



SOTO ZEN JOURNAL

DHARMA EYE

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Number

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March 2018



Upon the Publication of the English Translation of the *Denkoroku* (Record of the Transmission of Illumination)

Rev. Teppu Otani

Chair of the Translation Editorial Board
Committee of The Soto Zen Text Project

Since 1996, when the work of The Soto Zen Text Project was first organized, the English translation of the “Soto School Scriptures for Daily Services and Practice” was published in August, 2001, and in January, 2010, the translation of “Standard Observances of the Soto Zen School” was published. Now, at this time, the English translation of Great Ancestor Keizan Zenji’s “*Denkoroku*,” (Record of the Transmission of Illumination) a teaching he gave to his disciples over a period of many years, is now complete. On November 27, 2017, a memorial symposium was held at the Tokyo Grand Hotel in honor of completing this work.

Since the 1960s, there has been an increase in the number of people practicing Soto Zen outside of Japan, and during that time many of Dogen Zenji’s and Keizan Zenji’s most important works have been translated and published in the English-speaking world. Nevertheless, many of those translations had few notes and so it is difficult to say that readers of those books correctly understood them or that there was sufficient material to interpret them correctly. To correctly transmit Soto Zen and to continue at expanding it widely, whether it be with lectures given at each Zen center or at classes given in university, it is a self-evident fact that it is necessary to have accurate translations of original

texts which are faithful and are based on trustworthy scholastic understanding. These translations must also be able to withstand an academic viewpoint. It was within such a situation that this translation project was organized and which has continued this way until the present day.

The “*Denkoroku*,” together with Dogen Zenji’s “*Shobogenzo*,” (Treasury of the True Dharma Eye) is a fundamental Soto Zen text. This is an exceptional record that covers and instructs in a *teisho* format about the causes and conditions which brought about the awakening to the Way of the various buddha-ancestors beginning with Shakyamuni Buddha and the twenty-eight Indian ancestral masters through the twenty-three Chinese ancestral masters leading up to Dogen Zenji and Ejo Zenji.

In 2005, the Sotoshu Shumuchō edition of “*Denkoroku*” was published. Taking this opportunity, the English translation of this book began. The translation work progressed with Professor. William Bodiford as head of the project, together with work done by the late Dr. John McRae and Dr. Sara Horton. Professor. Griffith Faulk took the responsibility of chief editor.

The translation and editorial work proceeded by verifying each Japanese sentence in the original text with the English sentence, making sure that it was possible to correctly understand all of it, and then once again revising it when it was necessary. Regarding the English translation of Buddhist terminology, we standardized the “*Denkoroku*” text and where possible with the English translation of the “*Shobogenzo*,” now we are working on, as well, in order to make the

final translation consistent and reliable.

Also, many footnotes have been added. Among these are explanations of traditional Buddhist wisdom which has been passed down to us as well as well-known stories. There is also commentary on unfamiliar Buddhist terms and doctrine. Furthermore, with regard to quotations and Buddhist literature which until now has not been clear, various databases have been used to detect the meaning and to describe them.

The English translation of “*Denkoroku*” consists of two volumes: the text and the glossary. The glossary contains all of the names, such as people, places and texts that appear in the “*Denkoroku*” as well as Buddhist terminology, particularly Zen terminology, important terms which were too long to be included in the footnotes, ideas, metaphors, historical event, and important points in the text have been written about in detailed description.

We had Dr. Urs App’s help with the layout before publication and finally after more than ten years this enormous and detailed work has finally reached the time of publication.

I would like to extend my heartfelt condolences for Dr. John McRae who passed away during the course of this project.

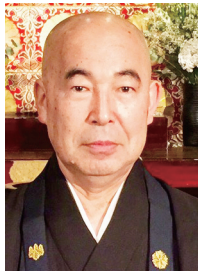
With the publication of the English translation of “*Denkoroku*,” this basic Soto Zen text, I have great expectations that the truly transmitted Buddhadharma which has been passed down by buddhas and the successive generations of ancestral masters will continue to thrive and flourish more and more overseas.

Also, regarding the translation of the “*Shobogenzo*” which was undertaken since the beginning of this project, we expect that during this current year the whole book will be completed. Beginning next year, we will move to the editorial and proofreading work and from there proceed toward publication of this work.

In my closing remarks regarding the publication of the English translation of the “*Denkoroku*,” my hope is that all of you will thoroughly read and study this book and that you will also encourage many other people to do so.



The Project of Establishing an Officially Recognized Training Monastery Together with the Construction of Tenpyozan Bodaishinji

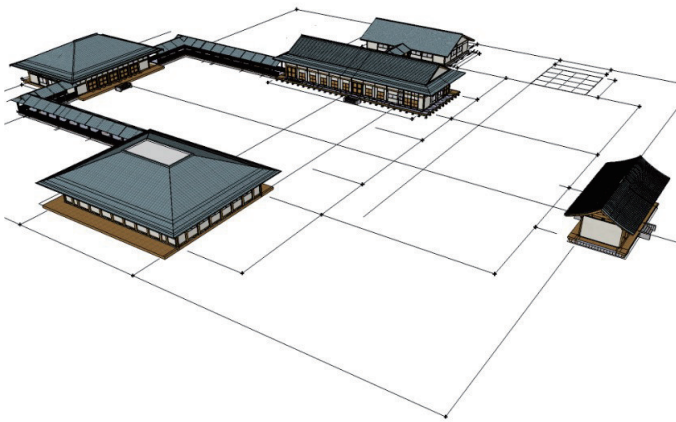


— Toward the first Sotoshu training monastery in the United States—

Rev. Gengo Akiba

Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism
North America Office

As we approach 2022, the year we will celebrate the major event of the 100th anniversary of the Soto Zen Buddhism teaching activities in North America, one part of that commemorative event is the earnest drive forward to complete the “Tenpyozan Bodaishinji Project.” Set on 106 acres of land in California’s Lake County, the Tenpyozan Bodaishinji Project aims to be the first training monastery located outside of Japan that is officially recognized by the Sotoshu. It will be a temple built of *hinoki* wood (Japanese cypress) in the traditional Japanese style and according to the layout of a Zen-style monastery.



The establishment of an overseas training monastery is the result of the nearly 100 years of the dedicated spirit and drive of the pioneer Soto

Zen priests who engaged in teaching activities in the United States. The need for such a facility arises from their perennial prayers that one would be established in this country.

The history of Soto Zen teaching activities outside of Japan began in 1903 when Japanese priests were sent to Hawaii and Peru. Following that, in North America as well, the teaching activities flourished in temples which primarily served the immigrants from Japan and their descendants.

In the 1960s, through the advocacy of the Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office, various *Kaikyoshi* (present-day *Kokusaifukyoshi*, priests who carry out teaching activities outside of Japan) became actively involved in teaching Zen to local, native-born people so that Zen began to penetrate into local communities.

There are said to be more than 80 sects of Buddhism intermixed in America. In the mid-1970s, there were approximately 200,000 Buddhists in this country. There are presently estimated to be 3,000,000 Buddhists, so that Buddhism is now accepted as an “American religion.” According to one recent survey, 25,000,000 people said they had “received some kind of important influence from Buddhism” – an astounding number!

There are several reasons why Buddhism has spread so widely through Western societies. Among these, one is that “the establishment of the self” is an important objective in modern education and much distress and suffering arises because of the individual person constructed by

the ego/self. The need then appears to rise above the sphere of this sort of human nature so that a sense of oneness can be established through a community with others; a sense of oneness with humanity, with ecosystems, the Earth, and the universe. It is because people feel that Buddhism can possibly shed light on the establishment of oneness that it is spreading in the West..

In particular, “the act of just sitting” is understood to be the most practical and concise way of relieving human hardships and troubles. In other words, this also means that “it is the practice that awakens without all the theory of the buddhas’ and ancestors’ teachings.”

With this background of cognitive understanding, it is impressive to see in recent years the spread of Buddhism in the United States. At present, there are approximately 400 non-Japanese people registered as priests with the Sotoshu and there are more than 300 separate Soto Zen temples and centers. One after another, we see American priests who qualify for the teaching rank of *Kyoshi* after having completed training in a Japanese Soto training monastery. There is also an increase in the number of priests who have been newly appointed as *Kokusaifu-kyoshi*, as well as an increase in the number of temples and centers that are registered as special overseas temples with Sotoshu. With the momentum of Soto Zen teaching activities outside of Japan increasing, fostering priests in the next generation is an important issue.

To state why Soto Zen, which is based on the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha and the Two Founders (Dogen Zenji and Keizan Zenji), has

penetrated into the religious mind and spirit of Westerners is because “*Shikantaza* – just sitting” can be regarded as having the power to encourage a person to awaken to what it truly means to be active as a human being. And also, that within *shikantaza* there is the clear function of causing people to realize the firm fact and embodiment of the truth that is linked with the oneness of life on Earth and the eternal life of the universe. Another thing is that with regard to the greatest challenge facing civilization in the twenty-first century, at which time we are basking in the benefits of advanced development, which is “How can we maintain ecosystems with sustainable resources and environments?” it is possible to find within the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha and the Two Founders many very modern words that can help us find the keys to awaken and fundamentally resolve this difficult issue.

I think that to correctly transmit this by cultivating priests in this actual place is of utmost urgency as we consider the future development of Soto Zen teaching activities outside of Japan. While accommodating and adjusting to the history of a country and religion, to its culture, climate and habits of life, Soto Zen will develop and I expect that diversity will be manifested in these new features. This is also something that is very fascinating. Nevertheless, at the present time, it is vital that the subtle and wonderful truths of the true Dharma that have been singularly transmitted by the buddhas and ancestors – *shikantaza*, “this body itself is the buddha,” “the oneness of Zen and the precepts,” and “the oneness of practice and realization” – are correctly transmitted. It is also important that priests are taught hands-on the basic movements and deco-

rum that one learns through the body including the Soto Zen teachings of “Dignified behavior is the Buddhadharma; the proper way something is done is the essence of the Way.” They must also be taught how to hit bells, drums, and so forth. It is surely the responsibility of the Sotoshu to carry this out for Soto Zen groups that have been developing overseas

Tenpyozan Bodaishinji is the place where Soto Zen teachings and traditions can be correctly transmitted in the local language; it is a training place for continuous and immediate practice.

If the Soto Zen Buddhism, which has a proud tradition 800 years long, can complete this project which will be its lifelong masterwork, it will be possible train in the traditional manner of practice and study. This is connected to building the foundation such that the true transmission of the Buddhadharma, which is “entering by means of practice,” can thereby be transmitted to all countries of the world.

Furthermore, with Tenpyozan Bodaishinji as a base, many Japanese and Western priests will come and go thereby making it possible for close exchange between them. As for the future of Sotoshu spreading throughout the whole world, there will be the benefit of producing many talented people who are rich in diversity. This will create the opportunity of undergoing a complete transformation such that Soto Zen will become a strong power, an “opened, awakened Sotoshu” which in regard to society and world seeks unlimited potential. I am confident that this will bring about a very beneficial resource.

There will be no greater happiness for me if all Soto Zen priests, both in Japan and overseas, would kindly understand the aim of creating “Tenpyozan Bodaishinji” and then support us both materially and spiritually. I humbly ask for your gift of love for the Dharma and your cooperation.



About the World Buddhist Conference and World Buddhist Youth Conference in Japan



Rev. Hakuga Murayama

A member of the Deliberation Committee for Sotoshu's International Teaching Activities
Acting President of the World Fellowship of Buddhist Youth

Next year, from November 5~9, 2018, the Japan Buddhist Federation will sponsor the General Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists and the World Fellowship of Buddhist Youth in Japan. As one part of these events, a commemorative ceremony is scheduled to be held on November 9th at Daihonzan Sojiji.

The World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB), the mother organization of this General Conference, was founded in 1950. It was originally established as an international network with Buddhist countries in Asia, including Japan, at the center. At present, this group is the world's largest Buddhist organization with membership from countries around the world. In Japan, the Japan Buddhist Federation (JBF), which the Sotoshu is affiliated with, participates in the WFB and its only center in Japan.

Also, the World Fellowship of Buddhist Youth (WFBY), which organizes the youth group of this General Conference, was formally recognized at the WFB General Conference held in Sri Lanka in 1972. The WFBY is active as the world's largest international network of young Buddhists. All-Japan Young Soto Zen Buddhist Priest Association (AYSZBPA) is a member of

All Japan Young Buddhist Association (JYBA), which participates in the WFBY, and in the same manner as the JBF, runs the only center of the WFBY in Japan.

For six years beginning in 2011, I was sent as a representative from the AYSZBPA to the JYBA, and from there I was sent to the WFBY. Here, as we approach next year's world conference, I would like to write a little bit about the international exchange activities which the members of the JYBA have been working on in unison.

JYBA is an organization which consists of twelve organizations apart from AYSZBPA. This group takes responsibility for the Japan Center of the WFBY. As a responsibility of member organizations, it participates, in exchange between Buddhist youth groups throughout the world as well as various international activities the objective of which is to contribute to the dissemination of Buddhist culture and to the development of world peace. Particularly in recent times, the Japanese Buddhist world has been concentrating its energies on "international teaching activities" and "international volunteer work" by taking into consideration the concept of "international exchange" such that the JYBA together with the AYSZBPA has participated in various international exchange programs as well as the planning of such programs.

Taking into account the ways in which Japan can deepen the significance of participating in international exchange activities, as well as considering how Japanese Buddhists can further understand international exchange and public relations while also learning how to be active in

international Buddhist activities and support overseas activities in order that these activities can be carried out smoothly, the JYBA has been making effort to cultivate human resources who have an international way of thinking as well as discovering capable people of the next generation. We are striving to produce something for the future possibility of Japanese Buddhism, which came about through its connection with traditional Asian Buddhism, as well as those international exchange activities which keep an eye on the much-needed internationalization of the future of Japanese society and Japanese Buddhism.

To be more precise, we must actively participate in world Buddhist conferences that are held in various countries. We must also participate in different events such as the Magha Puja (万仏節 Ten-thousand Buddhas Ceremony) in Thailand, the Vesak Festival (the day when the Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and death are commemorated) in Malaysia, and the Perahera Ceremony (commemorating the relics of the Buddha) held in Sri Lanka. This also applies to cooperating with international Buddhist youth exchange programs, training courses for international Buddhist leaders, planning forums, and so forth. It includes the local relief work we did two years ago following the earthquake disaster in Nepal when the World Buddhist Kitchen (sponsored by the WFB and WFBY) provided food relief.

Another thing worthy of special mention is the International Buddhist Youth Exchange (IBYE), the largest continuing operation of the WFBY. The objective of this program is to promote international exchange and mutual understanding between young Buddhists of vari-

ous countries. On three occasions during the past five years, we have held this gathering in Japan.



local relief work in Nepal

In August 2013, the “Crisis Management IBYE Japan 2013” event was held in Iwaki City, Fukushima Prefecture as part of the Great East Japan Earthquake Disaster recovery support. Held under the cooperation of Japanese Buddhist groups and Japanese relief groups, this program brought together Japanese students, both from within and without the disaster area, with representatives of various countries who are members of the WFBY. Fukushima Prefecture, as well as Japan as a whole, had suffered from harmful rumors and misinformation that had spread around the world. By listening to lectures given by local people, through direct exchange, doing reconstruction work in the affected areas, studying the problems related to radioactivity, the Japanese students had a chance to experience various earnest thoughts. And the participants from overseas, together with the Japanese students, were able to correctly understand these phenomena so that this was an opportunity to generate correct understanding and disseminate it throughout international society.



International Buddhist Youth Exchange 2013

In March 2015, we held the “Discover Japanese Buddhism IBYE Japan 2015” event in Tokyo and Kanagawa. This program was held to promote the understanding of “Sect Buddhism” by visiting 4 head temples of different Buddhist sects in Tokyo and Kanagawa, something that is unique to Japan and something which has attracted attention from people in Asian countries. By participating in ceremonies of each sect, attending lectures, and in particular at Daihonzan Sojiji, joining “The Zen gathering of training for disciples from around Japan together with Children’s International Zen gathering – the sound of great footsteps in the future,” it was possible through the experience of practice and the collaboration between Japanese and overseas participants to further disseminate in a big way the unique characteristics of Japanese Buddhism to the countries of Asia.

Then, in March 2017, with the prayer for 7th anniversary of the memorial for those who perished in the Great East Japan Earthquake Disaster and reconstruction, we held the “Compassion in Practice – Walking Dharma Together IBYE Japan 2017” event in Sendai City, Miyagi Prefecture. At this time, participants from Japan

and from overseas studied and learned about the relief activities that have been continuously carried out by Japanese Buddhist priests during the 6 years following the disaster as well as the way the consciousness of these priests has been cultivated and affected through this experience.

Moreover, since it is unusual in overseas countries to see Buddhist monks and priests participating in relief work – that is to say, Buddhist priests as a group directly involved with relief work – this was another way of getting the word out to the rest of the world about the valuable and unique features of Japanese Buddhism. One result of frequently holding these IBYE programs in Japan is the founding of the “Club 25 Japan.” The leadership of the JYBA, of which the Young Buddhist Association at all universities is the center, has long sought the establishment of such an international youth exchange group.

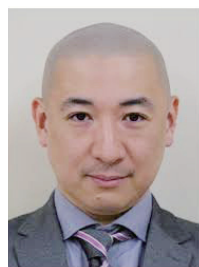
Now, in contrast with the 350,000 foreigners who visited Japan in 1964 – the year that the Olympics were held in Tokyo – 24,000,000 foreigners visited Japan in 2016, many of them coming from countries in Asia. In 1996, the year when the Internet began to become popular and the word “globalization” became a buzzword in Japanese, there were fewer than 600,000 Japanese people living abroad. In 2016, this number had increased to more than 1,300,000.

With the momentum provided by the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, it is presumed that from now on the internationalization of Japanese society will gather speed. Accompanying the change in the places of various countries in the world’s economy, with the flow of capital into Japan from

other Asian countries, with the increase in the number of Japanese people living in Asian countries, further coupled with the change into “borderless” information brought about by the Internet environment, it’s a fact that it isn’t difficult to imagine that the tightening of the economies, politics, and cultures of Asian countries will be encouraged and that there will be a sharing of the value consciousness among people in Asia.

This is why it is essential that we now participate in the projects of the WFBY and the WFB, the world’s largest network of which Buddhist countries in Asia are the center. This has a very great meaning for the Japanese Buddhist world. It is obvious that while it is necessary to further build up the rock-solid brand of traditional Japanese Buddhism in Asian countries. Particularly in the Buddhism of other Asian countries where meditation is considered to be a natural element. After understanding a comparison with the other ways of meditation, the thing which has attracted the most attention from people around world, including those in the West, is “ZEN”-Japanese Zen Buddhism-. For this reason, I firmly believe that the Sotoshu has a great role to fulfill in this matter as the greatest promoter of ZEN.

As we approach next year’s General Conference, AYSZBPA and JYBA will make great effort at international exchange. For all Soto temple priests in your various positions of responsibility, I hope that from now on you will continue to have great love for the Dharma. Furthermore, I’m thankful for even more of your understanding and cooperation. Thank you for allowing me to inform you of these international Buddhist exchange activities and the upcoming General Conference.



The Sotoshu Understanding of Zazen: Learning About the *Fukan zazengi*

Rev. Kenshu Sugawara

Over the next few issues of Dharma Eye, I would like to pursue the subject of Dogen Zenji’s work, the *Fukan zazengi* (“Universally Recommended Instructions for Zazen”), which is the fundamental scripture on zazen for the Sotoshu. Also, I would like to mention at the start that I will be reading this work, the *Fukan zazengi*, according to the Daihonzan Eiheiiji version of “Dogen Zenji’s Extensive Record” (also known as the “popular edition”). I would like to understand and grasp the tenets of Soto Zen Buddhism through this way of reading.

I would like to grasp the meaning of the *Fukan zazengi* while looking at commentaries that date from before the Edo Period (1603-1868) and other writings written by Dogen Zenji. Consequently, I must note that there are some differences from what it has been said in the past.

Furthermore, among the conventional ways this text has been divided, there is the way of dividing it into sixteen segments (this is the way that Hata Egyoku Zenji divided it in his *Lectures on the Fukan zazengi*) which is taken from the *shiroku benrei* structure of the popular version of the *Fukan zazengi*. I personally think this is a good method. However, since the text will be divided this time according to the number of installments in the Dharma Eye, I would like to add my commentary based on my studies as well as this condition.

Accordingly, regarding these studies, I would like to proceed by looking primarily at the commentaries of three Edo Period scholar priests, focusing mostly on *Eihei koroku tenchato* (A Cup of Tea with Dogen Zenji's Extensive Record) by Katsudo Honko Zenji. But also looking at *Fukan zazengi monge* (Listening to and Understanding the *Fukan zazengi*) by Menzan Zuiho Zenji and *Fukan zazengi funogo* (Words That Cannot Be Spoken About the *Fukan zazengi*) by Shigetsu Ei'in Zenji. I would also like to examine various commentaries on the *Eihei Gen Zenji Goroku* (also known as the "Ryaku roku" or the "Abbreviated Record"). I would like to look at these other texts because these texts are the achievement of the Edo Period scholar priests' studies of the *Fukan zazengi*. I also would like to refer to the commentaries on the *Fukan zazengi* described in collections of saying of Dogen Zenji, written by some other scholar priests in Edo period. As a result, it is possible for us to know about commentaries related to zazen by scholar priests who are not well known.

By the way, before I begin looking at the text, in a word, we can say that the essence of the *Fukan zazengi* is "The Way is originally perfect and all-pervading." In other words, our bodymind itself is from the beginning perfectly the Buddha's Way (*satori/enlightenment*, teachings, and sutras). And yet, if that is the case, why is it necessary for us to practice and verify this? Or, at this time, what should this practice/verification be? It is precisely these questions that are the greatest source which is pressing us forward with the study of the *Fukan zazengi* as well as our own zazen itself. It can be said that this is a *koan* that we must always keep in mind.

Fukan zazengi (Universally Recommended Instructions for Zazen)

Written by monk Dogen at Kannon Dori
Kosho Horinji

First, this title itself is a big problem. We must examine and study what is the meaning of the words "*Fukan zazengi*." Regarding this expression "*fukan*" (universally recommended), Katsudo Zenji emphasized that even with the differences people may have in their personal circumstances and talents, it is not possible to escape from or get rid of this character for "*kan*," which means "to recommend" or "to promote." He also said that we must not understand the title of this text to mean that this is only a matter of simply conveying the "form of zazen." Katsudo Zenji wrote, "The essence of zazen as it is practiced (by all buddhas and ancestral masters) is sitting in immobile stillness. The spirit of promoting this practice as well as when teaching others must not be one of form only. [Zazen] is immediately the intimate understanding of the Buddha's radiant light. It isn't that there is neither practice nor verification, but they must not be defiled." Here we can see the depth to which he studied this matter. In other words, if we fall into thinking of zazen only in terms of form or technique, then there is no "universal" element of zazen there. To the very end, we must realize the Buddha's principle of "universal." It is for this very reason that it is "the Buddha's radiant light which must not be tainted." When Dogen Zenji uses the term "Buddha," the sense of "no discrimination" is contained within it. Since it is ordinary people who discriminate about "no discrimination," it is necessary for everyone to break down this viewpoint of the

ego. And then, it is necessary to correctly transmit zazen that has taken in Buddha's radiant light. This is "universally recommended."

By the way, regarding "instructions for zazen," which we will hereafter be reading, Katsudo Zenji said that it would be good to also read this text along with Dogen Zenji's "The Model for Engaging the Way" (*Bendoho*) and "On the Endeavor of the Way" (*Bendowa*). It would also of course be good to refer to Dogen Zenji's "Instructions for Zazen" (*Zazengi*) and "A Needle for Zazen" (*Zazen shin*).

Continuing then, we can see from the description in the title "Written by monk Dogen at Kannon Dori Kosho Horinji" that this popular version of the *Fukan zazengi* came into existence while Dogen Zenji was living at Koshoji. Based on this premise, I would like to explore a little bit the context of this text with some of Dogen Zenji's other writings.

Oct. 15, 1236	Dogen Zenji gave a Dharma talk to the assembled monks at Koshoji
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March 18, 1242	He wrote <i>Zazenshin</i> at Koshoji
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July 16, 1243	Dogen Zenji moved to Echizen
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Mid-November 1243	He spoke to the assembled monks at Kippoji about <i>Zazengi</i>
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Feb. 15, 1244

He spoke about *The King of Samadhis (Zammai O Zammai)* to the assembled monks at Kippoji

This was the flow of events. From this, we can clearly see that *Zazengi* was written after *Fukan zazengi*. It is not known which one came first *Zazenshin* or *Fukan zazengi*, but in my humble opinion, I think that Dogen Zenji uses a kind of "experimental thoughts" in his writings and that in the process of hammering out the popular version of the *Fukan zazengi*, he wrote the *Zazenshin* chapter. I also think before and after that chapter there came the Ancient Mirror chapter of the *Shobogenzo* and that evolved into the Continuous Practice and Radiant Light chapters, and so the popular version of the *Fukan zazengi* was written after *Zazenshin*. Wasn't it the case that in response to the result of the *Zazenshin* chapter, Dogen Zenji once again rearranged the style of the *Fukan zazengi* which then resulted in the popular version of the *Fukan zazengi*? Also, with regard to the studies about Koshoji's temple name, I think Menzan Zenji's *Fukan zazengi monge* (Listening to and Understanding the *Fukan zazengi*) is an excellent text, so I recommend that you read.

The Way is originally perfect and all-pervading. How could it be contingent on practice and realization?

The true vehicle is self-sufficient. What need is there for special effort?

*Indeed,
the whole body is free from dust. Who could believe in a means to brush it clean?*

It is never apart from this very place; what is

the use of traveling around to practice?
And yet,
if there is a hairsbreadth deviation, it is like
the gap between heaven and earth.
If the least like or dislike arises, the mind is
lost in confusion.

In the past time, someone wrote a paper just on these first two lines. From long ago scholar priests have paid the most attention to in their *teishos*. The contents of these two lines must never be dealt with lightly. Furthermore, the section from “The Way is originally perfect and all-pervading” to “the mind is lost in confusion” should be thought of as one section, otherwise it is certain that this text will be misunderstood and for that reason, I would like to talk about these lines together.

First, these first two lines of the *Fukan zazengi* truly indicate Dogen Zenji’s view of zazen and his view of practice/realization from the standpoint of “the gate of original enlightenment” (*Hongakumon*). The world in which we live, including the Way of Buddha and the true vehicle, exists perfectly and harmoniously, and (from the beginning) there is no need for practice in order to awaken to (reality). Also, since all dust and dirt has fallen away from all things, there is no need to wipe away. Since there is no separation from the core place of the Way of Buddha, there is no need to practice and verify the Way of Buddha.

The question is that given this fact of original enlightenment, in other words that all things are enlightened from the beginning, how does that influence our present reality? If there is even the

slightest misconception regarding this part of the text, then the truth of the buddhas and ancestral masters becomes as different from our understanding as the gap between heaven and earth. We will be in a state of confusion such that the Buddha-mind will be lost. If that is the case, then how is it possible to learn about and master this condition where there is no misunderstanding?

Regarding the phrases “How could it be contingent on practice and realization?” and “What need is there for special effort?” Katsudo Zenji pointed out that both of them refer to the teaching “practice and realization are completely the same.” If we describe the teaching “practice and realization are the same” from the standpoint of the Buddha’s truth and awakening, then questions arise such as “Why is practice/realization necessary?” or “Why is it necessary to make effort at practicing the Way?” But it isn’t that there is no practice here. In other words, it is precisely because of this condition of the Way being originally perfect and all-pervading, that the self-sufficiency of the true vehicle is emphasized. It is because there is practice which is not born as well as the original Way and true vehicle which are perfect and self-sufficient that this becomes “practice and realization are completely the same.”

In that sense, then, there is the danger for a person who does not correctly grasp the teaching of “the oneness of practiced and realization” of falling either to the side of practice or to the side of realization even if they do read the *Fukan zazengi*. This is pointed out by Katsudo Zenji who is truly saying the same thing as Dogen Zenji. This means that for those of us living in

the present day we as well must grasp this point correctly. Although the term does not appear, Katsudo Zenji continues his commentary up to pointing to the notion of “subtle practice within original enlightenments.” This is to say, in short, that no matter how much *satori* or awakening or “perfect and all-pervading” are emphasized, this still means that practice must certainly be carried out. And, the actual implementation of this practice or training must be done under a good teacher and that we must imitate his or her way of living. If you practice under a bad teacher, then these everyday actions will only be bad actions and not Buddhist practice.

When we hear the teachings “the subtle practice within original enlightenment” or “the Way is originally perfect and all-pervading,” we quickly end up thinking “Is any sort of lifestyle the originally perfect and all-pervading Way?” and then “If the Way is originally perfect and all-pervading, does that mean that practice isn’t necessary?” It leads to these sorts of notions. However, these ideas themselves are already abstract discussions that are separate from reality; they are truly empty fantasies and delusions. These phrases can first be said only on the premise that practice is correctly being carried out and are teachings for the purpose of pointing out the relationship between practice and enlightenment. That is the teaching of the *Fukan zazengi*. The significance of this text is to show that no matter how much a person practices it will not lead to enlightenment and in order to avoid such useless actions it shows or expresses the relationship between the two based on “untainted (non-discriminatory) practice/realization.” With this presupposition, there will be no reckless confusion.

It is best to think of the premise that there is a daily practice. Indeed, this is certainly a text aimed at beginners. However, in the amended version of *Zazengi* chapter, which was in the true sense intended for beginners, the instruction at the beginning of the *Fukan zazengi* regarding Dogen Zenji’s viewpoint of practice and realization was omitted. This compassionate consideration of Dogen Zenji must be correctly grasped by his descendants. It is precisely because the *Fukan zazengi* is a text that was given as a teaching for all sentient beings that these instructions are for all people from beginners all the way to elder practitioners who have been practicing for many years. For the beginners, Dogen Zenji first instructs that it is relatively easy to understand the principles of Buddhism, but that it is also necessary to be cautious. For longtime practitioners, he teaches at the beginning of the *Fukan zazengi* that the essence of “the subtle practice within original enlightenment” is, in words found in *Bendowa*, “Remember, in order to prevent us from tainting the experience that is never separate from practice, the buddhas and ancestral masters have repeatedly taught us not to be lax in practice.” Moreover, if we are unable to correctly understand this sentence which I’ve just quoted from *Bendowa*, then our understanding of “the subtle practice within original enlightenment” will be mistaken. Nowhere is it written that we must be lax in our practice. It is essential that we practice strictly. (Here, this is not based on the premise of a final spurt of physical and spiritual practice. Rather, I am referring to having correctly grasped the intention of practice and correctly living a well-regulated life).

If we have been able to correctly understand

the first section of the *Fukan zazengi*, then it should be easy to understand the whole text of the *Fukan zazengi*.

Suppose

*you are confident in your understanding and
rich in enlightenment,
gaining the wisdom that knows at a glance,
attaining the Way and clarifying the mind,
arousing an aspiration to reach for the heavens.
You are playing at the entranceway, but you
are still short of the vital path of emancipation.*

Consider the Buddha:

*although he was wise at birth, the traces of
his six years of upright sitting can yet be seen.
As for Bodhidharma, although he had
received the mind-seal, his nine years of
facing a wall is celebrated still.*

*If even the ancient sages were like this, how
can we today dispense with wholehearted
practice?*

For the moment, I have brought forward this part of the text. In a nutshell, this part consider the freedom from “the perceptual illusion” (*makyo*) of great enlightenment (*daigo*). In the previous section, it is clearly stated that we must not misunderstand that “the Way is originally perfect and all-pervading.” This second section develops from there to “practice.” In the same way as the present-day Sotoshu (and something that I am very concerned about), Dogen Zenji did not put emphasis on “great enlightenment” (or, as some people say “the thorough investigation of the self” or “*kensho*,” as other say). I don’t think this is to deny everything completely, but it must be handled with care.

The prime example is the very first two lines. Stated another way, you have participated and practiced in many Dharma events, and you think you are richly endowed with enlightenment and have glimpsed the truth; and you may even think you have attained the Way of Buddha and the Mind of Buddha, and gained the power to touch the heavens. However, this is after all to have finally just entered the truth. In fact, you are still only wandering around the peripheral. Rather, if you are satisfied with having grasped a little bit of this understanding, then you have almost lost the way of total liberation. This “vital path of emancipation” means to enter the world of truth by jumping over in an instant such things as worldly reputations. This is, in other words, “With one leap to straightaway enter the stage of the Tathagata.” Furthermore, even if you have entered the stage of the Tathagata and then let it end at that, this is to be in “the devil’s cage” (the place where practice has ceased).

Let me make sure, the thing that was pointed out in the preceding section was the correct understanding of “practice and realization are completely the same.”

If this is so, then it can be said that this section is about seeking the correct understanding of “practice.” This is the second half. Here, we have a reference to Shakyamuni Buddha who had attained the Way of Buddha from the time of birth and that we must take note of the superlative vestiges of his six years of practice that he underwent. And, we must also be aware of the great fame of Bodhidharma who had obtained the Buddha-mind seal in India and transmitting it to China, he then sat for nine years facing a wall.

It was the case with both of them that this was not “zazen in order to attain enlightenment,” but rather this text means that based on the fact that they were clear about the enlightenment, they practiced zazen which was practice within realization.

“It is just a stamp like realization of the Buddhas and ancestral masters who made zazen their body-mind and homeland.” Katsudo Zenji (*A Cup of Tea with Dogen Zenji’s Extensive Record*)

People who think that zazen is something practiced only with your own body will not be able to understand this statement. However, it says “the dependent and the proper.” Zazen is the environment (the dependent reward of karma) and at the same time zazen is our body (the proper reward of karma). And then, while zazen is our own body-mind, it is simultaneously our homeland. This means that zazen itself is the existence of ourselves and at the same time it is the basis for that existence. Since zazen itself is “practice and realization is the same,” practice is reality and realization is the foundation. If we understand zazen this way, then the next sentence will be easy to understand.

“In this way, Shakyamuni Tathagata and Venerable Mahakashapa were both used by practice within realization; Great Master Bodhidharma and the Sixth Great Ancestral Master Huineng were drawn in and turned by practice within realization. The ancient way of abiding in the Buddhadharma has always been like this.” (*Bendowa*)

Because Shakyamuni Buddha as well as Mahakashapa, or Bodhidharma and Huineng, all of them were used and guided by practice within realization, they correctly dwelled and maintained within the Buddhadharma. It can be said that we should yearn for their traces and follow their way. In short, as was mentioned at the beginning of this commentary, even if a person has “great enlightenment,” if that is where his or her practice wavers and then comes to an end, they fall into the devil’s cave (*makyo*). It is precisely for this reason it can be said that it isn’t a question of whether or not there is great enlightenment, but rather whether or not there is practice. It is essential that we have a situation in which we endeavor at investigation day and night.

When we hear the word “practice,” we end up thinking of it (no matter how far we take it) as a means only to attain enlightenment. We only think of practice as a means to attain a fixed state of some sort. However, as Dogen Zenji confirms in this statement from *Bendowa*, “The realm of all buddhas is inconceivable.” Or as in *Points to Watch in Buddhist Practice (Gakudo Yojinshu)*, “Understand that we establish practice within delusion and attain realization before enlightenment.” Or, regarding our practice of the Dharma, in *The Model for Engaging the Way (Bendoho)*, he wrote, “It is this koan before judgments or omens, so do not wait for great enlightenment.” In this way, Dogen Zenji is instructing us that practice-realization is always untainted (no discrimination); it is always completely the same. This is something we must really understand well. In other words, if we clearly want to attain “realization,” then it is not a matter of grasping it with own personal view or on the

level of consciousness. It is only rather that we must ask whether or not there is practice.

This is the point strongly stressed in the part I introduced this time.

To be continued in the next issue.



正法眼蔵第七 一顆明珠
**The 7th Chapter of Shobogenzo
Ikaka-myōju (One Bright Jewel)
Lecture (7)**

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One Bright Jewel

[text]

(11)

是一颗珠は、いまだ名にあらざれども道得なり、これを名に認じきたることあり。

This one bright jewel is not yet a name but an excellent expression. [And yet] it has been accepted as a name [in Xuansha's expression].

一顆珠は、直須万年なり。亙古未了なるに亙今到来なり。

One bright jewel is directly penetrating ten thousand years. Before the entire past has gone, the entire present has arrived.

身今あり、心今ありといへども明珠なり。

Here is the present moment of the body and the present moment of the mind. Each of them is one bright jewel.

彼此の草木にあらず、乾坤の山河にあらず、明珠なり。

[The entire ten-directions] is not this grass or those trees. [The ten-directions] is not mountains or rivers in the universe. [The ten-direction] is one bright jewel.

Making a Name for a Nameless Reality

This one bright jewel is not yet a name but an excellent expression. [And yet] it has been accepted as a name [in Xuansha's expression].

This is a continuation of Dogen's comments on Xuansha's expression, "The entire ten-direction world is one bright jewel." "Not yet" here actually means "never." This means the one bright jewel cannot be a concept, because it is the reality before any naming. When we name it, it becomes *nama rupa* (name and form). By using the expression, "one bright jewel," this reality becomes *nama rupa*, or a conceptual object of mind. This is how we are able to think about it and discuss it. Regardless of what we think about this nameless reality, we enter a fictitious world when we encounter it conceptually. Yet on the other hand, this fictitious world can be a good guide for seeing reality, in the same way a map or an atlas can be a guide for traveling a certain territory.

A map is flat. It has only two dimensions while the earth has three. There is no way to make a perfect map; some part of it will always be distorted. A map is not the same as the reality of the terrain of the earth. It is a very incomplete

copy of the real earth. The earth is the real thing and a map is an illusion.

However, without this distorted map we cannot accurately see the earth itself. If we don't have a map and simply walk around the planet, I don't think we could have an image of the entirety of the earth. For example, how could we discover the shape of this American continent? Even if we could walk around it for fifty or even a hundred years, I don't think we could create an image of the shape of the American continent. In a sense, a map is the fruit of every person's experience, nurtured over the course of tens of thousands of years, of walking around, imagining, and reporting on what the different parts of the continent look like. It is also the fruit of investigation using devices that measure the shape, size, direction, etc. of the terrain. So although a map is a distorted copy of the actual territory, it can be a useful tool in helping us to understand what the earth looks like.

If we think a map is the actual territory, that is a mistake. If we understand how a map is made and understand what parts of it are distorted in shape, size, or direction, then we can use it to create a mental image of the reality of the earth. In other words, if we understand that a map is an illusion, it can be used as a helpful guide.

This is what I think Dogen is saying here, since in a sense Xuansha made an offering to us to help us think about this reality of one bright jewel before it is put into words or made into a map. Reality cannot be confined to a map, but a map is nonetheless useful. In the case of a map of the earth, when we look at it we can envision and

think of the earth as an object of our mind and therefore cultivate knowledge and understanding of it. Although conceptualization is usually considered a negative thing in Buddhism, we need to accept that we cannot live as human beings without engaging in conceptualization. Even though Buddhism sees concepts as products of *prapanca* (conceptual proliferation) and *vikalpa* (false discrimination), if we understand their nature without being deceived by them, then they can be useful devices for us to see the true reality of all beings.

In a sense, all of our knowledge and wisdom based on conceptualization is delusion, just the same as a map. Yet a delusion or a distorted copy of reality can be a useful device to see reality as long as we are not deceived by the distortion. This means if we know how the map is made and we know what distortions are created in the process of making it, we can use the map as a source of wisdom.

I first thought about this analogy some years ago before the Internet became available. Today we have other methods that don't require a map to see what the earth is like, such as using a satellite image and a computer. But even this is still just an image or copy of the real thing. Yet by using this distorted copy, somehow we have a more developed understanding of the world in which we live as a tiny part. We can use our delusion, if we don't believe in it or cling to it as the actual reality. We therefore should appreciate Xuansha's offering us this image of reality as a bright jewel.

The Bright Jewel as Time

One bright jewel is directly penetrating ten thou-

sand years. Before the entire past has gone, the entire present has arrived.

“Ten thousand years” refers to one seamless, unsegmented moment from the beginning-less beginning to the endless end. This is time that does not flow from past to present and from present to future. As I discussed in lecture (5), I call this kind of time “eternity.” When we are fully attentive and mindful in one moment as one bright jewel (1), before (i.e. the past) and after (i.e. the future) are cut off, and this one moment becomes zero (0). Within this zero moment, the seamless moment of eternity is revealed ($1=0=\infty$). This is how “One bright jewel is directly penetrating ten thousand years.”

And yet in our mind the past, present and future exist, and time flows in this linear stream. This is a map or a framework the mind produces in order to understand the changing of things. In this framework we create a story or history centered around ourselves. When we do things attentively and selflessly with the things we encounter, this moment and our activity become one with eternity. But in our mind, we likely still think that our action is taking place within a particular position in this flow of time, i.e. the past, the present and the future. And yet, in this zero moment the entire past and the entire future are actually included. This is the meaning of, “Before the entire past has gone, the entire present has arrived.”

This sentence is a paraphrase of another Zen expression, “before the matter of the donkey has left the matter of the horse has come.” In this expression, the donkey and the horse refer to

karmic consciousness and Buddha nature respectively. Actually, they are always together. Here Dogen is talking about time; before the past has gone, the present has already arrived. That means these are exactly one moment, and the entire past is reflected in this zero moment. Within this present moment, the entire past is present. And we can also say the same thing about the future.

Here is the present moment of the body and the present moment of the mind. Each of them is one bright jewel.

Now Dogen talks about the present moment (1) in terms of the common idea of time flowing from the past to the future. He says our body/mind is at this present moment in the flow. And yet our body/mind at this present moment (0) is in unison with the entire past and the entire future as time which doesn't flow (∞). Dogen disagrees with the idea that there is some permanent, unchanging thing that remains within this linear flow of time. But within this flow of time, when we are attentive and mindful and are just present right now, right here, fully doing some activity and becoming zero (0), then this zero moment without length becomes a gateway to eternity (∞). One bright jewel is realized as our body/mind and its function, right now, right here, together with the entire past and the entire future. And yet this is simply one bright jewel. Each of us, and each moment of our life, is itself one bright jewel.

[The entire ten-directions] is not this grass or those trees. [The ten-directions] is not mountains or rivers in the universe. [The ten-directions] is

one bright jewel.

The final sentence of this paragraph presents the bright jewel spoken of in terms of us and all beings abiding together within space. All beings within space, such as ourselves, mountains, rivers, trees and grasses, exist within this network of interdependent origination that includes all time and space. And each and every individual thing is a bright jewel existing in relationship with all things. There are also various facets of this jewel, including “mountains are mountains” as *u*-buddha-nature. Yet simultaneously “mountains are not mountains” exists as *mu*-buddha-nature, along with the “mountains are mountains” facet that includes both *u* and *mu*.

Usually these three sentences, “a mountain is a mountain,” “a mountain is not a mountain,” and again “a mountain is a mountain,” are considered to be the stages a practitioner goes through as a process of development in practice. But in Dogen’s case, practice is not a matter of stages. It is rather, “as manifestation (*genjo*), a mountain is always a mountain, and yet as liberation (*todatsu*), a mountain is never a mountain, therefore as the bright jewel, a mountain is always a mountain.”

As the bright jewel, each and every thing is individual and unique, and at the same time these things are not fixed, unchanging entities that exist outside of relationship to other things. Rather each one of them is entirely the bright jewel; everything exists within this interconnection. They exist as individual things and yet from another perspective they are not there; they are simply collections of various elements for some

amount of time, but sooner or later those elements will disperse.

How We Should Understand

[text]

(12)

学人如何会得。

“How should this student (I) understand?”

この道取は、たとひ僧の弄業識に相似せりとも、大用現前、是大軌則なり。

This question sounds as if the monk is interacting with his own karmic consciousness, but it is the great function manifesting itself as the great standard.

すすみて一尺水、一尺波を突兀ならしむべし。

One step further, when there is one foot of water, the water causes one foot of wave to stand up high.

いはゆる一丈珠、一丈明なり。

In other words, ten feet of jewel have ten feet of brightness.

In the previous few paragraphs, Dogen comments on the nature of the ten-direction-world and the bright jewel. He says the ten-direction-world is the range in which we live and act, the range of our practice and life. In terms of a human life, the bright jewel is a collection of the five skandhas, this body/mind; it’s not something hidden within the five skandhas. It is also not one individual being and simultaneously it’s not one whole. Yet at the same time each and every individual thing is one whole, just as a collection of five different fingers makes up one hand, and yet the fingers remain five different fingers.

From this section until paragraph (19), Dogen makes comments on the conversation

between Xuansha and the monk. In my lecture (5) on this fascicle, I mentioned two possible interpretations of this conversation. The common understanding of this conversation between Xuansha and the monk is that the monk did not at all understand Xuansha's intention. The other interpretation says they share the same understanding and are engaging in word play and joking with each other. Dogen's understanding is closer to the second, and yet it is still a bit different. His interpretation is much more dynamic. Before I begin talking about each of Dogen's comments, let me talk about my personal understanding of the vital point of this conversation.

“Understanding” and “beyond Understanding”

The monk's question in Chinese is: *Ikan ga e toku* (如何会得). *Ikan* is “how,” *e* is “understanding,” and *toku* is “be able to” or “can.” So the question reads, “How can I understand [your saying]?” The first part in Dogen's comment, “this question” is a translation of “*kono doshu* (この道取).” Even though I translated it as “question,” actually “*doshu*” means “statement,” “saying” or “expression.” According to Dogen, the monk's question is not really a question but rather a statement. The monk is insisting, “We should understand this, shouldn't we?”

Then Xuansha replied: *yu e somo* (用会作麼). When we read an English translation of this, it becomes confusing, but when we can study the original Chinese it's much simpler. *Yu* is “use,” and *e* is “understanding,” and *somo* is “what.” So the sentence is, “What is the use of understanding?” And that is the end of the conversation on that day.

The next day, Xuansha asked the monk: *Nanji somo san ka esu* (汝作麼生会)? *Somo* is the same as “how,” and “*somo san*” makes this sentence a question. The “*e*” is “understanding.” So Xuansha asked the monk “How do you understand it?” Then the monk says exactly the same thing as what Xuansha said the day before: “What is the use of understanding (*yu e somo*; 用会作麼)?” Finally, Xuansha says, “I know that you are making your livelihood inside a demon's cave in the black mountain.”

The monk's “How can I understand [your saying]?” is a rhetorical question. In Dogen's interpretation this is actually a statement rather than a question. And Xuansha's saying given the next day, “The entire ten-direction world is one bright jewel. How do you understand it?” is also a rhetorical question. Both are telling us we should continue to investigate the matter endlessly in order to understand.

Xuansha's answer to the monk the first day is, “What is the use of understanding it?” The monk's answer to Xuansha the second day is exactly the same. These sayings mean that there's no use in understanding; there's no way you can understand it. They are decisive statements.

The statements present two sides. On one side, we need to question and inquire and see as clearly as possible what the expression means; how can we understand?; what does it mean in our life? On the other side, any understanding resulting from such inquiry is useless. This is what I think Dogen is talking about.

In *Genjokoan*, Dogen said that when sailing a boat in the ocean, the ocean looks like a circle, and nothing else can be seen; there's no way to understand the ocean from this perspective; in it there is no distinction, separation or difference. The ocean simply looks like one circle.

And yet at the same time Dogen said the ocean is not simply a single circle. Rather there are millions of characteristics, many different things, and many aspects to the ocean. He said for fish the ocean's water is like a palace, for human beings water is just water as we commonly think, but for heavenly beings water is like a jewel. Dogen is saying that a thing can be seen in very different ways depending upon our karmic consciousness. He is saying we must keep asking ourselves, "What is this?" In the process of this questioning, we will receive some tentative insights or understanding, depending upon our level of experience and the level of our information and knowledge. We will perceive and think that the ocean is like this or like that. In this way, as bodhisattvas, we keep flying in the sky like a bird or swimming in the ocean like a fish, as Dogen says in *Genjokoan*. This is an endless process of study, practice, deepening our understanding, and opening our eyes even a little bit wider; that is how we see things more and more clearly so that we can "swim" or "fly" together with all beings.

But this inquiry always has its limitations: it is *my particular* view, it is produced by *my personal* perspective and *my unique* experiences. No matter how deeply we see and how wide our knowledge might become, our views are still limited. My view is only my view, produced by

my particular conditioned life experiences. This is what being a karmic or conditioned being means.

What I'm writing now is simply my own understanding of Dogen's writing, and my understanding is based on a small part of the whole of many Buddhist traditions. Whatever I say is, in my case, based on the Japanese Soto Zen Buddhist point of view. From my point of view this world or my life looks a certain way, but from other people's points of view, these might be quite different. We share the world with people from many different cultural and spiritual backgrounds. It's impossible to create a view and understanding of life that everyone will share.

I realize I'm just offering my particular view, and I make an effort to study other people's views; it is in this way we can come to understand each other better and perhaps become a bit more flexible while broadening our views. This is the basic meaning of the text we are now studying. Hopefully this kind of study allows us to live with other people in a more harmonious and peaceful way. You don't need to believe anything I'm saying – please don't believe me. Honestly speaking, even I don't believe what I'm saying right now. Tomorrow I may have a slightly different understanding and say something a bit different. What I'm writing now is simply one offering of one particular view from one particular person at one particular moment.

So we must keep inquiring. As Dogen said in *Genjokoan*, that is the process of our lifelong study. And yet, no matter how deep or wide my understanding might be, it is always simply a product of one particular point of view. Reality is

beyond any amount of conditioned understanding. In this sense, our intellectual understanding of reality, based on our particular karmic consciousness, doesn't work at all. Our view is not the reality itself. Any view is like a map; it's a distorted, incomplete copy, seen through a particular person's viewpoint, of a reality that is beyond any view.

In order to avoid being deceived by our views, we have to see reality from two sides. To me some situation or thing may look a certain way, but in reality things might not be one hundred percent as I think they are; seen from another side, this situation or object might be completely different. We always need to make an effort to view a situation from both sides. Later in this fascicle, Dogen calls these two sides the fixed dharma (*joho*, 定法) and not-fixed dharma (*fu-joho*, 不定法). This way of seeing things is in accordance with the Heart Sutra's "form is emptiness; emptiness is form" and Nāgārjuna's "absolute truth and conventional truth." These expressions describe how we can seek the middle way.

Both sides are necessary. Neither should be eliminated or negated, but each side negates the other while at the same time supporting the other. Both of these sides are included in our *zazen*. Our thoughts (*shiryō*, 思量) which come from our karmic consciousness, are always coming and going in our minds, but we don't grasp them in *zazen* – we open the hand of thought. Then our *zazen* becomes dropping off body and mind, or letting go; thinking is there but we don't actually think. So there is both thinking (*shiryō*, 思量) and not-thinking (*fu-shiryō*, 不思量). And both of

these are happening as beyond-thinking (*hi-shiryō*, 非思量). This is my basic understanding of what Dogen wants to say in this writing.

According to the common interpretation, the monk in the conversation doesn't understand reality and is asking Xuansha to teach him, and then even though Xuansha gives him the teaching, the monk still doesn't really understand. It is because of the monk's ignorance that Xuansha tells him that he is no good, that he is still living in the black mountains of ignorance.

But Dogen's interpretation is different. For him, Xuansha and the monk are on the same level, engaging in word play with in their exchanges and changing roles each day to jointly express reality. The monk's "we need to understand, how can we understand?" Xuansha's "there's no way to understand; understanding is of no use," Xuansha's, "How do you understand?" and the monk's "there's no use of understanding," are all, according to Dogen, ways that this bright jewel is rolling around without obstacles. Here it is turning this way and that way, showing the beauty of each of its sides and emitting its light.

The Great Function Manifesting Itself as the Great Standard

Now I would like to begin interpreting Dogen's comments on this conversation.

"How should this student (I) understand?"

This monk had heard that Xuansha's primary teaching to his assembly was, "The entire ten-direction-world is one bright jewel." So he was

asking Xuansha, “How should I understand this?”

Dogen says of this exchange:

This question sounds as if the monk is interacting with his own karmic consciousness, but it is the great function manifesting itself as the great standard.

As I said, according to Dogen, this is not really a question, that is why in his commentary he repeats the phrase, “sounds as if the monk is interacting with his own karmic consciousness.” “Interacting with his own karmic consciousness” is “*ro goshiki* (弄業識). *Go* (業) is “karma,” and *shiki* (識) is “consciousness.” *Ro* (弄) means “to play with,” as children play; so it is “to play with karmic consciousness.” Usually “karmic consciousness” refers to some sort of negative habitual way of thinking that makes our life a cycle of suffering in samsara.

In the common interpretation of Buddhist teachings, karmic consciousness produces a distorted way of viewing things and creates desires that compel us to produce good or bad karma. As a result, we suffer and transmigrate within the six realms of samsara. From this perspective, by “playing with karmic consciousness” the monk was producing karma. Therefore, as a result of his karmic consciousness, he didn’t understand Xuansha’s saying, “the entire ten direction world is one bright jewel,” and his question was also formed by karmic consciousness. So his thinking and inquiring are totally happening within the realm of karmic consciousness.

Dogen, however, says that although on the surface this monk’s question seems to be coming from his karmic consciousness, this saying is actually “the great function manifesting itself as the great standard.”

This “great function” is *dai yu* (大用). This is a part of the longer expression, *daiyu genzen fuson kisoku* (大用現前不存軌則), an expression of Zen Master Yunmen (*Unmon*, 雲門), Xuansha’s dharma brother. *Genzen* is “manifesting,” the great function manifesting itself. This great function refers to the movement of this entire network of interdependent origination. *Fu* is “not” and *son* is “to be” or “exist,” and *kisoku* is like a regulation, standard, or rule. So it means that when this great function is working, there is no such thing as man-made regulations or rules. Human beings cannot control or even evaluate this great movement of causes and conditions. It is the movement of a much greater energy of a universal system.

Yunmen’s saying means that we should wake up to this great function and not cling to “my” personal point of view. We often make our own rules and expect or request other people to abide by them, and if they don’t do so, we think they are strange or bad people. These are man-made *kisoku* or standards. We measure ourselves and others using such standards. This might work within the human world, but Yunmen said we should awaken to universal reality and give up such man-made, small, and self-centered standards of measurement. That is so because we are only a tiny part of this much larger movement; if we cling to these measurements we are like a drop of sea water trying to measure the entire ocean.

But Dogen twisted the meaning of Yunmen's expression, saying almost the opposite of the traditional interpretation. He omits *fuson* (not existing) and adds "*ze dai kisoku*." *Ze* means "this"; *dai* is "great," so the word is "great standard." That means when this great function is working and when we awaken to it, we see the great standard we must follow.

These standards have the same meaning for our practice as the bodhisattva precepts. The bodhisattva precepts are not a collection of man-made rules or prohibitions. Yet when we awaken to the reality of interdependence and the functioning of causes and conditions, there are certain things we should avoid, or we actually cannot do. This is not due to the authority of man-made regulations, rules or laws, but it is rather the result of awakening. When we try to live following this great function, we simply cannot do certain self-centered things. Because we are supported by all beings and are living together with all beings, we in return should support them; the very least we can do is to try not to harm them. This is not dictated to us by a set of man-made regulations or rules, but it is rather the natural result of awakening to this reality. Here Dogen calls this result of awakening the "reat standard."

Yunmen's saying is more in line with what we might call orthodox Zen teachings. It says that if we give up man-made standards and follow this great function, we will attain freedom or liberation. That is one of the common understandings of Zen teachings, but Dogen says here that if we awaken to that reality of interconnectedness, that does not make us free. Instead, we are actually

restricted by this reality to which we awaken.

Here Dogen means that when we awaken to this reality, we must keep looking into the nature of each and every thing we encounter, moment after moment. We need to keep asking ourselves, "How can I understand this? What is the meaning of this?" And if we feel we understand, we must ask "How can I best live? What should I do, what should I avoid?" We must continue to reflect, to keep deepening and to keep broadening our understanding. That is following the great standard.

So we can see that from Dogen's perspective the monk's question or saying does not stem from his lack of understanding. Rather his question arose from his awakening to this reality. That means this question itself is a function of the great jewel and a part of its brightness.

This is also what the next two sentences of Dogen's comments are expressing:

One step further, when there is one foot of water, the water causes one foot of wave to stand up high.

"One step further" means that not only is the great standard of this vast function of the network of interdependent origination a function of this bright jewel, but also the individual monk and his activities, including this question, are also its function. The function is not simply universal, it is individual as well.

In *Tathagāta-garbha* theory teachings, water is used as a metaphor for true reality, *tathatā*, and

waves are used as a metaphor for karmic consciousness, the movement of the reality caused by the wind of ignorance. When the water, true reality, is blown by the wind of ignorance, it starts to move, and that movement is karmic consciousness. Water is something positive, i.e. truth or reality, and waves are something negative, being caused by ignorance.

But water and waves are actually one thing, and here Dogen uses the metaphor in that way, negating the traditional symbolism. In his view, one foot of water causes one foot of wave, and both are the bright jewel. The wave in this case is the monk's question, "How can I understand?" and it is a function of the jewel. So the question is not a product of the monk's ignorance, and there's no such distinction between ignorance on the surface of things and Buddha nature or *Tathagāta-garbha* as a kind of a deeper, hidden treasure. But our body and mind (*panca upadana skandha*, five aggregates of attachment) as both Mara and the prajna that sees the emptiness of the five aggregates and liberates us from attachment are entirely there. This is the same as the painting "My Wife and my Mother-in-law," where an image of a young lady and an old lady are completely the same and yet completely different. When we see the young lady, the old lady disappears or hides within the young lady; and when we see the old lady, the young lady is nowhere to be found. Both images are one hundred percent the same, and yet they never meet each other.

In other words, ten feet of jewel has ten feet of brightness.

This means the monk's question is a question-statement manifesting the brightness of the jewel. Dogen says this monk is not ignorant.

Transmitting the Bright Jewel

(13)

いはゆるの道得を道取するに、玄沙の道は「尽十方世界は一顆明珠、用会作麼」なり。

In putting forth this expression, Xuansha said, "The entire ten-direction world is one bright jewel. What is the use of understanding it?"

この道取は、仏は仏に嗣し、祖は祖に嗣す、玄沙は玄沙に嗣する道得なり。

This utterance is what a buddha inherits from a buddha, what an ancestor inherits from an ancestor, and what Xuansha transmitted to Xuansha.

嗣せざらんと廻避せんに、廻避のところなかるべきにあらざれども、しばらく灼然廻避するも、道取生あるは現前の蓋時節なり。

If one tries to avoid this transmission, there might be some way to avoid it. But even if one resolutely tries to avoid it, the moment in which one speaks is the entire moment that expresses [the entire ten-direction world].

Next Dogen comments on Xuansha's saying, "What's the use of understanding?" "In putting forth this expression" means that Xuansha offers a saying that expresses the same reality as the bright jewel, but does it from the opposite side?

Dogen says that buddhas have been transmitting this saying from buddhas and ancestors have been transmitting this saying from ancestors, and Xuansha transmitted this saying to Xuansha. Those who transmitted and those who received the transmission are all buddhas, ancestors, and Xuansha. This means that there is nothing as a

particular *thing* to be transmitted. Nevertheless, this reality of one bright jewel, which is itself the ten-direction world, has been transmitted; it is the identity of the self, the self's activity, and the world. This is what Dogen said about Bodhidharma's coming from India in *Shobogenzo Gyoji*. When traveling to China, Bodhidharma was the self of transmitting the Dharma, and his world was the world of transmitting the Dharma (see lecture 4).

What the buddhas and ancestors have been transmitting is the Dharma that is expressed from these two sides: "keep inquiring using understanding" and "not using understanding." They transmitted the way of life that is awakening to both the absolute truth of the reality and the conventional truth of the same reality. In other words, they transmitted the way we can live that enables us to awaken to and manifest the continuous relationship between our personal activities and the great total function. This concrete way of life based on the bodhisattva vow is the Dharma manifesting as the one bright jewel and the entire-ten-direction world. Because this is one's own self, one's own activity and one's own world, there is no way to exchange it with others.

These two truths are not two separate things; they are like a buddha transmitting the Dharma to a buddha, an ancestor transmitting the Dharma to an ancestor, and Xuansha transmitting the Dharma to Xuansha. The teacher, the student and the Dharma that is transmitted are one and the same thing.

As an illustration of this teaching, Dogen quotes Zhauzhou (Joshu)'s conversation with a

monk in *Shobogenzo Katto* (Entanglement):

The Great Master Zhenji of Zhaozhou said to his assembly, "Kashyapa transmitted [the dharma] to Ananda. Tell me, to whom did Bodhidharma transmit it?"

At that time, a monk asked, "What about the Second Ancestor's attainment of the marrow?"

The master replied, "Do not slander the Second Ancestor."¹

Zhauzhou said that thinking the Second Ancestor Huike received some particular thing from Bodhidharma is slandering the ancestor. Huike simply became Huike through practicing with Bodhidharma. Here is another conversation Zhauzhou had with a monk that expresses the same point:

When Zhauzhou was asked, "From whom have you received the transmission?"

Zhauzhou said, "Ts'ung-shen (Jushin)."²

Ts'ung-shen (Jushin) is Zhauzhou's personal name. When we study Buddhist teachings such as Nagarjuna's two truths, we commonly think there is an absolute truth and a conventional truth. We think there are two truths and in order to approach the absolute truth, we need to use the conventional truth as a tool. It seems that there are two truths and somehow we need to make these two into one. But once we separate these into two, there's no way to make them into one again. Dogen says here that these two truths are really one truth from the outset, and a buddha transmits it to a buddha, an ancestor transmits it to an ancestor, and Xuansha transmits it to Xuan-

sha. These two truths are exactly the same thing as one's own life that cannot be transmitted from one person to another.

In this case, the conventional truth is what tells us to keep inquiring into the nature of the absolute truth, deepening our understanding, and expressing it as much as possible using words, concepts, and logic in order to share the Dharma with other people. This is what the monk meant when he said, "How should I understand?" Then Xuansha points to another side by saying "What is the use of understanding?" In other words, there is no way to fully understand and express the absolute truth no matter how many words and concepts we use. These two sides are exactly the same thing. Both are the function of the one bright jewel.

If one tries to avoid this transmission, there might be some way to avoid it. But even if one resolutely tries to avoid it, the moment in which one speaks is the entire moment that expresses [the entire ten-direction world].

This means we must continue to study and practice using both, "keep asking and trying to deepen my understanding," and at the same time, "I know understanding is of no use." These are the two sides of the Dharma that has been transmitted by buddhas and ancestors, and we receive the transmission from the reality of our selves.

Dogen also says "if one tries to avoid this transmission..." Of course Dogen doesn't think there is actually such a possibility. It might be possible, however, to avoid either or both of these sides, "keep asking" and "stop asking." But

genuine practice involves simply being right here, right now, within this one circle of the ocean and simultaneously asking "what is this?" In that way, we study reality one moment at a time, one problem at a time. This is what Uchiyama Roshi did when he had terrible pain from a foot infection (See lecture 3).

"Even if one resolutely tries to avoid it," means to only focus on one side or the other of this reality. So even if we try to ignore one side of this reality, we are still within this reality. If for example, we think about Buddha's teaching and study Buddhist texts only intellectually, that action, energy and desire to study the texts comes from the power of the total function which includes the self and the myriad dharmas. It is impossible to be separate from the one bright jewel or outside of the ten-direction world.

Other people don't like intellectual study and want to simply practice silently and give up all mental understanding. That is also a way to choose based on preferences. Even if we reject intellectual understanding, still this simple discrimination is a judgement based on intellectual understanding.

But when we make such a choice, we are still working within the ten-direction world. If we try to avoid one side or the other, we can do so, yet when we make a decision based on preferences or judgements, both sides are actually present within the brightness of the jewel. We cannot really escape from the transmission or identity of these two sides. We cannot choose one over the other, because both sides are really one thing.

Whenever we ask a question or make a decision, that is the moment in which we express the entire ten-direction-dharma-world. This is true no matter how small or narrow our mind or our view might be. Even within a narrow discrimination like “I like this” or “I hate this,” this entire network of interdependent origination is working. No matter how selfish our thoughts might be or how much knowledge we have of this teaching, the teaching is always working within us. There’s no way we can escape it.

This concludes my comments on the conversation of the first day between Xuansha and the monk.

¹. This is Okumura’s unpublished translation.

². This is Okumura’s unpublished translation. Another translation is in the Recorded Sayings of Zen Master Joshu (translated by James Green, Shambhala, Boston 1998) p.83.



Treasury of the True Dharma Eye

Book 2

Mahā-prajñā-pāramitā

Maka hannya haramitsu

Translated by
the Soto Zen Text Project

Introduction

This brief text represents the earliest dated work found in traditional redactions of the *Shōbōgenzō*. It appears as number 2 in both the 60- and 75-fascicle collections, as well as in the vulgate edition. According to its colophon, it was composed during the summer retreat of 1233, at the Kannon Dōri cloister, Dōgen’s quarters at Fukakusa, just south of the imperial capital of Heian-kyō (modern Kyoto).

We do not know who might have kept that 1233 retreat with Dōgen. He had been back from China for six years at this point, but it had been only three years since he left the Zen monastery of Kenninji, in Heian-kyō, to make his own way as an independent teacher. We know that the Chinese monk Jiyuan (J: Jakuen) had already joined him, but his most important disciple, Ejō, would not arrive until the following year. Thus, it is not clear for whom and to what end this work was written.

Unlike the majority of *Shōbōgenzō* texts that were to come, the *Maka hannya haramitsu* does not yet address the stories and sayings of the Chinese Chan masters. Apart from a brief comment on a single poem by Dōgen’s recently deceased Chinese master, Rujing, the essay is devoted entirely to its title theme of the “perfection of wisdom” (prajñā-pāramitā), opening with an interpretation of the popular *Heart Sūtra*, and

then proceeding to quotations from the massive *Mahā-prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra*, translated by Xuanzang, in six hundred rolls. Although Dōgen does not introduce here the rich allusions to Chan literature that mark his mature writing, we can already see in some of his comments a taste for the novel readings of Chinese passages that would become a hallmark of his style.

Because this text is quite brief, we have been able to include here the full annotation provided in the Soto Zen Text Project's forthcoming translation of the *Shōbōgenzō*, now in preparation. Passages in italics in the translation indicate that the original text is in Chinese, rather than Japanese.

Mahā-prajñā-pāramitā

“When the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara practiced the deep *prajñā-pāramitā*,” it was his whole body “perceiving that the five aggregates are all empty.” The five aggregates are form, sensation, conception, formation, and consciousness; they are *prajñā* in five pieces. “Perceiving” is *prajñā*. In proclaiming this essential point, it is said, “form is itself emptiness; emptiness is itself form.” Form is form; emptiness, itself emptiness. It is the hundred grasses; it is the myriad phenomena.¹ Twelve pieces of *prajñā-pāramitā* — these are the twelve bases. Again, there is *prajñā* in eighteen pieces: the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind; form, sound, smell, taste, tactility, and dharmas; the visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, and mental consciousnesses. Again, there is *prajñā* in four pieces: suffering, its arising, its cessation, and the path. Again, there is *prajñā* in six pieces: charity, morality, forbearance, effort, meditation, and *prajñā*. Again, the *prajñā* in one piece is realized in the present: it is

anuttarā-samyak-saṃbodhi. Again, there are three pieces of *prajñā-pāramitā*: the past, present, and future. Again, there are six-pieces of *prajñā*: earth, water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness. Again, the *prajñā* in four pieces is the walking, standing, sitting, and reclining performed in everyday life.²

* * * * *

There was a bhikṣu in the assembly of the Tathāgata Śākyamuni who thought to himself,

*I should honor and pay obeisance to the most profound *prajñā-pāramitā*. Although in it, there are no dharmas that arise or cease, still it can be designated that there are the precept aggregate, the concentration aggregate, the wisdom aggregate, the emancipation aggregate, and the knowledge of emancipation aggregate. Again, it can be designated that there are the fruit of stream-entrant, the fruit of once-returner, the fruit of nonreturner, and the fruit of the arhat. Again, it can be designated that there is the bodhi of the solitary awakened one. Again, it can be designated that there is the supreme, perfect bodhi. Again, it can be designated that there are the jewels of buddha, dharma, and saṅgha. Again, it can be designated that there are turning the wheel of the wondrous dharma and delivering sentient beings.*

*The Buddha, knowing his thoughts, addressed the bhikṣu, saying, “Rightly so, rightly so.” The most profound *prajñā-pāramitā* is subtle and wondrous, difficult to fathom.”³*

Where the “bhikṣu” here “thinks to himself”

to “honor and pay obeisance to” the “dharma,” the prajñā of “although there are no arising and ceasing” — this is honoring and paying obeisance. At the very time that he honors and pays obeisance, the prajñā of “it can be designated” is realized — that is, the “precepts,” “concentration,” and “wisdom,” down to “delivering sentient beings.” This is called “there are no.” “The designation” “there are no” “can be” like this. This is “the most profound prajñā-pāramitā” that is “most profound, subtle and wondrous, difficult to fathom.”⁴

The Deva Śakra asked the elder Subhuti, “Virtuous One, if a bodhisattva-mahasattva wishes to study the most profound prajñā-pāramitā, how should he study it?”

Subhuti replied, “Kauśika, if a bodhisattva-mahasattva wishes to study the most profound prajñā-pāramitā, he should study it as if it were space.”⁵

Thus, to study prajñā is space; space is to study prajñā.

The Deva Śakra further addressed the Buddha saying,

World-Honored One, if good men and good women receive and uphold, read and recite, correctly reflect on, and preach for the benefit of others the most profound prajñā-pāramitā spoken of here, in what way should I protect it? I beg the World-Honored One to extend his compassion and instruct me.

At that time, the elder Subhuti said to the Deva Śakra, “Kauśika, do you see any dharma that should be protected?”

The Deva Śakra replied, “No, Virtuous One, I do not see any dharma that should be protected.”

Subhuti said,

Kauśika, if good men and good women speak like this, the most profound prajñā-pāramitā will itself be their protection. If good men and good women speak like this, the most profound prajñā-pāramitā will never be distant. This you should know: whatever humans or non-humans might look for the chance to harm it, in the end they will be unable to do so.

Kauśika, if you wish to protect it, you should do so in accordance with what has been said: for the bodhisattvas, [wishing to protect] the most profound prajñā-pāramitā is no different from wishing to protect space.⁶

We should know that “receiving and upholding, reading and reciting, correctly reflecting on,” are themselves protecting prajñā. “Wishing to protect” is “receiving and upholding, reading and reciting,” and so on.

* * * * *

My late teacher, the old buddha, said:

Its whole body, like a mouth, hanging in space,

It doesn’t ask if the winds are from north, south, east or west.

Equally, for them, it talks of prajñā:

Chichin tsunryan chichintsun.⁷

This is the “talking of prajñā” of successor after successor of buddhas and ancestors. It is the prajñā of “the whole body”; it is the prajñā of the

whole “other”; it is the *prajñā* of the whole self; it is the *prajñā* of the whole “north, south, east or west.”⁸

* * * * *

*The Buddha Śākyamuni said, Śāriputra, these sentient beings should make offerings, honor, and pay obeisance to this prajñā-pāramitā as if a buddha dwelt there. When they reflect upon the prajñā-pāramitā, they should do so as if they were making offerings, honoring, and paying obeisance to a buddha, a bhagavat. What is the reason? The prajñā-pāramitā is no different from a buddha, a bhagavat; a buddha, a bhagavat, is no different from the prajñā-pāramitā. The prajñā-pāramitā is identical with a buddha, a bhagavat; a buddha, a bhagavat, is identical with the prajñā-pāramitā. Why is this so? Because, Śāriputra, all the tathāgatas, the worthy ones, the perfectly awakened ones appear owing to the prajñā-pāramitā. Because, Śāriputra, all the bodhisattvas-mahasattvas, pratyeka-buddhas, arhats, nonreturners, once-returners, stream-entrants appear owing to the prajñā-pāramitā. Because, Śāriputra, the ten good deeds, the four tranquil contemplations, the four formless concentrations, and the five paranormal powers, in all worlds, appear owing to the prajñā-pāramitā.*⁹

Therefore, a buddha, a *bhagavat*, is the *prajñā-pāramitā*. The *prajñā-pāramitā* is the dharmas. “These dharmas are marked by emptiness; they do not arise or cease; they are not sullied or pure; they do not increase or decrease.”

When this *prajñā-pāramitā* appears, a buddha, a *bhagavat*, appears. We should question him; we should study with him. To “make offerings, do obeisance, and honor” is to attend and serve the buddha, the *bhagavat*. Attending and serving is a buddha, a *bhagavat*.¹⁰

Treasury of the True Dharma Eye
Mahā-prajñā-pāramitā
Number 2

Presented to the assembly at Kannon Dōriin,
on a day of the summer retreat, in the first year of
Tenpuku [25 May to 21 August 1233].

Copied while serving in the acolyte's office,
Yoshimine (Kippo) Shōja, district of Etsu,
twenty-first day of the third month, spring of the
yang wood year of the dragon, the second year of
Kangen [29 April 1244]. Ejō

Notes

1. “**When the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara practiced the deep prajñā-pāramitā**” (*Kanjizai bosatsu no gyō jin hannya haramitta ji*): The opening paragraph here is devoted to comments on the *Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra* (*Boruo boluomiduo xin jing*). This first sentence represents Dōgen’s variation, in mixed Chinese and Japanese, on the first sentence of the *Sūtra* (T.251.8.848c6-7):

When the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara practiced the deep *prajñā-pāramitā*, he perceived that the five aggregates were all empty.

“They are prajñā in five pieces” (*gomai no hannya nari*): I.e., each of the five aggregates is an instance of wisdom. Cf. the *Heart Sūtra* here (T.251.08.848c10):

Therefore, in emptiness, there is no form; there is no sensation, conception, formation or consciousness.

“Form is itself emptiness; emptiness is itself form” (*shiki soku ze kū nari, kū soku ze shiki nari*): Quoting from the famous passage in the *Heart Sūtra* (T.251.8.848c7-9):

Śāriputra, form is not different from emptiness, emptiness is not different from form. Form is itself emptiness; emptiness is itself form. Sensation, conception, formation, and consciousness are also like this.

“It is the hundred grasses; it is the myriad phenomena” (*hyakusō nari, banzō nari*): Or, perhaps, “they are”; the translation takes the unexpressed subject here to be the immediately preceding “emptiness,” but it might as well be “form” and “emptiness.” “The hundred grasses” and “the myriad phenomena” are two common expressions for all things in the world.

2. **“The twelve bases”** (*jūni nyū*): The twelve *āyatana*, or “supports”: i.e., the six sense organs (*kon*; S. *indriya*) and their objects (*kyō*; S. *viśaya*).

“Prajñā in eighteen pieces” (*jūhachi mai no hannya*): The list here corresponds to the eighteen elements (*jūhachi kai*; S. *dhātu*), involved in cognition: the six sense organs, their objects, and the corresponding consciousnesses. This and the preceding sentence reflect the *Heart Sūtra* at T.251.8.848c10-12:

There is no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body or mind. There is no form, sound, smell, taste, touch or dharma. There is no eye element, and so on

until, there is no mental consciousness element.

“Prajñā in four pieces” (*shimai no hannya*): I.e., the Buddhist four noble truths.

“Prajñā in six pieces” (*rokumai no hannya*): I.e., the six perfections (S. *pāramitā*) of the bodhisattva.

“Anuttarā-samyak-saṃbodhi” (*anokutara sanmyaku sanbodai*): I.e., “supreme, perfect bodhi,” the wisdom of a buddha. The implication of the description here of this wisdom as “realized in the present” (*nikon genjō seri*) is uncertain; it may mean simply that it “has been expressed here [in the *Sūtra*],” in reference to the line at T.251.8.848c16-17):

The buddhas of the three times, by relying on the prajñā-pāramitā, attain *anuttarā-samyak-saṃbodhi*.

“Six pieces of prajñā” (*hannya rokumai*): I.e., the six major elements (*rokudai*; S. *mahābhūta*) of Buddhist cosmology.

“Prajñā in four pieces” (*shimai no hannya*): I.e., the four departments (*iigi*; S. *īryāpatha*) of the body.

3. **“There was a bhikṣu”** (*ichi bissū*): This entire section is a quotation of the *Great Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra* (*Da boruo boluomituo jing*, T.220.6.480b17-26).

“The precept aggregate, the concentration aggregate, the wisdom aggregate, the emancipation aggregate, and the knowledge of emancipation aggregate” (*kai un jō un e un gedatsu un gedatsu chicken un*): The so-called “undefiled five aggregates” (*muro goun*) attributed to an awakened one, also treated as the “five-part dharma body” (*gobun hosshin*) of a buddha.

“The fruit of stream-entrant, the fruit of once-returner, the fruit of nonreturner, and

the fruit of the arhat” (*yoru ka ichirai ka fugen ka arakan ka*): I.e., the four stages, or “fruits” (*S. phala*), on the traditional Buddhist path to nirvāṇa.

“The bodhi of the solitary awakened one” (*dokkaku bodai*): I.e., the awakening of a *pratyeka-buddha*.

“The supreme, perfect bodhi” (*mujō shōtō bodai*): I.e., the full awakening of a buddha, *anuttarā-samyak-sambodhi*.

“The jewels of buddha, dharma, and saṅgha” (*buppōsō hō*): I.e., the “three jewels” (*sanbō*; *S. tri-ratna*), traditional symbol of the Buddhist religion.

4. **“Where the ‘bhikṣu’ here ‘thinks to himself’ to ‘honor and pay obeisance to’ ‘the dharmas’”** (*nikon no ichi bissū no setsu sanen wa shohō o kyōrai suru tokoro ni*): This entire passage is an exercise in reorganizing the semantic units in the sūtra quotation. Here, honor is paid to the dharmas, rather than to prajñā; and it is prajñā, rather than the dharmas, that is without arising and ceasing.

“The prajñā of ‘it can be designated’ is realized” (*sesetsu katoku no hannya genjō seri*): Or, perhaps, “the prajñā that ‘can be designated’” Likely meaning something like, “the wisdom that recognizes that [although ultimately ‘there are no dharmas,’ the entire list of dharmas that follow here in the sūtra] ‘can be designated’ [i.e., conventionally proposed]” — such wisdom is realized in the act of “honoring and paying obeisance” to the dharmas.

“This is called ‘there are no’” (*kore o mu to iu*): I.e., the list of dharmas, from “the precept aggregate” down to “delivering sentient beings,” is characterized by the bhikṣu as “there are no

dharmas that arise or cease.”

“In this way, ‘the designation’ ‘there are no’ ‘can be’” (*mu no sesetsu kaku no gotoku katoku nari*): The translation struggles here to retain something of Dōgen’s play with the terms of the sūtra passage. Here, he has split the predicate “can be designated” (*sasetsu katoku*) and made the term *mu* (“there are no,” in the phrase “there are no dharmas”) the “designation” that “can be” in this way.

“This is ‘the prajñā-pāramitā’ that is ‘most profound,’ ‘subtle and wondrous, difficult to fathom’” (*kore jinjin mimyō nansoku no hannya haramitsu nari*): Variation on the last line of the sūtra quotation above.

5. **“The Deva Śakra asked the elder Subhuti”** (*Ten Taishaku mon guju Zengen*): Continuing to quote from the *Great Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra* (T.220.6.480b28-c2). “The Deva Śakra” (*Ten Taishaku*) is the god Indra, also addressed here as Kauśika (*Kyōshika*); “the elder Subhuti” (*guju Zengen*) is the Buddha Śākyamuni’s disciple.

6. **“The Deva Śakra further addressed the Buddha”** (*Ten Taishaku fuku haku butsu*): Continuing the quotation from the *Great Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra* (T.220.6.480c2-15).

7. **“My late teacher, the old buddha”** (*senshi kobutsu*): I.e., Dōgen’s teacher, Tiantong Rujing (1163-1228). The verse quoted here, entitled “Ode to the Wind Chime” (*Fengling song*), is cited elsewhere in Dōgen’s writings. His source for it is uncertain: it can be found in the *Rujing heshang yulu* (T.2002A.48.132b15-16), but that record of Rujing’s sayings did not reach Dōgen until the eighth month of 1242, well after the

date of our text here.

“Equally, for them, it talks of prajñā” (*ittō i ta dan hannya*): The translation takes the word *ta* here as a third person plural pronoun referring to “the winds”; in his comment below, Dōgen reads it as “other” (in contrast to “self.” In the *Rujing heshang yulu*, this line appears as “equally, with them, it talks of prajñā (*yideng yu qu boruo*) — a version that suggests the chime and the winds are talking together. This latter version is closer to the text cited at *Eihei kōroku*, DZZ.4:220. In his *Hōkyōki* (DZZ.7:40), Dōgen records Rujing’s appreciation of his interpretation of the verse.

“Chichin tsunryan chichintsun” (*tekitei tōryō tekiteitō*): An onomatopoetic representation of the sound of the wind chime. The reading here follows a premodern tradition recorded at *Maka hannya haramitsu monge*, *Shōbōgenzō chūkai zensho* 1:165. In modern Mandarin, the line would be read *diding dongliao didingdong*.

8. **“The prajñā of the whole ‘other’”** (*kōta hannya*): The translation here obscures Dōgen’s play with Rujing’s verse, which extends the adjective “whole” (*kon*) from the expression “whole body” (*konshin*) in the first line to other terms in the verse. Here, the term is *ta* (translated in the verse as “them”), to which Dōgen adds the contrasting “whole self” (*konko*).

9. **“The Buddha Śākyamuni”** (*Shakamuni butsu*): Quoting again from the *Great Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra* (T.220.5.925a8-20).

“The tathāgatas, the worthy ones, the perfectly awakened ones” (*nyorai ō shōtōgaku*): Three standard epithets of the buddhas. “The worthy ones” translates *ō* (abbreviation of *ōgu*, “worthy of reverence,”); i.e., “arhat.”

“The ten good deeds” (*jūzen gōdō*): Here, the sūtra begins a list of standard Buddhist spiritual practices: the ten wholesome actions (*S. daśala-kusala*), the four meditations (*S. dhyānas*), the four formless absorptions (*S. ārūpya-samāpatti*), and the five higher knowledges (*S. abhijñā*).

10. **“These dharmas are marked by emptiness; they do arise or cease; they are not sullied or pure; they do not increase or decrease”** (*kono shohō wa kūso nari, fushō fumetsu nari, fuku fujō fuzō fumetsu nari*): Dōgen here gives a Japanese rendering of a line from the *Heart Sūtra* (T.251.8.848c9-10).

“Attending and serving is a buddha, a bhagavat” (*bugon shōji, butsu bogabon nari*): Following the punctuation in Kawamura’s text; the passage might also be parsed, “To make offerings, do obeisance, and honor is to attend and serve the buddha, the *bhagavat*; is to be a buddha, a *bhagavat*, who attends and serves.”





**My Footnotes on Zazen (14)
“The Self Breathing Simultaneously
With the Great Earth and
All Sentient Beings” (1)**

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When reading a book by Charlotte Selver (1901 – 2003), the founder of a bodywork system called “Sensory Awareness,” I came across the following passage. This was a remark she made in 1966 at a workshop held in New York the theme of which was “breathing.”

“Look at this photograph taken of plants growing luxuriantly near the water. Isn’t the strength and diversity fascinating? All of the things that are there with these plants – water, rocks, earth, sunlight, shade – melt or fade into one harmonious whole, don’t they? This photograph eloquently speaks to the fact that in the midst of nature not one thing exists alone or isolated from other things. We, as well, do not exist disconnected from the surrounding world. The process of breathing, too, in the same way that plants are linked to all things around them, is connected to all things that arise inside and outside of us....”

Reading this passage, I recalled Shakyamuni Buddha sitting under a tree. This is because I think that the Buddha truly sat in harmonious oneness with all things, in the same way that Charlotte describes plants growing close to water. With his back to a great tree, the roots taking firm hold of the great earth, his torso standing upright in a relaxed manner, the air

freely moving in and out, allowing each of the sense organs to be quietly settled and finely tuned, clearly aware of all things arising both inside and outside of him, and then, all things in the natural world – animals, plants, mountains, rivers, sky, and stars – being the contents of his sitting....This is truly the condition in which the world throughout the ten directions is intimately received and used as one’s true body. Borrowing Dogen Zenji’s words, we can say that this is the state of “being confirmed or verified by all dhar-mas.” I think we must thoroughly study and investigate how revolutionary this was in the history of human beings, this “way of sitting which is opened to the whole world.”

As I have previously written in this discussion so far, all forms of meditation aiming at the attainment of a specific state of mind called dhyāna (“learning meditation”) that Shakyamuni Buddha tried after he left the castle were in one way or another methods to break away from the present world (the reality of this earthly life) that is filled with suffering. Within the framework of a soteriology (a doctrine of salvation) in which salvation is thought of precisely as a matter of escaping from this present world in which we are now living, all things in this world at the moment of escape are considered to be restrictions, encumbrances, fetters and hindrances (the human body is not an exception here because it is precisely the body that is the biggest thing which tethers us to this world. It is from this that the notion of ascetic practice arises). Consequently, from this point of view, the objective of religious training and practice must inevitably be to cut off those connections to the world. Isn’t it the case that in principle as established religions

both Buddhism and Christianity stand on the same foundation with regard to this point? This is because in both of these religious traditions the religious elite, in other words, the clergy who are called monks and priests who live apart from the everyday world without family and possessions while walking the path of abstinence and spiritual poverty, that these are the people who stake their whole lives on overcoming all desires that are rooted in the body. The final destination, whether it is nirvana or whether it is heaven, is envisioned to be somewhere that isn't here and at some other time than now. Profane and sacred, this shore and that shore, this world and a future world – these sorts of dualistic realms are contrasted with each other. But were Shakyamuni Buddha and Jesus themselves, the men considered to be the founders of these two traditions, really standing on this sort of dualistic viewpoint? Couldn't it be that this wasn't the case? Or, wasn't it rather that both of them tried to overcome that very framework? For Shakyamuni Buddha, it was by means of the teaching of dependent co-origination and for Jesus, it was by preaching the love of God. The reason is that for both of them their teachings were not about separation and detachment or cutting off and throwing things away. Rather, their teachings were about relationships and bonds. And, then, wasn't it the case that rather than emphasizing the next life, they emphasized living a fulfilling life “here, now” in this world? In adjusting the appearance and format of both “Buddhism” and “Christianity” as “religion,” the original message of both founders became, due to various circumstances, one where the opposite teaching of denying this world became mainstream. Wasn't this a completely misguided viewpoint?

Be that as it may, denying this world and withdrawal from this life was the mainstream ethos of that time in India. Shakyamuni Buddha was also born into this cultural framework, so it is only natural that after having left the castle, he thought and practiced within that framework. And yet, finally, he acquired the insight that from the beginning the framework itself was the problem. And then when he realized that within this framework it would not be possible to resolve the existential questions he was holding, he was able to take a big and completely new step outside of this framework. It is precisely at this point, in my humble opinion, that we must look at the revolutionary nature of Buddhism.

The specific form or shape of this revolutionary step was “sitting in zazen under a tree.” From ascetic practice to sitting in zazen, this paradigm shift was a complete change in direction from “escaping from this world” to “settling down in this world.” To have your feet firmly on the ground of this world, to have the attitude towards life of resolving to devote yourself to this life was the incarnation and fruition of the Buddha's way of sitting. It was when the result of his hard work had all come to a standstill within the traditional framework that that Shakyamuni Buddha made his great achievement. Let's consider a little more specifically the fundamental achievement of his breakthrough of moving from ascetic practice to sitting.

While he was engaged in ascetic practice, Shakyamuni Buddha took an attitude toward food that was negative or a denial by either fasting or eating an extremely small amount of food. Nevertheless, according to Buddhist legends, it

is said that before he began to sit under the tree, Shakyamuni Buddha accepted the offering of rice gruel with milk given to him by a village girl named Sujata. It was thanks to eating this food that he was able to regain his declining physical strength. For his comrades who had practiced asceticism with Shakyamuni Buddha, seeing him take this food, they were disappointed, thinking “Gautama is unable to withstand ascetic practice. He has abandoned asceticism. He has escaped from ascetic practice.” For this reason, they walked out on him. But in fact, it wasn’t that Shakyamuni Buddha had abandoned ascetic practice because he was unable to withstand this practice, but that he had let go of ascetic practice because he realized that it was not the path to a true resolution. To break sharply with a method that he had enthusiastically practiced for many years because he knew it was ineffective and in vain surely was a decision that required courage. Yet, from the vantage point of his comrades who saw things within the framework of denying the world, it was not unreasonable for them to see his actions as backsliding or being corrupted. It is said that Francis of Assisi put ash on his food purposely making it taste bad before he ate it. I remember similar anecdotes about Myoe Shonin who lived during the Kamakura Period (1192-1333). This mentality of a person who does ascetic practice is the same in the East or West, but the attitude toward food of both Jesus and Shakyamuni Buddha was not like this, was it?

When Shakyamuni Buddha gratefully received Sujata’s offering of rice gruel with milk, his attitude toward food fundamentally changed. By leaving behind ascetic practice, the meaning of food had completely changed. It was precisely

for this reason that he was able to accept with genuine gratefulness an offering of food from someone in the everyday world without any feeling of guilt. When we eat with the *oryoki* bowls, we chant various verses such as “This morning meal of ten benefits nourishes us in our practice. Its rewards are boundless filling us with ease and joy.” Or “The three virtues and six tastes of this meal are offered to buddha and sangha. May all sentient beings in the universe be equally nourished.” Or, especially in the “Verse of Five Contemplations” where we chant “We reflect on our virtue and practice and whether we are worthy of this offering” and “We regard this meal as medicine to sustain our life” and “For the sake of enlightenment we now receive this food,” when we read these verses, we feel the joy of Shakyamuni Buddha’s innermost feelings when he received Sujata’s offering that has been handed down to us unbroken.

To be continued



NEWS

September 29–October 1, 2017

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

October 27, 2017

Hawaii Minister's Autumn Meeting was held at Shoboji in Hawaii, U.S.A.

October 27–29, 2017

Hawaii Soto Zen Workshop was held at Shoboji in Hawaii, U.S.A.

November 27, 2017

Symposium for the publication of the English translation of “*Denkoroku*” was held at Tokyo Grand Hotel, Japan.

November 29, 2017

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

February 2–4, 2018

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

February 24, 2018

Hawaii Minister's Spring Meeting was held at Shoboji in Hawaii, U.S.A.

March 13–14, 2018

South America Soto Zen Conference and Workshop were held in Florianópolis, Brazil.

SOTO ZEN JOURNAL is published semiannually by the Soto Zen Buddhism International Center
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