



SOTO ZEN JOURNAL

# DHARMA EYE

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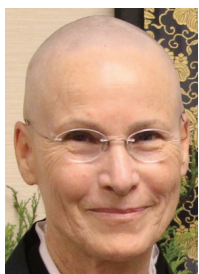
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## A Greeting

### Konjin Godwin

Director of Soto Zen Buddhism  
International Center

I am Reverend Konjin Godwin, the Director of Soto Zen Buddhism International Center, based in San Mateo, California, USA. As I write this greeting to all of you who read Dharma Eye and practice the Way Seeking Mind of Soto Zen, we are entering another year of challenges and opportunities. Once again, the year begins with the challenges of the pandemic which still covers the globe, causing loss of life, hardship, disruption, and confusion.

I pray that all of you are finding your way through this challenge, and that your sanghas are finding creative ways to practice together, and to welcome newcomers to Zen. Despite the hardships, we have the opportunities that come from observing reality as it actually is. We can observe that the only way forward is to work together, uniting our efforts to wake up. I believe there is growing awareness that our shared problems can only be addressed by our shared efforts. The fundamental Buddhist principle of interconnectedness, of En, is the principle that every effort has an effect.

As a member of the International Center, we travel to many Zen Centers and temples. We are able to witness the deep understanding of conditions and effects, and hear the creative efforts different Centers are making to repair the world,

to sustain connection. In this circular way, by making efforts to repair the world, each group receives nourishment and is repaired. All efforts to help others result in receiving help from others, not necessarily visible, but powerful nevertheless.

This year, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) with which Soto Shu is in alignment, focus on the Oceans. The ocean is a powerful symbol of great acceptance. Yet the ocean also needs our care and compassion. The ocean provides nourishment for the entire planet. We also must give care to the oceans around us.

One remarkable opportunity that is emerging this year is the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Zen in North America. Around the country we are preparing to celebrate Zenshuji, the first Zen temple, founded in 1922 in Los Angeles. As we travel around, we are observing the profound gratitude that all North American temple members are coming to have for the efforts that Zenshuji members made to open their doors, and to keep them open, even during the Second World War. We express profound Gratitude. Because of Zenshuji, great Zen teachers came to America to serve the Japanese-American congregation and, through further efforts, to spread the dharma across the continent.

I hope you join with me in celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Zen in North America, aware that all of our efforts will demonstrate our gratitude to the founders. In addition, as the pandemic shows us inadvertently, we are all linked together. May we appreciate the wonder of interconnectedness, and hear the teachings of the oceans, trees, and all beings.



## **Current State of International Dissemination in North America**

### **Rev. Ejo MacMullen**

Administrative Secretary of Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office

The year 2022 marks the 100th anniversary of Soto Zen in North America. Zenshuji Soto Zen Mission was established in 1922, we look to the founding of this first official temple as the starting point of North American Soto Zen.

Over the last century, Soto Zen in North America has faced many celebrations and also many difficulties. Regardless of the circumstances, there is a thread that runs through each of our temple communities and through each of our individual lives. This thread is constant and connects back through our ancestors to Shakyamuni Buddha sitting upright beneath the Bodhi Tree. Our accomplishments and challenges are all part of this thread and are, each in their own way, vitally important to the lineage of Soto Zen. At this pivotal moment of the 100th anniversary of Soto Zen in North America, we have plenty to celebrate, and there is much work to be done.

In spite of the difficulty of COVID 19 our temples are vibrant. Over the past two years there has been a wide range of approaches to navigating the pandemic, but every temple has made great leaps in utilizing online video platforms to make the dharma and a sense of community available to our parishioners. We are looking forward to the time when we can gather freely as we did before COVID, but it won't be

exactly the same as before. There will be a renewed sense of the value of our communities and tradition. Many temples have seen a significant growth in participation throughout the pandemic. This is partly related to the ease of attending remotely, but much more importantly, North Americans are waking up to the importance of the heart of stillness, silence, and reflection.

It is rewarding to see how our simple practice of zen has captured the imaginations of so many North Americans. Meditation continues to be of interest among a broad range of people. Most of the newcomers to our temples come because they are interested in meditation. It is wonderful to be able to introduce people to Buddhism through introducing them to zazen. They are enthusiastic, but mostly they have a foggy picture of what "meditation" means. Connecting them with the thread of the ancestors allows their inspiration to flower into something much more subtle and valuable than meditation taken up as a mental health exercise. This "heart", the "heart of zazen", the "heart of the ancestors", the "wondrous heart of nirvana", is the thread that runs through all of our lives as disciples of the Buddha Shakyamuni, Dogen Zenji, and Keizan Zenji. People here in North America are hungry for this type of authentic connection and for traditions that care for and cultivate them.

The political turmoil of North America over the past several years has also been difficult but has helped our communities mature our role in North American society. For many years there was a tendency for our temple communities to simply stay away from social issues. We can not participate in supporting political parties or

particular candidates, but our views on social issues are important to express if we are to be true members of the larger society. Many temples are more deeply exploring what their role is within the fabric of North American institutions. What values we promote always have social implications, and we are gaining the maturity to be able to express those values without falling into the trap of politicizing our temples. Many temple communities are beginning to speak out on racial justice, social justice, immigration, and the environment. We are looking for more skillful ways to bring dharma wisdom to the practical social issues of our day.

As our communities grow in size and maturity, the need for a strong central organization is becoming more apparent. There are many Soto Zen temples and priests that are not affiliated with the Japanese Soto-shu. Many North American Soto Zen priests are members of a national organization called the Soto Zen Buddhist Association (SZBA), but we are also in need a North American organization to help shepherd the legacy of the Soto-shu in North America. These first 100 years the Soto Zen School in North America has been kindly and carefully tended to by the Sotoshu of Japan, and the countless ministers it has sent to build and staff temples here. Many of the priests sent to care for North American communities raised disciples who have now founded their own North American temples. There are also many priests who studied in Japan and have returned to North America to found new communities. It is imperative that North American Soto Zen maintain a deep connection with our roots in Japan, but for many temples and priests the organizational structure

of the Soto Zen is too distant and difficult to integrate with life here across the Pacific Ocean.

In response, the Kokusai Fukuyoshi organization of North America (Association of Soto Zen Buddhists), has been working to found an organization to independently continue the work of the Soto Zen. We have named the organization “Soto Zen North America” and our goals are to strengthen our connection with Japan, broaden the circle of connection between Soto Zen communities in North America, and deepen our practice and understanding of the Soto Zen way. An independent organization may sound as if it would pull North American Soto Zen and Japanese Soto Zen farther apart, but actually this kind of independence is the only way that we will mature a long-term relationship in which a North American Soto Zen can truly develop.

The next 100 years of Soto Zen in North America is here. The seeds that were planted by our ancestors have sprouted and grown. The shoots, stems, trunks and branches are reaching up into open space. Responding to the light, we are finding our way. The Dharma Rain continuously and graciously falls.







## Panorama of Zen in South America

**Rev. Senpo Oshiro**

Soto Zen Buddhism Association of Argentina Nanzenji

Why to leave your place of practice and wander through other countries?

A single false step and you move away from the Path clearly laid out before you.

*Fukanzazengi, Dogen Zenji*

### History

In 1903, the Venerable Taian Ueno arrived at Cerro Azul, on the coast of Peru, on an official mission from the Soto School. He traveled to support Japanese immigrants and their families who worked in the fields, mines, and farms. In 1907 with the help of Japanese families he founded the Taiheizan Jionji, the oldest Temple in South America, and in 1908 he established the first school for immigrant children, which functions as a public primary school to this day.



Libro "La Memoria del Ojo"

Para un(a) infantil, reverendo Ueno recitando Sutra(Okyo), antes de partir el cortejo fúnebre desde Templo Jionji. No está utilizando ataúd, encima de cuna, su cuerpo está envuelto en la sábana. Fue tomada en los alrededores de 1910.

慈恩寺での子供の葬儀、その出棺前。棺が使われず、寝台の上の遺体がシーツにくるまれている。導師は上野師。明治末年ごろ撮影



In 2003, the 100th anniversary of Sotoshu's arrival in South America was celebrated. At that time the Jionji Temple remained inactive, without an abbot and the Soto Mission of South America had to resume its presence there. By 2013, in celebration of Sotoshu's 110th anniversary, the Temple was already under the direction of my Teacher, Venerable Jisen Oshiro, who restored and normalized ties with the Nikkei community (families of Japanese origin). On that occasion, a group of monks and teachers signed the Lima declaration. There we agreed to coordinate efforts for the dissemination and transmission of Zen teachings and exchange between groups and sanghas of the continent for the good of the entire community without distinction.

### The meetings

The Latin American Zen Meeting was the result of this initiative. It was organized by an independent group of sanghas, temples and associations of Zen practitioners open to all traditions, lineages, countries, religions, lay or monastic groups. Among them the Sotoshu Mission in South America. My experience as a missionary (Kokusai Fukyoshi) of the Soto School and having directed the EZLA all these years, has allowed me to meet and practice with people

from all over the continent (lay and religious; Buddhists and non-Buddhists) of all ages, social classes, researchers, musicians, native peoples leaders, among others.

### **Buddhists in South America?**

This continent is inhabited by 424 million people, 90% are of Christian origin and much less than 1% practice or call themselves Buddhists. Curiously, we are at the antipodes of Japan and Asia with whom the cultural barrier is even greater. The Buddhist Temples established in South America throughout the 20th century were mostly built and maintained by immigrants, whether Korean, Chinese, Laotian or Japanese, for the performance of memorial ceremonies and the worship of their ancestors.

The vast majority follow Tibetan traditions, followed by the Mahayana Zen tradition which includes the Chinese community's Chan, Korean Seon, and Japanese Zen (Soto and Rinzai).

Within Zen, the Sotoshu school is the oldest and the one with the greatest institutional presence on the continent. However, there are many groups and sanghas that practice shikantaza, as passed down by Dogen Zenji, that are not affiliated with the Soto School such as, Martial arts dojos, Therapeutic, health or educational establishments, Christian or non-Buddhist religious congregations, Sanghas related to Rev. Deshimaru, Independent Zen organizations, Meetings of self-taught people who learn from books or videos. I would like to describe the profile of the public related to Sotozen in South America. Simplified and generically, two large groups can be observed:

A) Nikkei families (of Japanese origin and Buddhist tradition). Attend temples for

memorial ceremonies and social activities. They support the Temples financially, but in general do not practice zazen.

B) Lay practitioners (of non-Buddhist/non-Japanese origin). They participate in zazen, retreats, and other activities. Overall, they attend individually, without their families and in some cases they collaborate with money or carry out voluntary chores. They have intellectual, health or other personal motivations. The vast majority of dojos or Zen centers operate in private homes, gyms or premises managed by groups of practitioners or individuals.



### **Panorama**

My personal experience performing funeral ceremonies in Argentina and Peru is that group A is decreasing as grandparents and elders pass away, and the new generations do not speak Japanese, do not know the traditions, and do not show interest in institutional religion. Very often, more young families come to us to see how to get rid of the butsudan (family altar). In

contrast, in group B we observe a gradual and sustained growth of Zen Centers and formal or occasional dojos.

More people choose to take vows as laymen or novices, and we can see the rise of a 3rd generation of monks in South America. In South America almost half of the Sotoshu Temples are sustained thanks to the dedication of local monks, the support of lay practitioners, donations, courses, retreats, events, sales of books and accessories, and other activities.

### **Presence**

The Latin American Zen Meeting has maintained and reinforced the interest of group B for 8 consecutive years, even in times of pandemic. All this despite being organized by independent groups from different countries and cultures, with volunteers and limited resources. We found that most Zen practitioners do not know the existence or the operation and organization of Sotozen, or they consider it to be something belonging to Japanese monks for Japanese families. Others see no need or convenience in approaching or familiarizing themselves with Sotozen and his teachings or they reject the liturgy and anything related with religion.

For this reason, Sotoshu's presence has been fundamental in recent Encounters, where the public in general and other Sanghas, particularly, can see and experience the forms and breadth of our school, without the need to evangelize or impose dogmas or doctrines. This also opens a space for exchange between Zen Teachers of various lineages and traditions. Dialogue with leaders of other religions and cultures, from the university or artistic world, government officials and NGOs give us the opportunity to

expand our links with the remainder of society. A presence that connects us with a reality in which we are immersed and shows us new scenarios.

### **Reflections**

If a crude analogy is allowed, paraphrasing Pope Francis, the challenge is how to transcend the role of "pious organization" for funeral and memorial services, where the Temple is only for matters of the dead, and on the other hand, to overcome the stereotype of "Zen Meditation Club", in which only the hours sitting on a cushion polishing the Nangaku mirror count. Following the example of my teacher, in both Ceremonies, for families and in the zazen for beginners, in our sanghas we try to give everyone the opportunity to cultivate the practice in daily life. The O-cha (tea) that is offered to the ancestors in the butsudan is the same that is offered to the Bodhisattva Manjusri in the dojo.

### **Monastery**

"Monastic life is called the 24-hour practice, or gyoji. This means practicing following the Way of the Buddhas and the Ancestors in meditation, work, meetings with others and ceremonies".

The worldly life that conditions us at work, study, family and multiple occupations does not allow us to fully develop this practice.

It is the monastic sphere that is naturally oriented and organized for it.

"Why to leave your place of practice and wander through other countries?"

Foreign novices going to Senmon Sodo (training monasteries), We will leave this controversy for another article. But it is also true that it is increasingly difficult to send another



generation of South American monks to Japan to train for months or years, due to the cost, time, and cultural barriers.

## Community

"One false step and you stray from the Way laid out clearly before you."

I consider necessary the cultivation of a monastic community, patiently and intelligently adapted to our reality, which can adequately form monks and nuns. It is necessary to have Temples, monasteries and the essential presence of a Great Sangha of Sotozen in Latin America that can support and gather Teachers and disciples, for their training and practice, that has the support of lay people and adherents. In order not to take a single false step, a team of qualified Masters, instructors and professors with monastic and academic accreditation is needed to plan, adapt or maintain, teach, supervise and direct the activities of the community.



## Mission

So far, the only institution with the history, personnel, training plan, administrative capacity, scope and resources for this is Sotozen, through its Mission in South America. But its model follows the reality and needs of a particular civilization. As South Americans, we cannot

expect our solutions to be served from other countries. Although it is necessary to rely on the roots, such initiatives will bear fruit only if the monks who are born and die in this land assume such a commitment.

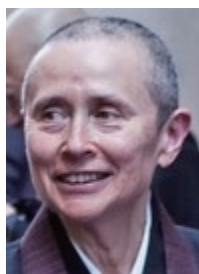
## But how?

There is an extensive debate on the subject in Europe and the Americas with multiple aspects and arguments. Some of us try to cultivate the Great Sangha through Gatherings. A small big step in this direction is the publication of manuals of practice in a Zen monastery (Sodo no Gyoji), in Portuguese (already in 2011 it was published in English), and soon a Spanish edition. Based on the Zuioji Senmon Sodo manuals, with texts by Tsugen Narasaki Roshi. This latest edition is possible thanks to the collaboration of the Zuioji Monastery in Japan with the work and donations of volunteers from Colombia and Peru. This book will be presented during the celebration of the 120th anniversary of Sotoshu in South America at the Jionji Temple in Peru in 2023. The purpose is not to transplant a ritualism, but to preserve the Awakening Mind.

It is necessary that more monks in South America cultivate the example of Dogen Zenji, transmitting the True Dharma and Keizan Zenji, bringing it closer and spreading it to all audiences. And thus, to generate the conditions to practice in harmony with the Dharma.

There is much more to go after almost 120 years of history of Sotoshu in South America. If we have reached these lines, perhaps we can make a contribution in this regard. May the Dharma pervade and benefit all beings.





## Situation of the diffusion of Zen in Europe

**Rev. Koren Robel**  
Dojo Zen du Chatelet

In just over fifty years, from north to south, from Norway to Spain, and from west to east, from Portugal to Poland, Zen has spread throughout Europe. It was in 1967 that the practice of Zen was established in Europe thanks to the arrival of the Zen monk of the Rev. Taisen Deshimaru in Paris. He did not come to take care of Japanese communities as was the case with the first Zen monks in America. He came on his own initiative in a missionary spirit to spread Zen practice and philosophy in the West.

Rev. Taisen Deshimaru was an atypical monk. He was endowed with great charisma, unshakable energy and faith, and a deep knowledge of both human beings and the Zen tradition and Far Eastern culture. His mission, which lasted fifteen years, was a great success. Settled in Paris, his teaching spread throughout Western Europe. He firmly established the practice of zazen, translated the great Zen texts, and introduced rituals and chants. He was responsible for the creation of more than a hundred dojos and practice groups throughout Europe, as well as the Gendronnière temple in 1980 in the Val-de-Loire, France. He was the first kaikyosokan in Europe in 1976, and from then on, many Japanese delegations came to visit him and several young Japanese monks came to help him. He gathered many disciples around him, ordaining

more than 500 monks and nuns, and it is said that more than 20,000 people have at one time or another practiced with him. In 1970 he founded the European Zen Association, which became the International Zen Association (IZA) in 1979. Forty years after his death in 1982, his memory and energy remain very much alive and underpin the situation of Zen in Europe.

Rev. Taisen Deshimaru passed away in 1982, having trained disciples but not given Dharma transmission. In the years that followed, and although several disciples received transmission from other Japanese masters fairly quickly - notably Rev. Shuyu Narita and Rev. Renpo Niwa Zeni - the situation was somewhat confused and different choices were made concerning the relationship with the Japanese tradition, the transmission and the relationship with the Soto School. Some of his former disciples remained and still remain fiercely opposed to any affiliation with the institution (Shumuchō). For about twenty years, there was no kaikyosokan or European office of the Soto School in Europe.

Finally, things became clearer from the end of the 1990s. Most of Master Deshimaru's disciples, who had become teachers, returned to Japan and received the transmission from various Japanese masters. As other Europeans went to practice in Japanese temples (Eihei-ji, Sojiji, Sojiji Soin, Eihei-ji Betsuin, Nisodo, Antai-ji, etc.) and also received transmissions, there are a large number of lineages in Europe from different Japanese masters. There are also some lineages from the United States. Since 2002, a new European office of the Japanese school has been set up, first in Milan and then in Paris,

which has created a link between these different lineages. Training seminars, organised by the Sokanbu at the Gendronnière temple, regularly bring together oshos, kyoshis and kokusai fukyoshis from all over Europe, who can on these occasions meet, get to know each other and have exchanges. The hossenshiki and shin-zan ceremonies, organised in the temples, are also the occasion for regular meetings, as are the two ojukai ceremonies, led by Rev. Minamizawa Zenji, which took place for the first time outside Japan in 2016 at the Gendronnière and in 2019 at Kanshoji, and the commemoration ceremonies.

Today, the second-generation teachers generally follow the classical Soto school curriculum and go to practice angu in the sodo in Japan, mainly in Toshoji (Okayama prefecture). There were two shuritsu senmon sodo at the Gendronnière in 2007 and 2008, organised by the Sotoshu Shumuchō for the first-time outside Japan, and with the presence of teachers such as Shohaku Okumura. But since then, the angu held in various temples are not yet officially recognized by the school for the training of monks. There are currently several Soto School temples in Europe, some of which are monastery-type temples in the countryside and others in the city.

There are also a large number of groups who voluntarily keep away from the Soto School and its rules, because they want to preserve their independence at all costs and create a "European Zen" with its own forms, "independent" lineages, while practicing zazen and simplified rituals. Since some of the teachers are affiliated with the school and others are not, these risks creating confusion and difficulties for the future,

even though the form of the practice is mostly the same.

In fact, the living fabric of Zen in Europe is made up of a great many small practice groups scattered around the cities, as well as isolated individuals, and then a few dozen dojos and larger centers and a few temples, all run by monks and nuns and teachers (65 kyoshis, 52 kokusai fukyoshis). All these people and places of practice are generally organized in a network, linked to a temple or a teacher, within an association or not. The International Zen Association, founded by Master Deshimaru, is probably the most important - it has more than 1,100 members and 9 temples, 9 zen centers, 73 dojos and 129 groups - but there are others, in Germany, Italy, Belgium, etc.

The great diversity of lineages, associations, and of course countries with different languages and cultures, does not prevent a certain unity of European Zen, such as the central place of zazen, the black *koromo*, the sewing of the *kesa*, the teaching of Zen texts and the practice of traditional rituals, more or less advanced, most often using the recitation of sutras in Sino-Japanese. In general, European Zen groups are not overly concerned with social affairs and do not get involved in political affairs. They also differ from many other mindfulness-type groups, and preferably follow a traditional form appropriate to the circumstances.

The last two years have obviously been a bit complicated with the Covid pandemic. Some groups have adopted video-conferencing teaching, others have not. At the moment, we are

hopeful that this pandemic will end and that second-generation teachers will be able to train in Japan again, that it will be possible to do zui-se there again and that the number of kyoshis will increase, thus showing the vitality of Zen.



## The 18th Chapter of *Shobogenzo Kannon* (Avalokiteshvara) Lecture (5)

**Rev. Shohaku Okumura**

Sanshinji, Indiana, U.S.A

(Edited by Rev. Shoryu Bradley)

### 15. Groping for a Pillow in the Night

(9)

道吾いはく、「如人夜間背手摸枕子。」

Daowu said, “It is like a person who is reaching his hand behind, groping for a pillow in the night.”

To Yunyan’s question/statement, “What does the Great Compassion Bodhisattva do with innumerable hands and eyes?” or, “The Great Compassion Bodhisattva is doing ‘what (thusness)’ with innumerable hands and eyes?”, Daowu responds using an analogy of a person sleeping in complete darkness, reaching his hand behind his head, groping for a missing pillow. Dogen Zenji interprets every word of Daowu’s saying in minute detail.

(10)

いはゆる宗旨は、たとへば、「人の夜間に手をうしろにして枕子を摸索するがごとし」。

What he means is, for example, it is like a person in the night, reaching his hand behind to search for a pillow.

「摸索する」といふは、さぐりもとむるなり。

“To grope for” means to search around for.

「夜間」はくらき道得なり。

“In the night” is an expression of darkness.

なほ日裏看山と道取せんがごとし。

It is rather like the expression “seeing mountains

in the daytime.”

「用手眼」は、「如人夜間背手摸枕头」なり。

“Using hands and eyes” is “like a person in the night, reaching his hand behind, in search of a pillow.”

これをもて「用手眼」を學すべし。

Study “using hands and eyes” on this basis.

夜間を日裏よりおもひやると、夜間にして夜間なるときと檢點すべし。

We should investigate “thinking of the nighttime from daytime”, and “being nighttime within nighttime”.

すべて晝夜にあらざらんとときと、檢點すべきなり。

We should investigate the time that is neither daytime nor nighttime.

「人」の「摸枕头」せん、たとひこの儀すなはち觀音の用手眼のごとくなる、會取せざれども、かれがごとくなる道理、のがれのがるべきにあらず。

As for a person groping for a pillow, even though we don’t understand that this conduct is like Avalokiteshvara’s use of hands and eyes, we cannot escape from the principle that the two are the same.

*What he means is, for example, it is like a person in the night, reaching his hand behind to search for a pillow.*

The sentence preceding this one is a quotation from the Chinese original. This sentence is Dogen’s Japanese translation, made for Japanese readers. When I translate these two sentences into English, they become repetitive.

*“To grope for” means to search around for.*

This is the same situation as in the preceding sentence. Here he is explaining in Japanese the

meaning of the Chinese word *mosaku* (摸索).

In this paragraph Dogen starts to talk about Daowu’s saying: *Nyo nin ya kan hai shu mo chinsu* (如人夜間背手摸枕头). *Nyo* (如) is “like,” *nin* (人) is “person,” *yakan* (夜間) is “nighttime,” *hai* (背) is “back” or “behind,” *shu* (手) is “hand,” *mo* (摸) is “grobe,” and *chinsu* (枕头) is “pillow.” So this phrase can be read as, “It (what Avalokiteshvara is doing) is like a person in the night reaching his hand behind and groping for a pillow.” This is a simple sentence. It seems there is nothing difficult to understand. However, Dogen’s comments puzzle us.

## 16. Nighttime

One of the important points in this sentence is the meaning of the word nighttime (*yakan*; 夜間). Nighttime is associated with darkness, of course. Later in the text Dogen talks about the meaning of darkness, but he doesn’t explain it in detail. Basically, darkness in Zen literature means “no discrimination.” In complete darkness we cannot make distinctions between things. This means the activities of Avalokiteshvara’s hands and eyes are without discrimination. As I said before, Avalokiteshvara’s compassion is called *muen no daihi* (無縁の大悲), “great compassion without ‘objects.’” This means Avalokiteshvara always gives his/her hands to anyone in need, without discriminating between people. Yunyan spoke about the activity of Avalokiteshvara as the entire network of interconnectedness that uses innumerable hands and eyes. Daowu, on the other hand, is speaking from the side of an individual person as a part of this network. He is asking, “How can we function as a part of the innumerable hands and eyes of the Great Com-



passion Bodhisattva?”

Daowu is saying a bodhisattva's practice is like a person in the night, reaching behind herself in search of a pillow, without discrimination. After the pillow has moved, although she is sleeping in complete darkness, somehow her hand searches and grasps the pillow, returning it beneath her head. There's no discrimination in this action.

This person is still in deep sleep. When she loses the pillow, she doesn't wake up, but somehow her hands alone try to find it. Her brain isn't doing the work; consciousness isn't involved. This is what “without discrimination” means. Without conscious intention, her hands search for the pillow. It is as if somehow her body needs the pillow, and her hands move in search of it.

Next, Dogen examines each word in this sentence meticulously and creatively. The Chinese commentators of the *Blue Cliff Record and Book of Serenity* didn't pay much attention to each individual word in this conversation because, I think, the meaning of these words is very obvious to Chinese people. But somehow Dogen investigates every word carefully. This is Dogen's language game. To play this game with Dogen, we need to check the meaning of every word and how the words or the expressions are used in the original source, and thoroughly think about them; at the same time, we need to let go of our habitual way of thinking.

*Mosaku* (摸索), translated as “groping for,” means to search around. “In the night” is an

expression of darkness, and Dogen uses it in the strange phrase, “‘In the night’ is an expression of darkness, it is rather like the expression ‘seeing mountains in the daytime’ (日裏看山).” What is the connection between complete darkness and seeing mountains in the daytime? He doesn't explain what this means. He expects his readers to investigate and discover the meaning. This is a challenge we often encounter when we read *Shobogenzo*. We need to check the meaning of “seeing mountains in the daytime” (日裏看山) in the context of the quoted source, and we also must consider Dogen's intention in using it with the expression “in the night” in the same sentence. These expressions have almost opposite meanings and are contradictory in our common way of thinking.

“Seeing mountains in the daytime” (*nichi ri kan zan*; 日裏看山) comes from Yunmen's conversation with a monk. Yunmen (Unmon, 雲門) is the founder of the Yunmen School, one of the five schools of Chinese Zen. *Nichi* (日) is “sun,” *ri* (裏) is “within,” *kan* (看) is “see,” and *zan* (山) is “mountain.”

A monk asked, “What is the intention of Bodhidharma's coming from the West?”

Yunmen answered, “*Nichi ri kan zan* —In the daytime, seeing the mountains.”<sup>1</sup>

To understand Yunmen's answer, we first must understand the meaning of this famous Zen question, “What is the meaning or intention of Bodhidharma coming from the West?” In Zen literature, many monks ask this question, and Zen Masters often give strange, almost nonsensical answers like Yunmen's. How can his response

here be an answer to why Bodhidharma came from the West?

This is common in the so-called “Zen question and answer practice”. It seems the question and the answer are unrelated. To us, many answers appear to be almost nonsense or a joke. But I don’t think these questions and answers are completely nonsense. These are language games between monks and Zen masters who know language does not work well in speaking about the ultimate reality itself.

In this case, I think Yunmen gave a good answer to the question. Of course, all those monks knew Bodhidharma came from India to China to transmit the Dharma. This is “capital D” Dharma, that is, the truth or reality the Buddha awakened to. The teachings of Buddha are also called the dharma. People in the Zen tradition thought they were directly transmitting Dharma, the reality itself, mind-to-mind without using the written record of Buddha’s teaching. They called this idea, “the separate transmission outside of the teachings.” They weren’t concerned with the written teachings of the Buddha since they thought they were directly transmitting Buddha’s mind. They therefore called their school *Busshin-shu* (仏心宗), the School of Buddha’s Mind, and they called other schools *Butsugo-shu* (仏語宗), the Schools of Buddha’s Words. From the Zen point of view, all the Buddhist scholars of other schools studied only Buddha’s words, but Zen directly transmitted Buddha’s mind without relying on Buddhist sutras, commentaries, or various doctrinal systems. They insisted that Bodhidharma had

transmitted this capital “D” Dharma.

Bodhidharma didn’t bring any texts from India to China. He came alone and simply sat facing a wall for nine years at Shaolin temple. The answer to the question, “Why did Bodhidharma come from the West?” was very simple—to transmit the Dharma, the Buddha Mind. Then the next question naturally became, “Did the Dharma need to be transmitted or not? Does the Dharma need to be carried from one place to another place by a person?”

In theory this Dharma should be everywhere since it is the reality of all beings. It is not a local product made particularly in India. So why did Bodhidharma have to go to China to transmit the Dharma? This Dharma should have been in China already, even before Bodhidharma arrived or before the Buddha awakened to it. Shakyamuni Buddha himself said he only discovered the Dharma the way one would discover an ancient palace hidden in the forest. It was already there before he discovered it. So why did Bodhidharma have to transmit the Dharma? This is the actual meaning of the question.

Yunmen’s expression means this Dharma is very apparent and vivid, like seeing mountains illuminated by bright sunlight; nothing is hidden. That is the meaning of this question and answer between Yunmen and the monk. It means that even before Bodhidharma came, the Dharma was already present. And yet, it is not possible to express it using words, concepts, and logic as a doctrinal system because it is beyond discrimination. Before Bodhidharma had come, although the Dharma was always right before

their eyes, people didn't understand that and tried to find the Dharma within a thicket of written teachings.

Every year for seven years, I held a walking meditation retreat on the Appalachian Trail in Hot Springs, North Carolina. At the end of the walking retreat each year, we went to a place called Max Patch. It's a 4,600 ft bald mountain that was devoid of trees because it was used as a pasture in the 19th century. When we walked up to the top, the 360° view was filled with nothing but mountains. It was a beautiful, panoramic view of an ocean of mountains. I associate Yunmen's expression with my experience of seeing nothing but mountains in bright sunlight. If I had known that area well and had known the names of the mountains, the people who had lived there, and what kind of plantations they had established, for example, I may have started to think about each mountain, each town within them and the people who lived there, or I may have experienced memories of other similar places. But I had no such knowledge at all. All I saw was simply mountains and I had no discrimination between them. I think this is similar to the experience Dogen wrote of in Genjokoan about his ocean voyage from Japan to China. He simply saw a vast circle of ocean. Similarly, on Max Patch everything was very clear and there was no discrimination, no distinctions, in my mind. That is the image I associate with this saying. That means each mountain was a different, unique mountain, but I didn't know the name or characteristics of any of them. All the mountains were clearly there, but I made no distinction between them.

Usually, we define ourselves in comparison with other things. When we see others with expensive jewelry, luxury cars, or huge mansions, we define ourselves as a poor person who cannot buy such things. When we meet a very famous person, we define ourselves as an anonymous person. When we read about the terrible activities of a criminal, we feel we are not so bad. But when we see something boundless, beyond discrimination, like the circle of the ocean or a huge chain of mountains, we cannot define ourselves using some concept. We just feel we are so tiny, almost nothing. At such times we may feel we are released from samsara, the world of comparisons and competition.

This expression, *nichi ri kan zan* (seeing mountains in the sunlight) means that everything is perfectly revealed, or as in Dogen's favorite expression, "nothing is hidden." And yet simultaneously, as with my experience on Max Patch, there's no discrimination. Everything is there clearly, but there's no way to discriminate which things are which, which are more important, more beautiful or more valuable.

Daowu used darkness to express this reality and Dogen does so using Yunmen's expression "seeing mountains in the brightness." Now we must think about the relationship between darkness and brightness. Here Dogen is saying that darkness and brightness are interpenetrating each other. This idea comes from *Sandokai, The Merging Of Difference And Unity*. Darkness and brightness have almost opposite meanings in Indian Buddhism and Chinese Zen teachings. In Indian Buddhism darkness is negative, as in the word *mumyo* (無明), for example. *Mu* (無) is

“no,” and *myo* (明) is brightness, so this word literally means “lack of brightness.” *Mumyo* is a Buddhist term for ignorance or *avidya* in Sanskrit. *A* means “no” and *vidya* literally means “brightness,” a word synonymous with wisdom. In Chinese Zen literature, on the other hand, “brightness” refers to the discrimination of our thinking mind, and darkness represents the ultimate reality beyond discrimination.

Another saying of Yunmen uses the same logic but the opposite light/dark imagery of *nichi ri kan zan* (seeing mountains in the sunlight):

“Each and every person without exception has the radiant light. When looked for, it cannot be seen; [it is] obscured in total darkness. What is the radiant light existing in all people?”

All of his assembly monks kept silent, then, he added, “The monks’ hall, the Buddha hall, the kitchen, and the three gates.”<sup>2</sup>

Yunmen is saying the interpenetration of the radiant light and total darkness is the reality of all beings, that is, nothing special. These temple buildings are the world in which the monks live and function in their everyday life.

## 17. Using Hands and Eyes

*“Using hands and eyes” is “like a person in the night, reaching his hand behind, in search of a pillow.” Study “using hands and eyes” on this basis.*

“Using hands and eyes” is the function of the Great Compassion Bodhisattva, the entire network of interdependent origination. Each one

of us is a part of the Bodhisattva’s hands and eyes. Daowu is talking about how we, as individual people, can work as a part of the Bodhisattva’s hands and eyes.

*We should investigate “thinking of the nighttime from daytime”, and “being nighttime within nighttime”. We should investigate the time that is neither daytime nor nighttime.*

This means we need to see things from both the side of discrimination and from the side of beyond-discrimination. Form is emptiness, emptiness is form, form is just form and emptiness is just emptiness. Darkness is brightness, brightness is darkness, darkness is completely darkness, and brightness is simply brightness. In *Tenzokyokun (Instruction for the Cook)*, Dogen says:

If those monkeys and birds once took the backward step of inner illumination, naturally you would become integrated. This is a means whereby, although you are turned around by things, you can also turn things around. Being harmonious and pure like this, do not lose either the eye of oneness or the eye that discerns differences. Take one stalk of vegetable to make the six-foot body [of buddha]; invite the six-foot body to make one stalk of vegetable. This is the divine power that causes transformations and the buddha work that benefits beings.<sup>3</sup>

“Monkeys and birds” refer to our discriminating thinking that is often self-centered. “Backward step,” is the same expression Dogen uses referring to zazen in *Fukanzazengi*



(Universal Recommendation of Zazen). “The eye of oneness” (一眼; one eye) sees all things as one without discrimination, and “the eye that discerns difference” (両眼; two eyes) sees each thing as an unique individual being different from others. Dogen here is speaking of practicing with the “Dharma Eye”, the practice eye that freely sees with both the eye of oneness and the eye that discerns differences. “One stalk of vegetable” refers to each individual person functioning as a tenzo or in other positions. “The six-foot body” refers to the entirety of the network of interdependence; in this fascicle it refers to Avalokiteshvara.

*As for a person groping for a pillow, even though we don't understand that this conduct is like Avalokiteshvara's use of hands and eyes, we cannot escape from the principle that the two are the same.*

Avalokitesvara's compassionate work uses a thousand hands and eyes, and each one of us works as a tiny part of these hands and eyes, like a sleeping person's groping in the darkness. And this activity and Avalokiteshvara are one and the same.

## 19. Person of Thusness

### (11)

いまいふ「如人」の「人」は、ひとへに譬論の言なるべきか。又この「人」は平常の「人」にして、平常の「人」なるべからざるか。

Is the person in the phrase “like a person” simply a word used as a simile? Also, is this person an ordinary person and [at the same time] no ordinary person?

もし佛道の平常人なりと學して、譬論のみにあらず

は、「摸枕头」に學すべきところあり。

If we take this word person to refer to an ordinary person on the Buddha Way rather than simply being a simile, there is a point to be studied in “groping for a pillow.”

「枕头」も、咨問すべき何形段あり。

We should inquire into the shapeless shape of the pillow.

「夜間」も、人天晝夜の夜間のみなるべからず。

The nighttime also is not simply the nighttime of the “day and night” in human or heavenly realms.

しるべし、道取するは「取得枕头」にあらず、「牽挽枕头」にあらず。「推出枕头」にあらず。

We should know that what we are talking about is not grabbing the pillow, pulling the pillow or shoving the pillow away.

This paragraph is a continuation of Dogen's comments on Daowu's saying. He interprets the meaning of the first two words, *nyo* (如) and *nin* (人), —“like a person.”

*Is the person in the phrase “like a person” simply a word used as a simile? Also, is this person an ordinary person and [at the same time] no ordinary person?*

In order not to read this as a simile, Dogen combines these two words into one, *nyo-nin* (如人). This word *nyo* (如) can be a translation of *tathata*, as in *shinnyo* (真如), true *tathata*, true thusness or true suchness. I think he is reading this *nyo* as *tathata* (thusness), and therefore *nyonin* means “person of thusness.”

Dogen wrote *Shobogenzo Inmo* (慇懃; *Thuness*), about a month before writing his

*Kannon* fascicle in 1242. This *nyo* (如) can be synonymous with *inmo*. In the *Inmo* fascicle, Dogen quotes a saying by Yunju Daoying (Ungo Doyo), a disciple of Dongshan and a dharma grandson of Yunyan. Yunju says:

“If you wish to attain the matter of thusness, you must already be a person of thusness. Since you are already a person of thusness, why do you worry about the matter of thusness?”<sup>4</sup>

“The matter of thusness” is a translation of *inmo-ji* (恁麼事). When we arouse bodhi-mind and study and practice the Dharma, we are seeking the matter of thusness, the true reality of all beings. “Person of thusness” is *inmo-nin* (恁麼人). Yunju is saying when we look for the matter of thusness, we are already a person of thusness. And if we are already a person of thusness, why do we need to worry about the matter of thusness and seek after it?

It seems to me when he reads this *nyo-nin* (如人) as one word, Dogen interprets *nyo-nin* the same as *inmo-nin* (恁麼人), a person of thusness. So it is helpful to study what he writes about *inmo-nin* to understand what he is saying in this fascicle. Yunju says *inmo-nin* is seeking *inmo-ji*, or a person of thusness is seeking the matter of thusness. This is like a fire boy seeking a fire, as in another koan story Dogen quotes in *Bendowa*.<sup>5</sup>

In his comments on Yunju’s saying in the *Inmo* fascicle, Dogen writes:

What he said is that one who wished to attain the matter of thusness (*inmo-ji*) must

be a person of thusness, and because this person is already a person of thusness, why does he have to worry about the matter of thusness? The essential point of this saying is that directly heading toward the unsurpassable awakening for the time being is called ‘thusness’.

Dogen says “thusness” means directly going to the unsurpassable awakening (*anuttara samyak-sa bodhi*), Buddha’s awakening. Buddha’s awakening is the awakening of interconnectedness, the true reality of all beings. There’s no separation between the Buddha, his awakening, and the true reality of all beings because here there is no subject/object relationship and no separation. So Buddha’s awakening refers to the reality of our interconnection. This is the matter of thusness; we are part of this reality of Indra’s net, and we all are a person of thusness. This is what Yunju said when he asked, “if we are already a person of thusness, why must we be concerned about the matter of thusness and seek after it?”

Dogen goes on to comment in *Inmo* on how we can see that we are a person of thusness:

We are also the furnishings existing within the ten-direction world. How do we know that we are thus? We know that [the reality] is thus because our bodies and minds appear within the entire world, and yet they are not ourselves.

Even the body is not our personal [possession]; our life is moving through the passage of time and we cannot even stop it for an instant. Where have our rosy cheeks gone? Even if we wish to find them, there is

no trace. When we carefully contemplate, we understand that there are many things in the past that we can never see again. The sincere red heart does not stay either—bit by bit, it is coming and going. Although there is sincerity, it does not stagnate within the boundary of individual ego-centered self.

I was born within Indra's net, within this network of time and space, and have been living here for seventy-three years; soon or later I will disappear. Because my five aggregates are empty and impermanent, my body and mind are not my personal possessions. That means my life is a public thing, not a private thing. It is happening within this entire network, and I am not fulfilling my own personal plan to be born, live and die. It was also not my personal decision to live in this way or in that way. Of course, my decisions based on my desires, intentions, and plans were a part of it, but they contributed only a tiny part to the way I am now living. Probably 99% of our lives are produced, influenced, and determined by other aspects of this world. Only a tiny part can be changed by our thinking, intentions and effort. In fact, even these things are a gift from the network. So there's no such thing as the private matter of Shohaku's life, Shohaku's body, and Shohaku's mind. That's why I am a person of thusness, and so is everyone else. We cannot stop this flow of time. Once it's gone, yesterday never comes back.

We simply accept this and try to put it to work; that is what Dogen calls *jijuyu-zanmai* (self-accepting-and-utilizing samadhi). In *jijuyu-zanmai*, both subject and object are thusness. "Ten-direction world" also refers to this entirety

of interconnectedness. Each one of us and all the myriad dharmas are like the furnishings of this network. Where have our rosy cheeks gone? Where has the child Shohaku gone? More than sixty years ago I was a child, but even though that child was me, there's no place I can find him anymore. Once our childhood is gone, it never comes back. This is the true, undeniable reality of impermanence.

Not only our body, but our mind is also always changing. Something I thought was important to me when as a kid is not important to me at all now. Our mind and our thinking are always changing, whether it's sincere or insincere. Thoughts and experiences are always coming and going, moving and changing. But within this reality, we sometimes arouse awakening-mind.

Although it is thus, there are some who arouse awakening-mind without any particular reason. From the time that this mind is aroused, we throw away everything we have been toying with. We wish to listen to what we have never heard, and we wish to verify what we have never verified. All of these are not simply our personal activities. We should know that we are thus because we are persons of thusness. How do we know that we are persons of thusness? We know that we are the persons of thusness precisely because we wish to attain the matter of thusness. Since we already have the face of the person of thusness, we should not worry about the present matter of thusness.

Even my body and mind are not possessions

of this person, Shohaku. Somehow, we arouse awakening-mind, the aspiration to study dharma. We don't know why the awakening-mind comes up; it doesn't arise from our desire. Awakening-mind is very different from my personal desire that always wants to get this thing or that thing. But somehow it is aroused.

Before we arouse awakening-mind we have many different toys which give us happy or pleasant experiences. But when we arouse awakening-mind we throw away those kinds of toys that amuse us. Arousing awakening-mind, we try to transform our self-centered way of life to a life lived harmoniously with all beings.

Almost mysteriously, this transformation somehow happens. According to Dogen, it happens because we are already within thusness. When we find we are not living in accordance with thusness, somehow we feel this is not right or healthy, and we try to find a better or healthier way of life. I think this is, for most of us, how we begin studying dharma or doing some spiritual practice.

We may have this kind of aspiration to become free from our self-clinging, but such an aspiration and determination does not come from our self-centered self, it comes from interconnect-edness. We are able to arouse awakening-mind and study and practice the Dharma because we are already in suchness from the beginning.

Finally, Dogen says this of a person of thusness:

It should simply and precisely be already

being a person of thusness; why worry about the matter of thusness? For this reason, thusness of sound and color is thus. And thusness of body and mind is thus. Thusness of all Buddhas must be thus.

This means we find we have been living in a self-centered way within the reality of no-self, and not only ourselves, but everything we encounter is thusness.

## 20. Pillow

Now, we will return to *Shobogenzo Kannon*. Next Dogen writes about *nyo-nin* (如人), a person of thusness.

*Also, is this person an ordinary person and [at the same time] no ordinary person?*

This “ordinary” is a translation of *heijō* or *byōjō* (平常), the word used in the expression *heijō-shin* or *byōjō-shin* (平常心), often translated as “ordinary mind.” This appears in Mazu’s famous saying, “ordinary mind is the Way.” This ordinary mind and this ordinary person are indeed very ordinary, being nothing special. This means we are all a person of thusness already. But at the same time, we are not ordinary; each person is unique.

This way of always viewing things from two sides, such as ordinary/not-ordinary, special individual being/nothing special individual being, awakening/not-awakening, is like Dogen, not ordinary. But he is just talking about ordinary reality. To see this ordinariness is not so ordinary, because we are always looking for something special, something beyond this world,



something beyond our natural condition. In contrast, saying, “you are okay as you are, and yet, you have to practice endlessly,” is unusual.

This person groping for the pillow is a person of thusness (恁麼人, *inmo-nin*; 如人, *nyo-nin*). The person has aroused awakening-mind and begun to seek the Dharma of the Buddha way. In this case the pillow refers to the Dharma. At the same time, this pillow refers to the self, as in, “a person of thusness is seeking the matter of thusness,” or “a fire boy is seeking fire.” This self is seeking the self; Avalokiteshvara is seeking Avalokiteshvara.

*If we take this word person to an ordinary person on the Buddha Way rather than being simply a simile, there is a point to be studied in “groping for a pillow.” We should inquire into the shapeless shape of the pillow.*

“Ordinary person on the Buddha Way” means a bodhisattva. We are ordinary people, but when we arouse awakening-mind, take the bodhisattva vows, receive the bodhisattva precepts, and try to walk the bodhisattva path, we are ordinary persons on the Buddha way.

To understand what Dogen is saying, we need to understand what “groping for the pillow” means. This means seeking the Way, seeking the self, or seeking the matter of thusness. This pillow has no shape, so it is a shapeless shape. But this is not a literal translation. The original expression is *ka-gyōdan* (何形段). *Gyōdan* (形段) means “shape,” and *ka* (何) means “what;” combined they make “what shape”. Because it doesn’t make sense to

translate this as “which shape” or “what shape”, the editor of my English advised me to translate it as “shapeless shape.” This expression appears in the commentary on Hongzhi’s verse about this koan in the Book of Serenity (*Shōyōroku*). It says:

Tiantong (Hongzhi) says, by one hole, emptiness pervading, all directions become crystal clear. It is like willow-grown banks and flower-grown walls on a warm day in a gentle breeze – where is the spring? What shape is it? (春在何處。作何形段。)<sup>6</sup>

This is the scenery of a spring day where new leaves of the willows are fresh and green, and beautiful cherry blossoms are blooming. A gentle breeze blows and shakes the leaves and flowers. This is the peaceful and pleasant scenery of a spring day. And yet, this person is asking, “Where is the spring?” “What shape is it?”

This entire world is spring. When we see new fresh green leaves, the colors of flowers, and other phenomena in springtime, we say, “Spring has come.” But where is spring actually? Is there any spring other than all these concrete things we can see or feel, like willow leaves, cherry blossoms and so on? This is the question. That means each thing has its own color, shape, smell, and so on as the objects of our six sense organs. Is there anything called “spring” besides the forms of each of these concrete things? Is there any “emptiness” other than the five aggregates? Besides innumerable hands and eyes, is there any Great Compassion Bodhisattva?

What is the shape of spring? The shape of

spring is simply green leaves, flowers, and so on. Is there any shape of spring besides each of those beings which have form? Dogen Zenji uses the same expression from *Shōyōroku* to refer to this pillow. This pillow has no shape, or it has a shapeless shape, like spring. This pillow is the formless matter of thusness.

So this pillow has a shape that is no-shape. If this pillow has no shape, there's no way the person's hand can touch it. When we are seeking thusness, seeking ourselves, there's nothing to touch and grasp. We are seeking, still there's nothing to grasp and say "this is me," or "this is the Dharma," because the dharma is the entirety which includes, the self, the myriad dharmas, and our seeking. The conversation between Yunyan and Daowu is a simple exchange, but in reading this simple dialogue, Dogen sees the essential teaching of Buddhism or the nature of our practice as a bodhisattva.

*The nighttime also is not simply the nighttime of the "day and night" in human or heavenly realms. We should know that what we are talking about is not grabbing the pillow, pulling the pillow, or shoving the pillow away.*

Dogen already discussed nighttime, so I don't think I need to repeat what he said. These three actions, "grabbing," "pulling," and "shoving" are based on the idea that the pillow is something outside of ourselves as an object. When we see it in this way, we try to obtain it or manipulate it as if it were a tool, or we try to push it away. But because the pillow is the entirety of everything, we cannot push it away or manipulate it. The person sleeping and her

actions are part of the pillow. There's no separation between the person groping and the pillow being groped. When I read Yunyan and Daowu's dialogue before reading Dogen's interpretation, I could not have imagined they were talking about such a thing. Probably even those Chinese commentators of the koan collections did not understand this simple exchange in the way Dogen interprets it. This pillow is not something we can grasp and make our possession, and we can't throw it away, either. This is because the pillow is the self, our life connected to the entire network of interdependence, the entire network of interdependence which includes us.

## 21. Hands and Eyes

### (12)

「夜間背手摸枕子」と道取する道吾の道底を檢點せんとするに、眼の夜間をうる、見るべし、すごさざれ。

When we are investigating Daowu's statement, "in the night, reaching his hand behind, groping for the pillow," we should see without fail that eyes grab the night.

「手のまくらをさぐる」、いまだ劑限を著手せず。While groping for the pillow, the hands have not yet touched the edge.

「背手」の機要なるべくは、背眼すべき機要のあるか。

If reaching his hand behind himself is the functional essence, there must be the functional essence of looking behind.

夜眼をあきらむべし。

We should clarify the night-eye.

手眼世界なるべきか。人手眼のあるか、ひとり手眼のみ飛霹靂するか、頭正尾正なる手眼の一條兩條なるか。

Is it the world of hands and eyes? Are there a person's hands and eyes? Does this mean that

only hands and eyes are booming like a flash of lightning? Does this refer to one or to two instances of hands and eyes, right from start to finish?

もしかくのごとくの道理を檢點すれば、「用許多手眼」はたとひありとも、たれかこれ大悲菩薩、ただ手眼菩薩のみきこゆるがごとし。

When we closely examine principles like these, the use of innumerable hands and eyes is there, and yet who is the Great Compassion Bodhisattva? It seems that only Hands-and-Eyes Bodhisattvas are there.

### (13)

恁麼いはば、「手眼菩薩、用許多大悲菩薩作麼」と問取しつべし。

If we make such an assertion, we should ask, “What are Hands-and-Eyes Bodhisattvas doing in using the innumerable Great Compassion Bodhisattvas?”

しるべし、手眼はたとひあひ罣礙せずとも、「用作麼」は恁麼用なり、用恁麼なり。

We should know that even if hands and eyes do not obstruct each other, “using what” is “thus using”, and “using thusness.”

### (14)

恁麼道得するがごときは、徧手眼は不曾藏なりとも、徧手眼と道得する期をまつべからず。

When we express thusness, even though entire hands and eyes are never hidden, we should not wait for a time to express entire hands and eyes. 不曾藏の那手眼ありとも、這手眼ありとも、自己にはあらず、山海にはあらず、日面月面にあらず即心是佛にあらざるなり。

Even though there are those hands and eyes and these hands and eyes, they are not the self; they are not mountains and oceans; they are not sun face or moon face; they are not the Mind-Is-Itself Buddha.

In paragraphs (12), (13), and (14), Dogen examines “hands and eyes” as the individual elements of Avalokiteshvara, the network of interconnectedness.

*When we are investigating Daowu’s statement, “in the night, reaching his hand behind, groping for the pillow,” we should see without fail that eyes grab the night.*

Dogen deletes “person of thusness” (*nyonin*; 如人), the subject that is groping, because there is only an action, and this action is our practice. This is practice without a practitioner. “Grab” is a translation of *eru* (得る), meaning “to attain,” or “to get.” In this case, “grab” means “become one with:” hands, pillow, eyes and night are not-two.

Here Dogen is connecting Daowu’s saying with Yunyan’s, “innumerable hands and eyes are Avalokiteshvara.” If Avalokiteshvara’s hands are trying to grope for the pillow, then what are Avalokiteshvara’s eyes doing? The eye grabbing the night symbolizes nondiscrimination. The eye (wisdom) sees the reality beyond discrimination. It sees the darkness and the hand is groping for this shapeless pillow. That is our practice.

*While groping for the pillow, the hands have not yet touched the edge.*

A hand is groping for a pillow, but it hasn’t touched its edge. Because this pillow has no edge, it’s not possible to touch it. The entirety of everything is the pillow, so there’s no edge to it, even the person’s hand is a part of the pillow. That means we are looking for the Dharma, but

we are already the thing we are looking for. We cannot grasp the Dharma as an object. So there's no way to say "I have attained enlightenment," because there's no such person "I" who "gets" this "enlightenment," and there is no such "enlightenment" which can be attained. To say "I have gotten enlightenment," is like saying "I am sleeping." This is false speech. When I am sleeping, "I" is sleeping. "I" cannot be the observer of the sleeping and say, "I am sleeping." This is not something mysterious, it's a logical thing.

*If reaching his hand behind himself is the functional essence, there must be the functional essence of looking behind.*

"Looking behind" is a translation of *hai-gen* (背眼). This *hai* (背) came from the word *hai-shu* (背手), "reaching the hand behind." If we reach our hand behind ourselves, our eyes also look behind us. If the "hand's" groping the pillow is the "functional essence" (機要), then the "eye's" seeing behind is also the functional essence.

I think "behind" in "reaching his hand behind," and "looking behind" have the same meaning as "taking the backward step" in *Fukan-zazengi*. We usually think a "backward step" is negative, something like backsliding, and a "forward step" is like making progress and positive. But Dogen says we take a backward step in our zazen. This is similar to his teaching in *Gen-jokoan*, where he says conveying ourselves toward the myriad things is delusion, but the myriad things coming to the self is realization.

In Daowu's saying, because we are still

sleeping in the dark of night, we can't see anything. So the action of groping for a pillow is not done intentionally. If we woke up and had some light, to get the pillow I think we would just turn our face, move the pillow forward, and get it with our hands. But because we are sleeping in complete darkness, there's no way to find where the pillow is. Yet without seeing it, we search for the pillow and somehow find it. Our hand functions like an eye. This is not our intentional, discriminating, goal-oriented activity. Somehow our hand naturally goes there, without the intention to get the pillow we need or desire.

"Functional essence" is a translation of *kiyō* (機要), which comes from Hongzhi's *Zazen-shin*. This is the same *ki* (機) as the *ki in zenki* (全機), "total function." On a handheld fan, there is a point called the *kaname* (要), or "pivot" in English. A tiny pin at this pivotal point keeps all of the fan's thin bamboo ribs together. If the pin is lost, the entire fan falls apart and the fan ceases to be a fan. So *kaname* (要) is something which keeps this entire reality together and functioning.

*Ki* (機) also can mean "loom," a weaving machine. *Yō* (要) is "essence," or the most important part of this total function. On a weaving machine the *kiyō* (機要) is the treadle the weaver pushes with their feet to make the entire machine work. Dogen is saying our zazen is a pivot like this that makes the self and the myriad things work dynamically together.

*We should clarify the night-eye. Is it the world of hands and eyes?*



Dogen says we need to clearly understand the “night-eye,” the eye that grabs in the darkness in which everything exists as a part of the interconnectedness that, without discriminating, functions as one. Night is beyond discrimination, and this eye is the wisdom that discerns the uniqueness of each thing. The night eye is the same as the dharma eye which can freely see each concrete form (difference) as well as no-form (unity), or emptiness.

*Are there a person’s hands and eyes? Does this mean that only hands and eyes are booming like a flash of lightning? Does this refer to one or to two instances of hands and eyes, right from start to finish? When we closely examine principles like these, the use of innumerable hands and eyes is there, and yet who is the Great Compassion Bodhisattva? It seems that only Hands-and-Eyes Bodhisattvas are there.*

When we see both difference and unity, we need to investigate how we can express this reality that includes both sides. Does this world consist of the hands and eyes of an individual person? Are these the hands and eyes of an individual person that is the world? Are there such things as the world and individual persons? Or are there only things that are like hands and eyes, moving around, appearing and disappearing like a flash of lightning? Are there such things as a world that contains all phenomenal things or a person that is a collection of five aggregates? When we thoroughly investigate these things, we find there is an action of using innumerable hands and eyes, but it seems there is no such fixed entity as the Great Compassion Bodhisattva, Avalokiteshvara. Rather there are

only Hands-and Eyes Bodhisattvas.

At the beginning of the Heart Sutra, we read, “Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, when deeply practicing prajna paramita, clearly saw that all five aggregates are empty.” But there is no such fixed entity called Avalokiteshvara. Only the five aggregates are there. The Five-Aggregates Bodhisattva is seeing the emptiness of the five aggregates.

*If we make such an assertion, we should ask, “What are Hands-and-Eyes Bodhisattvas doing in using the innumerable Great Compassion Bodhisattvas?” We should know that even if hands and eyes do not obstruct each other, “using what” is “thus using”, and “using thusness.”*

We can restate Yunyan’s saying as, “What are Hands-and-Eyes Bodhisattvas doing in using the innumerable Great Compassion Bodhisattvas?” or “Hands-and-Eyes Bodhisattvas are doing ‘what’ using the innumerable Great Compassion Bodhisattvas.” “Do not obstruct,” is a translation of *keige sezu* (罣礙せず), the negation of *keige suru* (罣礙する), “obstruct.” Here “obstruct” means always together, not-two, as in “form is emptiness and emptiness is form.” “Do not obstruct” here means not-one, as in “form is form, emptiness is emptiness.” This sentence means even when hands and eyes are not-one, the function of “using what” is the “function done by thusness,” and the “function using thusness.” Here both the individual self and Avalokiteshvara as subjects disappear, and there are only the five aggregates and the innumerable phenomenal things; there are simply hands and eyes moving

and changing.

*When we express thusness, even though the entire hands and eyes are never hidden, we should not wait for a time to express the entire hands and eyes. Even though there are those hands and eyes and these hands and eyes, they are not the self; they are not mountains and oceans; they are not sun face or moon face; they are not the Mind-Is-Itself Buddha.*

When we see and express the reality of the network of interconnectedness in which each individual being is empty and connected to all other beings, even though the entirety of hands and eyes are never hidden, we should not wait to express the entirety of hands and eyes for some time in the future when we can see them. That means even before we see this reality and express it using words, the reality is thus. The hands and eyes that are never hidden, whether they are our hands and eyes or others' hands and eyes, are not an individual self. Hands and eyes are not something external such as mountains or oceans.

“Sun-face or moon-face” comes from one of Mazu’s (Baso’s) sayings. When Mazu was sick, the director of his temple asked, “How are you today?” Mazu said, “Sun-face Buddha and Moon-face Buddha.”<sup>7</sup> It is said that the Sun-face Buddha lives for eighteen hundred years, and the Moon-face Buddha’s life span is only one day and night. “Neither Sun-face nor Moon-face” means “beyond time,” or “timeless.” “Mind-is-itself Buddha” (即心是佛) is also from an expression by Mazu. Dogen is saying that all things happening in interconnectedness are the

Hands-and-Eyes bodhisattvas, nothing else. Besides Hands-and-Eyes bodhisattvas, there is no mind that can be called Buddha.

In this writing, Dogen Zenji says Yunyan speaks from the side of the entire network of interconnectedness, expressing the reality that Avalokiteshvara is doing “what” or “thusness” using innumerable hands and eyes, and Daowu expresses the same reality from the side of individual beings selflessly working together as various parts of Avalokiteshvara.

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<sup>1</sup> This dialogue appears in *Unmon Kyoshin Zenji Koroku* (雲門匡眞禪師廣錄; Yunmen’s Extensive Record) T 1988, 47544. English translation by Urs App is in *Master Yunmen* (Kodansha America, 1995) p. 90. Somehow, “seeing mountains” (看山) is not translated. In this translation, Yunmen only says, “That’s as clear as day!”

<sup>2</sup> Dogen quotes this saying in *Shobogenzo Komyo* (Radiant Light). There Dogen says the monks’ silence is the exact expression of what Yunyan meant.

<sup>3</sup> Dogen’s *Pure Standards for the Zen Community: A Translation of Eihei Shingi* (by Taigen Daniel Leighton and Shohaku Okumura, SUNNY), p.37

<sup>4</sup> Quotes from *Shobogenzo Inmo* are Okumura’s unpublished translations.

<sup>5</sup> See *The Wholehearted Way: a Translation of Eihei Dogen’s Bendowa, with Commentary by Kosho Uchiyama Roshi* (Tuttle publishing, 1997) p.37 - 39.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Clearly's translation in *Book of Serenity*, case 54, Yunyan's "Great Compassion", p.231.

<sup>7</sup> Blue Cliff Record, case 3, Master Ma is Unwell. (Blue Cliffe Records, Shambhara, 1992), p.18.

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## Treasury of the True Dharma Eye Number 1

### The Realized Kōan *Genjō kōan*

Translated by  
The Soto Zen Text Project

#### *Introduction*

This brief essay was composed in the autumn of 1233, probably at its author's newly opened monastery, Kōshōji, in Fukakusa, just south of the imperial capital of Heiankyō (modern Kyoto). It represents the first text in both the seventy-five and sixty-chapter compilations of the *Shōbōgenzō* and number 3 in the ninety-five-chapter Honzan edition. The work bears an unusual colophon stating that it was presented to a lay disciple, Yō Kōshū (or Yanagi Mitsuhide), apparently an official at the government office in Chikuzen 筑前, in present-day Kyushu, about whom little is known.

The title theme of the essay is an expression occurring frequently in Chan literature, where it originally carried the juridical sense of a legal matter or case (*kōan*) in which the finding or verdict is settled or is immediately apparent (*genjō*). Its use in Chan is thought to derive from

a saying attributed to the Tang-dynasty figure Chen Zunsu, who, upon seeing a monk approaching, said, "Yours is a settled case, but I spare you the thirty blows." The expression (or variants of it) occur frequently in Dōgen's writing. It came to be used as a technical term in Sōtō tradition to express the direct manifestation of ultimate truth in the phenomenal world.

The essay is a much-celebrated statement on Buddhist religious practice, most famously described here as the study of the self, in which one forgets the self, sloughs off body and mind, and is verified by all things. Such practice, we are told, has no end: it is the practitioner's natural environment, like water to a fish or the sky to a bird. It is like the wind that is always blowing, even as we fan ourselves.

This translation is based on the text published in Kawamura Kōdō, ed., *Dōgen zenji zenshu*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shunjusha, 1991).

## Treasury of the True Dharma Eye

### Number 1

#### The Realized Kōan

At times when the dharmas are the buddha dharma, just then there are delusion and awakening; there is practice; there is birth; there is death; there are buddhas; there are living beings.<sup>1</sup>

At times when all the myriad dharmas are not self, there is no delusion; there is no awakening; there are no buddhas; there are no living beings; there is no arising; there is no cessation.<sup>2</sup> Because, from the start, the way of the buddhas has jumped out from abundance and scarcity, there are arising and ceasing, there are delusion and awakening, there are living beings and

buddhas.<sup>3</sup> And yet, while this may be so, it is simply “flowers falling when we cherish them, weeds growing when we despise them.”<sup>4</sup>

Bringing the self to practice and verify the myriad dharmas represents delusion; the myriad dharmas proceeding to practice and verify the self is awakening.<sup>5</sup>

Those who greatly awaken to delusion are the buddhas; those who are greatly deluded about awakening are the living beings. Moreover, there are people who attain awakening on top of awakening, and there are people who are further deluded within their delusion.<sup>6</sup>

When the buddhas are truly the buddhas, they make no use of perceiving that they themselves are buddhas. Nevertheless, they are verified buddhas; they go on verifying buddhahood.<sup>7</sup>

When we take up body and mind and see forms, when we take up body and mind and hear sounds, although we understand them intimately, it is not like the reflection in a mirror, not like the water and the moon: when one side is verified, the other side is obscure.<sup>8</sup>

To study the way of the buddhas is to study oneself. To study oneself is to forget oneself. To forget oneself is to be verified by the myriad dharmas. To be verified by the myriad dharmas is to slough off one’s own body and mind and the body and mind of others. There is an ending to the traces of awakening; and the traces of awakening that are ended are brought out for a long, long time.<sup>9</sup>

People, when they first seek the dharma, remove themselves far from the borders of the dharma. The dharma, when it has been directly transmitted to one, is immediately the person of the original lot.<sup>10</sup>

When people ride in a boat, if they turn their

eyes and gaze at the shore, they make the mistake of thinking that the shore is moving. When they fix their eyes more closely on the boat, they understand that it is the boat that is advancing. Similarly, in confirming the myriad dharmas with a confused conception of body and mind, we make the mistake of thinking that our own mind and our own nature are eternally abiding. When we become intimate with our conduct and return here, the principle that the myriad dharmas are not self is clear.<sup>11</sup>

Firewood becomes ashes, and it is not possible for it to return again to firewood. However, we should not take the view that the ashes are after and the firewood is before. We should know that firewood occupies the dharma position of firewood, and has a before and has an after.<sup>12</sup> Although it may have a before and after, before and after are cut off.<sup>13</sup> The ashes occupy the dharma position of ashes, and have an after and have a before. Just as that firewood does not become firewood again after it has been reduced to ashes, after people die they do not come to life again. However, it is an established practice of the buddha dharma not to speak of life becoming death; therefore, we say, “not arising.” It is an established buddha-turning of the dharma wheel that death does not become life; therefore, we say, “not ceasing.”<sup>14</sup> Life is one position in time, and death is one position in time. It is, for example, like winter and spring: we do not think that winter becomes spring; we do not say that spring becomes summer.

A person’s attaining of awakening is like the moon residing in the water. The moon does not get wet, and the water is not disturbed. Although its illumination is wide and great, it resides in water of a foot or an inch. Even the



whole moon or the entire heavens resides in the dew on a blade of grass or resides in a single drop of water. Awakening's not disturbing the person is like the moon's not boring into the water; the person's not obstructing the awakening is like the dewdrop's not obstructing the heavens or the moon. The depth must be a measure of the height.<sup>15</sup> The length of time must be determined by whether the water is large or small, must be appraised by the breadth of the heavens or the moon.<sup>16</sup>

When, in our body and mind, we have yet to study our fill of the dharma, we feel that the dharma is already sufficient; if the dharma is replete in body and mind, we feel that it is insufficient in some respect. For example, when we board a boat, go out into the middle of the ocean where no mountains are in sight, and look around in the four directions, all we see is a circle. We do not see any different shapes. Nevertheless, the great ocean is not round, nor is it square, and the remaining virtues of the ocean can hardly be exhausted.<sup>17</sup> It is like a palace; it is like a jeweled necklace.<sup>18</sup> It is just that, for the moment, the part our eyes can reach appears circular.

Like that, so are the myriad dharmas. Amidst the dust and beyond its bounds are included many forms, but we see and understand only what is reached by the strength of the eye of study.<sup>19</sup> If we wish to perceive the house styles of the myriad dharmas, in addition to seeing the square and the round, we should realize that there are worlds in the four directions in which the remaining virtues of the ocean and virtues of the mountains are numerous and boundless.<sup>20</sup> We should realize that it is not that this is so only beside us: it is so right here as well, in a single drop as well.<sup>21</sup>

When a fish moves in water, however far it goes, the water has no boundaries; when a bird flies in the sky, fly as it may, the sky has no boundaries. However, from long ago, fish and birds have never been separated from the water and the sky.<sup>22</sup> It is just that, when their function is great, their use is great; when their need is small, their use is small.<sup>23</sup> In this way, while none of them fails to reach its limits, and nowhere do they fail to overturn it, if the bird were to leave the sky, it would quickly die, and if the fish were to leave the water, it would quickly die.<sup>24</sup> We should know that they take water as life; we should know that they take the sky as life.<sup>25</sup> There is taking the bird as life; there is taking the fish as life. It should be taking life as the bird; it should be taking life as the fish. Other than these, there should be further steps forward.<sup>26</sup> That there are practice and verification, and that they have those with lifespans, those with lives, are like this.<sup>27</sup>

Nevertheless, if there were birds or fish that thought to go on through the water or the sky after reaching the limits of the water or the sky, they would find no way, would find no place, to do so in either water or sky. When we find this place, our conduct accordingly realizes the *kōan*; when we find this way, our conduct accordingly is the realized *kōan*.<sup>28</sup> This way and this place are neither great nor small, are neither self nor other; it is not that they existed before, nor that they appear now. Hence, they exist like this.<sup>29</sup> In this way, when a person practices and verifies the way of the buddhas, it is to get one dharma is to penetrate one dharma; to meet one practice is to cultivate one practice.<sup>30</sup> Since, in this, the place exists, and the way penetrates [everywhere], the fact that the known limits are

not conspicuous is so because this knowing is born together with and studies together with the exhaustive investigation of the buddha dharma.<sup>31</sup>

Do not think that finding one's place will necessarily become one's own knowledge and be understood by thinking.<sup>32</sup> While ultimate verification may be realized suddenly, what is intimately ours is not necessarily realized; what is realized is, "why necessarily so?"<sup>33</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

Chan Master Baoche of Mount Mayu was fanning himself when a monk came and asked, "The nature of the wind is constant, and there's no place it does not circulate; why does the Reverend fan himself?"<sup>34</sup>

The Master said, "You only understand that 'the nature of the wind is constant'; you still don't understand the principle that there is no place it doesn't reach."

The monk said, "What is the principle of 'there's no place it does not circulate'?"

The Master at this point just fanned himself.

The monk bowed.

The proof of the buddha dharma, the life-saving path directly transmitted, is like this. To say that, since it is constant, he need not fan himself, and that, even when he does not fan himself, he should feel the wind, is not to understand "constant" and not to understand "the nature of the wind." Because the nature of the wind is constant, the wind of the house of the buddhas has revealed the whole earth to be golden and prepared the butter of the Long River.<sup>35</sup>

Treasury of the True Dharma Eye  
The Realized Kōan  
Number 1

[Ryūmonji MS:]

This was written on the mid-autumn day, first year of Tenpuku [20 September 1233], and given to the lay disciple Yō Kōshū of Chinzei<sup>36</sup>

Compiled and ordered in the senior water year of the rat, [fourth year of] Kenchō [1252]<sup>37</sup>  
Proofed. Auspicious [first] day of the first month, second year of Eikyō [25 January 1430]<sup>38</sup>

Copied on the twenty-third day of the second month, junior fire year of the sheep, [the sixteenth year of] Tenbun [14 March 1547]<sup>39</sup>

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### Notes

**Realized Koan** (*genjō koān*): From a saying attributed to the Tang-dynasty figure Venerable Chen (also known as Muzhou or Daoming; dates unknown): "The Master, seeing a monk approaching, said, 'Yours is a settled case, but I spare you the thirty blows.'" While the original (and often the later) use of the expression thus suggests a juridical pronouncement ("The case is resolved"), in Dōgen's writings and in subsequent Sōtō usage, it often takes on a semantic life of its own, in which the sense is greatly expanded.

1. **At times when the dharmas are the buddha dharma** (*shohō no buppō naru jisetsu*): Probably to be taken in the sense "when everything is

seen in terms of the Buddhist teachings.”

2. **At times when all the myriad dharmas are not self** (*manbō tomo ni ware ni arazaru jisetsu*): Probably to be taken in the sense, “when everything is seen to be empty of independent existence.”

3. **Because, from the start, the way of the buddhas has jumped out from abundance and scarcity** (*butsudō motoyori hōken yori chōshutsu seru yue ni*): Presumably, meaning that the way of the buddhas transcends the affirmation and negation of the previous two sentences.

4. **“flowers falling when we cherish them, weeds growing when we despise them”** (*hana wa aijaku ni chiri, kusa wa kiken ni ouru*): A Japanese reworking of a saying attributed to Chan Master Jing of Niutou (dates unknown):

Someone asked, “What is the Reverend’s house style?”

The Master said, “Flowers fall from my love for them; weeds grow from my hatred of them.”

Dōgen also quotes this line in his *Eihei kōroku*.

5. **the myriad dharmas proceeding to practice and verify the self** (*manbō susumite jiko o shushō suru*): This phrase could also be read “to practice and verify the self while the myriad dharmas advance.”

6. **further deluded within their delusion** (*meichū u mei*): An expression in Chinese that occurs several times in the *Shōbōgenzō*; perhaps reflecting the words of the *Dahui Pujue chanshi yulu*.

7. **they are verified buddhas** (*shōbutsu nari*): Or “they verify buddhahood”; an expression occurring several times in the *Shōbōgenzō*, usually as a verb-object compound.

8. **We take up body and mind and see forms** (*shinjin o ko shite shiki o kenshu shi*): Most interpreters take this phrase to mean, “we (or perhaps the buddhas) see with the entire body and mind.” Hence, they read the passage as describing a non-dualistic apprehension in which there is no opposition between the object and its reflection in the mirror or the water. It is also possible, however, to take the phrase to mean simply, “we see using the body and mind,” and to understand the passage as describing ordinary, biased perception, in contrast to the undistorted reflection of the mirror or the water.

**when one side is verified, the other side is obscure** (*ippō o shō suru toki wa ippō wa kurashi*): Perhaps to be taken as a description of a non-dualistic perception, in which the object (moon) and the subject (water) are both complete in themselves.

9. **the traces of awakening that are ended are brought out for a long, long time** (*kyūkatsu naru goshaku o chōchō shutsu narashimu*): A difficult passage typically taken to mean that the traces of having ended the traces of awakening continue forever. In his use here of the unusual Chinese expression *chōchō shutsu*, Dōgen may have had in mind the saying, alluded to in *Shōbōgenzō kenbutsu*, on “the eye of the *sramana*” by Changsha Jingcen (dates unknown):

At the time, there was a monk who asked,

“What is the eye of the *sramana*?”

The Master said, “You can’t get it out for a long, long time.”

Again, he said, “You can’t get it out by attaining buddhahood or becoming an ancestor; you can’t get it out by rebirth in the six paths.”

10. **person of the original lot** (*honbun nin*): An expression, occurring several times in Zen literature, for one who has realized his or her true nature, or fundamental lot in life. The translation of this sentence seeks to preserve the syntactical parallel with the preceding sentence, such that “the dharma” (*hō*) is read as the grammatical subject of both verbs here. Perhaps more naturally, we may read, “When the dharma has been transmitted to one, one is immediately the ‘person of the original lot.’”

11. **When we become intimate with our conduct and return here** (*moshi anri o shitashiku shite kori ni ki sureba*): I.e., when we attend closely to our actions in the place where we are.

12. **firewood occupies the dharma position of firewood** (*takigi wa takigi no hōi ni jū shite*): Drawing on the common Buddhist teaching that each dharma exists in its own moment, or temporal position, without changing into something else. Allusion to a passage in the *Lotus Sūtra* that can be read “The dharmas abide in their dharma positions.”

13. **before and after are cut off** (*zengo saidan*): A common idiom, found in the perfection of wisdom literature, expressing the emptiness of entities over time.

14. **“not arising”** (*fushō*); **“not ceasing”** (*fumetsu*): A standard pair in many Mahāyāna texts expressing the doctrine that all dharmas are empty and, hence, neither arise nor cease. Dōgen here is conflating “arising and ceasing” (*shōmetsu*) with “life and death” (*shōji*).

**an established buddha-turning of the dharma wheel** (*hōrin no sadamareru butten*): I.e., an established Buddhist doctrine; a play with the standard phrase, the “buddha turns the dharma wheel” (*butten hōrin*).

15. **The depth must be a measure of the height** (*fukaki koto wa, takaki bunryō naru beshi*): Likely meaning that the depth of one’s awaking is a function of the loftiness of the dharma that inspired it.

16. **The length of time** (*jisetsu no chōtan*): Likely the time of (or until) awakening.

17. **virtues of the ocean** (*kaitoku*): Buddhist texts sometimes attribute eight virtues to the ocean: that it is vast and deep; that its tides are regular; that it does not retain corpses; that it contains precious substances; that it collects the five rivers; that it absorbs precipitation without increase or decrease; that it contains great fish; and that it is a single saltiness throughout.

18. **It is like a palace; it is like a jeweled necklace** (*gūden no gotoshi, yōraku no gotoshi*): Likely reflecting the Buddhist teaching, found especially in Yogācāra literature, known as “the four views of water” (*issui shiken*): devas see water as jewels (or jeweled ground), humans as water, pretas (“hungry ghosts”) as pus and blood, fish as a dwelling.



19. **Amidst the dust and beyond its bounds** (*jinchū kakugai*): Perhaps to be taken as the mundane world of the six sense objects (or “dusts”) and the higher realm of the buddha dharma.

**only what is reached by the strength of the eye of study** (*sangaku gan riki no oyobu bakari*): I.e., only those objects that the vision gained through our practice is capable of perceiving. The expression “eye of study” (*sangaku gen*) occurs with some frequency in the *Shōbōgenzō*.

20. **house styles of the myriad dharmas** (*manbō no kafū*): The expression “house style” (*kafū*) usually refers to the teaching styles of the various “houses,” or lineages, of Zen. Dōgen may be using it here simply as a playful way of saying “what things are like,” but it is possible that the “dharmas” here are not only the “things” of this world, but also the myriad “teachings” of the various schools of Buddhism.

**the square and the round** (*hōen*): These terms, while here of course reflecting Dōgen’s point that the ocean is neither square nor round, are also used as Buddhist technical terms for “partial” and “complete” teachings respectively — i.e., teachings that utilize expedient devices (*hōben*; S. *upāya*) and teachings that directly reveal the highest truth.

21. **it is not that this is so only beside us** (*katawara nomi kaku no gotoku aru ni arazu*): The term *katawara* (literally, one’s “side”) may be taken to mean one’s “surroundings” — as opposed to the following *jikige* (“right here”), meaning “at our very feet” or, perhaps, “we ourselves.”

22. **from long ago** (*mukashi yori*): Probably best taken in the sense “from the start” (*moto yori*).

23. **when their function is great** (*yōdai no toki*): “Great function” (*daiyū*; also read *daiyō*) is a common term in Zen literature for the activities of the awakened master.

24. **none of them fails to reach its limits, and nowhere do they fail to overturn it** (*zuzu ni henzai o tsukusazu to iu koto naku, shosho ni tōhon sezu to iu koto nashi*): A loose translation of a passage more literally read, “for each of them, there is no case in which it fails to exhaust the boundaries; in each place, there is no case in which they fail to kick over.” The verb *tōhon*, rendered here as “overturn” (as in tipping over a boat), is used in Zen texts to express the “great function” — as in phrases like “kick over the great oceans, jump over Mount Sumeru” (*tōhon daikai tekito Shumi*).

25. **We should know that they take water as life** (*i sui i myō shirinu beshi*): The saying that fish (and dragons) “take water as life” occurs in several Chan sources. The grammatical subject of the verb “should know” (*shirinu beshi*) here is unexpressed and could also be taken as “they” (i.e., “the fish must have known”), a reading suggesting that Dōgen was recalling a line by Hongzhi Zhengjue (1091-1157: “Dragons and fish don’t know that water is life.”

26. **there should be further steps forward** (*sara ni shinpo aru beshi*): I.e., there must be other permutations of the phrase.

27. **That there are practice and verification, and**

**that they have those with lifespans, those with lives, are like this** (*shushō ari, sono jusha myōsha aru koto, kaku no gotoshi*): I.e., Buddhist practice and verification are to living beings as water is to fish or the sky is to birds.

28. **When we find this place, our conduct accordingly realizes the koan** (*kono tokoro o ureba, kono anri shitagaite genjō kōan su*): “Realizes the kōan” renders Dōgen’s novel verbal form *genjō kōan su*, which might be understood, “manifests, or expresses, ‘the realized kōan.’”

29. **This way and this place** (*kono michi kono tokoro*): “This place” could also be read in apposition to “this way”: “this way, this place.”  
**they exist like this** (*kaku no gotoku aru nari*): The sense of “like this” is unclear; perhaps, “in a way that enables them to be the loci for the expression of the realized kōan.”

30. **To get one dharma is to penetrate one dharma; to meet one practice is to cultivate one practice** (*toku ippō tsū ippō nari, gū ichigyō shu ichigyō nari*): Dōgen gives these two phrases in Chinese, as if quoting some text; but there is no known source. “Dharma” here likely refers to “teaching”: one thoroughly understands each Buddhist teaching one learns.

31. **the fact that the known limits are not conspicuous is so because this knowing is born together with and studies together with the exhaustive investigation of the buddha dharma** (*shiraruru kiwa no shirukazaru wa, kono shiru koto no, buppō no gūjin to dōshō shi dōsan suru ga yue ni, shika aru nari*): Perhaps meaning something like, “the limits of this place and this

way are not obvious to the practitioner because they are experienced as the practice itself.” Dōgen often uses the expressions *dōshō* (“arises together” or “lives together”) and *dōsan* (“studies together”) to express identity or equivalence.

32. **finding one’s place** (*tokusho*): Taken here as the Chinese version of Dōgen’s earlier Japanese *tokoro o uru*, though it could as well be read as “what one gets.”

33. **what is intimately ours is not necessarily realized** (*mitsu’u kanarazushimo genjō ni arazu*): “What is intimately ours” (or, perhaps, “private being”) renders *mitsu’u*, a term not found elsewhere in the *Shōbōgenzō* and not common in the Buddhist literature; typically taken as a reference to our innermost reality.

**what is realized is, “why necessarily so?”** (*genjō kore ka hitsu nari*): “Why necessarily so?” (*ka hitsu*) is a fixed expression in Chinese used to question (or challenge) a statement; perhaps meaning here that what is realized in “ultimate verification” is not a previously unrealized reality but a questioning of previous understanding.

34. **Chan Master Baoche of Mount Mayu** (*Mayokusan Hōtetsu zenji*): Dates unknown; a follower of Mazu Daoyi (709-788). Mount Mayu is in present-day Shanxi province. Dōgen here recounts, largely in Japanese, a conversation found in his *Mana Shōbōgenzō* (case 123) and elsewhere.

35. **revealed the whole earth to be golden and prepared the butter of the Long River** (*daichi no ōgon naru o genjō seshime, chōga no soraku o sanjuku serī*): The term *soraku* refers to a form

of processed milk, variously described as “butter,” “yogurt,” “curd cheese,” etc. “The Long River” refers to the Milky Way. The phrase reflects an expression used in reference to the powers of the advanced bodhisattva, “to churn the Long River into butter and turn the whole earth into gold” (*jiao changhe wei sulao bien dadi wei huangjin*).

<sup>36</sup>. The Tounji MS shares an identical colophon. **mid-autumn day** (*chūshū*): I.e., the Harvest Moon Festival, on the fifteenth of the eighth lunar month.

**lay disciple Yo Koshu of Chinzei** (*Chinzei no zoku deshi Yō Kōshū*): A name that might also be read Yanagi Mitsuhide. The identity of this individual is unknown; presumably, an official at Chinzei, the government office of Dazaifu, in Chikuzen, in present-day Kyushu.

<sup>37</sup>. It has been speculated that this colophon, written in 1252, presumably by Dōgen himself, may have indicated completion of his work on the seventy-five-chapter *Shōbōgenzō*.

<sup>38</sup>. Copyist unknown.

<sup>39</sup>. By Tessō Hōken (d. 1551), copyist of the Ryūmonji MS.



## My Footnotes on Zazen (22) Meeting Thoughts in Relaxation (2)

Rev. Issho Fujita

(Continued from previous article) *The Vitak-kansathana Sutta* is the twentieth sutra in the *Majjhima Nikāya*. The literal translation into English of its Japanese title is the “Stop Thinking Sutra.” This means that this sutra teaches us to “stop thinking.” When I searched for an English translation of the title of this sutra, I found two different versions, with interestingly different nuances. One is “The Removal of Distracting Thoughts Sutra”, and the other is “The Relaxation of Thoughts Sutra.” It is clear that the former translator is taking a negative stance on thoughts, and is translating the sutra based on the understanding that the sutra is the Buddha’s instruction on how to get rid of thoughts that interfere with the work of sustained attention to a particular meditation object (what the sutra calls the “subject” or “theme” such as the breath or body sensations).

It is important to note that even in the first translation, which is negative about thoughts, the sutra does not insist that all kinds of thoughts must be eliminated. Rather, the sutra clearly states that the removal is only for the limited conditional thought of “evil and unwholesome thoughts that involve desire, anger, and foolishness.” But if one were to introduce the crude and totalitarian idea that because all our thoughts are accompanied by “desire,

anger, and delusion,” that any thought is an “evil and evil thought,” one would conclude that all thoughts, insofar as they are thoughts, should be summarily eliminated. Even though the Buddha himself didn’t say anything like that, in fact, it is often the case that people understand the words of the sutras through such preconceptions.

According to the dictionary, the original meaning of the Pali word *santhana* is “resting place or meeting place. If so, then the title of this sutra, *Vitakkansathana Sutta*, should be literally translated as “resting place for thought.” In this case, the second English translation, “The Relaxation of Thoughts,” is closer to this meaning. With the difference between “removal” and “relaxation,” the “view” of this sutra becomes completely different. However, for those who aim unreservedly to have a “pure” mind without any thoughts (such as Shenhsiu and Zen Master Wolun mentioned in the previous article), it is difficult to imagine the scene where the Buddha seriously talks about “meeting thoughts at the resting place” or “meeting thoughts in relaxation.” However, if we read the title of this book honestly, shouldn’t we understand that the Buddha is teaching exactly that? In other words, he is not talking about how to fight and overcome all the thoughts that come up, but how to deal with the “bad and unwholesome thoughts” that come up under such conditions, rather than trying to put all kinds of thoughts to rest (or eliminate them).

In this sutra, the Buddha teaches five specific ways to deal with such thoughts. Judging from the phrase, “When a bhikkhu encounters a subject and pours out his will,” and the

phrase, “When he has successfully dealt with it, his mind is established, set, unified, and concentrated within,” it is clear that this sermon was not addressed to Vipassana (observation) practitioners, but to Samatha (stopping) practitioners. However, I am reading this sutra in the hope that we who practice “upright sitting” may also find in it a useful guide to the problem of what to do when thoughts and images arise that frustrate our efforts to do zazen. In order to do this, we must first and foremost understand the meaning of the title of this sutra as relaxation, not removal.

First of all, the scripture tells us that if, for example, a practitioner is trying to pay attention to the breath and an angry thought persists and prevents him from doing so, he should suspend his attention to the breath and turn his attention to another good thought, such as a compassionate thought. This approach is explained by the metaphor, “It is like a skilled carpenter or his apprentice using a small wedge to drive out a large one.” Then, when the “evil and unwholesome thoughts” have been let go of and subdued, the attention is again directed to the breath. In the context of this sutra, one might assume that the choice of what exactly to do with the “other good thought” that opposes the bad thought would be deliberately or methodically decided by the practitioner himself or by his instructor, but in our zazen there is no such artificial intervention.

Rather, we patiently deal with the unwholesome thoughts until they are calmed down by the process of the mind naturally giving rise to other wholesome thoughts. As long as the unwholesome thoughts are in the flow of imper-



manence, it is essentially impossible for them to continue to exist forever. As Dogen Zenji said, “Vexations or afflictions have within themselves the opportunity to overcome themselves.” Borrowing from this, we can say, “Unwholesome thoughts have within themselves the power to overcome themselves.” As long as we do not interfere with this process, the temporary state of bad thoughts will eventually transition into a more balanced state. It’s like a child who is busy building sandcastles on the beach, but when he gets tired of it, he leaves them behind and runs away without any regrets. We need to be patient and allow such things to happen. It is the “up-right sitting” form that allows for such a patient approach.

Next, if the first method does not work, the Buddha recommends “taking a close look at the faults of those thoughts.” This is not to divert attention from the bad thoughts, but to watch them carefully. This is illustrated by the meta-

phor, “A young woman or man who likes to adorn herself would be afraid, ashamed, and offended if she had a dead snake, dog, or human carcass hanging around her neck.” This means that instead of rushing to turn our backs on our thoughts, we should meet them in a relaxed state and look at them straight on. Through this process, one does not try to force the thoughts away, but rather one becomes deeply disgusted and fed up with them (“scared, ashamed, and sick”) and naturally detaches oneself from them. In the past during sesshin, there were times when I used to struggle to deal with certain thoughts (sexual fantasies) that persisted in my mind (in hindsight, I think I actually enjoyed it). But one day, I realized that I was playing with these inferior feelings, and I became really sick of them. Then, I remember that for some reason those thoughts subsided on their own, even though I shouldn’t have tried to stop them. (To be continued)

## NEWS

### **September 15, 2021**

South America Soto Zen Conference was held at Zoom

### **October 9–10, 2021**

Europe Soto Zen Workshop was held at Zoom

### **October 10, 2021**

Europe Soto Zen Conference was held at Zoom

### **October 16, 2021**

Hawaii Soto Zen Conference was held at Zoom

### **October 16–17, 2021**

Hawaii Soto Zen Workshop was held at Zoom

### **November 17, 2021**

Association of Soto Zen North America Conference was held at Zenshuji, California

### **November 17–19, 2021**

North America Soto Zen Workshop was held at Zenshuji, California

### **December 15, 2021**

South America Soto Zen Conference was held at Zoom

### **February 11, 2022**

South America Soto Zen Conference was held at Zoom

### **February 26, 2022**

Hawaii Soto Zen Conference was held at Zoom

### **March 3,8,10,15,17, 2022**

South America Soto Zen Workshop was held at Zoom

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