



SOTO ZEN JOURNAL

DHARMA EYE

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A Greeting

Rev. Gengo Akiba
Director of the Soto Zen
Buddhism North America Office

On April 1, 2015, together with Rev. Daigaku Rummé's resignation, I was appointed as the Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office.

Looking back, it was in 1987 when I first received the status of *Kaikyoshi* (presently *Kokusaifukyoshi*) and came to the United States. My teaching career in America began at Kojin-an Zendo, a small attic room the size of four tatami mats. This room was located in a remodeled house in Oakland, which is east of San Francisco across the Bay Bridge. Later on, blessed by "Buddha connections," I moved to our present location in 1994 (also in Oakland) and was able to build a Japanese-style zendo there. Then, in 1997, just when I was envisioning further development in my teaching activities I was appointed to be the Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office. Traveling between Kojin-an and the Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office, which is located at Zenshuji in Los Angeles, I continued to be of service this way for thirteen years. This will be my second opportunity to see what I can do as the Director of this office. Even though I'm now over 70 years old and feel some decline in my physical strength, I am still full of energy. I anticipate a further leap forward for Soto Zen in North America and will do everything I can to make that happen.

Looking back at the history of Soto Zen in North America, it all began when Rev. Hosen Isobe, who had been serving as a *Kaikyoshi* in Hawaii, was asked by Hioki Mokusen Zenji and Arai Sekizen Zenji to go to the continental United States and begin teaching there. In 1922, he hung up a sign in Los Angeles with the words "Zenshuji – Temporary Temple." In 1937, Zenshuji was designated as a branch temple of the two Head Temples (Eiheiji and Sojiji). At the same time, the first Director (Sokan), Rev. Banjo Sagumo, was appointed and the Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office was set up at Zenshuji.

In 1933, Rev. Isobe sensed the need to have a Soto Zen temple in northern California and so he went to San Francisco. He went around speaking to many Japanese and Japanese American people whom he thought might be interested in such a project. The next year, they purchased a Jewish synagogue and built Sokoji. In those days, most of the temple members were immigrants from Japan. For this reason, these temples performed the same services and ceremonies as temples in Japan. For those Japanese people who were living in a faraway country, these temples were an important spiritual anchorage where they could remember their homeland and honor the memory of their ancestors. The temple was a place where they could maintain their identity as Japanese people.

During World War II, all Japanese and Japanese American people living on the West Coast were regarded as enemy aliens and were sent to one of eleven internment camps that were set up in various regions of America.

During that time, Zenshuji and Sokoji, as well as the temples of other Buddhist schools, were forced to close. However, Buddhist groups were formed in the internment camps and teaching did continue there. After the war was over, people returning from the internment camps struggled with the task of restoring the temples. It was through the efforts of those forerunners that the temples were reopened.

Zenshuji and Sokoji were the two strongholds of Soto Zen activities in North America. The result of the continued teaching by priests sent from Japan was the birth of many American priests. Among the Japanese priests, three of them in particular – Rev. Shunryu Suzuki, Rev. Hakuyu Maezumi, and Rev. Dainin Katagiri – produced many American priests. Their disciples and the disciples of those disciples gradually increased in number and many Zen centers have now been built throughout America. This development in combination with the trend of the times created much momentum for expanding the boundaries of Soto Zen in North America. At present, there are approximately 380 registered Soto priests and 250 Zen centers.

We can perhaps finally say that we have passed the developmental infancy of Zen in America. But from now on, however, in order to make sure that further development can happen in a big way, the cultivation of the next generation of priests is essential. Furthermore, I keenly sense that to continue the extension of the Sotoshu doctrine expressed in the statement “Abiding in the True Dharma singularly

transmitted by Buddha-ancestors, the Sotoshu doctrine is to realize *Shikantaza* (Just Sitting) and *Sokushinzebutsu* (Mind itself is Buddha),” it is extremely important to have a traditional Zen monastery in America where monastic practice can be experienced and applied. This sort of practice is the bedrock of Sotoshu and of the teachings we have inherited from the Shakyamuni Buddha through Dogen Zenji, Keizan Zenji and ancestral masters. This idea is one that was also embraced by the teachers who trail-blazed the way as *Kokusai Fukuyoshi*. I am convinced that this opportunity to do authentic monastic practice will be the culmination of Sotoshu teaching activities and I believe it will be the catalyst for developing the teaching activities outside Japan in the future.

At present, we are proactively proceeding with the construction of Tenpyozan Zendo on a site which is about two and a half hours by car or 125 miles (200 kilometers) northeast of San Francisco, near the town of Lower Lake in Lake County. The site is 111 acres (45 hectares) in size. The objective of this project, as mentioned above, is to have a place of traditional Zen training on a site equipped with the standard features of a Zen monastery: Buddha hall, monks’ hall, kitchen, temple gate, bell tower, and toilets. The objective of this project is also to serve as a means of transmitting the forms of Japanese architecture and culture. Full-scale construction began last year. In June of this year, we celebrated the Framework-Raising Ceremony for the monks’ hall, which will be the first completed building. We were fortunate to have the Vice Abbot of Daihonzan Eihei-ji, Rev. Donin Minamizawa Roshi, serve

as the officiant for a great and solemn ceremony. It will take several years before all of the buildings are completed, but we are certainly proceeding with the ardent wishes of our forerunner *Kokusaifukyoshi*. To help us meet this goal, I ask you to provide material and spiritual support.

In 2022, Sotoshu will commemorate a major milestone: the 100th anniversary of teaching activities in North America. I believe that this will be a major turning point and the opening of a new chapter for Sotoshu teaching activities as well as for the future of Sotoshu in North America. For this reason, I fully intend to fulfill my responsibilities. I conclude this greeting by asking for your continued understanding and support.



Framework Raising Ceremony for the Monks' Hall of the Tenpyozan Zendo Project

Rev. Hoko Karnegis
Kokusaifukyoshi of North America

Japanese and Americans came together in June to mark the latest milestone in the construction of Tenpyozan Zendo Project, which is expected to be the first Sotoshu-recognized *senmon sodo* (training monastery) in the West. Under blazing California sun, clergy and laity celebrated the completion of the framework of the Monks' Hall, the first of the traditional buildings that will make up the temple complex, chanting together for the safe completion of the project, voicing hopes for meaningful training and practice for generations of practitioners.



The *Joto shiki* (Framework Raising Ceremony) was officiated by Daihonzan Eiheiji's Vice Abbot, Rev. Donin Minamisawa, with participation by Revs. Hokan Saito, *Godo* of Daihonzan Eiheiji; Bokusho Maekawa, *Godo* of Daihonzan Sojiji; Kenji Nakamura, Director of Education and Dissemination Division of Sotoshu; Risai Furutani, Manager of Interna-

tional Department of Sotoshu; Shugen Komagata, Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism Hawaii Office; Dojun Sekiguchi, Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism Europe Office; and Koshu Sato, representative of the Soto Zen Buddhism South America Office; and Issho Fujita, Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism International Center in San Francisco. Also on hand were more than two dozen North American *Kokusai Fukuyoshi*, and three dozen additional clergy from Japan.

Tenpyozan Zendo Project is the long-held dream of Rev. Gengo Akiba, the abbot of the Kojin-an Zendo as well as the Director of Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office. His twenty-eight years in America have given him a first-hand appreciation of the challenges faced by Westerners who aspire to be Soto Zen clergy. He's been at work on the Tenpyozan Zendo project for more than eight years. He is not the only one who has believed in the importance of providing rigorous traditional training for overseas clergy. "This isn't only my idea," he explained. "This is an idea that those *Kokusai Fukuyoshi* who were our forerunners as well as others involved with teaching activities always had in mind." He cites in particular Rev. Dainin Katagiri and Rev. Hakuyu Maezumi as colleagues for whom the creation of traditional training opportunities for Westerners, including establishing a *senmon sodo* in America, was a deep aspiration. Even though Rev. Katagiri and Rev. Maezumi have died, Rev. Akiba continues to carry their collective dream. Tenpyozan Zendo is the culmination of that shared vision.

Tenpyozan takes its name from the Tenpyo (Heavenly Peace) period in Japan [710-794 CE], during which Buddhism was a powerful influence on Japanese culture and politics and there was much interaction with China and the Middle East. Once completed, Tenpyozan Zendo, too, will sit at the center of a variety of intersections. It will allow Western Soto Zen lay and ordained practitioners to connect with the source of their tradition, with a variety of cultures and lineages coming together to practice in one place. The relationship Tenpyozan residents and visitors with the surrounding local communities will be significant, with community service and involvement playing an important part in Tenpyozan life.



Training in traditional Zen arts will offer concrete application of the daily practice for both lay and ordained practitioners. Rev. Akiba is keen to bring together the Japanese traditions of Zen practice and Zen arts with contemporary Western culture. "The two flowers of the Dharma and the temple were planted in America by the founding Zen Masters," he said. "We have in America, and in Japan, the same founding teachings. Let's not separate America and Japan. Let's not just look at each

others' flowers as if they were in vases. We should plant these flowers, tend them, and help them to grow strong roots. As disciples of the Buddha, we can work together diligently, and manifest the teachings of Buddha in our everyday actions.”

The practice at the core of Tenpyozan Zendo's mission will be based on the *shingi*, the standard regulations for life in a Soto Zen training temple. “The *shingi* protect the shape of the Zen sangha,” Rev. Akiba says. Though based on the traditional training offered in Japan, instruction will be in English, with interpretation and translation from Japanese language and culture where necessary. That makes the program valuable not only to North American practitioners, but those from Hawaii, South America and Europe—wherever Japanese is not the primary language. Scholarship, dharma study and lectures in English, as well as English explanations and instructions for temple roles and activities, will allow those who hesitate to train in Japan due to language barrier, culture difference, and so on. “It's necessary to transmit authentically the subtle truths of the genuinely transmitted Buddhadharma of Shakyamuni Buddha and the Two Founders, the oneness of Zen and the precepts, and the oneness of practice and verification, as well as the actual form of practice that is the lifeline of Soto Zen,” Rev. Akiba explained. “In order to transmit *shikantaza* and daily activities as 'Buddha's practice' based on the teaching of 'everyday decorum itself is the Buddhadharma,' a traditional Zen place of practice for the training and cultivation of western clergy overseas is indispensable.”



The first concrete step came in July, 2012, with the purchase of about 110 acres in Lower Lake in Lake County, California. Four dozen shipping containers of sustainably-harvested hinoki wood were collected for years for Tenpyozan and donated by Rev. Shuyu Togari, Kichijo-in in Yugawara, Japan, and his Hinoki Charity Foundation in what likely represents the single largest gift ever of traditional Japanese art and architecture to the U.S.. Ground was broken in September 2012, and Japanese carpenters trained in traditional building techniques are now at work on the *Sodo* (Monks' hall), with the full-fledged temple complex planned to include a *Butsuden* (Buddha hall), *Sodo* (monks' hall), *Shuryo* (priests quarters), *Kuin* (kitchen), *Sanmon* (mountain gate), *Tosu* (toilet), and *Shoro* (bell tower). The *Butsuden* will be modeled on Toshodaiji in Nara, Japan, a design with roots in ancient China. The arrangement of the buildings around a courtyard has its precedent in the early Indian Buddhist vihara. If everything goes as planned with construction and fundraising efforts, the *Sodo* will be completed next year, and construction of the entire complex will be finished by 2022.

Work is underway to incorporate Tenpyozan as a non-profit corporation. Once that is finished, work will begin on the fundraising necessary to complete the project. An initial advisory board is handling organizational tasks like writing bylaws, nominating a board of directors, developing communications materials, and articulating a vision for Tenpyozan activities. Tenpyozan's basic mission is to support, encourage, and facilitate the international transmission of Soto Zen Buddhism by offering training for Soto Zen clergy and opportunities for formal practice, cultural and religious study, and community fellowship for both clergy and laity. Tenpyozan will be a place to preserve Buddhist traditions and to explore practical applications of Zen wisdom to encourage a world that is peaceful and sustainable.

Rev. Akiba asserts, "For us, living in the highly advanced material civilization of the 21st century, it's of very great significance both historically and culturally to build such a training monastery on American soil, in this country at the forefront of modern change. I'm convinced that creating a training temple which exemplifies the lucid and rational practice of Soto Zen cultivated for nearly 800 years in Japan will be a great contribution to human society."



For more information about Tenpyozan Zendo Project, and to learn how you can help make the vision a reality, visit tenpyozan.org.



The 7th Chapter of Shobogenzo
Ikka-myōju (One Bright Jewel)
Lecture (2)

Rev. Shohaku Okumura
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(Edited by Rev. Hoko Karnegis)

2. About the title: *Ikka-myōju* (One Bright Jewel) continued
(5) Dōgen's criticism against *The Complete Enlightenment Sutra* and *the Surangama Sutra*.

In the last issue, I introduced the usage of "one-bright jewel (*ikka-myōju*)" in the writing of Guifeng Zongmi based on the theory of *tathagata-garbha* (Buddha nature) from *the Lankavatara Sutra*, *the Complete Enlightenment Sutra* and *the Surangama Sutra*. For Zongmi, "One bright jewel" was a very important concept for comparing the similarity and difference of the four important Zen lineages in the Tang Dynasty. However, when we study Dōgen's *Shobogenzo Ikka-myōju* (*One Bright Jewel*), we need to understand that Dōgen did not appreciate these sutras since he was a young monk studying under the guidance of Tiang-tong Rujing until his final years. Dōgen does not say anything about the *Lankavatara Sutra*, but he clearly criticized *the Complete Enlightenment Sutra* and *the Surangama Sutra*.

Dōgen's criticism of the two sutras in *Hokyoki*

Dōgen recorded his conversations with Tiantong Rujing while he was in China. The record was found after Dōgen's death and was called *Hokyoki*. Hokyo is the name of the Chinese era during which Dōgen practiced there with Rujing. One of the dialogues Dōgen had with his teacher, recorded in this text, is as follows:

I asked Rujing, "Lay people read *The Lankavatara Sutra* and *The Complete Enlightenment Sutra* and say that these are the ancestral teachings transmitted from India. When I opened up these sutras and observed their structure and style, I felt they were not as skillful as other Mahayana Sutras. This seemed strange to me. More than this, the teachings of these sutras seemed to me to be far less than what we find in Mahayana Sutras. They seemed quite similar to the teachings of the six outsider teachers [who lived during the Buddha's time]. How do we determine whether or not these texts are authentic?"

Rujing said, "The authenticity of *The Lankavatara Sutra* has been doubted by some people since ancient times. Some suspect that this sutra was written by people of a later period, as the early ancestors were definitely not aware of it. But ignorant people in recent times read it and love it. *The Complete Enlightenment Sutra* is also like this. Its style is similar to *The Lankavatara Sutra*." ¹

In this translation, Dōgen mentioned *The Lankavatara Sutra* and *The Complete Enlightenment Sutra*. But the first sutra Dōgen mentions

is not *The Lankavatara Sutra* but *The Surangama Sutra*. In Chinese this sutra is called *Shuryogonkyo* (首楞嚴經). *Shuryogon* is a transliteration of *Surangama*.

I also have a question about Tanahashi's translation of the two sentences in this paragraph: "Some suspect that this sutra was written by people of a later period, as the early ancestors were definitely not aware of it. But ignorant people in recent times read it and love it." I think these sentences should be translated as follows: "Some suspect that this sutra was produced by people in a later period. In the previous ages, ancestral masters never read this sutra. Ignorant people in these days read it and love it." Rujing said that authenticity of *The Shurangama Sutra* has been questioned from ancient times, therefore ancestral masters in the early times never read this sutra.

Anyway, Dōgen has a doubt about the authenticity and quality of *The Surangama Sutra* and *The Complete Enlightenment Sutra*. Those are sutras I have introduced as the foundation of Zhongmi's and Xuansha's usage of "one bright jewel".

Dōgen gives the question to his teacher. This is a very serious question. Dōgen thinks that the teachings in these sutras are similar with the six outsider teachers. This means the sutras advocate non-Buddhist teachings such as Senika's theory, which Dōgen introduces in Bendowa. In this case, to be non-Buddhist means to go against the Buddha's teaching of *anatman* (no permanent self). The teaching of the metaphor of the *mani* jewel (one bright

jewel) which is permanent and never changes, even though the surface color is changing is, according to Dōgen, nothing other than *atman*. That is the problem in Dōgen's question. He is asking whether the theory included in these two sutras can be considered to be authentic Buddhist teaching or not.

This is a conversation that happened when Dōgen was twenty-five years old. In China, it seems that the authenticity of these two sutras has not been questioned. However in Japan, in the 8th century, some Hosso School (Japanese Yogacara School) monks doubted whether *The Surangama Sutra* is an authentic sutra from India or not. Dōgen and his teacher Rujing had the same question. In modern times, almost all Japanese Buddhist scholars think that *The Surangama Sutra* and *The Complete Enlightenment Sutra* were written in China.

The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism says the following about the authenticity of *The Surangama Sutra*:

Although Zhisheng assumed *the Surangamasutra* was a genuine Indian scripture, the fact that no Sanskrit manuscript of the text is known to exist, as well as the inconsistencies in the stories about its transmission to China, have led scholars for centuries to question the scripture's authenticity. There is also internal evidence of the scripture's Chinese provenance, such as the presence of such indigenous Chinese philosophical concepts as yin-yang cosmology and the five elements (wuxing) theory, the stylistic beauty of the literary

Chinese in which the text is written, etc. For these and other reasons, the *Surangamasutra* is now generally recognized to be a Chinese apocryphal composition.²

However, Chinese masters don't agree. There is a Chinese temple in San Francisco named Golden Mountain Temple, and it has a big community called the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas in Ukiah, Northern California. The founder of that temple, Ven. Master Hsuan Hua, opposed those modern scholars: "Where *the Surangama Sutra* exists, then the Proper Dharma exists. If *the Surangama Sutra* ceases to exist, then the Proper Dharma will also vanish. If *the Surangama sutra* is inauthentic, then I vow to fall into the Hell of Pulling Tongues to undergo uninterrupted suffering."³ In a subsequent section of the introduction to the *Surangama Sutra*, Ron Epstein and David Rounds argue that it was written in India.⁴

So there is a controversy. Since I am not a Buddhist scholar, I cannot discuss which is right. Anyway, we are studying Dōgen's *Shobogenzo*, we need to hear what Dōgen has to say on this point. We need to understand that Dōgen questions not only about whether the *Surangama Sutra* was written in India or China but also whether the core teaching in the sutra is non-Buddhist theory.

Dōgen's criticism in *Eiheï Koroku*

Not only when he was young, but also in his later years, he repeats the same opinion regarding the two sutras in his Dharma discourse number 383 in *Eiheï Koroku* (*Dōgen's Extensive Record*), the collection that includes

more than five hundred formal discourses by Dōgen. Because this is a long discourse on Dōgen's disagreement with the theory of the identity of the three teachings (Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism), I will only quote one paragraph of just a few sentences:

Therefore we should not look at the words and phrases of Confucius or Lao Tzu, and should not look at the *Surangama* or *Complete Enlightenment Scriptures*. (*Many contemporary people consider the Surangama and Complete Enlightenment Sutras as among those that the Zen tradition relies on. But the teacher Dōgen always disliked them.*) We should exclusively study the expressions coming from the activities of buddhas and ancestors from the time of the seven world-honored Buddhas to the present. If we are not concerned with the activities of the buddha ancestors, and vainly make our efforts in the evil path of fame and profit, how could this be study of the Way? Among the World-Honored Tathagata, the ancestral teacher Mahakashyapa, the twenty-eight ancestors in India, the six generations [of ancestors] in China, Qingyuan, and Nanyue [Huirang], which of these ancestral teachers ever used the *Surangama* or *Complete Enlightenment Sutra* and considered them as the true Dharma eye treasury, wondrous mind of nirvana? ⁵

The italic sentences in the parenthesis are a note made by Gien, a disciple of Dōgen who compiled volume 5 of *Eihei Koroku*. It is clear that he continued to dislike these two sutras

even when he was past his youth.

Dōgen criticizes not only the two sutras but Guifeng Zongmi's essential points in Dharma discourse number 447 of *Eiheikoroku*:

I can remember Guifeng Zongmi said, "The quality of knowing is the gateway of all excellence."

Zen master Huanrong Shixin [wuxin] said, "The quality of knowing is the gateway of all evil."

Later students have recited what these two previous worthies said, without stopping up to today. Because of this, ignorant people have wanted to discuss which is correct, and for hundreds of years have either used or discarded one or the other thing. Nevertheless, Zongmi's saying that knowing is the gateway of all excellence has not yet emerged from the pit of those outside the way. What is called knowledge is certainly neither excellent nor course. As for Huanlong [Shixin]'s saying that knowing is a gateway of all evil, what is called knowledge is certainly neither evil nor good.

Today, I, Eihei would like to examine those two people's sayings. Great Assembly would you like to clearly understand the point of this?

After a pause Dōgen said: If the great ocean knew it was full, the hundreds of rivers would all flow upstream.⁶

It is clear that Dōgen knows what Guifeng Zongmi wrote about the one bright jewel. Zongmi said that everything good came from

this knowing (*chi*) or the spiritual intelligence that is nothing other than the one bright jewel. Dōgen also quotes another Zen master, Huanrong Shixin. They said completely opposite things and Dōgen made a comment about these two opposite sayings.

Dōgen says Zongmi's saying has not yet emerged from the pit of those outside the way. This "pit of those outside the way" means the trap of non-Buddhist theory. Dōgen is saying that Zongmi's saying is non-Buddhist teaching. This dharma discourse 447 was probably given when Dōgen was around 50 years old, a few years before his death. Dōgen still thinks Guifeng Zongmi's teaching based on the two sutras was not Buddhist.

After a pause he said, "If the great ocean knew it was full, the hundreds of rivers would all flow upstream." The ocean will never fill up, so water can flow from the mountains to the ocean continuously. However, if the ocean becomes full, water needs to flow towards the mountains. Such a thing can never happen. From these sayings of Dōgen, it is clear to me that Dōgen does not agree with what Guifeng Zongmi had written using the analogy of "one bright jewel".

Dōgen's Comment on *The Surangama Sutra in Shobogenzo Tenhorin* (Turning the Dharma Wheel).

In *Shoboenzo Tenhorin* (*Turning the Dharma Wheel*) written in 1244, Dōgen discusses several Zen masters' comments on an expression from *the Surangama Sutra* as follows:

The expression quoted now, that "*when a person exhibits the truth and returns to the origin, space in the ten directions totally disappears*" is an expression in *the Surangama Sutra*. This same phrase has been discussed by several Buddhist patriarchs. Consequently, this phrase is truly the bones and marrow of Buddhist patriarchs, and the eyes of Buddhist patriarchs. My intention in saying so is as follows: Some insist that the ten-fascicle version of the *Surangama Sutra* is a forged sutra while others insist that it is not a forged sutra. The two arguments have persisted from the distant past until today. There is the older translation and there is the new translation; the version that is doubted is [not these but] a translation produced during the Shinryu era. However, Master Goso [Ho]en, Master Bussho [Ho]tai, and my late Master Tendo, the eternal Buddha, have each quoted the above phrase already. So, this phrase has already been turned in the Dharma wheel of Buddhist patriarchs; it is the Buddhist Patriarch's Dharma wheel turning.⁷

The translation produced in the first year of the Shinryu era (Shenlong in 705 CE) is the ten-fascicle version of the *Surangama Sutra*. The older ones are entitled *Surangama-samadhi-sutra*, translated by Kumarajiva; this is a different sutra from *the Surangama Sutra*, which is a Chinese apocryphal scripture. Here Dōgen doubts the authenticity of *the Surangama Sutra*, but he says that once a sentence from the sutra is quoted and used by ancestors to express the Dharma, the statement can be thought of as turning the Dharma wheel.

Similar criticism in Bendōwa, Question Ten

In *Bendowa* and *Shobogenzo Sokushinzebutsu* (The Mind itself is Buddha), Dōgen criticized the theory that the mind-nature is permanent and forms are arising and perishing. This teaching is what Dōgen thought came from the same ideas Zongmi wrote based on the Surangama Sutra and *the Complete Enlightenment Sutra*. I think that to clearly understand Dōgen's points in these two writings, it is important to know why Dōgen does not appreciate these two sutras. Question ten in Bendowa is about the problem. First Dōgen formulated the question, then he wrote the reply to the question.

[Question 10] Someone has said, "Do not grieve over life and death. There is an instantaneous means for separating from life and death. It is to understand the principle that mind-nature is permanent. This means that even though the body that is born will inevitably be carried into death, still this mind-nature never perishes. If you really understand that the mind-nature existing in our body is not subject to birth and death, then since it is the original nature, although the body is only a temporary form haphazardly born here and dying, the mind is permanent and unchangeable in the past, present and future. To know this is called release from life and death. Those who know this principle will forever extinguish their rounds of life and death and when their bodies perish they enter into the ocean of original nature. When they stream into this ocean, they are truly endowed with the same wondrous virtues as the Buddha-

Tathagatas. Now, even though you know this, because your body was produced by the delusory karma of previous lives, you are not the same as the sages. Those who do not yet know this must forever transmigrate within the realm of life and death. Consequently, you need comprehend only the permanence of mind-nature. What can you expect from vainly spending your whole life doing quiet sitting?" Is such an opinion truly in accord with the way of buddhas and ancestors?"⁸

Life and death in this case refers to transmigration within samsara. In this teaching, we don't need to grieve over suffering in samsara, and we don't need to practice. This mind-nature is *shinsho*(心性), *shin* is "mind;" *shō* is "nature." This is one of the expressions Guifeng Zongmi used. We should see the permanence of mind-nature. Even though phenomenal body and mind are impermanent, this mind-nature is permanent. Just to see the permanence of mind-nature is an instantaneous method to become free from suffering. If this is true, it's pretty easy to be released from samsara. We don't need to practice.

This theory says that our life with this body is like a river. Until the river reaches the ocean, we are living as individual persons and experiencing different things and we attach to certain things and we hate certain things and we suffer. But once we return to the ocean, we become free from the body. The body is the source of delusions, but this mind nature is always pure. When this mind-nature returns to the ocean of original nature, we are free from the suffering

of samsara and become like buddhas. Why do we have to go through a difficult practice such as zazen?

According to this theory, we don't need to practice. We just need to know that mind-nature is permanent and undefiled, and even if we don't practice at all, when we die we become buddhas. This is an interesting teaching. As long as we are living, we're no good, and our practice doesn't work. What we have to do is wait until we die. Then we become buddhas. It seems easy. However, this means that as long as we are alive we are deluded and we have to suffer. I don't think this is an easy way of life.

Bendowa: reply to Question Ten

Dōgen makes up this question and replies by himself as follows:

The idea you have just mentioned is not Buddha-dharma at all, but the fallacious view of Senika.

This fallacy says that there is a spiritual intelligence in one's body which discriminates love and hatred or right and wrong as soon as it encounters phenomena, and has the capacity to distinguish all such things as pain and itching or suffering and pleasure. Furthermore, when this body perishes, the spirit nature escapes and is born elsewhere. Therefore although it seems to expire here, since [the spiritual nature] is born somewhere, it is said to be permanent, never perishing. Such is this fallacious doctrine.

However to learn this theory and suppose it is buddha-dharma is more

stupid than grasping a tile or a pebble and thinking it is a golden treasure. Nothing can compare to the shameful of this idiocy. National teacher Echu of Tang China strictly admonished [against this mistake]. So now isn't it ridiculous to consider that the erroneous view of mind as permanent and material form as impermanent is the same as the wondrous dharma of the buddhas, and to think that you become free from life and death when actually you are arousing the fundamental cause of life and death? This indeed is most pitiful. Just realize that this is a mistaken view. You should give no ear to it.⁹

Senika is one of the non-Buddhist teachers that appears in *the Mahayana Parinirvana Sutra*. What Dōgen says here in *Bendōwa* is the same as what he says in *Eihei Koroku*; this theory that insists that mind-nature is permanent is the same as the non-Buddhist teaching.

This spiritual intelligence is a translation of *reichi*(靈知) and that is exactly the same word that Guifeng Zongmi used to describe "one bright jewel" in his writing when he compared the four lineages of Zen in the Tang Dynasty. When this spiritual intelligence encounters a certain object, it creates some discrimination. This spiritual nature escapes from our body when we die as the owner of a house goes out when the house is burned and gets a new house.

Dōgen repeats exactly the same discussion in *Shōbōgenzō Sokushin-zebutsu* (The Mind Itself is Buddha). There he quotes a long conversation between Nanyan Huizhong (Nanyo Echu,

675-775) regarding the same theory of Senika. The expression “mind itself is Buddha” is by Mazu (Baso), a disciple of Nanyan’s Dharma brother Nanyue Huairang (Nangaku Ejo, 677-744). Dōgen does not agree with the teaching of Guifeng Zongmi written in his text.

If we interpret Xuansha’s saying, “The entire ten-direction world is one bright jewel,” according to the same usage of the analogy that appeared in Zongmi’s writing, then probably Dōgen didn’t agree with it. What is Dōgen’s understanding of Xuansha’s statement? Is there any difference between what Xuansha said and Dōgen’s interpretation of Xuansha’s saying? This is the point of studying *Shobogenzo Ikka-myōju (One Bright Jewel)*. What I have been discussing is a kind of preparation before starting to read Dōgen’s insight about this analogy of “one bright jewel”.

Dōgen is really a difficult person with whom to practice. In a sense, he’s so stubborn and picky. Many Zen texts agree with this theory in these sutras and Zongmi’s. Dōgen is a very unusual and unique Zen master. To be his student is a difficult thing.

Shodoka, a poem by Yongjia Xuanjue

I pointed to the examples of usage of this analogy of “one bright jewel” in Zen Buddhism in the Tang Dynasty. I think Dōgen didn’t agree the theory behind the expressions. He needed to make his own interpretation of what this bright jewel is. Obviously this bright jewel is a metaphor of Buddha nature, *bushō* in Japanese. We need to understand what Dōgen’s understanding of Buddha nature is.

Before I start to read the text, I’d like to introduce one more example of the same kind of idea in one of the famous pieces of Zen literature written in the Tang Dynasty. This is a very well known and important poem written by Yongjia Xuanjue (Yoka Genkaku, 665-713). This person was another disciple of the Sixth Ancestor Huineng (Eno, 638-713), and yet he stayed with Huineng only one night. On the day he visited the Sixth Ancestor, he attained enlightenment and he left. He is a Dharma brother of Nanyan Huizhong and Nanyue Huairang. He used to be a Tendai monk, a great scholar and also a very skillful poet. He wrote a long poem entitled *Shodoka* (Song of Enlightenment of the Way).

I found a translation by D. T Suzuki. In this poem Yongjia Xuanjue wrote about this metaphor of *mani* jewel as follows:

The whereabouts of the precious
mani-jewel is not known to people generally,
Which lies deeply buried in the recesses of
the *Tathagata-garbha*;
The six-fold function miraculously per-
formed by it is an illusion and yet not an
illusion,
The rays of light emanating from one per-
fect sun belong to the realm of form and
yet not to it.¹⁰

As it is generally said, people don’t see this bright jewel. It is something hidden deeply within us. In this translation it says “the six-fold function miraculously performed by it...” Six-fold function refers to the function of the six sense organs when they encounter the six

objects of sense organs. This refers to what we do every day, the things happening between subject and object such as seeing, hearing, sensing and knowing. All these things we do are done by this hidden bright jewel, Buddha Nature. This bright jewel is the subject of seeing, hearing, etc.

D.T. Suzuki translates, "...is an illusion and yet not an illusion." I'm not sure if this is the right translation or not. The original word Xuanjue used is *ku* (空) and *fuku* (不空). *Ku* is "emptiness" and *fuku* is "not emptiness." This means that the conditioned color of blackness is empty but the bright jewel itself is not empty but substance as Zongmi said.

The next line, "The rays of light emanating from one perfect sun belong to the realm of form and yet not to it," is like this in Chinese: 一顆円光色不色。一顆 is the same word as *ikka* in *ikka-myōju*, which means "one piece". Even though D.T. Suzuki translated it as "perfect sun," I think this "one-piece" refers to the *mani* jewel. 色不色 (*shiki fu-shiki*) is form and not-form. I would translate this line : The perfect light of the one [bright jewel] is both form and not-form.

Of course *ku* and *shiki* came from *the Heart Sutra*, "*shiki soku ze ku, ku soku ze shiki*". That is what this means. "Not *ku*" means *shiki* and "not *shiki*" means *ku*, so *ku* and *shiki* interpenetrate each other. That is what is said in *the Heart Sutra*. Form is nothing other than emptiness and emptiness is nothing other than form. The function between subject and object are performed by this hidden bright jewel. And

these are at the same time emptiness (conditioned color) and not emptiness (bright jewel) and the light of the bright jewel is both form and yet not-form. That is what is written in this poem. So here we can see a kind of a combination between the teaching of emptiness and the theory of *tathagata-garbha* (buddha nature). The author of this poem or the theory in *the Surangama Sutra* and *the Perfect Enlightenment Sutra* combined these two. In a sense, this theory is an integration or mixture of theory of emptiness, Yogacara's consciousness only, and *tathagata-garbha*.

Dōgen's Understanding of the Bright Jewel

This poem is still considered as a classic of Zen Buddhism and no one thinks that this is a heretical teaching. This is considered an authentic Zen teaching. Probably Dōgen is a rare Zen master who didn't like this idea. The interactions of our six sense organs and the six objects of the sense organs are something we carry out day-to-day. Yet this poem says that there is something which is hidden and that that hidden thing called *tathagata-garbha* (buddha nature) is the subject that performs these day-to-day things. Here are two layers of reality; one is phenomena and another is probably, in Western philosophical world, called noumenon. Buddha Nature in this case is noumenon and things happening between subject and object are phenomena, and these phenomenal things are a function of the noumenon. That is the basic structure of this idea. I think this is what Dōgen didn't like, probably because viewing it from his practice of *zazen*, this theory is dualistic. There is the duality of phenomena and noumenon, or Buddha nature

and our day-to-day activities or one bright jewel and its conditioned black color. That is, I think, the basic problem for Dōgen; thus he thinks this theory is not in accord with Buddhist teaching.

Then, in the case of Dōgen, what is this bright jewel? I think, the bright jewel in Dōgen's teaching is like a drop of water that is illuminated by moonlight. In the case of the structure of the theory of noumenon and phenomena, there's no relation between phenomenal things. But as Dōgen defines delusion and realization in his *Genjōkōan*, delusion and realization are only within the relationship between self and myriad dharmas. In *Genjōkōan*, Dōgen used the word *jiko*(自己) and *banpo*(万法), and he said that conveying the self toward myriad things and carry out practice-enlightenment is delusion, and all myriad things coming toward the self and carrying out practice-enlightenment through the self is realization.

In *Shōbōgenzō Sokushinzebutsu (The Mind is itself Buddha)*, Dōgen quotes Nanyan Huizong's conversation with a monk from the south who criticizes the Zen teaching in the south, saying that the theory is the same as Senika's, the non-Buddhist. Then the monk from the south asked Huizong, "Then what is the ancient Buddha mind?" Huizong replied, "Fences, walls, tiles and pebbles." Dōgen quotes this saying in *Shōbōgenzō Kobutsushin (The Ancient Buddha Mind)* and says at the end of *Sokushinzebutsu*, "The mind that has been authentically transmitted is one-mind is all things and all things are one-mind." Here there is no duality between noumenon (the bright

jewel) and phenomenal things (black color). I think Huizong and Dōgen mention the interconnectedness of phenomenal things within the network of Indra's Net.

It's not a matter of there being Buddha nature that is like a diamond inside the self and to find this diamond is realization. Dōgen doesn't like this idea. If this is the case, our practice is to find something inside ourselves, and we would be able to attain so-called realization or enlightenment when we've found this inner diamond. Then it would have nothing to do with our relationship with others. But in the case of Dōgen, practice-enlightenment is to transform the way of our life. Transformation of our life can be only within the relationship between self and myriad things.

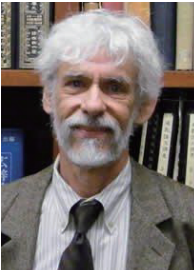
In the same writing (*Genjōkōan*), he says that the self is like a drop of water; it's a tiny thing, and it is impermanent. The moonlight is the light of myriad dharmas. The self is a part of the network of interconnectedness of myriad things. This way of existing is the bright jewel. The bright jewel is not a permanent noumenon. We and all myriad things are born, stay for a while, and disappear; nothing is permanent. And yet this tiny drop of water is illuminated by all dharmas. There are numerous things and they are all interconnected with each other. Without this connection, this tiny drop of water cannot exist even for one moment. This bright jewel is like a knot of Indra's net and each knot is a bright jewel. This bright jewel or drop of water is illuminated by everything, and this bright jewel or drop of water also illuminates everything. In this case,

this self is a part of the moonlight. This is like five fingers and one hand. One hand is simply a collection of five fingers. One hand is not a noumenon of five fingers. Practice-enlightenment or delusion and realization exist only within this relationship between self and all other beings. There is the difference of framework between the one bright jewel as noumenon and as a part of interdependent origination. I think this is the point Dōgen wants to show us.

When Dōgen interprets Xuansha's saying, "This entire ten-direction world is one bright jewel," he is talking about the relationship between self and myriad things within the structure of the network of interdependent origination.

Everything is reflected in one thing and, because this is a net, when we touch the one knot we touch the entire net. There is no separation between self and myriad things. It's really one seamless reality. And yet within our views it seems subject and object are separate. Unless we understand this point and interpret the title "One Bright Jewel," we don't really understand what Dōgen is talking about and why he had to say it in this way. Dōgen's interpretation might be different from what Xuansha expressed with this expression as I interpreted in the last issue based on Zongmi's comparison of the four lineages.

- 1 This is a translation from *Enlightenment Unfolds* by Kazuaki Tanahashi. (Shambhala, 1999) p. 6-7
- 2 *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Robbert Buswell, Donald Lopez, Princeton University Press, 2014)p.874
- 3 *The Surangama Sutra: with Excerpt from the Commentary by the Venerable Master Hsuan Hua* (Buddhist Text Translation society, 2009,). P. xli
- 4 Ibid
- 5 *Dōgen's Extensive Record* (Wisdom Publications, 2004) p.341-342.
- 6 *Dōgen's Extensive Record* (Wisdom Publications, 2004) p.341-342.
- 7 *Master Dōgen's shobogenzo Book 4* (Gudo Nishijima & Chodo Cross, Windbell Publications Ltd., London, 1999) p.28
- 8 Okumura's translation in *The Wholehearted Way* (Tuttle Publishing, 1997) p.32
- 9 Idib
- 10 D. T. Suzuki, *Manual of Zen Buddhism* p.91



Beyond the Buddha *Butsu kōjō ji*

Translated by
Carl Bielefeldt

Introduction

This fascicle of the *Shōbōgenzō* was produced at Kōshōji, Dōgen’s monastery just south of the capital Heian-kyō (modern Kyoto), in April, 1242; the date is near the beginning of a period of intense productivity, during which Dōgen was composing a *Shōbōgenzō* text on an average of one per week. *Butsu kōjō ji* represents number 26 in both the 75-and 60-fascicle redactions of the *Shōbōgenzō* and number 28 in the vulgate edition.

As its title suggests, the work deals with the notion that the way of the Chan masters transcends the traditional categories of Buddhism — a notion famously expressed in the sayings of the ninth-century master Dongshan Liangjie, founder of Dōgen’s Sōtō lineage, that there is “something beyond the buddha” (*butsu kōjō ji*) or “someone beyond the buddha” (*butsu kōjō nin*). In his essay, Dōgen offers his comments on nine examples of sayings, by Dongshan and others, that use the term “beyond,” or “above” (*kōjō*).

Beyond the Buddha

The Eminent Ancestor, Great Master Wuben of Mount Dong, in Yun province [i.e., Dongshan Liangjie (807-869)], was the close legitimate heir of the Great Master Wuzhu of

Mount Yunyan, in Tan province (i.e., Yunyan Tansheng (782-841)]; from the Tathāgata, he is the thirty-eighth “beyond the ancestors”; he is the ancestor of the thirty-eight above him.¹

On one occasion, the Great Master addressed the assembly, saying, “When you’ve experienced what’s beyond the buddha, then you’re in a position to talk a bit.”

A monk asked, “What is this talk?”

The Great Master said, “When I’m talking, the ācārya doesn’t [i.e., you don’t] hear it.” The monk said, “Then does the Reverend [i.e., do you] hear it?”

The Great Master said, “Once I’m not talking; then I hear it.”²

The Great Master is the original ancestor of the saying, “what’s beyond the buddha,” being discussed here. Other buddhas and ancestors have studied the words of the Great Master and experienced “what’s beyond the buddha.” We should realize that “what’s beyond the buddha” is not remaining at the cause [i.e., practice], is not fulfilling the effect [of practice]. Nevertheless, there is the experience, the mastery, of “not hearing” “when I’m talking.” When we do not reach “beyond the buddha,” we do not have the experience of “beyond the buddha”; when we are “not talking,” we do not experience “what’s beyond the buddha.” They do not reveal each other; they do not conceal each other. They do not give to each other; they do not take from each other. Therefore, when “talking” occurs, this is “what’s beyond the buddha.” When “what’s beyond the buddha” occurs, “the ācārya doesn’t hear it.” To say that “the ācārya doesn’t hear it” means that “what’s

beyond the buddha” itself “doesn’t hear it.” “When I’m talking, the ācārya doesn’t hear it.” We should realize that “talking” is not defiled by “hearing,” not defiled by “not hearing.” Therefore, “hearing” and “not hearing” are not concerned with each other.

While he is an ācārya contained within “not hearing,” an ācārya contained within “talking,” he is “meeting someone” and “not meeting someone”; he is “like this” and “not like this.” When the ācārya is talking, this is “the ācārya doesn’t hear it.” The meaning of his not hearing is that he is obstructed by the tongue and “doesn’t hear it”; he is obstructed by the ear and “doesn’t hear it”; he is illumined by the eye and “doesn’t hear it”; he is blocked by body and mind and “doesn’t hear it.” Because of this, he “doesn’t hear it.” We should not go on to take these as “talking”: it is not the case that “not hearing” is “talking”; it is just that “when [I’m] talking, [the ācārya] doesn’t hear it.” In these words by the Eminent Ancestor — “When I’m talking, the ācārya doesn’t hear it” — while the head and tail of “talking” are “like wisteria clinging to wisteria,” “talking” should entwine “talking” and be obstructed by “talking.”

The monk said, “Then does the Reverend hear it?” What this is saying is not concerned with “the Reverend” and whether he hears “the talk”; for the hearing brought up here is not “the Reverend” and is not “the talk.” Rather, what the monk is considering here is the question of whether or not he should study “then I hear it” in “when I’m talking.” For example, he is thinking to hear whether the “talking” is “talking”; he is thinking to hear whether “hearing it” is “hearing it.” Still, while we may say this, it isn’t your [i.e., the monk’s] tongue.

Clearly we should study the words of the eminent ancestor of Mount Dong, “Once I’m not talking, then I hear it.” It says that, at the time he is “talking,” there is no “then I hear it”; the occurrence of “then I hear it” is when he is “not talking.” It is not that he sets aside the time when he is “not talking” and vainly waits for his “not talking.” It is not that he treats “talking” as an onlooker at the time of “then I hear it”; for it is truly an onlooker. It is not that, at the time of “then I hear it,” “talking” has gone off to stay over there to one side. It is not that, when “I’m talking,” “then I hear it” is a clap of thunder hiding itself within the eye of the “talking.” This being the case, whether in regard to the ācārya, who does not hear it when I talk, or in regard to the I of “Once I’m not talking; then I hear it,” this is “then you’re in a position to talk a bit”; this is “when you’ve experienced what’s beyond the buddha.” For example, it is to experience “when I talk, then I hear it.” Hence, it is “Once I’m not talking; then I hear it.” So it may be, but “what’s beyond the buddha” is not what is prior to the seven buddhas; it is what is beyond the seven buddhas.

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The Eminent Ancestor, Great Master Wuben, [i.e., Dongshan] addressed the assembly, saying, “You should know that there’s someone beyond the buddha.”

At that time, a monk asked, “What is this ‘someone beyond the buddha’?”

The Great Master said, “Not the buddha.” Yunmen [i.e., Yunmen Wenyan (864-949)] said, “He can’t get its name, he can’t get

its state; so he says it's 'not.'"

Baofu [i.e., Baofu Congzhan (d. 928)] said, "Buddha is not."

*Fayan [i.e., Fayan Wenyi (885-958)] said, "As an expedient, he's called 'the buddha.'"*³

The buddha and ancestor who is beyond the buddhas and ancestors is the Eminent Ancestor Dongshan. The reason is that, though there may be many other buddha faces and ancestor faces, the saying "beyond the buddha," they have not seen even in their dreams. The likes of Deshan [i.e., Deshan Xuanjian (780-865)] or Linji [i.e., Linji Yixuan (d. 866)], though we teach it to them, would not accede to it; the likes of Yantou [i.e., Yantou Quanhuo (828-887)] or Xuefeng [i.e., Xuefeng Yicun (822-908)], though they pulverize their bodies, would not "taste the fist." The sayings of the Eminent Ancestor, such as "when you've experienced what's beyond the buddha, then you're in a position to talk a bit," or "you should know that there's someone beyond the buddha," will not be thoroughly verified merely in practice and verification over one, two, three, four or five threefold asa khyeya and one hundred great kalpas. Truly, only those who have the study of the dark road are in that position.

We should know that there's "someone beyond the buddha." This refers to the livelihood of "toying with the spirit." Be that as it may, we know it by taking up an old buddha; we know it by raising up a fist. To have seen it in this way is to know "there's someone beyond the buddha," to know "there's no one beyond the buddha." The address to the assembly here

does not mean that we should become "someone beyond the buddha," or that we should encounter "someone beyond the buddha": it means simply that, for the moment, we should know that there is "someone beyond the buddha." One who can use this pivot surely does not know "there's someone beyond the buddha," does not know "there's no one beyond the buddha." This "someone beyond the buddha" is "not the buddha." When wondering what this "not the buddha" is, we should think, it is not called "not the buddha" because it is prior to the buddha; it is not called "not the buddha" because it is subsequent to the buddha; it is not that it is "not the buddha" because it transcends the buddha: it is "not the buddha" solely because it is "beyond the buddha." It is called "not the buddha" because it is the face of the buddha sloughed off, because it is the body and mind of the buddha sloughed off.

* * * * *

The Chan Master Kumu, of Jingyin in Dongjing (successor to Furong; monastic name, Facheng) [i.e., Kumu Facheng (1071-1128)] addressed the assembly saying, "When you know there's something beyond the buddhas and ancestors, then you're in a position to talk. Zen worthies, tell me, what is this something beyond the buddhas and ancestors? There's a child of this family whose six sense organs are lacking and seven consciousnesses are incomplete. He's a great icchantika, without the nature of the seed of buddhahood. When he meets a buddha, he kills the buddha; when he meets an ancestor, he kills

the ancestor. The halls of heaven can't contain him; hell has no door to admit him. Members of the great assembly, do you know this person?"

After a while, he said, "Face to face, he's no saindhava [i.e., quick witted]; a lot of sleep and plenty of talking in his sleep."⁴

To say that "his six organs are lacking" means *he has had his eyes switched by someone for soapberry seeds, he has had his nose switched by someone for a bamboo tube, he has had his skull borrowed by someone to make a shit dipper. What is the truth of this switching?* Because of it, his six organs are lacking. Because he lacks the six organs, he has passed through the forge and become a golden buddha, he has passed through the great ocean and become a clay buddha, he has passed through the flames and become a wooden buddha.

To say that "his seven consciousnesses are incomplete" means he is a "broken wooden dipper." Though he "kills the buddha," he "meets the buddha"; he kills the buddha because he meets the buddha. If he thinks to enter "the halls of heaven", the halls of heaven will crumble; if he heads for "hell," hell will immediately rupture. Hence, "face to face," he "breaks into a smile"; there is no further "*saindhava*." While he "sleeps a lot," he still "talks in his sleep" a lot. We should realize that the principle here is that *both all the mountains and the entire earth know themselves; the entire body of the jewels and stones are smashed in a hundred pieces*. We should quietly work at investigating Chan Master Kumu's address to the assembly; do not treat it hastily.

* * * * *

The Great Master Hongjue of Mount Yunju [i.e., I.e., Yunju Daoying (d. 902)] went to study with the Eminent Ancestor Dongshan. [Dong]shan asked, "What is the ācārya's name?"

Yunju said, "Daoying."

The Eminent Ancestor asked again, "Say something beyond that."

Yunju said, "If I say something beyond that, I'm not named Daoying."

Dongshan said, "When I was at Yunyan, my answer was no different."⁵

The words here by master and disciple, we should definitely examine in detail. The saying "if I say something beyond that, I'm not named Daoying" is beyond Daoying. We should study the fact that, in the previous Daoying, there is a "not named Daoying" beyond. With the appearance of the principle that he is "not named Daoying beyond," he is the true Daoying. Nevertheless, do not say that even beyond he must be Daoying. Even if, upon hearing the Eminent Ancestor's words, "say something beyond that," he had presented his understanding by saying, "beyond that, I'm named Daoying," this would be a "saying beyond." Why do we say this? Because Daoying leaps immediately into his head and hides his body. Though he may hide his body, he exposes his shadow.

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The Chan Master Benji of Caoshan [i.e., Caoshan Benji (840-901)] went to study

with the Eminent Ancestor Dongshan. Dongshan asked him, “What is the ācārya’s name?”

Caoshan said, “Benji.”

The Eminent Ancestor said, “Say something beyond that.”

Caoshan said, “I won’t say.”

The Eminent Ancestor said, “Why won’t you say?”

The master said, “I’m not named Benji.”

The Eminent Ancestor approved of this.⁶

What this says is, not that he has nothing to say beyond that, but that he “won’t say” it. “Why won’t he say it?” Because he is “not named Benji.” Therefore, saying something beyond is “I won’t say”; his “I won’t say” something beyond is his “I’m not named”; the Benji “not named” is his saying something beyond. Therefore, “Benji” is “not named.” In this way, there is a non-Benji; there the “not named” sloughed off; there is a “Benji” sloughed off.

The Chan Master Baoji of Panshan [dates unknown, disciple of Mazu Daoyi (709-788)] said, “The one road beyond — even a thousand sages don’t transmit it.”⁷

“The one road beyond” is a saying only of Panshan. He does not say, “what’s beyond”; he does not say, “someone beyond”: he says, “the one road beyond.” The essential point is that, though a thousand sages may compete to appear, “the one road beyond,” they “don’t transmit.” To say, they “don’t transmit it,” means the thousand sages preserve their position of not transmitting it. We should study it

in this way. And there is something further to say about it: it is not that there are not a thousand sages and a thousand wise men; though they may be wise men and sages, “the one road beyond” is not the realm of the wise men and sages.

The Chan Master Guangzuo of Mount Zhimen [dates unknown, disciple of Xianglin Chengyuan (908-987)] was once asked by a monk, “What is ‘what’s beyond the buddha?’”

The master said, “The head of the staff hoists the sun and moon.”⁸

That “the staff” is obstructed by “the sun and moon” — this is “what’s beyond the buddha.” When we study “the staff” of “the sun and moon,” all of heaven and earth is dark — this is “what’s beyond the buddha.” It does not mean that “the sun and moon” are “the staff.” “The head of the staff” means “above the entire staff.”

In the assembly of the Great Master Wuji of Shitou [i.e., Shitou Xiqian (700-790)], the Chan Master Daowu of the Tianhuang Monastery [i.e., Tianhuang Daowu (748-807)], asked, “What is the great meaning of the buddha dharma?”

The master answered, “Unattainable, unknowable.”

Daowu said, “Beyond this, is there some further turning point?”

The master said, “The vast sky doesn’t obstruct the flight of the white clouds.”⁹

Shitou was the second generation after Caoxi [i.e., the Sixth Ancestor, Huineng (638-713)]; the Reverend Daowu of Tianhuang Monastery was the younger fellow disciple of Yaoshan [i.e., Yaoshan Weiyan (745-828 or 751-834)]. On one occasion, he asked, “What is the great meaning of the buddha dharma?” This question is not something of which the beginner or the later student is capable. If he asked about “the great meaning,” he did so at a time when he must have understood “the great meaning.”

Shitou said, “Unattainable, unknowable.” We should realize that “the buddha dharma” has a “great meaning” in the first thought [of attaining bodhi] and has a “great meaning” in the ultimate stage [of buddhahood]. That great meaning is “unattainable”: producing the thought, cultivating the practice, and acquiring the verification are not nonexistent; they are “unattainable.” That great meaning is “unknowable”: practice and verification are not nonexistent; practice and verification are not existent; they are “unknowable”; they are “unattainable.” Or that great meaning is “unattainable, unknowable.” The noble truths, practice and verification are not nonexistent; they are “unattainable, unknowable.” The noble truths, practice and verification are not existent; they are “unattainable, unknowable.”

Daowu said, “Beyond this, is there some further turning point?” What he is saying is that, if the “turning point” occurs, “beyond” occurs. “Turning point” means an expedient. An expedient means the buddhas, the ancestors. In saying this, there should be “something

further.” Even if there is “something further,” “nothing further” should not be omitted, should be said.

“The vast sky doesn’t obstruct the flight of the white clouds” are the words of Shitou. “The vast sky,” moreover, does not obstruct “the vast sky.” While “the vast sky” may not obstruct “the flight” of “the vast sky,” “the white clouds,” moreover, do not themselves obstruct “the white clouds.” “The flight of the white clouds” is unobstructed; “the flight of the white clouds,” moreover, does not obstruct the flight of “the vast sky.” Being unobstructed by the other, they are unobstructed by themselves. It is not that each requires the non-obstruction of the other; it is not that each possesses the non-obstruction of the other: therefore, they are “unobstructed.” They take up the nature and attributes of “the vast sky does not obstruct the flight of the white clouds.” Precisely at such a time, raising the eyebrows of the eye of study, we spy the coming of the buddhas, we see the coming of the patriarchs, we see the coming of ourselves, we see the coming of the other. This has been taken as the principle of “asking one and answering ten.” In the “asking one and answering ten” here, the one asking one must be “that person,” and the one answering ten must be “that person.”

* * * * *

Huangbo [i.e., Huangbo Xiyun (dates unknown), disciple of Baizhang Huaihai (749-814)] *said*,

Those who have gone forth from the household should know that they are allotted what has come down to them. Now, take the

*Great Master Farong of Niutou [i.e., Niutou Farong (594-657)], under the Fourth Ancestor: while he could teach horizontally and teach vertically, he still didn't know the pivot beyond. Only when we have this eye and brain, can we distinguish true and false lineage groups.*¹⁰

This “what has come down” that Huangbo speaks of like this is what has been directly transmitted down from buddha to buddha and ancestor to ancestor. This is called “the treasury of the true dharma eye, the wondrous mind of nirvāna.” Though it may be in oneself, we “should know” it; though it is in oneself, he “still didn't know” it. Those who have not received the direct transmission of buddha after buddha have never seen it even in their dreams. Huangbo, as the dharma child of Baizhang, was superior to Baizhang; and, as the dharma grandchild of Mazu [i.e., Mazu Daoyi (709-788)], was superior to Mazu. For three or four generations of the lineage of the ancestors, there was no one who stood shoulder to shoulder with Huangbo. Only with Huangbo alone was Niutou shown not to have a pair of horns. Other buddhas and ancestors did not yet realize it.

The Chan Master Farong of Mount Niutou was a venerable under the Fourth Ancestor. “He could teach vertically and teach horizontally”; indeed, if we compare him with the sūtra masters and treatise masters, within the Eastern Lands and coming from the West, we cannot regard him as wanting. Nevertheless, what is regrettable is the fact that he still did not know “the pivot beyond,” the fact that he did not speak of “the pivot beyond.” If one does not know the pivot that has “come down,” how

could he distinguish the “true and false” in the buddha dharma? He is just a fellow who studies words. This being the case, to know “the pivot beyond,” to practice “the pivot beyond,” to verify “the pivot beyond” — these are not something that mediocre types can reach. They always occur where there is true concentrated effort.

To say “what is beyond the buddha” means, having reached [status of] the buddha, to go on further to see the buddha. It is the same as living beings seeing the buddha. This being the case, if seeing the buddha is equivalent to living beings seeing the buddha, it is not seeing the buddha. If seeing the buddha is like living beings seeing the buddha, seeing the buddha is a mistake. How much more is this the case with “what is beyond the buddha.” We should realize that Huangbo's saying of “what is beyond” is beyond the grasp of the illiterates of today. There may be those whose dharma words do not reach those of Farong, and there may be those whose dharma words are equal to Farong's; but they are younger and older dharma brothers of Farong. How could they know “the pivot beyond?” And certainly others, like the ten holy and three wise [on the bodhisattva path] do not know “the pivot beyond,” much less can they open and close “the pivot beyond.” This point is the eye of study. To know “the pivot beyond” is to be considered “someone beyond the buddha,” to have “experienced what's beyond the buddha.”

Treasury of the True Dharma Eye
Beyond the Buddha
Number 26

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Kōshō Hōrin Monastery,
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tora, the third year of Ninji [24 April 1242]

Copied this from an unrevised manuscript at
Eiheiji,
on a day of the summer retreat in *tsuchinoto-*
hitsuji, the first year of Shōgen [May-August
1259]
Ejō

Notes

1. “The ancestor of the thirty-eight above him”: I.e., the generations of the Chan lineage preceding him. A tentative translation of a difficult phrase: sometimes read, “[The Tathāgata] is the ancestor thirty-eight above him,” it might also be parsed, “The thirty-eighth ancestor beyond himself.”
2. A conversation recorded in Dōgen’s *Shōbōgenzō sanbyaku soku* (case 12) and elsewhere. The final sentence here might also be understood, “Once I’m not talking, then you’ll hear it.”
3. Dōgen seems here to be combining at least two sources: the exchange between Dongshan and the monk, together with the comment of Yunmen, resembles a discussion of “what’s beyond the buddha” (as opposed to “someone beyond the buddha”) in Dōgen’s *Shōbōgenzō sanbyakusoku* (case 72); the additional comments by Baofu and Fayan reflect the *Jingde chuandeng lu*.

4. A passage found in the *Liandeng huiyao* and *Jiatai pudeng lu*.
5. A conversation found in the *Jingde chuan deng lu*.
6. A conversation found in the *Jingde chuan deng lu*.
7. A conversation found in the *Jingde chuan deng lu*.
8. An exchange found in the *Tiansheng guangdeng lu*.
9. An exchange recorded in the *Shōbōgenzō sanbyaku soku*, case 191. The phrase rendered here “unattainable, unknowable” could also be read “you can’t not know it.”
10. A saying found in the *Jingde chuandeng lu*. Farong founded the short-lived Niutou school of Chan, distinct from lineage leading to the Sixth Ancestor.
11. “Within the Eastern Lands and coming from the West”: Most modern editions follow the Honzan printing in amending the phrase to the more familiar “within the Western Heavens and the Eastern Earth [i.e., India and China].”
12. “It is the same as living beings seeing the buddha”: Some manuscripts give here the less problematic, “It is not the same as living beings seeing the buddha.”



My Footnotes on Zazen (9) The Difficulty of Zazen (2)

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Well, then, how will (C) work with this? In order to relax the force in my hands, he can use words to get me to do this or he can use the approach of touching my body in order to get me to release the force in my hands. Or he can use both words and touch. In fact, depending on (C)'s ingenuity, we can think of many variations that (C) could use. How about your way of doing it?

First, let's think about the method of using words. There are times when, without touching my body, it would be sufficient simply to speak to me saying, "Please relax the force in your hands that you are now using to bend this bamboo stick." This is a case where I correctly understand what (C) is trying to say and I am able to correctly carry this out. In order for there be a desirable change occurring simply by speaking, there must be certain conditions in both sides of two people: the one who is speaking as well as the one who is being spoken to. Is the form of expression by the person speaking to the point? Is the person being spoken to clearly understanding with his or her head the meaning of the matter which is being explained? And then, is the person hearing the explanation able to correctly "translate" his or her understanding to the movements of his or her body? If all of these things are not satisfactory, then in many cases words alone don't work.

For example, in the case when (C) plainly says, "Please straighten out the bamboo stick you are holding" it may happen that rather than relaxing the force in my hands, I can't help but try to straighten out the stick using the force in my hands. This would be what I think is straight, only my idea, and not necessarily the authentic, natural "straightness" of the bamboo stick itself. This is one poor example of using words. But even if we think "I would like this to happen" and are able to express this thought in words, it often happens in our everyday lives that it doesn't go the way we think it will.

Also, it could happen that my body doesn't actually know what it means to relax the force in my hands. In that case, to say "Please relax the force in your hands" wouldn't prove to be very effective, would it? Then, it would be a case of "Please relax the force in your hands." "What?! How should I do that?" It is conceivable that sometimes the result would be that when the person thinks of relaxing the force, instead that effort itself ends up putting even more force into the hands. It often happens that the body manages to "misinterpret" words that are spoken to it. Certainly everyone has had the not infrequent experience where someone has told us, for example, "Relax!" or "Ease up the tension!" and has thereby invited the opposite result. This is because the effort the body-mind makes to try to relax, to try to ease the tension, has the reverse effect of making tension. Another good example is the effort you make when you say to yourself "I've got to go to sleep" and you end up, to the contrary, further away from going to sleep.

To relax or let go of tension is not something to do. Rather, it is a matter of “undoing” the thing you are doing. Evidently, it is much more difficult for us “to stop doing” than it is “to do.” In connection with this, I remember something from quite long ago when I was studying the developmental movements of human infants. Roughly speaking, the development of an infant when it grasps something with the hand can be explained like this. First, when whatever stimulus goes to the hand, there is a reflexive movement such that the baby closes its hand. The next step is one where the baby intentionally tries to control its grip. However, if someone tells the baby “Let go” of the thing which it is gripping, the thought of the baby, that it has to let go, becomes the stimulus which induces a gripping movement of the hand which, to the contrary, ends up being an even stronger grip. The next step beyond this is the development of being able to skillfully let go of the tension in the hands when one has the thought to “let go.” It is very interesting that there is this intermediate stage where contrary to the thought of letting go the baby ends up grasping something even harder. When a mother screams in surprise on seeing that her baby has mistakenly grabbed hold of a knife blade and shouts “Let go of it!” a baby at this stage would grip the blade even more firmly as opposed to letting go of it. So, this is a case where we must all be particularly careful.

We tend to think that our hand movements are only a matter of tensing the hand. But it can be said that we have really mastered the skill of grasping and squeezing only when we are able to relax the hands as well as let go of

what we have been holding. If we are at the stage where we are able to grasp things but unable to let go of them as we would like to, then we have a hard time letting go of something once we have grasped hold of it. If we are holding something, we wouldn't be able to take hold of something else with the same hand. For this reason, it can be said that a hand which continues to grasp hold of something loses its freedom because it is limited by what it is holding onto. An open hand is precisely one sufficiently developed that it is able to grasp and let go as occasion may require.

For us, letting go is a more advanced skill than grasping something. It can also be said that undoing is more advanced than doing. We can only come to this conclusion if we see that the latter skill is a developmental movement which we acquire after the former one.

Later, I will speak in detail about the matter of all the thoughts that boil up during zazen. However, I would like to write about one more thing that is related to what I've just said above. My grandfather in my Dharma lineage, Uchiyama Kosho Roshi (1912-1998), said something to the effect that “Zazen is, by means of correcting your sitting posture, to let go of thoughts millions of times.” Here, I would like you to take a close look at this expression “letting go (of thought).” This is, of course, a metaphor. This is Uchiyama Roshi's way of speaking about chasing after thoughts during zazen, of holding firmly onto thoughts that float up from nowhere in particular and not releasing them, but grasping onto them even more firmly. This is to say that zazen is to continually make the effort to not grasp onto the

thoughts that float up while we are sitting. Isn't the question of how to relax the hands that are gripping the bamboo stick and forcing it to bend exactly the same as the hand which is grasping onto thought? In the same way that as long as you relax the hands, the bamboo stick will straighten out by itself, if you let go of thoughts, they will disappear on their own. Since you try to make the bamboo stick straight and because it isn't necessary to apply force to the stick from the outside in order to make it straight, in the same way, it isn't necessary to chase away thoughts because they will leave on their own. If you do something which is unnecessary, then that thought, to the contrary, will end up remaining. As long as you don't interfere with their disappearance, thoughts will leave on their own. To let go of thoughts isn't a matter of forcibly pushing them away. It isn't a matter of straining to push away thoughts, but simple to let them go.

As I mentioned earlier with regard to the actual movement of the hand, there is a common characteristic here that since it is more difficult to let go than to grasp hold of something, if someone were to shout "Let go!" in a loud voice or even if you were to think forcefully to yourself "Let go!", the result would be that it would have almost no effect and you would only end up adding more force to the grip. For those of us who find it rather difficult to let go of thoughts, even if we know that we cling to them, we still haven't really developed the ability to let go of them. Regarding this matter of letting go of thoughts, we remain at an in-between level of development. When we are able to grasp thoughts and also let

them go in a way where we are able to do it as the occasion demands – where we are flexible and free in this regard – then for the first time we can freely master and make use of thought. As long as it seems difficult to let go of thoughts that we cling to, it must be said that rather than being able to master and make use of thought, we are to the contrary grasped by and dragged around by thoughts, and consequently have lost our freedom.

The wonderful thing about zazen is that it isn't a matter of getting rid of thought with thought – it isn't a method like washing out blood with blood. Rather, the result is letting go thoughts by sitting with the body-mind in the sitting posture, which is designed to not grasp hold of thought physiologically or by chasing after thoughts.

At this point, I would like to conclude this line of argument and return to my original topic which was (C)'s approach. I was discussing the case in which I am holding a bamboo stick with the force of my hands and thinking of various ways that (C) might use words to get me to relax my grip. Wouldn't it be possible for (C) to say the following? "Please sense the way in which the bamboo stick that you are now holding would like to move. And then, try allowing yourself to make that movement." This would be a different approach than "Please make the bamboo stick straight." It would also be different from simply saying, "Please relax the force in your hands." This is a way of speaking which is coming from a completely different standpoint.

Earlier, I said that there is a movement in which the bamboo stick straightens out itself. I can sense the force from the stick with my two hands. This way of speaking is suggesting that I senses the force (energy) and will (inclination) of the stick and indicates me to allow, or permit the stick to move to the direction of that force (the direction of becoming straight) To be precise, (C) is not telling me to do something with the bamboo stick or what I should do. It only says “Feel, sense, and allow that.” (C) doesn’t force his or her own preconceived “correct answer” on me, but rather by creating a new relationship between me and the bamboo stick, he tries to bring about a change from inside through that new relationship.

In this manner of speaking, the point is whether or not I am able to sense with my two hands the “intention” of the bamboo stick, and then, whether or not I will be able to allow the manifestation of that intention? Certainly, the doubt is there that this way of speaking would be effective for anyone. However, I think that this way of speaking is appropriate for zazen.

This time, I ended this article by only speaking of the example of the bamboo stick. However, I think this metaphor still contains much more that is related to this very important question. So, I will pick it up again in my next article and proceed with this discussion about another way of relaxing the force by touching my own body.

[To be continued]

NEWS

May 11 - 20, 2015

Baika classes by Sotoshu Specially Dispatched Baika Teacher were held at 5 places in North America.

May 15 - 17, 2015

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

June 7 – July 2, 2015

Baika classes by Sotoshu Specially Dispatched Baika Teacher were held at 7 places in South America.

June 12, 2015

North America Soto Zen Conference was held at Sokoji in San Francisco, California.

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