



SOTO ZEN JOURNAL

# DHARMA EYE

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## A Greeting

**Rev. Yusho Sasaki**

Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism  
Europe Office

As of January 2016, I was appointed the new director of the Europe Office replacing the previous director Rev. Dojun Sekiguchi, who was assigned in April 2015, but who resigned in September due to health concerns. Although I have some familiarity with the office duties here, as this is my second involvement with the Europe Office, it certainly makes me humble and sober to have received such responsibility.

As you will know, two incidents of the Islamic terrorist attacks in Paris last year shook the whole world. Its aftershock is not yet over and France is still officially under a state of emergency. France, where the Europe office is located, is well known to have pursued a policy of secularisation after the revolution. Publicly, there are some restrictions in being overtly religious, and the support for promoting religious activities is relatively limited. On top of that, the present political climate over the whole of Europe, including France of course, involves the problems of immigrants and refugees, which could generate devastating effects on the current administration of any nation.

With such a notable amount of tension being built up against religions and racial issues, leading to a closed-up society, what can we really do as teaching activities in Europe? Or perhaps public psychology will favour anti-

violence after witnessing brutal incidents and, therefore, Buddhism, as an alternative religion, has a better chance to reach out to people? It has yet to be seen. We need to quietly observe how the situation unfolds itself.

Soto Zen has spread in Europe in a rather unique fashion. The history of Soto Zen teaching activities in Hawaii, North America, and South America were primarily based on the needs of the Japanese immigrants of those places. Temples were first constructed and it started from there, in a similar fashion to how dissemination was done by temples in Japan. On the other hand, Rev Taisen Deshimaru, who was the first Director of Europe Office, conducted teaching activities directly with the Europeans. Soto Zen was established as a more personal religion and it did not rely on parishioners and temples. And with the practice of zazen, not even language was a primary impediment. In this way, the teaching activities in Europe goes back only 50 years or so.

However, the teaching activities has been notably successful and we now have over 400 registered priests and some 12 special registered temples. The Zen Priesthood as a profession though, is not operable here, and inevitably, most have their own separate jobs despite the fact that their daily spiritual life is oriented by Buddhism.

In Japan, such a life style is found among devout followers of Zen; nonetheless, over here it is more the norm for priests and the quality of priesthood and the understanding of Zen within it varies greatly. Also, there is a prevalent tendency that zazen and study are heavily

prioritized while perhaps less emphasis is put on applying Zen to everyday life, in other words, the view point of “living Zen.”

Obviously, you do not expect the essence of well-matured Soto Zen to instantly emerge from within the short history of European Zen. But my impression is that something fundamental has been neglected. Fortunately, I find there is an unwavering “*hosshin*” (arousing the aspiration) at its base and with this it can be trusted that the direction of practice will gradually change its course.

After 50 years, and it has barely wavered, the characteristic and core practice of European sanghas is *sesshin*. But now a number of groups organize family day events, have lessons on *goeika*, or hold prayer ceremony. As such, many new teaching activities are attempted. Soto Zen in Japan once experienced a shift in its approach from priest-oriented Dogen Zen to Keizan Zen that encompassed the general public. Is this what is happening here as well? A new generation of teachers are coming onto the horizon now and this period of trial and error will probably last for some time. Good news is that Europe has a long history and things do not have to happen at speed. If the elements of Soto Zen imported from Japan do not seem compatible, what is not adaptable to European culture can be slowly omitted --- there remains this kind of humble attitude. So with the passage of time, and with the cultures andethos of this all embracing land, finally European Zen begins to root itself firmly amongst its people. We cannot but watch over the next 50, 100.... or even more.... years, as the future of Europe unfolds.

Working in Europe makes me realise that we are all in the same boat. I would like to, even if only a small amount, contribute toward supporting this sincere endeavour of their teaching activities.

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## There is an Easy Way to Become a Buddha

Rev. Shiju Sakagawa  
Sotoshu Specially Dispatched Teacher  
Kotokuji, Hokkaido, Japan

Ocean Gate Zen Center  
California, U.S.A.  
September 19, 2015.

I will first chant a verse, so please hold your hands in gassho while I chant.

Homage to the Buddha; we take refuge in the Buddha because he is the great teacher.  
Homage to the Dharma; we take refuge in the Dharma because it is good medicine.  
Homage to the Sangha; we take refuge in the Sangha because they are excellent friends.  
Homage to Shakyamuni Buddha, our great benefactor and founder of the doctrine.  
Homage to the Eminent Ancestor Eihei Dogen Zenji.  
Homage to the Great Ancestor Keizan Jokin Zenji.  
We pray that all of these will bestow their love for the Dharma on this place of practice.

Thank you. Please put your hands down.

Good morning, everyone. As just introduced, my name is Shiju Sakagawa. I am visiting from Japan. This is my first trip to the United States so of course this is my first time in Capitola. I live in Hokkaido which is a relatively wide-open spacious part of Japan, but it is nothing like the feeling of coming to America. I have really sensed how big America is on actually visiting this country. I am truly happy to see with own eyes this place where Rev. Shinshu Roberts and Rev. Doyo Kinst are active as teachers and also to have the opportunity to sit together with you.

Turning to my talk, I have a question for you. What comes to mind when you hear the word "Buddha"? Would anyone like to tell me? Our eyes met, so how about you? "The mind of compassion which overflows toward all things. I think the Buddha is something that understands all things." I think that nearly sums up everything I wanted to say today, so it may not be necessary for me to continue speaking. Something with the mind of compassion which understands all things, I think that is a splendid answer. I'd like to hear from one more person. If you could simply say what you think.... "I think it is an impossible ideal, but even though it is difficult to achieve it, it is important to have the intention of realizing it." That really exhausts everything I want to say, so I think it isn't necessary for me to speak because of this person's answer. Nonetheless, I can't just stop here and return to Japan, so please allow me to go on with my talk.

The statue of Buddha which is placed on this altar is an image of Shakyamuni Buddha, a

person who actually lived as a human being in the same way we do some 2,500 years ago. Now, Shakyamuni Buddha is depicted like this statue and as Buddhists we come here and put our hands in gassho in front of this image. But as this person just said another meaning of "Buddha" is that each one of us is in fact an existence which can become the Buddha and this is something I would like to speak about today. The title of my talk is "The Very Best Way to Become a Buddha."



I would like to introduce some words written by Dogen Zenji, the founder of Eiheiji.

"There is an easy way to become a Buddha. When you refrain from unwholesome actions, are not attached to life and death, and are compassionate to all sentient beings, respectful to seniors and kind to juniors, not disliking or desiring anything, with no thoughts or worries; this is called a Buddha."

To paraphrase these words, "There is an easy way to become a Buddha. Don't do bad things, don't get hung up on life and death, be compassionate toward all things, respect those who are well-informed about Buddhism, reach

your hand out to those whose connection with the Buddhadharma is, unfortunately, weak, don't think only of your situation and desire things for yourself, don't be consumed by worries and concerns; this is what is called a Buddha." To this say this in the simplest terms, we could say "Don't do bad things; do good things." "Good things" doesn't mean "things that are good just for you." It means things which are good for others. And then, the important thing is to make this a habit. This is like the habit you have of sitting in zazen every day. It means to keep repeating the same thing. To express this in different words, making this a habit means to absorb something to the extent that we can do this naturally without having to think about it. This is to practice the Buddhist precepts. This is in fact an important meaning when Dogen Zenji speaks about practice. Dogen Zenji's practice is to repeat the practice every day without mistake; practice or sitting in zazen is not a matter of doing it for some purpose or objective. What is it in particular that we must make into a habit? The teaching for us is that as Buddhists it is the habit of putting our hands in gassho and worshipping by making prostrations.

Now, I would like to tell you the story when I was a trainee monk.

When I was 23 old, it was about 30 years ago, I practiced at Eiheiji. The person with the most responsibility at Eiheiji is the Abbot or Zenji and next in line is the Director or Kan'in. The Kan'in Roshi at that time was eighty-five years old. Along with five other monks, I was given the job of looking after this senior priest. Each morning at 3:30 a.m., the Kan'in Roshi

would go to the Zazendo. My duty was to clean his quarters during the one hour or so that he went to the Zazendo. The first thing to do was to clean his *hibachi* (charcoal brazier). I placed more charcoal in the brazier, smoothed out the ash that surrounded the charcoal, and then placed a metal teapot over the charcoal. After smoothing out the ash, I looked at the clock and saw that about half of the time allotted had already passed. There were still many things to do: wiping the tatami, folding up kimono if necessary, wiping his desk, and straightening out his calligraphy brushes. Before very long, I heard the signal that zazen was finished. As one last thing, I placed a stick of incense in the incense pot located in the *tokonoma* alcove. After placing the incense, I left the room and sat in the corridor waiting. After a short time, the Kan'in Roshi returned to his room. I thought to myself, "I managed to somehow get the job done; that's a relief." But then I heard a voice from inside the room say, "Who was on duty this morning?" "I did just as my seniors told me. I'm sure I didn't make any mistakes," I thought. Trembling, I opened the sliding door to his room and said, "Do you need something?" He said, "Look at that stick of incense in the *tokonoma*, it's not straight. Go over and straighten it up." "Yes," I said, as I crawled on my knees over to the *tokonoma* to straighten out the incense. It was leaning very slightly to the right. I didn't say it but was really thinking to myself, "It's leaning only a little bit. Why couldn't he straighten it out himself? What a cold-hearted person." But I straightened up the incense and as I left to room I said, "I'm sorry."

That's how I felt then. But now, I think he was speaking compassionately to me. If he had

not called me and made me straighten up the incense, I wouldn't have made the experience my own and I think that was the Kan'in Roshi's deep sense of compassion. In Japan, we have the saying, "to do something with your own hands." I think there are many things in our everyday lives that we will not understand unless we try to do them ourselves. If he had said, "Sakagawa, the incense stick was leaning a bit, so I straightened it up", I would have thought, "What a kind old man he is." But now, I understand the deep meaning of him bothering to call me and make me straighten it up. Later on, this Kan'in Roshi, whose name was Miyazaki Ekiho Zenji, became the 78th Zenji of Eiheiji. He died seven years ago in 2008 at the age of 108. One day, Kan'in Roshi said, "The fundamental practice of Buddhism is to light a stick of incense and place it straight before the altar. Then, with the Buddha image, the stick of incense and you in one straight line, to put your hands in gassho and bow your head." Of course, "zazen" is the basis of Buddhism. I think that the Kan'in Roshi's teaching was that placing a stick of incense straight up in the incense pot and bowing our head is done with the same feeling as doing zazen. What is the same? To regulate the breath, to straighten up our posture, and then to harmonize the mind, these things are exactly the same as zazen. If they weren't, you would not place the stick of incense straight. To regulate and harmonize these three things is something that is shared in common with zazen. One other thing the Kan'in Roshi said was the importance of doing this every day, of repeating it so that it becomes a habit, something you are used to doing on a daily basis. This is another funda-

mental aspect of Buddhism. You may think that repeating the same thing every day lacks originality and that you are not making any forward progress. It seems as if the thing you are doing every day is the same, but while time is always flowing, it isn't the same time. The flowers which bloomed last year and the flowers that bloomed this year both look beautiful, but time has passed and they are consequently completely different. Even if we repeat the same things every day, each thing is independent. I said that putting your hands in gassho and sitting in zazen are the same as fundamental Buddhist practices, but please have a look at the words of Egawa Shinzan Zenji which were passed out earlier.

### ***Message from the Head Priest of Sotoshu in 2015***

*The many challenges we now face offer us the opportunity to reexamine our way of life.*

*It has been more than four years since the Great East Japan Earthquake, the great tsunami, and the accident at Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. Nevertheless, the goal of the reconstruction remains distant. It is impossible to fully fathom the grief and suffering of the many families who lost members in the disaster as well as the 240,000 people who are forced to live in temporary housing.*

*In addition, we are grappling with many other serious issues, such as global warming, a trend toward more frequent natural disasters, war, poverty, social inequality, bullying, and suicide.*

*In light of this reality, I hope that we will*

reexamine our society in which people only seek their own comfort and convenience.

We must focus on “respect for human rights, establishment of peace, and conservation of the environment.” I also hope for the realization of a society where we do not need to rely on nuclear energy, and where each and every individual life is valued.

To realize this kind of society, we once again learn from and practice the teaching of “generosity,” one of the components of “The Bodhisattva’s Four All-Embracing Methods.” This is a practice in which we share generously, whether we are sharing something material or spiritual, and through which we support each others’ lives.

Dogen Zenji taught that generosity is not to be greedy. This is a way of living where we do not use flattery and where we do not give something to others with the expectation of what we might receive in return.

Keizan Zenji taught that we dedicate the boundless merit of zazen to all sentient beings with great compassion

This is the year of the Great Memorial Ceremony for the 650th Anniversary of Daihonzan Sojiji’s Second Abbot Gasan Joseki Zenji. Let us express our deepest gratitude for his grace on this great opportunity.

Gasan Zenji taught about the teaching of “Sojo” (transmission), which is for us to sit quietly in an upright posture, regulate the breath, and settle our minds. We also study the teachings of “Shakyamuni Buddha and the Two Founders,” follow in their steps, and transmit their teachings carefully through our practice.

Let us inherit the practice of generosity, pray together for the peace of mind for all living beings, and proceed with the bodhisattva practice of

standing together and walking together.

I take refuge in Shakyamuni Buddha.

I take refuge in Koso Joyo Daishi Dogen Zenji.

I take refuge in Taiso Josai Daishi Keizan Zenji.

Egawa Shinzan

Head Priest of the Sotoshu

Keizan Zenji, who came four generations after Dogen Zenji and who was the founder of Sojiji, taught that the merit of our zazen is something we must return to other people. To put our hands in gassho is a practice which cultivates the thought of bringing yourself and others together, of bringing people other than yourself closer to the Buddha. As the person earlier answered my question with the image of overflowing compassion, this is an ideal that is right in front of us. It may be something we are unable of being, but our practice is to come nearer to this ideal.

I would like to speak about “generosity”, one particular form of the heart of compassion. At the time of Shakyamuni Buddha, this word “generosity” specifically referred to the offerings that lay believers made to Shakyamuni Buddha and his followers in terms of shelter and food. To be generous in this manner was not a sacrifice for these believers. It was also not simply a matter of being kind. Of course, it also was not a matter of give and take. Rather, it can be said that generosity was for the lay believers to hear the teachings of the Buddha and then in order to enter the Way of Buddha, it was to practice together and to be saved together – both those who were giving offerings

and those who were receiving them. Another important thing is that Dogen Zenji taught that generosity means “to not be greedy.” Greed is the feeling which confuses the mind; it is a confusion which we all have. Generosity also has the meaning of controlling that greedy feeling.



Finally, I would like to tell a story about the practice of generosity.

This is an old story that took place in Japan sometime in the last half of the seventeenth century or early eighteenth century. Benjamin Franklin, whose image is on the US \$100 bill, was born in 1706, so this is a story that took place around that time.

At that time, there was a temple called Toshoji, located in the village of Gokamura which is in present-day Ibaraki Prefecture. This story took place during the Edo Period of Japanese history. The condition then and the condition of present-day Japan were completely different. At that time, the most important crop was rice. Wealth was not determined by how much currency a lord had but rather the financial strength of a feudal domain was determined by how much rice was produced. That's

how it was in those days, which is to say that people lived very poor lives. In temples too, they had only limited rice. This was a condition where it wasn't possible like it is now where we can quickly go down to the supermarket and buy food items like vegetables and so forth. It was a time when people were always barely able to get by.

The twenty-third resident priest of Toshoji was a man named Inshi Doken who was an outstanding Zen master. For that reason, many Zen monks were always practicing under him. Here, I have a question for you. What would you do if there were many people who had come to eat, but you did not have the amount of rice that you normally would need to serve all of them? It would not be possible to go to the supermarket and buy more rice nor could you steal it. What would you do?

“By some means or other, we would have to share it.”

“We would have to become a farmer and grow rice.”

“We would have to beg for it.”

There is no mistake that these are all fine answers, but if you need to quickly prepare a meal, going out for alms (*takuhatsu*) or growing the food yourself would not be an option. I think sharing the food would be the best way to resolve this. How would you be able to share the food? The easiest way would be to increase the amount of hot water when you make rice porridge. Then, the amount of rice grains would decrease such that the porridge would be nearly like a lake. There is a name for this kind of porridge: “ceiling porridge.” This is because it is so watery that the top of the porridge is like a mirror that reflects the ceiling

above. That's how was it was at the time this story took place. They really did eat like this.

*Tenzo* is the name of the person who prepares food three times a day for the monks as well as making food called *buppan*, the food which is offered to the various Buddhas in the temple. It is a very important position. Usually this position is filled by a veteran monk who has been practicing for many years. However, the *tenzo* at Toshoji had fallen sick. The senior monk, who was the leader of the training monks, went to the Master's room to inquire about what should be done.

The senior monk asked, "Master, what should we do about the *tenzo* position?"

The Master said, "Yes, I see. This is a difficult situation. How about Gengo, even though he is a bit young? He's young, but he is a staunch, sincere man. I'm sure he would do it if we asked him."

The senior monk said, "I think he is young, but if you think he's all right, let's ask him to be *tenzo*. I'll go right away and speak to him."

Beginning the next day, Gengo took the position of *tenzo*. After a few days, a rumor began to make its way around the temple. It seemed strange, but at night when all the monks were sleeping, a light could be seen coming from the kitchen. And sometimes, there was also the smell of food. The rumor was that perhaps Gengo was in the kitchen cooking something good to eat and then eating it himself. At first, this was something bad that monks were saying behind other's backs, but since Gengo's cooking seemed to be continuing each evening, finally it came out in the open. The monks gathered together and everyone

talked about this. So, the senior monk was forced to go and speak with Abbot Inshi about this problem.

The senior monk said, "Master, this is difficult for me to say, but Gengo is truly doing something that isn't good. He may be doing well as the cook, but apparently, he is cooking delicious food at night for himself behind everyone's backs. I ask you to carefully look into this and punish him. Please understand that this is what all of the monks want you to do."

The Abbot listened and then quietly opening his mouth he said, "There must be some sort of mistake. Gengo isn't the kind of person who would do something like that. I'm sure of this."

The senior monk spoke of various things, pleading with the Abbot, but the master refused to take up the matter. The senior monk had no choice but to leave even though he was still angry. From that night onwards, the monks decided they would take turns and each night keep a close eye on the kitchen.

"He is certainly doing it." "I've seen him, too." "It's definitely true." All of the monks who were spying on Gengo were in agreement. They couldn't stand it any longer, so once again, the senior monk went to speak with Abbot Inshi.

The senior monk said, "The other day, I came to speak with you about Gengo, but you refused to get involved. So, we have been taking turns to see exactly what is going on each evening in the kitchen. We all agree that he is doing something outrageous. We've seen it ourselves. You must, by all means, look into this. We ask that you punish Gengo. If you say you will not do this, then we will all join

together and leave the monastery. Either you ask him to leave or we will go. You must choose one or the other.”

The Master said, “Don’t be so upset. I put him in the position of *tenzo* because I believe in him. Certainly, there is some reason behind this. Give me a little more time.”

The Master continued as before to not take any action. The monks had no choice but to grudgingly keep quiet.

It happened that a few days later Abbot Inshi was up at night to use the bathroom. While walking down the corridor, he noticed a light coming from the kitchen. He thought, “Hmmm...Well, it is long past time for lights out.” While thinking this, he suddenly noticed a good smell coming from the direction of the kitchen.

He said, “For some time now, the monks have come many times saying those things, but certainly Gengo, if anyone, isn’t like that.” He stood in front of the kitchen. The door was slightly open. When he looked inside, hanging right over the open fire place was a small pot on a hook with something cooking inside of it. “Oh, so this that good smell....”

It was his disciple, Gengo, the one he trusted. It was just as the other monks had told him. As might be expected the Master got angry and rolling open the sliding door to the kitchen, he went in.

He said, “Gengo, what are you doing here so late at night?”

Gengo said, “I’m preparing food for tomorrow.”

The Master said, “I see. Thank you for doing that. But by the way, I’ve just gotten up

to use the toilet, and now I’m feeling a little hungry. Won’t you let me eat some of the food cooking in that pot?”

“Well, yes, but that’s my food,” Gengo said.

The Master said, “Your food?! You mean you won’t let me eat any of it?”

“Yes, this is my food. It’s really not the kind of food for you to eat, Master,” Gengo said.

The Master said, “Gengo, what are you saying? Is there something in this world which you can eat but I can’t? It’s all right. Let me have some of that food.”

Gengo couldn’t say anything. Doing as he was told, he removed the lid from the pot and a puff of steam shot up. Taking some food from the pot and placing it in a small bowl, he handed it to Abbot Inshi. Even though there was light in the kitchen, it was rather dark because it was in the middle of the night. In the darkness, the food in the bowl looked quite delicious. Taking a bit of the food, the Abbot gagged the instant he put the food in his mouth.

He said, “Gengo, what is this?! It smelled good, but when I put it in my mouth, I couldn’t swallow it. Why are you cooking food like this? Tell me the reason.”

Looking down, Gengo said, “Please forgive me.”

The Master said, “That’s no good. You must speak openly to me about this.”

Grudgingly, Gengo began to speak. “Even though my practice was not yet ripe, you compassionately allowed me to be the head cook. I would like to thank you from my heart for that. It was my strong wish to do this job and work at it as my true practice.”

“And so?” the Master said.

Gengo, "Lately, the number of monks has increased at this temple. I'm happy that so many monks want to practice under you, Master, but we don't have a lot of extra food. And yet, we still must feed the monks. So, I've been thinking how I could add even just a little food for the monks. I thought that I could give them my food. So, I made a bag out of old cloth and put it in the sink drain to collect scraps and cut-off pieces of vegetables, kernels of rice that are rinsed out of the pots, and so forth. I cooked these bits of food, but when I first tried eating it, I couldn't swallow that food. But recently, I've gotten used to it and it tastes good.

The Master said, "In that case, there's no need to do this while the others are sleeping, is there?"

Gengo said, "But then, all of the monks would know what I'm doing. It wouldn't be 'hidden virtue.'"

The Master said, "I fully understand. But today, it's late. Finish cleaning up and go to bed. I'm going back to sleep, too."

The next morning, following the morning service, Abbot Inshi turned to the monks and said, "I'm going now to bow my head to the Buddha. All of you, follow me." The Master was saying strange things. No one understood what was going on. But in any case, they all followed after him. Evidently, they were headed to the kitchen. In the kitchen, Gengo was busy with preparations for breakfast. Abbot Inshi came close to Gengo and said, "Gengo, you stand right here." Gengo did as he was told. He removed the string that tied up his sleeves and gave a morning greeting.

Then, he said, "What brings you here?"

While saying, "You stand right here", the Master began to tell the others some of what had happened the night before. The Master then spread his sitting mat (*zagū*) on the wooden floor and facing Gengo solemnly put his hands in *gassho* and began to make prostrations, touching his forehead to the floor.

Gengo said, "Master, what are you doing? This is the kitchen. It isn't a place to make prostrations. It also isn't proper for the master to bow to the disciple. Please, don't play around like that."

The Master said, "I'm not making prostrations to my disciple. I'm making prostrations to the Buddha." While saying this, he continued to make many prostrations.

Seeing the Abbot do this, the other monks all spread their sitting mats and began making prostrations.

Gengo was moved to tears and while weeping said, "Please stop. Please stop." And then, he also began making prostrations.

It isn't possible for the master to make prostrations to his disciple. A disciple is taught something and then makes prostrations. The master was teaching that he was making prostrations because Gengo's actions were the actions of the Buddha. Gengo was not making a sacrifice in what he had done. He was only thinking about what he ought to do with the maximum compassion; what could he do by means of compassion. His master was making prostrations to these actions of a Buddha. Gengo did not have a greedy mind. In a pure way, he had thought about what he ought to do and then he did it. Regarding this matter, it was

not the case that his master was apologizing to Gengo nor was he praising him with words. It was prostrations to the Buddha that was carried out. Human beings are endowed with the ability to think of others. Dogen Zenji said that the way to carry this out is for each of us carry out this practice, each person shining as we live together. Since Gengo did these actions, this practice of a Buddha, he was truly a living Buddha. He was the same Buddha as Shakyamuni Buddha. His master was not praising him for this, nor was he doubting him or apologizing to him. By making these prostrations, his master's actions also made him a Buddha. Each of us has to do what each of us ought to do. This is the way to connect all of us who live in this world; it is also an ideal. That is why we are conscious of this as we practice, doing this each day and making it a habit that becomes our own. This is the very best way to become a Buddha, and that is what I want to tell you today.

Everyone, please, from now on, while coming here to sit zazen, I really hope and expect you will be able to further do the practice of a Buddha and keep on continuing to do this.

I am very grateful for this opportunity to meet you today. From my heart, I pray that you will all be happy and prosperous, and that you will work for the development of this area where you live.

This is the end of my talk. Thank you very much.



## The Great Memorial Ceremony for the 650th Anniversary of Gasan Joseki Zenji: the account of an experience

Rev. Dokan Crépon  
Kokaiji, France

Last year on October 22nd, when the Great Memorial Ceremony for the 650th Anniversary of Daihonzan Sojiji's Second Abbot Gasan Joseki Zenji was held at Daihonzan Sojiji, I participated in the ceremony as *Shokoshi* (the officiating priest but more literally the “master who burns incense”).

That day, there were five representatives of Soto Zen Buddhism outside of Japan, each conducting a ceremony expressing gratitude for Gasan Joseki Zenji, the second abbot of Sojiji. They were Rev. Issho Fujita, representing Soto Zen Buddhism International Center, Rev. Daigaku Rummé, representing North America, Rev. Koshu Sato representing South America, Rev. Shugen Komagata representing Hawaii and myself, representing Europe. We had arrived at Sojiji the day before, on October 21st, at the same time as various groups who had come from all over the world in order to participate in the commemorative ceremonies. All in all there were approximately 150 people, monks, nuns, and lay people.

The *Shokoshi* were led through numerous hallways and given single rooms in a different quarter to the groups. After a ceremonious welcome we were received by Rev. Shinzan Egawa, the Zenji of Sojiji, in the afternoon.

Arriving at Sojiji, quietly settling in our rooms, formally being received by the Zenji and awaiting the ceremonies the next day – all this

created an atmosphere of particular density in the space of a few hours. It was an important moment for everyone: we were going to participate in the Great Memorial Ceremony, which is organized every fifty years and which the community of Sojiji had spent a few years preparing. We were the representatives of communities of practitioners and had each traveled 10,000 km or more in order to be there. Therefore, a certain apprehension seemed legitimate.

Next we rehearsed the ceremonies, for which we had received the procedures a few months before. We could clarify certain points and most important, we could become familiar with the premises and the size of the big dharma hall (*Hatto*) of Sojiji. After the rehearsal we could relax and meet the other participants for dinner.



Guided tour

In the meantime the other participants had a guided tour of the temple and afterwards participated in a much appreciated workshop held by Rev. Issho Fujita, who shared his lively approach to zazen. All the participants had the opportunity to interact and then get back together the next day for the ceremonies and

the final lunch. It was very touching to get together with people from all over the world, who share the same practice and the same faith. With people from Hawaii, North and South America, Europe and Japan, there really was a sense of “Global Soto Zen” which made these two days very special.

Anyway, that evening I retired early to my room in order to prepare for the ceremonies I was going to officiate the next morning. I thought about the last forty years and the circumstances that had brought me there, to that room, at that place, in Japan, to that ceremony for which I would be wearing the red Koromo and an embroidered Kesa. It was the end of many months of waiting and now finally the moment had come and I was going to be *Shokoshi* at the ceremony. Moments like these are rare.



Raise incense and present Dharma words

The next day we attended the usual morning service (*Choka*) in the typical Sojiji style

with the slow recitation of the *Daihishin Dhārani*. Afterwards the ceremonies in honor of Gasan Zenji were held. I officiated the first ceremony, where rice gruel was offered, just after the morning service and we finished with a group photo of the European participants in front of the big *Hatto*. Afterwards the other ceremonies were held.

What I remember most of all about the ceremony is, that even if it was held in the rich decor of Sojiji with its hangings and golden chandeliers, at its heart there is something fundamentally simple, a ceremony of offerings and gratitude. I would like to take the opportunity and thank the *Jisha* and the other monks for making sure that everything went smoothly. Even though for them it might have been routine, for kindness and exactitude they were exemplary, especially as these days came at the end of two weeks of intense ceremonies. As visitors, we all saw the huge efforts the monks of Sojiji had made over a long period of time.

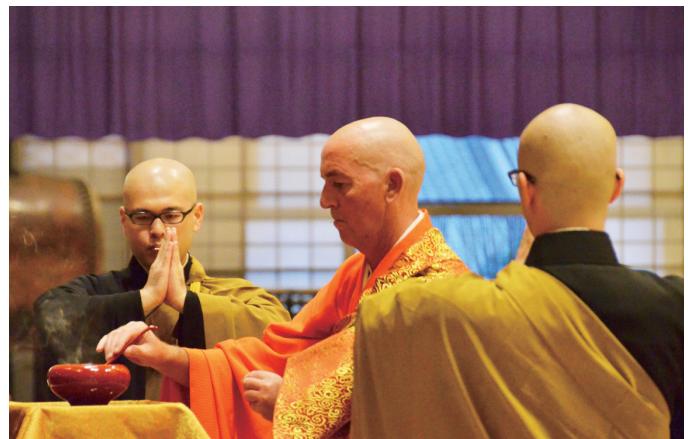
In fact, for me, participating in the Great Memorial Ceremony for Gasan Zenji was not so much a temporary impression, but rather a profound and lasting imprint. For us, this commemoration had begun in May 2014 with the preliminary ceremony for Gasan Zenji which had made us familiar with the person that was Gasan Zenji and taught us more about his history and role in the development of our school. In the West, we know the patriarchs Dogen Zenji and Keizan Zenji quite well but we are relatively unfamiliar with the masters who succeeded them and transmitted the Dharma up to the present time and to us.

When the preliminary ceremonies were

held we were informed that the office of the Great Memorial Ceremony of Sojiji had decided on “*Sojo*,” the transmission, as a general topic for the period from the Great Memorial Ceremony for Gasan Zenji in 2015 until the Great Memorial Ceremony for the 700th Anniversary of Keizan Zenji in 2024.

The topic of transmission, *Sojo*, resonates with us in this time of changing civilization and the establishment of Soto Zen in different parts of the world which are not originally Buddhist. It is significant that this topic has been chosen by Sojiji, which a century ago has been rebuilt at Yokohama, then the entrance to Japan, and which at least symbolically announced the diffusion of Zen into the West (Sojiji was rebuilt at Yokohama at the beginning of the 20th century after the buildings of the original Sojiji at Noto peninsula had burned down).

We are all well aware of the fact that in the West, it is necessary that we maintain an authentic transmission and at the same time adapt to a different environment and that this takes time. The topic of *Sojo* invites us to consider this very carefully. This is what I will remember most of all of my experience.



Offering rice gruel



## There and Here in Oneness

Raissa Pala Veras  
Brazil

Gasan Joseki Zenji (1276-1366) who was the Second Abbot of Daihonzan Sojiji, used to walk a long way to spread his knowledge. With the purpose of officiating at morning services in both Sojiji and Yokoji, Gasan Zenji used to hold services at Yokoji at midnight, and then cross a mountain, a fifty-two kilometer walk, to officiate at Sojiji afterward. During the Great Memorial Ceremony for the 650th Anniversary of Daihonzan Sojiji's Second Abbot Gasan Joseki Zenji, we could still perceive some of his footprints.

On the 21th and 22th of October, 2015, many practitioners from different continents met in the Great Memorial Ceremony and International Gathering at Sojiji. How many steps did anyone have to walk to be there? We could recognize in each person's expression the accomplishment of a long journey. How much movement? How much stillness? Moving images of steps across time and space crossed my mind.

Gasan Zenji passed away on the 20th of October, 1366. My country, Brazil, was discovered in 1500. Soto Zen was established in Brazil in 1955. The time gap between each of these events seemed to be so great. Can knowledge be kept for so long and travel so far? We know Buddha's footsteps moved from India through China and then to Japan. Nowadays there are all kinds of technology, fast transpor-

tation and sources of information, but at first everything must have been hard. We can also realize time and space as a concrete reality.

When I first walked on the perfectly shining pathways at Sojiji, I imagined the many monks who had done cleaning practice there, and the many practitioners from distant countries who had cleared their own paths in order to walk there as well, including images of dissemination who took their steps from this floor to serve in our countries. At that moment I observed coming and going with no dualism--just walking, an alive pulsation, overseas, a fulfillment of oneness though different life stories.



Workshop

Rev. Issho Fujita provided us with a great opportunity to clarify some basic fundamentals and to deepen the practice. We focused on the sitting posture and regulating the body in connection to others, considering "zazen as the dharma gate of joyful ease." The lecturer Mr. Yasushi Fujimoto was able to show us, through some simple exercises, how we can easily do our practice and be in contact with our colleagues. We worked in pairs. First, in a supine position,

one should place a chopstick at the most posterior teeth on the right side, holding it for some time. Facial muscles should be relaxed. And then, the same exercise should be done on the left side. We talked about the different body feelings and expressions. Then, with another pair, in a standing position, we tied a string around the abdomen and started to imagine that we were on the sea, facing the horizon. And then we could share experiences of being on the same sea, facing a broader horizon inside. Spaces kept being joined as a whole. We could feel that zazen is not a method which we learn following a manual, but is just practice itself. We realized effort was necessary, but it was a different kind of effort, something more spontaneous and natural as reinforced by Rev. Fujita's reference to "the gate of ease and joy."

During meals, we could feel objects and hands flowing, nourishing us. The old time tradition in present time was touching all senses. I looked around and saw known and unknown aspects. Each precious detail evoked a deep respect. How many steps had any single element taken to be there? How many other rituals had preceded this present meal, from planting vegetables to those creating those dishes? I observed the vegetables perfectly cut in harmony. A knife is a symbol which separates one thing from another--analyzing, distinguishing, discriminating, to show us the true way, and our hands holding the whole experience, touching the flow of life. Cutting and joining, separating and connecting.

As the chanting started, I felt the meal experience as a bridge and food as life, a concrete connection in colors, textures, tastes and

shapes coming together. A peaceful fulfillment stood as a reminder that we are life on Earth, beauty and rhythm offering themselves to the wholeness, tasting gratitude.

As a lay practitioner, I cannot describe much more about so many symbols shared during the memorial service for Gasan Zenji. But being among known rituals, known sutras and body postures, following our teachers, although we were in a different context, everything invited us to a belonging experience, beyond time and space. As long pathways are under construction at Sojiji, some long pathways are being built inside of us. Sometimes those old slippers slide, sometimes our thoughts push us out of our shining aisle, sometimes there is some noise of a new building, and mild and deep expressions confuse us. We are always under construction and cleaning. Children and the elderly are as one, form and space in emptiness, local and foreigner as the universal simple truth, with no dualism between inside and outside, here and there, me and the other. Whole-hearted and sincere, I feel Gasan Joseki's footprints have been kept fresh and alive.



Attending the Great Memorial Ceremony for  
Gasan Joseki Zenji



## The 7th Chapter of Shobogenzo *Ikka-myōju* (One Bright Jewel) Lecture (3)

Rev. Shohaku Okumura  
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(Edited by Rev. Shoryu Bradley)

In the last two issues, I discussed the meaning of the expression “One Bright Jewel” in the history of Chinese Zen and Dogen’s criticism of the traditional understanding of the phrase in Chinese Zen. Those comments are based mainly on the studies of Soto Zen scholars at Komazawa University, particularly the writings by Professor Shudo Ishii. I also studied many works of Professor Seizan Yanagida, Yoshitaka Iriya and other scholars of Chinese Zen. Now we are ready to read the text of Dogen’s *One Bright Jewel*.

### 【1】玄沙師備 (Xuansha Shabei)

[Text] (1)

娑婆世界大宋国、福州玄沙山院宗一大師、  
法諱師備、俗姓者謝なり。

The Great Master Zongyi (Shuitsu) [lived] at Mt. Xuansha (Gensha), in Fu Province, in Great Song China, in this Saha World; his dharma name was Shabei (Shibi) and his family name was Xie (Sha).

在家のそのかみ釣魚を愛し、舟を南台江にうかべて、もろもろのつり人にならひけり。

When he was a lay person, he loved fishing. He fished on his boat, mingling with other fishermen on the Nantai River.

不釣自上の金鱗を不待にもありけん。

He might not have been waiting [for fish,] even for the golden-scaled fish that comes up by itself without being lured.

唐の感通のはじめ、たちまちに出塵をねがふ。

In the beginning of the Xiantong (Kantsu) era (860-873) of the Tang dynasty, he suddenly wished to leave the dusty world.

舟をすてて山にいる。

He left his boat behind and entered the mountains.

そのとし三十歳になりけり。

He was thirty years old at the time.

浮世のあやうきをさとり、仏道の高貴をしりぬ。

He realized the precariousness of the transient world and knew the lofty preciousness of the Buddha Way.

つひに雪峰山にのぼりて、真覚大師に参じて、昼夜に辨道す。

He finally went up to Mt. Xuefeng (Seppo) and devoted himself to the wholehearted practice of the Way day and night under the guidance of the Great Master Zhenjue (Shinkaku).

### Identifying Xuansha Shabei

In this first paragraph, Dogen presents the life of Zen Master Xuansha Shabei (Gensha Shibi, 玄沙師備, 835-908) up until he practiced with his master Xuefeng Yicun (Seppo Gison, 雪峰義存, 822-908). The oldest biography of Xuansha is an epitaph written by Lincheng in 930 CE, 22 years after Xuansha’s death. His biography is also included in Volume 10 of *Zutang Ji* (*Sodoshu*, 祖堂集, *Anthology of the Patriarch Hall*), compiled in 952 CE, and volume 18 of *Jingde chuandeng lu* (*Keitoku Dentoroku*, 景德伝灯録, *Record of the Transmission of the Lamp Compiled During the Jingde Period*), compiled in 1004 CE.

According to Lincheng, Xuansha was born in 835 CE in Ming County of Fujian Province. His family name was Xie (Sha, 謝) and his Dharma name was Shibei. According to Lincheng's biography of Xuansha, he was the third son of the Xie family.<sup>1</sup> When Shibei was twenty-six years old, a Zen monk named Yitong from the monastery of Mt. Furong visited the family.<sup>2</sup> Shibei and Yitong talked all night. Due to this conversation with the monk, Shibei wanted to become a Zen monk and repeatedly asked his parents to allow him to leave home. With his parents' agreement, Shibei went to Mt. Furong with the monk. The abbot of the monastery was Furong Lingxun (Fuyo Reikun, ? - ?), Mazu's Dharma grandson. Lingxun established this monastery on Mt. Furong in 833 CE. In 863, at the age of twenty-nine, Shibei became a monk under Lingxun. In the next year, he traveled to a temple in Jiangxi Province and received the Vinaya Precepts from the Vinaya master Daoxuan. He then returned to Mt. Furong and continued to practice with Lingxun.

While Shibei was practicing at Mt. Furong in 866, Xuefeng Yicun (822-908), the Dharma heir of Deshan Xuanjian (782-865), visited the monastery and practiced there for a while. Yicun appreciated Shibe's sincere practice and called him Bei-toutuo (Bi-zuda). "Toutuo" (頭陀) is a transliteration of the Sanskrit word *dhuta*, which means "ascetic practice" or "a practitioner who practices twelve ascetic practices". Yicun moved to Mt. Xuefeng to found his own monastery in 870. In 872, Shibei went to Mt. Xuefeng and began to help Yicun establish it. At that time Shibei became a disciple of Yicun.

### Was Shibei a Fisherman?

In neither the earliest biography of Lincheng nor the biography found in *Zutang-ji* is it written that Shibei was a fisherman before becoming a monk. But in *Jingde chuandeng lu* we read:

*Since he (Shibei) was young, he loved fishing. He fished on his small boat mingling with other fishermen on the Nantai River. In the beginning of the Xiantong (Kantsu) era (860-873) of the Tang dynasty, when he was thirty years old, he suddenly wished to leave the dusty world. He left his fishing boat behind, visited Zen Master Lingxun on Mt. Furong and shaved his head.*

Dogen uses this information from *Jingde chuandeng lu* in this writing *One Bright Jewel*. It seems biographies dating before 1004 did not mention that Shibei was once a fisherman.

There are several accounts of an interesting story relating how and why Shibei the fisherman became a monk. The modern Soto Zen Master Bokusan Nishiari, for example, talked about the story in *Shobgenzo Keiteki*,<sup>3</sup> his commentary on *One Bright Jewel*.

According to *Shobgenzo Keiteki*, Shibei was a son of a poor fisherman. Since a child he worked with his father fishing on a small boat. One night his father fell into the river. Even though Shibei stretched a bamboo rod into the water in an attempt to save him, instead of helping him it pushed his father farther down into the water. When he saw his father had drowned, he saw impermanence. He left the boat where it was and entered the mountains to

become a Zen monk. According to Nishiari's story, Shibei thought that if he had saved his father, both he and his father would have had to continue to fish for the rest of their lives, creating evil karma by killing living beings. Then both of them would have continued to be reborn in the evil realms of samsara. Since he did not save his father from drowning and became a monk, however, he was able to free his father from transmigration in samsara. Shibei reasoned that In the long run this would bring about a better result.

Professor Seizan Yanagida discussed the same story in one of his books.<sup>4</sup> Yanagida wrote that this story appears in the General Discourse of Dahui, the Rinzai Zen Master of the 11th century.

Dahui said he read the story in a novel. As in the *Shobogenzo Keiteki* version, when Shibei's father fell into the river Shibei tried to help him but was unable to save him, and his father drowned. Shibei then made up his mind to become a monk. He wished to study the ultimate Way and save his father who would possibly be reborn into a painful realm because he killed many fish working as a fisherman. Shibei subsequently became Xuefeng Yicun's disciple, attained the Way, expound the Dharma and helped many people.

Many years later, according to the story, a person died and went to the world of the dead. He saw an empty jail with a signboard stating that the jail was for Xuansha.

The person asked the prison guard, "Why is this called the prison of Xuansha?"

The guard said, "The third son of the Xie family could not help his father when he fell into the river. We are waiting for him to come down here."

The person said, "Xuansha died many years ago. Why is this jail still empty?"

The guard said, "I don't know. What did he do while he was alive?"

The person said, "I heard from my ancestor that he attained enlightenment and helped many people."

When the guard heard this, he put his hand on his forehead. Then suddenly the wind blew and the jail disappeared.

According to Yanagida, this story was invented sometime in the Song dynasty in order to respond to a question from Chinese society: why does Buddhism encourage people to leave home, abandoning filial piety? Basically the answer from Buddhists was that if one person left home to become a monk, nine generations of that person's family members would be reborn in a heavenly realm. Not only this story about Xuansha, but similar stories about Huangbo Xiyun and Dongshan Liangjie abandoning their mothers were also created in the Song Dynasty.

Anyway, there are various versions of the story of Xuansha's life that are the same as Zen koan stories about him. Dogen, however, as in other of his writings, is in *One Bright Jewel* creating his own unique version of a well known story. It seems Dogen was not interested in the story of Shibei and his father's death. I think Dogen knew that Zen stories were invented and gradually developed by

people living in later eras to make the stories more interesting and meaningful. Unlike we modern people, It seems he does not care which stories are historically true. We therefore don't need to believe that what he writes here actually happened. Rather, he uses all of the information as material to express his understanding and insight of the Dharma.

Another interesting point about Dogen's version of Shibeī's life concerns Shibeī's enlightenment. As we will see, Dogen emphasized Shibeī's experience of injuring his toe, but in the *Jingde chuandeng lu* that incident is not mentioned at all. Rather, it said Shibeī clarified the "mind-ground" (or "mind-nature") by reading the *Shurangama Sutra*. As I discussed in the last issue, Dogen did not appreciate this sutra, saying it includes non-Buddhist teachings, specifically its teachings of original, permanent, and never-defiled "mind-nature", also known as "original-nature", "self-nature", "mind-source", etc. Therefore, Dogen deletes the sentence in *Jingde chuandeng lu* regarding Shibeī's enlightenment, even when he describes Shibeī's life according to that text. The scholar Shudo Ishi wrote regarding Dogen's intentional deletion of the connection between Shibeī and the *Shuramgama Sutra*, "Dogen Zenji tells a lie, to use a common expression."<sup>5</sup>

## Without Being Lured

In this paragraph, Dogen writes an interesting sentence, "He might not have been waiting [for fish,] even for the golden-scaled fish that comes up by itself without being lured." Dogen writes this sentence because he thinks Shibeī was a fisherman. Shibeī's life as a fisherman did

not consist of waiting for something magnificent to happen. While working as a fisherman, he just worked wholeheartedly. As Dogen writes in *Genjokoan*, firewood stays at the dharma position of firewood. Although the time of it being a live tree existed before it became firewood, and the time that it will become ash after being burned will come in the future, before and after are nonetheless cut off. This present moment is simply and absolutely only this present moment. The live tree is no longer here anymore; the ash has not yet come. Being a fisherman is not a preparatory stage for becoming a monk.

The "golden-scaled fish" is the bodhi-mind that transforms a fisherman into a bodhisattva. And "to come up without being lured" means to come up without biting some kind of bait. Often our activity is motivated by a desire to get something that we want. When we pursue this something we become like a fish lured by a fisherman's bait. In the same way a fish is caught because it pursues some bait, we are caught when we pursue an object of our desires. When we want to get something and make it our possession, we "bite the bait", and in biting this bait we are caught.

In the common way of thinking, there are three things involved in this process: a fisherman, the bait, and a fish. A fisherman wants to capture a fish and the fish wants to eat the bait. The relationship between these things involves subjects and objects. When the subject and object "contact" each other, each takes action based on its desires. That is how our lives become "running"; we are continually chasing

after something or escaping from something.

In this case, however, Dogen is of course talking about “biting” the Dharma. That means no one tried to lure Shibei but he instead “bit” the Dharma by himself. That is what “the golden-scaled fish comes up without being lured” means. In this case there is no subject-object separation and no taking of actions based on desires. And yet Dogen made another twist in his interpretation: he writes that Shibei did not even wait for any such golden-scaled fish that comes up without being lured. That means he was just enjoying fishing; his fishing was not a means to get a golden-scaled fish. He rather was just fishing as a fisherman when he was a fisherman, and somehow he came to find this way of life was not precious. He therefore became like a fish, “coming up” by himself. But that doesn’t mean he was waiting for this to happen. He had no plan or intention for it to happen, yet it happened naturally.

According to the oldest biography of Shibei, he was “lured” by the Zen monk from Mt. Furong. The day after they talked all night, probably about their lives, the dharma and their practice, Shibei asked his parents to allow him to become a monk. So I think he actually was “lured”. But Dogen’s statement about the fish coming up “without being lured” is a literary expression of sorts that he uses to express how Shibei encountered the Dharma.

### My Experience of “Being Reeled In”

Often when we start to practice we feel we are being lured. In my case, when I was a teenager I had many questions about life and I

doubted almost everything in it, and I was critical of many things happening at that time in Japanese society and all over the world. Because I doubted everything, I couldn’t find anything I really want to do. I felt I was completely lost. Then I had a chance to read Uchiyama Roshi’s book, *Jiko*, and afterwards I somehow wanted to become his disciple, even though I knew nothing of Buddhism, Zen, or the meaning of practice. Yet for some reason I wanted to live as he lived. I had a kind of appetite or hunger created by my doubts or some feeling of emptiness. I “bit” Uchiyama Roshi’s book and I was “hooked” and “reeled in”. I felt somehow this was not of my own doing or desire because I didn’t even know what it means to become a monk or to practice zazen. Rather I felt as if I was being sucked into that way of life, and I never returned after entering. I was reeled in like a fish.

But from another side, no one lured me. Uchiyama Roshi wrote his book about his own journey of searching for the Way, explaining what he discovered and how he found it. Then he simply continued to practice the Way. That’s all. He had no intention of fishing for people. But somehow I bit the bait. Probably we can say there is no one fishing, and yet somehow we are nonetheless lured. It’s an interesting and strange thing.

I think the same thing has happened to people in the United States. Fifty or sixty years ago, some Buddhist teachers came to this country from Asia, including Zen masters from Japan. Somehow American people bit these Buddhist teachings and the various kinds of

meditation practices. I'm not sure whether those Buddhist teachers tried to fish for those young American people or if American people just bit because of their appetites. Which is which? Did someone plan this? Or did it just naturally happen? I don't think anyone created a plan for some American people to accept Buddhism, and yet it happened. So no one is fishing and yet somehow we are reeled in.

## Leaving the Dusty world

[text]

*In the beginning of the Xiantong (Kantsu) era (860-873) of the Tang dynasty, he suddenly wished to leave the dusty world. He left his boat behind and entered the mountains. He was thirty years old at the time. He realized the precariousness of the transient world and knew the lofty preciousness of the buddha way.*

“The dusty world” refers to the mundane world, that is, samsara. Shakyamuni Buddha left his father’s palace because he woke up to the realities of suffering: living, aging, sickness, and dying. He wished to find the Way of release from this suffering. Fifty years later, on the evening of his passing away, Shakyamuni said to Subhadra,

*“When I was twenty-nine, Subhadra,  
I left home to seek the good.  
Now more than fifty years have passed, Subhadra,  
Since I renounced the world.  
I have walked only the realm of the correct principle and the Dhamma.  
Outside that, there is no Wayfarer.”<sup>6</sup>*

Just as the Prince Gotama (Shakyamuni) left his father’s palace and became a mendicant when he was twenty-nine years old, at twenty-six Shihui left his small fishing boat and entered the mountains to search for the Way. As a fisherman entering the mountains, he had to give up everything he had learned and experienced in the mundane world. A fisherman in the mountains was really good-for-nothing. He had to begin learning everything again from zero. He became determined to find the Way because “he realized the precariousness of the transient world.” This determination has been the foundation of the transmission of Buddhism for twenty-five hundred years in India, China, and many Asian countries, and this transmission today continues to many other countries throughout the world. When we see the “precariousness” of the mundane world, we seek some place we can go to find the *good*, and we can find that place in the Dharma.

When we see the impermanence of all beings, including ourselves, we see that nothing is secure, that nothing lasts forever since things are always changing. We then see that clinging to certain things and living only for the sake of making ourselves wealthy, famous and in a high position are not ultimately fulfilling as the goals of our life. When we see this precariousness, some of us become monks and some of us try to find some kind of work for the benefit of all beings rather than for the sake of personal fame and profit. When we see the impermanence of all beings and things in the world, we wish to transform our way of life, and becoming a Buddhist monk is one of the choices we have to make this transformation. Becoming a monk is

not the only alternative, but somehow in the case of Shibeī he chose this way. For him, being a monk was a lofty and precious way of life.

One event that contributed to my wanting to become a monk was my friend's death. One of my classmates in high school died from cancer when he was seventeen years old. When I talked about becoming a monk to my mother, she said, "Why don't you become a doctor?" I think my mother considered becoming a monk in response to my friend dying was going too far. Perhaps becoming a doctor might have been a good decision, but somehow becoming a monk seemed the only possible choice for me, even though I did not know what it meant.

A few years later, when I read Uchiyama Roshi's book entitled *The Zen Teaching of Homeless Kodo*, I found this saying by Sawaki Roshi: "We should not forget that modern scientific culture has developed on the basis of our lowest consciousness."

In the same book, Uchiyama Roshi made this comment on the lowest level of human consciousness:

*"The historian Arnold Toynbee said, 'Our modern scientific culture has increased the speed of Adam's original sin with explosive energy. That is all. And we have never released ourselves from original sin.' Real human advancement would liberate us from our lowest consciousness, which says, 'I want to gain everything without working hard. To do that, I'm ready to fight.'*

When I read this article, I thought I under-

stood why I wanted to become a monk. It seemed to me that modern civilization puts too much emphasis on progress and reaching some goal. In this structure of life, the basic driving force is dissatisfaction. We don't like who we are or the condition we are in, and we therefore are unsatisfied. We think if we work hard and get something or achieve something, we will be satisfied and happy. Then we start to run. When we live in this way, we are driven by the three poisonous minds: greed, anger or hatred, and ignorance. That is what Sawaki Roshi meant by "the lowest consciousness." Our life becomes a competition between who we are and who we want to be, and we also compete with other people who want the same kind of things. This world of competition is really *precarious*.

As Uchiyama Roshi said, real human advancement would liberate us from our lowest consciousness, the three poisonous minds. That is what Dogen meant when he wrote, "[Shibeī] knew the lofty preciousness of the buddha way.

After entering the mountains and becoming a monk, Shibeī met his true teacher, Xue-feng Yicun, and practiced with him diligently. Since they had practiced together under the guidance of Furong, originally the two were more like co-practitioners or Dharma brothers rather than teacher and disciple. Shibeī was only ten years younger than Yicun, so their relationship was not like a father and son. Yicun moved to Mt. Xuefeng and began to establish his own monastery in 870. Shibeī joined Yicun in 872 and helped Yicun from the outset to found a new monastery. Even years later, Shibeī was like a younger brother to

Yicun and was sometimes critical of him.

## Shibei's Awakening

### [Text]

(2)

あるとき、あまねく諸方を参徹せんため、囊をたづさへて出嶺するちなみに、脚指を石に築著して、流血し、通楚するに、忽然として猛省していはく、「是身非有、痛自何来」。「《是の身有に非ず、痛み何れよりか来れる》」。

Once he was leaving the mountain carrying his traveling bag to visit masters widely in the various regions and to thoroughly study [the Way]. On his way, he stubbed his toe on a stone. As it bled with terrible pain, he suddenly had a profound insight and said, "This body is not existent. Where does this pain come from?"

すなはち雪峰にかへる。

He immediately went back to Seppo (Xuefeng).

Probably in 875 when the construction of the new monastery on Mt. Xuefeng was nearly done, Yicun recommended Shibeи make a pilgrimage to various regions to visit Zen masters. According to older texts, Shebei did not really want to do this, but because Yicun repeated this instruction four times, Shibeи accepted. Yicun was famous for his visiting many Zen masters in various places. It was said that Yicun visited Touzi Datong (819-914) three times and Dongshan Liangjie (807-869) nine times and many other Zen masters besides his own teacher Deshan. Shibeи, however, did not practice with any other masters after he met Yicun.

According to *Zutangji*, the first collection

of Zen masters' biography and sayings made in 952, he left the monastery on Mt. Xuefeng to begin making his pilgrimage, however he stumbled on a stone and injured his toe before leaving the mountain. Upon having the terrible pain, suddenly he had an awakening. He said, "Bodhidharma did not come; the Second Ancestor did not receive [the transmission]." He climbed up a tree to look in the direction of Jiangxi and said, "What shall I do with your mother?" Then he returned to Yicun's monastery. I don't really understand what "What shall I do with your mother," means. In the *Record of Transmission of the Lamp*, as I mentioned above, this story is missing.

Dogen takes the newer version of this story from the *Liandenghuiyao* (*Rentoeyo*, 聯燈会要), the third of the five lamp history texts, compiled in 1189. There the story is almost exactly the same as what Dogen writes here:

*[Xuansha Shibeи] first met Xuefeng. Later he wanted to widely travel various regions to visit masters. He was leaving the mountain carrying his traveling bag. He stubbed his toe on a stone. As it bled with terrible pain, he suddenly had a profound insight and said, "This body is not existent. Where does this pain come from?" He immediately went back to Seppo (Xuefeng).*

The only difference in this text is that Shibeи went on pilgrimage due to his own motivation rather than the encouragement of Yicun. This might change the meaning of Shibeи's experience a little bit.

Shibei's experience of pain is one example of "contact," one of the important links in the Twelve-fold Chain, a Buddhist teaching of dependent origination. Because of "contact" between sense organs and their objects, we have various sensations such as love and hatred, and grasping and clinging; then our life becomes unstable, moving up and down between success and failure in the cycle of samsara. Physical pain is a particularly undesirable sensation. No one loves pain. And it is not just the feeling of pain that is distressful when we have a painful experience. We usually start to think, for example, "I have to go to such and such place to do such and such thing, but now I am injured and cannot go. What shall I do?" This is the kind of story we create in our mind and it makes us think we are in trouble.

Shibei directly saw his pain itself instead of getting involved in a story about the pain—he didn't fret about the fact that his teacher had asked him to visit monasteries widely—he didn't say to himself, "I left his temple a few hours ago, but now because of this accident I cannot visit other temples. If I go back to the monastery my teacher will be angry. Then ...."

Such story making is almost always happening in our minds. Instead of facing the pain directly, we start to create a story about it. We become upset and we don't know what to do. This makes our life suffering in samsara. But Shibei directly faced his pain, seeing that his body did not really exist. And not only the body but also the mind is not really existent. That is what emptiness means. Our life is simply a collection of the five skandhas which

make up the body and mind. And Mahayana sutras such as the Heart Sutra teach that even the five skandhas are empty. But somehow our pain is so real, fresh and powerful. What is this? Where does this pain come from?

Pain is always very fresh and powerful. And yet when we try to find where the "pain" is, there's no such thing we can call pain. I have a problem with my knees, for example, and when I sit I have some pain in them, but I don't know if the pain is in my knees or in my mind. Where is it? When I take a painkiller I don't feel the pain. Does that mean the pain ceases to exist, or is the pain still there and I simply don't feel it? Which is true? We don't really know if the pain is in my knee or in my mind.

Not only pain, but sound is also empty. For example, Dogen introduces in *Shobogenzo Inmo (Thusness)* a famous kōan story in which two Indian ancestors talked about the sound of a wind bell. They watched as the big wind-bell hanging from a roof of the temple building blew in the wind.

The teacher, Sanghanandi, asked his students, "You hear the sound. Is the bell ringing or is the wind ringing?" Then the student Geyasata said, "Neither the bell nor the wind, but my mind is ringing."

Dogen questions this answer of the student and then negates all possible answers. Some vibration of the bell and then the air is made when the wind and the bell make contact. Is the sound already there or not? If it's already there, then the sound is there whether we hear

it or not. But is the sound there before the waves of the air reach my ear? Before the waves of air reach my ear it's just a movement of the air. Without a hearer, does the sound exist? When we really try to find out where the sound is, in the bell, the wind or in our mind, this becomes a really interesting question. Basically Dogen says that the entire universe is ringing.

Pain is the same as sound in this way. Also color, taste and smells are the same. Where are they? Without this body and mind, is there sound? To me this is really interesting because living beings only appeared on this planet several billion years ago. Before that there were no living beings to hear the sounds, name them, think about them and evaluate them. Was sound already there, or did sound just start to exist when human beings began to live on this planet? Unless listeners are present, what we would otherwise call "sound" is only the vibration of the air. Sound didn't exist before listeners; all was completely silent. Only when I hear the sound does the vibration of the air become a sound. Some vibrations make me happy, and some vibrations make me sad, and some vibrations make me angry. What is this? It's really interesting and mysterious. When we try to grasp it, it disappears. It's nowhere. The sound is not in the bell, the sound is not in the wind, and the sound is not in our mind.

Shibei asked "Where does this pain from?" We can infer that he answered, "From nowhere." He understood that his body and mind did not really exist, and yet there was pain in his toe or in his mind.

We also might understand that the body and mind don't really exist, and yet pain can be a big problem for us. In my case, it sometimes controls my life or transforms my way of life. I could sit cross-legged comfortably for more than forty years, for example. But the last several years I have been sitting on a chair in the zendo because I have knee pain. This is a big and significant change to me.

What Shibei realized here is that both his body and the stone were empty, therefore the pain was also empty. And yet his pain was overwhelmingly powerful. "Where does this pain come from?" was not a question but rather his exclamation of his realization of the reality of form-and-emptiness. There were not two or more separate, independent things, therefore there was no "contact." The pain was not only in his toe or in his mind or in both; the entire universe was nothing other than pain. His five skandhas (body and mind) were dropped off, becoming free from self-clinging based on separation between subject and object, self and others, here and there. Then he found there was no longer any reason to travel here and there, visiting teachers to study dharma. Since wherever he went the pain or other things would always be with him, he had no need to study with various teachers. Immediately after this he went right back to the monastery –probably he didn't want to go on pilgrimage from the beginning.

### **Uchiyama Roshi's experience of pain**

I'd like to introduce one very concrete, practical teaching about pain. This is from Uchiyama Roshi. He wrote a collection of

essays on Dogen's teachings in *Tenzo Kyōkun* (*Instructions for the Cook*) entitled *Refining Your Life*. In one section he talks about Dogen's teachings of "Other people are not me" and "If I can't do it now, when else can I do it?" These are two sayings of the old *tenzo* monk who was working one hot summer afternoon on his temple grounds drying mushrooms. After lunch Dogen found this old monk working under the sun on a very hot day.

He asked, "You are quite old, why don't you let younger people do this hard work?"

The *tenzo* said, "Other people are not me."

Dogen asked the *tenzo*, "Why do you need to do it now, when in the evening it might be a little cooler."

Then the *tenzo* said, "If I don't do it now, when can I do it?"

When Uchiyama Roshi explained the meaning of this teaching, "only the self, here and now," he introduced an experience he had of pain. It was related to begging (*takuhatsu*), which he did for many years to support his practice. When we practice *takuhatsu*, we wear straw sandals with bare feet and hold our *oryoki* (begging bowl) as we walk down the street saying "ho." We stop and stand in front of each house or shop.

Uchiyama Roshi told of something that happened to him while he was doing *takuhatsu* sometime around 1952, seven years after the end of World War II. Japan was still very poor at this time and begging was very difficult. Uchiyama Roshi said there were many professional beggars then, so he had lots of competition.

One day while on his way back to his home temple, Antaiji, after doing *takuhatsu* he hit his toe on a rock, just as Shibei did in the mountains. But Uchiyama Roshi's case was much more serious. His toe was injured more severely. When he returned to Antaiji, he just washed the injury and took a rest for several days. After a few days, since the injury seemed to be healing, he went to do *takuhatsu* again. While he was walking it started to rain, and when his foot became wet an infection set in. When he returned to the temple his foot began to swell and he experienced terrible pain. The pain increased more and more until it became almost violent. He wrote about his experience as follows:

Finally the pain became worse and I developed a high fever. It got so bad that I could no longer lie face-up because the pain from the toe went directly to my head. I piled up several quilts and laid on them. Though it was a cold November I could not stand clothing or blankets because of the fever and pain all through the left side of my body. I kept naked, cooling myself with the cold air, and suffered through this without a drop of sleep for three days and three nights. I frequently thought, well, if I am going to die then I'll just die. But anyway, I was unable to see a doctor. Particularly during those days, the money I received from begging just would not have been enough to pay a doctor's bill. ....The following is something I wrote shortly after the incident:

### Suffering a Foot Injury

If I had a wife to care for me,  
If my parents were near,  
If I had money,  
I wouldn't have suffered.  
In my dust-covered room  
laying on ragged quilts  
recalling Job –  
“I can bear this hard pain” –  
I am grateful.

People worry –  
“what if I lose my savings,”  
“what if I become ill,  
lose my job?”  
Always framing their thoughts,  
“what if...”  
They're afraid though their fears  
are groundless.  
Though I'm ill,  
without savings,  
or income,  
unable to eat,  
even if I starved  
I wouldn't think it strange.  
And just for that  
I'm grateful.

Usually when we are in this kind of situation we make up a story around it and worry about what will happen. Then we become more and more overwhelmed and may even become increasingly depressed. But Uchiyama Roshi didn't fall into such a vicious circle. He only experienced his pain, avoiding making up this kind of fabricated story. So he simply faced this pain.

After introducing this poem he wrote:

Through this experience I realized that when I stopped fighting the pain and just let it be inside of me, the burden of the suffering would be lifted. I have always felt this was an extremely valuable experience in my life.<sup>7</sup>

In this experience he was released from suffering because he didn't follow fabricated stories but rather just faced himself, here and now. Basically this is what Dogen is saying here in *One Bright Jewel*.

But if Uchiyama Roshi thought that whenever he encountered some kind of painful situation he would be free from suffering because he had this experience, that would be a delusion. So we have to meet and encounter every experience one by one, moment by moment, one at a time.

Yet usually we have a kind of fantasy that if we attain so-called enlightenment and find the bright jewel inside of us, we will no longer have any problems. That is a problem. Dogen is writing a kind of caution here, saying there's no such thing as an enlightenment that can be preserved or frozen in the freezer and later taken out again when we need to use it.

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<sup>1</sup> This biography is included in Gensha Koroku ge (editorial supervision by Yoshitaka Iriya, Zen Bunka Kenkyusho, Kyoto, 1999). In the biography of Shibe, Yoshio Nishiguchi says that Shibe's family was rich (Gensha Koroku jo), p.240.

<sup>2</sup> This mountain is different from Mt. Furong in Shantong Province where the famous Caodong Zen Master Furong Daokai later lived during the Song Dynasty.

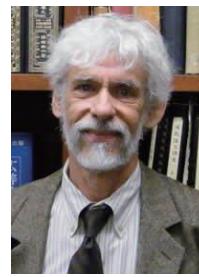
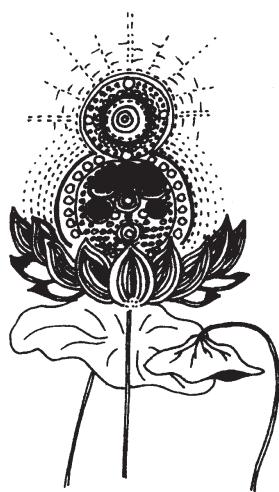
<sup>3</sup> Shobogenzo Keiteki, jokan (Bokusan Nishiari, Daihorinkaku, Tokyo, 1965), p.350.

<sup>4</sup> Sodo-shu Monogatari: Zoku Junzen no Jidai. (Zen Bunka Kenkyusho, Kyoto, 1985)p.215.

<sup>5</sup> Chugoku Zenshu-shi wa:Shinji Shobogenzo ni manabu (Zen Bunka Kenkyusho, Kyoto, 1988), p. 488.

<sup>6</sup> Gotama Buddha: A Biography Based on the Most Reliable Texts, Volume 2, by Hajime Nakamura (translated by Gauynor Sekimori, Kosei Publishing CO., Tokyo, 2005), p.151.

<sup>7</sup> Dogen and Uchiyama; From the Zen Kitchen to Enlightenment: Refining Your Life, pp. 79-81.



## Treasury of the True Dharma Eye Book 69

### The Samādhi of Self Verification *Jishō zanmai*

Translated by  
Carl Bielefeldt

#### *Introduction*

This fascicle was composed in the spring of 1244, at Kippōji in Echizen. It represents number 69 of the 75-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō* and number 75 of the vulgate edition. Likely because of its politically sensitive content, it does not appear in the “expurgated” 60-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō* redaction and is found, rather, as book 17 in the “secret” 28-fascicle collection.

The title of the fascicle, *jishō zanmai*, is not a common expression: while it occurs occasionally in the East Asian tantric literature, it is not favored in Chan texts and is not used by Dōgen elsewhere. Like the English “self verification,” the term *jishō* is ambiguous and could be understood as indicating a validating experience “of oneself,” “by oneself” or “for oneself.” Dōgen emphasizes here that the Buddhist study of the self is not done on one’s own but always guided by scripture and the instruction of teachers. Moreover, it is not done solely for one’s own edification but also in order to share that study with others.

These remarks occupy the first half of his essay. For the remainder of the piece, Dōgen engages in an *ad hominem* attack on the influential twelfth-century Chan figure Dahui Zonggao, who liked to use the expression “self verifi-

cation and self awakening.” Dōgen dismisses him as an ambitious lightweight, never certified by his teachers. Dahui was the teacher of Zhuoan Deguang (1121-1203), whose Japanese dharma descendants made up the leadership of Dōgen’s community; and this section is often read as a contribution to their re-education. Dahui was in the Linji lineage; and Dōgen ends his essay with the claim that only his own Caodong lineage represents the line of direct descent of the buddhas and ancestors.

### The Samādhi of Self Verification

From the buddhas, from the Seven Buddhas, what buddha after buddha and ancestor after ancestor has correctly transmitted is the samādhi of practice and verification. It is what is called “whether from a friend, whether from a scripture”; this is the eye of the buddhas and ancestors.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore,

The Old Buddha of Caoqi [I.e., the Sixth Ancestor, Huineng (638-713)] asked the monk [Nanyue Huairang (677-744)], “Is it [i.e., “what comes like this”] contingent on practice and verification?”

The monk answered, “It’s not that it lacks practice and verification, but they can’t defile it.”

Thus, we know that undefiled practice and verification are the buddhas and ancestors, are the thunder and lightening of the samādhi of the buddha and ancestors.

At the very moment of “whether from a friend,” we may see half his face; we may see half his body; we may see his whole face; we

may see his whole body. There is seeing half oneself; there is seeing half the other. We verify that the spirit’s head is “clad in fur”; we practice that the demon’s face is “crowned by horns.”<sup>2</sup> There is the “coming along with it” of the “moving of alien types”; there is the going on transforming of those “born together.” In such circumstances, we do not know how many thousand of myriads of times we “discard the body for the sake of the dharma”; we do not know how many millions of hundreds of kalpas we seek the dharma for the sake of our bodies. This is the way of life of “whether from a friend,” the circumstances of “attending the self and following the self.” Upon seeing him [i.e., Śākyamuni] blink, he [Mahākāśyapa] “broke into a smile”; he [i.e., the Second Ancestor, Huike] paid obeisance to getting the marrow [of Bodhidharma] and “cut off his arm.”

More generally, before and after the Seven Buddhas, to the left and right of the Sixth Ancestor, the friends in excess who have seen themselves are not one, are not two; the friends who have seen the other are not past, are not present.

At the time of “whether from a role of scripture,” when we investigate our own “skin, flesh, bones, and marrow” and slough off our own “skin, flesh, bones, and marrow,” the peach blossoms and the eye themselves are seen to come popping out; the bamboo sound and the ear themselves are heard to thunder.<sup>3</sup> In general, when we study from a scripture, the scripture truly emerges. This “scripture” means the entire world in the ten directions; “the mountains, rivers, and the whole earth”; grass and trees, self and other; it is taking food and wearing robes, hasty acts and demeanor. In studying

the way from each one of these scriptures, so many thousands of myriads of previously non-existent scriptures appear before us. They have passages in positive terms, exactly so; they have verses in negative terms, distinctly so. Having been able to encounter them, when we take up body and mind and study them, though we may exhaust long kalpas and take up long kalpas, there will invariably be an unobstructed destination. When we cast aside body and mind and study them, though we may gouge out the portents and jump free from the portents, the merit of receiving and upholding them will invariably be attained.

At present, the translations of the Sanskrit texts of the Western Heavens [i.e., India] into the dharma books of the Eastern Land [i.e., China] do not amount to half a myriad spindles [i.e., 5000 scrolls]. There are the [texts of] three vehicles, the five vehicles, the nine sections, the twelve sections. They are all scriptures we should follow and study; even if we try to avoid following them, we cannot. Hence, they have become the eye, or become “my marrow”; they are right at the horns and right at the tail. Though we may receive them from another or confer them on another, it is just the vital emergence of the eye, sloughing off self and other; it is just the bequest of “my marrow,” liberated from self and other. Because the eye and “my marrow” are not self and are not other, the buddhas and ancestors have directly transmitted them from the past to the past, and bequeath them from the present to the present. There are staff scriptures; preaching horizontally and preaching vertically, they themselves break up emptiness and break up being. There are whisk scriptures; they clean off

the snow and clean off the frost.<sup>4</sup> There are one or two assemblies of seated meditation scriptures; there is one roll or ten spindles of *kāśaya* scriptures. These are what the buddhas and ancestors protect and maintain. Following such scriptures, they practice and verify and attain the way. Causing a deva face or a human face, or a sun face or moon face, the work of following scripture is realized.

Nevertheless, whether one follows a friend or follows scripture, they are both following oneself. Scriptures are themselves scriptures of oneself; friends are themselves friends of oneself. Therefore, to study widely with a friend is to study widely with oneself; to take up the hundred grasses is to take up oneself; to take up the myriad trees is to take up oneself. We study that one’s self is always such concentrated effort. In this study, we slough off our selves, we accord with and verify our selves.

Based on this, in the great way of the buddhas and ancestors, there is a tool for self verification and self awakening that is not directly transmitted by those who are not buddhas and ancestors of direct succession; there is a tool inherited by successor after successor that is not directly transmitted to those who are not the bones and marrow of the buddhas and ancestors. Because we study in this way, when we transmit it to someone, there is a bequest of [Bodhidharma’s saying to Huike,] “you’ve got my marrow”; it is [Śākyamuni’s saying,] “I have a Treasury of the True Dharma Eye, which I bequeath to Mahākāśyapa.” Preaching for someone’s sake does not necessarily have to do with self or other: preaching for the sake of the other is preaching for one’s own sake; it is a

hearing and preaching in which self and self study together. One ear hears, and one ear preaches; one tongue preaches and one tongue hears; and so on in the same way for eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind, and organ, consciousness, and object. Further, they each have a body and mind, which verifies and which practices. The ear itself hears and preaches; the tongue itself hears and preaches. Yesterday, we may preach an indeterminate dharma for another's sake; but today, a determinate dharma is preached for our sake. Such sun faces are lined up and moon faces are lined up. To preach the dharma, to practice the dharma, for the sake of another is to hear the dharma, to clarify the dharma, to verify the dharma, in lifetime after lifetime. In this life as well, we are preaching for the sake of others; yet, when we do it with a sincere mind, we ourselves easily attain the dharma. Or, when we help and encourage others to hear the dharma, our own study of the dharma gains good advantage; it gains an advantage in our bodies, and it gains an advantage in our minds. Those who obstruct [others from] hearing the dharma are themselves obstructed from hearing the dharma. To preach the dharma, to hear the dharma, in body after body of life after life is to hear the dharma in generation after generation: the dharma that we directly transmitted previously, we now hear again in this generation. Since we are born in the dharma and expire in the dharma, when we have directly transmitted the dharma in the entire world in the ten directions, we hear it in life after life, we practice it in body after body. Since we manifest life after life in the dharma and make body after body into the dharma, we take up both one mote of dust and the dharma

realm and let the dharma be verified.

Thus, hearing a phrase in the east, we should come to the west and teach it to someone. This is by a single self, working equally at hearing and preaching, practicing and verifying equally our eastern self and western self. Whatever we do, we should rejoice in, hope for, and aspire to bringing near to our bodies and minds, and living by, the dharma of the buddhas and the way of the ancestors. We should live by them from one hour to one day, from one year to one lifetime. We should play with the buddha dharma as the spirit. This is what it means not to pass life after life in vain.

However, do not think that we should not teach others when we have not yet got clear ourselves. If we wait to be clear, we will not be able to do it for countless kalpas. Even should we clarify human buddhas, we must still clarify deva buddhas. Even should we clarify the mind of mountains, we must still clarify the mind of waters. Even should we clarify dharmas arising from causing and conditions, we must still clarify dharmas not arising from causes and conditions. Even should we clarify the vicinity of the buddhas and ancestors, we must still clarify [what is] "beyond the buddhas and ancestors." To imagine that we will clarify these in one lifetime and then teach them to others is not making concentrated effort, is not being resolute, is not studying.

In general, in studying the way of the buddhas and ancestors, once we have studied a single dharma or a single behavior, we let our determination to help others "assault the heavens." Through this, we slough off self and other. Going further, when we study and master our-

selves, it is our previous study and mastery of the other; when we study and master the other, it is study and mastery of ourselves. This Buddhist behavior, even those of innate knowledge cannot personally realize if it is not received from a teacher. Those of innate knowledge, if they have not encountered a teacher, do not know non-innate knowledge, they do not know non-innate non-knowledge. They may have innate knowledge, but they cannot know the great way of the buddhas and ancestors; they must study it to know it. Personally to realize oneself and personally to realize the other, is the great way of the buddhas and ancestors. Reflecting on our own study as beginners, we should study together the study of others' study as beginners. When self and other go on studying together from their time as beginners, they reach an ultimate study together. Like our own concentrated effort, we should encourage the concentrated effort of others.

However, upon hearing the words “self verification,” “self awakening,” and the like, crude people think that one should not receive transmission from a teacher but should study on one's own. This is a big mistake. To be without instruction from a teacher, reckoning mistakenly with the discriminations of the thinking of one's own understanding, is the alien way of spontaneity of Sindh in the west.<sup>5</sup> How could those types who do not discern this be people of the way of the buddhas? Not to mention that, upon hearing the term “self verification,” if we reckon it to be the accumulated five aggregates, it will be the same as the self control of the lesser vehicle. There are many of the types unable to distinguish between the greater vehicle and the lesser vehicle who call them-

selves descendants of the buddhas and ancestors. However, among those with clear eyes, who would be deceived by them?

\* \* \* \* \*

In the land of the Great Song, during the Shaoxing [era, 1131-1162], there was a certain Zonggao, the Chan master Dahui of Mount Jing [i.e., Dahui Zonggao (1089-1163)]. Originally a student of the sūtras and treatises, during his wanderings, he became a follower of the Chan master Chen of Xuanzhou [i.e., Mingjiao Shaochen (dates unknown)], under whom he studied the comments on old cases by Yunmen [Yunmen Wenjen (864-949)], as well as the verses and comments on old cases by Xuedou [Xuedou Chongxian (980-1052)]; this was the beginning of his study. Failing to understand the style of Yunmen, he eventually studied with the venerable Wei of Dongshan [Dongshan Daowei (dates unknown)]; but, in the end, Wei did not admit him into the interior of the hall. Venerable Wei was a dharma child of the venerable [Caodong master] Furong [Furong Daokai (1043-1118)]; he should not be compared to some insignificant person in the last seat. Though the Chan master Gao may have studied with him for quite some time, he was unable to get a feel for Wei's “skin, flesh, bones, and marrow,” much less know that the eye in the dust even exists.

Once, upon hearing that, in the way of the buddhas and ancestors, there is the [dharma transmission] procedure of [burning] incense on the forearm and [receiving] a succession document, he repeatedly begged a succession

document of Venerable Wei.

Venerable Wei, however, did not approve, finally saying,

"If you want succession to the dharma, do not be hasty. You should make effort and pursue your study. The conferral of the buddhas and ancestors is not transferred indiscriminately. I do not begrudge conferring it; it is just that you still do not possess the eye."

At this point, Zonggao replied, "The true eye originally possessed is self verified and self awakened. How could it be conferred indiscriminately?"

Venerable Wei laughed and retired.

Thereafter, [Zonggao] studied with the Venerable Zhantang Zhun [Zhantang Wenzhun (1061-1115)].

One day, Zhantang asked Zonggao, "Why is your nose half missing today?"

Gao said, "In the tradition of Baofeng."

Zhantang said, "Illiterate Chan monk."<sup>6</sup>

Once when Gao was looking at a sūtra, Zhantang asked him, "What sūtra are you looking at?"

Gao said, "The *Diamond Sūtra*."

Zhantang said, "This dharma is equal, without high or low. Why is Mount Yunju high and Mount Baofeng low?"

Gao said, "This dharma is equal, without high or low."

Zhantang said, "You've become quite the chief seat," and sent him away.<sup>7</sup>

Again, one day, Zhantang, looking at depictions of the ten kings [of the underworld], asked the upper seat Zonggao, "What's this official's name?"

Gao said, "His name is Liang."

Zhantang felt his own head and said,

"Why is the one named Liang missing the headdress?"

Gao said, "He may not have the headdress, but the nose looks just the same."

Zhantang said, "Illiterate Chan monk."<sup>8</sup>

One day, Zhangtang asked Zonggao, "Upper seat Gao, you understood my Chan here at once. I have you teach it, and you can teach it. I have you study it, and you can study it. I have you do verses on the old cases, comments on the old cases, small convocations, public sermons, requests for instruction, and you can do them. There's just one thing still missing. Do you know what it is?"

Gao said, "What thing is missing?"

Zhangtang said, "You just lack this one understanding: Ha! So long as you don't get this one understanding, when I'm talking with you in the abbot's quarters, you have Chan, but, as soon as you leave the abbot's quarters, you don't; when you're wide awake and thinking, you have Chan, but, as soon as you go to sleep, you don't. If you're like this, how can you confront life and death?"

Gao said, "This is exactly what I have doubts about."

Some years later, Zhangtang became ill. Zonggao asked him, "After the Reverend's hundredth year, on whom should Zonggao rely to comprehend this great matter?"

Zhangtang advised him, "There is a certain Qin Bazi [i.e., the famed Linji master Yuanwu Keqin (1063-1135)]. I don't know him, but if you happen to meet him, you will definitely be able to complete this matter. Once you've met him, don't wander off to others. Study Chan when you come back in the next life."

When we examine this case, Zhangtang did not accept Zonggao. While he sought repeatedly to discover it, he still lacked the “one thing.” He did not fill in the “one thing”; he did not slough off the “one thing.” Previously, the Venerable Wei denied him a document of succession, urging him on by saying, “You’re not ready.” We should trust the clarity of the Venerable Wei’s insight into his abilities. “This is exactly what I have doubts about”: he did not investigate this; he did not slough it off; he did not break through it; he did not have “the great doubt” about it; he was not obstructed by the doubt. Previously, his recklessly begging a document of succession was precipitate, was an extreme case of one lacking the mind of the way, was a flagrant case of lacking “learning from the ancients.” We have to say he was thoughtless; we have to say he was not fit for the way; he was an extreme case of neglect of study. From his “lust for fame and love of profit,” he would violate the interior of the hall of the buddhas and ancestors. How pitiful that he did not know the words of the buddhas and ancestors. Because he did not understand that learning from the ancients is self verification, and had not heard, had not studied, that perusing the myriad generations is self awakening, he had this kind of error, he had this kind of “self mistake.” Because he was like this, among the followers of the Chan master Zonggao, there is not one or one half with a real “nose grip”; most of them are fakes and inferiors. Failure to understand the buddha dharma, and failure not to understand the buddha dharma, are like this. Monks of the present should study in detail; do not be neglectful.

On Zhangtang’s advice, following Zhangtang’s quiescence, Zonggao studied with the Chan master Yuanwu at Tianning [monastery] in the capital [at Bianjing]. One day, when Yuanwu ascended the [dharma] hall [for a formal convocation], Zonggao had a spiritual awakening. He reported his awakening to Yuanwu.

Wu said, “Not yet. You may be like this, but the great dharma is not yet clarified.”

Again, one day, when Yuanwu ascended the hall, he took up the words of Venerable Yan of Wuzu [i.e., Yuanwu’s teacher, Wuzu Fayan (d. 1104)] on affirmation and denial. Upon hearing it, Zonggao attained the dharma of great bliss. Again he expressed his understanding to Yuanwu.

Yuanwu laughed and said, “I didn’t trick you?”

This is the story of the Chan master Zonggao’s later studying with Yuanwu. He served as secretary in Yuanwu’s congregation. Nevertheless, we do not see that he had any new attainments before or after; and, in his own public sermons and formal convocations, he does not bring up any attainments. We should recognize that, while his biographer [Zhang Jun] wrote that he had a “spiritual awakening” and “attained the dharma of great bliss,” we need not make anything of this. Do not take it seriously: he was just an ordinary student.

The Chan master Yuanwu was an old buddha, most honored in the ten directions. After Huangbo [i.e., the famous ninth-century figure Huangbo Xiyun], there is no venerable like Yuanwu; he was an old buddha who must be rare even in the other world. Nevertheless,

there are few humans or gods who recognize this; ours is a sad *Sahā* land. If we examine the upper seat Zonggao by holding up the teachings of the old buddha Yuanwu, it is as if he lacked wisdom approaching his master's, lacked wisdom equaling his master's; how much less did he ever see, even in his dreams, wisdom exceeding his master's.

Thus, we should realize that the talents of the Chan master Zonggao did not amount to "reducing the teacher's merits by half." He just memorized and conveyed a few passages of the *Huayan*, the *Laṅkāvatāra* [sutras], and the like; he still lacked the bones and marrow of the buddhas and ancestors. Zonggao thought that the view maintained by major and minor hermits simply taken by the spirits that "adhere to the grasses and attach to the trees" — that this was the buddha dharma. Given that he accepted this as the buddha dharma, it is clear that he never investigated the great way of the buddhas and ancestors. After Yuanwu, he did not travel to others or consult friends; he brazenly headed up the monks as the master of great monasteries. The words he has left us do not reach the vicinity of the great dharma. Those who do not know, however, think that the Chan master Zonggao owes no apologies even to the ancients; those who see and know are certain that he did not understand. In the end, he did not understand the great dharma but just meaninglessly ran his mouth, blah, blah.

Thus, we know that the Reverend Wei of Dongshan was truly a clear mirror on the future and was not mistaken. The resentment of and hostility toward Reverend Wei among those, to the last, who studied with the Chan master Zonggao remains unabated even now.

Reverend Wei simply failed to acknowledge him; the Reverend Zhang's failure to acknowledge him was even more severe than Wei's: at every encounter, he did nothing but point out his mistakes. Yet, they do not resent the Reverend Zhang. How shameful are those in present and past who resent [Reverend Wei].

Generally speaking, although there are many in the land of the Great Song who call themselves descendants of the buddhas and ancestors, since there are few who have studied the real thing, there are few who teach the real thing. That point can be clearly seen in this case as well. It was like this even in the Shaoxing period; now things are even worse than then, beyond compare. Nowadays, those who do not even know what the great way of the buddhas and ancestors is supposed to be have become the leaders of the monks.

We should understand that, with regard to the direct transmission of the documents of succession of buddha after buddha and ancestor after ancestor in the Western Heavens and the Eastern Land, that under Mount Qingyuan is the direct transmission. After the line of Mount Qingyuan, naturally it was directly transmitted by Dongshan.<sup>9</sup> This is something unknown to others in the ten directions; those who know it are all descendants of Dongshan, who spread his name among the monks. The Chan master Zonggao throughout his life did not understand the words "self verification" and "self awakening," much less did he master any other kōan. How much less, then, among the latecomers after the Chan elder Zonggao could anyone understand the words "self verification."<sup>7</sup>

Thus, speaking of the self and speaking of the other in the way of the buddhas and ances-

tors always has the body and mind of the buddhas and ancestors, the eye of the buddhas and ancestors. Since it is the bones and marrow of the buddhas and ancestors, it is not the skin got by the mediocre.

Treasury of the True Dharma Eye  
The Samādhi of Self Verification  
Number 69

Presented to the assembly at Kippō Monastery,  
in the domain of Etsu,  
twenty-ninth day, second month of kinoe-  
tatsu, the second year of Kangen [8 April 1244]

Notes

1. “**The samādhi of practice and verification**” (*shushō zanmai*): Some manuscripts read here *jishō zanmai* (“the samādhi of self verification”). “**Whether from a friend, whether from scripture**” (*waku jū chishiki waku jū kyōkan*): I.e., whether [one’s understanding of Buddhism derives] from a teacher or from a text.

2. “**The spirit’s head is clad in fur**” (*jinzu no himō seru*); “**the demon’s face is crowned by horns**” (*kimen no taikaku seru*): Combining two self-deprecating references to monks: “spirit heads and demon faces” (*jinzu kimen*; i.e., “weird things”), and “clad in fur and crowned by horns” (*himō taikaku* 披毛戴角; i.e., “beastly”).

“**There is the ‘coming along with it’ of the ‘moving of alien types’; there is the going on transforming of those ‘born together’”** (*irui gyō no zui ta rai ari dōjō shō no hen'i ko ari*): Perhaps meaning something like, “[practice and

verification involve] ‘coming back’ to help others and ‘going on’ transforming oneself.”

3. “**The peach blossoms and the eye**” (*tōka ganzei*); “**The bamboo sound and the ear**” (*chikusei nikon*): Allusion to famous stories of awakening upon seeing peach blossoms and hearing the sound of bamboo.

4. “**Staff scriptures**” (*jujō kyō*); “**whisk scriptures**” (*hossu kyō*): I.e., the master’s ceremonial staff and fly whisk as a scriptures.

5. “**The alien way of spontaneity of Sindh in the west**” (*Saiten no tennen gedō*): I.e., the non-Buddhist religious teaching of India that denies the laws of cause and effect.

6. “**In the tradition of Baofeng**” (*Hōhō monka*): A reference to Zhantang’s monastery, the Baofengsi, in modern Jiangxi prefecture.

7. “**Chief seat**” (*zasu*): A head monk, a lecturer; likely used here sarcastically, in the sense “know it all” or “smart ass.”

8. “**The one named Liang**” (*Shō Ryō tei*): Zhangtang’s lay surname was Liang.

9. “**That under Mount Qingyuan is the direct transmission**” (*Seigenzanka kore shōden nari*): I.e., the lineage of the Sixth Ancestor’s disciple Qingyuan Xingsi (660-740) is the main line of descent.

“**Dongshan**” (*Tōzan*): I.e., Dongshan Liangjie (807-869), in the fourth generation after Qingyuan; founder of Dōgen’s Caodong (Sōtō) lineage.



## My Footnotes on Zazen (10) Entrusting Yourself to the Capability of Self-Regulation (1)

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I would like to continue by saying a little more about the bamboo stick, a metaphor I've been using in previous articles. I think those of you reading these articles understand that when giving other people instruction on how to sit in zazen this question of "How to get the other person who is bending the bamboo stick with his or her own force to straighten it out?" is an easy model to understand regarding the matter of what approach to take in getting someone to release excess tension that he or she creates when sitting zazen. My aim at least in simplifying this important problem is to ask what sort of approach should be taken in getting someone to loosen up the unnecessary strain that prevents that person from sitting upright so that they are "...leaning neither to the left nor to the right, neither forward nor backward. Be sure your ears are in line with your shoulders and your nose is in line with your navel."

For this reason, it is fine in this case to think of the bamboo stick as being the backbone or the body axis of the person who is being instructed in how to sit zazen. If the bamboo stick is curved this means that the pelvis is falling too far backwards so that the upper and lower back has become rounded. Or conversely, if the pelvis is coming too far forward, the upper and lower back are then arched too much. (In fact, it often happens that in addi-

tion to these two conditions, people are also leaning to the left or right or they are sitting zazen in a twisted posture). Be that as it may, this means that the back or body axis has gotten out of alignment with the vertical direction of the force of gravity such that the place of the ears in relation to the shoulders and the place of the nose in relation to the navel are not in the same straight line. I provisionally call this sort of situation "twisted body, tilted sitting." "Twisted" means distorted, bent, or contorted while "tilted" means slanted or leaning in a direction which is away from the center. Assuming that the main purpose of zazen is sitting upright, then the question of how to correct "twisted body, tilted sitting" becomes a most important problem. The causes for creating "twisted body, tilted sitting" are complicated and various. However, I would like here to consider these causes using a little extra energy to focus on them. The bamboo stick which is bent forcefully is the model for "twisted body, tilted sitting."

So far, I have given two examples of ill-advised approaches, (A) and (B). There was absolutely no effect in either of these two cases or it could also be said that the effect of both methods was extremely tenuous. Furthermore, in some cases, there was the opposite effect. In other words, these approaches might have led to making the curve in the back even greater. In the case of (A), this person focused on the curved bamboo stick itself by trying to directly intervene by making the stick straight. Applying this example to instructing a person how to sit, this would correspond to coming behind the person who is sitting with a rounded upper

and lower back and using a kyosaku or your hands to forcefully push the back so that the curve becomes straight. This could also apply to the case of a person sitting with their upper and lower back arched too far inwards by using your hands to push from the front on the spot that is overarched and in that way attempt to eliminate the arch. Another possible example of that same approach would be in the case of a person sitting with his or her chin jutting forwards or conversely if the chin is drawn inwards and the head held down to take your hand and touching either the head or the chin to move them to a desirable position. We often see both of these approaches at zazenkai and other places. This is a method of instruction which attempts to correct a person's posture by directly or passively focusing on the problem areas.

However, while this method (A) is may seem quite reasonable, the instant you stop pushing again the bamboo stick, it will once again return to the curved condition. This is because the curve in the stick is finally only the result, and the cause, which is the force in both hands, has not been addressed at all. If the cause does not change and only the result is tampered with, the change will only stop at being something temporary. When I formerly had the duty of jikido (hall monitor in the zendo), I had the experience that if there was a person sitting with a rounded back, I used the kyosaku to make his back straight. Thinking to myself "that did it" after having changed his posture, I noticed after walking a few steps and glancing backwards that his posture had once again returned to where it was before. Disappointed, I got angry, thinking "What's with that guy?!" As a matter of fact, what I had done

was not "instruction" at all. If I put myself into the shoes of the person who had been corrected, a situation where my posture had been only been changed forcibly, then I would reluctantly move as I had been pushed, but only as long as the jikido was standing behind me. Once I, as the jikido, had walked past him, he would return to the way he had been sitting and it would end at just that.

In that case, it was necessary for me as the jikido to reflect on the way I had instructed him and work on changing the way I was instructing in a qualitative way. It must be said to be the height of stupidity to simply continue persistently with the same method and then on top of that to think "You fool, can't you sit like you're told to sit?" hitting him only with the kyosaku. I have a feeling, however, that actually this sort of behavior is quite frequent.

In (B)'s approach, the focus is not on the curved bamboo stick, but rather on the hands which are bending the stick. This method is to straighten out the bamboo stick by moving the hands. However, since there is no change to the fact that this method is passive in nature, it is very probable that once this encouragement to change stops, the stick will return again to its original position. Applying this method to the situation of someone giving zazen instruction, instead of putting your hands on the back itself, you would keep your eyes on the pelvis which is supporting the back. In this case, you would try to move the pelvis forward or backward depending on whether the back is tilted forwards or backwards.

Regarding the sitting posture of a person sitting in zazen, the tilt of the pelvis determines

the shape of the backbone. If the pelvis is tilted too far back, then inevitably the lumbar vertebrae, the dorsal vertebrae, and the cervical vertebrae will be rounded, the rib bones will fall downward, the chin will move closer to the chest, and the eyelids will tend to close. This is not something that happens through volitional control but rather a natural connection of the body. I strongly encourage you the readers to try this yourself by slowly tipping the pelvis backward while you are sitting and noticing how the various parts of the body move along with the pelvis.

On the other hand, if the pelvis is tipped too far forward this will produce the opposite shape. In other words, the lumbar vertebrae, the dorsal vertebrae, and the cervical vertebrae will arch forward in the shape of a bow, the ribs will rise, the chin will rise, and the eyelids will open. Again, I hope you will try this with your own body. I call this condition of the lower back where the pelvis has tipped too far backwards “feeble lower back” and the condition of the lower back when the pelvis is tipped too far forward I call “warped or arched lower back.” The condition of the lower back which is somewhere between “feeble lower back” and “arched lower back”, a place where the tilt of the pelvis is such that the lumbar vertebrae, the dorsal vertebrae, and the cervical vertebrae can maintain a natural curve that stretches the back upwards, is one that I call “zazen lower back.” It is there that (B) moves the other person’s pelvis in order for the pelvis to be settled.

Nevertheless, searching for the position of the pelvis like this is a very subtle task and doing this is extremely difficult for another

person to do from without rather than the person who is sitting. Except for those people with a very fine and sensitive touch, this sort of approach is usually random guesswork. From the point of view of the person sitting, this sort of approach appears to be nothing more than being pushed from the outside in the direction of another person’s standard. The human body is made such that in opposition to “offensive” or “forceful” approaches from other people it tends to tense up in defense and this creates a reflexive movement to counter the other person. For this reason, it is difficult to say that (B)’s approach is a good method.

Regardless of whether the approach is direct or indirect, there is a similarity between (A)’s and (B)’s approaches to instructing this condition which I have termed “twisted body, tilted sitting.” In both cases, there is the ideal held of “the straightness of the back” and this becomes the standard by which the sitting posture is judged; it is the standard by which the other person is moved unilaterally or passively in an effort to get the person nearer to that ideal. This is the greatest problem, I think, but now at zazenkai and other places where zazen is practiced in Japan, I wonder if there are really any other approaches that are being used or experimented with. From my limited knowledge, I don’t know of any such places, so if any of you are aware of such places by all means please let me know.

# **NEWS**

## **September 2 – 24, 2015**

Dharma talks by Sotoshu Specially Dispatched Teacher were held at ten places in Brazil.

## **September 13 – 20, 2015**

Dharma talks by Sotoshu Specially Dispatched Teacher were held at seven places in North America.

## **September 30–October 1, 2015**

North America Soto Zen Conference and Workshop was held at Zenshuji in Los Angeles, U.S.A.

## **October 21–22, 2015**

Great Memorial Ceremony for the 650th Anniversary of Daihonzan Sojiji's Second Abbot Gasan Joseki Zenji and International Gathering held at Daihonzan Sojiji, Japan.

## **November 3–14, 2015**

Baika classes by Sotoshu Specially Dispatched Baika Teacher were held at four places in Hawaii.

## **November 13–15, 2015**

Europe Soto Zen Workshop was held at Zendonien in Blois, France.

## **November 16–19, 2015**

South America Soto Zen Conference and Workshop was held at Busshinji in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

## **November 21–22, 2015**

Hawaii Minister's Autumn Meeting and Workshop was held at Shoboji in Honolulu, Hawaii.

## **February 13, 2016**

Hawaii Minister's Spring Meeting was held at Shoboji in Honolulu, Hawaii

## **March 8, 2016**

South America Soto Zen Conference was held in Bogota, Colombia.

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