



SOTO ZEN JOURNAL

# DHARMA EYE

News of Soto Zen Buddhism: Teachings and Practice

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## Lecture on Gasan Joseki Zenji, Second Abbot of Daihonzan Sojiji

*This talk was given by following lecturers from the Daionki Office of Daihonzan Sojiji in the Preliminary Memorial Ceremony for the 650th Anniversary of the Daihonzan Sojiji's Second Abbot Gasan Joseki Zenji held outside Japan.*

[Lecturer]

**Rev. Doko Maeda**, Assistant Director of the Donation Division

**Rev. Seietsu Ito**, Director of the Visitor Division

**Rev. Houei Murase**, Director of the General Affairs Division

**Rev. Horyu Otsu**, Director of the Ceremonial Division

I am deeply moved and appreciative that the Preliminary Memorial Ceremony for the 650th Anniversary of the Daihonzan Sojiji's Second Abbot, Gasan Joseki Zenji, has been successfully and solemnly completed here today, with your grateful hearts assembled for his grace.

The Buddha's teachings have been transmitted from India through China to Japan by Koso Dogen Zenji, and through Koun Zenji and Tettsu Zenji, mindfully and meticulously transferred to the Taiso Keizan Zenji, who opened the Daihonzan Sojiji. The Second Abbot of Sojiji, Gasan Zenji, received the true Dharma from Taiso Keizan Zenji, and he worked as the abbot of Sojiji for forty-two years, establishing a solid foundation for the temple through his great efforts in its consoli-

dation and management.

I would like to begin by speaking about the Great Memorial Ceremony for the Two Venerable Ones of the Daihonzan Sojiji.

### (Great Memorial Ceremony)

The 650th Great Memorial Ceremony of the Second Abbot, Gasan Zenji, and the 700th Great Memorial Ceremony of the Taiso Keizan Zenji, are ceremonies held in commemoration of the achievements of our deceased ancestors these many years and months after their passing. These ceremonies usually take place every fifty years after the initial fiftieth memorial ceremonies.

In Soto Zen Buddhism we refer to the memorial ceremonies of the Founders and the Second Abbots of the Two Head Temples, Eiheiji and Sojiji, as the "Great Memorial Ceremony."

### (Two Great Memorial Ceremonies: Learning from the Two Venerable Ones)

At the Daihonzan Sojiji we respectfully call Taiso Keizan Zenji and the Second Abbot Gasan Zenji "the Two Venerable Ones," viewing them as one unified honorable body.



Sign of the Great Memorial Ceremony in front of Koshakudai

We will hold the 650th Great Memorial Ceremony of the Second Abbot Gasan Zenji in 2015, and the 700th Great Memorial Ceremony of Taiso Kiezan Zenji in 2024. In a unified undertaking spanning ten years, we will observe “The Great Memorial Ceremony for Commemorating the Two Venerable Ones” by holding various events centered on the *Sojo* (Transmission) of their teachings.

Since laying the foundation of Sojiji, the Two Venerable Ones always met people and society with sincerity, devoting themselves tirelessly to the further development of Soto Zen Buddhism's teachings. We will listen intently to their footsteps and attend diligently to the footsteps of the present and future Sangha as well.

#### **(Gasan Zenji's birth)**

I would now like to comment upon the footsteps of Gasan Zenji, starting with his birth.

Gasan Zenji's parents were very devout people. As they were without a child for a long time, his mother especially prayed singleheartedly to Manjushri Bodhisattva “To be granted a child.” Then one night his mother dreamed that Manjushri Bodhisattva was swallowing a sword, and she became pregnant. We can imagine how much both parents were delighted, as they had been eagerly awaiting the birth of a child. The months matured and a big baby boy, like a jewel, was born. This child grew to become Gasan Zenji.

The story of Gasan Zenji's birth is very much like that of Keizan Zenji, the Founder of Sojiji. It is recorded that Keizan Zenji's mother also had not been granted a child for a long time, and that she, too, became pregnant after

praying to Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva at the Kannon Shrine in her village.

We do not know the name of Gasan Zenji during his boyhood, but he was warmly raised by his devout parents, enjoyed playing among the beautiful mountains and clear stream of his homeland, and grew to be a vigorous and wise boy.

The birthplace of Gasan Zenji was Uryu, now Tsubata-town, near the boundary between Ishikawa Prefecture and Toyama Prefecture. The time of Gasan Zenji's youth was the end of the Kamakura Period in Japan. At the age of eleven Gasan Zenji was brought by his mother to a temple of either the Tendai or Shingon School to become a novice monk, and he climbed up to Mt. Hiei to begin his formal training at the age of sixteen.

#### **(His meeting with Keizan Zenji)**

Regarding his meeting with Keizan Zenji, it is recorded that after six years of strenuous effort in training and study at Mt. Hiei, Gasan Zenji heard a rumor that a distinguished Zen monk named Keizan Zenji was staying in Kyoto. He was interested to know what kind of Zen monk Keizan Zenji was, so he decided to visit him. He then challenged him with this question, asking:

“Isn't the Tendai School teaching that I am now learning the same as the Zen teaching you mention?”

Without answering him, Keizan Zenji simply smiled. Not understanding the meaning of Keizan Zenji's smile, Gasan Zenji returned to Mt. Hiei and devoted himself to the cultivation of study and practice far more earnestly than before. He continued, however, to ponder the

significance of Keizan Zenji's smile, and to consider the true nature of the Buddha's Path. In this way he spent two more years at Mt. Hiei, but he was left feeling unsatisfied, unable to resolve the perplexities in which he found himself. Finally, he determined to leave Mt. Hiei and to go to Daijoji Temple in Kaga, in the present Kanazawa City in Ishikawa Prefecture.

### **(His practice, Two Moons)**

Upon arriving at Daijoji, Gasan Zenji was joyfully welcomed by Keizan Zenji. Keizan Zenji said, "I believe that you will become an important person in the development of the Soto Zen Buddhism in the future. So please become a Soto Zen monk, by all means." Gasan Zenji, responding to these words, changed from the way of the Tendai Buddhism to that of the Soto Zen Buddhism. Gasan Zenji thereby entered into a life of hard practice and deepened his practice of the Buddha Way.

The following anecdote comes from this period:

Keizan Zenji said, "Do you know that there are two moons?"

Gasan Zenji said, "No, I don't."

Keizan Zenji said, "If you don't know that there are two moons, you cannot become my Zen successor."

Recognizing the immaturity of his practice, Gasan Zenji strove even more intensively than before. Two years later, while Gasan Zenji, now at the age of twenty-six, was single-mindedly sitting in zazen as usual, Keizan Zenji approached him silently and snapped his fingers near Gasan Zenji's ear. At that moment Gasan Zenji was completely awakened. It was like being awakened from a long dream.

There is no record of how Gasan Zenji was awakened to the two moons, but it would have been to the one moon that illuminates the whole world and to the other moon that is in one's own mind, like the Buddha. Keizan Zenji acknowledged Gasan Zenji's awakening and was even more strongly convinced that he would become his successor.

Even after his awakening, Gasan Zenji continued his strenuous practice under Keizan Zenji, and at the age of thirty-one he set out to widen his observations and enrich his experiences by traveling to train throughout many provinces. Gasan Zenji's pilgrimage to districts throughout the country led to encounters with many people. After two years of travel, he returned to Daijoji. In due course Keizan Zenji entrusted Daijoji to Meiho Sotetsu Zenji, and he established Jojuji Temple in Kaga Province. He also established Yokoji with a land donation in Sakai, Noto Province, near the present Sakai-cho of Hakui City. At this time Gasan Zenji devoted his best efforts to support Keizan Zenji in founding of Yokoji.

### **(Opening of Sojiji)**

After opening Yokoji, Keizan Zenji worked actively to propagate Soto Zen Buddhism teachings, centering his efforts in Noto Province. He soon procured Morookadera Temple of the Shingon Buddhism in Noto, converted it into a Soto Zen Buddhism temple, and renamed it Sojiji.

Three years after opening Sojiji, Keizan Zenji gave the abbacy to Gasan Zenji, and returning to Yokoji Temple. Keizan Zenji passed away there in the following year at the age of sixty-two.



### (Establishing the foundation of Sojiji)

Gasán Zenji inherited Sojiji at the age of forty-nine. Although the Emperor Godaigo had already conferred the imperial designation of “Practice Place for Promotion of the Soto Zen Buddhism” upon Sojiji, the temple was not yet well equipped with physical buildings or financial resources, and it was expected that Gasán Zenji would use his great abilities to propagate Soto Zen Buddhism teachings throughout the country.

Under Gasán Zenji, the distinguished disciples that came to be known as the *Gotetsu* (Five Abbots) and the *Nijugotetsu* (Twenty-five Dignitaries) gathered from all over the country to practice at Sojiji.

The Five Abbots were the disciples, Taigen Soshin, Tsugen Jakurei, Mutan Sokan, Daitetsu Soryo, and Jippo Ryoshu, who set up Fuzoin, Myokoan, Tosenan, Denpoan, and Nyoian, respectively. Together these temples were called the *Goin* (Five Temples) of the Sojiji precinct, and each disciple managed Sojiji in turn.

Gasán Zenji spread Keizan Zenji’s teachings widely, providing his disciples with the “*Keizan Shingi* (Keizan’s Pure Standard)” in order to propagate Soto Zen Buddhism teachings throughout the country.

While acting as the abbot of Sojiji, Gasán Zenji became the abbot of Yokoji as well. The anecdote of “*Gasán-goe* (Gasán’s Peak Passing)” is from this period. In order to officiate at the morning services of both Sojiji and Yokoji, Gasán Zenji held services at Yokoji at midnight, and then crossed a mountain pass of fifty-two kilometers to officiate at Sojiji afterward. At Sojiji the monks recited the Daihishin Dharani

slowly, until Gasán Zenji arrived. Then, they resumed their recitation at the ordinary speed. This unique recitation method, called *shindoku* (literally, “true reading”) is observed at every morning service of Sojiji to this day.

### (Fostering of disciples and achievements)

As mentioned earlier, there were among Gasán Zenji’s disciples many particularly distinguished ones, who came to be called the Twenty-five Dignitaries.

Gasán Zenji determined that each abbot of “Five Temples” should take turns acting as abbot of Sojiji. Consulting together on important issues, they operated within a structure known as the Cycle Resident Priest System (*Rinban Jushoku Sei*), in which the disciples, bonded together, managed Sojiji.

After Gasán Zenji passed away, this system was formally adopted by Taigen Soshin Zenji, and it continued for five hundred and four years, among almost fifty thousand abbots, until it ceased in the year 1870. The Cycle Resident Priest System played an important role in the development of Sojiji and the formation of its Front Gate Town, with its great bustle and business.

### (His Entering Nirvana)

In these many ways, Gasán Zenji actively contributed to the solidification of Sojiji’s foundation. Gradually giving way to the natural course of physical conditions, he at last passed away, in the presence of his disciples, on the twentieth of October of the fifth year of Joji (1366), at the age of ninety-one.

His last words, in the form of a poem, were: “I received my life for ninety-one years, and

will depart to the other world when night falls.” He left such works as “*Mountain Clouds*,” “*Ocean Moon and The Ambrosia Announcing Dharma Words*,” among others.

(*Sojo*)

Let us consider, finally, *Sojo*, which means transmission of the Buddha’s teaching from master to disciple, generation after generation.

The Second Abbot Gasan Zenji correctly received the Buddha’s teachings from Taiso Keizan Zenji. He established the foundation of Sojiji, enabling the valuable teachings to be mutually transmitted to generations of ancestors, beginning with the Twenty-five Dignitaries. We are Dharma descendants in the living extension of this lineage, and we must mutually transmit these valuable teachings to the future. The “great footsteps” are not only those of Gasan Zenji and the generations of ancestors, but also those of the future sangha to which we must transmit the teachings.

By mindfully and meticulously teaching and fostering many disciples called Five Abbots and Twenty-five Dignitaries, the foundation of the Soto Zen Buddhism was established and its development throughout the country made possible.

As the Great Memorial Ceremony approaches, we wish to widely promote *Sojo*. The valuable teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha have been mutually transmitted through generations of ancestors, the Two Ancestors (Dogen Zenji, Keizan Zenji), and Gasan Zenji, and they are vividly received by us through the Dharma blood vein. We must mutually transmit these valuable teachings into the future. In doing so, we must deeply reflect on the difficult-to-meet

causal relations that have made it possible for us to receive these great teachings. We must also consider how we can transmit these teachings with our whole bodies and hearts into the future, even as we face growing fears of social confusion and spiritual insecurity.



"Sojo" Calligraphy by Egawa Shinzan Zenji

On this occasion of the Preliminary Memorial Ceremony, I would like to look forward to next year’s Great Memorial Ceremony and the opportunity it provides for extolling the beneficial virtues rendered to us by Gasan Zenji, for appreciating deeply the limitless grace of compassion legitimately inherited to this day without interruption, and for reflecting on the gravity of our responsibility to transmit the teachings into the future.

In closing, I am again very grateful, from the bottom of my heart, for this respectful holding of the Preliminary Memorial Ceremony for the 650th Anniversary of Gasan Zenji.

# Report on the Preliminary Memorial Ceremony for the 650th Anniversary of Daihonzan Sojiji's Second Abbot Gasan Joseki Zenji

## Soto Zen Buddhism International Center

Gasan Joseki Zenji was born in Uryu, Hakui District, Noto Province (the present Aza Uryu, Tsubata-cho, Kahoku-gun, Ishikawa Prefecture) in Kenji 2 (1276 C.E.). At the age of twenty four, in Shoan 1 (1299 C.E.), he became a disciple of Keizan Zenji, striving in practice under him. He devoted his life to the development of Soto Zen Buddhism and passed away at the age of ninety one in Teiji 5 (1366 C.E.).

Lectures about Gasan Zenji were given on the occasions of the Preliminary Memorial Ceremony for his 650th Anniversary held outside Japan. The content of these lectures may be found in the leading article.

In advance of the 650th Anniversary Ceremony to be held at Sojiji, one of the Head Temples of Soto Zen Buddhism, next year in remembrance of Gasan Zenji's great virtues and legacies, the Preliminary Memorial Ceremony has been held at nine places in Japan and four regional Soto Zen Buddhism Offices overseas.

The following is a report on the Preliminary Memorial Ceremonies held overseas.

## Soto Zen Buddhism Europe Office

May 17 - 18, 2014

Zendonien, Les Montils, French Republic

The first Preliminary Memorial Ceremony for the 650th Anniversary of Daihonzan Sojiji's Second Abbot Gasan Joseki Zenji held outside Japan was solemnly held at Zendonien (Temple Zen de la Gendronniere) in the suburbs of Blois, France.

Rev. Ikki Nambara, Assistant Director, and Rev. Yuji Ito, Secretary of the Soto Zen Buddhism International Center, went to France to make preparations and attend it.

As the place held the ceremony was located at Zendonien, about two hours by car from the Europe Office in Paris, they departed for the site after a meeting to make arrangements and prepare materials for the ceremony. Besides setting up the *Chinso* (Master's Portrait) and decorating the Hondo (Main Hall), they marked the layout for tatami mats with masking tape so that they could be placed easily, making the participants' positions clear and the movements of the chanting processions smooth.

On the morning of the 17th the Europe Soto Zen Conference was held, attended by *Kokusaifukyoshi* (International Dissemination Teachers) from all parts of Europe. In the afternoon a ceremony rehearsal led by Rev. Nambara was attended by twenty *Kokusaifukyoshi* and about sixty Soto Zen practitioners from the Europe Office area. Meanwhile Rev. Ryukan Sunakoshi, Director of the Publication Division of Sotoshu Shumuchō, Rev. Shunitsu Okamoto, Comptroller of Sojiji (*Fusu*), Rev. Doko Maeda, Assistant Director of the Dona-



tion Division of the *Daionki* (Great Memorial Ceremony) Office, and Rev. Doshu Hirose, Chief of the Donation Division of the *Daionki* Office arrived, and after the rehearsal, Rev. Sunakoshi, who would serve as the officiant at the Preliminary Memorial Ceremony on the following day, made three prostrations with five bell rings. Following this, at 5 p.m., the Special Decoction-offering Ceremony was led smoothly and solemnly by Rev. Jiso Forzani, Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism Europe Office.



Special Decoction Ceremony



Lecture on Gasan Zenji

After the ceremony, Rev. Maeda gave a lecture on Gasan Zenji's life, virtues, and legacies, accompanied by projected translations into English and French on the screen at the Seminar Hall. Participants appeared to listen to the lecture with great interest and renewed respect for Gasan Zenji, who laid the foundation for today's development of Soto Zen Buddhism.

The next morning at dawn participants joined in zazen and morning service in the still chilly Main Hall. Afterwards, monks with ceremonial duties prepared for the ceremony and checked that everything was ready.

At 10 a.m. the hall bell tolled, announcing the beginning of the Preliminary Ceremony. Rev. Ito and Rev. Kosen Servan of Kanshoji Temple sang *Sanbo Gowasan* (Hymns of the Triple Treasures), and they also added the feeling of adoration by singing the *Gowasan* and *Goeika* in praise of the Gasan Zenji and *Shobo Gowasan* (Hymns of the True Dharma) during the ceremony. Upon Rev. Sunakoshi's entrance, quiet prevailed and the ceremony proceeded in graciousness and flawlessness.

After the ceremony Rev. Sunakoshi read the greeting message of Rev. Koichi Sasaki, President of Sotoshu Shumicho. On behalf of the *Daionki* Office, Rev. Okamoto expressed appreciation for the respectful practice of the Preliminary Memorial Ceremony and extended an invitation to visit Sojiji in the following year. English and French translations were provided by Rev. Togen Moss, Secretary of the Europe Office. In this way, over the course of two days the practice was completed smoothly.





Leave Ranks and Offer Incense



Read the Statement



Greeting by Rev. Sunakoshi



Greeting by Rev. Okamoto

## Soto Zen Buddhism South America Office

May 24 - 25, 2014

Busshinji, Sao Paulo, Federative Republic of Brazil

The Preliminary Memorial Ceremony for the 650th Anniversary of Daihonzan Sojiji's Second Abbot Gasan Joseki Zenji was solemnly practiced in South America at Busshinji Temple in Sao Paulo, Federative Republic of Brazil.

As the Main Hall of Busshinji was newly built in 1995, with the *Daima* (the ceremony site in the Main Hall) spread with tatami mats and wood flooring elsewhere, it is among other overseas temples very similar to those of Japan. In addition to the Main Hall, a *Daikankaku* with *Zendo* (Zazen Hall), *Kaisando* (Founder's Hall), etc., was built in 2009, and zazen is practiced there in the morning and evening. By the day preceding the ceremony preparations had



been completed well with the Shumidan (Main Altar) decorated with the *Chinso* (Master's Portrait) and other offerings.

On the morning of the 24th, the day before the Preliminary Memorial Ceremony, a Conference of *Kokusaifukyoshi* active in Brazil, Peru, Argentina, and Colombia was held. In the afternoon a ceremony rehearsal was practiced to review procedures for *Dengu* (Passing Offerings) and *Shutsuban Shoko* (Leaving Ranks and Burning Incense), etc.

Before the Special Decoction-offering Ceremony, several representatives arrived, including Rev. Kodo Banno, Director of the General Affairs Division, Sotoshu Shumuchō, who would serve as the officiant at the Preliminary Memorial Ceremony, Rev. Wagen Murata, Assistant Administrator of Sojiji, and Rev. Seietsu Ito, Director of the Visitor Division of *Daionki* Office. Rev. Banno made the three prostrations with the five bell rings.

At 6 p.m. the Special Decoction-offering Ceremony was officiated by Rev. Dosho Saikawa, Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism South America Office. About ninety people, the majority zazen participants at Busshinji, attended.



Special Decoction Ceremony

At 9 a.m. on the rainy morning of the 25th, the Prayer Ceremony for the *Keirokai* (Senior Members' Group) of Busshinji was held, with prayers for good health, long life, and good fortune. Following this, Rev. Ito gave a lecture on Gasan Zenji's life, virtues, and legacies, accompanied by an interpreter translating into Portuguese. This became an important occasion to touch on the teachings of Gasan Zenji, who laid the foundation of Sojiji and fostered many disciples. Then, at the *Kannondo* Hall, located on the left side behind the Main Hall from front and well improved for this occasion, an unveiling ceremony of the frame of "*Kannondo*," a calligraphic work made by Rev. Egawa Shinzan Zenji, Abbot of the Sojiji, was held and the piece was first exhibited for the participants.



Lecture on Gasan Zenji



Unveiling Ceremony of the Frame

The Preliminary Memorial Ceremony was held in a solemn atmosphere, with Rev. Banno, invited to officiate. While offerings were made one by one and eighteen prostrations were solemnly performed by Rev Banno, the Main Hall became a place of serenity as if forgetting the hustle and bustle of the big city of Sao Paulo. Also, Rev. Shomyo Sato, the Specially Dispatched *Baika* Teacher, respectfully sang *Goeika* and *Gowasan* with *Baika* members in Brazil. About 120 participants filling the Main Hall recollected Gasan Zenji and concentrated their hearts on the “great sound of the holy footsteps” to be transmitted into the future.



Sing Baika songs

After the ceremony, Rev. Banno read the greeting message of Rev. Koichi Sasaki, President of Sotoshu Shumuchu. On behalf of the *Daionki* Office, Rev. Murata expressed appreciation for the respectful practice of the Preliminary Memorial Ceremony and said, “Please, by all means, visit Sojiji next year!” Thus, the practice of the Preliminary Memorial Ceremony was done successfully.



Greeting by Rev. Murata



Leave Ranks and Offer Incense



## Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office

May 31 - June 1, 2014

Zenshuji, Los Angeles, U.S.A.

Following the Preliminary Memorial Ceremonies held at the Regional Office (*Sokanbu*) in Europe and South America, the Preliminary Memorial Ceremony for the 650th Anniversary Ceremony of Daihonzan Sojiji's Second Abbot Gasan Joseki Zenji was solemnly practiced in North America at Zenshuji in Little Tokyo of Los Angeles, California, United States of America.

From the International Center, Rev. Issho Fujita, Director, Rev. Ikki Nambara, Assistant Director, and Rev. Yuji Ito, Secretary, participated in the ceremony.

At 9 a.m. on May 31st a Soto Zen workshop organized by North America Office guided by Rev. Nambara was held for *Kokusai Fukuyoshi* participating in the Preliminary Memorial Ceremony. The Main Hall of Zenshuji is built like a Christian Church, with rows of benches for the members and followers, and *Daima* (the ceremony site in the Main Hall) and the *Naijin* (the site of the altar) located on a stage. A practice rehearsal was held so that the ceremony could be carried out smoothly on the stage.

In the afternoon Prof. William Bodiford (University of California, Los Angeles) gave a lecture on "Gasan Zenji and the Expansion of the Soto Zen Buddhism" as a continuation of the morning workshop. Many attendants, including a public audience, listened intently with great interest and participated in a lively question and answer session afterward.

Meanwhile, Rev. Ryukan Sunakoshi, Director of the Publication Division, Sotoshu Shumuchō, who would serve as the officiant at the Preliminary Memorial Ceremony on the following day, Rev. Eiitsu Suzuki, *Godo* of Sojiji, and Rev. Houei Murase, Director of the General Affairs Division of the *Daionki* Office arrived.

At 4:30 p.m. the hall bell started tolling and the Special Decoction-offering Ceremony was officiated by Rev. Daigaku Rumme, Director of Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office.



Lecture by Prof. William Bodiford



Special Decoction Ceremony



At 9:30 a.m. the next morning a “Zendeko” performance by the Zenshuji Taiko Group opened the ceremony, and the sound of the taiko beats resounded aloud in the Main Hall. Before the ceremony, Rev. Murase, accompanied by an interpreter translating into English, gave a lecture on Gasan Zenji’s life, virtues, and legacies. The audience listened intently and some note taking was observed.



Lecture on Gasan Zenji



Offering

At 11 a.m. the bell tolled, announcing the beginning of the ceremony, and *Sanbo Gowasant* was sung by the *Baika* group members of

*Zenshuji* and of *Sokoji* in San Francisco. Rev. Sunakoshi, ceremony officiant, ascended the Hall led by Rev. Rumme. Participants observed the ceremony with great interest, as it was unlike the usual ones. The ceremony proceeded like water flowing and in the quietness we could hear a pin drop. Rev. Nambara played the role of *Ino* (Rector), as in the ceremony in Europe, and read the *Sho* (Statement). The *Sho* described the significance of the ceremony and expressed admiration for Gasan Zenji’s virtues and legacies.

After the ceremony Rev. Sunakoshi read the greeting message of Rev. Koichi Sasaki, President of Sotoshu Shumuchō, and the *Baika* song *Shobo Gowasan* (Hymns of the True Dharma) was sung as he left the hall. On behalf of the *Daionki* Office, Rev. Suzuki expressed appreciation for the respectful practice of the Preliminary Memorial Ceremony.

This was followed by a candle offering performed by the children of *Zenshuji Terakoya* to open a Merit Transfer Ceremony for all family ancestors of Zenshuji members. The ceremony was led by Rev. Gengo Akiba, former Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office. During the Sutra chanting participants offered incense one by one.

About thirty monks in North America and about one hundred members and followers of Zenshuji gathered together on that day, joined by monks of other schools from the Los Angeles Buddhist Church Federation, creating a grand gathering of great success.

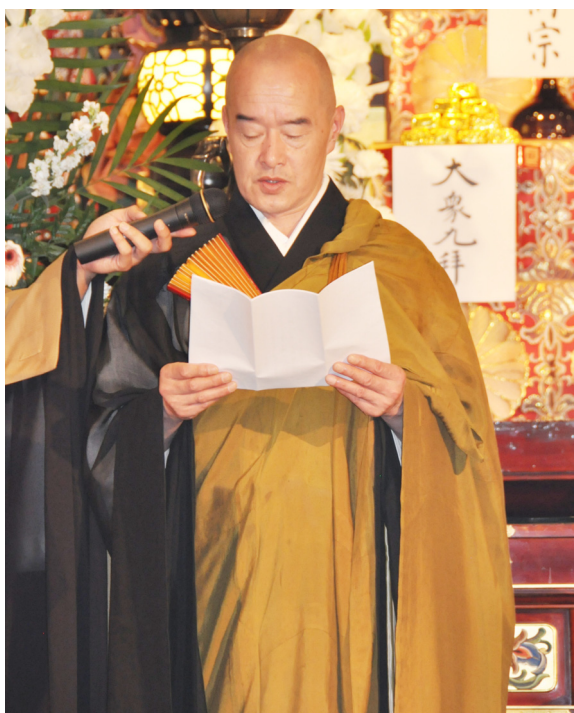
## Soto Zen Buddhism Hawaii Office

September 12 - 13, 2014

Shoboji, Honolulu, U.S.A



Sing Baika songs



Greeting by Rev. Suzuki

The final Preliminary Memorial Ceremony for the 650th Anniversary Ceremony of Daihonzan Sojiji's Second Abbot Gasan Joseki Zenji held in Japan and overseas was solemnly practiced in Hawaii at Shoboji in Honolulu. Honolulu is located on Oahu, the Island of Everlasting Summer.

With the empathetic participation of some monks who came from Japan, we began preparations in the Main Hall, which resembles Zenshuji in the interior, amid daytime outside temperatures that were above 30 degrees centigrade.

On September 12th, about eight monks from the Hawaii Office area gathered at 9.a.m. to have a meeting. Followed by they and monks from Japan had a rehearsal of the Preliminary Memorial Ceremony as the Soto Zen Workshop organized by Hawaii Office.

After lunch, several representatives arrived, including Rev. Yudo Saito, Director of the Mission Division, Sotoshu Shumuchō, who would serve as the officiant of the Preliminary Memorial Ceremony on the following day, Rev. Seishi Ishida, Assistant Administrator of Sojiji and Rev. Horyu Otsu, Director of the Ceremonial Division of the *Daionki* Office. After the workshop, Rev. Saito made the three prostrations with five bell rings.

At 3:30 p.m. the Main Hall bell started to toll and the Special Decoction-offering Ceremony was officiated by Rev. Shugen Komagata, Director of Soto Zen Buddhism Hawaii Office.



Following this Rev. Otsu gave a lecture on Gasan Zenji's life, legacy, and virtues, with English translation. Despite the lingering heat in the Main Hall, all attendants listened intently.

After the ceremony, monks and participants moved to the Social Hall to have a dinner, and we were entertained by the Taiko performance, "*Hawaii Matsuri Daiko*."



Special Decoction Ceremony



Lecture on Gasan Zenji

At 9:30 a.m. on the 13th, the *Sanbo Gowasan* was performed by the *Baika* members of Hawaii, their voices resounding throughout the Main Hall filled with the windless heat from outside. In the silence after the singing, Rev. Saito, passing through the center aisle between benches arranged like those in a church, ascended the stage. The chanting of "*Namu-kie-sanbo*" and "*Namu-kie-butsu, Namu-kie-ho, and Namu-kie-so*," in the Pali language was sung accompanied by the organ, a special feature of the Hawaiian ceremony, and the participants were enveloped by pleasant and comforting sounds.

After the ceremony, Rev. Saito read the greeting of Rev. Koichi Sasaki, President of Sotoshu Shumucho. Following this, on behalf of the *Daionki* Office, Rev. Ishida expressed appreciation for the holding of the Preliminary Memorial Ceremony, with the English translation projected on the screen.



Raise incense and present Dharma words





Greeting by Rev. Ishida

future generations. In this way, all events over two days were concluded safely.



Memorial Ceremony at Kemo'o Cemetery

After lunch in the Social Hall, about eighty monks, members and followers boarded three buses for a memorial ceremony in honor of deceased Japanese immigrants. Sutra chanting was officiated by Rev. Komagata at Kemo'o Cemetery, about forty minutes' drive northwest of Honolulu, and Kawaihoa Cemetery, ten minutes from there. The participants offered incense during the chanting and made *gassho* to the deceased under the strong sunlight. Afterwards, the group went further up the mountain from the hill of the Kawaihoa Cemetery to view the great ocean below. This was the previous site of Ryusenji temple, which later moved to Wahiawa, and where the great Bodhi tree continues to thrive, as if keeping watch over the area.



Bodhi tree at old site of Ryusenji

For more details, see our special website for the Great Memorial Ceremony of Daihonzan Sojiji at <http://sojo.jp/>

The participants on this day extended their thoughts to the two footsteps of Gasan Zenji and deceased Japanese immigrants, renewing their consideration of the importance of transmitting their teachings and experiences to





## **“1st Latin American Zen Meeting” Bridge of cultures**

**Rev. Senpo Oshiro**

Soto Zen Buddhist Association  
Nanzenji, Buenos Aires, Argentina

A gathering of monastic and lay practitioners of Zen Buddhism was held for the first time in more than 100 years of history of Buddhism in Latin America. No distinction of nationality, race, branch or school, teacher, lineage, or religion was made. It was even attended by Christian groups whose practice includes Zen meditation.

The “1st Latin American Zen Meeting” took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 15th to 20th April 2014. Sanghas, Masters and practitioners from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, Japan, Peru, Taiwan, Tibet, Uruguay and Venezuela attended and collaborated with this event.

### **Purposes of the Meeting:**

- a) Spread Zen practice in Latin America for the benefit of the whole society.
- b) Facilitate exchange and mutual understanding between groups and sanghas of the region
- c) Articulate and coordinate future activities

### **Background:**

Many sanghas of Latin America had a chance to meet in 2013 during:

- a) The 110th anniversary of the establishment of Rev. Taian Ueno, sent as missionary by the Soto Zen School from Japan, commemorated in Peru<sup>1</sup>.

- b) The "Second WABCE Asian Festival of Buddhist Culture & International Convention", held in Sri Lanka.

Thus we were enthusiastic about meeting in our own countries and languages.

**Organizers:** an ad-hoc committee was created by over 30 volunteers from the sanghas of Serena Alegria Anrakuji, Viento del Sur, Nanzenji Association (Argentina), Daishinji (Colombia), Community Zuihoji (Peru), Zenkoji (Brazil).

**Sponsored but not funded by:** Ministry of Culture of Buenos Aires, General Directorate of Religious Affairs, National Museum of Oriental Art, Japanese Association in Argentina.

**Funding:** even though certain activities or meals had a fee, the Meeting was funded to a large extent by the practice of Dāna, generosity and donations of money from individuals, groups and Buddhist and non-Buddhist organizations.

### **Audience:**

- a) Monks, lay people, researchers, academics, writers, journalists, teachers and practitioners of disciplines related to Zen, such as martial arts, aesthetic arts or health related ones.
- b) Public with little or no prior knowledge of Buddhism or Zen, not even related to any Asian community.

### **Highlights from the 6 days of the meeting**

#### **The opening ceremony**

The keynote speakers were Rev. Issho Fujita (Soto Zen Buddhism International Center, USA), Rev. Jisen Oshiro (Soto Zen Jionji Temple, Peru), Ven. Ru Ying (Fo Guang Shan Temple, Taiwan), Ven. Jampa Tenshin (Glugpa School, Tibet) and special guests, Mr. Alfredo Abriani (Director of General Directorate of Religious Affairs, Buenos Aires) and Mr. Osvaldo Borrás (Deputy Director National Museum of Oriental Art).

**Tribute act for Mr. Osvaldo Svanascini<sup>2</sup>**, art critic and pioneer in the dissemination of Zen and Asian art.



Morning Service



Zazen with chair

## Ceremony for peace

### Meditation Retreat (2 days) in a Christian Abbacy.

### Cultural activities

More than 30 open and free activities were offered. It was an opportunity to interact and share with other institutions and the public.

- Presentations of *kendō*, *kenjutsu*, *karate*, *aikidō*, *kyūdō*.
- Roundtable: "How to organize a sangha?" Testimonies and experiences in Brazil, Peru and Argentina.
- Film and discussion with the audience: "A Buddha" (Argentina, 2005), the first fiction film about Latin American Buddhists. "Sunset Samurai" (Japan, 2001) Reviewed by sword teachers.
- Artistic performances: Argentinian and Japanese folkloric dance and music.
- Workshops: haiku, zazen, *shodō*, massage, *taiso* gym, tea ceremony.
- Guided tours to asian art museums, Japanese garden and Buddhist temples.
- Photo-gallery of posters sent by sanghas from Latin America, detailing their history, teachers, and activities.
- Exhibition of art: calligraphy, paintings, ceramics, poetry.



- Zen Book Fair: books and texts published by sanghas from Latin America, in Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese, Sanskrit. It included a reference library, sales stands, auditorium for lectures and book signings by authors.

Special importance was given to this fair due to the difficulty of obtaining Buddhist literature, which is often out of print, not translated into Latin American languages, or in unknown editions.

- Closing Dinner: shared with all participants, their families and attendees.



Conference



Book fair



Calligraphy workshop

### Future events:

An Assembly where all participants shared their comments was held the last day of the Meeting. Reviews were strongly positive, and it was agreed unanimously to continue these meetings every 2 years. In the meantime a Meditation Retreat in 2015 in Florianopolis, Brazil was proposed.

Also, the success of the Zen Book Fair encouraged the organizing team to repeat it in the future. We are open to suggestions or collaboration from interested people or groups.

### Personal remarks

Maybe I am not objective enough to judge the outcome of the Meeting, but let me share some personal remarks about it.

When Rev. Taian Ueno arrived from Japan in 1903, he bridged cultures across the Pacific Ocean, connecting Japan and South America. That link has been kept alive with practice and through different manifestations of culture and tradition. For example, at our zendo at Nan-

zenji, after zazen we prefer just to serve or be served a cup tea instead of preaching. Sharing tea is about communicating beyond words instead of evangelizing.

Then, the motto of the meeting was “Zen, bridge of cultures”. But as Mr. Osvaldo Svanascini mentioned, “Zen is nowadays a buzzword that most people use epidemically”. During the Meeting we debated and talked about the scope of this. Some practice Chan, Zen, Seon, *koan*, Rinzai style, *shikantaza* or sitting meditation, with *oryoki* or fork and spoon, martial arts or yoga, in European or North American lineages, chant Christian psalms or dharanis, *Hannya Shingyo* or Heart Sutra (we exhibited 8 different translations in Spanish alone, not to mention the Portuguese ones), within lay or monastic, religious, non-Buddhist, Soto or non-Soto groups, etc.

In this regard, the presence and talk of Rev. Doshu Koshika (Soto Zen Buddhism South America Office) was very valuable. He detailed what it takes to become a Soto Zen monk, ordination and stages of formal training, and the meaning and attitude towards practice.

Another relevant guest, Rev. Issho Fujita from Soto Zen Buddhism International Center, was curious and on the first and the last days of the meeting he asked people from five different countries wearing *rakusu*, “You are from South America! Why do you dress in such a way (Japanese costumes)?”

My personal guess is that if you are sick, you just take the pill that cures, no matter if the medicine comes from Japan, India, or Paraguay.

In our countries, suffering is widespread in multiple ways, death is exacerbated by crime, sickness by poverty, and old age by forgetfulness<sup>3</sup>. Beggars and the homeless are right in front of us. The day Rev. Fujita and I were leaving for the airport, a gang tried to rob us on the street (but they ran away).

That is why some of us believe it is necessary to open real practice, human values and teachings to the whole society. But how?

The environment, conditions, and karma are different from those in Japan, Europe, North America or Africa, so there are no fixed recipes. For instance, these very lines you are reading now are not published in Spanish or Portuguese so far (missing 600 million potential readers).

We are trying to widen the bridge by setting up a common place for debate, exchange of ideas and experiences with the participation of all the groups interested in this path.

Debate is open..., gassho!

## Lessons from the Great Sangha in Latin America

Latin America is on the opposite side of the world from the land of Shakyamuni Buddha, but his teachings inspired most of us, getting to know each other and ourselves at the Meeting.

Masters, teachers, professors, instructors, students, translators, artists, guards, drivers, painters, electricians, designers, seamstresses, etc. made their contribution on site or through the internet. Most of them worked more than 6 months, totaling above 6000 *samu*-hours, pro-



viding their best effort, heart and knowledge, so that other people, even from other countries, other religions or other sanghas, could practice and receive the teachings of Buddha, while they were busy caring for other tasks.

We must mention and recognize two practitioners from Nanzenji's sangha: Nelson S. and Roxana C. They donated money themselves, got donations for soda and mineral water for the whole event, and attended long late night weekly meetings. Last but not least, during the meeting they welcomed visitors at the free and open entrance, and watched for the security and well-being of everybody, always willing to serve and risk their LIVES, as they already did in the past, if necessary. They are both police officers and volunteered for this task during their off-duty days (which means less rest), allowing peace of mind and a safe Meeting for the rest of us. While standing on the ground, they missed the retreat, the conferences, workshops, exhibitions, dinner and chit-chat, but they kept a tireless smile on their faces while guiding and caring for everybody. Gassho!

These deeds are Bodhisattva lessons.

All this has set the example of what we are capable to give and accomplish in Latin America. Another lesson is: the seed of dharma is a good one and this land has fertile soil and generous people. Time is ripe.

We invite everyone to join in the next Meeting of the Great Sangha, and appreciate the collaboration of an extended community of people and organizations in this and other con-

tinents who made the "1st Latin American Zen Meeting" possible.

May the dharma pervade and benefit all beings,  
with palms together in deep reverence

Venerable<sup>4</sup> Senpo Oshiro

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<sup>1</sup> Soto Zen Journal -DHARMA EYE- No.12 August, 2003 "THE FIRST BUDDHIST MISSIONARIES IN PERU"

<sup>2</sup> Osvaldo Svanascini (Argentinian, 1928 - Present )  
He pioneered studies in Spanish on Asian art and culture starting in the 50's and published, among many titles: "Conceptos sobre el arte de Oriente" (1964), "Sesshu y la pintura Zen" (1965). Member of National Academy of Arts. Decorated with the Order of the Sacred Treasure by the Japanese government (瑞宝章 Zuihō-shō).

<sup>3</sup> Argentina facts:  
37.1% of households in the biggest 40 cities has been victim of at least 1 crime in 2013-2014. Source Torcuato di Tella University.  
27% of population is below poverty line. Source Argentina Catholic University.  
80% of retired people covers just 50% of their needs with pension money. Source Buenos Aires Ombudsman Office.

<sup>4</sup> Introducing yourself as Reverend in a country like Argentina where the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church is the religion officially supported by the government is controversial and most of the times misleading. Venerable is a term applied by many Buddhist denominations outside Asia. Comments are welcome.



## The 22nd Chapter of Shobogenzo: Zenki (Total Function) Lecture (7)

Rev. Shohaku Okumura  
Sanshinji, Indiana, U.S.A.  
(edited by Rev. Shoryu Bradley)

### Dogen's comments on Yuanwu's "total function" [text]

(7) この道取、あきらめ参究すべし。

We should clarify and study this utterance.

参究すといふは、生也全機現の道理、はじめ・おほりにかかはれず、尽大地・尽虚空なりといへども、生也全機現をあひ罣礙せざるのみにあらず、死也全機現をも罣礙せざるなり。

What we should study is this: the principle "life is a manifestation of the total function," has no beginning and no end and [permeates] the entire great earth and the entirety of space, however, it hinders neither "life is a manifestation of the total function" nor "death is a manifestation of the total function."

死也全機現のとき、尽大地・尽虚空なりといへども、死也全機現をあひ罣礙せざるのみにあらず、生也全機現をも罣礙せざるなり。

At the time of "death is a manifestation of the total function," although it [permeates] the entire great earth and the entirety space, it hinders neither "death is a manifestation of the total function" nor "life is a manifestation of the total function."

このゆえに、生は死を罣礙せず、死は生を罣礙せざるなり。

Therefore, life does not hinder death; death does not hinder life.

尽大地・尽虚空、ともに生にもあり、死にもあり。

The entire great earth and the entirety of space

appear in life and also appear in death.

Yuanwu created the expression "Life is a manifestation of the total function; death is a manifestation of the total function" in his commentary on the conversations between Daowu, Jianyuan, and Shishuang concerning Jianyuan's question "Alive or Dead?" in case 55 of the Blue Cliff Record. In lecture (6) I discussed this koan and how it was developed and interpreted in koan collections made in the Song dynasty such as the Blue Cliff Record, the Book of Serenity, and so on. At the end of that article I mentioned that Hongzhi Zhengjue also used this expression "total function (Zenki, 全機)" in his verse on case 54 of the Book of Serenity, "Yunyan's Great Compassion." This koan is comprised of a conversation between Yunyang Tansheng (782-841) and his dharma brother Daowu Yuanzhi (769-835). Yunyan was the teacher of Dongshan Liangjie (807-869), the founder of Chinese Caodong (Soto) school. It is significant that Daowu appears in both of these koans since Shishung Qingzhu (807-888) and Jianyuan Zhongxing were Daowu's dharma heirs and are important masters associated with the origin of the Chinese Caodong tradition. I think these two koans point to the same reality in which all beings are existing in the network of interdependent origination.

In Shobogenzo Kannon (Avalokiteshvara) Dogen wrote his interpretation of the conversation between Yunyang and Daowu appearing in case 54 of the Book of Serenity.

The case is as follows:

Great Master Yunyan Wuzhu (Ungan

Muju) asked Great Master Daowu Xiuyi (Dogo Shuitsu), “What does the Great Compassion Bodhisattva do with innumerable hands and eyes?”

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

Yunyan said, “I understand! I understand!”

Daowu said, “How do you understand?”

Yunyan said, “Throughout the whole body, there are hands and eyes.”

Daowu said, “You spoke quite well. But only eighty or ninety percent was achieved.”

Yunyan said, “I am just like this. What about you, dharma brother?”

Daowu said, “The entire body is hands and eyes.”

In this conversation, the Great Compassion Bodhisattva with innumerable hands and eyes (Avalokiteshvara) refers to the entire network of interdependent origination in which all beings are interconnected. Each being exists as a knot of Indra’s net. And all beings are connected to each other, reflect each other, and support each other, working together as the hands and eyes of the Great Compassion Bodhisattva. Without the threads of connection, no being can exist. None can exist as a fixed independent entity with no relation to others. All things are always changing in dependence upon the coming and going of other things. Within time, some elements are coming together and others are dispersing, moment after moment. When we are born, nothing is added to the network; when we die, nothing is taken away. This is the reality of emptiness and interdependent origination according to Mahayana Buddhism. As a

bodhisattva, our practice is to awaken to this reality, to appreciate and venerate this connectedness, and to make an effort to work as a positive part of the network in supporting others. At the very least, we should strive to not be harm it.

We should remember that in one version of the story of “Alive or Dead?” Jianyuan, upon hearing someone chanting a part of the Sutra of Avalokiteshvara (Kannon-kyo, the 25th chapter of the Lotus Sutra), awakened to the meaning of Daowu’s “I won’t say! I won’t say!” The part he heard was, “To those who can be conveyed to deliverance by the body of a bhiksu, he preaches Dharma by displaying the body of a bhiksu.”

To understand our birth, living, and dying, we need to awaken to this reality of emptiness and interdependent origination. We can investigate the structure of this reality from three perspectives: first, as the total function of the entire network as a whole; second, as the relationship between the individual being as a knot in the network and the entirety of Indra’s Net; and third, as relationships between each of the myriad beings within the network. Our investigation must include seeing the relations in these three aspects both in time and space.

In the second chapter of the Lotus Sutra, this three-aspect investigation into the reality of all beings’ interconnectedness is depicted as the ten suchnesses. The ten suchnesses are: (1) suchness of their form (如是相), (2) suchness of their nature (如是性), (3) suchness of their bodies (如是体), (4) suchness of their energy (如



是力), (5) suchness of their functions (如是作), (6) suchness of their causes (如是因), (7) suchness of their conditions (如是緣), (8) suchness of their effects (如是緣), (9) suchness of their recompenses (如是果), and (10) the ultimate identity of the beginning to the end (如是本末究竟等). (1)-(5) refer to the uniqueness of each being. Causes (6) and effects (8) represent relations between each individual being and others individual beings in time. Conditions (7) and recompenses (9) are the relations in space at the same time. The ultimate identity of the beginning to the end (10) means that all the suchnesses from (1) through (9) are not separate independent items, but are rather all identical as one reality.

In the conversation between Daowu and Jianyuan, the master said, “I won’t say! I won’t say!” to his disciple’s question, “Alive or dead?” This means that although it seems there are arising and perishing and birth and death, actually, nothing arises or is born and nothing perishes or dies in the reality of emptiness. In one version of the koan story, Jianyuan understood and awakened to that reality when, while he was staying in a village temple, he heard someone chanting the Sutra of Avalokiteshvara. In another version, Jianyuan visited his elder Dharma brother Shishuang after Daowu’s death and asked for his instruction about the incident. Shishuang also replied saying, “I won’t say! I won’t say!” or “Don’t you see that he said, ‘I won’t say! I won’t say!’” With this saying, Jianyuan had realization. This part of the story illustrates the first aspect of the totality of interconnectedness in which each individual being has no fixed entity but rather exists simply as a

collection of causes and conditions.

After that, when Jianyuan took a hoe into the Dharma hall and said he was looking for his master’s relics, Shishuang said, “Vast waves spread far and wide, foaming billows flood the skies – what relics of our late master are you looking for?”

This means Daowu’s life penetrated the entire sky, being thoroughly connected to everything, so there was no particular place they could find his relics. This is the same thing Dogen said using the example of sailing a boat. When one is sailing a boat, the entire world becomes the world of sailing the boat. Or in the spring, one tiny plum blossom expresses the spring of the entire world. The totality of interconnectedness is nothing other than each person’s life. This is the second aspect, seeing reality as the relationship between the individual being as a knot in the network and the entirety of Indra’s Net.

Getting back to the koan story, Jianyuan then said, “This is where I should apply my effort.” Shishuang replied, “Right here, even a needle tip cannot be entered. What kind of effort do you make?” The Dharma brothers each expressed their own unique way of continuing Daowu’s Dharma and life. They were different and yet the same. That is why Fu of Taiyuan said, “The late master’s relics are still there.” Shishuang and Jianyuan’s lives and practice were Daowu’s relics. This is the third aspect, seeing the network of interdependent origination as relationships between each of the myriad beings within the network.

In regard to the three aspects of reality, we can

see a similar structure in a symphony orchestra. Here many musicians play their own parts using various instruments. All of the individual musicians are a part of one performance of music, just as the thousand hands and eyes are all parts of Avalokiteshvara. When we focus on one player, the entirety of the music is the part of that particular person. What she is playing is the entirety of the music. Even if the player's role is minor, without that part, the performance cannot be complete. Within the symphony each musician plays a different role, but each person's performance penetrates the other musicians' performances, forming one piece of music. The dependence, independence, and interdependence of all players combine to make one performance as a complete whole. In his comments, Dogen emphasizes these three points.

*What we should study is this: the principle "life is a manifestation of the total function," has no beginning and no end and [permeates] the entire great earth and the entirety of space, however, it hinders neither "life is a manifestation of the total function" nor "death is a manifestation of the total function".*

Shishuang and Jianyuan talked about the life and death of their teacher, Daowu. Daowu's life was a manifestation of the beginningless and endless total function in the reality of emptiness. His life was connected with all beings on the great earth and in the entirety of space. But his life did not obstruct other people's lives from being manifestations of the total function. Other people's lives are also manifestations of the total function.

*At the time of "death is a manifestation of the total function," although it [permeates] the entire great earth and the entirety space, it hinders neither "death is a manifestation of the total function" nor "life is a manifestation of the total function."*

Now Daowu is dead. His death is also a manifestation of the total function. His life as a manifestation of the total function and his death as a manifestation of the total function penetrate completely and do not disturb each other. His life and death never meet each other and yet they are always together. And his death does not obstruct other people's deaths. When he died, other people's deaths as the total function remained undisturbed, having no need to become something else. Every person's life and death is always an unobstructed manifestation of the total function.

[text]

(8) しかあれども、一枚の尽大地、一枚の尽虚空を、生にも全機し、死にも全機するにはあらざるなり。

However, it is not that one piece of the entire great earth and one piece of the entirety of space carry out the total function within life and also carry out the total function within death.

一にあらざれども異にあらず、異にあらざれども即にあらず、即にあらざれども、多にあらず。

It is neither one nor different; neither different nor identical; neither identical nor multiple.

このゆえに、生にも全機現の衆法あり、死にも全機現の衆法あり、

Therefore, within life all dharmas exist as a manifestation of the total function; within death all dharmas exist as the manifestation of the total function.



生にあらず死にあらざるにも全機現あり。

Within neither life nor death, there is the manifestation of total function.

全機現に生あり、死あり。

Within the total function, there are life and death.

このゆえに、生死の全機は、壮士の臂を屈伸するがごとくにもあるべし、如人夜間背手摸枕子にてもあるべし。

For this reason, the total function of life and death is like a vigorous young man bending and stretching his arm; or it is like a person asleep in the night searching with his hand behind his back for the pillow.

これに許多の神通光明ありて現成するなり。

These manifest themselves with limitlessly abundant divine power and radiant light.

*However, it is not that one piece of the entire great earth and one piece of the entirety of space carry out the total function within life and also carry out the total function within death. It is neither one nor different; neither different nor identical; neither identical nor multiple.*

Although everyone's life and death is a manifestation of the total function, this does not mean there is one fixed "total function" and this entity is shared by all living beings as their own life and death. The totality of the network of interdependent origination does not exist as any such fixed entity. In the same way, a musical performance does not exist before each musician plays his or her role. A musical performance exists only while the players perform their particular roles in concert with each of the other players' efforts, so that all roles are expressed as one integrated whole.

There is therefore no way to determine if either the entirety of interdependent origination, the Great Compassion Bodhisattva, or a musical performance, always exist as the absolute "Oneness" that includes all beings. It is also not possible to say that the entirety is only one and that the individual parts are many. We cannot say oneness and multiplicity are different and we cannot say they are the same. And we cannot tell whether all of the multitudes are separate, independent entities or whether they are completely one. There is no way to grasp this reality of all beings with our discriminating, conceptual way of thinking. This is why it says in the *Lotus Sutra*, "Only a buddha together with a buddha can fathom the Reality of All Existence."<sup>1</sup>

Dogen also wrote about this reality in the beginning of *Shobogenzo Gabyo* (Painted Rice Cake):

"Because all buddhas themselves are verification, all things themselves are verification. However, [buddhas and things] have neither one single nature nor one single mind. Although they have neither one single nature nor one single mind, at the time of verification, each of the verifications actualizes itself without obstructing [the others]. At the time of actualization, each of the actualizations actualizes itself without touching the others. This is the straightforward essence of the school of the ancestors. Do not use the measure of identity or difference as the criterion of the capacity of our study."<sup>2</sup>

*Therefore, within life all dharmas exist as a manifestation of the total function; within death*

*all dharmas exist as the manifestation of the total function.*

Within one person's life, all beings are included and each being is a manifestation of the total function. Even in the death of that person all beings are included, just as Daowu's death did not signal the end of his life since, as a manifestation of the total function, it continued within Shishuan's and Jianyuan's life of practice.

*Within neither life nor death, there is the manifestation of total function. Within the total function, there are life and death.*

"Within neither life nor death," refers to the reality of emptiness, where there is neither the arising nor perishing of each individual being.

*For this reason, the total function of life and death is like a vigorous young man bending and stretching his arm; or it is like a person asleep in the night searching with his hand behind his back for the pillow. These manifest themselves with limitlessly abundant divine power and radiant light.*

"Like a vigorous young man bending and stretching his arm," is an expression meaning "immediately" or "at once." For example, in the Pali Vinaya, after Shakyamuni had his awakening under the bodhi tree, he hesitated to teach what he discovered, thinking it too subtle and profound for people to understand. Then Brahma observed Shakyamuni's hesitation from his heavenly realm. In the text we read:

Then it occurred to Brahma Sahampati, knowing with his mind the reasoning in

the Lord's mind: "Alas, the world is lost, alas, the world is destroyed, inasmuch as the mind of the Truth-finder, the perfected one, the fully awakened one, inclines to little effort and not to teaching dhamma."

Then as a strong man might stretch forth his bent arm or might bend back his outstretched arm, even so did Brahma Sahampati, vanishing from the Brahma-world, become manifest before the Lord.<sup>3</sup>

The total function, as both the entirety of interconnectedness and the individuality of each being, is manifest as quickly as a young man can bend his arm.

"Like a person asleep in the night searching with his hand behind his back for the pillow," is a quote of Daowu's saying from case 54 of the Book of Serenity, "Yunyan's Great Compassion." The way Avalokiteshvara uses a thousand hands and eyes is like a person sleeping in complete darkness who gropes for his lost pillow and puts it back underneath his head. This action is done within non-discrimination. Since the person is still sleeping and is in darkness, he does not think of or even see the pillow, but somehow he can manage it. In the same way, the manifestation of the total function through each and every being is done without discriminating, conceptual thinking. In this paragraph Dogen is saying that the function of the entire network of interdependent origination and the function of each and every being in time occur simultaneously, and we cannot say if these functions are the same or different.



[text]

(9) 正当現成のときは、現成に全機せらるるによりて、現成よりさきに現成あらざりつると見解するなり。

At the very moment of manifestation, because it is totally functioned by manifestation, we view and understand that there is no manifestation prior to the manifestation.

しかあれども、この現成よりさきは、さきの全機現なり。

However, prior to this manifestation, the previous manifestation of total function was there.

さきの全機現ありといへども、いまの全機現を罣礙せざるなり。

Although the previous manifestation of total function was there, it does not hinder the present manifestation of total function.

このゆえに、しかのごとくの見解、きほひ現成するなり。

Therefore, such views and understandings vigorously manifest one after another.

This is the same thing Dogen said in Genjokoan using the example of firewood:

“Firewood becomes ash. Ash cannot turn back into firewood again. However, we should not view ash as after and firewood before. We should know that firewood dwells in the dharma position of firewood and it has its own before and after. Although there is before and after, past and future are cut off. Ash stays at the position of ash and it has its own before and after. As firewood never becomes firewood again after it is burned and becomes ash, after a person dies, there is no return to living. However, in buddha dharma, it is the never-changed

tradition not to say that life becomes death. Therefore we call it no-arising. It is the laid-down way of buddha's turning the dharma wheel not to say that death becomes life. Therefore, we call it no-perishing. Life is a position at one time; death is also a position at one time. For instance, this is like winter and spring. We don't think that winter becomes spring, and we don't say that spring becomes summer.”<sup>4</sup>

There is before and after but past and future are cut off. One way we see the change of things using reason is by observing them in the flow of time. We see the sequence of the flow of things. A live tree is cut and split and then becomes firewood. When the firewood is burned, it becomes ash. The ash will be spread on the ground and returned to the earth. Then it will again become part of a new tree. We see things, including our lives, in this way, as stories or histories within the stream of time. But Dogen says this is not the only possible way of seeing time. When firewood stays in the dharma position of firewood, it is one hundred percent firewood; the tree is already gone, and the ash is not yet here. At the time of firewood, firewood is the only manifestation of the total function, there is no tree and no ash at all. The manifestation of this moment is only in this moment; it did not exist one moment before.

And yet, before the tree is cut down, the tree is the only manifestation of the total function; there is neither firewood nor ash. When ash is staying at the dharma position of ash, ash is the only total manifestation; there is neither tree, nor firewood. Each moment is a complete

manifestation of the total function. The total manifestation of the time of firewood and the manifestation of the time of ash neither meet nor obstruct each other. We create a story about them that exists only within our minds.

Thus both the structure of the network of interdependent origination and how it functions are beyond the grasp of our conceptual thinking. We are therefore able to see things in many different ways. That is why people differ so much in their views. And our views are also part of the total function at this moment.

[text]: colophon

正法眼藏全機第二十二

Twenty Second Chapter of Shobogenzo: Zenki (Total Function)

爾時仁治三年壬寅十二月十七日、在雍州六波羅蜜寺側雲州刺史幕下示衆。

Taught to the assembly at the residence of the former governor of Izumo Province, next to Rokuharamitsu-ji Temple, on the 17th day, 12th month, 3rd year of Ninji era (1242).

同四年癸卯正月十九日、書寫之。懷獎。

This manuscript was copied on the 19th day, 1st month, 4th year of the same era (1243), by Ejo.

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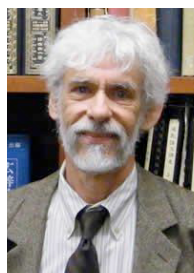
<sup>1</sup> The Threefold Lotus Sutra (Weatherhill/Kosei, 1975) p.52

<sup>2</sup> This is my unpublished translation. Another translation is in Master Dogen's Shobogenzo Book 2 (Gudo Nishijima & Chodo Cross, Windbell Publication) p.277

<sup>3</sup> The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya-Pitaka) Vol. 4 (translation by I.B. Horner, Luzac & Company, 1971); bold type emphasis added

<sup>4</sup> My translation from Realizing Genjokoan (Wisdom Publications, 2010), p.2-3

## Treasury of the True Dharma Eye Book 35



### Spiritual Powers *Jinzū*

Translated by  
Carl Bielefeldt

#### Introduction

This fascicle of the *Shōbōgenzō* was composed in the winter of 1241, at Kōshōji. It appears as number 35 in both the sixty- and seventy-five-fascicle redactions of the *Shōbōgenzō* and as number 25 in the vulgate edition.

As its title indicates, the theme of the work is the Buddhist teaching of the supernormal powers ascribed to the buddhas, bodhisattvas, and other adepts of the religion. This teaching was widespread throughout both the technical and popular literature of Buddhism and represented one of the common assumptions of the Buddhist community. Discussion of the powers also occurs with some frequency in the texts of the Chinese Chan masters, who tended in one way or another to redefine, dismiss or make light of the traditional understandings of the teaching.

Dōgen's text takes up several of the passages on the powers from the Chinese Chan literature, using them to develop his own vision of the higher meaning of what he calls "the great powers" and "the powers of the buddha." In this vision, the powers become the welling up of the world itself, the fundamental activity through which all things emerge and in celebration of



which the Chan masters act out their own eccentric powers. Throughout the text, Dōgen has harsh words for those Buddhists who lack this vision and remain limited to what he calls “the small powers” of the thaumaturgical tradition.

This translation is based on the edition of the text in Kawamura Kōdō, ed., *Dōgen zenji zenshū*, 1:392-402. Due to space limitations, the translation is published here without notes (though some explanatory material has been provided in square brackets); full annotation will be included in the complete translation of the *Shōbōgenzō* now in preparation by the Soto Zen Text Project.

### Spiritual Powers

Such spiritual powers are the [everyday] tea and rice in the house of the buddha. The buddhas even now do not neglect them. Among them [as will be seen below], there are the six spiritual powers; there is the one spiritual power; there is no spiritual power; there is the supreme spiritual power. They have taken the form of [Zen training described as] “in the morning, three thousand blows; in the evening, eight hundred blows.” Though they were born together with the buddha, they are not known by the buddha; though extinguished together with the buddha, they do not destroy the buddha. In ascending to the heavens, [the buddha and the powers] do so together; in descending from the heavens, they do so together; in cultivating the practice and getting the verification, they do so together. They are the same as the Snowy Mountains [of the Himalaya], like trees and rocks. The buddhas

of the past are the disciples of the Buddha Śākyamuni. They present him with a *kaṣāya*; they present him with a stūpa. At this time, the Buddha said, “The spiritual powers of the buddhas are inconceivable.” This being the case, we know that present and future [buddhas] are also like this.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Chan master Dawei [I.e., Weishan Lingyu (771-853)] was an ancestor in the thirty-seventh generation in direct descent from the Tathāgata Śākyamuni; he was the dharma heir of Baizhang Dazhi [I.e., Baizhang Huaihai (749-814)]. The present buddhas and ancestors who have arisen throughout the ten directions, [even those] not the distant progeny of Dawei, are [in effect] the distant progeny of Dawei.

On one occasion, when Dawei was lying down, Yangshan came to visit him. Dawei turned and lay facing the wall.

Yangshan said, “Huiji is the venerable’s disciple; no need for appearances.”

Dawei went to get up. As Yangshan was about to leave, Dawei called to him, “Huiji.”

Yangshan came back. Dawei said, “Let me tell you of my dream.”

Yangshan bent down to listen. Dawei said, “Can you interpret my dream for me?”

Yangshan brought him a basin of water and a hand towel. Dawei washed his face. Just as he had finished washing his face and sat down, Xiangyan came in.

Dawei said, “Master Ji and I just did a higher spiritual power. It wasn’t like the little stuff.”

Xiangyan said, “Zhixian was below; I

know all about it.”

Dawei said, “You, sir, should try to say something.”

Xiangyan went and made a cup of tea.

Dawei praised them, saying, “The spiritual power and wisdom of these two masters exceeds that of Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana.”

If we wish to understand the spiritual powers of the house of the buddha, we should study Dawei’s saying. Because it “wasn’t like the little stuff,” to engage in its study is called Buddhist study; not to study it is not called Buddhist study. It is the spiritual power and wisdom transmitted from heir to heir. We are not to go on to study what is studied by the treatise masters or the spiritual powers of the alien ways and the two vehicles [of *śrāvaka* and *pratyeka-buddha*] in the land of the Western Heavens of Sindh [i.e., India].

Now, in studying Dawei’s spiritual powers, though it may be unsurpassed, there are “higher” experiences: that is, beginning with “when he was lying down,” we have “he turned and lay facing the wall”; we have “he went to get up”; we have “he called, ‘Master Ji’”; we have “let me tell you of my dream”; we have “he had finished washing his face and sat down”; we have “Yangshan bent down to listen”; we have “he brought a basin of water and a wash cloth.”

Of such [acts], Dawei says, “Master Ji and I just did a higher spiritual power.” We should study these spiritual powers. The ancestral masters who correctly transmit the buddha dharma speak like this. Do not fail to say that [Weishan] was “telling his dream and washing his face”; we should be certain that this is “a

higher spiritual power.” Since he says, “it wasn’t like the little stuff,” it must not be the same as the small vehicle, a small measure, a small view. It must not be the same as the “ten holy and three wise” [stages of the bodhisattva path]. They all learn the small spiritual powers and only acquire small stature; they do not reach the great spiritual powers of the buddhas and ancestors. These are “the spiritual powers of a buddha,” “the spiritual powers beyond the buddha.” Those who would learn these spiritual powers should not be moved by Māra or the alien ways. What the sūtra masters and treatise masters have never heard is hard [for them] to believe even when they do hear it. The two vehicles, the alien ways, the sūtra masters and treatise masters, and the like, learn the small spiritual powers; they do not learn the great spiritual powers. The buddhas maintain the great spiritual powers; they transmit the great spiritual powers. These are the spiritual powers of a buddha. If they were not “the spiritual powers of a buddha,” [Yangshan] would not “bring a basin of water and a hand towel”; there would be no “he turned and lay facing the wall”; there would be no “after he had finished washing his face and sat down.”

Covered by the power of these great spiritual powers, there are also the small spiritual powers. The great spiritual powers take in the small spiritual powers; the small spiritual powers do not know the great spiritual powers. By “small spiritual powers,” we mean [feats such as] “a hair follicle swallowing the vast ocean, a mustard seed containing Sumeru,” or [flying into the air] and “emitting water from the upper body, emitting fire from the lower body,” and the like.



Further, the five powers or six powers [described in many Buddhist texts] are all small spiritual powers. The types [who master such powers] have never experienced “the spiritual powers of a buddha” even in their dreams. To say that the five powers or six powers are small spiritual powers is [to say that] the five powers and six powers are defiled by practice and verification; they are circumscribed in time and place. While we have them in life, they do not appear after the body. They belong to the self and not to others. Though they may appear in this land, they do not appear in other lands. Though they may appear when we do not show them, they fail to appear when it is time to show them.

The great spiritual powers are not like this. The teaching, practice, and verification of the buddhas are equally brought to realization in the spiritual powers. They are not realized only in the vicinity of the buddhas; they are also realized “beyond the buddhas.” The manner of converting [beings] of “the buddha of the spiritual powers” is truly inconceivable. It appears before he has a body; its appearance has nothing to do with the three junctures [of past, present, and future]. If it were not for “the spiritual powers of a buddha,” there would never be the development of the aspiration [for buddhahood], the practice, the bodhi or the nirvāṇa of the buddhas.

The ocean of this inexhaustible dharma realm, constant and unchanging, is all “the spiritual powers of a buddha.” It is not only that “a hair follicle swallows the vast ocean”: a hair follicle maintains the vast ocean, a hair follicle expresses the vast ocean, a hair follicle vomits the vast ocean, a hair follicle employs

the vast ocean. When the entire dharma realm has been swallowed into and vomited forth by one hair follicle, we are not to understand that, since the one entire dharma realm has become like this, there must be no more dharma realm. “A mustard seed containing Sumeru” is the same: a mustard seed vomiting Sumeru and a mustard seed expressing the dharma realm are also “the ocean of the inexhaustible treasury.”

When a hair follicle vomits forth the vast ocean or a mustard seed vomits forth the vast ocean, they vomit it forth in a single moment; they vomit it forth in ten thousand kalpas. Since the ten thousand kalpas and the single moment have both been vomited forth from the hair follicle and the mustard seed, how are the hair follicle and mustard seed themselves obtained? They have been obtained from the spiritual powers. Since this obtaining is itself the spiritual powers, this is just the spiritual powers giving rise to the spiritual powers. We should learn that the three worlds have no other persistence or perishing. The buddhas disport themselves only in these spiritual powers.

\* \* \* \* \*

The layman Pang Yun was an extraordinary person of the ancestral seat. He not only studied at the two seats of Jiangxi [i.e., Mazu Daoyi (709-788)] and Shitou [i.e. Shitou Xiqian (700-790)], he met and encountered many masters of the school possessed of the way. Once he said, “The spiritual powers and the wondrous functions: bearing water and carrying firewood.” We should investigate well the rationale [of this saying].

[The Chinese term] *yunshui* [in Layman Pang's saying] means to transport water. Whether doing it oneself by oneself, or another doing it by another, water is transported. This is "the buddha of spiritual powers." Although our knowledge of them may belong to a certain time, the spiritual powers are [always] the spiritual powers: it is not that, when people do not know them, their dharma is destroyed or their dharma is extinguished. Even though people do not know it, the dharma is the dharma as it is. Even if we do not know that bearing water is the spiritual powers, that the spiritual powers are bearing water is irreversible.

[The term] *banchai* [in Layman Pang's saying] means to carry firewood, as the Sixth Ancestor once did. Although we may not recognize "morning blows, three thousand" as the spiritual powers, although we may not think of "evening blows, eight hundred" as the spiritual powers, they are the realization of the spiritual powers.

Indeed, one who perceives "the spiritual powers and wondrous functions" of the buddhas, the tathāgatas, will inevitably attain the way. Therefore, the attainment of the way of all the buddhas has always been accomplished through these spiritual powers. This being the case, while the emitting of water in the small vehicle may be a spiritual power, we should study the fact that the bearing of water is a great spiritual power. "Bearing water and carrying firewood" have never been discarded, nor have people neglected them. That they have, therefore, from ancient times to the present, been handed down from this one to that, without ever reverting for a moment [to the small powers], is "the spiritual powers and wondrous

functions." They are the great spiritual powers; they cannot be the same as "the little stuff."

\* \* \* \* \*

Once, when the Great Master Dongshan Wuben [I.e., Dongshan Liangjie (807-869)] was attending Yunyan [Yunyan Tansheng (780?-841)], Yunyan asked him, "What are Master Jie's spiritual powers and wondrous functions?"

Dongshan joined his hands, stepped forward, and stood.

Yunyan asked again, "What about the spiritual powers and wondrous functions?" Dongshan paid his respects and left.

Truly, in this episode, there is [an accord between master and disciple described in Shitou's poem *Cantong qi* as] "receiving the words, understanding their sense" of the spiritual powers; there is "things exist, box and lid matching" of the spiritual powers. We should realize that "the spiritual powers and wondrous functions" must have their children and grandchildren, those who do not revert; they must have their eminent ancestors, those who do not advance. Do not foolishly think that they should be the same as the alien ways and two vehicles.

On the way of the buddhas, there are the spiritual transformations and spiritual powers of the upper body and the lower body. This entire world of the ten directions is [as the Tang-dynasty monk Changsha Jingcen says,] "the one true body of the *śramaṇa*." The [waters of] "the nine mountains and eight oceans" [surrounding Mt. Sumeru], down to "the ocean of the [true]

nature,” the waters of “the ocean of sarvajña [‘omniscience’],” are all water emitted from the upper body and lower body. Again, they are the water emitted from the non-upper body, the non-lower body, the non-mid body; and so on, down to the fire emitted [from the body, which] is also like this.

This is not only [true of] water, fire, wind, and so on: not only are buddhas emitted from the upper body, and buddhas emitted from the lower body, and ancestors emitted from the upper body, and ancestors emitted from the lower body, and immeasurable *asaṃkhyeya-kalpas* [‘incalculable eons’] emitted from the upper body, and immeasurable *asaṃkhyeya-kalpas* emitted from the lower body, and the ocean of the dharma realm emitted from the upper body, and the ocean of the dharma realm absorbed in the upper body; but also the vomiting out of seven or eight lands of this world and the swallowing up of two or three, are also like this.

The four elements, the five elements, the six elements, the various elements, the incalculable elements — all are the spiritual powers emitted and submerged, the spiritual powers swallowed and vomited forth. The present great earth and empty space, in every direction, are swallowed up and vomited forth. Their strength is their being turned by the mustard seed; their strength is their being connected to the hair follicle. Born together where knowledge does not reach; they abide where knowledge does not reach; they return where knowledge does not reach. The marks of the transformations of the “spiritual powers of the buddha,” which surely have nothing to do with short or long — how could we merely consider them in terms of [their] measurement?

\* \* \* \* \*

Long ago, when a seer with the five powers was serving the Buddha, the seer asked, “The Buddha has six powers; I have five powers. What is that one power?”

The Buddha called the seer, saying, “Seer with the five powers.”

The sage responded. The Buddha said, “That one power, ask me about it.”

We should study this episode very well. How could the seer know that the Buddha has six powers? The Buddha has immeasurable spiritual powers and wisdom, not just six powers. Even if one looks only at his six powers, the six powers cannot be exhausted. How much less, when it comes to the rest of the [Buddha’s] spiritual powers, could [the seer] even dream of them?

Now, let us ask something. We should ask, even if the seer may have seen the old master Śākya, has he seen the buddha or not? Even if he has seen the buddha, has he seen the old master Śākya or not? We should ask, even if he has seen the old master Śākya, even if he has seen the buddha, has he seen the seer with the five powers or not? In this questioning, one should study “using entanglements”; one should study “entanglements cut off.” How much less does [the question of] the buddha having six powers reach [the level of] “counting the neighbor’s valuables”?

What about the point of the old master Śākya saying here, “That one power, ask me about it”? He does not say the seer has “that one power” he does not say the seer lacks it. Even if he explains the penetration or obstruc-



ntion of “that one power,” how can the seer penetrate “that one power”? For, though the seer has the five powers, they are not the five powers in “the buddha has six powers.” Even if the powers of the seer get utterly penetrated in what the powers of the buddha penetrate, how could the powers of the seer penetrate the powers of the buddha? If the seer could penetrate even one power of the buddha, by this penetration he should penetrate the buddha.

When we look at the seer, he has something resembling the powers of the buddha; when we look at the deportment of the buddha, it has something resembling the powers of the seer. Though this may be [true of] the deportment of the buddha, we should realize that [such deportment] is not the spiritual powers of the buddha. Since they do not penetrate [the buddha], none of the five powers is the same as [those of] the buddha.

What is the use of his suddenly asking about “that one power”? The old master Śākya’s point is that he should be asking about even one power. He should be asking about “that one power”; he should be asking about “that one power.” Even one power is not something the sage could reach. This being the case, [when we speak of] “the spiritual powers of the buddha” and the spiritual powers of others, while the term “spiritual powers” may be the same, the term “spiritual powers” is very different.

In regard to this [we have the following].

\* \* \* \* \*

The Great Master Huizhao of Linji cloister [i.e., Linji Yixuan (d. 866)] said, “An ancient has said,

The Tathāgata’s presentation of the bodily

marks

Is done to accord with the sentiments of the worldly.

Lest people produce nihilistic views,

We expediently set up vacuous names.

We provisionally speak of the thirty-two [marks of a buddha's body]

and the eighty [auspicious signs], just empty sounds.

Having a body is not the substance of his awakening;

Having no marks is his true form.

You say that the buddha has six powers, and that they are inconceivable. All the heavenly beings, transcendent seers, *asuras* ["titans"], and powerful spirits have spiritual powers. Does this make them buddhas? Followers of the way, don't be mistaken. The *asuras* battled with the Heavenly King Śakra; defeated in battle, they led their eighty-four thousand followers to hide inside a lotus root. Are they not holy ones?

What this mountain monk has mentioned are all karmic powers or dependent powers; they are not like the six powers of the buddha. He enters the realm of form without being deluded by form, enters the realm of sound without being deluded by sound, enters the realm of smell without being deluded by smell, enters the realm of taste without being deluded by taste, enters the realm of touch without being deluded by touch, enters the realm of dharma without being deluded by dharma.

Therefore, when he realizes that the six types — form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and dharma — are all empty marks, they cannot bind this person of the way who depends on nothing. Though his is the defiled quality of

the five aggregates, it is yet the spiritual power of walking the earth [as opposed to the power of flying].

Followers of the way, the true buddha is without form; the true dharma is without marks. You are just making models and making patterns on top of phantom transformations. Even supposing you get something through your seeking, it will all be fox spirits. None of it is the true buddha; it is the view of the alien ways.

This being the case, the six spiritual powers of the buddhas are not something that could be reached by, not something that could be reckoned by, any of the heavenly beings or demonic spirits, or by the two vehicles and the like. The six powers of the way of the buddhas have been singly transmitted only by the disciples of the buddha on the way of the buddhas; they are not something transmitted by others. The six powers of the buddha are singly transmitted on the way of the buddhas; those that do not uniquely transmit them cannot be expected to know them. We should study that those who have not singly transmitted the six powers of the buddha are not people of the way of the buddhas.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Chan master Baizhang Dazhi [I.e., Baizhang Huaihai (720-814)] said,

The eyes, ears, nose, and tongue are each without the stain of craving for any of the dharmas, whether being or non-being — this is called “keeping the four-phrase verse” [of Buddhist teachings]; it is also called “the four

fruits” [of the *śrāvaka* path]. The “six entrances” [i.e., sense fields] without traces are also called “the six spiritual powers.” To be unobstructed by all the dharmas, whether being or non-being, and not to rely on the understanding — this is called “spiritual power.” Not to guard this spiritual power — this is called “no spiritual power.” Such is the bodhisattva of no spiritual powers, whose footprints cannot be found. He is a human beyond the buddha, the most inconceivable human, a deva himself.

The spiritual powers transmitted here by buddha after buddha and ancestor after ancestor are like this. The spiritual powers of the buddhas are “the human beyond the buddha,” “the most inconceivable human,” “the heavenly being of the self,” “the bodhisattva of no spiritual powers,” “the understanding not relying,” “the spiritual powers not guarding this,” “all the dharmas not being obstructed.” On the way of the buddhas, there are the six spiritual powers here. The buddhas have transmitted and kept them for a long time. Not a single buddha has failed to transmit and keep them. Those who do not transmit and keep them are not buddhas. Those six spiritual powers clarify “the six entrances” “without traces.”

“Without traces,” [means what] an ancient [Yungjia Xuanjue (d. 713)] has said:

The six types of spiritual functions are empty and not empty.

The one circle of light, is neither inside nor outside.

“Neither inside nor outside” must be “without traces.” When, “without traces,” we prac-

tice, study, and verify, we do not move “the six entrances.” To say, “we do not move,” means, the one who moves deserves thirty blows.

This being the case, we should study the six spiritual powers in this way. Those who are not legitimate heirs of the house of the buddha — which of them has even heard of this principle? They just mistake chasing about outside for the observances of coming home. Further, while “the four fruits” may be utensils on the way of the buddhas, there is no Tripiṭaka [master] who has correctly transmitted them. How could those who “count sand,” the types who “roam alone,” get these fruits? The types who “get a little and consider it enough” — their investigations have not mastered it; it is [something to which] only buddha after buddha accede.

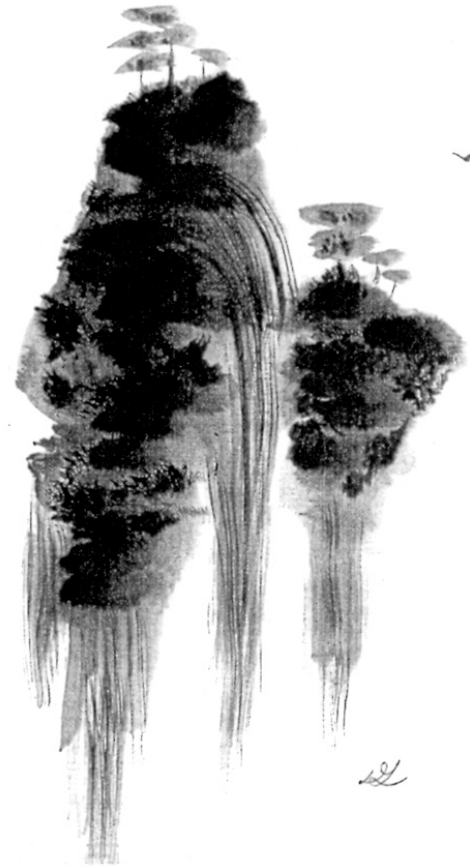
“The four fruits” are “to receive and hold the four-phrase verse.” “To receive and hold the four-phrase verse” means, in regard to “all dharmas, whether being or non-being,” “the eyes, ears, nose, and tongue are each without the stain of craving.” “Without the stain of craving” is “undefiled.” To say [they are] “undefiled” means they are “the ordinary mind”; they are [as Dongshan Liangjie says,] “I always take this seriously.”

The correct transmission of the six powers and four fruits in the way of the buddhas is like this. We should realize that what differs from this is not the buddha dharma. This being the case, the way of the buddhas is always mastered from the spiritual powers. Who could doubt that, in this mastery, the smallest drop of water swallows and vomits the vast ocean, the slightest mote of dust takes up and lets go of a tall peak? This is just the spiritual powers.

Treasury of the True Dharma Eye

Spiritual Powers  
Number 35

Presented to the assembly at Kannon Dōri  
Kōshō Hōrinji,  
on the sixteenth day of the eleventh month of  
*kanato-ushi*, the second year of Ninji [19  
December 1241]







## My Footnotes on Zazen (7) The Difficulty of Zazen

**Rev. Issho Fujita**

Director, Soto Zen Buddhism  
International Center

Let me share an experience I had in America when I taught a group of people who had never sat zazen before how to practice zazen.

After I gave them detailed instruction on how to practice zazen, they tried a period. Then I offered them time to talk about what they experienced during zazen. Many people mentioned the difficulty of doing zazen, each saying it in a different way. I could feel that they already assumed it was difficult to do zazen even before they tried it. So, for them, it was not so surprising that they experienced zazen as something difficult. But how and where did they get such a preoccupation and prejudice about zazen? Pondering on such a question, I said to them something like this;



Well, I guess that many of you already had the impression that zazen is hard and difficult before you tried it. After you tried it, you realized that zazen was really diffi-

cult, as you expected. However, the person who transmitted the zazen you just tried to Japan said, “Zazen is a dharma gate of ease and joy.” He declared that zazen is a definite entrance to the world of ease and joy (they laughed here). No, no, I am not kidding. He really said so. If we take what he said about zazen literally, what you did in the name of zazen, which was hard, painful, and agonizing, is not zazen (they laughed again). But I think you had a moment when you were sitting with ease and joy. It was a moment when you enjoyed the wonderful sound of the bell as I rang it to begin zazen. At least for ten seconds or so you were just hearing the sound, feeling good, “Wow, beautiful sound...,” forgetting about doing zazen. Another moment was the one when you felt relieved, “Phew, zazen is over...,” hearing the sound of the bell when I rang it as a signal to end zazen (great laughter). It was a time when you unconsciously forgot that you should do zazen exactly as Issho instructed and a time when you were freed from the duty of doing zazen. When you were not thinking, “I have to do zazen,” the dharma gate of ease and joy surely opened, even for a second. What does this mean? Of course I as an instructor wished that gate had stayed open for half an hour, from the beginning to the end of zazen. I would like you to firmly realize that there were moments when even beginners like you could do zazen as a dharma gate of ease and joy. Maybe because you were beginners, those moments were revealed in a clear way. So it is not that you can do zazen because you get used to it or you can’t do zazen because you

don't get used to it. Zazen has nothing to do with such a matter as getting used to it. I can't explain it very well for now but I think there is something very important which is very different from that matter but is essential to zazen. I really appreciate all of you that gave me a chance to notice it.

When they were not working hard to do zazen, the dharma gate of ease and joy unwittingly (ironically?) opened ... This happened a long time ago, more than twenty years ago. At that time this was the best that I could say. But how about now? Now can I speak more clearly about what I expressed as "not a matter of getting used to it"? Then, I could only elaborate by saying, "I think there is something very important which is very different from that matter but is essential to zazen." My first book on zazen, *Modern Lectures on Zazen: The Way to Shikantaza* is the result of my effort to describe in my own style my inquiries and experiments around that matter. There are some people who teach zazen believing that zazen is hard. There are some people who learn zazen believing that zazen is difficult. That is why zazen is REALLY hard and difficult. The more effort one makes to overcome the difficulty, the more difficult zazen seems to become. This is the fulfillment of the so-called "self-fulfilling prophecy." In this way, people automatically have images of zazen as "difficult," "hard," "just enduring," "something special only for special people," ... as soon as they hear the word "zazen." Isn't this an unhappy situation for zazen?

The difficulty mentioned here is concerned with the fact that body and mind do not follow

the instructions imposed by one's self-centered consciousness. In other words, things do not go according to one's intentional effort to artificially shape posture, breath and mind into the ideal states collectively called "zazen." Therefore, this difficulty only means that it is difficult to master zazen technically. If zazen is the activity of *techne* (1), this is a reasonable complaint. But if zazen is the activity of *poiesis* (2), it is an unreasonable accusation. The difficulty is not zazen's fault. A wrong attitude toward zazen in which one tries to do *poiesistic* zazen in a *technistic* way makes zazen difficult. This might be a pompous way of saying it, but the true difficulty of zazen lies in the difficulty of radically replacing a wrong view of and a wrong approach to zazen, one that we carry deep inside ourselves. Because of irrelevant misunderstanding, we sometimes make something really easy into something difficult and we sometimes fail to work properly with something really difficult. Is the same thing happening to us in the practice of zazen?

Here is a familiar example. Many people believe that we can't excrete without pushing hard. But in reality we can do it much more easily if we calmly wait until pushing comes naturally by itself. Although our body is designed to be that way, we tend to mix up natural pushing coming spontaneously from inside the body with artificial pushing coming from one's effort. This is a big mistake. We often see parents encouraging babies to push hard, saying, "Push, Yes, good, wooo, wooo ...." Actually this is teaching babies the wrong way of excreting. Babies have an innate ability to excrete. It is not something they learn from

someone else, but it is endowed from nature. Unnecessary intervention from parents destroys babies' natural feeling of excretion (it should be a pleasurable one) and changes excretion into a big job, with all sorts of hardship in the worst case. We are supposed to be able to excrete naturally and easily. What is keeping us from doing that? It is unnecessary pushing. We only pay attention to the force that we work hard to add from outside and totally forget about the spontaneous function from within.

The same thing can be said of birthing a baby. If a mother waits until the time comes, a natural pushing comes spontaneously to her. The baby arrives smoothly riding on the wave of this natural pushing. However, it is often the case that both the mother and the people around her are fixed on the idea that a baby cannot come out without hard pushing from the mother's side. Moreover wrong and distorted images of delivery such as "it is dangerous," "it is painful," "it cannot be done without a doctor's help," emphasize this. Because of a lack of understanding about the difference

between natural pushing and forceful pushing, we make a delivery (which is originally easy) more difficult than necessary. Haruchika Noguchi, the founder of *Noguchi Seitai* (a Japanese-born healing system) said, "To intentionally push oneself is totally different from naturally being filled with power. It is the first step when contacting living creatures to distinguish what spontaneously emerges from within from the force artificially added from without. If a person assumes that it is impossible to have a power without adding it from outside, he/she is handling a dead thing instead of something alive." These are really words of wisdom, I think.

Notes;

- (1) *Techne* is a Greek word and a root of "technique" and "technology." It is the human effort to extract what is hidden in nature by applying specific tools and crafts.
- (2) *Poiesis* is a Greek word and a root of "poem" and "poet." It is nature's working to spontaneously bring out what nature abundantly hides within herself, as a seed spontaneously germinates and blooms.

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## NEWS

### **May 2 - 26, 2014**

Baika classes by Sotoshu Specially Dispatched Baika Teacher were held at seven places in Brazil and at one place in Peru.

### **May 16 - 18, 2014**

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

### **May 24, 2014**

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

### **May 31, 2014**

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

### **June 9 - 19, 2014**

Baika classes by Sotoshu Specially Dispatched Baika Teacher were held at five places in North America.



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