

DHARMA EYE



法眼

News of Soto Zen Buddhism: Teachings and Practice



A Greeting

Rev. Issho Fujita

Director, Soto Zen Buddhism International Center

Thank you for being a regular reader of *Dharma Eye* all these years. The first *Dharma Eye* was issued as a newsletter from the Soto Zen Education Center (now the Soto Zen Buddhism International Center) in 1997. This issue you are now reading is Number 26. Without your warm support, we could not have continued *Dharma Eye* for this long; I am very grateful for it.

I was assigned to be the new Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism International Center this April, following Rev. Shohaku Okumura. In this way, I now find myself serving as the Editor of *Dharma Eye*. This newsletter is a very small one in terms of volume, but I will try my best to make it a helpful means to “promote dialogue between Japanese and foreign Soto Zen Buddhists by offering information from both sides” as Rev. Okumura wrote in the first issue. I appreciate any feedback or comments you might like to share.

Until now, I have been involved with *Dharma Eye* as a regular contributor. My articles on zazen appeared serially under the title of “*My Zazen Sankyū Notebook*” from Number 2 through Number 19. From Number 20, I started a new series under the title of “*Shobogenzo Zazenshin; A Free Translation*” which is still underway. I also helped as a translator of the articles written in English; my Japanese translations often appeared in the Japanese version of *Dharma Eye*. But from now on, I will be engaged in planning and editing—as well as writing

and translating—as the editor, not as a contributor or translator from the outside.

At present, the number of temples, Zen centers and groups outside Japan that follow the Sotoshu tradition is well over six hundred. There are so many different forms of “Sotoshu,” ranging from the people we might categorize as “followers and believers” to the people we call “Soto Zen practitioners”. The Soto Zen Buddhism International Center was established with an aim to develop the appropriate activities of dissemination and education toward such a wide variety of people outside Japan. Therefore, the International Center has to have a clear vision about what should be transmitted to what kind people in what way. What kind people is the International Center addressing? What are their lives, values, hopes, and problems? Why do they come to Sotoshu as their religious path? What, in the first place, is the “Sotoshu” which we try to teach and spread? Do its teachings and practices still work and have a meaningful value or significance to the people outside Japan (that is, can it still be a path to emancipation for them)? And if the answer is “yes,” what kind of expression and medium should we create to transmit these teachings and practices?

In The Sotoshu Constitution, we can find the *Article 3 Doctrine*. It reads as follows:

Abiding by the True Dharma singularly transmitted

by the Buddha-ancestors, the Sotoshu doctrine is to realize *Shikantaza* (“just sitting”) and *Sokushinzebutsu* (“mind itself is Buddha”).

Because “doctrine” here means the most fundamental teaching of Sotoshu, all activities of dissemination and education should be designed and operated as expressions of this Doctrine. But this doctrine, as it is, remains too difficult to understand and too abstract to perform. Therefore, we need to make our best effort to elaborate it into more tangible expressions and workable forms of practice so that the people outside Japan can understand and embody what this doctrine really means. Furthermore, we should respond to these questions: Does this doctrine in effect nourish their heart and life? How can it be made possible? Why should we spread this doctrine outside Japan in this modern world? (I believe that these questions are also weighty ones for those who are engaged with dissemination and education of Soto Zen teaching *in* Japan. So our response to these problems we are facing outside Japan may ultimately have repercussions for Sotoshu in Japan as well.)

I, as a new Director, hope to improve the role and function of the Center, by always returning to these basic questions and asking what the Center can and should do in response. It is not possible to accomplish this task if we do not have an open and intimate collaboration with all the Soto Zen Buddhists inside and outside Japan. I would like to conclude my greeting by asking for your continued help and support.

Gassho



A Greeting

Rev. Daigaku Rummé,
Director, Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office

On April 1, 2010, I was appointed as the Director (“Sokan” in Japanese) of the Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office. I took over from Rev. Gengo Akiba who held this position for more than twelve years, from the time he succeeded Rev. Kenko Yamashita. I am the first non-Japanese person to take this position and that in itself marks a big transition for the Office. My job is actually two jobs in one: to be the administrative representative of the Sotoshu in North America and to be the chief priest of Zenshuji temple in Los Angeles. To tell the truth, I never expected to be asked to do this job, but allow me to reflect on some of the aspects of this transition, as I see it now.

One of the ways I keenly feel this matter of transition is simply in the different ways people refer to my position: some people call me as “Bishop”, some people call me as “Director”, and others call me “Sokan.” Although I’m not familiar with all of the historical details of the temple, it seems likely that at some point it was felt that adopting a Christian title for the head priest of Zenshuji would be most suitable. This would have been particularly true around the time of World War II when people of Japanese descent were often treated harshly and interned in camps as part of the U.S. government’s war policy.

Japanese immigrants’ primary interest in building and maintaining a temple in this country was to have a

Japanese Sotoshu priest who could perform the traditional services and rites connected with funerals and memorial services. As Zenshuji was the major Sotoshu temple in the U.S., and Japanese Sotoshu priests were there, the head priest of Zenshuji was considered the bishop of the other four or five Sotoshu temples on the mainland U.S. and also because Zenshuji had been designated as Ryodaihonzan-Hokubei-Betsuin, the special overseas temple in the U.S. representing the Two Head Temples, Eiheiji and Sojiji. (Most readers are probably aware that at present there are four overseas Sotoshu districts: Hawaii, North America, South America and Europe; each office having its own director and staff. Hawaii is a separate district because of the long history of Japanese immigration to those islands).

Zenshuji still retains its traditional function for the Japanese and Japanese-American community, although some changes have definitely taken place in the past ninety years. Suffice it to say at this point that two of the biggest changes are that the membership of this temple is decreasing and secondly, the temple has become a center where various Japanese cultural pursuits are also practiced. While it is certain that the temple has always had a social and cultural function of providing a place for people in the Japanese community to socialize and so forth, this trend has become more noticeable in recent years.

As we all know, there have also been dramatic changes in the landscape of Soto Zen in this country in the past ninety years. While the term “Zen center” was unknown fifty years ago, there are by various counts now more than 200 Zen centers throughout North America and some would say there are twice as many, depending on which places are included. In any case, there has been a tremendous increase in interest among North American people in Zen and Zen practice. This is certainly one of the reasons why we have moved in the direction of calling my new position “Director.” This reflects the administrative responsibility this person has in applying, as much as possible, the rules and regulations of the Sotoshu to the fifty-four priests who are registered as Kokusaifukyoshi with the Sotoshu and their groups which are registered with the Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office. Although there are many more Soto priests throughout North America who have received permission

from their teachers to teach Soto Zen, this group of fifty-four priests has been recognized by the Shumuchō (the Administrative Headquarters of the Sotoshu in Tokyo) because they have met the specific requirements of the Sotoshu in Japan.

Some of the administrative issues that this Office now faces include: revising bylaws for the North America Office as well as for the Association of Soto Zen Buddhists, the question of yearly fees for priests who has *Kyoshi*-status, the matter of registering Zen centers as special overseas temples, and other issues related to applications to do practice periods, and so forth. This is not a one-way matter, however. It is important for the Director to relay the concerns and conditions of the priests and Zen centers in North America back to the Shumuchō. Nevertheless, the biggest issue we face in all of this is establishing standards and guidelines in North America for the way in which priests are recognized for the practice and study they have done. When these standards are adopted and applied, these people could then be accepted into our group as bona fide Sotoshu priests, recognized both in Japan and in North America.

While both the titles “Bishop” and “Director” seem to me far too grand for what I can try to do (when people ask me how they should call me, I say “Sokan”), my sincere hope and intention is, on the one hand, to build up the Zazenkai at Zenshuji, increase the number of temple members, and if all goes well to integrate new members of the Zazenkai into the Japanese cultural life of the older members of the temple. This could be a win/win situation for both sides because the temple needs new members and Zen in America, I feel, has too often been cut off from what could be the favorable influence of Japanese culture and tradition. In terms of my job as Sokan, my objective is to be of assistance as we look for ways of spreading the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha and the Two Founders (Dogen Zenji and Keizan Zenji) throughout North America.



~ *Sotoshu Training Monastery* ~
**Actualizing “Wa”: Harmony as the
Pure Standard of the Buddha’s Community**
By Rev. Seishin Viviani (Disciple of Rev. Daido Strumia)
Il Cerchio Vuoto, Italia

The monastic training period, or *ango*, the first official Sotoshu Training Monastery organized by the Sotoshu Shumuchō in the U.S. and the third to occur in the West, took place from December 15, 2009, to March 15, 2010, in the beautiful snowy mountains surrounding the Yokoji Zen Mountain Center of Los Angeles. In 2008 and 2007, it was held in Europe, specifically in France, at the La Gendronniere Temple, founded by Taisen Deshimaru Roshi.

I attended the *ango* of 2008, and this last one in 2009, thus completing the minimum course for obtaining the Kyoshi, or teacher, status that our school requires. Today I feel very honored to be invited to talk about my experience on these pages.

First of all, I wish to express my deep gratitude to all those who made this event possible. Both from a financial point of view and that of the human resources employed, the *ango* has surely required the concurrence of many forces, both upstream and downstream, for its successful outcome, a courageous and impressive investment by the Sotoshu Shumuchō.

Unity in diversity

Both Yokoji in the U.S., as well as La Gendronniere in Europe, were founded by two contemporary Masters, Maezumi Roshi and Deshimaru Roshi, who brought the Zen of Dogen Zenji and Keizan Zenji to the West. Like other Japanese masters of their era, they believed in the universality of the teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha borrowed by the Soto Zen tradition, and in its intrinsic capability to adapt to different conditions and environments, as well as to different people and cultures, choosing “diversity” as the soil in which to cultivate and transmit the Dharma.

The Sotoshu-sponsored *ango* stems from that same

vision. Monks and nuns coming from various parts of the U.S. (California, Vermont, Indiana, Oregon), South America (Colombia, Brazil, Peru), Europe (France, Germany, Italy), and Asia (Japan) practiced for ninety days at Yokoji, sharing the principles of an education that finds its roots in the purest tradition, but which at the same time has been able to undergo a constant reinterpretation.

I am convinced that this characteristic of our school must be cherished and continued. The Zen sangha can “think globally and act locally,” starting from the deep knowledge of the practice and ceremonies proper to its tradition, ready to accept the realities of a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural world that is constantly changing. For instance, let us think about the fact that all human beings can now define their identity not solely in terms of personal data, but also by actually choosing the gender, feminine or masculine, in which they truly locate that identity. If the “ordinary” world, ever struggling, can try to find ways to open itself and accept the “other” in any form of expression, then the Buddhist world, which is based on our capability to listen to, and overcome the suffering of sentient and non-sentient beings, surely cannot ignore the new changes affecting every scene of human life.

The “business” of Buddha’s family

During one of his talks on *Chiji Shingi*, Rev. Shohaku Okumura referenced *Tenzo Kyokun*, saying, “... From the start, the work of Buddha’s family has been the support of the Community”. In my humble opinion, this is the teaching that I’ve seen becoming reality in the ninety days of Zen practice at the *ango* at Yokoji, an experience for which I am indebted to all those who cooperated in its realization, directly or indirectly. This experience, for me, turns on the sentence “Every Buddha together with a Buddha can penetrate the True Nature of

all things. – *Hokekyo Hobenbon*”

In keeping with the Yokoji mission “To ensure the continuation of the Buddha Dharma for future generations,” the Yokoji Sangha, under attentive leadership of its abbot, Rev. Tenshin Fletcher, supported the practice of the *ango-sha* (participants), from the preparation of the spaces and instruments of the practice (the construction of new *tan*, the wooden food trays for the meal ceremony, a new bell tower for the *bonsho*, the purchase of a new power generator, and so on) to constant collaboration on the field, in the secretary’s office, in the organization of the *samu*, and especially in the kitchen. Special thanks to the *tenzo*, Kogen-san, who, together with his collaborator Jishin-san and all the members of the Community, provided the food for the entire period, with an excellent vegetarian diet in true Western style.

The Japanese staff, under the accurate and resolute leadership of Rev. Gengo Akiba (helped by the continuous presence of Rev. Ikki Nambara, Rev. Yuji Ito, and Rev. Shinko Kondo), were the backbone of the *ango*. They enabled all participants to know and apply in only three months the ways and forms of the tradition, following with the love of a mother the practice of everyone, respecting the diversity of cultures and education. The success of the *ango* was also made possible thanks to the commitment and dedication of Rev. Daien Bennage, who was present for the entire period. The monks and nuns of Eiheiji, Sojiji, Aichi Senmon Nisodo, and also six monks in special training to become *Shike*-level teachers, were there for shorter periods, serving as praiseworthy examples of generosity and abnegation.

The marriage of attention to detail and the search for harmony in the sangha seemed to be the objective from the start. There were hard times communicating in English (a language that not everyone had mastered).

If *samu* and the actual practice in the *dojo* were decisive in making clear the daily practice, or *gyoji*, so were the lessons of the teachers invited, starting with the solicitous and constant presence of Rev. Daien Bennage for the entire *ango*, and also that of Rev. Hokan Saito. I also wish to express my gratitude to Rev. Dogen Shihomi, Rev. Tenshin Fletcher, Rev. Shohaku Okumura, Rev.

Zenki Anderson, Rev. Sojun Weitsman, Rev. Gempo Merzel, Rev. Shugen Komagata, and Professor Carl Bielefeld. And I cannot forget the precious contribution of the translators, Rev. Daigaku Rumme and Rev. Ejo McMullen.

Even in this context, the leitmotiv has been unity in diversity. Each teacher, whether by talking about specific texts of the tradition, or by discussing Buddhist issues of a general nature, or by recalling the history of Zen in the U.S. through their personal experience, was able to nourish and invigorate the study with a contagious passion, offering motives and cues of great intensity to deepen the comprehension of our spiritual journey in the present, and into the future.

If the declared purpose of this third *ango* was to educate non-Japanese monks and nuns according to the standards of the Soto Zen school, I believe that I can say, also in the name of the other *ango-sha*, that the goal was realized. But I would add another achievement: the awareness in each of us of a particular identity, that of the Zen monk that has its function in the world.

Now it is the turn of this new generation of monks and nuns to return the benefits of this opportunity and this training by putting ourselves into service, sharing with others in our countries of origin a mature practice and—why not?—collaborating in the future in the organization of international training *ango* to be held in monasteries in our respective countries. Perhaps the time has arrived.



Breakfast



~ *Sotoshu Training Monastery* ~
Ango As My True Teacher

By Rev. Shoryu Bradley (Disciple of Rev. Shohaku Okumura)
Sanshinji, U.S.A.

As our van began its descent of the bumpy, unpaved mountain road, I watched the temple gates of Yokoji Zen Mountain Center, our home and training center for the past three months, shrink into the distance under the stark majesty of the San Jacinto Mountains. I felt a pang of grief in my chest as I watched the yucca, scrub oak, and pine-mottled peaks that had held us so steadily in their ancient high desert beauty slowly recede. These mountains had been a profound comfort over the past three months. Through balmy 70-degree days, week-long rains, and heavy snow storms, whenever possible I had gazed up into their magnificent stillness, each time inspired and calmed by their steadfast grandeur. Throughout the many challenges and changing emotions I had experienced during the course of the Sotoshu Training Monastery, it seemed I could feel the mountains constantly holding me in their silent majesty, as they had innumerable beings for countless years.

Up to this point in the ango I had tried as much as possible to avoid analyzing our practice, believing value judgments could only hinder my ability to fully meet whatever I might encounter. But now I would allow myself to reflect more deeply on my experience of the past three months. What had I learned during this ango practice? Was the purpose of an ango simply to train participants in the etiquette and ceremonial procedures of Sotoshu? How had the members of such a culturally disparate group of people managed to so quickly and deeply connect?

Kosho Uchiyama Roshi, my Dharma grandfather, said, “Zazen is your most venerable and only true teacher.” If I took this statement to literally mean that only the formal practice of the zazen posture is my true teacher, I might have desired more sitting during the ango. Yet I realize that our Sotoshu hosts, knowing that many Western priests have plenty of opportunity to sit zazen, made the decision to focus on instruction that isn’t

readily available in the West. And on its deepest level I believe Uchiyama Roshi’s statement goes beyond reference to formal sitting practice. Uchiyama Roshi did of course feel formal zazen practice is important, but “Zazen is your only true teacher” also means that we can only truly and deeply manifest the Dharma through practicing with our own life experiences; no one can practice for us, and each of us must awaken to the reality of interdependence and universally shared life through encountering *everything* as part of our own lives. So when we sit, sitting is our true teacher, when we cook, cooking is our true teacher, and when we do an ango, ango is our true teacher. Uchiyama Roshi taught a simple yet profound style of practice grounded in *shikantaza*, and he eschewed what he called ceremonial “toys.” I chose to attend the training ango because I felt connecting more directly with the culture that brought Soto Zen to the West would be a valuable experience, and I think fulfilling Sotoshu priest training requirements may someday assist me in supporting others in the Dharma. And although at times I couldn’t help wondering what Uchiyama Roshi would have thought of the intense focus on formal ceremonial practice we encountered during the ango, I think his “Zazen is your only true teacher” also means, “Don’t take my words as truth, discover the meaning of your own life through your own experience and practice.” So how could I as a Western monk evaluate a Japanese style of formal practice having never experienced such practice? Therefore, as I mentioned earlier, I decided to defer assessments and simply open myself to the ango as my true teacher for three months.

When I did begin reflecting more deeply on my experience, I found the ango was indeed a great teacher. I remember wondering one day, for example, as I sat in the sodo during the ceremonial mealtime offering to Manjushri, about the significance of this ritual. I had participated in this ceremony many times during the course of my Zen practice, yet I had never really

understood why bits of food are placed in miniature monk's bowls and offered to a bodhisattva statue before oryoki meals. This time, however, as I watched the Sojiji monk gracefully attend to the ritual, its meaning, for me at least, became apparent. This ceremony reminds us that the meal we are about to take is an offering to zazen (represented by Manjushri), nourishment to sustain the practice that we in turn offer back to the limitless universe that sustains us. So when my time came to perform the offering, I remembered its significance and tried to make the practice an extension of zazen by being fully present. Of course it is always possible to make such a ceremony my "toy", too, performing it in the spirit of "Hey, look at me!" or "I wish this was over with so we could eat!", for instance. But the choice is mine. As is true with most situations we encounter in life, I found the significance of ceremonial practice depended primarily on the attitude with which I received it.

Our three-month teacher proved a demanding yet compassionate guide. The amount of new information we were required to receive and digest, for example, could feel overwhelming, especially at the beginning. Since our group of trainees would soon be responsible for performing the daily formal duties of the monastery, we were taught in a few days what one might usually learn in a monastery, primarily through observation, over the course of several months or even years. Yet I often felt that some collective momentum beyond my own individual effort carried me through the training sessions and rigorous daily schedule, enabling me to do what initially seemed impossible. I was terrified, for instance, when I discovered that in about ten days I would be ino, announcing chants and reciting dedications for services. I had been listening to the Japanese monks perform the dedications for several weeks, but before the ango I had never heard, let alone recited, the *ekos* in Japanese. I knew this was an important job; the ino is responsible for inspiring wholehearted chanting and dedicating the sangha's practice to benefit of all beings. I frankly didn't think I could do it. There seemed too many subtleties of pronunciation to master and too much confidence yet to be gained. But our Japanese Dharma friends tirelessly offered assistance, and thankfully we were given the opportunity to record the dedications (I listened to them what seemed like countless times!). Akiba Roshi

emphasized the intentional *spirit* of the dedications more than their technical execution. This was very helpful in gaining an appreciation for their "poet heart", and it allowed me to focus on this spirit as the foundation for other formal practices as well. When my turn came to be ino, my performance was OK, I think; it was far from flawless, but it was OK. In reflecting on this experience I realize it exemplified a teaching I first received from my teacher, Shohaku Okumura Roshi, that points to an essential characteristic of the ango and of life in general. My ability to step up to the ino job was only possible with the practice of countless people: my fellow ango participants and their chanting, the monks who served as examples and trained me for the job, the monks who trained those who trained me—the list could go on infinitely. And yet when the time came for me to announce the chants and recite the dedications, no one could do my ino practice for me. It was only I who could make the effort to prepare for the job and actually do it when the time came, even though my ability to do so depended upon the efforts of countless others. For me, this reality of interdependent origination, that life is simultaneously characterized by absolute universal dependence as well as absolute individual responsibility, was a constant and primary teaching of the ango.

The ango also taught me something about the ability of human beings to live together peacefully and harmoniously. When I consider that around twenty men and women of various cultures and native languages, ranging widely in age and practice experience, were able to live together with very little discord for three months, I am amazed. This is especially astonishing considering the participant monks lived together in one large "privacy-free" room, as did the nuns. This group harmony wasn't limited to simply a lack of discord, either; we really came to move together and take care of each other in very simple yet intimate ways. For example, during the rare and precious free time allotted every fifth day in the monastic schedule, doing one's laundry could prove difficult due to the demand for washing machines. It seemed one could spend the better part of the day making trips to the laundry room hoping to find an open machine. Yet frequently I had some part of my laundry done for me anonymously when I was busy with other chores. I would often return to the laundry room to find

my clothes had been taken out of the machine and hung to dry. Participants also regularly shared the contents of care packages, and we were constantly reminding each other of the day's schedule and appropriate attire for upcoming events. We advised and quizzed each other about our monastic jobs, and we supported each other emotionally as well. I believe this atmosphere of mutual support stemmed from participants' putting aside the primacy of their individual perspectives and agendas to focus on harmony in practice with the community. My faith in the power of sincere practice deepened greatly as a result of this experience.

Perhaps it was the Sotoshu staff that set the primary example for this atmosphere of mutual concern. Although we were corrected in our execution of the monastic forms frequently, it seemed these requests were offered in the spirit of firm but friendly guidance rather than directives. Throughout the training period I had the impression the main concern of the staff was for our overall well-being, and their dedication to offering a rich, fruitful learning experience was apparent. During oryoki meals and morning service, for instance, we were constantly monitored and often corrected. Yet one morning I was approached by one of the higher ranking staff members because he had noticed my flushed face during service (I was experiencing the first symptoms of a mild flu). His behavior touched me, and his concern was typical of the staff.

On a broader level, I believe Sotoshu's offering of the Training Monastery was itself an act of concern and generosity. I can't help but wonder at the huge amount of monetary and human resources invested in the Training Monastery. Not only were fourteen participants housed and fed free of charge for three months, but we were meticulously trained and educated as well. For the first ten days of the angō, for example, six monks, each enrolled in a special training program to become qualified leader (*Shike*), worked together to standardize our monastic forms and train participants in various duties. Many excellent teachers from Japan and the United States were also brought to the training monastery to lecture, and monks from Eihei-ji and Sojiji, as well as nuns from the Aichi Senmon Nisodo labored tirelessly to train and support us during the entire angō. I believe this extensive

support demonstrates that Sotoshu has faith in its Western priests and considers our training an investment in the future growth of the Dharma.

Although our Japanese hosts taught us much about formal practice and ritual, I believe the examples they set of wholehearted engagement in practice were among the most valuable angō teachings. The organization of the schedule and execution of events were impeccable, and the staff appeared to possess boundless resources of energy and patience. They exhibited a genuine desire to deepen their understanding of Soto Zen's transmission from their culture to ours, and I suspect they viewed the angō as part of this process. I am truly grateful for the sincere dedication, patience, and generosity of our Sotoshu hosts.

Was there complete understanding and absolute harmony among those practicing in the Sotoshu Training Monastery? No. Did misunderstandings arise, likely stemming from cultural differences? Yes. But this bit of cultural tension, I believe, was also a teacher for us, helping all of us broaden our perspectives and let go of our individual and cultural biases.

Within a matter of hours we had reached Los Angeles: skyscrapers and blacktop, concrete and stoplights. Suddenly my mountain guardians seemed very far away. Yet the sun shone bright and warm, and I felt a sense of new possibility opening before me. I suspected my experience of the Sotoshu Training Monastery would continue to support me, and the deeper aspects of its significance would continue to reveal themselves for many years.

In closing I would like to offer my appreciation and thanks to Rev. Gengo Akiba Roshi for presiding over the angō as abbot with a firm yet gentle manner. My thanks also go to Rev. Hokan Saito Roshi, Rev. Dogen Shihomi Roshi, and Rev. Daiei Bennage Roshi for their examples, teachings, and guidance. I would also like to thank Rev. Tenshin Fletcher Roshi, abbot of Yokoji, for hosting us so graciously, and I deeply appreciate the dedicated "behind the scenes" work of the Yokoji residents who welcomed us into their home with much sensitivity and patience. And finally, my deep gratitude to my teacher, Shohaku Okumura Roshi, who, through his profound teaching

and sincere example, has enabled me to recognize and begin walking my own path on the Bodhisattva Way.



Calligraphy practice



Ryakufusatsu



Closing ceremony of Sotoshu Training Monastery

Shobogenzo Zazenshin A Free Translation (7)

Rev. Issho Fujita

Illuminating without opposing circumstances.

The "illumination" spoken of here is not the illumination of something else as an object, "over there." Furthermore, this is not the kind of illumination in which a subject such as spirit, consciousness, or the soul shines inward then radiates out. Not facing outward (form), not facing inward (reflection)—in any case, this is not a discussion of *illuminating* or *being illuminated* based on dividing self (subject) and other (object) into two. The illumination spoken of here is without dualistic opposition (that is, there is no relative gap between the one observing and the one being observed). This illumination is, rather, the essential functioning of all the myriad dharmas; it is the very reality of our being vitalized by the myriad dharmas.

This kind of illumination is not the sort in which an object is recognized by a seer. That's because the conditions of this moment are none other than the functioning of illumination itself.

Therefore, "without opposing" means that there is no "other," that everything in the world is manifest, that nothing is hidden—even if the world were destroyed, nothing could arise anew which has not already appeared. This is subtle; this is strange. It cannot be accepted merely through language or conceptual thinking. We can say that illumination and the conditions of this moment are each themselves, even in the context of the absolute; but at the same time, we can also say that there is no distinction whatsoever.

Knowing is naturally subtle; it is itself already non-discriminating thought.

(Normally, this phrase might be read to mean, "There is already no discriminating thought, so knowing is naturally subtle," but that is not Dogen Zenji's way of reading it.) Here, "already" means "originally."

It points to the vital, living reality prior even to the awareness born at the dawn of human activity—this, we

call “knowing.” Accordingly, though we may live our lives according to our discriminating thinking, that thinking itself is “already non-discriminating”; it arises and falls away as non-thinking (*hishiryō*). That is, “already non-discriminating thought” is the same as “knowing”; without relying on any other force, it is naturally none other than knowing itself.

“Knowing” is not the subjective awareness and activity of human beings. It is the very reality of the existence of all things. Thus, the concrete or pragmatic aspect of knowing is not the objectivity or dualism that we “know”; rather, it is the very form (existence) of mountains and rivers themselves.

Existence is nothing but existing as form. That said, the “subtle” and “strange” of mountains and rivers defies language or concepts.

We live utilizing this subtle knowledge, without any limitations—the circumstance of our lives is like a fish energetically leaping about, lively, with no obstacles and no resistance, playing itself out freely.

For example, it is said in ancient legend that Emperor Yu built a dragon gate on the upper stream of the Yellow River through which, if carp pass, they become dragons. But when it comes to the functioning of this knowing—vitalized, living reality—any discussion of whether it is found inside or outside of that gate misses the point.

It is said that Wu's gate had three levels of waterfalls, and that carp transformed into dragons upon climbing the third of them. But the free functioning of this knowledge exists regardless of “inside” or “outside.” Zazen is the direct practice of this very knowledge. So zazen becomes zazen. In the same way, to become buddha, no such levels are necessary.

The knowledge spoken of here, when utilized even just a little, is a knowing that brings with it the all-inclusive world of mountains and rivers (the true self); it is a knowing that makes use of all of the activity (power) of that exhaustive world. Unless the self's knowledge is so intimate and inseparable that one cannot

separate from mountains and rivers (mind and dharma are one), one cannot expect even the slightest wisdom or understanding to manifest.

One shouldn't lament that discriminating thinking comes later, after the fact. The discriminating thinking spoken of here is not delusional discrimination; rather it is “already non-discriminating thought,” where there is no room for talk of sooner or later. This is because discriminating thinking and mountains and rivers are practicing together—they are simultaneous.

“Already ever” discriminating buddha (that is, the discriminating original true shape of the self prior to self-awareness)—there, the embodiment of buddha is already complete. This is the “already ever” (original nothingness, the way things essentially are) spoken of in Master Wanshi's *Zazenshin*. However, even if we say “already ever,” that is not about the past—it is the fact that this realization is taking place this very moment. In this way, because the all-inclusive world of mountains and rivers and the self are one (“already non-discriminating”), it follows that there is not even one person we can encounter as “other.”

Illumination is itself subtle; never has there been the slightest sign.

(This phrase might commonly be read as “That illumination naturally subtle, ever without even the slightest sign,” but that is not the same as Dogen Zenji's understanding.) What's referred to here as “slightest” (*gokotsu*, an infinitesimal bit) is actually the fact of the existence of the all-inclusive dharma realm. Therefore, there exists absolute subtlety and absolute illumination. Being absolute, the question of bringing it with you or not simply does not occur. This is because when there is no relative opposition, there is no particular shape that the future is supposed to take.

That this infinitesimal bit is the exhausted world cannot be seen with the eyes, and it cannot be heard with the ears. This is something that the eyes and ears (the senses) cannot grasp as an object. The teachings only become clear outside of worldly notions—language impedes them, obstructing the truth. This is the true nature of illumination.

So there is no “other”; there is nothing to grasp, no object for our human desire. Because there is no “other,” there is independence without opposition; because there is nothing to grasp, there is clarity. To accept and receive illumination is the attitude of a disciple of Buddha. We call this attitude the “self which rejects doubt.” However, this so-called “doubt” does not carry the meaning of “distrust” or “suspicion.” It expresses the absolute reality of illumination, but with a question mark. This word “doubt” expresses in language something that goes beyond words. It does not mean what you think it means.

The water is clear right to the bottom; a fish is swimming leisurely.

Here we say “clear” water, but water that falls from the sky (rain) is not the water that is clear right to the bottom. Even the deep, unclouded water of this world of sentient beings (the “vessel world”) is not the clear water referred to here. Only water that is perfectly limitless, without shore or horizon, can be this water that is clear right to the bottom. In other words, limitless reality is called clear water.

If a fish swims in such waters, it’s not that it doesn’t go anywhere. But at the same time, the distance gone is so great, it cannot be expressed even in the tens of thousands. It cannot be measured on a relative scale, nor does it ever come to an end. There is no shore we can use as a standard to measure, nor is there any sky which appears to rise up (or any surface on which the sky can appear to stretch—one cannot even look up). And because there is no bottom to be found, there is no one who can measure. If you were to try to measure, you would find nothing but clear water, all the way down.

The meritorious act of zazen is the same as a fish going through the water. Whether a degree of one thousand or ten thousand, who can see so far ahead? Who can measure it? The distance to the very depth (this is the fish swimming without bounds; this is zazen) is the entirety (there is nothing else that exists) of the path of a bird in flight, going nowhere. The bird leaves no trace, and the sky is infinite—how could it be that the bird “goes”?

The 2nd Chapter of *Shobogenzo*: Maha-Hannya-Haramitsu (Maha-Prajna-Paramita)

Lecture (6)

Rev. Shohaku Okumura
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[Text]

先師古仏云、渾身似口掛虚空、不問東西南北風、
一等為他談般若、滴丁東了滴丁東。

My late master, the ancient buddha, said,

*"The whole body [of the windbell] is like a mouth
hanging in empty space-*

*Without distinguishing the winds from east, west, south,
or north*

Together expressing prajna equally to all beings-

Di ding dong liao di ding dong"

Tiantong Rujing’s poem on the Windbell

In the previous section, Dogen Zenji quotes from Mahaprajna Paramita Sutra regarding empty space (*koku*). As I explained in the previous issue, there are three meanings of the word “empty space” as a Buddhist technical term. The first is “empty space” as a conditioned dharma, like a space that is not occupied by anything—for example, an empty house, or an empty glass. The second is “empty space” as unconditioned dharma, that does not come into being when something disappears, and does not cease to be when it is filled with something. This empty space does not arise and does not perish, neither coming nor going. This is the space in which all beings are happening, coming, and going.

The third meaning of “empty space” derived from the second meaning and is used in Zen teaching as a metaphor of emptiness of all beings and *prajna* (wisdom): the way the Buddha sees all beings without fixed self-nature. Our study and practice of *prajna paramita*—that is, studying the self, grabbing the self and forgetting the self—is itself “empty space” in the third meaning. I think these quotations are the introduction to this poem by Dogen Zenji’s own teacher, Tiantong Rujing. Dogen appreciates this poem by Rujing very much. He recorded his conversation with his teacher about this poem in

Hokyoki. He quotes this poem in *Shobogenzo Koku* (Empty Space). In Volume 9 of *Eiheikoroku*, he collects 90 koans and caps each with his own verse. Case 58 is the first line of this poem by Rujing; Dogen composed his own poem following the same rhyme.

Dogen's conversation with Rujing in *Hokyoki*

Dogen's record of his conversation with his teacher about this poem is as follows:

Dogen made one hundred prostrations with admiration and said, "In your poem about the windbell, I read in the first line, 'The whole body [of the wind bell] is like a mouth hanging in empty space' and in the third line, 'Together expressing *prajna* equally to all beings.' Is the 'empty space' referred to one of the form (*rupa*) elements? Skeptical people would definitely think 'empty space' is one of the form elements. Students today don't understand buddhadharma clearly and consider the blue sky as the empty space. I am sorry for them."

Rujing replied with compassion, "This empty space is *prajna*. It is not one of the form elements. The empty space is neither obstructing nor non-obstructing. Therefore this is neither simple emptiness nor truth in relative with falsehood. Various elders haven't understood even what form (*rupa*) is, much less emptiness. This is due to the decline of buddhadharma beyond description in this country.

Dogen was sure that Rujing's poem is not about an actual big windbell, hanging in the space from the eaves of a high temple building, ringing loudly blown by the winds from four directions. This is the poem about how practitioners of the bodhisattva path live together with all beings expounding *prajna*. This empty space is neither a conditioned dharma nor an unconditioned dharma. This is what "neither obstructing nor non-obstructing" means.

"Simple emptiness" refers to a nihilistic view that only sees lack of substance. In the *Heart Sutra*, it is said that form is emptiness and emptiness is form. If we only see "form is emptiness," we fall into this view. "Truth relative to falsehood" is the same. This is the view which sees forms (phenomenal beings) as simply phantom-like emptiness, and grasping them as seeing emptiness in a

true and right view. To avoid these one-sided views, in the beginning of this fascicle, Dogen writes that the five aggregates, the twelve sense-fields, the eighteen elements, one hundred blades of grass, ten thousand things—all are instances of *prajna*.

Their conversation continues;

Dogen remarked, "This poem on the windbell is the utmost in excellence. Even if they would have practiced for three asamkhyas *kalpas*, the elders in all corners of the world would not be able to match it. Every one of the cloud-and-water monks should appreciate it. Having come from a far-off land, although being inexperienced and unlearned, I have unrolled and read the various texts such as *Jingde chuandeng lu*, *Tiansheng guangdeng lu*, *Jianzhong Jingguo xudeng lu*, *Jiatai pudeng lu*, as well as the collections of recorded sayings of various masters, I have not yet come across anything like your poem on the windbell. How fortunate I am to be able to learn it! As I read it, I am filled with joy and tears moisten my robe and I am moved to do prostrations because this poem is direct and also lyrical."

When my teacher was about to ride on a sedan-chair, he said with a smile, "What you say is profound and has the mark of magnanimity beyond compare. I composed this poem while I was at Qingliang monastery. Although many people praised it, no one has ever penetrated it as you do. I, this old monk Tiantong, grant that you have the Eye. When you compose poems, do it in this way."

(Okumura translation)

From this conversation, we can see that Dogen and Rujing had very intimate conversations. Dogen had deep respect for Rujing and Rujing had appreciation for Dogen's understanding of his Dharma. (These four Chinese texts Dogen mentioned are the collections of Zen masters' biographies and sayings compiled in Song Dynasty China from 11th to 13th century.)

Shobogenzo Koku

In *Shobogenzo Koku* (Empty Space), Dogen quotes the first line of Rujing's poem of the Windbell and gives a very short comment, "Clearly, the whole body of 'empty space' is hanging within 'empty space.'"

In the previous section of the chapter Koku, Dogen discusses the story of Xitang and Shigong I mentioned before, and said, “When you (Shigong) grabbed Xitang’s nostrils, if you wanted to grasp empty space, you should have grabbed the nostrils of Shigong by yourself, and you should have understood how to grasp the fingertips with the fingertips.”

Here Dogen points out that “empty space” in Rujing’s poem is not abstract, motionless, lifeless, unconditioned dharma beyond the phenomenal world. There is no separation between the windbell and empty space. The windbell is itself empty space hanging in empty space. To grab empty space is to grab one’s self, or empty space hanging in empty space. His practice is grasping fingertips with the fingertips, seeing the dharma eye with the dharma eye within one’s concrete actions in our day-to-day lives.

渾身似口掛虛空、

The whole body is like a mouth hanging in empty space-

When I discussed the first sentence of Dogen’s *Makahannyaharamitsu*, I said that is a paraphrase of the first sentence of the Heart Sutra, and he simply adds one word, “the whole body.” There, I introduced the dialogue between Dogo Enchi (Daowu Yuanzhi, 769-835) and Ugan Donjo (Yunyan Tansheng, 780-841) on the thousand hands and eyes. Both of them used similar expressions that can be translated as “whole body,” that is, *tsushin* (都身) and *henshin* (遍身). But the exact word Dogen uses in this first sentence is a word from Rujing in this poem of the windbell: *konshin* (渾身). The “whole body” of the windbell and the “whole body” of Avalokiteshvara refer to the same thing.

In the beginning of this chapter, by saying, “The time of Avalokiteshvara bodhisattva practicing *prajna paramita* is the whole body clearly seeing the emptiness of all five aggregates,” Dogen Zenji points out that Avalokiteshvara, practicing *prajna paramita*, the emptiness of the five aggregates, the action of clear seeing, and the time when that is happening are one thing without any separation between the subject, the object, the actions, and the time when that is happening. The “whole body” includes all of them. This is about the reality of no-separation within Avalokiteshvara, his/her practice of *prajna*, and what he/she sees about his/her aggregates.

Here, Dogen quotes Rujing’s poem to show the

seamless reality between the self and others. The shape of the windbell is like a mouth. The Chinese character of mouth (口) came from the shape of lips when they open. Actually there is no such thing called a “mouth” as an entity, only a space surrounded by lips, the roof of mouth, the tongue, etc. This Chinese character is related to hole (孔) and hollow space (空). Someone said that a good examples of emptiness is a doughnut hole. We know there is a hole in the center of a doughnut, but is there such a thing called a doughnut hole? It is a lack of something, not a kind of existing entity. Our mouth is the same as a doughnut hole. And yet, our mouth, which is simply empty space, has the very important function of taking in air, water, food, and so on to keep us alive. And from the mouth, our feelings, emotions, and thoughts go out to communicate with others and create our either wholesome or unwholesome karma, which then shapes our personality and our relations with others. A mouth is a good symbol of emptiness.

However, in Rujing’s poem, instead of the mouth being a part of our body, he said the entire body is like a mouth; empty and yet carrying out important functions. And hanging in empty space. The empty mouth is hanging in the empty space: *prajna*. This is the same as what Dogen says in the beginning of this writing, that Avalokiteshvara and the empty five aggregates clearly see the emptiness of the five aggregates themselves. Empty body and mind sees its own emptiness and *prajna* sees *prajna* itself. As I said there, this is what is happening in our zazen, by our five aggregates simply being the five aggregates.

不問東西南北風、

Without distinguishing the winds from east, west, south, or north

The windbell does not make any discrimination among the winds that come from all different directions: east, west, south or north. It does not make any distinction between a pleasant, refreshing breeze, a biting cold wind, or a powerful, stormy wind.

The materialistic modern civilization based on science and technology is the wind from the West blowing from the 16th century to the East. It was a powerful, continuous wind that made the entire earth into one community of people. Buddhism is a part of the wind from the East to the West. There are winds from the

developed countries in the northern part of the world to the developing countries in the south, and winds from the south to the north. Today, we are encountering all different kinds of winds from all over the world.

In 1975, I went to the U.S.A. to practice at Valley Zendo in western Massachusetts. In the early spring of 1976, we helped a nearby farm with maple sugaring. Maple sugaring can be done in the period when the temperature in the daytime rises above freezing and in the night drops again below freezing. In Massachusetts, that period lasted a little more than a month, from early February to the first half of March. We set about two hundred metal buckets on sugar maple trees along the road and in the forest. We walked in the forest to get the sap in the bucket offered by the trees. One day, it was quite warm in the morning; the wind from the south made the weather almost like real spring. Snow on the ground began to melt. However, during our work in the afternoon, carrying the sap to the tank on a truck by the road, suddenly the direction of the wind changed. The wind started to blow from the north. Within ten minutes or so, the temperature went down so quickly that the surface of the sap in all the buckets was frozen. After for a while, we had to give up working. Because that was one of my first experiences in New England, I was deeply impressed by the sudden change of the weather.

The direction of the wind sometimes has a very large, even drastic influence on our lives. Not simply the wind of nature, but the wind of social conditions, changes people's lives, sometimes completely.

一等為他談般若、

Together expressing prajna equally to all beings-

How can we express *prajna* within all different conditions of our lives caused by the directions of the wind, for example from peace to war, from prosperity to a recession, from favorable conditions to adversity? We more often express our egocentricity rather than *prajna*. The windbell does not distinguish the conditions caused by the wind. It is just ringing.

滴丁東了滴丁東。

Di ding dong liao di ding dong

The last line is simply onomatopoeia of the sound of the bell. Professor Rosan Ikeda of Komazawa University suggests that this sound of the windbell is the same with

the mantra at the end of the *Heart Sutra, Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate Bodhi Svaha*. (Dogen no Hannyashingyo Kaishaku, *Dogengaku no Yoran*, 1989, Daizoshuppan, Tokyo, p.145-158) Because mantras are not translated, for Chinese and Japanese people, mantras are just sound. And that is the sound of *prajna*, the sound of the entire universe.

In the translation by Thomas Clearly, (*Shobogenzo: Zen Essays by Dogen*, University of Hawaii Press) this line is translated, "Drop after drop freezes." I don't understand how this line can be translated in this way. It seems he read this line with the meaning of the Chinese characters instead of simply the sound of the windbell. 滴 means "drop" but I don't understand where "freeze" comes from. He might read 東 (east) as 凍 (freeze). However all the texts I looked have 東, not 凍.

Dogen's verse in Eiheikoroku

Dogen's verse on the windbell following Rujing's verse in Volume 9 of *Eiheikoroku* is as follows:

渾身是口判虛空、居起東西南北風、一等玲瓏談已語、
滴丁東了滴丁東。

The whole body is just a mouth defining empty space,

Ever arousing the winds from east, west, south, or north,

Equally crystalline, speaking your own words:

Ding-dong-a-ling ding-dong. (*Dogen's Extensive Record*, p.575)

In this verse, Dogen expresses the seamless reality from another side. As the windbell, we need to study and practice *prajna*, understand and express the meaning beyond meaning. The windbell can cause the wind and make change of the situation. No matter how small the change might be, we can change the world. Buddhism was originated with only one person, Shakyamuni Buddha, through his awakening and his lifelong efforts to share with other people. By the tiny wind caused by one person twenty-five hundred years ago in India, millions upon millions of people have been influenced. The history of the entire world without Buddhism must be very different from the world with it, the one we are living in.

Dogen Zenji founded his small monastery in the deep mountains in Japan eight hundred years ago; still,

many people both in the East and the West are studying and practicing his teachings. One person's tiny actions being illuminated by boundless moonlight influence the entire world. This is what Dogen wrote when he described his zazen practice as *Jijuyu-zanmai* in *Bendowa* (The Talk on Wholehearted Practice of the Way). From one side, the sound of the windbell is the sound of the entire world. From another side, the same sound of the windbell is its own unique sound made by a particular windbell only once in the entirety of time—past, present and future. In this verse, Dogen put emphasis on the significance and preciousness of one person's practice experience and its expression using one's own unique words. Dogen discusses this importance in *Shobogenzo Dotoku* (道得. That expression is the sound of universe.

(8)

これ仏祖嫡嫡の談般若なり。

This is how the *prajna* has been expressed authentically through buddhas and ancestors.

渾身般若なり、

The whole body is *prajna*.

渾他般若なり。

All others [which include the self] are *prajna*.

渾自般若なり、

The whole self [which includes others] is *prajna*.

渾東西南北般若なり。

The entire universe—east, west, south, and north—is *prajna*.

The wind of *prajna* determines the conditions of each individual being, and each individual being contributes to produce the wind of the world. The condition of society shapes our lives, and the way we live influences the whole of society. The wind and the windbell are working together, making sound of the *prajna*. Later Dogen refers to this mutual penetration as “total function” (*zenki*).

In *Shobogenzo Hokke-ten-hokke* (“Dharma Flower turns Dharma Flower”), Dogen quotes the saying of the Sixth Ancestor Huineng: “When the mind is in delusion, the mind is turned by the Dharma Flower. When the mind is in realization, the mind turns the Dharma Flower.” After offering a long commentary on this expression by Huineng, Dogen Zenji says at the end of the fascicle, “When the mind is in delusion, the Dharma Flower turns [the self].

When the mind is in realization, the Dharma Flower is turned [by the self]. When we penetrate thus, The Dharma Flower turns the Dharma Flower.”

This is how the self and all myriad dharmas are working together to create the sound of *prajna*. We are turned by the myriad dharmas and we turn the myriad dharmas. This is what is said 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.” In these sayings, delusion and realization are neither negative nor positive. Both are beyond such dualistic separation.

Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma Book 3

Buddha Nature (*Bussbō*) PART 2

Translated by Carl Bielefeldt

NOTE: The first part of this fascicle appeared in *Dharma Eye 25* (Spring 2010). The full translation, together with the original text and complete annotation, is available on the website of the Soto Zen Text Project: sztp.stanford.edu.

The Fourteenth Ancestor, the Venerable Nagarjuna, is called Nagarjuna in the language of the Brahmans; in the language of the Tang, he is called Longshu or Longsheng or, again, Longmeng. He was from the country of the western Sindh. He went to the south of the country of Sindh, where many of the people of the country believed in meritorious deeds.

When the Venerable preached the wondrous dharma to them, the hearers said to each other, “For people to have meritorious deeds is the foremost thing in the world. He talks futilely of the buddha nature, but who can see it?”

The Venerable said, “If you want to see the buddha nature, first you must eliminate self-conceit.”

They said, “Is the buddha nature big or small?”

The Venerable said, “The buddha nature is neither big nor small, neither broad nor narrow; it is without merit and without recompense; it does not die and is not born.”

Hearing the excellence of this principle, they all converted to the initial thought [of awakening]. The Venerable, at his seat, subsequently manifested his body of freedom, like the disk of the full moon. All the assembly merely heard the sound of the dharma but did not see the master’s form.

In that assembly was Kanadeva, the son of a rich man. He said to the assembly, “Do you recognize this form?”

The assembly said, “It’s something our eyes have never seen before, something our ears have never heard; our minds have no recognition of it, our bodies, no place for it.”

Deva said, “This is the Venerable’s manifesting the form of the buddha nature to show it to us. How do we know it? Because the formless samadhi has a shape like the full moon. The meaning of the buddha nature is wide open, spacious and clear.”

Once he had said this, the form of the disk then vanished, and [Nagarjuna] was once again at his seat. Then, he taught a verse, which said,

I manifest my body in the round moon form,
Showing by which the body of the buddhas.
My preaching of the dharma is without any shape;
The explanations, not sound or sight.

We should realize that true “explanation” is not “then it manifests” “sound and sight.” True “preaching of the dharma” is “without any shape.” The Venerable’s teachings on the buddha nature are innumerable; here, for a time, we take up in brief one corner of them.

“If you want to see the buddha nature, first you must eliminate self-conceit.” We should acknowledge the significance of this teaching without overlooking it. It is not that there is no “seeing”; but that seeing is itself “eliminating self-conceit.” The “self” is not one, “conceit” is of many types, and the method of “eliminating” must also be of myriad variations. Nevertheless, they are all “seeing the buddha nature.” We should study this in the eye’s seeing what the eye sees.

Do not exemplify the saying, “the buddha nature is neither big nor small,” and so on, in [the understandings of] the commoners and two vehicles. Thinking lopsidely only that it means the buddha nature must be broad and big is harboring false thoughts. The principle delimited by

this saying right now that it is not large and it is not small, we should think of just as we hear it here; for we make use of hearing that is our thinking.

We should listen for a while to the verse spoken by the Venerable. “I manifest my body in the round moon form, showing by which the body of the buddhas.” It is “the round moon form” because it is the “the body manifesting” that has been “showing by which” the “body of the buddhas.” Therefore, we should study all long and short, square and round, in this “body manifesting.” For the “body” and its “manifestation” to be alienated from each other is not only to be in the dark about “the round moon form”; it is not “the body of the buddhas.” The thinking of fools who think the Venerable temporarily manifested a transformation body is the false thought of a bunch that has not succeeded to the way of the buddha. Where and when would he manifest what is not his body?

We should realize that this is not just the Venerable assuming the high seat at that time: his conduct in manifesting his body was like anyone’s sitting now. This body — this is the manifestation of the round moon form. “The body manifesting” is not square or round; it is not being or nonbeing; it is not hidden or apparent; it is not an aggregate of 84,000: it is just “the body manifesting.” “The round moon form”: “where are we, that we’re talking about a fine or rough” moon? Since this “body manifesting” is “first you must eliminate self-conceit,” it is not Nagarjuna: it is “the body of the buddhas.” Since it “shows by which,” it passes through and beyond “the body of the buddhas.” Therefore, it has nothing to do with the confines of the buddha.

Though the buddha nature has a “spacious clarity” that takes a “shape like” “the full moon,” it is not the case that it lines up with the “round moon form,” let alone that its “explanation” is “sound or sight,” or its “body manifesting” is form and mind, or the aggregates, fields, and elements. Even if we say it completely resembles the aggregates, fields, and elements, it is “showing by which”; it is “the body of the buddhas.” It is the aggregate of dharma preached; and that is “without any shape.” When “without any shape” is further “the formless samādhi,” it is “the body manifesting.” Even if we say the entire assembly was here gazing upon a “round moon form,” it is “something our eyes have never seen”; for it is the turning point of the aggregate of dharma preached; it is the “not sound or sight” of “manifesting his body of freedom.” “Then vanished”

and “then manifest” are the “stepping forward and stepping back” of the form of the disk. The very moment when, “at his seat, he subsequently manifested his body of freedom” is “all the assembly merely hearing the sound of the dharma,” is “not seeing the master’s form.”

The Venerable’s legitimate heir, the Venerable Kanadeva, clearly “recognized this” full moon form, “recognized this” round moon form, “recognized this” body manifesting, “recognized this” nature of the buddhas, “recognized this” body of the buddhas. Though there may have been many who “entered the room and drained the jug,” they could not have been of equal stature with Deva. Deva was a venerable with a co-seat, a leader of the assembly, a shared seat with the whole seat. His correct transmission of the treasury of the eye of the true dharma, the unexcelled great dharma, was like Venerable Mahakashyapa’s being the prime seat on Numinous Mountain.

Prior to Nagarjuna’s conversion, he had many disciples from the time he followed the teachings of the alien paths; but he sent them all away. Once Nagarjuna became a buddha and ancestor, he correctly transmitted the treasury of the eye of the great dharma solely to Deva as the true heir of the bequest of the dharma. This was the single transmission of the unexcelled way of the buddha. Nevertheless, a false bunch of usurpers wilfully claimed of themselves, “We are also the dharma heirs of Nagarjuna the Great One.” They made treatises and put together doctrines, which they often ascribe to Nagarjuna’s hand. They are not Nagarjuna’s works; they are the previously abandoned bunch deluding and confusing humans and devas. Disciples of the Buddha should know without doubt that what was not transmitted to Deva is not the word of Nagarjuna; this is believing correctly. Nevertheless, there are many who accept them knowing they are apocryphal. How pitiful, how sad, the simpletons among living beings who slander the great prajna.

The Venerable Kanadeva then pointed out the Venerable Nagarjuna’s body manifesting and admonished the assembly, saying,

This is the Venerable’s manifesting the form of the buddha nature to show it to us. How do we know it? Because the formless samadhi has a shape like the full moon. The meaning of the buddha nature is wide open, spacious and clear.

Among the prior and later skinbags who have seen and heard the buddha dharma that has now spread among devas and humans and throughout the dharma realms of the great chiliocosm, who else has said that the form of the body manifesting is the buddha nature? In the great chiliocosm, only the Venerable Deva has said it. The others say only that the buddha nature is not something the eye sees or the ear hears or the mind recognizes; they have not said it because they do not know that the body manifesting is the buddha nature. It is not that the ancestral master is begrudging, but they close their eyes and ears and cannot see or hear him. Never having recognized it with their bodies, they cannot discern it. While gazing upon and bowing to the fact that the formless samadhi is “shaped like the full moon,” it is not something their eyes have seen. It is “the meaning of the buddha nature, wide open, spacious and clear.”

Therefore, that the body manifesting is the preaching of the buddha nature is “a spacious clarity,” is “a wide openness”; that the preaching of the dharma nature is the body manifesting is “showing by which the body of the buddhas.” Which one buddha or two buddhas does not “buddha body” this “showing by which”? The buddha body is the body manifesting, has a buddha nature that is the body manifesting. Even the measure of a buddha or the measure of an ancestor that speaks of and understands it as the four major elements and five aggregates is the hurried act of the body manifesting. Since we have called them “the body of the buddhas,” the aggregates, fields, and elements are like this. All their virtues are this virtue. The virtues of the buddha exhaust and envelop this body manifesting; the comings and goings of all his innumerable, limitless virtues are a single hurried act of this body manifesting.

Nevertheless, following the master and disciple Nagarjuna and Deva, the people who have periodically studied Buddhism in prior and later generations throughout all directions in the three countries [of India, China, and Japan] have never said anything like Nagarjuna and Deva. How many sutra teachers and treatise teachers have missed the words of the buddhas and ancestors? In the country of the Great Song, from long ago, in trying to paint this episode, being unable to paint it on their bodies, paint it on their minds, paint it on the sky, paint it on a wall, they have pointlessly painted it with a brush, depicting above a dharma seat the form of a disk that is

like a mirror and taking it as this [scene of] Nagarjuna's body manifesting a round moon form. Already for hundreds of years of frost and flowers blossoming and falling, they have formed gold dust in peoples eyes; yet no one has said they are wrong. What a pity that everything has gone amiss like this.

If we understand the body manifesting a round moon form to be the form of a disk, it is a real "painted cake." To play around with that — what a laugh! How sad that not a single one among the householders and renunciates in the entire of country of the Great Song has heard or known Nagarjuna's words, has penetrated or seen Deva's saying — much less has been intimate with the body manifesting. They are in the dark about the round moon; they have made the full moon wane. This is neglect of "investigating the ancient," lack of "yearning for the ancients." Old buddhas and new buddhas, going on to meet the real body manifesting, do not enjoy the painted cake!

We should know that, in painting the form of "I manifest my body in the round moon form," it should have the form of the body manifesting on the dharma seat. "Raising the eyebrows and blinking the eye" should be authentic. The "skin, flesh, bones, and marrow," the "treasury of the eye of the true dharma," should always be "sitting fixedly." It should convey "the face breaking into a smile"; for it is "making a buddha, making an ancestor." Where this painting fails to achieve the moon form, it has no "shape like," it is not "preaching the dharma," it has no "sound or sight," it has no "explanations."

If we seek the body manifesting, we should depict the "round moon form." If we are depicting the round moon form, we should depict the round moon form; for [it says,] "I manifest my body in the round moon form." When we paint the round moon form, we should depict the form of the full moon, we should manifest the form of the full moon. But without painting the body manifesting, without painting the round moon, without painting the form of the full moon, without depicting the body of the buddhas, without embodying the "showing by which," without depicting the preaching of the dharma, just pointlessly to depict a painted cake — what good is that? Look at it: who would be "satisfied as I am now and not hungry"? The moon is a round shape; its roundness is the body manifesting; when you study its roundness, do not study it in something like a coin; do not liken it to a cake. The form of the body is the body

of the round moon, "its shape like the full moon." The coin and the cake, we should study in its roundness.

In the past, during my wanderings, I went to the country of the Great Song. In the autumn of the sixteenth year of Jiading (tenth stem, eighth branch) [1223], I went to the Guangli Chan monastery on Mt. Ayuwang. On the wall of the west corridor, I saw illustrations painted of the thirty-three ancestors of the Western Heavens and the Eastern Earth. At the time, I had no grasp of them.

Later, when I went again during the summer retreat of the first year of Baoqing (second stem, tenth branch) [1225], while walking in the corridor with the guest prefect Cheng Gui of Western Shu, I asked the guest prefect, "What is this portrait?"

The guest prefect said, "Nagarjuna's body manifesting the round moon form." He spoke like this with no nose on his face, no words in his voice.

I said, "This really looks like a painted cake." Whereupon, the guest prefect gave a great laugh, but "in the laugh there was no blade," and he could not crack the painted cake.

While the guest prefect and I were going to the sharira hall and the six outstanding sites, I raised this with him several times, but he never even had doubts about it. The monks who volunteered comments were also largely completely wrong.

I said, "Let's ask the head of hall." At the time, the head of hall was the Reverend Daguang.

The guest prefect said, "He has no nose and couldn't answer. What could he know?" So, we did not ask old Guang. Though he said this, brother Gui also did not understand. The "skin bags" we asked also had nothing to say.

Prior and later heads of meals had seen it without wondering about it or correcting it. Furthermore, we should not paint anything that should not be painted; what should be painted, we should paint authentically. But the body manifesting the round moon form has never been painted.

In sum, because they have not awakened from the view that the buddha nature is our present consideration, knowledge, thought, and perception, they seem to have lost the point from which to penetrate either the words "have the buddha nature" or the words "have no buddha nature," and even those who study that we should speak them are rare. We should realize that this neglect is due to

a decline. Among the heads of meals in all quarters, there are even those who have spent their entire lives without ever speaking of the buddha nature. They say, “those who listen to the teachings talk of the buddha nature; those ‘robed in clouds’ who study Zen shouldn’t speak of it.” The bunch like this are real beasts. What minions of Mara are these that have infiltrated the way of our Buddha, the Tathagata, and seek to defile it. Is there something called “listening to the teachings” in the way of the buddha? Is there something called “studying Zen” in the way of the buddha? We should realize that there has never been anything called “listening to the teachings” or “studying Zen” in the way of the buddha.

* * * * *

The National Master Qian of Yanguang district in Hangzhou was a venerable under Mazu. On one occasion, he addressed the assembly saying, “All living beings have the buddha nature.”

We should quickly investigate the words “all living beings.” The deeds, paths, circumstantial and primary recompense of “all living beings” are not the same, and their views are various: they are commoners, on alien paths, on the three vehicles or five vehicles, and so on. In “all living beings” spoken of here on the way of the buddha, those with minds are “all living beings”; for the mind is living beings. Those without minds are similarly living beings; for living beings are mind. Therefore, all minds are living beings, and living beings all “have the buddha nature.” The grasses, trees and lands are mind; because they are mind, they are living beings; because they are living beings, they “have the buddha nature.” The sun, moon, and stars are mind; because they are mind, they are living beings; because they are living beings, they “have the buddha nature.”

[The words] “have the buddha nature” said by the National Master are like this. If they were not like this, they would not be a “having the buddha nature” said on the way of the buddha. The significance of what the National Master says here is only that “all living beings have the buddha nature”; to take this further, those who are not living beings would not “have the buddha nature.” Let us for the moment ask the National Master, “Do all buddhas have the buddha nature?” We should ask him and

test him like this. We should study [the fact] that he does not say, “all living beings are the buddha nature”; he says, “all living beings have the buddha nature.” The “have” of “have the buddha nature,” he should slough off. Sloughing it off is “one strip of iron”; “one strip of iron” is “the path of the bird.” Therefore, all buddha natures have sentient being. The principle of this not only explains thoroughly living beings but explains thoroughly the buddha nature. Although the National Master may not have acceded to a saying of this understanding, this is not to say that he will have no opportunity to accede to it. Today’s saying is not pointlessly insignificant. Again, though he himself may not necessarily yet understand the principle with which he is endowed, he has “the four major elements and five aggregates,” he has “the skin, flesh, bones, and marrow.” In this way, in saying something, there is saying something one’s whole lifetime, there are lifetimes contingent on a saying.

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The Chan Master Dayuan of Mt. Dagui [i.e., Guishan Lingyou] once addressed the assembly, saying, “All living beings have no buddha nature.”

Among the humans and devas hearing this, there are those of great capacities who rejoice and no lack of those who are alarmed and dubious. What Shakyamuni, the Honored One, says is “all living beings in their entirety have the buddha nature”; what Dagui says is “all living beings have no buddha nature.” There is a big difference between the meanings of “have” and “have no,” and which saying is correct should have been doubted. Nevertheless, “all living beings have no buddha nature” is superior on the way of the buddha. Yanguan’s saying, “have the buddha nature,” while it seems to extend a hand with the old buddha, is still “one staff borne by two people.”

But here, Dagui is not like that: he is “one staff swallowing up two people.” Moreover, the National Master is the child of Mazu, while Dagui is the grandchild of Mazu. Nevertheless, the dharma grandchild is an elder in the way of his master’s father, while the dharma child is a youth in the way of his master father. What Dagui says here by way of explication is “all living beings have no buddha nature.” He has not said that it is “a vastness beyond the line of ink”: he has this way of receiving and

maintaining the scripture within the quarters of his own house.

We should grope further: how could all living beings be the buddha nature or have the buddha nature? Any that have the buddha nature must be minions of Mara; they bring in a son of Mara and try to pile him on “all living beings.” As the buddha nature is the buddha nature, so living beings are living beings. The point is that living beings are not endowed from the start with a buddha nature; and even though they seek to provide themselves with one, the buddha nature will not newly arrive. Do not say that “When Mr. Chang drinks wine, Mr. Li gets drunk.” Where there is inherently a buddha nature, that is not a living being; where there is already a living being, that will not eventually be a buddha nature.

Hence, Baizhang said, “To talk of living beings having the buddha nature is to slander the buddha, dharma, and sangha; to talk of living beings having no buddha nature is to slander the buddha, dharma, and sangha.” Therefore, both saying “have the buddha nature” and saying “have no buddha nature” become a slander. Though we say they become a slander, this does not mean one should not say them. Now, let us ask you, Dagui and Baizhang: we should ask a bit, it is not that there is no slander, but have you talked of the buddha nature or not? If you have talked of it, it delimits the talk; and where there is talking, it should “study together” with hearing. Again, we should say to Dagui: you may be able to say, “all living beings have no buddha nature,” but you do not say, “all buddha natures have no living being”; you do not say, “all buddha natures have no buddha nature.” Much less have you seen, even in your dreams, “all buddhas have no buddha nature.” Try taking this up.

* * * * *

The Chan Master Dazhi of Mt. Baizhang [i.e., Baizhang Huaihai] addressed the assembly saying,

Buddha is the supreme vehicle; it is the highest wisdom; it is this person established on the way of the buddha; it is the buddha that has the buddha nature; it is the guide; it is making use of an unobstructed style; it is the unobstructed wisdom. Hence, it can make use of cause and effect, and is free in merit and wisdom; it forms the cart that carries cause and effect. In life, it is unarrested by life; in death, it is unobstructed by death. In the five

aggregates, like a gate opening, it is unobstructed by the five aggregates: it goes and stays freely, leaves and enters without difficulty. If it can be like this, it is not a matter of rank or stage, superiority or inferiority, even down to the body of an ant; if it is simply like this, everything is the pure and wondrous land, inconceivable.

This is Baizhang’s statement. The “five aggregates” are this body that “won’t be destroyed”; this hurried act is “a gate opening,” is “unobstructed by the five aggregates.” In making use of life, it is not arrested by life; in making use of death, it is not obstructed by death. Do not futilely love life; do not irrationally fear death! Since they are the locus of the buddha nature, to be moved by them or to reject them is an alien path. To recognize the conditions right before one is “making use of the unobstructed style.” This is “this buddha” that is “the supreme vehicle.” The locus of “this buddha” is “the pure and wondrous land.”

* * * * *

Huangbo [Xiyun] was sitting in Nanquan’s [i.e., Nanquan Puyuan’s] tea hall. Nanquan asked Huangbo, “‘Studying meditation and wisdom equally, one clearly sees the buddha nature’ — what about this principle?”

Huangbo said, “You only achieve it when you don’t rely on a single thing throughout the twelve times.”

Nanquan said, “Isn’t this the elder’s viewpoint?”

Huangbo said, “Not at all.”

Nanquan said, “Leaving aside the money for the rice water, whom can I get to pay back the money for the straw sandals?”

Huangbo desisted.

The essential point of “meditation and wisdom studied equally” is not that, since studying meditation does not interfere with studying wisdom, we “clearly see the buddha nature” where they are studied equally: it is that we have a study that is “meditation and wisdom studied equally” where we “clearly see the buddha nature.” He says, “what about this principle?” This is like saying, for example, “by whom is “clearly seeing the buddha nature” done? Another saying would also be, “when buddha and nature are studied equally, one clearly sees the buddha nature — what about this principle?”

Huangbo says, “you don’t rely on a single thing throughout the twelve times.” The essential point of this is that, although “throughout the twelve times” is located “throughout the twelve times,” it is “not relying”: because “not relying on a single thing” is “throughout the twelve times,” the buddha nature is clearly seen. This “throughout the twelve times” — in which time does it arrive? In which land? This “twelve times” — is it the twelve times among humans? Are there twelve times over there? Have the twelve times of the silver world come to us for a while? Whether it is this land, whether it is other worlds, it is “not relying.” Since it is “throughout the twelve times,” it must be “not relying.”

“Isn’t this the elder’s viewpoint?” is like saying, “Aren’t you saying this is your viewpoint?” Though he says, “is it the elder’s viewpoint?” [Huangbo] should not turn his head, thinking it must refer to himself. It may be accurate of himself, but it is not Huangbo, and Huangbo is not necessarily merely himself; for the “elder’s viewpoint” is “exposed everywhere.”

Huangbo says, “Not at all.” Regarding this term: in the land of the Song, when asked about one’s own ability, even while saying an ability is one’s ability, one says, “not at all.” Therefore, saying “not at all” does not mean “not at all,” and we should not reckon that this saying is saying that. “The elder’s viewpoint” may be that of an elder, “the elder’s viewpoint” may be that of Huangbo; but in speaking of it, he should say, “not at all.” He should be a water buffalo coming up and saying, “moo, moo.” Saying it like this is saying it. The point of what he is saying, we should try to say by another saying that also says it.

Nanquan said, “Leaving aside the money for the rice water, whom can I get to pay back the money for the straw sandals?” What he is saying is, “Putting aside for the moment the cost of your rice water, whom can I get to return the cost of your sandals.” The meaning of this saying, we should investigate for a long time, exhausting life after life. We should put our minds to and diligently study why he is not for the moment concerned about the “the money for the rice water,” and why he is concerned about “the money for the straw sandals.” How many straw sandals has he worn out in his years of pilgrimage? He should say, “If I hadn’t returned the money, I wouldn’t have put on the straw sandals.” Or he should say, “Two or three pair.” This should be his saying; this should be his point.

“Huangbo desisted.” This means he “desisted”: it does

not mean that, not being affirmed, he desisted; or, not affirming, he desisted. A patch-robed one of true colors is not like that. We should realize that there is speech within desisting, like “the blade within the laugh.” This is “the gruel is enough, the rice is enough,” of the buddha nature clearly seen.

Raising this episode, Guishan [Lingyou] asked Yangshan [Huiji], “Doesn’t this mean that Huangbo couldn’t catch that Nanquan?”

Yangshan said, “Not so. You should realize that Huangbo has the ability to trap a tiger.

Guishan said, “Your viewpoint is thus better.”

Dagui’s words say, “At that time, Huangbo could not catch Nanquan.” Guishan says, “Huangbo has the ability to trap a tiger.” If he has trapped the tiger, he should pet the tiger’s head.

Trapping a tiger and petting the tiger, he moves among other species.

Clearly seeing the buddha nature, he opens one eye;
The buddha nature clearly seeing, he loses one eye.

Speak! Speak!

The buddha nature’s viewpoint is “thus better.” Therefore, a half thing or a whole thing is “not relying”; a hundred thousand things are “not relying”; a hundred thousand times are “not relying.” Therefore, we say,

A single snare, throughout the times twelve.

Relying and not relying, like climbing vines depend on the tree.

Throughout the heavens and the whole of heaven; afterwards, he had no words.

* * * * *

A monk asked the Great Master Zhenji of Zhaozhou [i.e., Zhaozhou Congshen], “Does a dog have the buddha nature?”

We should be clear about the meaning of this question. The term gouzi means “dog.” He is not asking whether it has the buddha nature; he is not asking whether it does not have the buddha nature: he is asking whether “the man of iron” also studies the way. Although he may regret having mistakenly encountered a “poison hand,” it is in the style of “seeing half a holy one after thirty years.”

Zhaozhou said, “No.”

There is a route we should study when we hear this said. The “no” that the buddha nature calls itself should be said like this; the “no” that the dog calls itself should be said like this; the “no” by which the onlooker calls it should be said like this. There will be a day when this “no” just melts the stone.

The monk said, “All living beings have the buddha nature. Why doesn’t the dog have it?”

The point of what he says is that, if “all living beings” are “no,” “the buddha nature” must also be “no,” “the dog” must also be “no” — what about this point? Why should the buddha nature of the dog depend on “no”?

Zhaozhou said, “Because it has karmic consciousness.”

The meaning of these words is that, while “because it has” is “karmic consciousness,” and “having karmic consciousness” is “because it has,” they are the “no” of the dog, the “no” of the buddha nature. Karmic consciousness does not understand the dog; so how could the dog meet the buddha nature? Whether we disperse the pair or collect the pair, it is still karmic consciousness from beginning to end.

A monk asked Zhaozhou, “Does the dog have the buddha nature?”

The reason for this question must be for this monk to catch Zhaozhou. Thus, talking about and asking about the buddha nature is the “everyday tea and rice” of the buddhas and ancestors.

Zhaozhou said, “Yes.”

The form of this “yes” is not the “being” of the treatise masters of the teaching houses, not the “being” discussed by the Existence school. We should go on to study the being of the buddha. The being of the buddha is the being of Zhaozhou; the being of Zhaozhou is the being of the dog; the being of the dog is the being of the buddha nature.

The monk said, “Since it already has it, why does it still force entry into this bag of skin?”

In this monk’s saying, in asking whether it is present being, past being, or “already being,” though we may say “already being” resembles the various [other types of] being, “already being” shines alone. Should “already being” “force entry” or should it not “force entry”? There is no concerted effort that idly overlooks the conduct of “forcing entry into this bag of skin.”

Zhaozhou said, “Because it knowingly commits an intentional crime.”

These words may have long circulated in the world as a secular expression, but here they are Zhaozhou’s saying. What they say is that, knowing, it intentionally transgressed. Not a few must have had doubts about this saying. The term “entry” here may be difficult to clarify, but “the word ‘enter’ is not necessary.” Still more, [as the saying goes,] “if you wish to know the undying person in the hermitage, how could you leave this present bag of skin?” Whoever the “undying person” is, when would it leave the bag of skin? “Committing an intentional crime” is not necessarily “entering the bag of skin; “forcing entry into this bag of skin” is not necessarily “knowingly committing an intentional crime”: because it is “knowingly,” there must be “the commission of an intentional crime.” We should realize that this “commission of an intentional crime” may have covered and concealed the conduct of the body cast off. This is spoken of as “forcing entry.” The conduct of the body cast off, at the very time it is covered and concealed, is covered and concealed in the self and covered and concealed in others. Nevertheless, though this may be the case, do not say it has not escaped — “the [ordinary] guy ahead of the ass and behind the horse.” Moreover, as the Eminent Ancestor Yunju says, “Studying the marginal matters of the buddha dharma, you’ve already misused your mind.”

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In the community of the Reverend Changsha Jingcen, the Minister Zhu asked, “When you cut a worm in two pieces, both of them move. I don’t understand, in which one is the buddha nature?”

The master said, “Don’t have deluded ideas.”

The minister said, “What do you make of their moving?”

The master said, “It’s just that the wind and fire haven’t dispersed.”

The minister says here “cut a worm in two pieces”: is he certain that, before one cuts it, it is one piece? In the everyday life of the buddhas and ancestors, this is not so: from the beginning, the worm is not one piece, nor is it two pieces when one cuts it. We should make concerted effort and study the word “one piece.” In saying “both of them move,” by “both,” does he mean there is one before we cut it? Does he mean that there is one “beyond the buddha”? Whether or not the minister understands or does not understand the words “both of them,” we should not discard his words. Is it that, while the two cut parts are one, there is a further one? In speaking of the movement, he says “both move”: “concentration moves them and wisdom uproots them” are both this “movement.”

“I don’t understand, in which one is the buddha nature?” This saying, we should examine in detail. He should say, “When the buddha nature is cut in two pieces, I don’t understand, in which one is the worm?” “Both of them move; in which one is the buddha nature?” Is he saying that, if both of them move, they are unfit as the location of the buddha nature? Or is he saying that, although, since both move, the movement moves in both, in which [movement] is the location of the buddha nature?

“The master said, ‘Don’t have deluded ideas.’” What should we make of his point here? He says, “Do not have deluded ideas.” So, is he saying that, “when both of them move,” they have no deluded ideas? Or saying that they are not deluded ideas? Or saying just that the buddha nature has no deluded ideas? Or, without discussing the buddha nature or discussing “both,” is he just saying that there are no deluded ideas. We should study all these.

“What do you make of their moving?” Is this saying that, since they are moving, we should add another layer of buddha nature on top of them? Is it trying to say that, since they are moving, they are not the buddha nature?

To say “the wind and fire haven’t dispersed” is to make the buddha nature appear. Should we take it as the buddha nature? Should we take it as the wind and fire? We should not say that the buddha nature and the wind and fire both emerge; we should not say that one emerges and one does not emerge; we should not say that the wind and fire are themselves the buddha nature. Therefore, Changsha does not say that the worm has the buddha nature; he does not say that the worm has no buddha nature. He simply says, “Don’t have deluded ideas”; he says, “the wind and fire haven’t dispersed.” We should

calculate the way of life of the buddha nature by the saying of Changsha; we should quietly make concerted efforts on the words “the wind and fire haven’t dispersed.” What is the reasoning behind his saying “undispersed”? Does “undispersed” mean he is saying that the wind and fire have been collected and have not yet reached the point when they will be dispersed? This cannot be the case. “The wind and fire haven’t dispersed” is the buddha preaching the dharma; “the wind and fire haven’t dispersed” is the dharma preaching the buddha. It is like the arrival of the time when a single sound preaches the dharma; it is the time of the arrival of the single sound that is the preaching of the dharma. The dharma is a single sound; for it is the dharma of a single sound.

Again, to think that the buddha nature exists only at the time of birth and not at the time of death is [a case of] little learning and slight understanding. The time of birth “has the buddha nature” and “has no buddha nature”; the time of death “has the buddha nature” and “has no buddha nature.” If we discuss the dispersal and non-dispersal of the wind and fire, it would be the dispersal and non-dispersal of the buddha nature. The time that it disperses must be the buddha nature existing, must be the buddha nature not existing; the time that it has not dispersed must be having the buddha nature, must be having no buddha nature. Despite this, to cling falsely to [the views that] the buddha nature exists or does not exist depending on whether it is moving or not moving, or [that] it is spirit or is not spirit depending on whether it is conscious or not conscious, or [that] it is the nature or is not the nature depending on its knowing or not knowing — this is an alien path. “From beginningless kalpas,” “the deluded,” “acknowledging the knowing spirit,” have taken it as the buddha nature, have taken it as “the original person” — what a laugh! To say something further about the buddha nature, although we need not be “covered with mud and soaked with water,” it is “fences, walls, tiles, and pebbles.” When we say something beyond this, what is the buddha nature? Is everything clear? “Three heads and eight arms.”

Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma
Buddha Nature
Number 3

Presented to the assembly on the fourteenth day, tenth month,
second year of Ninji (*kanoto-ushi*) [November 18, 1241]
at Kannon Dori Kosho Horinji, Yoshu

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NEWS

April 1, 2010

Rev. Shohaku Okumura resigned as the Director of Soto Zen Buddhism International Center and Rev. Issho Fujita was appointed as the Director of Soto Zen Buddhism International Center

Rev. Gengo Akiba resigned as the Director of Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office and Rev. Daigaku Rumme was appointed as the Director of Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office.

May 28 - 30, 2010

Europe Soto Zen Conference was held at Temple Zen de la Gendronnière, France

June 2, 2010

Hawaii Soto Zen Workshop was held at Shoboji, Honolulu, HI

July 30 – August 1, 2010

North America Soto Zen Conference and Workshop was held at Sokoji, San Francisco, CA

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

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