

DHARMA EYE



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News of Soto Zen Buddhism: Teachings and Practice

One Hundred Years of Teaching Activity in South America

By Rev. Koichi Miyoshi
 Director, Soto Zen Buddhism South America Office

It is an honor for us to mark this year as the Centennial Celebration of Soto Zen Buddhist teaching activities in South America. I feel this is truly a wonderful opportunity to express our gratitude for the virtue of the people who preceded us as well as a time to make an energetic step forward into the future. It is for these reasons that we will hold various memorial ceremonies from August 24th to 29th in Lima, Peru.

The country with the longest history of Japanese immigrants in South America is Peru. Many Japanese people came to Peru to work in the development of agriculture following the abolishment of slavery by the Europeans. It was in this connection that Rev. Taian Ueno traveled to Peru in 1903. Enduring many difficulties, he was the first of the pioneers who came to South America in order to teach Soto Zen Buddhism. In 1907, Rev. Ueno opened Jionji, the oldest Buddhist temple in South America. Following him, many other priests came to teach the Japanese immigrants and their descendants in Peru as well as to look after Jionji. For the Japanese immigrants, who faced great hardships, Buddhism provided great support as well as providing spiritual nourishment and a foundation upon which these people could build their everyday lives. Both the priests and the immigrants continued to endeavor in the midst of difficult and unaccustomed geographical conditions.

In 1908, the *Kasado* left Japan, a boat carrying the first immigrants to Brazil. Forty years later, the first Soto Zen priest, Rev. Chikan Yassugi, began teaching activities in that country. In the years following, the Soto Zen



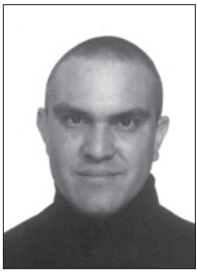
Buddhism South America Office was established in Sao Paulo. Presently, there are five Soto Zen temples in Brazil and one in Peru. Teaching activities are being carried out by teachers in these countries that are a lively expression of the true transmission of the Buddhas and Ancestors and which provide spiritual support in the lives of Japanese descendants.

In recent years, Zen groups have become active not only in Peru and Brazil, but also in Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia, Chile, and so forth. This indicates that many people who are not of Japanese descent have come to know about Zen Buddhism in general and Dogen Zenji and Keizan Zenji's teaching of shikantaza in particular. It seems that many types of people are seeking peace of mind through zazen and that there is a trend for more and more people to practice zazen.

It is on this occasion of the Centennial Celebrations of Soto Zen Buddhism teaching activities that I sincerely pray that all people will endeavor for happiness and prosperity and to seek the true peace that transcends nationality, race, age, customs, and language.

A History of Soto Zen Buddhism Teaching Activities in Peru

1899	Japanese immigrants arrive in Peru to do agricultural work. The first group of 790 people arrived on the <i>Sakuramaru</i> boat with a four-year contract. Due to the harsh geographical conditions, including no water in the desert and so forth, 79% of these people died while fighting unexpected illnesses and heavy labor.	1917	Rev. Ueno returned to Japan. Rev. Seppo Saito of Yamagata, Japan was sent to Peru and became the second head priest of Jionji.
June 16, 1903	Rev. Taian Ueno (aged 32 of Hyogo, Japan and founder of Jionji) was sent by the Soto Zen School with the order to teach among Japanese immigrants in Peru and to study the religion there.	February 1919	Rev. Doyu Oshio was sent to Peru and became the third head priest of Jionji.
June 20, 1903	Rev. Ueno left Kobe on the ship <i>Duke of Fife</i> .	April 5, 1919	Rev. Saito died at age 31.
July 29, 1903	The boat arrived in the port of Callao with 1178 people aboard, the second group of Japanese immigrants to Peru. Rev. Ueno was contracted to uphold discipline on the plantation at Tuman in the Lambayeque District, 790 km north of Lima.	1924	Jionji was moved to San Luis. The grave of Rev. Saito is still located here. (As part of the memorial celebrations this year, the grave will be moved to the Casa-blanca cemetery).
June 1905	All 134 Japanese working at the plantation at Tuman were dismissed. Rev. Ueno moved to the Santa Barbara plantation, 934 km south of Tuman.	1927	Rev. Oshio returned to Japan. Rev. Kenryu Sato of Akita, Japan was sent to be the fourth head priest of Jionji. He founded the <i>Jikokai</i> in Lima as a center for teaching activities.
1907	Amidst many difficulties, Rev. Ueno founded Buttokuzan Nanzenji (at its present site, it sits on a sandy beach facing the ocean).	1933	A memorial stupa for deceased Japanese immigrants was completed at Casablanca plantation by Rev. Sato and other people in the area who helped him.
1908	A school for Japanese language study was set up on land next to the temple. Rev. Ueno became the teacher and earnestly taught young boys and girls. He worked hard to be the center of the Japanese-Peruvian community, frantically work-ing to build up the foundation of their lives.	1935	Rev. Sato died at age 41. Rev. Shodo Nakao of Tottori, Japan was sent to be the fifth head priest of Jionji.
April 1908	The name of the temple was officially changed to Taiheizan Jionji.	1937	Rev. Nakao founded Nanbeizan Chuoji temple in Lima.
		1941	Rev. Nakao returned to Japan.
		1945-53	Mr. Chisaku Shinkai, who had read Pure Land Buddhist sutras, became the person responsible for Jionji and the place where funerals were performed.
		1961	Rev. Ryoko Kiyohiro, the sixth head priest of Jionji, was appointed to be the person to revive Jionji.
		1977	Jionji was moved and rebuilt at Caente thanks to money contributed by the Soto Zen School, industry, and the Japanese-Peruvian community.
		1992	Rev. Kiyohiro died.



Grupo Amigos del Budismo Zen in Lima, Peru

By Nestor Castilla

The rebirth of Zen in Peru took place in 1997 when the practice of Zazen began at a park in Lima. This was a response to those inquiring about the traditional Japanese Zen practice. At that time, people just gathered and sat not knowing the history of Zen in Peru or the importance of the first Soto Zen School mission to South America.

In time, a constant and persistent practice group called Amigos del Budismo Zen (Friends of Zen Buddhism) was formed. The main purpose of our group was to practice Zazen the best we could. Without spiritual guidance, at times our efforts seemed fruitless. Nevertheless, we learned to rely on each other for support, gradually gaining strength and through our own experience began to grasp the concepts of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

Mrs. Teresa Toro once said, "Practice, just practice and a Master will come." On October 2002 our group

literally stumbled upon Rev. Koichi Miyoshi, the Director for Soto Zen Buddhism in South America. Our first meeting was very emotional. Most of us had never had the experience of practicing Zazen with a Zen Master before. This contact with the Soto Zen School has encouraged us immensely. Our practice has been enriched by the directions and teachings of Rev. Miyoshi. Even a simple visit from Rev. Risai Furutani has been a source for understanding Zen.

The centennial celebrations of the first Soto Zen School mission to Peru and South America is not only a chance for us to truly take Soto Zen vows, but also a chance to consolidate and establish a formal Zen sangha. We believe that our efforts through the years has brought us to this point and that from now on, our practice will continue with the same enthusiasm we had when we did our first Zazen at the park.

Sandokai - The Harmony of Difference and Equality

By Rev. Sekkei Harada

Former Director, Soto Zen Buddhism Europe Office

Sandokai is a teaching that skillfully expounds "a transmission outside the teachings; not founded on words and phrases" in terms of the dualistic aspects of difference (not interacting) and equality (interacting). This is a teaching of one of the ancestors that is composed as a short poem consisting of 220 Chinese character in which it is clearly taught that the true nature of the Buddha-dharma is such that it is absolutely impossible to be biased toward either side, difference or equality.

Sandokai was written by Sekito Kisen Zenji, who was 35th in the lineage following Shakyamuni Buddha. He was the disciple of Seigen Gyoshi Zenji, who in turn was a disciple of Daikan Eno Zenji, the Sixth Patriarch following Great Master Bodhidharma, the First Patriarch of the Zen sect in China. It was through Sekito Kisen, Ungan Donjo, and Tozan Ryokai Zenjis that the mind (Buddha-mind) of the Great Sage of India was passed on and the Soto Zen

sect was born. If the Dharma of Seigen Gyoshi had not been transmitted to Sekito Kisen Zenji, then the Soto Zen sect would have ceased to exist. Presently, *Sandokai* is a sutra that is always chanted each morning as part of the sutra service in Japanese temples.

Sandokai, comprised of 220 Chinese characters, is a very concise sutra in which there are no wasted letters. It says everything there is to say about the source of Zen and the true meaning of the Buddha-dharma. Also, other sutras proceed to speak from the standpoint of the Dharma, but the special characteristic of *Sandokai* is that it expounds the teaching from both the standpoint of the Dharma as well as the self.

The character for "*san*" presents the separate nature (difference) of the myriad things in the universe. The character for "*do*" says that all things are the same

(equality) and “*kai*” has the meaning of fusion or harmony. These three features of difference, equality, and harmony are expressed in the poem:

Even though it separates
Into rain, hail, snow, and ice,
When it falls, it is
The same valley river water.

This is to say that the difference of all the myriad things (Dharma) as it is meets and merges together does so without anything be harmed whatever.

At the beginning of the sutra are the words “The mind of the Great Sage of India.” This refers to Shakyamuni Buddha. This “mind” is the Buddha-mind. It refers to the Buddha. It is easy for us to assume that this refers to an object that we worship and prostrate ourselves before, but this is something that is completely you yourself. Even if we are unsettled and agitated, the mind of the Great Sage is to dwell peacefully in each and every place.

“Intimately” in “is intimately transmitted from west to east” means “seamless,” that there is no separation. There is the Zen expression, “Each person is complete, each thing is perfect.” This is to say that the mind of Shakyamuni Buddha, the great sage of India is clearly and unmistakably you. “While human faculties may be sharp or dull, the Way has no Southern or Northern ancestors.” This means that this is something that anyone can do if you really do it. “Spiritual source” of “the spiritual source shines clear in the light” means that emptiness is the same as equality. If it is muddy, then muddy is fine. If it’s clear, then clear is fine as it is. This indicates the functioning of each and every moment.

“The branching streams flow in the darkness.” “Branching streams” refers to difference. “Flows on” is change in accordance with condition. In other words, it is the spiritual source. The source is one but it happens that it is divided into difference and equality. So, *Sandokai* refers to the merger of different things as they are. In this way “things” and “principles”, “darkness” and “light” are contrasted and taught in such a way that there is no bias toward one or the other.

However, it can be said that the life of *Sandokai* is “interacting” (equality) and “not interacting” (difference). Interacting means “mutual aid.” In the same way that if we look at the nature of our body, the six sense functions:

eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind clearly function independently, when we do not insert the ego and are truly one with not interacting. (Difference), then we are really free and able to function in a great manner. To say that there is no ego (self) means to be one with time and space without choosing. This is what is meant by “interacting” (equality). In other words, this says that equality is difference as it is, “interacting” is “not interacting” as it is. The concrete expression of this is zazen. The objective of zazen is to verify that interacting and not interacting are not two different things. In the Soto Zen sect, we say “Practice and realization are not two.” In a word, this is to let go of delusion arising from viewpoint and opinion and to “sit single-mindedly.”

“The four gross elements return to their natures just as a child turns to its mother.” As it says in this verse, all things, including ourselves, are comprised of the four basic elements: earth, water, fire, and air. It is only because of cause and condition that each of these elements is different. Hence there is difference, but there is no central substance. There is always change and nowhere is there a self or ego. “Thus for each and every thing, according to the roots, the leaves spread forth.” It is because of this that difference is the Dharma itself. A Buddha is one who proceeds practicing that Dharma. A Buddha is a person for whom the self has disappeared.

The world is presently in a chaotic condition, but nowhere is there a source of that chaos. For that reason, if each person does not, by means of Zen practice, live in accordance with the Dharma of the mind of the great sage of India as it is, it is perfectly possible that a powerful person will become oppressive or take away others’ freedom by shouting “Equality!” or “Democracy!” trying to unify people’s thoughts. It is here that there is a deep meaning in *Sandokai* and it is our great duty as Buddhists for us to convey and transmit this.





Preparing for the Master

By Karin Jinfu Connelly

Residents of Sonoma Mountain Zen Center in Santa Rosa, California began preparations for the arrival of Harada Sekkei Roshi months in advance. Working closely with the Soto Zen Buddhism International Center, we created a meeting place for practice between East and West, Japan and America.

As we prepared the rooms and washed the windows and created the schedule, there was a palpable feeling of excitement, knowing that our visitors from Japan, as well as several practitioners from around the country, would be joining us in sesshin.

For whom were we preparing? Many of us were unfamiliar with Rev. Harada, except for his titles as abbot of Hosshinji in Japan and General Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism Europe Office. He arrived with a small entourage and was greeted by Jakusho Kwong Roshi and residents with a brief ceremony in the zendo, followed by an informal lunch. Soon the rest of the sesshin participants joined us, totaling forty-five, which filled our simple zendo to its very corners. We created a silent

retreat over the course of four warm, sunny days in late May.

Although a person of high rank, Rev. Harada himself revealed only simplicity and clarity in his movements, his words, his occasional, complete smile. Through dokusan (private interview), teishos (dharma discourses), and spontaneous stories of monks from the past who seemed all too familiar, he spoke directly to the people around him. Gently, but decidedly pointing, he reminded us that this moment-a moment of delusion, pain, or anxiety-is at once perfect and complete, as it is.

Rev. Harada's visit was a reminder of the story of a monk who, while sitting alone each day, called out, "Master!"-to which he replied, "Yes, Master." Who is the master for whom we prepare? Every day, every moment, every thought, every action.

We express deep gratitude to Rev. Harada Sekkei for his time and wisdom, and give thanks for this place of practice.



Sesshin with Harada Roshi in Los Angeles

By Mark Bloodgood

Outside the zendo were the city sounds of a spring evening in Korea Town, Los Angeles. Inside all was quiet. Then, at exactly 7:00 pm, the zendo bell was struck breaking this silence. Five seconds later, a second strike. Another five seconds, a third strike. And then the zendo fell back into an energized silence.

Thus began May Sesshin at the Zen Center of Los Angeles Buddha Essence Temple (ZCLA) led by Harada Sekkei Roshi, visiting abbot from Hosshinji, a Zen temple located in Fukui Prefecture, Japan. This four-day sesshin was co-sponsored by the Soto Zen Buddhism International Center and ZCLA. Of course plans and preparations had been in the works for almost a year prior. And these plans

continued until just hours before sesshin began. Changes to our normal sesshin routine, kept even long time ZCLA members attentive and mindful.

Of particular note were the changes to our usual Oryoki routine. Normally at ZCLA we have these meals in a dining hall located in the Sangha house. For this sesshin, with so many participants involved, the decision had been made to have Oryoki in the Zendo. This had actually been the norm here during sesshin a number of years ago, but to many members, myself included, this was a new experience. It was indeed, not without its challenges, especially for our servers, but was a beautiful experience, reminiscent of Japanese monastic practices.

During Teisho, Harada Roshi spoke about *Sandokai, the Harmony of Difference and Equality*. We were encouraged not to try to understand or remember his words but instead to be one single-mindedly with our zazen. We were told to “listen to the teisho as if it has no relation to you.” (How difficult this is to do.) His comments were interspersed with wonderful Buddhist stories from the past giving examples of how our predecessors realized the Way - stories of Joshu, Dogen, Bodhidharma, Sekkyo, Tokusan and others.

At times Roshi would make informal comments to us as we sat in zazen. He spoke to all of us, whether our practice was following the breath (zuisokkan), koan work, or shikan-taza, whether we had been sitting for years or were brand new to this practice. There were encouraging words, urging us to keep practicing beyond sesshin, beyond the zendo, in all the activities of our lives. To sit zazen, become zazen and then forget zazen. To become one with the activity of the moment. There were admonishments about being attached to the ego-self and not “to put another head on top of the one you already have.”

Roshi offered many hours of Dokusan and most of us were able to interview with him twice or more. This was very interesting in that Daigaku was in the Dokusan room in order to translate. It was intimidating enough just to think about opening up to another teacher, a stranger, Japanese and a Zen master, no less. So, beforehand, I was

even more apprehensive about having another person in the room besides the two of us, that this would make things somehow less intimate and difficult. But this turned out to be unfounded and the communication with Roshi seemed seamless, open and alive. In fact, it was as if there was no language barrier at all and Roshi spoke to me, with kindness, gentleness and with an uncanny understanding of my practice and me. It was as if he'd known me for years. I was told, not unlike his instructions to the main group regarding zazen, to practice with my koan, to become this koan, then to let this koan go. It seemed to me that he was intrigued and encouraged with the seriousness and the “beginner’s mind” of the American students.

It was a challenging, rewarding and moving four days. The many hours of sitting were physically trying, even as a yoga practitioner. My service position of Jikido was stimulating and demanding and not without the anxiousness of potentially making mistakes. But it all worked. The Sangha, moving together as one, to support one another and to create this environment for our practice, the inspiration of Harada Roshi, all of this was magnificent to experience.

I live three hours north of Los Angeles. On that drive home from the Center, in the “after-glow” of sesshin, there was none of the usual listening to the radio or to CDs (compact discs), no singing out loud (as I am apt to do), and no endless thinking. There was just driving . . . only driving.



Reflections on the 2003 Dendokyoshi Kenshusho

THE SOUND OF THE FISH-HAN

By Rev. Tenkei Coppens
Zen River Vithuizen, The Netherlands

Zuioji Monastery is located on the northern coast of Shikoku. It lies against the lower slopes of a mountain range, overlooking a harbor town and the sea. Japan has often struck me as a highly charged meeting-point of new and old, and Zuioji provides a good example of that. Directly behind the temple there is a steep trail that makes one enter a timeless and mysterious forest with wild monkeys living high up in the trees. Walking down into the city one enters the modern world with the latest models of cars, sporting very boxy designs at the

moment, and passes shops from international chains. Within the Sodo and Hatto, buildings of wood and paper, the community of monks perform ancient ceremonies; outside, tourists send pictures back home over cell-phones.

Alive Zen practice seems to play itself out along the same lines. It needs both the back-bone of tradition and the fresh air of creativity. Finding the right balance between both sides has become a most vital matter for me. Since most of my training has taken place in the US under

a Western master, I thoroughly appreciated the unique chance to participate in the 2003 Dendokyoshi Kenshusho at Zuioji. During this month-long practice period, our group of six Westerners with similar back-ground was welcomed warmly into the fold of Japanese Zen. Besides an intimate experience of Sodo practice, we were offered an extensive program of lectures given by senior teachers, with short outings that included takuhatsu and a visit to hot-springs.

Making a bow, hopping onto the tan, sitting through morning zazen and hearing the temple bell, joining the kitchen crew and washing dishes, it is all a daily ritual that seems to be ingrained into the floors and walls of the temple. Aligning oneself with these activities means sharing the experience of generations of practitioners. It brought up great gratitude and a strong sense of interconnect-edness. I was particularly fascinated with how the big wooden fish-han that hangs in the Sodo was hit before oryoki meals. It just happened to be right in front of my seat. I felt that something very sacred was transmitted by the sound of these hits, as if their rhythmic sequence could easily reverberate throughout the ages. The monks of Zuioji created a wonderful atmosphere of harmony, and

the six of us became part of it.

Besides a deeper respect for the Japanese tradition, I also learned to see more clearly how creative the founding fathers of Western Zen really were, and what exactly they selected from their rich back-ground as the essence of practice. Working under very different circumstances with very different people, pioneers like Suzuki Roshi, Katagiri Roshi, Deshimaru Roshi and my dharma grand-father Maezumi Roshi had to be flexible to keep the dharma alive, while responding to the needs of the situation they encountered. What they initiated is still in its early stages and there are obviously growing pains. But they opened a door that connects tradition and experiment, and that is a priceless gift to all of us. Walking freely from one side to the other, we can learn to strike the right balance for contemporary practice.

When I call my American teacher Genpo Roshi in Salt Lake City, it is eight hours earlier there; when I call my Japanese dharma grand-uncle Kuroda Roshi in Tokyo, it is eight hours later for him. For me, living in Holland now is a balancing act in itself. Just as well I am really enjoying it.



Impressions of the 2003 Dendokyoshi Kenshusho

LIFE IN A JAPANESE ZEN MONASTERY

By Rev. Anne Seisen Saunders
Sweet Water Zendo, National City, CA, U.S.A.

I am writing this from Zuioji Monastery, located in Niihama City, Japan. Six Western Soto Zen teachers are here attending a conference as the guests of Soto Zen Headquarters in Japan. We are following the same practice schedule as the Zuioji monks, except that we are attending talks while the monks are doing work practice.

Most of my Zen training was done at Zen Center of Los Angeles and Zen Mountain Center with Hakuyu Maezumi Roshi. It is amazing for me to practice in a Soto Zen monastery in Japan and directly experience the roots of the practice that Maezumi Roshi introduced to the United States. At this point, I am doing “Bearing Witness” practice, simply being the experience, so I don’t have many impressions about Japanese monastic practice. I would, however, like to give you a little idea of what life is like in a

Japanese monastery.

I learned that Zuioji is considered one of the most traditional of the training centers here in Japan. In fact, I often feel like I’ve been transported back in time to medieval Japan. I am sharing a room with my Dharma sister Sensei Enkyo O’Hara from the Village Zendo in New York. We are the only women here, among over 40 practitioners.

The day starts at 3:30 am. Wakeup is actually later than 3:30, but Enkyo and I like to do morning yoga, which is not on the schedule. At 4:20, we sit one period of *zazen* for about an hour and then have a chanting service for about forty minutes. *Zazen* is held in the *sodo* (*zendo*) where the monks also sleep. (We Tokubetsu participants have our own housing.) There are no *zabutons*, so we sit with only a

zafu on *tatami*, which gets harder and harder as the sitting period advances. During the chanting services, we kneel (*seiza*) on *tatami* without a cushion. This is a real killer for my legs, which are slowly learning how to be a chair.

Breakfast is taken in the *sodo*, in *oriyoki* style (with formal eating bowls). The food here is incredibly good, especially for people like me who are carb addicts. Sometimes we have three potato dishes in one meal or both noodles and rice with a potato dish and tempura. There is a lot of fruit and more green vegetables than I expected. Sensei and I asked to have our portions cut in half (the young monks eat voraciously) and still I'm sure I will be a larger person in more ways than spiritually by the time I return home.

After breakfast, we spend half an hour cleaning our housing. Then there is a formal tea ceremony with the abbot and a reading from Dogen Zenji. The tea ceremony is quite elaborate and beautiful. Each person receives a sweet cake and cup of tea. The tea ceremony involves another thirty minutes in *seiza* on the *tatami*. We have one or two talks a day presented by speakers who have been brought in especially for us by the Soto school headquarters. The speakers are excellent and have helped us to put our experience in context, according to the teachings of the Soto school.

We are also learning some of the official duties in chanting services. The service hall is at least twenty times bigger than the small Buddha Hall back home, so it is a wonderful experience to participate on such a grand scale. I had no idea it was possible to chant as much as the monks of Zuioji do every day. We chant the *Shobogenzo*, the *Diamond Sutra*, the *Lotus Sutra*, and many other texts. The chanting is all in Japanese, and I often wish that I could understand better what we are chanting. During our work practice, we help set up lunch and dinner in a dining room off the kitchen. We have also spent some time weeding the *daikon* (white radish) patch. The monks who live here are very kind to us. They are concerned that we like the food, are warm enough, and don't get too tired. We are enjoying trying out our Japanese on them.

We have a bath every evening. Sensei and I are provided with a private bath. There is a talk or *zazen* in the evening and then bedtime at 9 pm.

The main impression that I have of Zuioji right now is how kind the abbot, senior teachers, and monks are to each other. There is a gentle caring that I was not expect-

ing in a traditional monastery. There is less *zazen* and more chanting than is usual in my experience of Western intensive practice. Still, I am experiencing the same kind of liberation and insight that comes from following a strictly regimented schedule.

A retreat like this brings up many questions. The tightly regulated schedule is a great opportunity for spiritual awakening, because we can see the ideas and judgments that mask our true nature. The question I have is how to balance our intensive Zen practice with practices of expanding and relaxing into the world. It seems to me that opening the heart/mind involves both restriction and expansion.

There are also the questions that we have in the West – about monastic and lay practice, monastic and engaged practice, interfaith practice, and so on. I feel very fortunate to have this opportunity to experience traditional practice. I am sure that reflection on my time at Zuioji will help to clarify many of these issues.

Footnote: After submitting this article we participated in the Rohatsu sesshin (intensive retreat) at Zuioji monastery. Rohatsu sesshin commemorates the enlightenment of the Buddha and is traditionally one of the most rigorous practice times for Zen Buddhists. I went into Rohatsu thinking “Thank goodness now we will get to do a lot of crossed legged *zazen* and get a break from all the *seiza*”. Half way into Rohatsu I was looking forward to *seiza*. The schedule intensified with wake-up at 2:30 am (to fit in yoga). We did *zazen* from 3:10 am to 9 pm in the evening. There was a half hour work time to clean our housing and an hour break after lunch. Otherwise we were sitting crossed legged for hour-long periods with a short time for walking in between. This was definitely the most intense time of *zazen* that I have ever experienced.

Spending this amount of time in an extremely tight container took me deeper into my personal wounds and barriers than I have ever experienced. I had a particularly intense experience of the way I separate myself from others through judgment and superiority. Living in such close contact with many people coupled with the power of *zazen* helped to expose even more deeply my issues of estrangement and separation. It is this false sense of separateness that keeps me from the experience of the Buddha, which is the fact of the oneness and interconnectedness of all things.

The practice was very difficult for this Westerner accustomed as I am to thirty minute *zazen* periods with three or

four hours a day of non-zazen time. I also kept waiting for the monks to start doing the harsh and mean things I thought happened in Japanese monasteries. At one point I was in such physical pain that I had completely left any semblance of zazen and was kind of curled up on my place—a little ball of misery. One of the young monks came up to me and tapped me on the shoulder. I thought, “This is it. This is where I get taken to a little room and beaten for hours since I can’t do zazen.” What he said was “Please come now. We’ve prepared your bath early today.” So off Enkyo and I went to have our hot bath and miss one hour of zazen.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to practice at Zuioji. I was especially touched by the kindness and openness of the monks and teachers who supported us. They completely opened their hearts and gave everything. I left with deeper insight into myself and a renewed appreciation for the roots of this wonderful practice that is seeding in the West.



Getting ready for takuhatsu at the Kenshusho

My Zazen Notebook (13)

Rev. Issho Fujita
Pioneer Valley Zendo

Fragmentary Thought XXII “Movement within Immovable Sitting (3)” Rhythms Emitted from the Cranial Sacrum System

Up until this point, I have discussed two among the many subtle body movements that take place in the immovable posture of zazen. In brief, the two I chose to write about are the pulsation of the whole body that accompanies the breath and the swaying motion of the body axis that supports upright sitting. To explain this more concretely, the former is a repetitive movement of expansion-contraction (like an amoeba) that originates in the *tanden* (the lower abdomen below the navel) and pulses throughout the whole body. The latter is a minute movement of the body axis (like the centrifugal movement of a spinning top) that moves forward and backward, left and right.

Both of these movements arise as a natural manifestation of the “aliveness” of zazen and are inevitable and spontaneous movements that we do not intend to cause. So these can be said to be “autonomous movements during zazen.” There are other such movements as well. For example, we could mention movement that originates from the pulse of the heart and the accompanying blood circulation. Speaking from my own experience, I can say that while sitting in zazen, it is possible to clearly feel the pulsation of the heart on the left side of my chest as well as in both hands of the cosmic mudra (*hokkai join*). At other times, I can feel the whole body pulsating with the rhythm of the heart pulse. This movement is much more minute than the two movements which I discussed in earlier chapters. And it cannot be perceived from outside the body. However, from within the immovable posture of zazen, it is possible to feel this essential life-supporting movement much more clearly than usual.

Everyone is aware of the movements of the breath as well as the heart pulse. With a little bit of attention, it is possible to easily observe these movements through the senses of sight and touch both in your own body as well as other people’s bodies. There is actually a third movement called the cranial sacral rhythm that undulates rhythmically throughout the body. It is not well known among most people. This is a very subtle movement and in order to feel

it, it is necessary to have an especially keen sense. This movement is originated from the deepest layers of the body (“brain and cerebrospinal cord system” that could be called the “core” of the body). I think this is a particularly interesting phenomenon when considered from the nature of human life. Of course, I also think that with regard to the study of *zazen*, this rhythmic movement will offer valuable material. Especially with regard to “movement within immovable sitting”, this is a phenomenon which must not be ignored. At this point, I am still nothing more than a novice when it comes to the theory of cranial sacral rhythm as well as the “bodywork” called cranial sacral therapy. But I would nevertheless like to write about this movement to the extent that I understand it.

I don’t know how well known cranial sacral therapy is at the present time in Japan. However, in America, it is a kind of bodywork that has been gradually attracting attention during the past ten or so years. The cranial sacral rhythm carries out the main role in this type of therapy. With this rhythm our skulls are subtly expanding and contracting and our skeletal systems are subtly turning in and out around the central axis of the body. Both of these movements are extremely minute, but after a certain degree of training, it is possible to feel them whenever the hands are placed on the surface of the body. By placing the palm on the body surface with a very light touch (said to be five grams), you wait quietly with a clear mind until it is possible to feel the rhythm. At the beginning, it is difficult to distinguish this rhythm from the breath or heart pulse rhythms. So, it is important not to be in a hurry and not to force yourself to feel the cranial sacral rhythm by adding your own intention to feel it. When a person is at rest, the breath movement per minute is between fourteen and twenty, for the heart pulse it is between sixty and eighty, and for the cranial sacral rhythm it is between six and twelve. Because the cranial sacral rhythm is very slow and it moves in a peculiar way, it gradually becomes easier to distinguish it from other rhythmic movements as a person becomes used to looking for it.

At the workshop for cranial sacral therapy that I participated in, we worked in pairs and practiced detecting our partner’s cranial sacral rhythm. In my case, it was really rather difficult to grasp this sensation by myself. So, the workshop leader put her hands on mine and moved them, following the cranial sacral rhythm movement of my partner in order to give me the feedback information. In this way, I was able to sense it to the extent that I thought, “Is this it?!” Continuing further by myself, I was able to

clearly sense the movement – “This is it!” I remember that when I first sensed this rhythm, which is totally different from the breath and pulse, with my own hand, I felt deeply connected with the “core” of my partner.

The cranial sacral rhythm is created by the flowing movement of fluid in the brain and cerebrospinal cord system. The brain and cerebrospinal cord are not in direct contact with the cranial or sacral bones and spine. In fact, they are wrapped in a bag-like membrane that is shaped like a tadpole. The inside and outside of this membrane is full of a clear liquid called the cerebrospinal fluid. This fluid is secreted from deep within the brain and flows down the backside of the cerebrospinal cord to the sacrum and then returns to the brain by flowing back up the front side of the cerebrospinal cord. When the pressure within the membrane caused by the secretion of the cerebrospinal cord reaches a fixed level, the secretion stops and the fluid within the membrane is absorbed outside and so the pressure falls. When it falls to a certain fixed level, the fluid is again secreted. In this way, the inner pressure rises and falls. (This cycle of secretion and absorption takes between five to eight seconds). This change in the pressure within the membrane is transmitted throughout the whole body: not only places close to the cerebrospinal cord such as the head, face and sacrum, but the cranial sacral rhythm also appears in the shoulders, ribs, buttocks, legs, arms, and so forth. The movements of the breath and pulse easily change as a result of the influence of mental tension or gross body movements. However, the cranial sacral rhythm is by comparison relatively much more settled and stable. In the deep recesses of our bodies, it ticks secretly, yet certainly the life rhythm of each individual person.

If there is stagnation or imbalance in the flow and rhythm of the cerebrospinal fluid, this will then bring about a bad effect on the brain and cerebrospinal cord system, resulting in various symptoms appearing in sense perceptions, body movements and the intellectual life of a person. In a word, cranial sacral therapy is a treatment in attempting to encourage the return to a normal condition of any stagnation or imbalance found in the cranial sacral rhythm. This is done through examinations made by hand of the flow of the cerebrospinal fluid and rhythm (width, intensity, speed, symmetry) by dissolving that imbalance through various techniques. The feeling I received from the cranial sacral therapy that I participated in was of deep relaxation and peace. I thought that perhaps this condition is what is referred to in the Yogacara (Consciousness-Only) School as *prasrabdhi* or “light -peace”, said to be one of the

ten general good functions of the mind that gives a sense of easiness and enables a person to do good. Previously, I had the sometimes had the sense of the way the body pulsates with the different rhythms of breath and pulse. Since I have become able to sense the cranial sacral rhythm with my hands, I can now sense this other body rhythm more often and more clearly. It seems to me that it is easier to feel it during the slight pause that separates the inhalation and exhalation of breath.

If through the benefits of cranial sacral therapy it would be possible to balance the smooth flow of cerebrospinal fluid and we could sit in a way that the cranial sacral rhythm was balanced symmetrically left and right, up and down, throughout the whole body, I think it would be much easier to put the sitting posture and breath in order. I think it is necessary for zazen practitioners to devise ways so that they can correct the body irregularities and difficulties and can create the balanced and harmonized body-mind for the better quality of zazen. It does seem that along with yoga and diet cranial sacral therapy would be of great use in this regard. Might it not be possible while sitting zazen to use cranial sacral therapy in such a way that we could monitor and correct the cranial sacral rhythm by touching our hands to the back of the head and coccyx or the shoulders and the knees? Conversely, might it not also be possible to bring about an improvement in the quality of cranial sacral rhythm by sitting zazen for a certain amount of time? In other words, there may be a definite aspect of cranial sacral therapy in zazen. It also seems possible to get a firmer hold on the various medical benefits of zazen that have been emphasized from long ago – such as improvement in energy, recovering balance in the autonomic nervous system, improving blood circulation, gaining courage and composure – by looking at these things from the standpoint of cranial sacral therapy.

I have come to think that zazen practice is primarily concerned with the core part of human existence (the brain and cerebrospinal cord system), beyond the surface layer of the mind (the neo-cortex). I have come to see the actual condition of this “core” in concrete terms since learning cranial sacral therapy and since knowing about the existence of the cranial sacral system that is moving rhythmically inside the membrane. Zazen, which is one spiritual practice, and cranial sacral therapy, which is one kind of body work – these may seem to be completely unrelated, but I feel that in fact an essential connection will be discovered at some deep place between the two. Can it not be said that this material is a must for furthering our

understanding of “physiology of zazen”?

I have discussed the pulsation of the whole body breathing, the swaying motion of the body axis, and cranial sacral motion in relation to the theme of “movement within immovable sitting.” Certainly, there are still other movements that must be considered. We can see that within the immovable posture called zazen, there exist many different kinds and qualities of movement. These different rhythms are played simultaneously within one whole body like a symphony. Isn’t this something that deserves our surprise?! What is the mutual relationship between these movements? Are they mutually independent? Or do they mutually affect each other? I will leave these questions for a future topic of investigation.

Finally, I would like to mention two points that require some caution. The first is that these movements are not restricted only to when we are sitting in zazen. In fact, as long as we are alive, these will exist wherever we are and at any time. Also, they are not created by us intentionally or by means of our personal effort. Rather, they are naturally and spontaneously manifested through the function of beyond-thought (*hishiryō*). Zazen is the purest posture of “losing, defeated, trusting, waiting” (the definition by Noguchi Mitsuzo of “faith” in the Japanese vernacular vis-à-vis the Chinese concept of it) in the regard to the work of Great Nature. It is simply for this reason that the forms and rhythms of these various spontaneous movements appear more purely and clearly in zazen.

The second point is that especially in the form of zazen called shikantaza, where a person expressly does not maintain a fixed concentration on any special object; we would not actively try to detect these movements by paying selective attention to them. It is only that during zazen our sensitivity is sharpened and so we notice those subtle spontaneous movements that always exist even though we usually don’t take notice of them because of our usual scattered mind. It would be all right to say, I think, that during zazen consciousness is thoroughly passive – “losing, defeated, trusting, waiting” – and that by some chance these movements are coming from somewhere over there and are picked up in the net of sensitivity. For this reason, the movements that I have mentioned so far are not objects for us to pursue during zazen. We should rather think that we are suddenly given notice to them as one of the sceneries of zazen.

The 28th Chapter of *Shobogenzo*: Bodhisatta-Shishobo The Bodhisattva's Four Embracing Actions

Lecture (3)

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Offering

Offering means not being greedy. Not to be greedy means not to covet. Not to covet commonly means not to flatter. Even if we rule the four continents, in order to offer teachings of the true Way, we must simply and unfailingly not be greedy. It is like offering treasures we are about to discard to those we do not know. We give flowers blooming on the distant mountains to the Tathagata and offer treasures accumulated in past lives to living beings. Whether our gifts are of the Dharma or of material objects, each gift is truly endowed with the virtue of offering, or dana. Even if this gift is not our personal possession, nothing hinders our practice of offering. No gift is too small, but our effort should be genuine.

Last time I discussed Dogen Zenji's definition of offering, or *dana*, as a practice of *paramita*. *Dana* is an offering made and received without greed. When we are truly free from the three poisonous minds of greed, anger/hatred, and ignorance, our activities of either giving or receiving are *dana*. If we act based on the three poisonous minds, even charity, an act of justice, or act of love can create twisted karma. *Dana* is a practice that allows us to be free from self-clinging based on the three poisonous minds. This practice benefits both giver and receiver, and the gift is also free from the three poisonous minds. Thus, our activities simply become one with the circulation of the myriad dharmas that are always coming and going within the Dharma world. We simply refrain from blocking such a circulation by ceasing to create a wall between ourselves and all others.

This is why Dogen says, "*Even if we rule the four continents, in order to offer teachings of the true Way we must simply and unfailingly not be greedy.*" The ideal king in Buddhism, *Chakravarti-rajā* (the Wheel Turning King with the golden wheel), governs the four continents located in the four directions around Mt. Sumeru. Everything in the world belongs to the king. If the king

wishes to give, he can give anything he wants. But Dogen said that "not being greedy" is the best and greatest offering to give as a teaching of the true Way. This Way is the Way of true Dharma, the Buddha Way or the Bodhisattva Way. Here the word "Way" also has a connotation of awakening or enlightenment inherited from the Chinese Buddhist use of *Dao* (Way) as a translation of the Sanskrit word *bodhi*. So, to give a gift to someone we love or to someone in need is, of course, a good thing. Yet such a gift does not necessarily help us to wake up to the reality of emptiness and impermanence but may rather strengthen our ego clinging and make us arrogant. In such a case the gift is not an offering of the true Way.

"*It is like offering treasures we are about to discard to those we do not know.*" Here Dogen Zenji shows us a concrete example of the kind of attitude we should maintain if we wish practice *dana* as a *paramita*. I hope this doesn't seem strange but I will offer here an example of this practice from my own life. When my family and I moved to Minneapolis from Japan, my daughter was five years old and my son was one-and-a-half years old. Since we could not bring lot of things from Japan, members of the sangha gave us many things as gifts. One of the sangha members gave us a rocking horse for our children. The rocking horse stayed in our home for ten years while our children became too big for riding it. During those ten years the horse experienced many difficulties as a result of the children's playing and two family moves. Some parts of it were broken, and when we moved from Minneapolis to Bloomington last year, we felt that it was not worth giving to someone else. So, we decided to put the rocking horse on the sidewalk in front of our apartment, and within 10 minutes someone had taken it. We did not need the horse and we did not think it was even worth giving away. We just put it on the sidewalk by a street in order to discard it. We had no attachment to it and we did not expect anything in return from the unknown person who took it. The person who took it did not know who put the horse on the street, and there was no need for the person to pay us or even say "thank you." Still, the rocking horse moved from one family to another and served other children.

It is not so difficult to offer with such an attitude of nonattachment and non-expectation in the case of a broken rocking horse or something we don't really need. But Dogen Zenji urges us not to offer only unimportant things with such an attitude. He says that all activities of offering, giving, or donation, whether of the Dharma or of material things, should be made in this way. If we closely

examine our minds, we see that when we make some offering we almost always find we have some expectation of return from the action. This expectation might be of a material return, some gratitude from the person who receives, a good reputation from other people, or a better image of oneself.

In light of this point, *takuhatsu* (Buddhist begging) is a very precious practice. The people who give donations to monks don't really know who they are or whether they are really sincere practitioners of Buddha's teachings. Although there are some fake monks practicing begging in Japan simply to make money, people on the street, many of them merchants who are making money to support themselves, make donations without making such judgments. They simply trust the monks' robes. When I practiced *takuhatsu*, my fellow monks and I felt people were giving to the Buddha rather than to us as individuals.

"We give flowers blooming on the distant mountains to the Tathagata." Those flowers blooming on the distant mountains are not ours. We have no sense of possession of those flowers. They grow by themselves and by blooming they decorate the mountains and make us feel good. The beauty of the flowers on the distant mountains is a generous gift from nature. Yet we don't cling to the flowers or their beauty. If we keep the same attitude towards the flowers inside our garden that have received a lot of our time and energy, our time and effort spent helping those flowers grow can be true *dana*. But it is very difficult to practice in this way. We usually want to enjoy the flowers we help to grow by ourselves, or we want to share our joy in them with only our loved ones.

When a woman asked Ryokan to give her a poem as a keepsake, he wrote this verse:

What have I to leave as a keepsake?
In spring, the cherry blossoms
In summer, the warbler's song
In autumn, the maple's crimson leaves.

There is another of Ryokan's poem about *takuhatsu*:

Clouds billow upward
skies are clear
I go out to beg
And receive heaven's gifts.

(Translations from *Great Fool* by Ryuichi Abe and Peter Haskel, University of Hawaii Press, 1996)

Ryokan was living truly without greed and therefore he was one with everything within the entire world. He had nothing to attach to and nothing to covet. He lived within the network of the offerings of heaven and earth. The flowers in the distant mountains are keepsakes of Ryokan and he offers them to those of us who appreciate his poems and his way of life. He received the gifts of heaven and earth, and his poems as well as his way of life are his gifts to us.

"...and offer treasures accumulated in past lives to living beings." Bodhisattvas arouse *bodhi-mind* to attain buddhahood and to save all living beings. They practice throughout many life times. Because of the power of their vows and the practices on which they base those vows, we can practice this life time. Our lives are the result of our efforts in past lives. Even if one doesn't believe the reincarnation of individuals, she knows that the air was created by primitive living beings, that soil is a mixture of sand and the residue of living beings, and that petroleum and coal are also gifts from living beings that lived billions of years ago. Languages we study and use in our cultures are gifts from people who previously lived in our societies. Various rich cultures are also legacies of people of the past. We cannot live without all these gifts from the first most primitive living beings on the earth, and if we awaken to this reality we cannot avoid trying to offer something to benefit other beings. *Dana* as a practice of paramita comes from such an awakening.

"Whether our gifts are of the Dharma or of material objects, each gift is truly endowed with the virtue of offering, or *dana*." Each and every thing in the universe is within the network of interdependent origination. Each being is connected with all other beings. Therefore by simply being as it is, each thing is participating in the network of offering. But for some reason human beings try to take only good things into "my" territory and make them "my" possession. We use all beings in nature as resources to satisfy our desires and make us happy. Even when we try to help others, our intention may have some subtle defilement created by some underlying self-centeredness. But even when we live in such an ego-centered way we are still one of the knots in Indra's net of interdependent origination. Awakening to interconnectedness and making efforts to live peacefully with other beings allow us to live in harmony with others. Such awakening allows us to take the bodhisattva vow, "Beings are numberless, we vow to free them." In order to free other beings we need to free ourselves, and the practice of *dana* (offering) is a practice that frees us and other beings

simultaneously.

In Buddhism, traditionally it is said that there are three kinds of offerings. The first is the offering of material things, the second is the offering of Dharma, and the third is the offering of fearlessness. Within the Buddhist sangha, laypeople usually offer material things to support the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, and the practice of offering to people in need has been encouraged in order to benefit society. The Buddha and monks offer Dharma in order to benefit peoples' practices and cultivate their spirituality. Also, Buddhists practice offering fearlessness by avoiding harming others and by taking good care of others with a compassionate heart.

"Even if this gift is not our personal possession, nothing hinders our practice of offering." In the very beginning of the Heart Sutra it says, "Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva when deeply practicing *prajna paramita*, clearly saw that all five aggregates are empty and thus relieved all suffering." *Dana paramita* is a practice of offering that is based on the insight or wisdom (*prajna*) that the five aggregates are empty. The five aggregates are form (*rupa*, or material), sensation, perception, formation and consciousness. These five aggregates are the elements of all beings. Avalokiteshvara saw that there is nothing that exists other than the five aggregates, and he also clearly saw that even those five aggregates are empty. "Empty" means there is no inherent nature that makes things fixed, substantial, or permanent. Things are only collections of the five aggregates that are coming and going, arising and perishing, and gathering and scattering. But the five aggregates themselves are also empty and have no self nature. When we see the reality of the emptiness of the five aggregates, that is (in the case of human beings), of our bodies and minds, we can be free from attachment to them. The body is composed of *rupa* and the other four elements constitute the functioning of our minds. Nothing exists other than the body and mind that are conditioned and always changing.

We suppose that there is something that does not change within or outside of our bodies and minds. Since I was born my physical condition has been always changing, and my mental condition is also always changing. But we assume there is something that is not changing and we call it identity. When I was a baby, my body was much smaller than it is now, and in my twenties, my body was much stronger. Now I am in the middle of my fifties and my body is losing strength. Some of the things I could once do easily are now difficult for me. Still, when I was a baby, when I was a teenager, when I was in my twenties, when I

was in my thirties, and when I was in my forties, Shohaku was always Shohaku, as he will be when I reach my seventies and my eighties. Although both my physical and mental conditions are changing, it seems there is something that continues without change as I age. In Buddhism this something that does not change is called *atman*, and the Buddha taught that there is no such thing. He said that the *atman* is merely a product of our minds, that is, a concept. If we see ourselves and all other beings thoroughly in light of this *prajna (wisdom) paramita*, we cannot say that there is an "I" that possess "this thing." We therefore cannot say that because "I" am the owner of "this thing", I have authority to give "it" to "that person." In reality there is no such thing called "I", "my possession", and "that person", but still we can make our offerings. In fact it is precisely because we possess nothing that things can be endowed with the virtue of offering.

"No gift is too small, but our effort should be genuine." The worldly value of things has no significance when we practice *dana*. Whether or not our intention to offer is sincerely for the benefit of others is most important. For example, Ryokan and his child playmates picked spring flowers such as violets and dandelions and placed them in his begging bowl. In the same way that Ryokan made this offering to the Buddhas of the past, present, and future, a baby's smile can sometimes be the most precious *dana*.

In his book "Awakening to Prayer" (ICS Publications, Washington DC, 1993), a Japanese Catholic priest, Father Ichiro Okumura, introduces a story he found in a newspaper about a four year-old-girl. The heading of the article, written by the little girl's aunt, was "*Kami sama, gomen-ne*"; "Dear God, pardon me."

One day my little four-year-old niece came to visit me. Since there were only boys in my family, the visit of this little girl was like a ray of sunshine, or the opening of a flower. The public gardens are nearby, so I brought her there, and when the time came to return home I took her by the hand and showed her how to cross the park, in which there is a small temple in honor of Jizo Bodhisattva, protector of children and the poor. My niece noticed it and led me there saying, "Let's go and pray." Since the door was closed, I thought we would pass by, but to my shame, the little girl opened it herself and began to pray fervently. I prayed too, and then asked her, "What did you say?" "I said, '*Kami sama*, pardon me; I have nothing to offer.'" I was deeply moved, since all I think of saying to the God or the Buddha is, "Give me this; do that..." Happily, I did not tell this child to ask Jizo

Bodhisattva to make her good, or other such things. If I had been that clumsy I would never have felt the purity of the innocent heart. I just squeezed her little hand.

(Translated by Theresa Kazue Hiraki and Albert Masaru Yamato, with minor changes)

Father Okumura comments on this story:

“Unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 18:3). A story like this should awaken the hearts of adults who no longer know the meaning of pure prayer. “Pardon me, I have nothing to offer.” As St. John of the Cross said, “This awareness of our nothingness (*nada*), of our poverty, at the very moment we come empty-handed before God who is all (*todo*), is possible only if we take time out for reflection during the day.”

Usually people bring some offerings to an enshrined Buddha or Bodhisattva of a temple and pray for their wishes to be fulfilled. Such an offering is a kind of trade or “give-and-take” offering. The person offering says, “I give offerings to the Buddha and then the Buddha will give me something I want in return”. But the girl in this story had nothing to offer and she just apologized instead of asking God to give her something she wanted. The little girl’s prayer was her precious offering to her aunt and all other people who read this story. Father Okumura interprets her prayer as expressing her awareness of the nothingness of the self before God.

This is the same spirit of Ryokan’s offering to the Buddhas of wildflowers in his begging bowl. He and the children had nothing to offer except those wildflowers that were not theirs. Ryokan’s empty begging bowl that was made to receive offerings from other people became a bowl for him to make an offering to the Buddhas.

When the Way is entrusted to the Way, we attain the Way. When we attain the Way, the Way unfailingly continues to be entrusted to the Way. When material things are treasured, these treasures actually become dana. We offer ourselves to ourselves, and we offer others to others. The karma of giving pervades the heavens above and our human world alike. It even reaches the realm of those sages who have attained the fruits of realization. Whether we give or receive, we connect ourselves with all beings throughout the world.

“When the Way is entrusted to the Way, we attain the Way. When we attain the Way, the Way unfailingly continues to be entrusted to the Way.” I think this is the same thing

that Dogen said in the *Genjokoan*; “Conveying oneself toward all things to carry out practice/enlightenment is delusion. All things coming and carrying out practice/enlightenment through the self is realization.” When the Way is entrusted to the Way, the person refrains from making judgments and controlling all things according to his personal view and system of values. This is what we do in our *zazen* by letting go of thought, or to use Uchiyama Roshi’s expression, by “opening the hand of thought.” When we try not to deal with all things based on our personal views and desires, the reality of all things as they are is made manifest. This is the same as the four-year-old girl saying, “I am sorry I have nothing to offer.” When we practice with an empty hand, the Way manifests itself. This is what Dogen meant when he said, “we attain the Way.” But actually when the Way is attained, we hold nothing. We simply continue to entrust all things, including ourselves, to the Way. In this sense, Ryokan’s practice of offering, the little girl’s prayer, Dogen Zenji’s *zazen*, and John of the Cross’s awareness of the nothingness of the self, are all the same thing. Only with an awareness of the reality that we have nothing to offer, or even more radically, that there is nothing to grasp as “me”, can we practice *dana*, or offering, as a *paramita*.

“When material things are treasured, these treasures actually become Dana.” A more literal translation of this sentence is, “When material treasures are entrusted to the material treasures, the material treasures without fail become *dana*.” As is so with the Way that is awakening or enlightenment, when material things are entrusted to themselves, that is, when we do not deal with them with our personal and selfish views and desires, all things become *dana*. Air as it is an offering. Water as it is an offering. Trees’ being as they are is an offering. Flowers’ being as they are is an offering. Butterflies’ being as they are is an offering.

Ryokan expresses this truth, I think, in another poem about begging:

With no mind, the flower invites the butterfly.
With no mind, the butterfly visits the flower.
When the flower opens, the butterfly visits.
When the butterfly visits, the flower opens.
I also don’t know him.

And also he does not know me.

Without knowing we follow the principle of the Emperor [of the Heaven].

When we don’t deal with things according to our

personal desires and try not to use things only for fulfilling these desires, all things appear as they are. Otherwise, we only see the image created in our minds by our own conditioned thoughts and desires. That realm of letting go of thoughts and desires is the common ground of interdependent origination in which all things are sustaining each other. Simply being a knot in the network of interdependence is already an offering.

We offer ourselves to ourselves, and we offer others to others. This means we entrust ourselves to ourselves and entrust others to others. We refrain even from controlling ourselves as well as others. This is what we do in our zazen. In zazen, the self settles down within the self and others become as they are. This is much different from our usual way of seeing ourselves with greed and anger or hatred. Zazen allows us to give up our usual struggle between whom we are and who we want to be, and it frees us from our expectations of how others should behave.

The karma of giving pervades the heavens above and our human world alike. It even reaches the realm of those sages who have attained the fruits of realization. Whether we give or receive, we connect ourselves with all beings throughout the world.

“The karma of giving” is a translation of *in-nen-riki*, or *dana*. “In” is cause and “en” is conditions. “Riki” is power. So *in-nen-riki* literally means “the power of causes and conditions.” “Causes and conditions” in this case is one of the “ten suchnesses” mentioned in the second chapter of the Lotus Sutra. The ten suchnesses are: (1) the suchness of form, (2) the suchness of nature, (3) the suchness of body, (4) the suchness of power, (5) the suchness of function, (6) the suchness of primary cause, (7) the suchness of secondary cause (conditions), (8) the suchness of effect, (9) the suchness of recompense, and (10) the suchness of the complete fundamental whole. Each and every thing is endowed with these ten suchnesses. My understanding is that the first five suchnesses comprise the uniqueness of each thing. The next four show us that each and every thing occurs and exists within relationship to everything else in both time and space. The suchness of primary cause (6) and the suchness of effect (8) are relationships within time. Cause (6) is a relationship with the past. Effect or result (8) is a relationship with the future. For example, a flower has a relationship in the past with its “parent’s” seed as the flower’s “cause”, and its own fruits or seeds give it a relationship in the future with the next generation of flowers. The suchness of secondary cause (7) and the suchness of recompense (9) are relationships within space

at the present time. Flowers can bloom because of numberless conditions that sustain it such as moisture, sunlight, and insects like butterflies and bees. The recompense or secondary result (9) in this illustration may be, for example, that the flower gives butterflies or bees nectar and brings joy to human beings. Finally, the suchness of the complete fundamental whole (10) expresses the truth that all of the previous nine elements in this list are actually one unified whole rather than nine independent items. Thus, each and every thing is connected with everything else within time and space and within a network of causes and conditions.

The lotus Sutra does not discuss the ten suchnesses in order to teach principles of nature, but rather it aims to teach us the principles of bodhisattva practice. Each and every action we perform as a practice of the bodhisattva vows is connected to everything in the past, present and future. Therefore, even our small offerings given with sincere hearts have a connection with all beings in all the six realms, including heaven realms, human realms, and the realms of all sages such as buddhas and bodhisattvas. Each and every action, no matter how small, resonates with all beings in the past, present and future. This is what Dogen means when he says, “Whether we give or receive, we connect ourselves with all beings throughout the world.” When either giving or receiving, by letting go of egocentricity and *being* giving or receiving, we go beyond the separation of self and all other beings. We then actively participate in the network of interdependent origination.



A gate at Eihei-ji

Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma
Shobogenzo
Book 13
Ocean Seal Samadhi
Kaiin zanmai

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Introduction.

This fascicle of the *Shôbôgenzô* was composed at Dôgen's Kôshô monastery, on the outskirts of the capital of Heian (present-day Kyoto), in 1242, a year perhaps the most productive in its author's career.

The work takes its name from a state of concentration, known in Sanskrit sources as the *sâgara-mudrâ-samadhi*. In this state, likened to an ocean on which appear images of the forms of all beings, it is said that the bodhisattva can see the mental activities of all beings or, more generally, can discern all phenomena (dharmas) in detail. The samadhi is often, though not exclusively, associated with the tradition of the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, which is said to have been taught while the Buddha was absorbed in this state.

Dôgen's piece represents a commentary on two texts. The first, which occupies him for some two thirds of his work, is a passage from the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, with a comment by the famous Tang-dynasty Zen master Mazu. The sutra tells how the bodhisattva should regard his body as merely the combination of dharmas arising and ceasing. In his comment, Mazu says that in fact the dharmas occur in each moment without relation to each other, a condition he identifies as the ocean seal samadhi. The second text is a teaching on the ocean by Tang figure, Caoshan, one of the founding ancestors of Dôgen's Sôtô lineage.

Dôgen's commentary takes up almost every word in these texts, playing with their interpretation and glossing them with cryptic allusions to the sayings and poems of the Zen masters. In the process, as is often the case in his writings, he seeks at once to lift the language of his texts to a more mysterious metaphysical plane and to ground the metaphysics in the spiritual practice of the buddhas and ancestors of his tradition. At times, the effort seems a bit

strained, and it is probably fair to say that the *Ocean Seal Samadhi* may not show us its author quite at his best; still, a test of these waters will give the reader a good taste of Dôgen's idiosyncratic approach to reading his sources.

The following English version, like all the translations of the Soto Zen Text Project, seeks to retain as much as possible of the syntax and diction of the original, even at the expense of readability. In keeping with the format of this publication, I have tried to keep the annotation to a minimum; additional notes will eventually become available on the SZTP web site, at <http://scbs.stanford.edu/sztp3>. Other English versions of this work can be found at Kôsen Nishiyama and John Stevens, *Shôbôgenzô*, volume 1 (1975); Hee-jin Kim, *Flowers of Emptiness* (1985) (partial); Thomas Cleary, *Shôbôgenzô* (1986); Yokoi Yuho, *The Shobo-genzo* (1986); and Gudo Nishijima and Chodo Cross, *Master's Dogen's Shobogenzo*, Book 2 (1996).

The text translated here is from the edition in Kawamura Kôdô, *Dôgen zenji zenshu*, volume 1, pp. 119-126. I should like to express my appreciation to Michael Radich, of Harvard University, for his invaluable contributions to the research and translation.

Translation

To be the buddhas and ancestors is always the ocean seal samadhi. As they swim in this samadhi, they have a time to teach, a time to verify, a time to practice. Their virtue of walking on the ocean goes to its bottom: they walk on the ocean as "walking the floor of the deepest ocean." To seek to cause the currents of birth and death to return the source is not "what are you thinking?" While previous "passing through the barriers and breaking down the sections" may be the faces of the buddhas and ancestors, they are rivers returning to the source of the ocean seal samadhi.¹

The Buddha said, "It is just the dharmas that combine to form this body. When it arises, it is simply the dharmas arising; when it ceases, it is simply the dharmas ceasing. When these dharmas arise, [the bodhisattva] does not state, 'I arise'; when these dharmas cease, he does not state, 'I cease'." "In prior thought moments and subsequent thought moments, the moments do not relate to each other; in prior dharmas and subsequent dharmas, the dharmas do not oppose each other. This is called the the ocean seal samadhi."²

We should work for a while at studying this saying of the Buddha. Attaining the way and entering verification do not necessarily depend on much hearing and many words. Those with the broad learning of much hearing will go on to attain the way through four phrases; those with the universal learning equal to the sands of the Ganges, will eventually verify their entrance through a *gāthā* of a single phrase. Much more [is this the case with] the present words, which do not seek original enlightenment on the path ahead and do not pick up initial enlightenment within verification. It may be a virtue of the buddhas and ancestors that they cause the occurrence of original [and initial] enlightenment, but it is not the case that the enlightenments of initial enlightenment, inherent enlightenment, and so on, are taken as the buddhas and patriarchs.³

The Buddha said, “It is just the dharmas that combine to form this body. When it arises, it is simply the dharmas arising; when it ceases, it is simply the dharmas ceasing. When these dharmas arise, [the bodhisattva] does not state, ‘I arise’; when these dharmas cease, he does not state, ‘I cease’.” “In prior thought moments and subsequent thought moments, the moments do not relate to each other; in prior dharmas and subsequent dharmas, the dharmas do not oppose each other. This is called the the ocean seal samadhi.”⁴

The moment of the ocean seal samadhi is the moment of “just the dharmas,” the saying of “just the dharmas.” This time is called “combine to form this body.” The single combined mark that has combined to form the dharmas is this body. This does not mean that this body is taken as a single combined mark. The dharmas combine to form it. It says [in short] that this body is [the activity expressed by the phrase] “combine to form this body.”

“When it arises, it is simply the dharmas arising.” This “dharmas arising” never leaves behind arising. Therefore, arising is not awareness, not cognition. This is called “he does not state, ‘I arise’.” In not stating that “I arise,” it does not mean that someone else sees, hears, senses, and knows these dharmas arising or discriminates them in thinking. When there’s a further encounter beyond this, one loses the advantage of the encounter.⁵

“Arising” is always “when the moment comes,” for time is arising. What is arising? It should be “arisen!” Since this is arising as time, it does not fail to expose the “skin, flesh,

bones, and marrow.” Because arising is the arising of “combine to form,” arising is this body; arising is “I arise”; it is just the dharmas. It is not simply hearing and seeing sounds and forms. It is the dharmas that are “I arise”; it is the “I arise” that is “he does not state.” “He does not state” is not saying anything, for a saying is not a statement. “When they arise” is these dharmas; it is not the twelve times. These dharmas are “when they arise”; they are not the profuse arisings of the three realms.⁶

An old buddha said, “Suddenly, a fire arose.” “A fire arose” is expressing the fact that this “arising” is not dependent on anything.⁷

An old buddha said, “When arising and ceasing don’t stop, what’s it like?”⁸

Thus, “arising and ceasing” “don’t stop” as “I arise” as I, “I cease” as I. We should let it be and pursue this saying “don’t stop.” It cuts off or continues “when arising and ceasing don’t stop” as the vital artery of the buddhas and ancestors. “When arising and ceasing don’t stop” is “who’s arising and ceasing?” “Who’s arising and ceasing” is “those who can attain deliverance through this body”; it is “manifesting this body”; it is “preaching the dharma for them.” It is “the past mind cannot be got”; it is “you’ve got my marrow”; it is “you’ve got my bones.” For it is “who’s arising and ceasing?”⁹

“When these dharmas cease, he does not state, ‘I cease’.” The time when “he does not state, ‘I cease’” is precisely when the dharmas cease. “Ceasing” is the ceasing of the dharmas; though it is ceasing, it must be dharmas. Because it is dharmas, it is not the adventitious defilements. Because it is not the adventitious defilements, it is undefiled. Just this undefilement is the buddhas and patriarchs. It is called “you’re also like this.” Who is not “you”? Prior thought moments and subsequent thought moments are all “you.” It is called “I’m also like this.” Who is not “I”? For prior thought moments and subsequent thought moments are all “I.”¹⁰ This “ceasing” is adorned with many “hands and eyes”: it is “the unsurpassed great nirvana”; it is “call it death”; it is “take it as annihilation”; it is “treat it as a dwelling place.” The “so many arms and eyes” such as these are in any case the virtues of ceasing. The “not stating” at the moment when ceasing is “I” and the “not stating” at the moment when arising is “I” have the same birth of “not stating,” but they are not the “not stating” of the same death.¹¹

["Ceasing"] is the ceasing of the prior dharmas; it is the ceasing of the subsequent dharmas. It is the prior thought moment of the dharmas; it is the subsequent thought moment of the dharmas. It is the prior and subsequent dharmas that constitute the dharmas; it is the prior and subsequent thought moments that constitute the dharmas. Their "not relating" constitutes the dharmas; their "not opposing" is the dharmas constituted. To make them "not opposed," to make them "not related," is a saying "eight or nine tenths complete." There is a taking up, there is a taking in, that takes as "hands and eyes" the four great [elements] and five aggregates of ceasing; there is an advance, there is an encounter, that takes as its course the four great [elements] and five aggregates of ceasing. At this time, "hands and eyes throughout the body" are not enough; "hands and eyes as the entire body" are not enough. Ceasing is the virtue of the buddhas and ancestors.¹²

That now we have the words, "they are not opposed," that we have the words, "they are not related," means that we should realize that arising is arising in beginning, middle, and end; it is "officially, you can't insert a needle; privately, you could drive a horse and cart and through it." In beginning, middle, and end, [arising] is not related to, is not opposed to, ceasing. Though there is the sudden arising of dharmas where there had previously been ceasing, this is not the arising of ceasing; it is the arising of dharmas. Because it is the arising of dharmas, it is not marked by opposition or relation. Nor are ceasing and ceasing in relation or opposition to each other. Ceasing is ceasing at beginning, middle, and end. This is [a case of] "in meeting, he doesn't bring it out; but if you raise the point, he knows it's there." Though ceasing occurs suddenly where there had previously been arising, this is not the ceasing of arising; it is the ceasing of the dharmas. Because it is the ceasing of the dharmas, it is not opposed or related. Whether it be the "this is" of ceasing or the "this is" of arising, it is just the ocean seal samadhi called "the dharmas." The practice and verification of "this is" is not non-existent; it is just this undefilement called the ocean seal samadhi.¹³

Samadhi is a presence, a saying; it is "the night" when "the hand gropes for the pillow behind." The groping for a pillow of "the hand groping for the pillow behind" in the night like this is not merely "hundreds of millions of tens of thousands of kalpas"; it is "in the ocean, I always preached only the *Lotus Sutra of the Wondrous Dharma*." Because "they don't state, 'I arise'," "I am in the ocean."

The former face is the "I always preached" of "the slightest motion of a single wave, and ten thousand waves follow"; and the latter face is the *Lotus Sutra of the Wondrous Dharma* of "the slightest motion of ten thousand waves, and a single wave follows." Whether we wind up or let out "a line of a thousand feet" or ten thousand feet, what we regret is that it "goes straight down."¹⁴ The former face and latter face here are "I am on the face of the ocean." They are like saying "the former head" and "the latter head." The former head and the latter head are "putting a head on top on your head."¹⁵ It is not that there is a person in the ocean. "I am [in] the ocean" is not "where the worldly dwell"; it is not "what is loved" by the sages. "I am" alone in the ocean. This is the "preaching" of "always only." This "in the ocean" "does not belong to the center"; it does not belong to "inner and outer": it is "remaining forever," "preaching the *The Lotus Sutra*." Though it is "not in east, west, north or south," it is "I come home with a fully empty boat, laden with moonlight." This true return is "immediately coming back home." Who could call it the conduct of "getting drenched"? It is realized only within the limits of the way of the buddha. We take this as the seal of "sealing water." Going further, we say it is the seal of "sealing sky"; or further, we say it is the seal of "sealing mud." The seal of sealing water is not necessarily the seal of sealing the ocean. Going further beyond this, there should be the seal of sealing the ocean. This is called the "ocean seal," the "water seal," the "mud seal," the "mind seal." Singly transmitting the mind seal, we seal water, seal mud, seal sky.¹⁶

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Once, a monk asked the great master Yuanzheng of Caoshan, "In the received teachings, there is a saying, 'The great ocean does not house a dead body.' What's the 'ocean'?"

The master said, "It contains the ten thousand beings."

The monk said, "Then why doesn't it house a dead body?"

The master said, "Someone whose breath has stopped doesn't belong."

The monk said, "If it contains the ten thousand beings, why is it that someone whose breath has stopped doesn't belong?"

The master said, "It's not the merit of the ten thousand things to stop breathing."¹⁷

This Caoshan was a [dharma] brother of Yunju.

Dongshan's essential message is right on the mark here. This "in the received teachings, there is a saying" refers to the correct teachings of the buddhas and patriarchs; it is not the teachings of the commoners and sages; it is not the lesser teaching of the subsidiary buddha dharma.¹⁸

"The great ocean does not house a dead body." The "great ocean" here is not an inner ocean or outer ocean, not the eight oceans. These are not what the student is asking about. He not only recognizes what is not the ocean as the ocean; he recognizes what is the ocean as the ocean. Even if we insist that they are oceans, they cannot be called the "great ocean." The great ocean is not necessarily a deep abyss of the water of the eight virtues. The great ocean is not necessarily a ninefold abyss of salt water or the like. The dharmas combine to form it. Could the great ocean necessarily be nothing but deep water? Therefore, his question about the "great ocean" is speaking of the great ocean because the great ocean is as yet unknown to humans and gods. The person who would hear this [question] will try to shake his grasp of "ocean."¹⁹ In saying "it does not house a dead body," "not housing" is "when the bright one comes, I hit the bright one; when the dark one comes, I hit the dark one." "A dead body" is "dead ashes"; it is "how many springs has it met without changing its core?" A dead body is a thing people have never seen. Therefore, they do not know it.²⁰

The master's saying "it contains the ten thousand beings" is speaking of the ocean. What he is saying about the main point is not that some single thing contains the ten thousand beings: "containing" is the ten thousand beings. He does not mean that the great ocean contains the ten thousand beings. Saying "it contains the ten thousand beings" means it is just the great ocean. Although we do not know what they are, for now we call them "the ten thousand beings." Even our encountering of the faces of the buddhas and the faces of the patriarchs are for now confused with the ten thousand beings. When they contain, even mountains are not only "standing on the highest mountain peak"; even water is not only "walking on the deepest ocean floor." Taking in is like this; letting go is like this. We say "the ocean of the buddha nature," or we say "the ocean of Vairocana's store"; these are simply the ten thousand beings. Though we may not see the face of the ocean, there are no doubts about the conduct of swimming. For example, in speaking of "Duofu's one grove of bamboo," while "one or two stalks are bent" and "three or four stalks are slanted" are conduct that causes the loss of the ten thousand beings, why does he not say "a

thousand are bent, ten thousand are bent"? Why does he not say, "a thousand groves, ten thousand groves"? We should not forget the reason why the bamboo of one grove are like this. Caoshan's saying, "it contains the ten thousand beings," is still the ten thousand beings.²¹

The monk said, "Why is it that someone whose breath has stopped doesn't belong?" Although this has the face of a mistaken question, it is "what are you thinking?" When it is "I've always had my doubts about this guy," it is just an encounter with "this guy I've always had my doubts about." "Where is it?" [is the question in] "why is it that someone whose breath has stopped doesn't belong?" or "why doesn't it house a dead body?" Here, [it is put,] "If it contains the ten thousand beings, why is it that someone whose breath has stopped doesn't belong?" We should realize that containing is not "belonging"; containing is not "housing." Although the ten thousand beings be dead bodies, "not housing" them means "it will only take ten thousand years"; "not belonging" means "this old monk makes one move."²²

Caoshan said, "It's not the merit of the ten thousand things to stop breathing." This means that, whether the ten thousand beings have stopped breathing, or whether they have not stopped breathing, they don't belong. A dead body may be a dead body, but where there is conduct that studies together with the ten thousand beings, it should contain it, should be the containing of it. The prior state and subsequent state of the the ten thousand beings have their merit: they have not stopped breathing. This is "a blind person leading a crowd of the blind." The principle of a blind person leading a crowd of the blind is furthermore a blind person leading a blind person, or a crowd of the blind leading a crowd of the blind. When it is a crowd of the blind leading a crowd of the blind, it is "containing the ten thousand beings" itself containing "containing the ten thousand beings." Further, in however many great ways there may be, where they are not the ten thousand beings, they will not manifest their concentrated effort. This is the ocean seal samadhi.

Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma

Ocean Seal Samadhi

Book 13

Composed at Kannon Dōri Kōshō Hōrinji

Twentieth day of early summer [fourth month], third year of Ninji (*mizunoe-tora*) [1242]

Notes

1. “Walking the floor of the deepest ocean” is from a saying by Yueshan Weiyuan (745-828): “We should stand atop the highest mountain, walk the floor of the deepest ocean.”

“What are you thinking?” (literally, “what mental act is this?”) is a standard Zen retort to an inadequate statement. “Passing through the barriers and breaking down the sections” refers to successful Zen practice.

The translation obscures Dōgen’s play in this paragraph with the graph *gyō*, rendered variously here as “practice,” “walking,” “goes,” and “thinking.”

2. The entire passage here is from the *Recorded Sayings of Mazu*. The first quotation represents Mazu’s (slightly abbreviated) quote of the Vimalakirti Sutra, in which Vimalakirti is instructing Mañjusri on how a sick bodhisattva should regard his body. The second quotation is Mazu’s comment, in which he goes on to say that the samadhi collects all the dharmas as the ocean collects the water of all the rivers.

The awkward translation “thought moment” tries to preserve something of the ambiguity of the term *nen*, used in reference both to moments of time and individual mental events. The term will reappear below in both senses.

3. “Original” and “initial enlightenment” are terms widely used in East Asian Buddhism to distinguish respectively the bodhi inherent in the buddha nature and the bodhi attained at the end of the bodhisattva path.

4. Some versions of the text, especially in the sixty-fascicle redaction, do not repeat the quotation here.

5. The last sentence here is generally understood to mean that, in the higher “encounter” with “dharmas arising,” the “encounter” between self and other, subject and object, is transcended. The obscure preceding phrase, “never leaves behind arising,” is usually interpreted to mean that each instance of arising is complete in itself and does not leave behind some arisen “thing” that could be the object of knowledge.

6. The “twelve times” are the twenty-four hours of the day, figured traditionally in two-hour divisions; the “three realms” are the realms of desire (*kāma*), form (*rūpa*), and formlessness (*arūpya*) that together make up existence in

samsara.

“Skin, flesh, bones, and marrow” is a standard Zen expression, much used by Dōgen, for the entirety, or complete truth, of something; from the responses of Bodhidharma to his four disciples, “You have got my skin”, etc.

In his distinction between a “statement” and a “saying” here, Dōgen seems to be saying that, though it is not stated, “I arise” can be a significant saying. The argument here is probably playing with the sense of arising alluded to in the remark, “it should be ‘arisen!’” which is taken from a saying of Caoshan Benji (840-901):

[A monk] asked, “There’s a saying handed down from the ancients, ‘No one who has fallen to the earth can arise without depending on the earth.’ What is this ‘falling’?”

The master said, “Consent to it.”

[The monk] said, “What is ‘arising’?”

The master said, “Arisen!”

This passage occurs in the *Jingde chuangdeng lu* just before Caoshan’s teaching on the ocean that Dōgen will cite below.

7. From the famous *Lotus Sutra* parable of the burning house. Notice that Dōgen is here using the expression “an old buddha,” usually indicating a previous Zen master, for the Buddha Shakyamuni.

8. From Loshan Daoxian: “Loshan asked Yantou, ‘When arising and ceasing don’t stop, what’s it like?’ Yantou said, ‘Who’s arising and ceasing?’”

9. See above, note 8, for the expression “who’s arising and ceasing?” The three phrases beginning with “those who can attain deliverance through this body” are from the Avalokiteshvara chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, in which it said that, to those who can attain deliverance through contact with a particular body (a buddha, a pratyekabuddha, a shrāvaka, etc.), the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara appears as that body and preaches the dharma for them.

“The past mind cannot be got” is from the Diamond Sutra. “You’ve got my marrow,” “you’ve got my bones,” are from Bodhidharma’s comment to his disciples, mentioned above, note 6.

10. This passage reflects a conversation, much treasured by Dōgen, between the Sixth Ancestor, Huineng, and his disciple Nanyue Huairang. Here is the version of the story given in Dōgen’s *Shōbōgenzō sanbyaku soku*.

The Zen Master Dahui of Mt. Nanyue visited the Sixth Ancestor. The Ancestor asked him, “Where do you come from?”

The Master said, “I come from the National Teacher An on Mt. Song.”

The Ancestor said, “What is it that comes like this?”

The Master was without means [to answer]. After attending [the Ancestor] for eight years, he finally recognized the question. Thereupon, he announced to the Ancestor, “I’ve understood what you put to me when I first came: ‘What is it that comes like this?’”

The Ancestor asked, “How do you understand it?”

The Master replied, “To say it’s like anything wouldn’t hit it.”

The Ancestor said, “Then is it contingent on practice and verification?”

The Master answered, “Practice and verification are not nonexistent; they’re not to be defiled.”

The Ancestor said, “Just this ‘not defiled’ is what the buddhas bear in mind. You’re also like this, I’m also like this, and all the ancestors of the Western Heavens [i. e., India] are also like this.”

The “adventitious defilements” (Sanskrit *āgantuka-klesha*) are the spiritual defilements understood as extrinsic to the mind. The argument here probably hinges on the multivalent term *dharma*. While the dharmas (i.e., phenomena) may be both defiled and undefiled, the dharmas (i.e., the truths) taught by the Buddha are always pure. The “ceasing” of the dharmas in this latter sense is the truth that all dharmas in the former sense are “empty” of inherent existence.

11. This obscure final sentence is subject to various interpretations. Some would take it to mean that, while both the arising and ceasing of the self are beyond what can be stated, they are not the same. Others would see the second clause as a reminder that “ceasing” here is not the same as death.

The expression “so many hands and eyes” is an allusion to the thousand-armed Avolokiteshvara, who has an eye in each of the hands. Although here we may take the passage to mean simply that “ceasing” can be understood in many ways, the allusion to Avolokiteshvara’s hands and eyes introduces material that Dōgen will develop below, from a dialogue between Yunyan Tansheng (780?-841) and fellow disciple Daowu Yuanzhi (769-835).

Yunyan asked Daowu, “How does the bodhisattva of great compassion use so many hands and eyes?”

Wu said, “Like a person searching behind him for his pillow in the night.”

Yan said, “I understand. I understand.”

Wu said, “What do you understand?”

Yan said, “The entire body is hands and eyes.”

Wu said, “You talk big talk, but what you say is eight or nine tenths.”

Yan said, “How about my fellow teacher?”

Wu said, “Throughout the body hands and eyes.”

The four phrases beginning with “unsurpassed great nirvana” are probably after a verse by Huineng (though the source of Dōgen’s substitution in the last line is not clear):

The unsurpassed great nirvana,
Perfect and bright, always quietly shining.
The commoners call it death,
The other ways take it as annihilation,
Those who seek the two vehicles
Treat it as the unconditioned.

12. See above, note 11, for the allusions here. The “four great [elements] and five aggregates” refer respectively to the four primary forms of matter (*mahābhūta*), earth, water, fire, and air, of which the physical world is composed, and the five “heaps” (*skandha*) into which the psycho-physical organism can be analyzed.

13. Dōgen is here again alluding to the dialogue between Huineng and Huairang cited above, note 10. The odd locution, “this is,” here is a play with the passage of Mazu cited earlier: “This is called the the ocean seal samadhi.”

The expressions, “officially, you can’t insert a needle; privately, you could drive a horse and cart and through it,” and “in meeting, he doesn’t bring it out; but if you raise the point, he knows it’s there,” are popular sayings in Zen literature. Both seem to be used here to mean something like, “on the surface, not obvious, but nevertheless true.”

14. Dōgen is alluding here to a poem by the Tang master Chuanzi (“the boatman”) Decheng (dates unknown):

A line of a thousand feet goes straight down.
The slightest motion of a single wave, and ten thousand waves follow.
The evening is still, the water cold; the fish aren’t feeding.
I come home with a fully empty boat, loaded with moonlight.

The “hand groping for the pillow” at the opening of this paragraph is from the conversation, cited above, note 11, on the thousand-armed Avalokiteshvara. The paragraph then intertwines two passages from the *Lotus Sutra*. (1) From the Sadāparibhūta chapter: “After hundreds of millions of tens of thousands of kalpas, after an

inconceivable period, they [the bodhisattvas] can hear this *Lotus Sutra*. After hundreds of millions of tens of thousands of kalpas, after an inconceivable period, the buddhas, the bhagavats, preach this sutra.” (2) From the Devadatta chapter: “In the ocean, I always preached only the Lotus Sutra of the Wondrous Dharma.”

15. The awkward translations “former face,” “latter face,” “former head,” “latter head” struggle to preserve the play here on the colloquial Chinese suffixes *mien* and *tou*. Though they would ordinarily function simply as nominalizers, Dôgen uses their primary semantic senses to move from former and latter “faces” to the “face” (i.e., surface) of the ocean, then from former and latter “heads” to the common Zen expression “putting a head on top of your head” (i.e., adding something superfluous).

16. Dôgen is here invoking the so-called “three seals” of Zen: sky, water, and mud (sometimes interpreted respectively as the dharma, recompense, and transformation bodies of the buddha). The translation “sealing sky” loses the metaphysical connotation of the term *inkū*, which could also be rendered “sealing emptiness.” The “mind seal” is of course a favored metaphor for the authentication of the transmission of the awakened mind from master to disciple.

The expression “getting drenched” probably invokes the Chinese idiom “muddied and drenched,” used as a metaphor for immersion in complicated affairs or language.

This paragraph introduces several phrases from the poem *Caosan ge*, by Shitou Xiqian (700-790):

The person dwelling in his hermitage remains forever,
Not belonging to the center, the inside or outside.
He doesn't dwell where the worldly dwell;
He doesn't love what the worldly love
He's not in north or south, east or west
Turning the light and shining it back, he immediately
comes back home.

(Notice that Dôgen's version has substituted “what is loved by the sages” for Shitou's “the worldly.”)

17. From the Caoshan chapter of the *Jingde chuandenglu*. Great Master Yuanzheng of Caoshan is Caoshan Benji (840-901), disciple of Dongshan. The translation of the last line is tentative. In his quotation here (as in his *Sanbyaku soku*), Dôgen has cut off the last three graphs of the original text, making the syntax of the final sentence difficult to parse. (The original would read something like, “The ten thousand things are not its merit; stopping the breath has its virtue.”)

The notion that “the great ocean does not house a dead body” is a fairly common one in Buddhist literature. It occurs, for example, in the *Dazhidu lun*, where it is said that those who break the monastic rule cannot remain in the sangha, just as the waters of the ocean do not house a dead body.

18. “Yunju” refers to Yunju Daoying (d. 902), another disciple of Dongshan.

19. The “inner ocean,” “outer ocean,” and “eight oceans” refer to the eight oceans surrounding Mount Sumeru in Buddhist cosmology, of which the first is called the inner and the remainder, the outer oceans. The “water of the eight virtues” refers to the excellent water in the oceans surrounding Mount Sumeru (and filling the lakes of the Pure Land of Sukhāvati). It is said to be sweet, cool, soft, light, pure, odorless, harmless to the throat, and harmless to the stomach.

20. A series of allusions to Zen literature: “When the dark one comes” is a tentative translation for a notoriously obscure saying of Puhua, recorded in the *Linji lu*; “dead ashes” is a common expression, used in both positive and perjorative senses, for the mind in trance, as in the idiom “dried wood and dead ashes”; “encountering how many springs, with core unchanged” is from a verse by Damei Fachang (752-839): “Broken dead wood keeping to the cold forest; how many springs has it met without changing its core?”

21. “Duofu's one grove of bamboo” refers to the following dialogue found in several sources:

A monk asked, “What is Duofu's one grove of bamboo?”
The master answered, “One or two stalks are slanted.”
The monk said, “I don't understand.”
The master said, “Three or four stalks are bent.”

22. “It will only take ten thousand years” alludes to the answer by Shishuang (807-888) to the question, “How about when one threads a single string through many holes?” “This old monk makes one move” uses a metaphor drawn from board games; the translation loses the pun on the term *chaku*, used here both for “belonging” and “placing” (a piece on the board).

For the expression, “what are you thinking?” see above, note 1. I've always had my doubts about this guy” is a remark by Linji in response to the saying by Puhua quoted above, note 20.

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NEWS

May 19-23, 2004

Rev. Sekkei Harada, Director of Soto Zen Buddhism Europe Office, led sesshin at Sonoma Mountain Zen Center, Santa Rosa, California.

May 27-31, 2004

Rev. Sekkei Harada, Director of Soto Zen Buddhism Europe Office, led sesshin at the Zen Center of Los Angeles.

July 8-11, 2004

Kokusai fukyoshi, Dendokyoshi, and many other teachers and students participated in the Many Faces of Dogen Conference that was held at Zen Mountain Monastery in Mt. Tremper, NY as a workshop co-sponsored by the Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office.

International Events

August 24-29, 2004

The following activities will be conducted in connection with a ceremony commemorating the 100th anniversary of Soto Zen Buddhism International teaching activities in South America.

1. A sesshin.
2. A ceremony to mark the 100th anniversary.
3. A memorial ceremony for the founders and past priests of Jionjii.

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