes called “The Scripture of Mountains and Rivers” or “The Mountains and Rivers Sutra.” I am not going to discuss the whole of this chapter, but rather I will give you some ways of appreciating its true depth; you should then read and consider it in detail. It is written in far more than just one dimension. For example, although the words “mountain” and “river” sometimes refer to mountains and rivers as we ordinarily understand them, we should know that the “mountain,” referred to on the deepest level, is the human being who, as a sage, monk, arahant, or saint, has “climbed the mountain” and discovered the True Source of the Water of the Spirit. Many great Buddhist teachers in the past were referred to as “The Mountain.” Many great monks of the past gave their names to the mountain upon which their monastery was built or, themselves, took the name of that mountain.

The Water of the Spirit is the deeper meaning of the terms “river” or “water” as they are used in this chapter. This Water is the Spiritual Essence of the Dharmakaya. It is also the Water of the Great Ocean of Meditation, which Dōgen speaks of in the chapter *Kaiin Zammai*. It is this

Water which floods the trainee at the time of a great realization and which is known to all of us to a lesser degree at those times when we turn from doing harmful things and resolve to refrain from all evil and do only that which is good, thereby purifying our hearts.

Therefore, when you hear the word “mountain” or “river” in what I am about to speak of, you may be hearing of a mountain or a river as you understand the term, but possibly you will be hearing something much, much deeper. If you do not simply think of mountains and rivers as we understand them, if you can put your mind into a kaleidoscopic frame (i.e., if you can see all things as changing and moving), then you will be able to understand this chapter somewhat. But if you insist on understanding it in terms of the movement of piles of stone as the result of the earth’s crust shifting, or water changing course as a result of earthquakes—and there are people who have tried this as an interpretation to prove there is a great God that controls all—then you will miss the exquisite subtleties that come forth from this chapter.

Dōgen says,

*...The monk Dōkai (C. Tao-chieh) of Mount Daiyō (C. Ta-yang), in instructing his assembly, said, “The verdant mountains are constantly moving on and the Stone Maiden, in the dark of night, gives birth to Her Child.”*

Here is an example of where the “verdant mountains” do not refer to mountains as we normally understand them. Their greenness implies the youngness of the mountains, and it implies that they are that which is always moving,

that which is always training itself, that which becomes a “Great Mountain.” This, in the end, becomes Mt. Sumeru,<sup>†</sup> as we must all become Mt. Sumeru, for all such mountains are Mt. Sumeru. So, the verdant mountains are those people who are fully alive, who are young in spirit, and who are always moving in their training. The Stone Maiden who gives birth at night must be understood as she (or he) who, having over the course of many lifetimes enveloped herself in a “self” composed of all manner of hindrances like a crust of stone, will, at that darkest of hours when the self is finally seen for what it is and is dropped off, give birth to the Child of the Lord.<sup>i</sup>

*The mountains are never lacking in the spiritual merits with which they are undoubtedly endowed. This is why they constantly reside at ease and are constantly moving on. By all means, you must examine in great detail the spiritual merits of their moving on. The moving on of a mountain will be just like the moving on of those who wander through life in ignorance, so even though you may think, “Since it does not seem the same as the human activity of walking,” nevertheless, do not doubt ‘the moving on’ of mountains.*

*What this Ancestor of the Buddha was expressing has already pointed to this ‘moving on’; this was his ‘getting to the very root of the Matter’. So, you should thoroughly pursue what he was pointing out to his assembly about ‘always moving on’. Since it is a ‘moving on’, it is constant. Although the moving on of the verdant mountains are more swift than the wind, those who live amidst the mountains do not perceive this or recognize it. ‘Being amidst the mountains’ refers to*

*things blossoming forth within the everyday world. Those who live apart from the mountains neither perceive nor recognize them.*

Because your training may seem extremely slow, do not doubt that training is actually taking place, for in reality it is “more swift than the wind.” “Moving on” in this context means doing real training. “Constantly moving on” means that there is unending training, which is how the training of Buddhas is, and how ours must be. While this training moves on “more swiftly than the wind,” those who have no familiarity with it have no cognizance of this. Their ignorance of this movement is a very different thing from the fact that those who live on the mountain, those who *are* the mountain, are in the same situation as the plum blossom that does not know that it is red and yet still leads the way onward to the Truth. For when one flower blooms, spring exists everywhere.

It is important for us to know that when enlightenment has occurred, when the Child of the Lord has been born, it is sufficient to just live. And, living in such a simple way, as in the case of the plum blossom, leads all those who are willing to look, and who want to see, to the Truth. Those who are not the mountain, those who are not yet even approaching the mountain, are unaware of the constant “moving on” of the Unborn. Although the moving of a mountain looks just like the moving of an ordinary person, we fail to recognize this movement of mountains when we have our self in the way. But the mountain *is* always flowing on, as is the Water of the Spirit. If we doubt this, it is because we do not understand our own “moving on,” which is the manifesting of our own Buddha Nature.

Dōgen also points out that the movement of such green mountains is beyond being sentient or non-sentient and that you

*...need to carefully explore moving on—both the steps that move you forward and those that move you back—and never cease in this for even a moment from the time before there is any sign of something coming into existence until the Lord of Emptiness appears.*

Thus the time when we *were* the mountain and the river is the same as the time now, when we *are* the mountain and the river, if we understand that all mountains are Mt. Sumeru and all rivers and waters are the Water of the Spirit. True training is timeless and endless.

*If this ‘moving on’ were to have come to rest, the Buddhas and Ancestors would have never appeared. If the ‘moving on’ had reached some culminating point, the Dharma of the Buddha would not have reached us today. Stepping forward has not ceased, nor has stepping back. When there is a stepping forward, it does not stand in opposition to stepping back; when there is a stepping back, it does not stand in opposition to stepping forward. We characterize this as ‘the mountain’s flowing’ or as ‘the flowing mountain’ .... Do not slander the mountains by saying, “Verdant mountains are incapable of moving on,” or “No mountain to the east of us is capable of walking upon water.”...*

The fact that you cannot see a person training all the time does not mean that the person isn’t training. We should



understand the flow of the mountain; at all times, unless there is a temporary serious blockage, training continues. Because of the shallow views of some persons there is often doubt about the flowing of the mountains and often a slander of those mountains. Slandering the training of others is a very serious matter. Our shallow views are due to our understanding being inadequate, and we are amazed to hear the expression that “all mountains flow.” However slowly a person may seem to train, there is training going on, for the Unborn *is* the Unborn and Buddha Nature is at work in every one of us. If we look at our fellow trainees as mountains, knowing how solid and unchanging a mountain may appear to us and yet be in motion, then we can cease to criticize them, we can cease criticizing the speed of their training or our own. A mountain, as we picture it, is very solid, very still, and yet it *is* constantly moving. Spring, summer, autumn, winter: through the brightness of the green of spring, to the red of autumn and the white of winter, it remains solid yet moves and flows. Its whole essence moves and flows. It is doing its training perfectly, as itself. So are we. No one has the right to judge or criticize the training of another.

Master Dōgen next speaks of a time “when a mountain gives rise to the Child of a Mountain.” When the stone of the stone woman is broken and she gives forth the Child of the Lord, then the Buddhas and Ancestors appear before our eyes. They emerge into this world, they come forth from mountains and stones, and stones cry out in joy—for all “stones” of self must give birth to the Child of the Lord. All stones seem still and cold. When first a person sets his or her mind to training, “the mind is hard and set and cannot be broken,” as it says in the Ordination Ceremony, for

we are as the stone man or the stone woman. But when endless training has softened the self and turned it from cold stone to fire, and thence to water, to the cool Water of the Spirit—then we give birth to the Child of the Lord and can understand how it is that the stone maiden dances and the mountains flow.

*Even when people have eyes before which a mountain is manifesting as grass and trees, earth and stones, or walls and fences, they do not doubt what they see nor are they disturbed by it, and it is not the whole of what is manifesting....*

There are those who see a mountain and just see a mountain. There are those who see a mountain verdant in spring and those who see one shimmering in autumn. There are those who see that “an old tree grows on a cold rock in winter; nowhere is there any warmth.” And then there are those who see that the tree grows on the cold rock, and that it and the rock flow together, and that from such “stones” comes forth the warmth and life of the Child of the Lord. Do not assume that what you see is all that there is.

*“The Stone Maiden, in the dark of night, gives birth to Her Child” refers to the time when the Stone Maiden gives birth to Her Child as ‘in the dark of the night’. Generally speaking, there are stones that are male and stones that are female, as well as stones that are neither male nor female; and all these quite nicely fill up the heavens and fill up the earth. And there are heavenly stones and there are earthly stones, which*

*those who wander in ignorance speak of, though persons who really know them are rare indeed.*

*One needs to understand the principle of Her 'giving birth to a Child'. At the time of Her giving birth to a Child, are Parent and Child made separate? You must devote yourself to exploring not only what is meant by 'the Child becoming the Parent' being the full manifestation of 'giving birth to the Child', but also what is meant by 'the time when the Parent becomes the Child' being the realization through one's training of the full manifestation of 'giving birth to the Child'. You must thoroughly penetrate what is being said here....*

Those who have not as yet realized the Truth are sometimes referred to as "earthly stones." But one must remember that even such a stone, when it has transcended self, can give birth to the Child of the Lord. And do not think that the "Stone Maiden" refers to only one gender, for there are male stones and there are stones that are neither male nor female, as we think of the terms. Do not think that physical gender or sexual orientation has anything whatsoever to do with the birth of the Child of the Lord. We should, by all means, set aside the stone shell of self and allow Buddha Nature to manifest Itself. We should cease to be the cold and barren stone man or woman and, instead, give birth to the Child of the Lord, for in so doing will we find the flow of our True Nature completely and be one with It.

The relationship of Parent and Child explains why it is said that, if a disciple is true, he or she will one day stand upon the master's head, as did Shakyamuni on the head of the ascetic.<sup>ii</sup> We should understand what is the master and

what is the disciple. When the disciple stands upon the master's head, it is the recognition that the master, like us, was originally encumbered by the stone of self and now the True Being has transformed that self and is therefore the True Parent, for he or she is within the Unborn. Thus the Child is the True Parent, and It existed before the master, who was "a self," was created.



Having spoken of the meaning of the mountains, Dōgen then goes on to discuss the nature of the water. He explores the meaning of Master Unmon's statement that, "Tōzan went walking upon the Water," pointing out that, although many say that this statement is incomprehensible, it actually has profound meaning for those with eyes to see it. In order to do this, says Dōgen, we must not limit our understanding of "water" to merely one thing.

*As for the Water, It is neither strong nor weak, nor is It wet or dry, nor does It move or stay still, nor is It cold or hot, nor does It exist or not exist, nor is It deluded or awakened.... For now, just concentrate on learning to recognize through your training the moments when you are able to open your eyes and see the Water in the whole universe as the whole universe.... To speak in general, what people see as a mountain or as water differs in various ways.... Although what is seen may completely differ according to the one who sees It, we should not be too hasty in accepting this as absolutely so. Are there really 'all sorts of ways' of seeing any single object? Have you*

*committed an error by taking the plethora of images for what is actually one object? Then, at the very peak of your efforts, you will need to make a further effort. If what I have just been saying is so, then, likewise, there cannot be just one or two ways for training to realize the Truth and for assiduously practicing the Way, and the realm of the Ultimate can be of a thousand kinds and ten thousand sorts.... Thus, the various ways in which the Water appears do not depend on one's mind or on one's body, nor do they arise from one's karma-producing actions, nor do they depend on oneself or on someone else: they possess that freedom from delusion which is dependent on the Water Itself....*

Water is simply Water, totally detached and complete in Itself. Although water may be celestial or terrestrial, and may come in all different shapes and sizes of ponds and oceans, they are all water. The Essence of Water, Buddha Nature, is within all Water. Each one of us looks different—male, female, short, tall, fat, thin—but we possess Buddha Nature. Look without discrimination, without analysis. Do not say, “But it’s only a small pond,” or worse, “But it’s a dirty pond,” or worse still, “But it’s a stagnant pond.” Pond is pond. Dirty, stagnant, or clear: pond is pond, and it has the watery essence thereof. Even if, like the Potomac, you could throw in a match and it would ignite, it’s still a river. Right? All of our pollution cannot destroy its essence of water.

Once we have got self out of the way, we see the Unborn in all things. This is because we already possess enlightenment. In other words, we are already in the fluid

state. As I understand it, the sludge that inhibits the flow of the Water within us is our past karma, which plugs up the pipes and stops the flow from going. But the more we clean up the karma, the more the flow is able to move. And, as this gets further and further cleaned up, so we become more and more fluid. When the Water of the Spirit flows forth freely, we cannot hold It in our hand. But we may hold our hand in the Water and, whilst feeling It, not own It. Therefore, we can experience the Water of the Spirit, we can experience the flow of Ūji, we can experience the Flowering of the Dharma, we can experience the Turning of the Wheel. All of these are aspects of the same thing: the experiencing for certain of Buddha Nature within ourselves.

Dōgen now goes on to give many examples of how the Water may be understood, and of how we limit our understandings of It. There is not time to go into these today. This is his concluding passage [about the Water]:

*Now, when we Buddhist trainees learn about the Water, we should not get blindly stuck onto just the everyday, human view of water but need to go on and investigate through our practice the Water of the Buddha's Way. How we view the term 'Water' as used by the Ancestors of the Buddha is something we need to investigate through our practice....*

Do not try to hold eternity, or understand the Water, with your limited brain. One must not judge by external appearances or by one's own small-mindedness. These things go so far beyond; there is so much more. It is all-encompassing. And it is never-ending, which we will explore further in the next chapter. The mountains and the Water all

flow one within the other; the true trainee and the Buddha Nature are not separate; and they are indeed the Immaculacy of Emptiness.

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<sup>i</sup> The Child of the Lord refers to the inherent Buddha Nature or Buddha seed within all beings, which through meditation and training is awakened and matured. Another term for this is the Tathagatagarbha, which can be translated as both the “womb of the Tathagata” and the “Tathagata-in-embryo,” thus representing both the potential for and the actualization of the Buddha Nature within each being. See Tatha.; LRQS, 96–99 and 104–106. Sometimes this process of gestation and birth has a physical aspect to its experience, as it did in the case of Rev. Master Jiyu herself (see HGLB).

<sup>ii</sup> At the newly-born Prince Gautama’s naming ceremony, it is said that his feet came to rest miraculously upon the head of Asita, a prominent ascetic who had been invited to predict the young prince’s destiny.

## 11.

### *Always Becoming Buddha*

From a Lecture on *Gyōbutsu Igi*, “The Everyday Behavior of a Buddha Doing His Practice”

What are the activities of a Buddha? What is the practice of a Buddha? How do you practice when you are Buddha (remembering, of course, that one is Buddha at all times)? What does it mean to be “a Buddha doing his practice”? We saw in the previous chapter that the practice of the Buddhist Ancestors is both flowing and unending. Is this also true of the practice of Buddhas? This chapter makes clear that it is.

It also explains something which I have often been asked about regarding the translation which I did of *The Scripture of Great Wisdom* (the *Hannyashingyō* or *Heart Sutra*). As a result of much discussion and study with my master, I changed the final lines which are normally translated as “...gone, gone, gone on beyond, gone to the other shore. Buddha. Svaha!” to “...going, going, going on beyond, and always going on beyond, always *becoming* Buddha. Hail!” One of the points which Dōgen makes in this chapter, *Gyōbutsu Igi*, or “The Everyday Behavior of a Buddha Doing His Practice” is that the practice of Buddhas is ongoing and endless. This being so, Kohō Zenji and I decided to translate the sutra using the terms “going” and “always becoming Buddha,” which is not quite as perfect as it could be but was the nearest we could get. We had a lot of discussions



about it. If we had translated it as “always practicing Buddha,” it might have been a little clearer, but it also might not have been understood except from the point of view of someone who has gone a lot more deeply into meditation than the average person who comes to ceremonies in a Buddhist temple. But “practicing Buddha,” as you will see from this chapter, is really what *The Scripture of Great Wisdom* is talking about.

Dōgen starts the chapter as follows:

*All Buddhas, without exception, make full use of their everyday behavior for their practice. This is what is meant by ‘a Buddha doing his<sup>i</sup> practice’.*

We could also say that this is what is meant by “a Buddha exhibiting Buddhahood.” Whichever way we say it, take care that you do not understand “a Buddha” to be a separate “thing,” unrelated to yourself. Buddha is one and undivided. The great circle of Buddhas and Ancestors is one Reality, one Unborn, one Buddha.

*‘A Buddha doing his practice’ does not refer to the state of a Buddha upon realizing enlightenment, nor to a Buddha’s transforming himself for the sake of helping others. Nor does it refer to a Buddha as the embodiment of the Dharma or to a Buddha as others see him embodied.*

It is the practice of being Buddha. But how do we see it? In this human world we see it as everyday human practice. The Buddha, on those occasions when He left this human realm and went to the realms of the gods, would

have been seen as “doing his practice” as a god. We see “a Buddha doing his practice” right where we are:

*It is beyond a Buddha at his initial realization or in his fundamental realization, beyond one in his inherent enlightenment or in his being ‘beyond enlightened’. A Buddha who is equivalent to any like these can never stand shoulder to shoulder with a Buddha who is doing his practice.*

This is what is meant at the end of *The Scripture of Great Wisdom* about “always becoming Buddha”: it means always practicing Buddha. Dōgen is saying that “a Buddha doing his practice” surpasses “a Buddha gone beyond.”

*Keep in mind that Buddhas, being in the Buddha Way, do not go looking for realization. Becoming proficient in one’s daily conduct on the path toward Buddhahood is simply ‘just a Buddha doing his practice’. It is not something that is even dreamt of by those who are, say, Buddhas as embodiments of the Dharma.*

*Because this Buddha who is doing his practice manifests the modes of behavior in everything he does, he manifests these modes right out in the open. Before he speaks, he gives a hint of his functioning woven into whatever he does, which goes beyond time or place or ‘being Buddha’ or ‘doing some practice’. If you are not a Buddha doing your practice, you will not let go of your attachment to ‘Buddha’ or your attachment to ‘Dharma’, and will be grouped with those poor devils who deny Buddha and Dharma within themselves....*

This is how we begin to practice Buddha. Our practice must be “right out in the open,” with nothing hidden. It must pervade whatever we do. It is not self-conscious about “doing some practice.” And, there must be no attachment to anything, not even Buddha or Dharma. When Buddha Nature is manifest within you, all of this is evident (and be very careful not to think of “Buddha Nature” as a thing).

Dōgen then goes on to discuss what “attachment to ‘Buddha’” means, pointing out that it involves holding onto a concept, an understanding of something. But what is there to hold onto? We already are enlightened. One can know when one’s actions are *not* enlightened; comprehension is of no importance when we *are*. In fact, as Dōgen points out, the notion that one is enlightened is an illness. And, “a Buddha doing his practice” is completely unfettered by it. Therefore, no true trainee ever says he or she is a Buddha, and no one ever says he is not.

*As a consequence, doing one’s training and realizing the Truth are beyond a matter of ‘not existing’ or ‘existing’, for training and realizing the Truth are beyond any stain.*

As I have mentioned before, one must be very careful of both grasping onto positive terms or going into the blackness of negativism when hearing terms like “not existing,” “void” or “emptiness.” When these latter terms are used, they are not referring to annihilation; they are an attempt to express the fullest “nothingness” known. Furthermore, they point to being unattached to anything (any “existing”), so that one does not set oneself up as “something.” This is a Buddha doing his practice. “Buddha” here is an all-inclusive

term. When you do the practice of Buddhism, you do the same practice as the Buddhas. When you do the same practice as the Buddhas, *you* are practicing Buddha.

Note how Dōgen keeps referring to “realization,” both as something which has value and as something to which one must not be attached. Thus, one kenshō should not be thought of as the end of training. Having had one glimpse of the Unborn is like someone who has seen or felt the tail of an elephant and has said it is a long, stringy thing. One has to know the whole elephant. To understand one thing is to understand one thing: it is obviously better than not having understood one thing, but do not think that this one thing is the end of everything. *And*, you must know that in one thing all is encompassed.

A little later on Dōgen points out:

*...This is why a former Buddha said, “Having comprehended the Matter in abstract terms, we come back to the here and now, where we conduct our daily living.” When we maintain and rely upon the Matter in this way, all things, all beings, all practices, and all Buddhas are familiar to us, and are our kindly friends.*

*Simply, each and every one of these Buddhas who put the Dharma physically into practice had obstructions to their direct experiencing of Truth. Simply, because there are obstructions to one’s direct experiencing of Truth, there will be liberation in one’s direct experiencing of Truth....*

This is the nature of a Buddha doing his practice. Do not expect that there will be no obstructions. It is extremely difficult to simultaneously accept, let go of, and appreciate

our obstructions. Furthermore, you must understand that, although they may be dropped off, still they appear and disappear. They are the fabric of our practice: we can make use of all things, and we are not attached to them. A little later on, he points out the same about birth and death:

*We need to keep in mind that our coming forth into life is at one with our coming forth from the Way and that our entering death is at one with our entering the Way. In the head-to-tail rightness of that state, our everyday behavior manifests before our very eyes as the turning of a jewel or the revolving of a pearl. To make use of, and be possessed of, one aspect of a Buddha's everyday behavior is to be the whole of the great earth in all directions and to be the whole of birth-and-death and coming-and-going, to be a dust-filled mundane world and to be a lotus blossom. This dust-filled mundane world and this lotus blossom, each is an aspect of It....*

There is the constant flow and flux of Ūji. If we clarify this, fear can be avoided; in fact it can be eliminated. Know that the universe is in a grain of sand, and “foregoing self, the Universe grows ‘I.’” Most of us have probably only just touched the tip of the iceberg of such an understanding of the Buddha Way. Even with all our realizations, still only the tip of the iceberg has been touched. How can you say that you are enlightened? And how can you say that you are not?

*Let's consider for the moment, can there be any kind of sentient being born...who experiences birth but does not experience death? And are there any to*

*whom the direct, one-to-one Transmission of death has been given to whom the direct, one-to-one Transmission of life has not? You should by all means explore through your training whether there is any kind of being that just is born or just dies.*

*There are those who hear the phrase ‘that which is beyond birth’ without ever clarifying what it means, acting as if they would ignore all efforts of body and mind.*

This is also the reason why practice with a Buddhist teacher is always changing, for he or she is always “one who does his practice.” And that is why it is so difficult to train with a live master. A dead one, who has only got so far, can’t change his mind as a result of greater experience. Do not be stuck with the fact that the master said one thing one day and is expounding it at a higher level on another one, or you will never understand how to let go. One has to stay within the flow. Do not think that Buddhism is static: no true religion is ever static. It is at all times moving; it is a *live* thing. To think that there is an end to training and understanding is to think that there is an end to a Buddha doing his practice. You must not be afraid to go on, however dark the road may seem.



In the next section of *Gyōbutsu Iigi* Dōgen demonstrates how the Buddha appears at all times and in all places. Everywhere you go the Buddha can be seen, so how can the Buddha only appear in the world of the humans? He points out that true training, true practice, is possible in all places

and in all worlds. No one is stuck in hell for eternity, or in the realm of the hungry ghosts, or in heaven.

He then goes on to make a very important point:

*...do not aim at fathoming a Buddha's everyday behavior by trying to measure it.... Do not count as disciples of the Buddha those in lineages that merely take the world of ordinary human beings to be the realm of a Buddha or that narrowly take the ways of ordinary human beings to be the ways of a Buddha, for they are nothing more than human beings living out the result of past karma....*

In other words, do not try to measure “the everyday behavior of a Buddha doing his practice” nor trivialize it by saying that any old thing we do is the practice of a Buddha. This is why precepts must be the first thing that we study. It is precisely to set aside the burden of our past karma that we practice the keeping of the precepts. Some people want to know the ultimate origin of the law of karma, as if this would make our own karma easier to bear. Kohō Zenji told me that by accident someone made the course of karma. What is the point of asking how karma first appeared in the world? What matters is that we sit up straight in the presence of the Buddhas, accept our own karmic consequence, and know that such karmic consequence is not an impediment to practicing Buddha.

But, if you ask where self comes from, Dōgen has a very interesting answer for you:

*Accordingly, the living activity of creating things and creating a self are well left for our mind to do.*

*And the everyday behavior of getting rid of 'life' and getting rid of 'death' has been entrusted for the time being to Buddha. This is why there is the saying, "Our myriad thoughts and things are simply our mind..." Also, when we express the situation from an ascendant perspective, there is the expression 'simply our mind', that is, it refers to the stones and tiles of our walls and fences. Because 'simply our mind' is not simply our mind, so 'the stones and tiles of our walls and fences' are not the stones and tiles of walls and fences. This is the everyday behavior of a Buddha doing his practice, and is the principle of leaving things to the mind and leaving things to things, while we create a mind and create things....*

First of all, note that the Great Matter of life and death is entrusted to the Buddha, the Unborn. Faith is essential. As to what we think of as reality, "self and things," Dōgen reiterates what he said in *Muchū Setsumu*: it is "simply our mind." And even our mind is not real, for all is a dream. If we do not understand this we are in trouble, for this is the basis for the dignified activity of a Buddha doing his practice.

What happens when we truly entrust everything, even including life and death, to the Unborn? At the very moment of this, the Wheel of the Dharma turns within a great Fire:

*Great Master Shinkaku (C. Chen-chüeh) of Mount Seppō (C. Hsüeh-feng), in pointing out the Great Matter to his assembly, said, "The Buddhas in the three temporal worlds exist within the Blazing Fire, turning the Great Wheel of the Dharma."*



When Seppō speaks of fire here, he means it. This is the Wind and Fire spoken of in Chapter Four of the *Shushōgi* where Dōgen says, “From these Precepts come forth such a wind and fire that all are driven into enlightenment when the flames are fanned by the Buddha’s influence: this is the merit of non-action and non-seeking; the awakening to True Wisdom.” They are a reality. It is the coolest Fire and gentlest Wind, and the strongest Fire and the most powerful Wind, that you will ever know. This same Fire blazes up from the hara when the “stone maiden gives birth to the Child of Buddha,” the realized Buddha Nature. If you look at the cover of the bag which contains my Transmission silks,<sup>†</sup> you will see that what I embroidered on it all those years ago in Japan was a manji,<sup>†</sup> the ancient Buddhist symbol of turning the Wheel of the Dharma, in the midst of a white-hot flame that fans to pink, gold and red; this was the result of my experience of this Fire at the time of realization. If you look at a manji, or at the symbol of the turning wheel, and you can see the streaming Fire behind it, you can understand something of the power of turning the Wheel of the Dharma. It is very difficult to explain these things in words.

*...Be aware that the Blazing Fire of all the Buddhas will not be any other sort of blazing fire. Also, you need to reflect upon whether any of those other sorts is ablaze with a fire or not. You need to learn the teaching methods in our monastic tradition employed by the Buddhas of the three temporal worlds whilst They exist within the Blazing Fire....*

For They are in the center of the manji, the still center of the turning wheel, which is the same Place as the circle in which we all sit and turn the Wheel of the Dharma.

*Turning the Great Wheel of the Dharma will be the turning of oneself and the turning of the opportune moment at hand. It is one's ability to hit the target through word or deed in response to one's Master, which will be possessed of a turning of the Dharma and the Dharma turning. "The turning of the Wheel of the Dharma" which Seppō has already mentioned, will be possessed of a Dharma Wheel which is the turning of the Wheel of Fire, even though the whole of the great earth is completely ablaze....*

Remember the parable of the burning house in the *Lotus Scripture*? When we drop off all attachment to body and mind, then the fire of the burning house turns into the Fire that turns the Wheel of the Dharma, and there is no need to put out the fire nor to leave the house.

*Thus it is that the Blazing Fire is the great training ground for all Buddhas to turn the Great Wheel of the Dharma. To try to analyze and measure this by spatial thinking, temporal thinking, human thinking, or ordinary or saintly thinking, and the like, is to miss the mark. Since it cannot be measured by these types of thinking, then, because it is the training ground for the turning of the Wheel of the Dharma by each and every Buddha of the three temporal worlds and because there is the Blazing Fire, there is a training ground for Buddhas....*

Thinking, measuring, or analyzing this are useless, for this Fire is felt with one's entire being; it is a fire of certainty, born of the fire of faith. It is actually beyond certainty: in Its presence there is not even the possibility of the possibility of the possibility of a shadow of doubt.

Dōgen then goes on to discuss the understanding of the turning of the Wheel of the Dharma by Gensha Shibi, Seppō's disciple, and here he makes another very valuable point:

*Now, in Gensha's statement, he has already said that "all Buddhas in the three temporal worlds listen to the Dharma right on the spot where they are": this encompasses the Essential Nature and the forms It takes in which all Buddhas listen to the Dharma. By all means, do not regard those able to give voice to It as being superior and do not say that those who are listening carefully to the Dharma are inferior. If those who give voice to It are worthy of our respect, then those who listen to It are also worthy of our respect.*

Thus the master who runs a monastery is still doing his training, and he or she teaches that which he finds true for himself to his or her disciples. If they are too narrow to continue to follow, they do not understand the flow of the Law nor do they know its Wind and Fire. But, if they are "listening carefully," the Wheel turns for both master and disciple. This, too, is "the everyday behavior of a Buddha doing his practice." When the master does give voice to the Dharma, by all means listen carefully, for as Dōgen says in another passage, after the master is dead it is much more difficult to

hear and accept the teaching. I have so often wished that Kohō Zenji and Seck Kim Seng<sup>ii</sup> were still here today.

He then goes on to point out that it is not only the disciples that must “listen carefully,” for even Buddhas do their practice by listening to the Blazing Fire:

*...Keep in mind that the Buddhas of the three temporal worlds, as They stand right on the spot listening to the Blazing Fire give expression to the Dharma, are Buddhas.*

They are always willing to learn. They are always eager to listen. They do not say that They are enlightened nor that They are not enlightened. They are “always becoming Buddha.”

*...When it comes down to Their listening to the voicing of the Dharma by the Blazing Fire right where They are, what is it that ultimately manifests before Their very eyes? In everyday terms, it will be Wisdom surpassing the Master or it will be Wisdom being equal with the Master. In thoroughly exploring what is beyond the threshold of Master and disciple, it will be the Buddhas of the three temporal worlds.*

Every master hopes that his or her disciples will be greater than they are. But heaven help the disciple who goes into ambition for this purpose! When master and disciple both “listen to the voicing of the Dharma by the Blazing Fire right where they are,” it is Buddhas doing their practice. When there is comparison or ambition, we are deeply entangled in delusion.

Dōgen concludes the chapter as follows:

*...Thus, Dharma gives voice to Buddha, Dharma practices Buddha, Dharma awakens to Buddha, Buddha gives voice to Dharma, Buddha practices Buddha, Buddha becomes Buddha. All like these, all together, are what the everyday behavior of a Buddha doing his practice is. Over the heavens and over the earth, over the past and over the present, those who have attained it do not trivialize it, and those who have clarified what it is do not debase it.*

“O Buddha, going, going, going on beyond, and always going on beyond, always becoming Buddha. Hail! Hail! Hail!”

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<sup>i</sup> In this chapter, the translations do not use the initial capital letter on the pronouns referring to the Buddha. Thus we have “a Buddha doing his practice.” This usage was intended to indicate that “a Buddha” here is being used by Dōgen as a term which includes each of us as well as referring to various historical or celestial Buddhas. The same usage will be followed in the text of the chapter.

<sup>ii</sup> The Very Reverend Seck Kim Seng (1913–1980) was Rev. Master Jiyu’s ordination master in the Chinese Mahayana sangha. He was the Abbot of Cheng Hoon Teng, the oldest Chinese Buddhist temple in Malacca, Malaysia, and President of the Malaysian Buddhist Association.

## 12.

### *The Training of a Bodhisattva*

From Lectures on *Kannon*,  
“The Bodhisattva of Compassion”

In *Gyōbutsu Igi*, we saw how a Buddha does his everyday training. What is the training of a Bodhisattva like, and how does that relate to us? This chapter answers that question by exploring in depth the training done by Kanzeon or Kannon, the Bodhisattva of Compassion. In order to understand this chapter, you need to know a few things about Bodhisattvas in general and Kanzeon in particular.

Bodhisattvas have not been properly understood in the West. We tend to think of them as being somehow lesser “beings” than Buddhas. Whether you regard them as beings or whether you regard them as simply attributes of the Unborn, it is not true that the Bodhisattvas are lesser. As beings, in one sense of course Buddhas are the highest form of spiritual existence, but without Kanzeon and other Bodhisattvas behind Them as Their advisors and active representatives, Buddhas would not be Buddhas. As attributes of the Unborn, all such attributes inevitably encompass each other and none can be thought of as greater or lesser. Only Dōgen talks of this clearly. But in schools of Mahayana Buddhism other than Sōtō Zen, it is tacitly understood.

As to Kanzeon, this particular chapter of the *Shōbōgenzō* speaks of that form of Kanzeon called Daihi, Great

Compassion, which is often seen in pictures showing the Bodhisattva with thousands of hands and thousands of eyes, many faces, several kinds of body, and several kinds of heads. Some persons have thought that such pictures were grotesque, but that is because they do not understand what is going on. They are a pictorial way of expressing the nature of Kanzeon's compassion. Her thousand hands help all beings and her thousand eyes see where that help is needed. In fact, if you would understand Kanzeon, you must understand that the *whole* of Kanzeon is hands and eyes and the like. Those multiple hands, eyes, and heads are also teachings about how our own training must be. If you would train to the full, then you must exhibit the signs of Kanzeon: the constant functioning of helping hands, discerning eyes, and even more.

Another thing that you must realize about pictures and statues of Kanzeon is that, while many will take the female aspect, not all will do so. The Bodhisattva of Compassion takes many forms, so don't get stuck with any one in particular. They are all attempts to point to Something that is not limited by form or gender.

*Ungan Donjō (C. T'an-sheng of Mount Yün-yen), posthumously called Great Master Mujū (C. Wu-chu), once asked Dōgo Enchi (C. Yüan-chih of Mount Tao-wu), posthumously known as Great Master Shuitsu (C. Hsiu-i),*

*“What use does the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion make with His ever so many hands and eyes?” Dōgo replied, “He is like someone in the night who reaches behind himself, his hand groping for his pillow.” Ungan remarked, “I get*

*it, I get it!" Dōgo asked, "What do you get?" Ungan said, "That His whole body is hands and eyes." Dōgo replied, "What you have said is very well put. Still, it only expresses eighty or ninety percent of the matter." Ungan responded, "Well, so much for the likes of me. How about you, my elder brother in the Dharma, what do you make of it?" Dōgo replied, "That His whole being, through and through, is hands and eyes."*

You must realize that all of one's organs and other parts of the body can know and see and understand. Do not think that only the eye can see or that only the mind can understand. And do not think that there is a "self" in charge of this seeing and understanding. Furthermore, it is important to be aware that Kanzeon's being is not limited to just hands and eyes. Kanzeon's being is the whole of Her body, the whole of your body, and, indeed, the whole of the universe.

*In expressing what Kannon is, many voices have been heard before and after this incident, but none equals those of Ungan and Dōgo. If you wish to explore through your training what Kannon is, you should thoroughly investigate what Ungan and Dōgo are indeed saying here. The Bodhisattva of Great Compassion spoken of here is Kanzeon Bosatsu, "The Bodhisattva Who Heeds the Cries of the World," who is also known as Kanjizai Bosatsu, "The Bodhisattva Who Observes All Things Free of Attachments." Through our training, we study Him, or Her, as the father and mother of all Buddhas, so do not consider Him to be inferior to the Buddhas as one who has not*



*yet realized the Truth, for in the past He was the Tathagata who was known as The Clarifier of the True Dharma.*

In the beginning of *The Scripture of Great Wisdom*, it is Kanzeon Who looks upon the five skandhas that compose our existence and recognizes that they are void, unstained, and pure. Why was it not a Buddha who did this; why was it a Bodhisattva? It is because there is no difference between the wisdom of a Buddha and that of a Bodhisattva. Kanzeon is the essence of Great Compassion, and this essence is no different from the Great Wisdom of a Buddha. Furthermore, you have to remember that Buddhism is very careful not to create anything that could possibly be thought of as a God figure. And so the Scripture attributes this Great Wisdom to the representation of Great Compassion, rather than to a Buddha, lest it create the illusion of an omniscient being. In so doing, it makes the whole teaching of Great Wisdom accessible to us.

This passage is as close as Dōgen ever comes to saying that Kanzeon really is showing us what it is to be one with the Unborn. Now, as I have said, people can misunderstand terms like “the Unborn” and make them into God figures, and I have been criticized on occasion for using them. But I have come to the conclusion that it is safer to use them, and speak out clearly as to what they indicate, than not to use them. Here is an example of one of the reasons why I do this. If we were to say that Kanzeon was showing us how to be one with the Buddha, it could create the idea that Kanzeon, as the representative of the aspect of Great Compassion, was somehow less than the whole. But when we say that both She and all Buddhas are One with the

Unborn, it implies that *each* aspect of the Unborn, whether it be a Buddha or a Bodhisattva, *is* the whole *and* is showing a facet of It clearly. I am actually very proud of Dōgen for saying that Kanzeon is not inferior to the Buddhas but is Their father and mother. All Buddhas are born out of Kanzeon, for Kanzeon is the expression of the Great Compassion of the Unborn, the Compassion that Buddha Nature shows in the Dharma Cloud, the Compassion that comes out of the fingertips that know where to look and how to grope in the dark, no matter how dark the night, to find That which gives rest. I can just picture how Eihei-ji† temple must have been jumping when Dōgen gave this particular lecture!

You should know that Kanzeon has other names. Of course you know the ones “Kannon,” “Avalokitesvara,” and “Kanjizai,” but few know that She, or He, is also a Tathagata, Shōbōmyō Nyorai, a Buddha of old. While it is convenient to use the term “Kanzeon” when we are referring to the specific aspect of the Unborn that is Great Compassion, in fact this Bodhisattva encompasses all aspects of the Unborn Buddha Mind, and is a Buddha in Her own right. As such, Kanzeon knows that all things are pure and, as we understand them with our limited minds, they are also void.



Now let us consider more deeply the meaning of Kanzeon’s many hands and eyes. The eyes cover the entire body of Kanzeon, the eyes *are* Her entire body. At the same time, there “is no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind”; there is just total oneness with the Unborn. Because of this, Kanzeon shows us a gateway to enlightenment where every single thing is at peace within the body, where the body as

we have understood it, being full of aches and pains and griefs and worries, no longer exists as “what is real” and we know that there is no old age and death.

*So, let us now take up, and thoroughly explore, the words spoken by Ugan, namely, “What does the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion do with His ever so many hands and eyes?” There are Buddhist traditions that attend to Kannon, and there are Buddhist traditions that have not yet seen Kannon even in their dreams. The Kannon that existed for Ugan was in complete harmony with Dōgo’s Kannon, and it was not just one or two Kannon, but hundreds of thousands of Kannon with which Ugan was likewise in harmony.... When Ugan speaks of the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion using His ever so many hands and eyes, his phrase ‘ever so many’ does not mean merely eighty-four thousand hands and eyes. How much less is it limited to some particular number.... You need to explore through your training that the underlying meaning of the phrase ‘ever so many’...has already gone beyond the bounds of the immeasurable and the unbounded.*

In other words, the hands and eyes of Kanzeon are countless in the real meaning of the word. Their use is unbounded. This is the way of being of a Bodhisattva, and it is the way in which we must train. Of course, this means that our wise ways of helping beings must be endless, for this is one use of our countless hands and eyes. But the meaning goes even beyond this. I can remember hearing the great council of the Sōtō Church discussing who was to be

the next abbot of Sōjiji, and they were saying, “Is he full of light yet?” And one person replied, “He can never be full of it, but he has more than most of the people who are suitable.” To be “full” implies a measure and a boundary; it also implies an ending. Since “a Buddha doing his practice” is never finished, we should not think that any training is totally completed or finished. It is important to keep this in mind. Thus it is that the celestial Bodhisattva of Compassion, and we as bodhisattvas in the Way, must use our hands and eyes unboundedly and unceasingly in all things.

This also provides another way of looking at the question of gradual and sudden realization in Zen. The sudden one is a sudden realization of...something. When we realize one thing, that one thing is what we have realized. Although such a realization is a doorway into the unbounded, it is not proof that a person’s whole being is one of Light beyond measure. This is one reason why, in Sōtō, we do not recognize people as masters only on the basis of one sudden understanding. What is essential is to watch the slow but sure cleansing of the karmic stream and to see the Light, the Flowering of the Dharma, gradually rising, glowing in greater and ever greater brightness.



To understand that the training of a Bodhisattva is endless and equal to that of a Buddha, and that it involves the ceaseless use of hands and eyes, still does not tell us fully how that training is done. In the *Shushōgi* (and in another chapter of the *Shōbōgenzō* that we will not be studying this time, called *Bodaisatta Shishōbo*), Dōgen explains that it is founded on the principles of charity,

tenderness, benevolence, and sympathy. These four aspects of the practice of a Bodhisattva are sometimes called the “Four Wisdoms,” or “Four Signs of Enlightenment,” and are excellent guidelines for our own training.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, Dōgen explains a completely different aspect of a Bodhisattva’s training, and he takes it to a new level by investigating the meaning of Dōgo’s statement that Kannon’s use of His hands and eyes is “like someone in the night who reaches behind himself, his hand groping for a pillow.”

*...To express the underlying principle, Dōgo gives as an example that it is like someone in the night groping behind himself for a pillow. ‘Groping about’ means ‘searching for’. ‘In the night’ is a way of saying ‘being in the dark’, just as we might speak of ‘seeing a mountain in the light of day’. That is, ‘using one’s hands and eyes’ is like someone in the night reaching behind himself, his hand groping for a pillow.... When people grope for a pillow, even though they do not understand it as something resembling Kannon’s using His hands and eyes, we do not escape from, nor can we, the principle that it is just like that....*

*You need to realize that even though hands and eyes do not stand against each other, their use in doing something is their employing That Which Is and is That Which Is making use of them. When That Which Is expresses Itself in this way, even though the whole of Its ‘hands and eyes’ are never hidden from us, we must not look for a time when It expresses Itself as ‘the whole of Its hands and eyes’. Even though there are Its hands and eyes that are never hidden*

*from us and even though these hands and eyes do exist, they are not oneself, nor are they mountains and oceans, nor are they the countenance of the sun or the countenance of the moon, nor are they 'Your very mind is Buddha'.*

This is an amazing statement that Dōgo is making. We all know that our own training is like groping about in the dark, but to hear that the same is true of a Bodhisattva seems, at first glance, to be astounding. After all, as the *Kanzeon Scripture* tells us, “With wisdom does He darkness all dispel, subverting all effects of wind and fire; His all-illuminating light fills all the world.” So, how could Kanzeon be “in the dark” about anything? But, when you consider the matter more deeply, the real question is how could Kanzeon’s training be so very different from yours and mine? Training is training and, as Dōgen said elsewhere in an equally revolutionary statement, “Training *is* already enlightenment.” What Dōgo is saying, then, is that the training of a Bodhisattva is the same as our own, and that our training is that of a Bodhisattva.

No matter how deep the darkness, when we are motivated by Great Compassion, as we grope in that darkness—as we hunt in it—it is as if our hands have eyes to find what is needed. Kanzeon is looking for a way in which to bring rest and peace to all beings and, at heart, so are we all. To hunt in the darkness or to hunt in the daylight is still to hunt. One needs eyes for darkness and eyes for daytime, and the ability to move in complete freedom without worrying about either darkness or light. This type of activity is reflexive, like reaching for a pillow in the night: we do not plan it nor think about it. So, do not get caught in discrimination;

this “feeling our way along” can only happen in the Third Position beyond the opposites. This groping in the dark with a good heart *is* the activity of training, stimulated within us by Kanzeon, the true Mother/Father of all Buddhas. When we train willingly, within the darkness of unknowing, our hands are the hands of God, our hands are guided from Kanzeon, our hands are “made use of by That Which Is.” That which is the essence of Daihi Bodhisattva permeates everything we do when we live from Buddha Nature, when we give ourselves into It to be used by It. Then all things are from Kanzeon Bodhisattva; all things guide and teach. When we exhibit our essential Buddhahood in this way, That which gave us and all Buddhas spiritual birth, the great Kanzeon Bodhisattva, stands behind us and guides our groping about in the dark.

And what is it that we are guided towards? Great Compassion.

*...When Ungan said, “His whole body is hands and eyes,” he was not saying that hands and eyes are the Dharma-body, which exists everywhere. Even though everywhere is the whole universe, the hands and eyes of our body at this instant will not be the Everywhere that is everywhere. Even though the hands and eyes of our body are the meritorious functionings of the Everywhere, they cannot be the hands and eyes that leave the marketplace with unpurchased goods. The meritorious functioning of hands and eyes will be beyond the seeing, behaving, and expressing that judges rightness.... Not only is it like the whole body being hands and eyes, it will also be like giving voice to the Dharma in order to rescue sentient beings, and*

*it will also be like loosing the Light throughout nations. Therefore, you should explore through your training that it must be, as Ungan put it, that your whole body is hands and eyes. So, even though he says to use your whole body as being hands and eyes, and even though he says to change your demeanor, now moving forward, now resting, do not let yourself be disturbed by this....*

The old question of why a just God “maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust,” is stupid. If one understands Kanzeon, one understands That which is both Pure Love and Pure Compassion. *That* cannot discriminate between the just and the unjust. It is pure compassion; It is pure love. Here, there is no such thing as “judging rightness.” There is only non-discrimination, for love is love and compassion is compassion. *Maha Prajna, Maha Karuna*—the two great pillars of the Mahayana—Great Wisdom and Great Compassion. They do not worry as to what a man or woman was. All They do is pour Their benefits out on all, equally. This is how your hands and eyes will be guided, when you grope about in the darkness of unknowing, in utter willingness, allowing “That Which Is to make use of you.” And, although your hands and eyes are then “the meritorious functionings of the Everywhere,” still you cannot be complacent in this knowledge, for “they cannot be the hands and eyes that leave the marketplace with unpurchased goods.”

Dōgen concludes the chapter with the following:

*Thus, the Kannon of whom our old Master Shakyamuni spoke is only one of a thousand hands*



and eyes, or one with twelve faces, or one with thirty-three bodies or eighty-four thousand bodies. The Kannon of Ungan and Dōgo is one of ever so many hands and eyes, but one beyond talking about quantities. When you explore through your training the Kannon of Ungan and Dōgo, which has ever so many hands and eyes, all Buddhas realize eighty or ninety percent of Kannon's meditative state.

Look everywhere and, no matter what the shape or form, you will see a Kanzeon: a Kanzeon standing behind you, a Kanzeon standing beside you, in front of you on the bus or in the car, in the restaurant. No matter what you are doing there is a Kanzeon there. Do not think that you cannot see one. Do not think It has to take a specific form. Understand the meaning of those strange pictures with the thousand hands and eyes. Kanzeon is our “still, small voice.” He is the “voice of Brahma, voice of oceans” as it says in the *Kanzeon Scripture*. All the forms and voices in this world that speak true are the voices and forms of Kanzeon. And, even the Buddhas realize only eighty or ninety percent of the Heart and Mind of Kanzeon, Who is training at this very moment as one who gropes in the dark for a pillow.

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<sup>i</sup> For a discussion of these Four Wisdoms, please refer to chapter 4 of Volume I of *Roar of the Tigress*, the section on them in the Shushōgi found in ZEL, 99–101, and the chapter of the *Shōbōgenzō* known as “Bodaisatta Shishōbo.”

## 13.

### *How to Read the Scriptures*

From Lectures on *Kankin*, “Reading Scriptures”

An ancient saying tells us that “the Truth that is realized by Buddha is called the Dharma Treasure.” Therefore, to truly read the Scriptures is to be at one with the Truth, and this is to turn the Wheel of the Dharma. But this cannot happen if you merely read as most people read and, in that sense, you cannot get the true teaching from books. “Kankin” refers not only to turning the Wheel of the Dharma but also to the practice of daily recitation of the Scriptures at services and to the ceremonial “revolving of the Scriptures,” wherein a volume of the Sutras is fanned back and forth by the monks from one hand to the other as an offering of the Dharma. If you have never seen this ceremony, it is easier to imagine if you understand that traditional Japanese books are printed as one long piece of paper which is accordion-folded between the two covers. This permits it to be run between the hands from one cover to the other, with each page being visible for a brief instant. The inner meaning of revolving the Scriptures is the turning of the Wheel of the Dharma, and if it is done sincerely and not simply as a meaningless ceremonial exercise, this is precisely what happens. The same holds true of sincere Scripture recitation: it can be a profound form of meditation wherein the Dharma flowers

and the Wheel of the Dharma turns. All of these meanings of “kankin” partake of each other. Therefore, Dōgen says:

*Training to directly experience supreme, fully perfected enlightenment sometimes makes use of our spiritual friends and sometimes makes use of Scriptural works. ‘Our spiritual friends’ refers to the Buddhas and Ancestors, those who are fully Themselves. ‘Scriptural works’ are the Scriptural texts, which are complete in themselves. Because the Self Nature is what all Buddhas and Ancestors are and because the Self Nature is what all Scriptural works are, this is the way things are. We speak of Their ‘Self’, but It is a Self that is beyond any adherence to ‘self and other’, for this is Their penetrating eyes, Their emancipating fist.*

When we read the Scriptures with these penetrating eyes, the Wheel turns within us, and that is the true Scripture. That which turns the Wheel is none other than the Dharmakaya, which is another name for the Unborn. The Dharmakaya is the essence of Dharma; it is the Teaching which manifests in all things. The Wheel of the Dharma also turns when we are doing simply that which is to be done, beyond the opposites of right and wrong. When the Wheel turns, It is the flowing of the Water of the Spirit. When we feel the Water of the Spirit pour through ourselves and pour through our neighbors, then we are truly “reading the Scriptures,” for then we are *living* the Scriptures.

When the Buddha’s Teaching turns us and we turn the Teaching, when all conditions in our training ripen, the Scriptures speak of themselves, which is a Flowering of the Dharma. Some of you remember how, when I was very ill

in 1976, I used the daily Scriptures. I repeated them and repeated them; I “revolved” them, so to speak. Over the course of my monastic life, reciting them each day, I had already done this many, many hundreds of times, yet I felt the need to do so even more. And then they started to “revolve” me. They started to show me how to do things, with meanings I had not seen in them before. “Don’t come too close, don’t go too far away.” “Remember that nothing matters, don’t be afraid.” And so on; each day a new passage would “light up” with meaning. The Water of the Spirit was very lively, as were the “penetrating eyes and emancipating fist” of the Buddhas and Ancestors.

The use of the fist, by the way, is something which I feel should be reserved for the Buddha Nature within us, not for human teachers. Perhaps I am wrong, for “lively fists” have been used for centuries in Japanese Zen, but I have seen so much abuse and so much misunderstanding that I prefer to err, if I must, on the side of being what is called in the East an “old woman” (which, by the way, I happen to be) rather than to be an iron-fisted old Zen master. I believe that by gentler methods I can do much more good and, of course, I could be wrong.

*At the same time, there is the calling to mind of Scriptures, the reading of Scriptures, the chanting of Scriptures, the writing of Scriptures, the accepting of Scriptures, and the preserving of Scriptures, all of which together comprise ‘the training to directly experience’ of the Buddhas and Ancestors. Nonetheless, encountering the Buddha’s Scriptures is no easy matter. As they say, “In countless lands not even as much as their names can be heard.” And “Among the Buddhas*

*and Ancestors not even their names can be heard.” And “Within the lifeblood of our Ancestral line not even their names can be heard.” When we are not a Buddha or an Ancestor, we do not see or hear Scriptural works, read or chant them, or explain their meaning.*

It is difficult to hear the name of Buddha, let alone to hear of the Dharmakaya. We hear of god(s) and spirits and demons, but to hear of the Dharmakaya and to be turned by the Wheel of the Dharma because we have taken Its essence (which is the “refraining from all evil whatsoever”) as our way of life, that is to truly “encounter the Scriptures” and “hear their name.” This is a rare and wonderful thing. Even among the Buddhas and Ancestors, says Dōgen, it is difficult to hear their name. Even when the body hears and the eyes feel, when the ears speak the name and the Wheel turns and the Water cascades—even then it is not easy to hear their name. How much more difficult is it for those who depend upon god(s) and spirits, theories and notions, or who always need books to be able to put their point of view forward.

*As soon as we have investigated the Buddhas and Ancestors through our training, with some considerable difficulty we explore and train with Scriptural works. At this time, what manifests before our very eyes are the hearing, keeping to, accepting, and expounding of the Scriptures within our ears, our eyes, our tongue, our nose, our body, our mind, no matter what place we go to, or listen in, or speak at. Those folks who expound non-Buddhist theories and interpretations*

*because they seek a name for themselves cannot put into practice Buddha's true purpose. That is why the Scriptures have been passed on and preserved on trees and on rocks, why they have spread through field and town, why they are presented to us by the worlds of dust motes, why they are opened up and lectured on by boundless space....*

I have so often had lectures torn to pieces and analyzed by silly people who could not get above their own opinions. By studying the Buddhas and Ancestors, by studying and taking to heart what They have bequeathed to us as Scripture, by studying with our master, we can gradually be enabled to truly "hear the names of the Scriptures." Do not doubt this. We can come to know the turning of the Wheel; we can receive the teaching of the Great Dharmakaya. When the essence of Buddhist teaching has been fully accepted, when there is no longer any question as to refraining from what is not to be done and doing all that is good to do, then we *shall* "hear the name of the Scriptures" within our blood and bones. Whilst there is still argument in the mind, or still concern for a previously held theory of religion, then the Wheel of the Dharma will not turn freely within us.

Do not worry too much about whether you feel this turning in a personal way: a lot of people mistake the turning of the Wheel for something else, and a lot of them mistake other things for the turning of the Wheel. Do not feel worried about whether you do, or do not, have personal experiences of these things. Do the training of the Buddhas and Ancestors, do what you can to repair the harm that you may have caused to others by your actions, but do *not* allow

guilt from old religions and old theories to get in the way. Embrace, do not reject, and walk on.

It is very easy for a slight coarseness to enter into our practice. This is why there is danger in the “teaching of the emancipating fist.” This coarseness can come from a lot of things. It can come from guilt, from our feelings of rejection, or from words we read in comparative religions. And still, these things must not make you a coward in being willing to read and to live a normal daily life. It is very easy to find support for a theory to which you are attached. Therefore, it is very important to sit still in the center of our true being. When we do this, and simply abstain from what is not to be done, and simply do that which is to be done, we live in a type of innocence. A lot of people mistake ignorance for innocence because they do not know how subtle coarseness can be. Be very, very careful of feeding your own opinions, hurts, and theories.

Next, Dōgen gives several examples of these principles in the interchanges between monks of old. Here is one:

*In the assembly of the lofty Ancestor Daikan (C. Ta-chien), founder of the monastery on Mount Sōkei (C. Ts'ao-chi) in Shinchou Province, a monk named Hōtatsu (C. Fa-ta), who could recite the whole of the Lotus Scripture by heart, had come to train under the Master. The Founding Ancestor gave voice to the following poem for Hōtatsu's benefit:*

*When our mind is wandering in delusion,  
It is set straight by this Flowering of the Dharma:  
When our mind is awakened,  
It sets this Flowering of the Dharma straight.*

*Though we may long recite it, if we have not  
clarified who we truly are,  
We make its meaning an alien home.  
Repeating it free of opinions is the proper way;  
Repeating it while holding to personal views a  
hindrance creates.  
And when we no longer measure by 'holding to'  
and 'being free',  
We will, for good and all, ride in the White Ox's cart.*

Here the *Lotus Scripture* does not simply refer to a sutra but also to the “Flowering of the Dharma,” to the turning of the Wheel of the Dharma (which happens simultaneously with the Dharma’s Flowering), and to the opening of the lotus of enlightenment. So, the first four lines of the poem say that if the mind is deluded and yet we are able to recite the *Lotus Scripture* within the still innocence of our true being, this will cause the Wheel to turn within us and the Dharma to Flower before us. And, if we are enlightened, then our Flowering of the Dharma will revolve the Scripture and cause the lotus blossom of Immaculacy to be made manifest.

The next two lines make clear that it is necessary to clarify through training our True Nature (“who we truly are”), for otherwise no matter how many times we may recite the sutras, they will not be our true home. If we do not do this, the words that we use to explain ourselves to ourselves will obstruct the innocence of our training, and the Buddha Nature cannot manifest Itself. “I am not God, and there is nothing in me that is not of God.” I am nothing but the “void, unstained, and pure,” but if I do not understand how karma and the operation of dependent origination made me the way that I am, then I will forever be discussing



why I am the way I am, and I will be constantly going to other people to get help because I think that someone outside me can give me the answers. There is no substitute for practice, for true study of the sutras, for clarifying the self. When we have studied the self in this way we can drop off the self, and when we drop off the self and make of our lives an innocent offering, then we have “clarified who we truly are.”

Next, the poem tells us how to recite sutras: free of all opinions and personal views. In meditation instruction we speak of “natural thought” and “deliberate thought.” Thoughts may arise sometimes while reciting the Scriptures. This is not, in itself, a problem. That which comes up naturally is harmless unless we hold onto it and turn it into a discussion in our heads. That which we discuss and argue about in our own minds is deliberate thought; it is an obstacle, whether in meditation or in the recitation of Scriptures.

“Do not measure,” says Daikan, either by “holding to” or by “being free.” Within the Great Dharmakaya, what is there to measure? In this way, you will always “ride the White Ox’s cart.” The “White Ox’s cart” has several meanings. It is a metaphor used in the *Lotus Scripture* for the Supreme Vehicle of Buddhist training which lies beyond the doctrinal differences of the various schools of Buddhism. Also, in the “Ox Herding Pictures,”<sup>i</sup> the ox changes from black to white, as the self is transformed through training and Buddha Nature becomes manifest. When we have “clarified who we truly are,” our True Nature is seen for what It really is; the false self has been exposed, and that which made the ox black has now dropped away. The ox is seen pure and clean and white, carrying the Buddha Nature within

itself. When it does this, then one indeed is in the Ox Cart, traveling the Way of the Buddhas and Ancestors.

*Thus, the mind deluded is turned around by the Flowering of the Dharma, and the mind awakened sets the flowering of the Dharma in motion. And further, when we leap beyond 'deluded versus awakened', the Flowering of the Dharma sets the flowering of the Dharma in motion.*

If the mind is deluded, the true reading and revolving of the Scriptures will gradually make us turn ourselves around more and more until, having cleansed ourselves of hindrances, we allow the Water of the Spirit to arise and the Wheel of the Dharma to turn. If the mind is simply training and beyond all opposites, our very being “revolves the Scriptures” and manifests Truth; then “Buddha bows to Buddha and Buddha recognizes Buddha.” In such a place, there is nothing but the Dharmakaya and the innocence of endless training. This is to truly read the Scriptures. But, if we hadn't first read the words within our ignorance and delusion, we would not have known that any of this was possible. And if we hadn't allowed those same words to drop away, they could not have transcended themselves. And if we had not allowed ourselves to drop away, It could not have turned Itself. Thus there is no self. What is real is the “vision within our dream,” the Dharmakaya, the Unborn. All things, the universe, is one's own Dharmakaya.

*When Hōtatsu heard this poem, he leapt for joy, and presented the following poem in praise of it:*

*Though I have recited the Scripture three  
 thousand times or more,  
 It is all made nil by just one line from you.  
 If we have not yet clarified the purpose of our  
 leaving home,  
 How will we bring to rest the madness of  
 repeated lives?  
 The provisional terms of 'sheep', 'deer',  
 and 'oxen'  
 Are thoroughly fine to quote.  
 But who inside the burning house may know  
 That from the first they were, within the  
 Dharma, Its very lord?*

Hōtatsu is saying that, if it were not for our having encountered the Dharma of Shakyamuni Buddha, if it were not for our having taken it to heart and followed it each in our own way, how could we possibly set to rest the delusions of countless lives and truly hear the *Lotus Scripture* for the first time? It is important to know that each of us must go our own way within the overall framework of the teachings and practices of our lineage and tradition. For example, what I wrote in *How to Grow a Lotus Blossom* was my way at a certain point in my training; it has nothing to do with any of you and everything to do with every one of you. It is important to clarify this point. Each of you has different karma, and must go his or her own way, but the Buddha's Way and its signposts are all the same. The blueprint for the basic structure of the "burning house" of self is identical for each one of us, but we each trim, decorate, and furnish it totally differently.

The sheep, deer, and ox carts once again refer to the parable of the burning house in the *Lotus Scripture*. But they also have another meaning: in the beginning of the road of training, we are led like sheep, in the middle of the road we run and prance like deer thinking we know it all until we get our horns caught in the thickets, and in the mature phase we are as oxen patiently training for the sake of training, pulling the cart of the Buddha Nature, happy in the yoke of the Dharmakaya. All of these are good, for all lead to the supreme good of enlightenment.

Who would have guessed, wonders Hōtatsu, that within this burning house of self is the Buddha Nature, our true home, from which we have never been apart? “The Treasure House will open naturally,” says a daily Scripture, and within it we find the kingdom of the Dharma, the kingdom of innocent training, that place within which everything—all life, all Truth—flows. It is not a thing that is inside or outside, or in a heaven or in a hell, it is right here and now; and it is in all of those places too, for there is nowhere where Dharma is not Flowering at this very moment.

*The Founding Ancestor then said, “From now on, it would be well to call you the Monk Who Calls the Scripture to Mind.”*

*You should recognize that in the Buddha’s Way there is the monk who calls the Scripture to mind. This is directly pointed to by the Ancient Buddha of Sōkei. The ‘calling to mind’ in this ‘monk who calls the Scripture to mind’ is beyond ‘holding to opinions’ and ‘being free of opinions’: he is no longer involved in measuring by ‘holding to’ and ‘being free’. This*

*means, simply, that as the Founding Ancestor once said, “From eon to eon, we do not let this Scripture book out of our hands, and both day and night, there is no time when we do not call this Scripture to mind.” In other words, from Scripture to Scripture, there is no time when we are not This Scripture.*

To call someone “One Who Calls the Scripture to Mind” is a great compliment in the East. It means that he or she is at one with Truth, is one in whom the Wheel of the Dharma is always turning. I want you to think of what an awesome thing that is. For such a one, from Scripture to Scripture there is nothing other than being This Scripture; from one turning to another, there is nothing but being This Turning.

Now let us look at another example.

*The Twenty-seventh Ancestor, the Venerable Hannyatara (Skt. Prajñātara) of eastern India, was once invited to dine with an eastern Indian king. After the meal, the king asked him, “All the other monks recited Scriptures to Us, so why have you alone not recited them?” The Ancestor replied, “In my humble way, what I breathe out does not conform itself to external conditions and events, and what I breathe in does not take up residence in the realm of my skandhas. The Scriptures I recite—always being like this—are comprised of hundreds of thousands of millions of billions of scrolls, not just one or two scrolls.”*

Now, there is a lot more here than what meets the eye. Hannyatara is not telling the king that he practices a form of

breath-following meditation and that he reads the Scriptures in a similar way. Instead, he is referring to something which has been written in ancient texts which say that during meditation, quite naturally, on the inhalation of each breath we gather the True Shakyamuni, and on the exhalation we allow Him to spread throughout our entire being. Therefore, if the true recitation of the Scriptures is the turning of the Wheel of the Dharma, then this is the same thing as what happens naturally during meditation: the gathering in of the Truth on the inhalation of the breath, and the showering of the Dharma on the exhalation. Thus, Hannyatara is reciting the Scriptures continually, just by his very being, for his mind is never outside of the Great Ocean of Meditation. He has preached a greater sermon to the king, just by being with him and sharing their meal together, than could be done by a monk reciting Scriptures in ordinary ways.

*The Venerable Hannyatara was a seedling that sprouted up in a kingdom in eastern India. He was a direct descendant of the twenty-seventh generation from the Venerable Makakashō (Skt. Mahākāshyapa). He had had properly Transmitted to him all the necessary equipment of the Buddha's family, having in his charge a monk's head, eyes, fist, nostrils, traveling staff, begging bowl, robe, Dharma, bones, and marrow. He is our Founding Ancestor, and we are his distant descendants.*

Now, all of these things which Hannyatara had Transmitted to him need explaining, for they have multiple meanings. The fists I have already spoken about. The nostrils or breath, I have just mentioned. The staff is the certainty of

a monk's footfalls in the Way. Their mendicant bowl represents the cleanliness, the purity, the offering of seeming nothingness. Into this bowl, which is so full of innocence and perfect emptiness, others can put things which the monk will then eat, showing simply by feeding the body (that we know will one day turn to dust), that no matter what the offering may be, both it and the bowl are immaculacy, the True Mind of the Buddhas and Ancestors. By using the begging bowl not only does he prevent himself from becoming lean and dying, but also he accepts offerings so that he and others may see the innocence and immaculacy of enlightenment. He or she wears robes that one may see that there is something different from the worldly, that there is a Reality beyond the reality we usually understand, and that there is a Way to it. And he has the bones and the marrow. "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels," says the Psalm. "Drop off body and mind," says the Buddhist Scripture; allow *everything* to dissolve into the Water of the Spirit. This is what happens at death and what happens at kenshō. The head of the monk is the head of the Buddhas and Ancestors, that which can make proper use of all things, first on the coarse level and later on the spiritual one, but never for fame or gain. To just teach someone to forever sit and count their breaths, and never to take them deeper, is to use Buddhism for gain. To use a begging bowl solely to collect food in order to stay alive, is to use a begging bowl for gain. To wear robes solely to say, "I am a priest, look at me; you are merely a layman" is to use the robes for fame. Be very careful what you do and what you show to the world, for you will reap the consequences of your every action at a later date. The law of karma is

inexorable; cause and effect follow as night follows day. If we are to be the true descendants of Hannyatara, we must understand this very clearly. Dōgen continues:

*What the Venerable One is now putting his full strength into saying is that not only does what he exhales not conform itself to external conditions, but external conditions do not conform themselves to what he exhales....*

This little sentence makes a very important point. The world is as the world is. The individual trainee may know the joy of being one in the innocence of the Buddha Nature, and meanwhile wars take place, and people die, and people quarrel when they are married, and they say, “Why doesn’t the great monk do something about it?” And the great monk answers, “When I exhale, my breath is not affected by events or conditions; when I inhale, I do not dwell in the world of conditioned form.” This may not seem like a satisfactory response, but the truth is that the only way for things to change is for each of us to do training for ourselves. Buddhism is not a religion that can be taught by standing up on a podium in some stadium with a couple of TV cameras in front of you and asking people to come up and bear witness; it doesn’t work that way. Our way is taught in the privacy of one’s own heart, in the temple of one’s own body. And only when each person does it for themselves will conditions change. Changing the world is not something that any one person can bring about, and it is something that *every* one person can bring about. Do not think that, because you cannot change the world as you might wish, your life is insufficient. It *is enough* for you to know the Unborn. Then,



your every breath will be a sermon, a reciting of the Scriptures to all beings who have the eyes to see and ears to hear it.



After giving several more examples, which are well worth reading, Dōgen shifts to another point.

*Great Master Igen, our ancient Ancestor of Yakusan Mountain, was in the habit of not permitting his people to read Scriptures. One day, when he himself was holding a Scripture in his hands and reading it, a monk asked him, "Venerable Monk, you are in the habit of not permitting people to read Scriptures, so why are you reading one?" The Master replied, "I just want to shield my eyes." The monk asked, "May this one take a lesson from the Venerable Monk and do likewise?" The Master replied, "If you were to read, it would surely be enough to pierce holes even through the hide of an ox."...*

The Master doubtless did not allow Scripture reading among his monks because he discerned in them a danger of their getting involved with various ideas, arguing with each other, and distracting themselves from training by discussing theories. I can remember some of my monks being very upset when I asked them to stop reading comparative religions, but you should know that I am regarded by many as extremely lax and very stupid to allow any of you to read anything. As I have said many times, I will never stop anyone reading anything, but I would warn you that, unless you understand what you are doing in the spiritual sense, it can

be a very dangerous thing to do. And, when all conditions are right, it can be the best possible thing to do.

Such was the case for Master Yakusan Igen at that moment. When a master uses something so that the Wheel of the Dharma may turn, it gives him great joy and great rest, so that he or she is not exhausted. In this way others can find Truth by training in his or her presence. Therefore, when a master uses something for that purpose, one should be very careful how one judges such acts. I have often in the past had people say to me, "Well, you do it." But, do they know what I am really doing? Take the watching of TV for example. It took a long time for some monks to realize that, when I watch TV, I often am not really looking at what is happening on the screen. It is a place to rest my eyes so that I can meditate and refresh myself in the midst of other people without being constantly distracted by their ideas and expectations. And I find joy in the very Buddha Nature of the thing, which also helps others to relax. This can be of benefit to them, for it is when one is relaxed and not struggling that sometimes one is most open to the Truth.

It is when one has just the joy of holding a Scripture book, or just the joy of seeing a beautiful tree, or just the joy of being in the meditation hall, that the Dharma may Flower most readily. But if there is greed and doubt and selfishness, It must bide Its time, for the mind and heart are not conducive, not open. It is worse still if there is the sort of criticism and judgment inherent in thoughts such as, "The master is using this in order to keep me down, whilst he himself does as he wishes." Do not judge the master; do not judge the seniors of a monastery. If you do that, you will never understand Zen, and the Dharma will never Flower within you. That does not mean that such people can never make

mistakes; of course they can. But those are *their* mistakes and they will reap the karma of them. Only the Buddhas and Ancestors can measure the karma of our actions or know if something is a mistake in the ultimate sense. You can leave such measurements to Them (and They do not measure nor judge). For, even if the master is mistaken in some ultimate sense, to judge him is to make *your* mistake. In the case of the monk in this story, since his mind was locked into such judgmental thinking, if he so much as looked at the cover of the book, he would have “burned a hole right through it.”

Dōgen points out that when the Master said that he was resting his eyes upon the book, it means that he had abandoned all forms of learning and judging. It means that he had opened the eye of True Wisdom and was simply dwelling in the joy of the Scriptures. And they do bring forth joy. One must not allow obstructions to cover this eye; one must not allow extra skins to grow over it. Read in the wrong way, the written word can so often become an extra skin. But read in the right way, just “resting one’s eyes upon it,” allowing the true sight of it to turn the Wheel, this is sheer joy.

*Meditation Master Yafu Dōsen (C. Yeh-fu Tao-ch’uan)*  
once said in verse:

“Boundless are the merits of offerings made to  
the countless Buddhas,  
But how can they possibly resemble the merits  
from continually reading Their ancient  
instructions  
Whose words are written in ink upon white  
paper?”

*So you may ask. Well, open your eyes and look  
at what is right in front of you!*

*You need to recognize that the blessings and merit  
from making offerings to the ancient Buddhas and  
from reading Their ancient instructions stand shoul-  
der to shoulder and go beyond blessings and merit.  
What people call ‘ancient instructions’ are the inked  
words written on white paper, but who can understand  
these as Their Age-old Instruction? You need to train  
until you thoroughly understand this very principle....*

There is no greater joy than that of making offerings to the Buddhas. Making the offering of our training and practice is clearly superior to just reading the Scriptures in the ordinary way, but is it superior to *truly* reading them? The Scriptures can be just black characters on white paper. Open your eyes and look at them properly! We should know that to make offerings to the Ancient Buddhas and to “read Their ancient instructions” possess the same virtue and the same joy, for they are identically the same thing. There is a turning of the Wheel of the Dharma in taking refuge in the Buddhas and Ancestors and in taking refuge in the Scriptures. For this true reading, no Scripture book is necessary, yet every Scripture book must be given the greatest veneration and be read through and through.



The next part of the chapter deals with ceremonial regarding how the Scriptures are to be stored and read in temples of the Chinese style. Many of the details of this are not particularly relevant to us, as we do these things in our

way. Nevertheless, there are general principles which are useful to keep in mind. For instance, although the Scriptures of a temple are kept in a special scriptural repository or Tripitaka Hall, each monk should have his or her own copy of the major works of their tradition. Another useful point comes from the observation that, during ceremonies for the revolving of the Scriptures, the temple copy was always put into a special tray or box, and given great veneration. This is helpful for us to keep in mind for, since they are one of the means of producing the joy of knowing the Unborn, the Scriptures must have deep respect, as much respect in fact, as we show for the kesa or any other holy article. A third principle applies to those times when it is suitable for a monk to read the Scriptures under his or her own initiative. Every large temple is supposed to have a special room for this purpose. Generally, those engaged in Scripture reading put on their kesas and go there, rather than sitting casually in their own room. Again, this points to the deep respect and dignity of the act of reading Scriptures.

The chapter concludes with the following story:

*Great Master Igen, our founding Ancestor of Yakusan Mountain, once asked the novice monk Kō (C. Kao), "Did you come to realize the Truth through reading some Scripture or through requesting your Master's personal instruction?" The novice Kō replied, "I did not come to realize It through reading Scriptures or through requesting personal instruction." The Master said, "There are many people who do not read Scriptures or seek instruction, so how come they have not realized It?" The novice Kō replied, "I do not say that*

*they do not have It. Simply, they have not dared to let themselves experience It.”*

*In the house of the Buddhas and Ancestors, there are those who let themselves experience It and those who do not. Even so, reading Scriptures and seeking instruction are the common tools of our everyday life.*

Nothing, neither reading the Scriptures nor studying under a master, can *give* you the Truth. You must be willing to “dare to let yourself experience It.” And, at the same time, you must be willing to make grateful and joyful use of all things to help you. You must allow the eye of your training to rest upon them and “the Flowering of the Dharma to turn you around.” There are those who, at any given moment, will rest their eye upon the Scriptures and turn the Wheel of the Dharma. And there are those who will not, for all they do is read black letters on white paper and discuss them. Nonetheless, says Dōgen, the reading of Scriptures and the studying under a master *are* the everyday life of practice, which is the life of Buddha. Within that life is the living innocence, our Buddha Nature.

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<sup>i</sup> The “Ox Herding Pictures” are an ancient set of drawings of a man and his ox, used as a pictorial expression for the course of Zen training. One example of these drawings can be found in MZB, another in ZFZB.

## 14.

### *Training After Realization*

From a Lecture on *Butsu Kōjō Ji*, “The Experiencing of That Which is Above and Beyond Buddhahood”

What this chapter is about is a matter of great importance: the training that comes after a realization of the Truth. Many things have been written in Zen about the training which leads to realization; very few indeed discuss the training which follows it. One can easily get the impression that realization, *kenshō*, an experience of enlightenment, or however you wish to phrase it, is the end of Zen training. It is not. It is, rather, a new beginning, an entrance into a more mature phase of Buddhist training. To take it as an ending, and to “dine out” on such an experience without doing the training that will deepen and extend it, is one of the greatest tragedies of which I know. There must be continuous development, otherwise you will be as a wooden statue sitting upon a plinth to be dusted, and the life of Buddha will not increase.

To have the Wheel of the Dharma turn, to find one’s Buddha Nature, to know the Unborn is not enough. It *is* enough in the sense that you must be content and *look* for nothing more; it is *not* enough in the sense that you must never cease *becoming* Buddha. One must be worthy of it, and to be worthy of it is to keep up the training after that first realization.

What does this training after realization look like? As with many things, it is easier to say what it does not look like. In this chapter Dōgen talks much about the stupidity of some masters who shout insults at each other in order to (so-called) “bring each other to the Truth,” or who shake fists or beat each other up. These are only games; they are not the proper recognition between mature masters of genuine development after realization. It was because Kohō Zenji knew how to do this properly that he sent me to see Sawaki Kōdō Rōshi<sup>i</sup> some time after my own first realization. For many years I could not understand why he did that, and why he did what he did after I came back from seeing Sawaki Rōshi. The answer is in this chapter. He wanted someone who knew how to check to see if training was continuing after a first kenshō, so he submitted the matter to a greater master, or a more famous master, than himself. He didn’t sit back and say, “I am right; I know; my opinions are correct”; he sent me to Sawaki Kōdō. Thus we can see that humility is one of the signs of training after realization, and Kohō Zenji himself was a wonderful example of this training.

Dōgen starts this chapter with a famous dialogue between Great Master Tōzan and one of his monks.

*There was a time when Great Master Tōzan addressed his assembly, saying, “Once I had learned from directly experiencing That which is above and beyond Buddhahood, I had the ability to say a few words about It.” Thereupon, a monk asked, “And what were the words you spoke?” The Master said, “When I spoke about It, my acharya,<sup>†</sup> you did not hear It.” The monk asked, “Are you, venerable monk, listening*



*or not?" The Master said, "When I am not speaking about It, I am waiting to hear It." ...*

When we are training following realization, the Wheel of the Dharma is always turning; there is a Flowering of the Dharma within and without. We need to speak of It so that we and others know what It is. We need to hear It and touch It, we need to practice It, for this is what continues the Wheel in motion. When we can recognize this Flowering or Turning in both self *and* others, it is a sign that we are continuing to develop "beyond Buddha," to train after realization. It proves that we are not just "dining out" on our past experiences, turning them into nothing more than a beautiful dream; it proves that we are keeping It a reality, a *live* reality, and this is very important. Do not play games with what is, after all, the most important and fundamental thing in your life.

There are some people who are called "masters" who think that once they have been named as a master, that is the end of their training. In Sōtō Zen, if a master's fellow masters do not recognize the training beyond realization, they will cease to use the title of "Master" for him or her. It is very important not to become "tetchy" or oversensitive once one has become a master, lest you project what is going on within yourself onto other people. I have had monks complain to me after a realization that they were suffering from the feeling that people were spiritually "eating" them or projecting their past life material upon them. If a person is a true master this does not happen, simply because he or she knows how to handle it. Yes, you may have moments of oversensitivity to the mental and spiritual states of others now and again, but you know what to do. You do not

complain, you do not blame others; instead you look within and do your own training.

Now, Dōgen goes on to examine carefully the meaning of each of the statements in this dialogue, and he relates them to the meaning of training after realization. Please read these carefully. I want to concentrate here on what he has to say about the last statement in the dialogue.

*The words of our Founding Ancestor Tōzan, “When I am not speaking about It, I am waiting to hear It,” need to be studied thoroughly in order to clarify their meaning. That is, at the time of putting It into words there is no simultaneously listening to It. The full manifesting of listening will occur at the time when one is not speaking. It is not that one idly disregards the time of not speaking, waiting for ‘not speaking’ to occur. At the moment of ‘just listening’, one does not consider ‘putting It in words’ as something extraneous because such a thought is truly something extraneous. At the time when there is ‘just listening’, it is not that speaking of It has departed and exists wholly as a side issue. And at the time when there is speaking of It, it is not that ‘just listening’ has closely hidden itself within the eyes of the one speaking and then thunders forth. As a consequence, even if someone is the acharya, at the time when It is spoken of, that person does not hear It. Even if the someone is the ‘I’, the time when there is no speaking is one of ‘just listening’, and this is comparable to “I have the ability to say a few words about It” and to “I have directly experienced That which is above and beyond Buddhahood.” It is, for example, the directly experiencing*

*‘just listening’ at the time when one is engaged in speaking about It. This is why Tōzan said, “When I am not speaking about It, I am waiting to hear It.”...*

One calls and One answers. When That Which Is—which is in both of them—hears, sees, and speaks through both, there is continuous training after realization. Do not speak of Dharma in such a way that you place blocks in your own mind which prevent you from simultaneously hearing the Truth. And, do not fear opening your mouth to allow the Dharma to flower forth of Its own. People say, “I can’t tell you, I don’t know how to speak” but, if your training after realization is ongoing, you *do* know how to speak. It is just that it is not the “old you” that must do the speaking. Have the courage to set aside the old ways, open the mouth, and see what comes out. If you hold back the flowering of the Dharma out of fear, then the Wheel does not turn and there is no development beyond Buddha. And then you neither know how to speak, nor do you know how to hear, nor do you know how to see, or to touch or to know, and training has come to a standstill. Do not mistake fear for humility. Furthermore, understand that the “waiting to hear” of Tōzan is not a passive waiting: it is active, attentive, and at all times eager to be instructed by the Truth. Training after realization is by no means passive quietism.

This hearing, speaking, touching, and seeing is not limited by place or circumstance. It is present when we sit still in meditation, but it is not absent anywhere. I remember asking my chaplains to stop at a casino in Las Vegas when we were on our way somewhere, just to see whether I could be one with It in even this most worldly of places. And there I sat, the Wheel turning beautifully. Do not think

that there is a place where the Dharma flowers and a place where It will not. There is no place where the Buddha Dharma does not go and no place where That Which Is, the Unborn, does not exist.

Dōgen now goes on to give a series of examples, both positive and negative, of how masters of old have understood, and sometimes failed to understand, this ongoing training after realization. Here is a positive one.

*Our Founding Ancestor Gohon [also known as Tōzan] once pointed out to his assembly, “You need to know that there are people who are above and beyond Buddhahood.” At the time, there was a monk who asked him, “What is a person who is above and beyond Buddhahood?” The Great Master replied, “A non-Buddha.” Unmon (C. Yün’men) once commented on Tōzan’s reply, “We cannot name It, nor can we describe It, so we speak of It as ‘a non-.’” Hofuku (C. Pao-fu) once commented, “Buddha is something ‘non.’” And Hōgen (C. Fa-yen) once commented, “Calling upon expedient means, we make such a one to be a Buddha.”*

We *must* use words, for lack of anything else. It is as skillful means that I use the term “Unborn.” It is very dangerous to use anything that has a negative connotation, and dangerous to use anything that has a positive connotation, but we have to say something or we shall be undutiful beings. So, I err on the side of the positive, but I know that it is expedient means. Do not fear words, and take deep care not to delude self or other with the words you use.

The next passage gives some negative examples, and here Dōgen appears to be quite critical of some very famous masters of the past. Passages such as this are difficult to understand, for you have to realize that he does not speak from pride here, nor does he have contempt for these former masters. Indeed, in other parts of the *Shōbōgenzō*, he expresses deep gratitude for their teachings. What he is doing in the passage that follows is pointing out just how very rare and precious is the constant training after realization, and how even great masters can, and have, fallen away from it at times.

*Generally speaking, an Ancestor of the Buddha who is above and beyond being 'an Ancestor of the Buddha' would be our Founding Ancestor Tōzan. The reason for that is, even though there are many others who have the countenance of a Buddha and the countenance of an Ancestor, they have not even dreamt of the term 'being above and beyond Buddhahood'. Even if it had been explained to the likes of a Tokuzan (C. Te-shan) or a Rinzai (C. Lin-chi), they could not have attested to it through their direct experience. And even if the likes of a Gantō (C. Yen-tou) or a Seppō (C. Hsüeh-feng) had worked their own bodies to a nubbin through training, they would still not have what a Master's Fist is....*

He is saying that, according to their behavior and ways of teaching, it is apparent to him that even such great masters as these did not know fully how to train after realization. To have a deep understanding of the Great Matter of enlightenment is one thing, to continue to grow in Buddhahood beyond

that understanding is quite another. Thus, no true Zen master ever says he is enlightened and he never says that he is not. All he or she will say to you is some form of “Gyatei, gyatei, hara gyatei, hara sō gyate, Bodhi, sowaka!”: “Going on, going on, always going on, always *becoming* Buddha. Hail!” This is another reason for Kohō Zenji’s insistence that this was how that mantra should be translated. I think that what allows Dōgen to know that these masters have not fully comprehended the ongoing practice after realization is that they have left behind techniques for training, the most famous of these, of course, being the kōans used by Rinzai. Others among these masters were famous for their exhibitions of shouting at, or beating, their disciples. I have sat in meditation halls in the Far East where it seemed like madness was raging all around me, with thrashings and beatings and screamings. It simply is not necessary, and it can never substitute for “always going on.”

Here is another positive example:

*When Sōzan Honjaku (C. Ts’ao-shan Penchi) went to train under our Founding Ancestor Tōzan, the latter asked him, “O acharya, what is your name?” Sōzan replied, “Honjaku.” The Founding Ancestor said, “Speak again, but from a place above and beyond the conventional.” Sōzan responded, “I cannot say it.” The Founding Ancestor asked, “Why on earth can’t you say it?” Sōzan responded, “My name is not Honjaku.” The Founding Ancestor approved of this response.*

*As my comment, it is not that there are no words in that place above and beyond, it is just a matter of “I*

*cannot say it.” Why does he not say it? Because his True Self is not called Honjaku. Since this is so, the words of the place that is above and beyond are not spoken, and the unspoken words of that place above and beyond are unnamed, and the unnamed Honjaku is a term from that place above and beyond. As a result, Honjaku is unnamed. Since this is so, there is a non-Honjaku, there is the unnamed which has dropped off, and there is a Honjaku that has dropped off.*

Now, herein lies the principle of “If you say it, you are wrong, and if you can’t say it, you are wrong,” but the word “to say” here does not refer to words. Therefore, what is meant does not contradict what has gone before about the need to speak of Dharma when the time is suitable. When that suitable time is present, you must speak, or act, or simply be, within the Truth that exists beyond the opposites. And if you do this, then the Dharma will flower no matter what you say, for it is not the words themselves that matter. Thus it is possible for a priest, if he or she is in the place of “always going on,” to help those who come to ask him or her questions during formal Dharma interviews, no matter what words come out of his or her mouth. It is not the words; “to say” or “not to say” is not the problem. The matter at hand is to get oneself out of the way sufficiently that the Dharma will flower of Itself. Therefore there is the saying, “If you can say, I will beat you, and if you cannot say, I will beat you; who can help you?” To which the answer is to cry, “Help!” to the Unborn, and behold—the Wheel turns.

*Meditation Master Banzan Hōshaku (C. P’ an-shan Pao-chi) once said, “Not even thousands of*

*saintly persons have Transmitted the one path to That Which is Above and Beyond.”*

*The phrase ‘the one path to That Which is Above and Beyond’ is the wording of Banzan alone. He did not speak of the matter of what is above and beyond, nor did he speak of those who are above and beyond; he spoke of the one path to That Which is Above and Beyond. His main point is that even though thousands of saintly ones may have come forth in great profusion, they have not Transmitted the one path to That Which is Above and Beyond. ‘To not Transmit’ can also mean that the thousands of saintly ones have preserved a part of something that is above and beyond being Transmitted. We can study the matter in this way too. And there is still something more that needs to be said: thousands of saintly ones and thousands of wise ones do indeed exist, and even so, wise and saintly they may be, yet the one path to That Which is Above and Beyond is above and beyond the realm of the wise and saintly.*

This statement explains why I am worried periodically by people whom I sometimes call “plaster saints” in this temple. That does not mean that, for instance, trying diligently to keep the Buddhist precepts is wrong. Trying to keep the precepts is *right*, for if you do not keep them, all you will do is constantly create karma and cause more clouds to appear in the clear sky, which will make the flowering of the Dharma all that much more difficult. But the turning of the Wheel is the turning of the Wheel. It is the true essence of the great saints and sages, it is the essence of us, and it is the essence of all things.



You can make mistakes on both sides of this matter. On the one hand, there is attachment to the form of the precepts which, perhaps out of an excess of zeal or perhaps out of a subtle fear, can cause a person to get in their own way and not allow the spontaneous flowering of the Dharma to flow forth. This is another meaning of the statement in *Shoaku Makusa* that the keeping of the Precepts of the Shravakas can be the breaking of the Precepts of the Bodhisattvas.

On the other hand, there is a tendency for some people after realization (particularly if it comes to them early in training or they do not already have a firm preceptual foundation to their practice) to make grave mistakes by violating the precepts, thinking that knowing the Truth makes them free *from* karma instead of free *within* it. This is what caused what was known as “beat Zen” in my own youth to come into fashion and caused Zen to get a bad name. Of course the Buddha Nature exists and the Wheel turns for such persons, as It does for us all, but they are not likely to continue to know It, they are not likely to have their faith stimulated and their training go onward. They become like children playing with holy things, throwing Buddha statues in the air and wondering why they smash. As they get older, fear and doubt begin to enter in, for the Law of Karma is inexorable, being a Law of the Universe.

Do not think that training after realization is easy. Do not get pulled away from serious training by the silly magazines that come through the mail, talking of enlightenment in a week, with corny jokes about Zen. Beware of the people who use shock tactics and rudeness, thinking that these will shock people into enlightenment. The only true path lies through hard work and keeping to the spirit of the precepts—that is, if you want the perfection of Zen. And, still,

keep in mind that the Unborn is not the private property of saints and sages. It is still there for those who do the shocking and play the silly games, if and when they turn around. If we wish to turn the Wheel and know the turning of the Wheel non-stop after kenshō, and if we wish to be one with the Unborn and to be completely free at the time of death, then we must not despise anything. We must attentively “wait to hear It” at all times, and we must train ourselves as if our hair were on fire in the keeping of the precepts, while at the same time not being attached to anything and not being upset by the little threads of karmic consequence, the threads of pain and difficulty, that sometimes have to appear to teach us to avoid making mistakes. Those threads must be seen as threads of Great Compassion.

*Meditation Master Kōso (C. Kuang-tso) of Mount Chinmon (C. Chih-men) was once asked by a monk, “What is this thing about ‘That which is above and beyond Buddhahood’?” The Master answered, “I hold aloft the sun and moon atop my staff.”*

*That is, his saying that one’s staff is mantled by the sun and moon is the same as ‘experiencing going above and beyond Buddhahood’. When we explore through our training the pole of the sun and moon, the whole universe—heaven and earth—is thrown into darkness, which is our going above and beyond Buddhahood. And it is not that the sun and moon are the pole: what is atop the head of the pole is what is atop the whole pole.*

When Master Kōso said, “I hold aloft the sun and moon atop my staff” he was pointing at the perfection of Zen, not being content with the experience of realization, wanting to go on, on...on to the moon and the stars and the sun, and beyond. The perfection of Zen *is* the continuous development beyond Buddha, the ongoing training after realization, the always *becoming* one with the Unborn. The perfection of Zen is the perfection of meditation; that is, dwelling constantly in the Great Ocean of Meditation.

When we do this, “heaven and earth are thrown into darkness” and we have no choice but to go onward *in unknowing*. For the “sun and moon” represent what is unknown and would seem to be unattainable, the full essence of Zen. It is good to be walking onwards toward such things, for this is the path of continuous development that is always being trodden by everything that is truly sincere. This is the path of Kanzeon, groping in the dark for a pillow. Such is how we should understand the continuous development beyond Buddha, the “gyatei, gyatei.” “What is atop the head of the pole is what is atop the whole pole,” says Dōgen. The entire staff, therefore, becomes the head that is pointing at the Unborn, and we must forever have our eyes hearing the Unborn, our ears seeing the Unborn, our taste smelling the Unborn, and our nose tasting the Unborn. Thus we can walk boldly in the darkness.

*In the assembly of Sekitō Kisen (C. Shih-t’ou Hsi-ch’ien)—posthumously named Great Master Musai (C. Wu-chi)—the later-to-be Meditation Master Dōgo (C. Tao-wu) of Tennōji (C. T’ien-huang-ssu) Temple asked, “What is the Great Intent of Buddha-Dharma?” The Master replied, “It is above and beyond*

*grasping, above and beyond comprehending.” Dōgo asked, “Having gone above and beyond, is there any other way you have of putting it, or not?” The Master replied, “The vast expanse of space does not hinder the floating by of white clouds.”*

The Great Ocean in which the Wheel of the Dharma turns does not obstruct Itself. To use the metaphor of the monk and the fan, although the presence of wind is constant, still we need to use a fan...and, nothing whatsoever is needed. The Wheel and the Ocean exist. If we do not do the ongoing training of becoming Buddha, thus turning the Wheel of the Dharma, how will we know the essence of Buddha and how will the Dharma flower? This is the reason for the using of the fan, but if all you see is that a monk was hot you will never understand the use of the fan. I must not fear the clouds, for I know the Moon. It is enough for me to know the Moon. Then, whether a passing tiger wishes to eat me or not doesn't matter. This is to “live in the world as if in the sky,” with the clouds going back and forth. This is the deeper meaning of faith. It is also the deeper meaning of the precepts. If rules and other people's opinions frighten you, how will you ever reach this place? *And*, if you are not fully committed to simply refraining from those “things one does not do” and simply doing “what is upheld and practiced,” then how can you ever have the courage to go onward?

Dōgen goes on to explore this dialogue at length; I will only quote a part of it to you.

*...You need to know that within the Buddha-Dharma the Great Intent exists at our first moment of spiritual awareness and It exists at the stage of our*

*ultimate, full awakening. That Great Intent is not something to be gotten. Giving rise to the intention to train, doing the training and practice, and realizing the Truth do indeed exist, and they too are not something to be gotten. That Great Intent is not something to be comprehended.... Also, that Great Intent is neither something to be grasped.... It is not that the Noble Truths and training-and-enlightenment do not exist: it is that they are not something to be grasped nor something to be comprehended....*

*The floating by of white clouds is unhindered, and the floating by of white clouds does not hinder the floating by of the vast expanse of space. Not to be limited by others is not to be limited by oneself. It is not the case that the meeting face to face [of Master and disciple] requires there be no limits beyond the one that each does not hinder the other. Because of this, there are no limits between Master and disciple. This expresses the ultimate reality and the outer form of "The vast expanse of space does not hinder the floating by of white clouds." At that very moment, he raised the eyebrows of the eyes of that one who was exploring the Great Intent through his training, and that trainee caught a glimpse of the Buddha coming to him and encountered the Ancestor coming to him: he met himself coming and met the other coming....*

This is the Right Transmission from Buddha to Buddha, Ancestor to Ancestor. Without it, we would not be able to train together in the Buddha's Way in our present time. It is this which has kept the Wheel of the Dharma moving down the generations. It was the continuous training of each

master and each disciple that has enabled the Life of Buddha to continue to this day. If it were not so, all we would have left would be empty forms: things sitting on shelves to be dusted and worshipped. This is why it is so dangerous for a Zen master to be thought of as a “guru,” whose practice will somehow magically carry you along. He or she has to be seen as a priest who is going on, going on, always going on, continuing his or her own training. One of the senior monks here said to me a year or two ago, “It amazes me to watch that you continue to do training.” What the flaming so-and-so did he think I was going to do? The Buddha-Dharma can only continue if *each* of us continues the living practice, continues to develop beyond realization.

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<sup>i</sup> Sawaki Kōdō Rōshi (Butsu Kojo Rōshi, 1880–1965) was considered to be perhaps the foremost meditation master of his time in Japan. For more on this episode, see WWG, 273–274.

## 15.

### *Living Beyond Buddha*

From a lecture on *Gabyō*, “A Painting of a Rice Cake”

This chapter of the *Shōbōgenzō* will be the last one which I am going to cover in this series. It is a fitting conclusion to everything which we have been talking about thus far, for in this chapter Dōgen gives us an ultimate lesson in humility, all-acceptance, and always going onward. He does this in a most radical way: by taking away from us everything which we have come to rely upon, know, and understand up to this point, leaving us in that place described by the Sixth Ancestor where there is truly “not a single thing,” where “no dust can alight.”

The chapter starts innocently enough, by referring back to the story of Tokusan and the old woman who would not sell him a rice cake, which we heard in *Shin Fukatoku*. Dōgen extends the metaphor of the rice cake to explain that each of us is, in one sense, a painting of a rice cake. What we see when we look at one another is a picture in our mind. I look at you and I see a picture. My eyes can shorten you, or make you taller; I can also embrace the whole of you within my sight. And, all of this is my picture; this is not the “real you,” however you may define that. It is that which I see, just as a vision is not the “real thing”: it is that which you see. The same applies when I regard “myself” and “my

training”: all that I can know of such things is a picture in my mind.

Now, as the old story of Tokusan points out, a painting of a rice cake cannot satisfy hunger. To see a Buddha is not enough. To see a person is not enough. One has to know and feel the essence of Buddha if one would know Buddha. One has to feel and know the Buddha Nature of each person if one would know the reality of that person. To see a rice cake will not make you full of food. To become one with that rice cake, as a result of it being within oneself, is to cease being hungry for a rice cake. To become one with the Buddhas and Ancestors by knowing the Buddha Nature within yourself is to satisfy your hunger for enlightenment. For the master to become one with his or her monks within the Unborn is to satisfy both: they are no longer hungering for enlightenment. And, nonetheless, one must still know them as individuals. This is the position from which the chapter starts.

*Because all Buddhas are enlightened, all things are enlightened. Even so, Buddhas and things are not of one and the same nature nor of one and the same frame of mind. Even though they are not of one and the same nature or of one and the same frame of mind, at the time when they manifest their enlightenment the enlightenment of the one does not hamper the enlightenment of the other. At the time of their manifesting their enlightenment, they will manifest it without the two coming in contact with each other's manifesting it. This is the forthright teaching that is characteristic of our Ancestors. So do not hold up*



*measurement by sameness or difference as the gauge of someone's capacity to train.*

Although we are all in enlightenment, each one of you is an individual. You do not dissolve and cease to be a separate entity. Here, Dōgen is reaffirming the principle that “all is One *and* all is different.”

*This is why it is said, “When we just barely comprehend what a single thought or thing is, we comprehend what myriad thoughts and things are.” What is spoken of here as the comprehension of a single thought or thing does not mean that we deny the appearance that some thought or thing previously had, nor does it mean that we make one thought or thing stand against some other, nor does it mean that we treat some thought or thing as absolute and unique. Treating some thought or thing as absolute and unique is synonymous with treating it as an obstruction and then being obstructed by it.*

We are the same in the Unborn, but we are long and short, bright and stupid. We have our own opinions, our own thoughts. Sometimes those opinions get in our way; sometimes they help us on our way. No one knows the twists and turns of another person's karma, therefore no one can be sure what the way is for another person. The only thing that you can be sure of is to take refuge in the Buddha, take refuge in the Dharma, and take refuge in the Sangha.

You know what the Buddhas and Ancestors have taught, for you know how to truly read the Scriptures and study with a master. If you honestly believe in everything

they taught, you put it into practice. If there are some things that they teach that you do not feel you can go along with, perhaps as a result of past karma, then you go along with as much as you can, and at a later date maybe you will believe it. And, maybe next time 'round you will believe it. Maybe it will take several lives to understand the truth of it, and who knows if you will do this in the near future or the far future. It doesn't matter, for we have come to understand that time as we measure it is meaningless within training. Furthermore, no one can force another into a mold, for all is different. And, in the Buddha Nature, all is One. Thus, there are many, many pathways on the way to enlightenment, within the great Way of the Buddhas and Ancestors.

Now, what I have just said is a very dangerous teaching. For Lord Mara<sup>i</sup> can, and will, come flying in at any door you leave open. Which is why it is advisable to go along in detail with what the Buddhas and Ancestors have taught! But if you honestly don't feel that you can do that in all aspects, then watch out for Mara and go the way you feel is right. You must train as a spiritual adult, fair enough? But do watch out for Mara; your old delusions and karmic proclivities can take some awfully charming forms. This danger is why some Buddhist temples are very, very rough, and say, "You'll believe everything we say, or get out!" I do not believe that such a teaching gives the depth or freedom of understanding that can come from realizing that the way which the Buddhas and Ancestors taught was right for one's self, without being forced into it. I believe that such an understanding can only come as a result of complete and absolute free will. I believe that the Unborn only beckons, never forces. (sigh...) But I must confess that the other way makes for a much more peaceful monastery!

Perhaps, when some of you monks are running monasteries, you will want to do things differently from me, and I will understand that. You should, however, keep in mind that if you go with what you believe, Mara can get at you with a vengeance. So, as Dōgen says, do not take hold of some pet idea or notion, “treating some thought or thing as absolute and unique,” for this “is synonymous with treating it as an obstruction and then being obstructed by it.”

*When our comprehension is freed from the obstruction of ‘I comprehend’, one instance of comprehension is equivalent to myriad instances of comprehension. One instance of comprehension is equivalent to a single thought or thing, and the comprehension of one thought or thing is synonymous with the comprehension of myriad thoughts and things.*

When you are fully at one with anything, you understand all things. In order to be in this place, you must not create duality or opposition. In fact, you must not even try to know that you comprehend. In this way, true Buddhist conversion to the Truth always comes from within, not from without. Likewise, do not try to force upon yourself non-duality either. What Dōgen is speaking of here is how to live at all times in the Great Ocean of Meditation, which is the same as how to “live beyond the Buddhas and Ancestors.” This is another teaching which leads us into the more dangerous areas of Buddhism. The Buddhas and Ancestors tell you truly what *is*. Here, we are moving from the state of “trees being trees and mountains being mountains,” to the time when “trees are not trees and mountains are not mountains.” One day, as I found out, you will all come back

to where trees are trees and mountains are mountains. To get there, you must not force even your non-attachment. Do not force the Buddhas and Ancestors, and do not force a way of your own. You must stop trying to *control* your training in such ways, for such control comes from subtle pride and fear. Give up all such things and simply *be willing*. And, watch out for Mara, for your old karma and kōan may still work upon you.



Master Dōgen now introduces the metaphor of the painting of a rice cake, and he immediately starts to expand its meaning beyond the way in which it is commonly understood.

*A Buddha of old once said, “A picture of a rice cake never satisfies hunger.”*

*Patch-robed novices who are seeking for a Master with whom to explore this saying, as well as bodhisattvas and shravakas who have come hither from all directions, are not all uniform in reputation and rank. And this includes those having the head of a celestial being or the face of a demon who come from thither in all directions, their hides thick or thin. Although they may say that they are studying what Buddhas of past and present have said, they are actually spending their lives under some tree or in a hermit’s thatched hut. As a consequence, when they are at the point of passing on the deeds of those in our monastic family, some may refer to this statement about a rice cake, saying, “He said what he said because engaging in the*

*study of the Scriptures and commentaries will not instill true wisdom,” whereas others say, “He spoke this way because he was trying to say that studying the Scriptural texts on the three provisional vehicles and the one True Vehicle was, moreover, not the path to enlightenment,” which in both instances is their engaging in judgmental thinking.*

*Speaking more broadly, those who hold to the opinion that such statements are asserting that provisional Teachings are truly useless are greatly mistaken. They have not had the meritorious deeds of Ancestors in our tradition genuinely Transmitted to them, so they are in the dark about the sayings of Buddhas and Ancestors. Since they have not clarified what this one saying is about, who would affirm that they had thoroughly explored the sayings of other Buddhas?*

The standard interpretation of the saying that “a painting of a rice cake never satisfies hunger” is that it means that we cannot find enlightenment from studying the Scriptures. And, quite rightly, Dōgen points out that this understanding is inadequate, for he has already shown us in *Kankin* how *true* study of the Scriptures leads precisely to enlightenment. What the metaphor of the rice cake does mean, at this level, can be summarized by another saying, “He who counts another’s treasure can never have his own.” If all you do is swallow and regurgitate the words and ideas of others, and you do not train yourself to find the truth in the words of your teachers and in the sayings recorded in the Scriptures and commentaries, then your study of them will, in fact, be “trying to eat the painting of a rice cake.”

However, to do that is to ignore what the Dharma itself says; it is to refuse to make use of what the Buddhas and the Ancestors have said is the way to go. You remember that little thing I wrote titled, “I am glad that I became a monk”? In it, I said that I found out that I had to take the Scriptures literally, since they were obtained at death’s door. That’s why the Scriptures were written down: they are other people’s accounts of the Truth and the Way. If you do not set aside your own ideas and opinions and study them in pure innocence, then you will never know the road that others have walked. Dharma is the maps they have bequeathed to us.

And, there are certain signposts on all of those roads that are the same, although the scenery may be totally different. You are not required to follow the road, but if you do not wish to land up in the wrong place, it’s not a bad idea to study some maps. Therefore it is wrong for people to go around saying, “You don’t need the Scriptures in Zen.” This is what Dōgen is talking about here. This mistake was just as prevalent in his time as in ours. People would, and do, go around saying, “You don’t need to study any of the Scriptures,” or “Dharma study is useless.” You need all the help you can get! It is handy to find somebody who has got a road map. That’s why they had all those volumes in Sōjiji’s archives, and it is why we have works like the *Denkōroku*. See what the signposts are.

But reading maps is not the same as walking the road. Always remember, you *also* have to clean up everything, practice fully-digested preceptual action, withdraw within, and meditate upon yourselves. Scriptural study is not a *substitute* for the rest of Zen training: it is a map for how to do it. Dōgen is very anxious that people do not make this

mistake either. If you try to appease your hunger with the painting of a rice cake—if you try to appease your longing for the Unborn by *only* reading the Scriptures—of course it won't happen. There has to be practice as well; it won't work otherwise. And, in that sense, if you are reading, studying, or teaching the Sutras in order to escape from doing the actual training, then you are wasting your time. It is a serious mistake, however, to consider the teaching in the Sutras incomplete or unable to lead us to enlightenment. In other words, it is dangerous to think that the road maps don't contain all the signposts, 'cause they do. Anyone who thinks that they don't, cannot Transmit the true Buddhist Way, says Dōgen.

*The saying, “A picture of a rice cake never satisfies hunger,” for instance, is like the saying in the Agama Scripture, “Refrain from all evil whatsoever, and uphold and practice all that is good.” And it is like Daikan Enō's (C. Ta-chien Hui-neng) saying, “What is It that has come about like this?” And it is like Tōzan Ryōkai's (C. Tung-shan Liang-chieh) saying, “I am always eager here in this place.” For the time being, you need to explore his statement in this manner through your training.*

Dōgen points out that such statements must be thoroughly explored through our training. It is our training that makes them come alive, for they are statements about the ultimate. The form of their words are different, but they all point to the same place. Do not make them into pretty sounding words which do not have any meaning. Do not do with such statements what I used to hear done in university

lectures. I have listened to the lectures, and the words whizzed by, and they have sounded wonderful, and I've come out of them and I've said, "What did I learn from that?" I'd learned that the man had a good vocabulary, but I don't think that I got very much else. This is what Dōgen is talking about here. Don't waste words; explore the Sutras and the teachings of the Ancestors thoroughly, *through your training*.



*...You need to realize that what is called 'a picture of a rice cake' includes the appearance of what is born of father and mother and the appearance of what had not yet been born of father and mother. At the very moment that a rice cake is actually made by using rice or wheat flour, without doubt, it is the moment when the reality of it manifests and the term for it is fulfilled. You must not explore through your training that a picture of a rice cake is as trifling as what we witness as the coming and going of some thing.*

Here is where Dōgen begins to question the traditional way of looking at "a picture of a rice cake," challenging us to explore beyond our assumptions that a mere picture of something is of little worth. When I look at you, what I actually see is not "you" but rather a picture of your physical aspects, your five skandhas, in my mind. And, if I am looking with unobstructed eyes, I also perceive an essence that is more than that. This essence existed before our fathers and mothers were born. This essence was always here; it is your innate Buddha Nature, and it goes beyond "me" and



“you.” And still, you are a “painting of a rice cake” when I look at you. Your physical elements are not inside of me when I look at you; instead, I see a painting of them upon my consciousness. And when I look with real eyes, I will see more than the painting. The same is true for how we perceive all things, including ourselves. If you look at the painting of a rice cake, you will see both a painting and that same Buddha Essence, if you look at it correctly. In the words of *Muchu Setsumu*, within your dream there will be both a dream and a vision.

*The ‘colors’ we use in ‘painting a rice cake’ will find their equivalents in the colors we use in painting a landscape. That is, in painting a landscape we use cerulean blue and earthen red pigments, and in painting a picture of a rice cake we use rice and wheat flour. Because it is thus, what was being used is alike for both projects and the planning is equivalent.*

*As a consequence, ‘a picture of a rice cake’ of which we are now speaking may refer to such things as a rice dumpling, a bean cake, a cake of tofu, a baked wheat cake, a fried rice cake—all which arise from a picture we have drawn in our minds. You need to recognize that they are such things as pictures, cakes, and thoughts and things. Therefore, the cakes that are appearing in the here and now are all together ‘pictures of rice cakes’. Should we seek for ‘a picture of a rice cake’ apart from this, ultimately we will never encounter it, for such has never been thought up....*

Don't get worried about what rice cakes look like. Do not think, "*This* is a rice cake, 'cause I can see its essence; that is *not* a rice cake, for I can't see its essence." Don't get into, "I like wheat cakes, but I don't like tofu cakes," because the next thought can easily be, "Wheat cakes have Buddha Nature; tofu cakes don't." And, if you get into the habit of that kind of thinking, it is easy for the next thought down the line to be, "This kind of person has Buddha Nature; that kind of person doesn't." You see, all you have to do is look wrong. You have already made one step wrong, and off you go: straight into delusion.

Since all things that are "appearing in the here and now" are "pictures of rice cakes," we must reconsider whether or not such pictures can be truly separate from the essence of these "rice cakes." No matter whether it's long, short, round, fat, or thin, it is rice cake! The picture upon your consciousness is what a rice cake *is* for you, whether the picture comes from the colors seen in your eye or the flavors tasted in your mouth. Do not look for a rice cake outside of "a painting of a rice cake," for you will never find it. Dōgen has taken us to a deeper level here, so do not look with ordinary eyes. And when you look beyond the ordinary and see the essence, where does that essence exist for you other than in your own being?

*In the phrase 'will never satisfy hunger', 'hunger' does not refer to something that is under the sway of the twenty-four hours of a day, and at the same time, when one encounters a picture of a rice cake, it is not some convenient thing, for even were we to sample a picture of a rice cake, ultimately it would fail to stop our hunger.*

He is now speaking of hunger in the spiritual sense. This sort of hunger occurs when we do not know our True Nature; then no painting can ever satisfy us. No external thing can ever be satisfactory. Nothing will stop this hunger. Only that which is within can give this satisfaction. Once we know our True Nature, we are no longer hungry. Then we are “beyond the Buddhas and Ancestors.” We are the ancestors of the Buddhas and Ancestors. We do not *need* to worry about enlightenment or non-enlightenment. We live within the vision, not the dream. But what is the vision?



*...When painting the Buddha, we not only make use of a clod of earth or mud, we also make use of His thirty-three auspicious characteristics, of a blade of grass, of innumerable kalpas of training and practice. Because depicting the Buddha in a scroll painting has always been like this, all Buddhas are depicted Buddhas and all depicted Buddhas are Buddhas. We need to investigate what a painted Buddha is and what a painted rice cake is. We need to thoroughly explore in detail and with the utmost effort, which is a black turtle of stone and which a monk's traveling staff of iron, which is a physical thing and which a mental thing. When we make such an effort, life and death, coming and going, are completely drawings of a picture and supreme enlightenment is, in a word, a drawing of a picture. In sum, neither the Dharma realms nor empty space is other than a drawing of a picture.*

Remember that poem at the end of the *Diamond Scripture*?

Thus shall ye think of all this fleeting world:  
 A star at dawn, a bubble in a stream;  
 A flash of lightning in a summer cloud,  
 A flickering lamp, a phantom, and a dream.

A rice cake, life and death, all things, Dharma realms, Buddhas, supreme enlightenment, empty space—all *this* is a picture that is painted within our whole being. So long as we dwell in a human body, it cannot be otherwise. And yet, do not doubt the vision. If you cannot see the vision in the picture, then you will never be satisfied. You will always be hungry, you will always be looking for more and better pictures instead of being content. And still, you should never force your non-attachment, or your contentment, upon others. When you live in the state where *everything*, even the vision, is “a drawing of a picture,” you are completely free. And, as Dōgen goes on to warn us, even when you walk completely free, delusion may still walk beside you, looking *very* nice.

*A Buddha of old once said in verse,  
 “When the Way is attained,  
 The white snow that has blanketed all in a  
 thousand layers departs  
 And, in making a painting of this,  
 Blue-tinged mountains on numerous scrolls  
 emerge.”*

*This is talk about the great realization. It is his way of expressing that his having done his utmost to practice the Way had come to full fruition. As a consequence, at the very moment of his having attained the Way, he has come to make a picture whereon he calls blue-tinged mountains and white snow ‘numerous scrolls’. Notwithstanding that, there is not a movement or a moment of stillness that is not his making a picture. Our efforts to do our utmost at the present time are simply obtained from our own pictures. The ten epithets and the three insights are ‘scroll paintings’. The five spiritual agents, the five spiritual powers, the seven characteristics of enlightenment, and the Noble Eightfold Path comprise ‘scroll paintings’. Were you to say that such pictures are not real, then all thoughts and things are unreal. If thoughts and things are not real, then the Buddha Dharma is unreal. If the Buddha Dharma is real, then it follows that a picture of a rice cake must be real....*

The Unborn covers the entire earth, and still, as I look around, I see the forms of individual monks. The green mountains are still and very clear. There is movement and there is stillness. One should be able to see all of these things, and see the differences in them, whether one looks at the picture that one sees everywhere, or whether one looks at the picture that is upon the wall. All of these things must be seen clearly. All *is* One, and all *is* different. All is a picture within our being, and that *is* our Truth. Do not despise the picture, for that is to despise your human life. Do not try to be God. Do not try to “jump beyond the Great Round Mirror.”

This is how to be “beyond the Buddhas and Ancestors,” how to “live beyond Buddha.” Fully accepting our humanity allows us to see Buddha everywhere, to see the essence of Buddha in all things, and to be able to be ourselves without being caught by delusion. This is to be in the same position as the Buddhas and Ancestors, for they were human beings too, *and* what they found out *was true*. Though everything is “a drawing of a picture,” says Dōgen, do not “say that such pictures are not real.” By looking at everyone and seeing what they are doing in the position they are in right now, by recognizing that those actions are the actions of Buddhas and Ancestors, by not putting judgments upon them because they are not doing what you *believe* Buddhas and Ancestors do, and by not forcing upon them even your non-attachment to what Buddhas and Ancestors do—this is to live beyond the Buddhas and Ancestors. It is “our effort to do our utmost at the present time,” and it is “simply obtained from our own pictures.”

Do you follow me? What Dōgen does in this portion of the chapter is revolutionary: he is taking the meaning of the story of Tokusan and the rice cake far beyond the usual one of “an intellectual understanding of the Truth does not satisfy our spiritual hunger.” He is pointing to a place where even our deepest understandings of the Truth, our “vision within a vision,” are a picture within our own being. And, he assures us that this does not mean that they are unreal for, in this sense, “a picture” is what Reality is for each of us.

But this does mean that there is *nothing* to hold onto, nothing to be attached to. This is no easy way to go, but I didn’t promise you a rose garden in the higher reaches of Buddhism. In fact, this is a very dangerous way to go, ’cause you can go off the rails awfully easily. It was once described

to me as like being on a railway line that is going around a mountain: round and round and round. And suddenly there's no more mountain; the rails simply go onward, and the train doesn't come off them, until it finds itself on another mountain. And still the rails go onward until it finds itself upon yet another mountain, and the train doesn't come off the tracks. And, of course, sometimes the train does come off. Watch out for Mara, for delusion. This is an extremely difficult way to train, *but it has to be found*. Obviously no master wants his or her monks to do anything that is contrary to the teachings of the Buddhas and Ancestors, because he wants them to know completely what is the best way. The master will advise them as best he may, but the master cannot stop them, nor will he stop them. In the end, they have to be able to live freely, knowing the best way, and making their own choice on the best way.

This is how to understand a painting of a rice cake. For one person, it will be one thing; for another, it will be something different, according to the understanding that each person has reached. Here we live beyond Buddhas and Ancestors, for there is no separation from them. In this place, neither Buddhas nor "demons of delusion" are any longer separate, for one sees their true essence. Be very careful with this; be incredibly careful with this. Mara can come up with some of the finest specious arguments under the sun with this, to invite you to misuse this in order to justify doing what you please. This is why we take the Triple Refuge. And, in the end, each must walk alone.

Know that Mara is the Buddha Nature, too: seeing if we are fit to truly be Buddha. In this place, even our delusion is not apart from the Unborn; even delusion can serve the Truth, for it is through our training within delusion that

Buddha Nature finds us and we have the opportunity to understand It. Mara is that which temporarily stands in the way. That which hinders (if we allow it to hinder) should be understood not as an opposition to the Unborn but as that which tries us in the fire to see if we are fit. We can only go the whole way completely, we can only be completely free, if we give completely freely. We have the innate ability to do this, and to be completely free in every sense of the word. So, watch out for Mara, do not despise Mara, shake hands with him (so to speak), and go on. Remember that so long as you are within this human form, ignorance and delusion will always be there, looking for an opportunity, but they are not your enemy. Always we are going on, always we are *becoming* Buddha.

Dōgen gives further examples of how to live in this place beyond Buddha. Then he concludes as follows.

*In sum, to be satisfied with being hungry, to be satisfied with not being hungry, not to satisfy one's hunger, and not to satisfy one's not being hungry—all these would be impossible and inexpressible were it not for a depiction of hunger. You need to explore through your training that the concrete here and now at this very moment is a picture of a rice cake. When you explore the fundamental point of this, you will begin to master through your body and mind the meritorious function of ever so slightly setting things in motion and being set in motion by things. Prior to this meritorious function manifesting itself before your very eyes, your ability to learn the Way has not yet manifested fully. When you make this meritorious*



*function fully manifest, it will be your fully manifesting your realization of what a picture is.*

To manifest this function is to make it happen, to live in this place. When we do this with any one person, with any one thing, the whole universe is enlightened. That is why Shakyamuni said, “I am, was, and will be enlightened with the entire universe.” That is to live beyond Buddhas and Ancestors. It comes from being free: free to make the mistakes that delusion presents to you, free to make the right decisions that the Scriptures and the Buddhas show to you. And always you are the person who has to make those decisions. At all times, all people are Buddhas, and must be seen as Buddhas.

According as those decisions are made by you, so will you appear in this world. As you appear, so will things happen. If a person appears as one thing, he or she will have a certain effect upon this world and will be responded to as that thing. If a person appears as another thing, he or she will have that effect and will be treated as that thing. A cat behaves as such and is treated as a cat, a dog as a dog—each makes its own decisions, and appears as it is, according to those decisions.

A picture of a rice cake is only a picture of a rice cake, *and* the essence of Buddha shows clearly within it, for it is a picture of a fine rice cake. So must you be. Within the painting, within the vision in the dream, be the finest rice cake you can be. Do so in each moment. Never cease doing the best you can. *And know that it is enough.*

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<sup>i</sup> Lord Mara (S). The personification of all temptations to evil and distractions from training. Some Buddhists consider Mara to be a spiritual entity which, unlike the Christian Devil, is not itself evil but serves to test the trainee. Other Buddhists use the term simply as a way of referring to all obstructing tendencies within a person.

# Appendix 1.

## Glossary

The entries listed below are reprinted [with some minor changes] by permission from the glossary which Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett provided in her first book, *Zen is Eternal Life* [ZEL], with the exception of the following which have been created or revised for this volume: dharma-kaya, gasshō, hossu, karma, ketchimyaku, kyosaku, manji, monjin, Mount Sumeru, nyoi, samadhi, Samantabhadra, and Transmission Silks. Letters in parenthesis following the glossary entry indicate the language of its origin: C—Chinese, J—Japanese, P—Pali, or S—Sanskrit.

**Acharya** (S). A master or teacher; a senior of five years standing.

**Anatta** (P). No separate self or soul.

**Anicca** (P). Impermanence. Transience.

**Arahant** (J). One who has cleansed his or her heart of all greed, hatred and ignorance and, knowing the Unborn, Undying, Uncreated and Unchanging in life, becomes completely at one with It in death.

**Avatamsaka Scripture** (S). The teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha during the three weeks immediately after His enlightenment while He was still in a deep state of meditation.

**Bodhisattva Vows**. (1) However innumerable beings are, I vow to save them; (2) However inexhaustible the passions are, I vow to transform them; (3) However limitless the Dharma is, I vow to understand it completely;

(4) However infinite the Buddha's Truth is, I vow to attain it.

**Dependent Origination**, *Paticca Samuppada* (P). One of the earliest Buddhist teachings which explains the law of causal relationships. It describes the wheel of becoming which consists of twelve steps or stages, each stage giving rise to the next:— (1) *Avijja*—ignorance; (2) *Sankhara*—volitional formations (pre-dispositions); (3) *Vinnana*—consciousness; (4) *Namarupa*—name and form; (5) *Salayatana*—sense organs; (6) *Phassa*—contact; (7) *Vedana*—feeling or emotion; (8) *Tanha*—craving; (9) *Upadana*—clinging or attachment; (10) *Bhava*—becoming; (11) *Jati*—birth; (12) *Jaramarana*—decay and death.

**Dharmakaya** (S). The *Dharmakaya* is the highest of the Three Bodies of the Buddha (*Trikaya*), representing the Absolute Truth. The other two Bodies are the *Sambhogakaya*, representing the reward of training (sometimes regarded as the Cosmic Buddha), and the *Nirmanakaya*, the physical *Shakyamuni Buddha* Who is seen in this world.

**Eiheiji** (J). *Eihei Temple*, one of the two head temples of the *Sōtō Zen Church*, founded in *Echizen* in *Fukui Prefecture* in 1244, by *Dōgen*. Its original name was *Daibutsuji*.

**Gasshō** (J). The Buddhist *mudra* which expresses gratitude and humility. It is made by placing the palms together, fingers pointed upward.

**Hara** (J). The triangular region of the front of the body formed from the base of the sternum and reaching down the sides of the rib cage to just below the navel.

**Hossu** (J). A sceptre in the shape of a fly-whisk or cascading fountain carried by a celebrant during ceremonies. It symbolizes compassion and the flowing of the Water of the Spirit.

**Jiisha** (J). A priest constantly with the Abbot, or constantly with a priest who is his senior: he is not a servant although he may help the Abbot in many ways. The post of jiisha is much sought after; this is because a jiisha is not only constantly with his teacher, thus having the advantage of constant teaching, but also since the future Abbot of a temple is frequently the former Abbot's jiisha—Makakashyo was jiisha to Shakyamuni Buddha; Ananda was second jiisha to Shakyamuni and first jiisha to Makakashyo.

**Kalpa** (S). An aeon.

**Kanzeon Bodhisattva** (J), Avalokitesvara (S), Kuan Yin (C). He who hears the cries of the world. Avalokitesvara is the Bodhisattva who exhibits Great Compassion and Mercy.

**Karma** (S). That which results from all positive or negative volitional action and which has future sensation as effect. The law of cause and effect in the ethical dimension; the third of the Five Laws of the Universe.

**Kenshō** (J). To see into one's own nature. The experience of enlightenment, satori (J).

**Kesa** (J). The Buddhist priest's robe.

**Ketchimyaku** (J). One of three silks copied and passed on from master to disciple at the time of Transmission in the Sōtō Zen tradition. This particular silk consists of a diagram showing how to follow "where the Precepts, as the Blood of the Buddhas, lead" (Liturgy, 34). A paper replica of this silk is given to newly-ordained lay

Buddhists during the Ten Precepts Retreat (Jukai). In the diagram an “empty circle” at the top represents the Unborn or Dharmakaya, from which a red line, representing the Precepts, flows down through the names of Shakyamuni, all the Ancestors, the ordaining Master, and the new disciple. The red line then returns to the top of the graph to flow back into the empty circle of the Unborn.

**Kōan** (J). A public case. A statement or story, used usually by a Rinzai Zen Master, as a teaching device.

**Kyosaku** (J). Awakening stick. A long, thin hardwood stick carried during meditation in some Zen temples which may be applied to the shoulders of trainees who are tense or drowsy.

**Maitreya Bodhisattva** (S). The Buddha who is to come. He is waiting, as a Bodhisattva, in the Tushita heaven. To realise one’s own Buddha Nature is to bring Maitreya here.

**Manji** (J). The ancient symbol of Indian Buddhism. In Sanskrit it is called “swastika.” This symbol of peace and ongoing training is frequently seen in the Far East, but rarely in the West because of the confusion which can occur with the swastika of Nazism. The Nazi swastika goes in the reverse direction from that usually seen in the manji.

**Manjushri Bodhisattva** (S). Manjusri personifies great wisdom (prajna).

**Monjin** (J). A type of respectful bow, made with hands in gasshō and the body bent at the waist.

**Mount Sumeru** (S). Mount Sumeru is the symbol for the Buddhist universe; all the worlds are located upon it.

- Nyoi** (J). A sceptre in the shape of a lotus carried by a celebrant during ceremonies. It symbolizes wisdom.
- Parinirvana** (S). Complete, all, round (pari) Nirvana. Parinirvana means complete and final extinction of greed, hate and delusion; rest, eternal meditation.
- Pratyekabuddha** (S). A general term referring to one who is enlightened as a result of his own efforts but does not share his understanding with others.
- Samadhi** (S). A state of deep or prolonged meditation.
- Samantabhadra Bodhisattva** (S). The Bodhisattva who embodies loving patience. Also known as “Full of Virtue.”
- Skandha** (S). A heap or aggregate. The psycho/physical existence of a human being is categorised into five aggregates. They are:– (1) form or matter; (2) sensations or feelings; (3) thoughts and perceptions; (4) mental activities or impulses; (5) consciousness. When the skandhas are viewed through ignorance, a false notion of a self is created.
- Sōjiji** (J). One of the two head temples of the Sōto Zen Church now located in Yokohama, Japan. It was originally a Shingon temple, established by Gyōgi (668–749), but was later given to Keizan in 1321. In 1898 it was moved from Ishikawa Prefecture to its present site. The Very Reverend Kohō Keidō Chisan Zenji, Rōshi P.T.N.H. Jiyu-Kennett’s teacher, was Chief Abbot of Sōjiji from 1957 until his death in 1967.
- Shravaka** (S). One who hears. A disciple. The term originally applied to those who heard the Buddha’s teaching and became Arahants.
- Three Vehicles**. (1) Hinayana, or small vehicle (also called Shravakayana), by means of which one becomes an

Arahant through the understanding of the Four Noble Truths. (2) Pratyekabuddha-yana by means of which one reaches understanding through one's own efforts but does not teach others. (3) Mahayana, or great vehicle, by means of which one becomes a Bodhisattva.

**Transmission Silks.** In Sōtō Zen these are the three certificates given to a full priest by his or her master at a private ceremony in which each recognizes the living Buddha Nature of the other. The first of these is the Ketchimyaku (see pp. 263–264 in this glossary) and in some lineages is regarded as a public document. The remaining two are private.

## Appendix 2.

### Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in quotation citations, reference notes, and footnotes in this volume:

**BW:** *Buddhist Writings on Meditation and Daily Practice: The Serene Reflection Meditation Tradition*, trans. Rev. Hubert Nearman, eds. Rev. Master P.T.N.H. Jiyu-Kennett and Rev. Daizui MacPhillamy, Mt. Shasta, Calif.: Shasta Abbey Press, 1994.

**BZ:** *Bankei Zen: Translations from the Record of Bankei*, trans. Peter Haskell, ed. Yoshito Hakeda, New York: Grove Weidenfield, 1984.

**Denk.:** *The Denkōroku or The Record of the Transmission of the Light*, Zen Master Keizan Jōkin, trans. Rev. Hubert Nearman, ed. Rev. Master P.T.N.H. Jiyu-Kennett, Mt. Shasta, Calif.: Shasta Abbey Press, 2001.

**DS:** *The Diamond Sutra and the Sutra of Hui Neng*, trans. A.F. Price and Wong Mou-lam, Boston: Shambhala, 1990.

**FL:** “The Five Laws of the Universe,” Rev. Master P.T.N.H. Jiyu-Kennett, in *An Introduction to the Tradition of Serene Reflection Meditation*, Mt. Shasta, Calif.: Shasta Abbey Press, 1997, pp. 25–31.

**HGLB:** *How to Grow a Lotus Blossom or How a Zen Buddhist Prepares for Death*, 2nd ed., Rev. Master P.T.N.H. Jiyu-Kennett, Mt. Shasta, Calif.: Shasta Abbey, 1993.



**JOBC:** *Journal of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives.*

**KJV:** King James Version of the Bible.

**Kyo.:** *Kyōjukaimon (Giving and Receiving the Teaching of the Precepts)*, Great Master Dōgen, ZEL (see below), pp. 211–214.

**LA:** *The Light of Asia*, Sir Edwin Arnold, Wheaton, Ill.: Theosophical Pub. House, 1969.

**Lank.:** *The Lankavatara Sutra*, trans. Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, Boulder: Prajna Press, 1978.

**LGC:** *The Litany of the Great Compassionate One*, Liturgy (below), pp. 78–79.

**Liturgy:** *The Liturgy of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives for the Laity*, 2nd ed., comp. P.T.N.H. Jiyu-Kennett, Mt. Shasta, Calif.: Shasta Abbey Press, 1990.

**LOBC:** *The Liturgy of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives*, comp. P.T.N.H. Jiyu-Kennett, Mt. Shasta, Calif.: Shasta Abbey Press, 1978.

**LRQS:** *The Lion's Roar of Queen Srimala: A Buddhist Scripture on the Tathagatagarbha Theory*, trans. Alex and Hideko Wayman, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1990; first pub. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1974.

**MEMS:** *The Most Excellent Mirror—Samādhi*, Liturgy (see above), pp. 61–65.

**MZB:** *Manual of Zen Buddhism*, D.T. Suzuki, New York: Grove, 1960.

**Nish.:** *Shōbōgenzō (The Eye and Treasury of the True Law)*, complete edition, Dōgen Zenji, trans. Kōsen Nishiyama, Tokyo: Nakayama Shobō, 1975.

**Plat.:** *The Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra (With the Commentary of Tripitaka Master Hua)*, 3rd ed., trans. Buddhist Text Translation Society, Burlingame, Calif.: Buddhist Text Trans. Soc., 2002.

**Precepts:** "Notes on the History of Our Tradition: I. Precepts," Rev. Daizui MacPhillamy, JOBC, 17:4 (Winter 2002), pp. 48–65.

**Record:** *The Record of Transmitting the Light: Zen Master Keizan's Denkōroku*, trans. Francis H. Cook, Los Angeles: Center Pub., 1991.

**SBN:** *The Scripture of Brahma's Net*, BW (see above), pp. 49–188.

**SGW:** *The Scripture of Great Wisdom*, Liturgy (see above), pp. 72–74.

**Shobo.:** *The Shōbōgenzō or The Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching*, Vol. 1, Great Master Dōgen, trans. Rev. Hubert Nearman, ed. Rev. Daizui MacPhillamy, Mt. Shasta, Calif.: Shasta Abbey, 1996.

**SRM:** *Serene Reflection Meditation*, 6th ed. rev., Rev. Master P.T.N.H. Jiyu-Kennett, Mt. Shasta, Calif.: Shasta Abbey, 1996.

**Sur.:** *The Surangama Sutra (Leng Yen Ching)*, trans. Lu Kuan Yu (Charles Luk), Bombay: B.I. Publ., 1978; first pub. by London: Hutchinson, 1966.

**SZ:** *Sōtō Zen*, Keido Chisan Kohō Zenji, Mt. Shasta, Calif.: Shasta Abbey Press, 2000.

**Tatha.:** “The Concept of the Tathagatagarbha in the *Srimaladevi Sutra (Sheng-man Ching)*,” Diana Paul, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 99.2 (1979), 191–201.

**TLS:** *The Threefold Lotus Sutra*, trans. Kato, et al., with rev. by Soothill, et al., New York: Weatherhill/Kosei, 1975.

**Trans.:** *Transmission of the Light (Denkōroku)*, trans. Thomas Cleary, San Francisco, North Point Press, 1990.

**Udana:** *Udana: Verses of Uplift* (chap. 8, sec. 3), *Early Buddhist Scriptures: A Selection*, trans. Edward J. Thomas, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1935, pp. 110–111.

**WWG:** *The Wild, White Goose*, 2nd ed., Rev. Rōshi P.T.N.H. Jiyu-Kennett, Mt. Shasta, Calif.: Shasta Abbey Press, 2002.

**ZBH:** *Zen Buddhism: A History*, Volume 2: Japan, Heinrich Dumoulin, trans. Heisig and Knitter, New York: Macmillan, 1990.

**ZD:** *Zen Dawn: Early Zen Texts from Tun Huang*, trans. J.C. Cleary, Boston: Shambhala, 1986.

**ZEL:** *Zen is Eternal Life*, 4th ed., Rōshi P.T.N.H. Jiyu-Kennett, Mt. Shasta, Calif.: Shasta Abbey Press, 1999.

**ZFZB:** *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*, comp. Paul Reps and Nyogen Senzaki, Boston: Tuttle, 1985.

**ZTHP:** *The Zen Teaching of Huang Po on the Transmission of the Mind*, trans. John Blofeld, New York: Grove, 1958.

# Appendix 3.

## Quotations

### Introduction

Page xxiii. “an unborn, an unbecome....” Udana

### Chapter 1

Page 3. “...existence, time, flow.” “*Ūji*,” ZEL, 198–205

Pages 4–5. “The white snows falls....” MEMS, 62

Page 5. “Preserve well for you now have....” MEMS, 62

Page 6. “Thus shall ye think....” DS, 53

Page 11. “Originally there is not a single thing....”  
Plat., 57

Page 12. “Be still, and know that I am God.” Psalm  
46:10, KJV

Page 29. “O Buddha, going, going....” SGW

### Chapter 2

Page 40. “of cats there are some kinds....” MEMS, 64

Page 44. “If life comes, it is life....” “*Shōji*: Life and  
Death,” ZEL, 197

Page 50. “Always He had the form and figure....”  
ZEL, 225

### Chapter 3

### Chapter 4

Page 63. “Thus shall ye think....” DS, 53

Page 66. “I am enlightened simultaneously....” Source  
unknown.

Page 74. “we live in the world as if in the sky.”  
Liturgy, 20

## **Chapter 5**

Page 87. “Many are called, but few are chosen.”  
Matthew 22:14, KJV

Page 89. “In the beginning the mallet...” LOBC, 460

Page 94. “Om to the One Who leaps beyond all fear.”  
LGC

Page 96. “evil is vanquished and good prevails.”  
*Shushōgi*, ZEL, 95

Page 97. “The wheel of the Dharma rolls constantly...” Kyo., 34

Page 100. “without fail evil is vanquished...” FL, 28;  
*Shushōgi*, ZEL, 95

## **Chapter 6**

Page 103. “the obstacles dissolve...” SGW, 74

Page 108. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God...”  
Matthew 6:33, KJV

Page 111. “Whenever these Precepts are truly  
accepted...” ZEL, 98

## **Chapter 7**

Page 127. “If you are going to sin...” Source  
unknown.

## **Chapter 8**

Page 134. “I am not God...” Source unknown.

## Chapter 9

Page 143. “Cease from evil; do only good; do good for others.” Kyo., 212–213

Page 152. “live in the world as if in the sky.” Liturgy, 20

## Chapter 10

Page 170. “the mind is hard and set...” [paraphrased from the Ordination Ceremony], LOBC, 508

Page 171. “an old tree grows on a cold rock in winter...” ZFZB, 24–25

## Chapter 11

Page 177. “...going, going, going on beyond...” SGW

Page 182. “foregoing self, the Universe grows ‘I.’”  
LA, 150

Page 186. “From these Precepts come forth...” ZEL,  
98–99

## Chapter 12

Page 195. “is no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind.”  
SGW

Page 199. “With wisdom does He darkness all dispel...”  
Liturgy, 50

Page 199. “Training *is* already enlightenment.”  
*Bendowa*, ZEL, 186

Page 201. “maketh his sun to rise on the evil...”  
Matthew 5:45, KJV

Page 202. “voice of Brahma, voice of oceans.”  
Liturgy, 51

### **Chapter 13**

Page 203. “the Truth that is realized by Buddha...”

Kyo.

Page 210. “void, unstained, and pure.” SGW

Page 211. “Buddha bows to Buddha and Buddha recognizes Buddha.” Liturgy, 43

Page 213. “The Treasure House will open naturally.”  
Liturgy, 100

Page 216. “I am poured out like water...” Psalms  
22:14, KJV

### **Chapter 14**

Page 232. “Gyatei, gyatei, hara gyatei, hara sō gyate,  
Bodhi, sowaka!” Liturgy, 35

Page 238. “live in the world as if in the sky.” Liturgy, 20

### **Chapter 15**

Page 241. “not a single thing,”...“no dust can alight.”  
Plat., 57

Page 248. “I am glad that I became a monk.” HGLB,  
171–172

Page 255. “jump beyond the Great Round Mirror.”  
Ancient Zen saying.

## Appendix 4.

### Reference Notes on “the Unborn” and “Buddha Nature”

The phrase “the Unborn” was used most extensively by Rinzai Zen Master Bankei in the 17th century (BZ, 17, 38, 53). In Sōtō Zen, Keizan Zenji uses “Unborn” and “unborn nature” in chapter 4 of *Denkōroku* (Denk., 20; Record, 37–38) and an equivalent, “Lord” or “Lord of the House,” in chapter 2 (Record, 31: see esp. 247, n. 12; Denk., 8). Dōgen Zenji uses similar terms in *Shōbōgenzō*, such as “One Mind” (“Bendōwa,” Shobo., 29), “absolute truth,” “*dharmakaya*,” and “Vairocana Buddha” (“Yuibutsu Yobutsu,” Nish., 680–682); and “Pure and Undeiled Dharma Body, Vairocana Buddha” (“Ango,” Nish., 499). Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett’s master, Keidō Chisan Kohō Zenji, employs “Original Buddha” and “the Absolute” in his introductory work, *Sōtō Zen* (SZ, 79, 100). Zen Master Huang Po (d. circa 850 C.E.) uses “the Absolute,” “Original Source,” and “permanent Reality” (ZTHP, 110–111). “The Unborn” or equivalent translations also appear in Mahayana Scriptures often cited in Sōtō Zen: “the Uncreate,” “Absolute Reality,” “Vairocana Buddha,” and “the Pure” in the *Surangama Sutra* (Sur., 228, 158, 202, 112); “the Undying” and “the Eternal” in the *Lankavatara Sutra* (Lank., 166).

“Buddha Nature” is used by Dōgen in “Genjo Kōan” (Shobo, 54; see also ZBH, 86) and “Busshō” (Nish., 9–29; ZBH, 79–87); he uses “true nature” in “Yuibutsu Yobutsu” (Nish., 683). In *Denkōroku* Keizan seems to prefer the term



“Original Nature” (Denk., 13, 125, 128, 199) or “True Self” (Denk., 13, 28, 31, 34), but “Buddha Nature” also appears (Denk. 46, 51, 171; and Record, 59, 152, 175, 181; see also Record, 258, n. 91). Other variants appearing in *Denkōroku* include: “ocean of Buddha nature” (Record, 76; Trans., 56); “true nature” and “original nature of Mind” (Record, 77, 113); and “inherent nature” and “uncreated fundamental nature” (Trans., 33). “Buddha Nature” also appears in the *Mahāparinirvāna Scripture*, quoted in both “Bodhidharma’s Treatise on Mind” (ZD, 83; BW, 358) and *The Sutra of Hui Neng* (DS, 77). The latter scripture also uses “essence of mind” as an equivalent of “Buddha Nature” throughout the sutra (DS, 67, 83, 91). Huang Po employs “original mind,” “Buddha-Nature,” and “real Nature” (ZTHP, 110–111).

## *About Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett\**

Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett was born in St. Leonards-on-Sea, near Hastings, Sussex, England on New Year's day, 1924. Baptized Peggy Teresa Nancy in the Church of England, she was the last child and only girl of a deeply unhappy marriage.

Her first encounters with Buddhism came from a copy of *The Light of Asia* in her father's library and a statue of the Buddha, relic of the Empire, that for some unknown reason sat on a mantelpiece in the assembly hall of her first school. This statue gave her solace in the midst of the sorrows of home and school. Even earlier as a very small girl, on seeing a person in monastic robes in the street, she told her mother that this was what she wanted to be when she grew up.

In 1939 came World War II and the death of her father in December of that year after a long illness. Although evacuated to a safer part of England, she did not escape the trauma of war: her home town was heavily bombed; stray bombs fell near her even after evacuation; Peggy's best friend was drowned, caught in the barbed wire that had been strung for defense along the coast, and the girl's father died trying to save her. The sound of the bombs and the sight of the red night sky—London aflame—stayed with Peggy Kennett all her life and were the impetus to her spiritual search: why did people do this to one another?

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\* The information about Rev. Master Jiyu has been adapted from the obituary for Rev. Master Jiyu, which appeared in the Winter 1996/Spring 1997 memorial issue of *The Journal of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives*.

These years also saw the beginnings of her professional career as a musician and her first encounters with Gregorian plain chant. This became a life-long interest and was put to excellent use in later years in the liturgy used by the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives, which she founded. During this time she also strengthened her connections with Buddhism. She received an excellent education in the basic teachings of the Theravada tradition, eventually taking the Refuges and Precepts from the Venerable Dr. Saddhatissa, a leading monk and scholar of that tradition who taught for many years in London, and earning a diploma in Buddhist doctrine from the Young Men's Buddhist Association of Sri Lanka.

In the years following the war, Peggy Kennett worked as a church organist wherever she could find employment. She also joined the Women's Royal Naval Reserve and worked for the Conservative Party as a youth representative. In 1954 she became a member of the London Buddhist Society, eventually becoming one of their lecturers and, in 1958, a member of the governing Council.

There being no money forthcoming from her family for her higher education, she put herself through university. She first studied at Trinity College of Music, London, where she was awarded a fellowship, and then went on to obtain the degree of Bachelor of Music from Durham University, specializing in organ and composition.

During her time at the London Buddhist Society, Peggy met and studied with the many Buddhist teachers who visited there, including D. T. Suzuki. In 1960 one of the Chief Abbots of the Sōtō Zen Church of Japan, the Very Rev. Keidō Chisan Kohō Zenji, visited London. He was on a tour of Western countries to investigate the possibilities of

spreading the Dharma and to look for suitable Westerners to train as his disciples. He met Peggy Kennett, as she helped organize his visit, and invited her to come to Japan to be his disciple. She said, "Yes!" and began to make preparations. She worked at various jobs teaching music at several schools to help raise money, but in the end had to borrow the last few pounds from a friend to afford the boat ticket.

Around this time, the Buddhist community in Malaysia, led by the Ven. Seck Kim Seng, had finally succeeded in obtaining authorization from the government for the first public celebration of the Buddha's Birth. In commemoration of this, the American monk Ven. Sumangalo wrote the words to the anthem "Welcome Joyous Wesak Day", and an international contest was held to find a composer to set it to music. The contest was won by Peggy Kennett, and the Malaysian Buddhist community asked her to stop in their country on her way to Japan to receive the award and to give public lectures on the Dharma.

In the fall of 1961, Peggy Kennett boarded a ship for the East by way of the Suez Canal and India. Arriving in Malaysia, she discovered that, due to misunderstandings, preparations had been made for her ordination there. Because there was intense and often hostile coverage of her situation by the non-Buddhist press, she agreed to be ordained in Malaysia, rather than in Japan as she had planned, and asked the Ven. Seck Kim Seng to be her ordination master. This was because she thought that a refusal to be ordained in Malaysia might be used by the press to bring Buddhism into disrepute. On January 21, 1962, she was given *Shramanera* ordination into the Chinese Buddhist Sangha and received the name *Sumitra* (True Friend). At her request, she also received the Bodhisattva

Precepts from Ven. Seck Sian Toh, assisted by other masters who were allowed out of China specifically for the ceremony. After several months in Malaysia studying with her ordination master, Rev. Sumitra travelled to Japan.

On April 14, 1962, she was received by Kohō Zenji as his personal disciple, and her ordination name was translated into Japanese as *Jiyu* (Compassionate Friend). At this time she also received the religious “family” name of *Hōun* (Dharma Cloud), the family name that her disciples bear to this day.

There was considerable controversy in Sōjiji, which was Kohō Zenji’s monastery and one of the two great training seminaries of the Japanese Sōtō Zen church, over his plans to train this foreign female disciple in what was to many minds a place for Japanese male trainees only. She asked him a number of times if she could go to one of the female monasteries, but he refused, knowing that unless she trained at Sōjiji and did everything that the men did, it could be said in the future that things had been made easy for her.

Finally, the way was cleared for her to formally enter Sōjiji as a novice trainee. Shortly before her entrance, the senior disciplinarian confronted her: what did she want? Many foreigners came to Japan seeking various things. Did she want to study calligraphy, flower arrangement, or perhaps tea ceremony? Rev. Jiyu looked him straight in the eye and said, “I want the perfection of Zen!” “So be it!” he replied, and from then on they understood each other. While he, and those like him, treated her with fairness and respect, many others did not, and she had to continually face discrimination for being both a foreigner and a woman. She took these tests of her sincerity positively, and her training soon bore fruit: after less than six months in the temple, she

experienced a first *kenshō*, a first understanding of Zen. This confirmed Kohō Zenji's confidence in her and, in May 1963, he gave her the Dharma Transmission and, in later years, certified her as a Dharma Heir and holder of his branch of the Sōtō Zen lineage from Shakyamuni Buddha through Bodhidharma, Hui Neng, Tendō Nyojō, Dōgen, Keizan, and Manzan.

Thereafter Rev. Master Jiyu, as was Kohō Zenji's wish, began to teach the many Westerners who came to Sōjiji by serving as his Foreign Guest Master, ordaining Western monks, and eventually having her own temple, Unpukuji, in Mie Prefecture. She promised Kohō Zenji that, no matter what, she would care for and protect his foreign disciples.

In the fall of 1965, in order to silence questions over the fitness of "this foreign woman" to inherit the Dharma, Kohō Zenji sent Rev. Master Jiyu to the highly respected Sōtō Zen master Sawaki Kōdō Rōshi, who confirmed her understanding.

After Kohō Zenji's death, and as a direct result of her promise to him, Rev. Master Jiyu left Japan with two Western disciples to accept invitations to visit the United States, Canada, and Great Britain. She arrived in San Francisco in November of 1969 and, although she made visits to England and Canada, decided to settle in the United States.

The next six years were spent simply doing her own training and trying to be of use to whoever came to her. Out of this emerged Shasta Abbey in Mt. Shasta, California, Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey near Hexham in northern England, and eventually the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives with branch temples and meditation groups in North

America and Europe. Many students came to her and stayed with her until her death; and many left, some perhaps because they did not understand what she was doing, and some perhaps because they did.

In 1976, worn out, ill, and having been told by her doctor that death was near, Rev. Master Jiyu went into retreat and experienced another kenshō, this time a massive spiritual opening accompanied by visions and recollections of past lives. Having been prepared for this by the teachings she had received in Malaysia and Japan,\* she knew what was taking place, but many of the people around her did not.

Her health recovered somewhat and she continued on, deepening her faith and practice in the basic tenets of Sōtō Zen and entering the most productive years of her religious life. Most of the lectures which form the basis of these two volumes were given by her between 1976 and 1990, when her health began to fail massively. The diabetes she had been diagnosed with soon after her arrival in America took a heavy toll on her body throughout the early nineties, eventually leaving her paralyzed from the waist down and nearly blind. Unable to continue giving public lectures, she nonetheless taught, working closely with her more senior disciples and providing a remarkable example of equanimity and all-acceptance in the face of ever-increasing disability. On November 6, 1996, Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett passed

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\* Such events are rare and not often discussed in the Zen tradition, but were well known to Zen masters of old. See, for example Bernard Faure, *Visions of Power* (Princeton University Press, 1996); and Revs. Daizui MacPhillamy, Zenshō Roberson, Kōten Benson, and Hubert Nearman, “Yume: Visionary Experience in the Lives of Great Masters Dōgen and Keizan” in *The Journal of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives*, Vol. 12, No. 2, (Summer 1997).

away quickly and peacefully. It was, as she had wanted, as if she had stepped out through a door: not an ending, nor even a new beginning, just a going on, going on, going on beyond.



## *About the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives*

The Order of Buddhist Contemplatives is a religious order practicing Serene Reflection Meditation (J. Sōtō Zen) as transmitted from The Very Reverend Keidō Chisan Kohō Zenji, Abbot of Dai Hon Zan Sōjiji in Yokohama, Japan, to Reverend Master P.T.N.H. Jiyu-Kennett. Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett returned to the West in 1969, establishing Shasta Abbey in 1970 and Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey in northern England in 1972. She founded the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives in 1978, serving as Head of the Order until her death in 1996. There are currently temples and meditation groups of the Order located in various places throughout Europe and North America. The daily practice of Buddhism which occurs at these temples and meditation groups uses Western forms and languages. The Order has male and female monks and lay ministers; women and men have equal status and train together. In our Order, the monastics are referred to as both monks and priests, and they follow the traditional Mahayana Buddhist monastic precepts, including being celibate and vegetarian. Lay ministers, who serve in a wide variety of roles, are householders who have long experience and deep commitment to the practice of this religious tradition. The Head of the Order is Rev. Master Haryo Young. The Order publishes *The Journal of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives* quarterly.

For more information about the Order, and the location of its temples and meditation groups, please visit our website: [www.obcon.org](http://www.obcon.org).