

DHARMA EYE

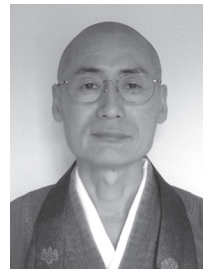


法眼

News of Soto Zen Buddhism: Teachings and Practice

On Taking Up the Post of Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism South America Office

Rev. Dosho Saikawa,
Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism South America Office



I was appointed Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism South America Office on May 1st, 2005 following the resignation of Rev. Koichi Miyoshi, who stepped down to return to his home temple in Hokkaido, Japan. As you know, Busshinji, where the Soto Zen Buddhism South America Office is located, is the representative of both head temples in Japan, Eiheiiji and Sojiji. For that reason, I went to both temples to offer greetings and prostrations together with Rev. Miyoshi after his return to Japan. I left for South America on May 13th. Every day since then, I have mainly been digesting the various activities and duties that the former Director had set up on a monthly and yearly basis. Rev. Miyoshi entered as Director at a particularly difficult time as he came following a period when there had been no director. However, he set up many new activities including the South America sesshin and so forth. Furthermore, I would like to offer my sincere respect for the great success he achieved through his efforts last year at the memorial activities held for the Centennial of Soto Zen Buddhism in South America.

It is well known that because of the historical circumstances of each of the teaching districts as well as the differences in the various activities carried out in each place that it is difficult to apply the same techniques and methods for teaching used in other teaching districts. Here, in South America, it is also really quite difficult to balance well the needs and requests of Zen teaching for the people of Japanese descent and those who are not of Japanese descent. In short, there is a need to balance the main focus of Japanese temples in South America which are the memorial services for deceased family ancestors and the study of the self through zazen that takes place in the

zazen dojo for those who are not of Japanese descent. Both of these activities give peace of mind to these groups of people and so it can be said that it is necessary to overcome the differences of form and make efforts to promote the convergence of them within the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha, Dogen Zenji and Keizan Zenji.

Of course, in a temple for people of Japanese descent, it is not the case that the only activities that take place there are performing memorial services and other ceremonies. Morning and evening zazen are important activities that are indispensable and are carried out on a daily basis like monasteries in Japan. To express this in concrete terms, with the exception of younger people, there are virtually no people of Japanese descent who participate in morning and evening zazen at Busshinji. The people who come for memorial services are only of Japanese descent. This means that the people participating in Japanese cultural activities such as flower arranging, calligraphy, and Buddhist chanting are largely of Japanese descent while those people who are in the group that sews things related to zazen such as sitting cushions and rakusu are mostly not of Japanese descent. In other words, the common characteristic of temples for people of Japanese descent in South America, regardless of which Buddhist school they are associated with, is that the building is used at different times both for general temple activities and as a Zen center. While it cannot be said that the traditional Japanese cultural elements and the Zen center elements perfectly merge together, the priests in the teaching positions perform their duties without leaning one way or the other. It is within

this situation that next year we will mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of Busshinji. (Memorial activities are also planned for the 50th anniversary of Zengenji in Mogi das Cruces and the 45th anniversary of Busshinji in Rolandia both of which take place this year).

The historical origins of temples for people of Japanese descent go back to 1955. At that time, the Head Priest of the Soto Zen School, Takashina Rosen Zenji, came to Brazil and this visit served to unify him with the hearts of the Soto Zen believers here. This was the opportunity through which the path was opened to build temples. Then, as I think you are all well aware of, it was through the tireless efforts of fukyoshi teachers that temples were built in various places. I have unexpectedly received the opportunity to be here next year for the 50th anniversary of Busshinji.

It is through this stroke of fortune that not only will I be here for that celebration, but that I have inherited from the former Director, Rev. Miyoshi, the task of building a zendo. The building of this zendo is not only his wish, but also the long-cherished desire of all the former Directors including the first Director, Rev. Ryohan Shingu, the second Director, Rev. Shunkyo Aoki, and the third Director, Rev. Daigyo Moriyama. I am now faithfully

taking on this great project which was the deep wish of all these former directors. In more concrete terms, this project includes 1) a memorial ceremony 2) a memorial publication 3) building of the zendo and a memorial sesshin 4) setting up memorial plaques in the form of small wooden towers for the founder of the temple, the successive head priests, deceased priests, and one for the deceased ancestors of the temple congregation 5) building an addition to the office 6) repairing the road that leads up to the temple 7) remodeling the interior of the temple (building a space for prayer ceremonies) and so forth.

There is not much time to carry out all of these activities that must be done in time for the events next year, so I have already begun to work on them. It is my sincere wish that through collaboration with both head monasteries, the Administrative Headquarters of Soto Zen Buddhism, as well as the cooperation of all involved that we can set up a true place of practice that is well balanced for international teaching activities.

This has mainly been a report on the activities right in front of me. However, I would like to include this information together with this greeting on the occasion of taking this post.

Gassho

August 6th, A Day of Prayer

By Rev. Shoken Yokoyama,
Head Priest of Zenshoji

It goes without saying that the first atomic bomb burst in the skies over Hiroshima on August 6th, 1945. At that time, Zenshoji was located at Yagen-bori in the Naka Ward of Hiroshima, a location that was less than one kilometer from the bomb's epicenter. The *hondo* (the Dharma Hall) of the old temple was the same size as the present one and along with the *kuri* (family quarters), there was also a bell tower and a building for Inari. The temple grounds were thickly covered with persimmon and willow trees that added to the dignified atmosphere and also made it a favorite place for children to play.

It was around 1587 that a place for Hiroshima Castle was chosen and building began. It was completed in 1591 by Mori Terumoto. The building of Zenshoji was commenced in 1615 by the lord of the castle, Fukushima

Masanori in the Yagen-bori district that was home to many people of culture, including doctors and scholars.

As Hiroshima entered the Meiji Period, it gradually was transformed into a military center where many boats were constructed and factories for producing military weapons were built. With this prospering of the industries that supplied the military, there was a sudden increase in the population of Hiroshima. It is said that this is the reason why Hiroshima became the target for the first atomic bomb. The whole neighborhood of Yagen-bori as well as the entertainment district was changed.

At that time, the temple grounds of Zenshoji bustled on the festival days associated with the god of Toyokawa Inari as people came to offer prayers for prosperity in

business. It was a temple that had a whiff of the entertainment and downtown districts because geisha would also come to offer prayers at the temple.

The Ura-bon Sejiki ceremony was held every year on the evening of August 5th and it seems it took place just about the time the entertainment district was beginning to become crowded with people in the early evening. In 1942, the father of my wife Hitoko became the 22nd head priest of Zenshoji. On the morning of August 6th, 1945, her family was enjoying a break following the Obon Sejiki-e ceremony, the biggest ceremony of the year at the temple. The only daughter, Hitoko had just turned five. The temple hondo was being used as a temporary classroom for elementary school students. From the passageway around the temple, Hitoko watched the students getting ready for class propping herself up with her head resting on her hands. It was a long leisurely morning and as it happened her parents were sitting on the temple veranda enjoying conversation with two members of the temple parish who had come to visit their temple grave.

The atom bomb burst over Hiroshima at 8:15 a.m. My wife says that she remembers almost nothing of what happened next. Fortunately, her parents, who were sitting on the veranda, were able to escape with little injury when the family quarters of the temple collapsed. My wife as well was not hurt. She had been in between the temple hondo and family quarters. Her father picked her up as they all escaped in the direction of Hijiyama and from there went on through Fuchu-machi to a temple named Chofukuji. It seems they were able to pass through the areas where the flames had died down, along places that been cleared so people could walk. At that time, her mother was poisoned by radiation and died one month later on September 10th from radiation sickness. Her father also died from cancer caused by radiation sickness. He passed away on April 6th, 1954, the day on which my wife completed her second year of middle school.

Of the thirty some elementary students who had gathered at the temple hondo that day to study only one girl survived. The temple priest had seen her foot protruding from under the broken tiles of the temple roof and pulled her out. This woman is still alive and well today. However, it was not possible to save most of the others. They burned to death, caught in the flames of fire.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb, the first time in history that such

wholesale carnage was caused by a single bomb. August 6th has become a day in Hiroshima in which we make an appeal to the world, praying for world peace. And yet, conflicts around the world arising from hate and enmity only deepen. Furthermore, in our own country of Japan as well, with the rise in crimes committed by younger people and the flood of cruel crimes in general, we could never say that this is a peaceful country.

On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the end of the war as well as the suffering from the atomic bombing, the new generation follows in the footsteps of those people who steadfastly proceeded in the face of poverty and great difficulty. I think we really must rethink the objectives of our wishes and prayers for peace.

In the *Dhammapada*, there is the following passage:

A winner invites resentment,
The losers lie suffering.
Those who throw away both winning and losing
And whose minds are tranquil,
Are happy in any situation.

In a fair contest, whether it is in a game or in sports, both sides are inspired; both sides feel they are alive. But behavior that is aggressive and selfish, thinking only of conquering the other side and doing away with the other will only breed enmity and become the cause of someone wanting to put an end to you. When we give up the opposition between winning and losing and awaken to the reality in which all things are allowed to live, we will be able to see the suggestion of how to live our own lives.

I think August 6th will be a day on which we as Buddhists will be questioned about the way in which we put into practice our prayers for world peace.



The atomic dome in Hiroshima



Preparing for the Jizos for Peace Pilgrimage

Rev. Yuko Krieger
Great Vow Zen Monastery, Clatskanie, Oregon

This August, thirty five Western Buddhists from the United States, Canada and Germany traveled to Japan on pilgrimage for the sixtieth anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The pilgrimage was the culmination of an over two-year effort to gather 270,000 images of Jizo Bodhisattva to bring to Japan as a peace offering. The images of Jizo, many of which were drawn on cloth and sewn into quilts and peace flags, were contributed by people from every state within the United States, from many countries of the world, and each continent. By the time the pilgrims left on their journey, the number of Jizos totaled nearly 500,000.

The night before we departed all of the residents of Great Vow Zen Monastery, abbots included, stayed up well beyond ten o'clock in order to prepare for the pilgrimage. Jizo panels, tapestries and origami strings were cast about the monastery, some all ready to go to Japan, some in stacks and suitcases in the process of being organized. The spirit in the air was one of cheerful anticipation mixed with gratitude for the hundreds of thousands of individual Jizo images that have been sent in as part of this project.



Sending off lanterns in Hiroshima

The mission of Jizos for Peace is to support people in cultivating and expressing peace in their lives. Having lived



Pilgrims chant the Heart Sutra in Nagasaki

with this project over the past few years, I have received the gift of seeing the power of this simple intention: we have received letters from prisoners who found their own voice through making Jizos; stories from veterans and victims of war alike who grieve deeply for all they have seen and done, and who have been able to release some of that weight into the simple act of expressing their wish for peace on a small white square of fabric to be taken to Hiroshima and Nagasaki; a class of school children who studied Jizo Bodhisattva and Japanese history before carefully sculpting traditional figures of Jizo to bring to the monastery in person. To have helped staff this project has been to be the container of and witness to an ocean of prayers for peace, it has been the opportunity of a lifetime.

Feeling personally connected to Jizos for Peace, I have made many Jizo panels since the project's inception and have experienced firsthand the connection to peace and healing that can come through this project, which invites everyone to find the desire for peace within themselves and

then to extend it outward. In the 1940's my grandfather, a tall and eloquent man, worked on the Manhattan Project as a chemical engineer. He went on to a lifetime's career of developing missiles. My own life indirectly arose from his, and in taking part in Jizos for Peace it feels as though I have been able to begin to use the gift of our lives, my grandpa's and mine, for good. My grandfather died this spring, and when I went to Japan as a pilgrim for Jizos for Peace I carried his memory with me, as well as the complicated love I know for the harm and kindness that can arise from being a human-being.



Jizo parade in Hiroshima

As the hours passed and the suitcases bound for Japan piled higher, we spoke of the beauty of each piece of cloth, decorated with pictures of Jizo Bodhisattva. Behind each small offering is a long history, and the sincere desire for peace. In Japan many prayer flags made of these Jizo panels danced in the wind.

The days in Kyoto were spent visiting temples, shrines and other sacred sites. As western Zen practitioners it was meaningful to see the ancient roots of the practice we share with our brothers and sisters across the water. The profound grace of Kyoto with its countless temples and bright bustling downtown full of shrines tucked into every corner set a tone for the rest of the trip which lasted throughout.

From Kyoto we followed the heat and humidity southward to Hiroshima. There we were kindly received as guests at Zensho-ji. Staying at a family temple was an experience that allowed everyone to take part in a life we

would never have been able to know otherwise. Many pilgrims realized that most who visit Japan may only see the outside of a temple, but that given the nature of our trip, we were allowed into the workings of daily temple life - the bells, samu period, simple and delicious oryoki meals. We were grateful for this during the whole pilgrimage.

In Hiroshima, the Peace Park and museum were sites of pilgrimage. Although many of us had prepared for this trip by studying the history of the bombings, the war and its aftermath, there was no way to prepare for the effect of actually being at the site of the devastating bomb. In the peace museum there are cases of objects belonging to victims of the bomb: shreds of clothing, book satchels with holes burned through them, lunch boxes of children seared black. Somehow seeing these items and then walking outside onto the land that witnessed and suffered under the bomb silenced our hearts and brought the reality of why we were there to life.

The Annual Hiroshima Peace Day was a large gathering of individuals and various groups championing the peace cause. There was a "die-in" at the time the bomb was detonated, where everyone dropped to the ground from where they stood. In the evening countless paper lanterns were sent down the river by the park, and on each lantern was written a prayer for peace.

After continuing on to Nagasaki by train, the group visited more sites of pilgrimage, and attended the Peace Day in Nagasaki Peace Park. The Jizos for Peace Project had a presence at the day's official activities, ranging from



Chozen Bays and others offering Jizos at a Nagasaki nursing home

interfaith religious ceremonies to a colorful peace parade in the Peace Park of Nagasaki.

One of the most important aspects of the pilgrimage was that of personal connection. We were able to meet with *hibakusha* (survivors of the atomic bombings) in senior homes as well as on the peace days, friendships were forged between the western pilgrims and our excellent companions/guides from the Soto-shu, and everyone returned home with memories of brief, strong encounters with people everywhere we went. The common desire for peace in the world transcends language, age and nationality. This was apparent on our pilgrimage, where people from many different backgrounds were able to connect with one another in the common goals of practice, and peace.

The Jizos for Peace pilgrimage was an honor to take part in. At our last group meeting before returning home, we acknowledged that much of the processing of this trip will happen over time. The spirit of pilgrimage is one of open-handedness - open hands for giving, and for receiving. The effects of what we attempt to give to the world can never be known, but the gifts of kindness, insight and peace which we received from so many people during our time in Japan are shining jewels which have been brought back with us to our distant homes.



Jizos and the Heart Sutra

Bearing Witness at Los Alamos: The Sixtieth Anniversary of the Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki



Rev. Joan Halifax,
Upaya Zen Center, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Friday evening, at 5:15 pm in New Mexico and 8:15 am August 6th in Japan, the temple bell of Upaya Zen Center in Santa Fe, New Mexico, began to slowly toll, joining the Hiroshima Peace Bell and bells around the world, as all marked the time when the atom bomb was dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. Thus began Upaya's Bearing Witness Retreat marking the memorial of the sixtieth anniversaries of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a retreat visioned and organized by myself of the of Upaya Zen Center, and supported by the Los Alamos Study Group, the Buddhist Peace Fellowship,

the San Francisco Zen Center, the Zen Peacemaker Community, the Jizos for Peace Project, and Kazuaki Tanahashi's A World without Armies.

In front of the many people gathered in the temple, I read the words from the Bhagavad Gita quoted by physicist and Manhattan Project director, Robert Oppenheimer: "Now I am become death, the destroyer of worlds." Ryumon Baldoquin of San Francisco Zen Center and Maia Duerr, Executive Director of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, read a letter from the Mayor of Hiroshima calling for the end of nuclear proliferation, and the

testimonies of two *hibakushas*, Mr. Ueda from Hiroshima and Mrs. Hashida from Nagasaki, were read with great emotion by their translators.

This was followed by all who were gathered doing one hundred and eight full prostrations of atonement after chanting the verse of atonement: "All my ancient twisted karma, from beginningless greed hate and delusion, born of body, speech, and mind, I now fully atone."

People then offered incense at the altar and bowed deeply before Mr. Ueda and Ms. Hashida, survivors of the bombings. At this evening, with much media in attendance, Buddhist teachers from all over the country, Christians, Muslims, Jews, young and old, offered prayers that there would be an end to the production and proliferation of nuclear weapons, as they asked forgiveness for the great suffering caused by the dropping of these apocalyptic bombs.



Upaya sangha members in sackcloth

On Saturday, August 6, in New Mexico, one hundred sangha members went to Los Alamos and Ashley Pond, the site where the atom bomb was invented and assembled. They joined the many pacifists and protesters, including the famous anti-nuclear Jesuit priest, Father John Dear, as all donned sackcloth, carried ashes and walked to the gates of the National Laboratory.

Later in the morning, Upaya sangha members sat in meditation, bearing witness, as scholars, artists, and politicians, offered facts and aspirations regarding the ending of nuclear proliferation. The *hibakushas* spoke again to a large respectful and rapt audience.

In front of the Upaya sitting group were placed

kimonos, which had been sent to Upaya by elder Japanese people. On the kimonos were sewn patches with Jizo Bodhisattvas drawn on them. Sangha members during the day gave away small Jizos to those participating in the powerful gathering. These Jizos were also a gift from Japan, and the gratitude for these gifts was deep and quiet.

In the late afternoon, many sangha members visited the Los Alamos Museum and registered dismay in how the development and deployment of the bombs were portrayed. We realized how little relative truth means in our world today.

That night, people gathered at Upaya Zen Center in council to share their insights about the events of the past 24 hours. For two days after this, fifty people sat in meditation, doing a sesshin schedule during the early morning hours and the day. Participants included Dominican nuns, a veteran of the Iraqi war, social activists, and dedicated pacifists,

On one evening the *hibakushas* met with the group and shared their stories and feelings about being in the United States at this time. On the evening of August 8th, at the time in Japan when the atom bomb was dropped in Nagasaki, joining our friends in the Jizos for Peace Project in solidarity, the Zen Center held a powerful interfaith worship service, with Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hawaiian, and Hindu prayers for peace.



Looking into the lab from Tsankawi

On August 9th, New Mexico dateline, all of the retreatants went to an archeological site next to the Los Alamos National Laboratory. From the edge of the mesa of Tsan Kawi, looking into the Laboratory, participants made vows to work for the ending of violence in the world, and to dedicate themselves to the ending of nuclear production and proliferation. These words were said among the old stones and caves of this ancient Pueblo village in the high desert barrancas of New Mexico.

Above participants shone the brilliant sky of New Mexico; around them, red sand and great stone cliffs were the ground on which sangha members stood and also the Laboratory; directly over the lab, dark storm clouds gathered, reminding us of the truth of suffering. This was a time to bear witness to suffering, to remember what happened sixty years ago in the heart of Japan. It was also a time to dedicate our vows to end suffering through our concerted efforts to educate, protest, and work. Led by Ryumon Baldoquin, participants vowed to be awake to the suffering caused by nuclear proliferation, to speak out about the consequences of nuclear production and proliferation, to hold institutions accountable for principles that affirm life, and to work for peace in ways that open the heart of our world.

My Zazen Notebook (15)

Rev. Issho Fujita
Pioneer Valley Zendo

Fragmentary Thought XXIV "Zazen and Knowing" Part 2

Behind knowing, something beyond it is functioning. While making knowing possible, it transcends knowing. Certainly there is something that can never be reached by means of knowing. Without that, knowing doesn't even exist. But it would never be possible to use words that appeal to knowing by saying "It's A or B." In a word, it's a condition where a predicate cannot be attached. This is why in Zen it is indicated by the interrogative "who." In Dogen Zenji's *Shobogenzo Zazenshin*, we find, "There is a 'who' in non-thinking". A 'who' maintains the self." In Zen expression the prefix "non (非)" is not simply a negation. It contains the meaning of "transcending while embracing." So I borrowed this usage of the word and made an unfamiliar phrase of "the condition of non-

knowing" in preceding articles that I have written.

This expression "the condition of non-knowing" in concrete terms is nothing other than the totality of zazen (lumping together the person practicing zazen and the whole environment around him). I think it is necessary to investigate the true nature of knowing within zazen in the relationship with this conditions of non-knowing. If this is omitted and the focus is only on knowing, there is the danger of not putting knowing in its proper place within zazen by either putting too much value on knowing (e.g. mixing zazen and meditation, a tendency to overemphasize the psychological aspects of zazen, etc.) or conversely by underestimating the value of knowing (e.g. neglecting or ignoring the important role that knowing carries out in zazen, a superficial view of zazen that only pays attention to the externals of zazen, etc.).

The whole of zazen, which is the condition of non-knowing, is not in the same dimension as knowing (not one). However it expresses or reflects itself in a form of knowing. So they are directly connected with each other and not two. I think this *not-one* nor *not-two* relationship must not be overlooked. From this point, the following two things can be taken up as important points in the practice of zazen. One thing is that we must never lose sight of the fact that the source and "what is knowing" is not knowing itself but that it is the condition of non-knowing. In short, knowing is unilaterally born by the totality of zazen and we mustn't obscure this cause-result relationship. The other thing is to correctly and minutely differentiate the messages that come from the condition of non-knowing without distorting them or mixing them up with noise. In other words, knowing should faithfully reflect the conditions of non-knowing as it is.

What sort of sitting is necessary so that this quality of knowing can be attained within zazen? With regard to zazen, it is stated in Dogen Zenji's *Fukan-zazengi*, "Cease all movements of the conscious mind, stop the gauging of all thought and views." This is to not antagonize the movements of the conscious mind or thought and views by trying to eliminate or do away with such things. The meaning of these words is to completely give up all intentions, all fabrications based on the ego consciousness (practices of controlling the self) that aim to control the mind according to our wishes by trying to bring about special mental states. What we must cease or stop are "the movements of the mind" which is to actively use the mind by setting up your goals and "gauging all thoughts and views" which are activities that involve will and intention.

We don't need to stop mental activities themselves. Even when you "cease all movements of the conscious mind" and stop the "gauging of all thoughts and views," knowing will vividly appear within zazen apart from any thoughts. It will be just as it is written in Dogen Zenji's *Shobogenzo Zazenshin*, "It is actualized in non-thinking."

In this way, to "cease all movements of the conscious mind, stop the gauging of all thought and views" and to let knowing "actualized in non-thinking" is the essential condition for knowing to be able to faithfully reflect the totality of zazen. Nevertheless, in truth, this is not an easy thing to do.

As I touched in the last article, we are deeply conditioned by "what-is-known-is everything-ism". Therefore it is relatively easy for us to make the mistake of assuming that the contents of knowing are the whole self (i.e. to regard knowing and the self as the same; in a word, the illusion that the known self equals the true nature of the self). As a consequence, by turns, we are usually happy or unhappy depending on the content of knowing and we are always trying to control and manage our knowing according to our own conveniences, preferences, and ideas. If we bring these habits into zazen, then, as mentioned earlier, zazen becomes a means of constant movements of the mind and gauging thought and views, i.e. zazen becomes a method for self control (actualized in thinking).

How is it possible to protect zazen from these deeply rooted habits? First of all, in our own thoughts and behavior we must be clearly aware of the reality in which we regard knowing and self as being the same. Then, it is necessary to clearly acknowledge that it is a big mistake to regard knowing and the self as the same. We must realize that this is nothing more than a self-serving prejudice, by fully applying our intellect. Knowing is surely one part of the self but it isn't all of it and this is something we must be able to agree with completely. Nevertheless, this deep-rooted habit isn't something that will be cured simply by understanding it with your head. Zazen is the practice of returning to the "true nature of the self" by waking up from the dream of the "known self." Ultimately, there is no other way of fundamentally correcting this habit than through the effort of really practicing correct zazen.

If you try zazen, you will quickly realize that as long as you regard knowing and the self as the same, you cannot simply accept knowing as knowing. There will inevitably be a reaction against the contents of knowing and you will end up being dragged around by this. And then, you will

end up forgetting the essential effort of upright sitting because the center of your intention will shift to managing the contents of knowing. Moment to moment in our zazen, we are standing at a crossroads: will we be deepening into zazen or will we become occupied with knowing? In most cases, little by little and without being aware of it (or while being aware of it), people tend to go tottering off in the latter direction. It is through fully tasting this difficulty in zazen, that we experience over and over again the strength, the depth, and the persistence of our habit to regard knowing and the self as being the same.

However, it isn't possible for those of us who practice zazen to stagnate there. In any case, there is nothing else we can do except to make the effort over and over again of awakening from our infatuation with knowing by retracing our steps and heading in the direction of upright sitting. When our diligence bears fruit and gradually our zazen ripens, we will be able to distinguish between the condition of knowing and that of non-knowing (the totality of zazen equals the true nature of the self). Then, upright sitting and knowing will no longer get involved in the habitual entanglements and confrontations and knowing will become of use to upright sitting. Actually, the root of the problem is not knowing itself, but rather the attitude we have toward knowing and the manner we deal with it. When this changes, then we are no longer disconcerted or manipulated by knowing. Rather, we will be able to use knowing as a key for regulating the body, breath, and mind, and in this way effectively make use of it in zazen. Furthermore, knowing will be an indispensable part of zazen that will merge and unite with it. In this way, knowing is fully integrated with zazen and it becomes zazen's knowing (the knowing of "the actualization in non-thinking") and then a new development will occur in knowing itself. In the previous sections of *My Zazen Notebook*, I touched on the subtle feelings of oneness within the whole body as well as the experience of all sorts of subtle movements. These are actual examples of this type of knowing.

There are still other things to discuss with regard to knowing within zazen, but I will stop here because of space limitations. For a person who practices zazen, one thing we must always keep in mind is to practice zazen in such a way that knowing is effectively used as knowing. Within that kind of zazen, knowing which usually serves for delusions functions actively as an indispensable part of "sitting Buddha." How is it possible to sit zazen in which knowing "becomes a Buddha?" That is the task to be accomplished.

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

Lecture (5)

Rev. Shohaku Okumura
Director, Soto Zen Buddhism International Center

The Buddha said, "One may offer a gift to oneself and use one's own gift; even more, one can pass it to one's parents, wife, and children." Therefore we should know that giving to ourselves is a kind of offering. To give to parents, wife, and children is also an offering.

Dogen Zenji says that offering a gift to oneself and one's family and to use it for oneself and for one's family can also be dana. I had difficulty to understand what he is saying.

On December 20th, 1975, I came to the US for the first time with my dharma brother and a few American friends. I was twenty six years old. We stayed with our friend John in Los Angeles. Then another friend from San Francisco, Michael came to pick us up to take us to San Francisco. On our way, we stopped in Santa Barbara to visit another friend, Paul who practiced at Antaiji, and then went to UC Santa Barbara. That was on New Year's Eve. We talked with Paul and his roommates regarding our trip to Massachusetts.

Another dharma brother who went to Massachusetts one year before us had bought a piece of land in the woods in western Massachusetts to build a zendo. Speaking among ourselves, we noted that they had nothing other than a small house built by practitioners in the previous summer. It was going to take a lot of work to establish a practice center. When he heard of the talk, a roommate of our friend whose name was Michael, gave me a pair of working boots. He said, "I am happy if these boots are useful for you." The pair of boots did fit my feet quite well. My English was very poor. I could only say, "Thank you," and received his offering. But in my mind, I felt something uncomfortable. I appreciated his kindness and generosity to a stranger came from Japan, but some deeper part of my mind said, "I don't want to receive it." I did not really understand what this feeling was.

Next day was New Year's Day, 1976. Taking a walk

by myself early in the morning along the nearby streets that had big beautiful trees on both sides, I tried to figure out what that feeling was. The sky was so blue, a color that was rare in Japan. After for a while, I found that the feeling had something to do with the teaching of Sawaki Roshi, "Gaining is delusion, losing is enlightenment."

My teacher, Kosho Uchiyama Roshi retired from Antaiji in the winter of 1975. Right before he left the temple, he gave his last lecture as the abbot on February 23. In the lecture, he talked on the seven points he kept in mind in order to educate his disciples and maintain sincere practice while he was the abbot. His wish was that his disciples would observe these points and continue his vow in our activities.

The third of those seven points was "Zazen must work concretely in our daily lives as the two practices (vow and repentance), the three minds (magnanimous mind, nurturing mind, and joyful mind), and as the realization of the saying 'Gaining is delusion, losing is enlightenment.'"

Uchiyama Roshi talked about the saying "Gaining is delusion, losing is enlightenment" as an essential point of practice based on buddhadharma as follows:

To recognize true zazen, we have to look at our practice from an absolute perspective. If you are caught up in one of the limited kinds of Zen of the six realms, you can no longer see the essential point of buddhadharma. And what is that? As I said before, Buddhism teaches impermanence and the quality of non-ego. Letting go and opening the hand of thought is the foundation of Zen based on the buddhadharma.

The saying "gaining is delusion, losing is enlightenment" has very practical value. In our ordinary human life, we are always trying to fulfill our desires. We're satisfied only when all our desires are met. In Buddhism, though, it's just the opposite: it is important for us to leave our desire alone, without trying to fulfill them. If we push this one step further - gaining is delusion, losing is enlightenment - we're talking about active participation in loss.

Let me be clear that I am not saying, "Losing is important, so go help people out by collecting what you can from them." That just makes you the "someone" who gains. Rather, apply this saying just to yourself and give something up. For breaking the ego's grip, nothing is more effective than giving something

up. (*Opening the Hand of Thought*, 2004, P. 153)

Originally this saying was Sawaki Kodo Roshi's unique expression in colloquial Japanese terms of Dogen Zenji's teaching, *mushotoku* (冥徐橡); no gaining, which came from the Mahayana teaching of emptiness of subject and object: there is no one to gain and nothing to be gained.

In the Heart Sutra, we find the expression, "There is neither ignorance nor extinction of ignorance--- neither old age and death, nor extinction of old age and death; no suffering, no cause, no cessation, no path; no knowledge and no attainment (冥橡, *mutoku*). With nothing to attain (冥徐橡, *mushotoku*), a bodhisattva relies on prajna-paramita, and thus the mind is without hindrance.---."

Uchiyama Roshi said that someone criticized Sawaki Roshi saying, "Neither gaining nor losing, neither enlightenment nor delusion is in accord with buddhadharma. 'Gaining is delusion and losing is enlightenment' is still incomplete." What Uchiyama Roshi said in the last paragraph of the above quote was his refutation against that criticism. Because we all have a tendency to gain something desirable and not to lose anything we possess, we need to actively practice not to gain and to lose. This was a very important teaching to me since from the beginning, I studied and practiced following Sawaki Roshi and Uchiyama Roshi's teachings.

Since Uchiyama Roshi retired and I began to make preparations to come to the US to work on establishing the zendo in Massachusetts, many people including my teacher, parents, dharma brothers, and various friends, helped and supported me. Some of them were so generous that they made offerings of money to help me buy the necessary things to travel and to live in the US. Without their help, I could not have moved to the US. I was almost overwhelmed by those offerings. Although I was very grateful with all such gifts, in part of myself, I felt as if they had some expectation from me and I had an obligation to them. I did not think that I had some desire to gain something for my own from my practice and going to the US as a means to get some benefit. But when I received so many offerings from so many people, I felt uncomfortable. And yet, I could not reject them. That was the feeling I had had when Michael gave me the pair of working boots in Santa Barbara.

The teaching of "gaining is delusion, losing is enlightenment" is about being free from the ego-centered mind that is always calculating how much we gain and

how much we lose. And when incoming is larger than outgoing, we think our life is in a good shape. It is very difficult for us to be free from this kind of basic desire for gaining even when we practice buddhadharma. We always ask, "What I can get from this?" Our expectation from Buddhist practice is usually so-called enlightenment. We practice if we can expect some kind of benefit that makes us better, or makes our lives easier and more comfortable. Basic Mahayana teaching of egolessness and no-gaining is warning against this kind of mental framework.

However, if we take this kind of teaching against our ego-centered calculating mind with a more twisted calculating mind, we will have a rather complicated problem. Because gaining is delusion, I don't want to gain. Because losing is enlightenment, I want to lose. When I am offered something from others or when I don't have anything to lose (offer), I feel small and guilty. When I can offer something, I feel good. When we understand this teaching in this way, we simply create another standard to measure gaining and losing. We are still in the framework of gaining and losing. That was what was happening in my mind on the New Year Day of 1976. I did not want to gain, because gaining was losing.

At the time, I made up my mind to receive the working boots with gratitude and use it not for the sake of my desire but for the sake of Dharma. After arriving at Pioneer Valley Zendo, I put on the pair of working boots when I worked on cutting trees, clearing land to make a vegetable garden, chopping wood to make firewood, etc. The pair of working boots was really helpful both in the summer and winter. It protected my feet. People taught me how to take care of the leather. The pair of boots was a very good friend of mine. After two years of lots of hard work in the woods of western Massachusetts, the pair of boots was completely broken. In Japanese colloquial expression, we say that they had become Buddha.

In *Shobogenzo Gyoji* (Continuous Practice), Dogen Zenji wrote,

"Now that we today have become people who see and hear the true Dharma, we should unfailingly repay our debt of gratitude to the (Second) Ancestor. Extraneous methods of repayment will not do: bodies and lives are not sufficient, and nations and cities are not important. Nations and cities can be plundered by others, and bequeathed to relatives and children. Bodies and lives can be given over to the impermanent; they can be committed to a lord, or entrusted to false

ways. Therefore, to intend to repay our gratitude through such means is not the way.

Simply to maintain the practice day by day: only this is the right way to repay our gratitude. The principle here is to maintain the practice so that the life of every day is not neglected, and not wasted on private pursuits. For what reason? [Because] this life of ours is a blessing left over from past maintenance of the practice; it is a great favor bestowed by maintenance of the practice, which we should hasten to repay." (translated by Gudo Nishijima & Chodo Cross, with small changes, Master Dogen's Shobogenzo Book 1, Windbell Publications, 1996, P165.)

Here Dogen Zenji discussed his debt of gratitude to the Second Ancestor of China for having succeeded Bodhidharma's teachings and enabling the Dharma to survive in China through successive generations of the tradition. I believe we can include not only our ancestors but also all other people who support and help our practice as the source of our debt of gratitude. How can we repay the debt of gratitude? Since the number of people who support us is literally numberless, we cannot do something good for them in return one by one. We cannot even say thank you to them. The only way we can repay the debt of gratitude is to live an unselfish way and try to be helpful to other people we encounter. That is, we offer the same support as we received to others. In the case of Buddhist practitioners, we practice buddhadharma for the sake of buddhadharma. This is what Dogen Zenji means when he says, "The principle here is to maintain the practice so that the life of every day is not neglected, and not wasted on private pursuits."

As Dogen Zenji said in the beginning of the section of offering (dana) in *Shishobo*, "Offering means not being greedy." We are born, live and die within the network of interdependent origination. Within this network, things are interconnected, moving and changing, giving and receiving, supporting and helping. To be greedy means to make a wall between ourselves and other beings and trying to make desirable things our possessions and keep them inside the wall and undesirable things outside the wall. This is done by the three poisonous minds; greed, anger/hatred, and ignorance. To be free from these three poisonous minds, especially greed, is the actual practice of offering (dana) as a paramita. Within this network, each and every one of us is included. Unless we take good care of ourselves and our family, we cannot help others. This is why Dogen Zenji quotes the Buddha's saying, "*One may offer a gift to oneself and use one's own gift; even more, one*

can pass it to one's parents, wife, and children."

Bodhisattva practice is not the way of self-sacrifice. The goal of our practice is to find a way we and other beings can live together without causing suffering to each other. This is the middle way between pursuing only one's own interests and sacrificing oneself. Offering (dana) is a practice of not disturbing the movement of all beings in the network in which ourselves and our families are included.

Whenever we can give up even one speck of dust for the practice of dana we should quietly rejoice. This is because we have already correctly transmitted a virtue of the buddhas, and because we practice one dharma of a bodhisattva for the first time.

Because of our self-centered tendency influenced by the three poisonous minds, it is difficult to give up even small things. We would like to make our life secure not only today but also for the rest of our lives. We cannot be completely satisfied even when our stomach is full now, because we can think of the future. We want to accumulate wealth not only for ourselves but also our children. Living with such a principle of social life, if we give up even one speck of dust for the practice of *dana*, we transmit and manifest one of the virtues of the buddhas. This is the first step of entering into the way of a bodhisattva. Even if our offering is as small as a glass of water when we see someone is thirsty, or giving directions when someone is lost, our small gift can be the first practice of *dana paramita*. We can quietly rejoice for that.

The mind of a sentient being is difficult to change. We begin to transform the mind of beings by offering material things, and we resolve to continue to transform them until they attain the Way. From the beginning we should make use of offering. This is the reason why dana-paramita is the first of the Six Perfections.

Both giving and receiving without attachment to either objects or our own actions is the manifestation of the virtue of dana paramita through which the wheel of dharma is turning. Although the mind of a living being is difficult to change, active offering (*dana*) is the most powerful way to change living beings and create a friendly, harmonious condition. Common sense tells us that offering material things might be easier, offering kind and friendly sympathy might be more difficult, and offering

Dharma might be the most difficult. We should offer whatever we can offer. The action of offering changes the mind of our own and the mind of the people who receive the offering. Dogen Zenji encourages us to continue this practice until both we and others attain the Way (awakening to the reality of all beings) together.

Offering (*dana*) is the first of the six *paramitas*: offering (*dana*), precepts (*sila*), patience (*kshanti*), diligence (*virya*), meditation (*dhyana*), and wisdom (*prajna*). These six *paramita* are a bodhisattva's practice to help all living beings to ferry from this shore of *samsara* to the other shore of *nirvana*. One of the English translations of this Sanskrit word is "perfection." Another translation is "reaching [from this shore of *samsara*] to the other shore [of *nirvana*]." Dogen Zenji says that *dana paramita* is the first of the six *paramitas* because this is most powerful in terms of changing the mind of living beings.

The vastness or narrowness of mind cannot be measured, and the greatness or smallness of material things cannot be weighed. But there are times when our mind turns things, and there is offering, in which things turn our mind.

This is the conclusion of Dogen Zenji's comments on the practice of offering. He discusses the relation between our mind and things as the objects of our mind. Depending upon how the mind and its objects interact, we create either *samsara* or *nirvana*. Dogen Zenji wrote in *Shobogenzo Genjokoan*, "Conveying oneself toward all things to carry out practice/enlightenment is delusion. All things coming and carrying out practice/enlightenment through the self is realization." According to him, delusion and enlightenment lies within relation between oneself and myriad things. It is not that there is delusion as a part of ourselves and if we take that part off from ourselves, like removing a cancer by means of surgery, we become enlightened.

In one of the oldest Buddhist scriptures named *Sutta-Nipata*, we find the older version of the Buddha's teaching about dependent origination that was one of the materials from which the teaching of twelve links of causation was formed. *Sutta-Nipata* is a collection of short *sutta* (*sutta* is a Pali word for *sutra* in Sanskrit). In this collection there is a *sutta* called *Kalahavivada Sutta* (Disputes and Contention). This *Sutta* begins with a question to the Buddha by someone:

"Sir, whenever there are arguments and quarrels there are tears and anguish, arrogance and pride and

grudges and insults to go with them. Can you explain how these things come about? Where do they all come from?"

The Buddha replied, "The tears and anguish that follow arguments and quarrels, the arrogance and pride and grudges and insults that go with them are all the result of one thing. They come from having preferences, from holding things precious and dear. Insults are born out of arguments and grudges are inseparable from quarrels." (*The Sutta-Nipata*, translated by H. Saddhatissa, Curzon Press, 1994)

The question and answer sequence continued. The Buddha points to the causes of the problems we have in our daily lives at the source. That is, preferences → impulse of desire → pleasant and unpleasant sensation → action of contact → the compound of mind and matter. These are number eight and number four of the Twelve Links of Causation. Finally the Buddha said, "There is a state where suffering ceases to exist. It is a state without ordinary perception and without disordered perception and without any perception and without any annihilation of perception. It is perception, consciousness, that is the source of all the basic obstacles."

Consciousness is No. 3 of the Twelve Links of Causation. In this short *sutta*, six of the twelve links are mentioned although the words are different from the final version that appears in various part of the Nikaya.

I believe that what Dogen Zenji says in *Genjo-koan*, what we actually practice in our *zazen*, and what the Buddha said are the same things. By letting go of thoughts coming up from our *karmic* (conditioned) consciousness, and refraining from any action based on our thoughts, we are illuminated and verified by all beings. All beings cease to be the objects of our consciousness (*namarupa*, compound of name and form) and appear as they are. In Dogen Zenji's teachings, *zazen* itself is awakening.

The practice of offering (*dana*) in its true sense as *paramita* comes from this liberation and awakening. This is what Uchiyama Roshi meant when he said, "Zazen must work concretely in our daily lives as the two practices (vow and repentance), the three minds (magnanimous mind, nurturing mind, and joyful mind), and as the realization of the saying 'Gaining is delusion, losing is enlightenment.'"

Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma Book 42

Talking of the Mind, Talking of the Nature *Sesshin, Sesso*

Translated by Carl Bielefeldt

Introduction

According to its colophon, this fascicle of the *Shôbôgenzô* was composed in 1243, at Kippôji, the monastery in Echizen (present Fukui) where Dôgen resided following his departure from the capital area in the summer of the same year.

The text represents a commentary on a conversation between Shenshan Sengmi and his dharma brother Dongshan Liangjie (807-869), famed founder of Dôgen's Caodong (Sôtô) lineage. The title derives from Dongshan's remark in the conversation that "there's someone inside who's talking of the mind and talking of the nature."

In the Chinese Chan literature (and perhaps even in Dongshan's remark), to talk of the mind and the nature was sometimes seen as a waste of time. There was a story, for example, of the Second Ancestor, Huïke, who always talked of the mind and the nature but did not understand them. There was the opinion of the famous Song-dynasty figure Dahui Zonggao (1089-1163), who warned his followers against talking of the mind and talking of the nature.

In an earlier text, the *Mountains and Waters Sutra*, Dôgen seems to agree with this view; but here he takes the opposite position, arguing forcefully that talking of the mind and the nature are the very essence of the Zen tradition, what he calls "the essential functions of the Seven Buddhas and the ancestral masters." Talking of the nature, he says, is the nature "talking," the Buddha nature expressing itself in the world; and it is participation in this activity that constitutes the teaching, practice, and awakening of the way of the buddha.

From this position, Dôgen criticizes those who think that one must give up talking of the mind and the nature in order to attain the way. In particular, he singles out Dahui as someone who does not understand the mind and the nature, someone who has not "tasted the tea and rice of

the buddhas and ancestors."

This attack on the Linji master Dahui, as well as a passing jibe at Linji himself, together with the praise of the Caodong founder, Dongshan, as "the most honored among the ancestors," has led some scholars to see this fascicle as in part an argument for the superiority of Dôgen's Sôtô tradition.

The following translation is based on the text appearing in Kawamura Kôdô, ed., *Dôgen zenji zenshû*, vol. 1, pp. 449-456, with slight changes in section formatting. Due to the constraints of space, we have kept the notes here to a minimum; a more fully annotated version can be found on the SZTP web site, at www.scbs.stanford.edu/sztp3. Other translations of this fascicle can be found in Nishiyama and Stevens, *Shôbôgenzô*, vol. 2 (1977); Yokoi, *The Shobo-genzo* (1986); and Nishijima and Cross, *Master Dogen's Shobogenzo*, vol. 3 (1997).

Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma Book 42

Talking of the Mind, Talking of the Nature

Translation

Once, when the Zen Master Shenshan Sengmi was traveling with the Great Master Dongshan Wuben, the Great Master Wuben pointed out a cloister beside [the road] and said, "Inside, there's someone talking of the mind and talking of the nature."

Elder brother Sengmi said, "Who is it?"

The Great Master Wuben said, "Questioned once by my elder brother, and he's immediately doomed."

Elder brother Sengmi said, "Who is it that's talking of the mind and talking of the nature?"

The Great Master Wuben said, "In death, he lives."¹

"Talking of the mind and talking of the nature" is the great origin of the way of the buddha; from it are caused to appear buddha after buddha and ancestor after ancestor. Without "talking of the mind and talking of the nature," there would be no turning the wheel of the wondrous

dharma; there would be no production of the thought and cultivation of the practice; there would be no "the great earth and sentient beings simultaneously achieved the way"; there would be no "all living beings lack buddha nature."²

"Holding up a flower and blinking" is "talking of the mind and talking of the nature"; "breaking into a smile" is "talking of the mind and talking of the nature"; "making a bow and standing there" is "talking of the mind and talking of the nature"; "the ancestral master entering the Liang" is "talking of the mind and talking of the nature"; "transmitting the robe in the middle of the night" is "talking of the mind and talking of the nature." Taking up the staff is "talking of the mind and talking of the nature"; laying down the whisk is "talking of the mind and talking of the nature."³

In sum, every virtue of buddha after buddha and ancestor after ancestor is "talking of the mind and talking of the nature." There is the "talking of the mind and talking of the nature" of "the ordinary"; there is the "talking of the mind and talking of the nature" of "fences, walls, tiles, and pebbles." The realization of the principle, "when the mind arises, the various dharmas arise," and the realization of the principle, "when the mind ceases, the various dharmas cease," are in either case occasions of "talking of the mind," occasions of "talking of the nature."

Yet, mediocre types, who have not penetrated the mind, who have not reached the nature, without knowing "talking of the mind and talking of the nature," without knowing "discussing the dark, discussing the subtle," say that these must not be the words of the buddhas and ancestors, teach that they should not exist. Because they do not know "talking of the mind and talking of the nature" as "talking of the mind and talking of the nature," they think of "talking of the mind and talking of the nature" as "talking of the mind and talking of the nature." This is particularly because they have not been critical of the passage and obstructions of the great way.

* * * * *

Of late, there was a certain Zonggao, the Zen master Dahui of Jingshan, who said,

People today, because they like "talking of the mind and talking of the nature" or "discussing the dark and discussing the subtle," are slow to attain the way.

When, you have thrown away both "mind" and "nature" and forgotten both "dark" and "subtle," so that the two do not arise, you will verify and accord.⁴

This saying does not know the pale yellow silk of the buddhas and ancestors, has not heard of the monarchical line of the buddhas and ancestors.⁵ Consequently, he says this because he knows that the mind is merely consideration, knowledge, thought, and perception, and does not learn that consideration, knowledge, thought, and perception are also the mind. Mistakenly figuring only that the nature is pure, deep, quiescent, and still, he does not know about the existence or non-existence of the buddha nature or dharma nature. Because he has never seen "such a nature" even in his dreams, he has this biased view of the buddha dharma.

The "mind" spoken of by the buddhas and ancestors is "skin, flesh, bones, and marrow"; the "nature" maintained by the buddhas and ancestors is "the bamboo truncheon and staff." The "dark" that the buddhas and ancestors verify and accord with is "columns and lanterns"; the "subtle" that buddhas and ancestors take up is "knowledge and understanding."⁶

The buddhas and ancestors who are truly buddhas and ancestors, from the beginning, hear this "mind and nature," teach it, practice it, and verify it. They maintain this "dark and subtle," and they study it. Those who are like this are called the children and grandchildren studying the buddhas and ancestors. Those who are not like this are not students of the way.

Therefore, [Dahui's] "attaining the way" does not attain the way; when it does not attain the way, it is not that it does not attain the way. It misses the occasions of both attaining and not [attaining]. While, to say, as you [Dahui] say, "forget both mind and nature," may be a part expressing the talking of the mind, it is a small part, a hundredth, a thousandth, ten thousandth, a hundred millionth part. To say "discard both dark and subtle" is a part forming the discussion of discussing of the dark. Not having studied this pivot, if you stupidly say "forgetting," you think [it is] leaving the hand, you know it as escaping the body. You are not yet liberated from the confines of the Small Vehicle; how could you reach the innermost darkness of the Great Vehicle, let alone know "the higher pivot" It is difficult to say that you have tasted the tea and rice of the buddhas and ancestors.⁷

To study with a teacher and be diligent in your work is just to investigate physically "talking of the mind and talking of the nature" at the very moment of body and mind, to investigate it before the body and after the body. There are not two or three other ways.

* * * * *

At that time, the First Ancestor said to the Second Ancestor, "Externally, put a stop to conditions; internally, the mind will be without panting. With the mind like fences and walls, you will enter the way."

The Second Ancestor talked of the mind and talked of the nature, but did not verify and accord [with them]. One day, he suddenly understood. Subsequently, he addressed the First Ancestor, saying, "Your disciple has this time finally put a stop to conditions."

The first ancestor recognized that he had awakened and did not further press him, saying only, "Haven't you achieved severance and extinction?"

The Second Ancestor said, "No."

The First Ancestor said, "How is the 'master'?"

The Second Ancestor said, "Clear, clear, always knowing; therefore words can't reach it."

The First Ancestor said, "This is the substance of the mind transmitted down from the buddhas and ancestors. Now you've got it; protect it well."⁸

There are those who doubt this episode, those who take it up. One episode among the episodes of the Second Ancestor's service under the First Ancestor is like this. When the Second Ancestor was persistently talking of the mind and talking of the nature, at first he did not accord with it. Finally, piling up merit and accumulating virtue, he attained the way of the words of the First Ancestor. The mediocre fools think that, [if] the Second Ancestor failed to verify and accord when he was first talking of the mind and talking of the nature, the fault lay in his talking of the mind and talking of the nature; subsequently, having discarded talking of the mind and talking of the nature, he verified and accorded. They say this because they have not penetrated the words, "with the mind like fences and walls, you will enter the way." This is particularly ignorant of distinctions in studying the way.

Why is this? After we have produced the thought of bodhi and turned to the practice of the way of the buddha, when we are wholeheartedly performing the difficult practices, though we may be performing them, we do not have one hit in a hundred practices. Still, "whether from a friend, whether from a scripture," eventually we hit it. This one hit in the present is [due to] the power of a hundred misses in the past, is the "one maturation" of a hundred misses. Hearing the teachings, cultivating the way, attaining the verification are all like this. Yesterday's "talking of the mind and talking of the nature" may be a hundred misses, but yesterday's hundred misses of "talking of the mind and talking of the nature" are suddenly today's one hit.

When we have the beginner's mind in the practice of the way of the buddha, if [we think that], since we are untrained and have not mastered it, we might discard the the way of the buddha and take another path, then we cannot attain the way of the buddha. Those types who have not mastered the beginning and end of the practice of the way of the buddha have difficulty clarifying the fact that this passage and obstruction is reasonable.

The way of the buddha is the way of the buddha at the time of the first production of the thought; it is the way of the buddha at the time of attaining true enlightenment. It is the way of the buddha throughout beginning, middle, and end. For example, for one walking ten thousand *ri*, one step is within a thousand *ri*; the thousandth step is within a thousand *ri*. The first one step and the thousandth step may be different, but the thousand *ri* are the same.⁹

Yet, an extremely stupid bunch thinks that, when we are studying the way of the buddha, we have not reached the way of the buddha; only when we attain the fruit is it the way of the buddha. They do not understand "taking up the way and practicing the way." They [talk] like this because they do not understand "taking up the way and practicing the way," they do not understand "taking up the way and verifying the way." Those who talk like this are the bunch who learn that only the deluded practice the way of the buddha and have the great awakening; they do not know, and have not heard, that the non-deluded also practice the way of the buddha and have the great awakening.

Though we say that "talking of the mind and talking of the nature" before verification and accord is the way of the

buddha, we verify and accord through "talking of the mind and talking of the nature." We should not learn that "verification and accord" refers only to the deluded initially having the great awakening; the deluded have the great awakening; the awakened have the great awakening; the unawakened have the great awakening; the undeluded have the great awakening; those who have verified and accorded verify and accord.

Thus, "talking of the mind and talking of the nature" is the direct [approach] of the way of the buddha. Mister Gao's saying, without his having mastered this principle, that we should not "talk of the mind and talk of the nature" is not the principle of the buddha dharma. In the present land of the great Song, there is no one who even reaches Mister Gao.

* * * * *

The Eminent Ancestor, the Great Master Wuben, the single most honored among the ancestors, mastered the principle that "talking of the mind and talking of the nature" is "talking of the mind and talking of the nature." The ancestral masters everywhere who have not mastered it have no sayings like this present episode.¹⁰

Once, when elder brother Sengmi and the great master were traveling, [Dongshan] pointed out a cloister beside [the way] and said, "Inside, there's someone talking of the mind and talking of the nature."

Ever since the eminent ancestor appeared in the world, his dharma descendants have always correctly transmitted this saying [as] the ancestral style. It is not something [those of] other traditions have seen even in their dreams; still less have they known, even in their dreams, how to understand it. Only those who are legitimate heirs have correctly transmitted it. How can one who does not correctly transmit this principle reach the origin of the way of the buddha?

The principle in question here is: whether "inside" or "surface," "there's someone" and "someone's there" "talking of the mind and talking of the nature." Within the surface, the mind is talking; within the surface, the nature is talking. We should investigate and work at this. There has not yet been "talking" that is not "nature"; there is no "mind" that is not "talking."

"Buddha nature" means all "talking." "Lacking buddha nature" means all "talking." Though one studies the nature of buddha nature, [those who] do not study "having buddha nature" are not studying the way; [those who] do not study "lacking buddha nature" are not studying the way. [Those who] study that "talking" is "the nature" are the legitimate descendants of the buddhas and ancestors. [Those who] believe and accept that "the nature" is "talking" are the buddhas and ancestors of the legitimate descendants.

To say that the mind is rattled and the nature is composed is the view of other ways; to say that the nature is clear and deep and the form shifts and moves is the view of other ways. The study of the mind and study of the nature on the way of the buddha are not like this. The practice of the mind and practice of the nature on the way of the buddha are not equivalent to the other ways. The clarification of the mind and the clarification of the nature on the way of the buddha, the other ways have no share in.¹¹

On the way of the buddha, there is the "talking of the mind and talking of the nature" of "someone"; there is the "talking of the mind and talking of the nature" of "no one." There is the "not talking of the mind and not talking of the nature" of "someone"; there is the "not talking of the mind and not talking of the nature" of "no one." There is "talking of the mind and not talking of the mind"; there is "talking of the nature and not talking of the nature." When one has not studied "talking of the mind" at the time when there is "no one," then "talking of the mind has not reached the field." When one has not studied "talking of the mind" at the time when there is "someone," then "talking of the mind has not reached the field." We study "no one who talks of the mind"; we study "no one talking of the mind"; we study "this one who talks of the mind"; we study "this one talking of the mind."¹²

Linji's total power to say something is just "the true person without rank," but he still has not said, "the true person with rank."¹³ He has not realized what remains to be studied, what remains to be said; we can say he has not reached the ground of penetration. Because "talking of the mind and talking of the nature" are talking of the buddhas and talking of the ancestors, we meet them in the ear, we meet them in the eye.

The elder brother Sengmi said, "Who is it?"

When he expresses this saying, elder brother Sengmi should previously avail himself of this saying and should subsequently avail himself of this saying. "Who is it?" is the "talking of the mind and talking of the nature" of "that inside." Therefore, when "who is it?" is said, when "who is it?" is thought, this is itself "talking of the mind and talking of the nature." This "talking of the mind and talking of the nature" is something that those of other quarters have never known. They have forgotten their child and taken it for a thief; so "they recognize the thief as their child."¹⁴

The great master said, "Questioned once by my elder brother, and he's immediately doomed."

When mediocre types of students hear these words, they think that the "someone" who is "talking of the mind and talking of the nature," upon being asked, "who is it?" is "immediately doomed." The reason is that they are facing the words, "who is it?" without recognizing them, without any view of them at all; hence, [the words] are "dead words." This is not necessarily the case. Those who have penetrated this "talking of the mind and talking of the nature" are rare. To be "doomed" a hundred percent is not to be "doomed" ten or twenty percent; hence "doomed" is a hundred percent. At the very moment of "questioned," who would hold that this is not "shielding the heavens and covering the earth"? Reflection of the past is cut off; reflection of the present is cut off; reflection of the future is cut off. Reflection of this very moment is cut off.¹⁵

The elder brother Sengmi said, "Who is it that's talking of mind and talking of the nature?"

The previous "who is it?" and this "who is it," though the name is "Zhang's third," the person is "Li's fourth."¹⁶

The Great Master said, "In death, he lives."

In regard to this "in death," [we should not] think that it is directly referring to the "immediately doomed"; he is not directly referring to [the one who is] "talking of the mind and talking of the nature" and arbitrarily saying, "who is it?" "Who is it?" arranges the "someone" who is "talking of the mind and talking of the nature." There should be a study holding that he does not wait forever to be a hundred percent "doomed." The Great Master's words, "In death, he lives," are the voices and forms of "someone talking of the mind and talking of the nature" right before us. Again, they are also one or two parts of

completely "doomed." Life may be fully alive, but it is not death changing to appear as life: it is just the sloughing off of "he lives" that is "true at the head and true at the tail."

In general, there is this kind of "talking of the mind and talking of the nature" that is investigated on the way of the buddha and the way of the ancestors. When we go further, by dying a complete death, we realize the way of life of "he lives."

We should realize that, from the Tang period till today, there have been many pitiable types who have not clarified the fact that "talking of the mind and talking of the nature" are the way of the buddha, who are in the dark about the "talking of the mind and talking of the nature" in teaching, practice, and verification, and who talk rashly and speak wildly. We should save them "before the body and after the body." What I say to them is this: "talking about the mind and talking about the nature" are the essential functions of the Seven Buddhas and the ancestral masters.¹⁷

Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma
Talking of the Mind and Talking of the Nature
Book 42

Presented to the assembly first year of Kangen
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at Kippô monastery, Yoshida district, Etsu province,
in the land of Nihon



Notes

1. A story, quoted here in Chinese, that also appears as case 62 in Dôgen's *shinji Shôbôgenzô* collection of Chan sayings. Shenshan and Dongshan were fellow disciples of the ninth-century master Yunyan Tansheng.

2. A series of references to the spiritual career of a buddha - his teaching, his practice as a bodhisattva, and his enlightenment - ending with a playful comment by the ninth-century master Gueishan Lingyu.

3. A series of allusions to the history of the ancestors: "Holding up a flower and blinking" and "breaking into smile" refer to the first transmission on Vulture Peak from Shakyamuni to Mahakashyapa; "making a bow and standing there" and "the ancestral master entering the Liang" refer to Bodhidharma's arrival in China and his transmission of the dharma to the Second Ancestor, Huike; "Transmitting the robe in the middle of the night" refers to recognition of Huineng as the Sixth Ancestor. "Taking up the staff" and "laying down the whisk" allude to the teaching activities of the Chan masters.

4. Likely a paraphrase of passages found in the writings of Dahui Zonggao (1089-1163), a leading figure in the Linji lineage during the Southern Song. The *Shôbôgenzô* contains several criticisms of him.

5. "The pale yellow silk of the buddhas and ancestors" refers to the silk threads used to decorate books; hence, as a synecdoche, "texts."

6. 'Skin, flesh, bones, and marrow' is an expression used throughout Dôgen's writings for the essence or entirety of what is transmitted in the Zen tradition; from the famous account of the occasion on which Bodhidharma is supposed to have received responses from four disciples and remarked to each in turn, "You've got my skin," etc. "The bamboo truncheon and staff" are two insignia of the Zen master's office. "Columns and lanterns" is a fairly common Zen expression for the ordinary insentient things of the world around us.

7. The "pivot" is a common Zen idiom referring to the pivots at the top and bottom of a door frame on which the door turns; hence, the pivotal point of something. "Tea and rice" is an idiom used somewhat as we might use "standard fare" or "daily bread."

8. A story found in several Chan collections and also quoted by Dahui. The protagonists here are, of course, Bodhidharma ("the First Ancestor") and his disciple Huike ("the Second Ancestor"). "Severance and extinction" usually indicates a (misguided) denial of the laws of cause and effect.

9. "Production of the thought" refers to the bodhisattva's aspiration to achieve the perfect enlightenment of a buddha. A ri (Chinese li) is a unit of distance, often figured as roughly one-third of a mile.

10. Dôgen here begins a line-by-line Japanese translation of and comment on the Dongshan story with which he opened this piece.

11. "Other ways" refers to non-Buddhist traditions.

12. "Has not reached the field" is an idiom used as we might say, "falls short of the mark."

13. "The true person without rank" is a famous saying by Linji Yixuan (d. 867), founder of the Linji house of Chan.

14. "To recognize a thief as one's child" is a common Zen saying used to describe an egregious error.

15. "Dead words" is a standard Zen expression for empty, ineffective language. The expression "shielding the heavens and covering the earth" is generally interpreted to mean "all inclusive."

16. "Zhang's third" and "Li's fourth" are taken from the Chinese idiom "Zhang's third son, Li's fourth son", used (as we might use "Tom, Dick, and Harry") to indicate anyone at all.

17. "The Seven Buddhas" refers to the series of ancient buddhas ending with Shakyamuni.

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NEWS

May 1, 2005

Rev. Dosho Saikawa, of Hosenji in Yamagata Prefecture, Japan, was appointed as Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism South America Office. He replaced Rev. Koichi Miyoshi. Rev. Saikawa has been an officer at Daihonzan Sojiji for many years.

March 31, 2005

Rev. Taiken Yokoyama resigned from his position as the Assistant Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism International Center. He is now working as the Administrator at the Soto Zen Buddhism Europe Office in Milan.

International Events

The 50th anniversary of the founding of Zengenji in Mogi das Cruzes, Brazil as well as the 45th anniversary of Busshinji in Rolandia, Brazil were celebrated in September.

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