



SOTO ZEN JOURNAL

# DHARMA EYE

News of Soto Zen Buddhism: Teachings and Practice

On the Occasion of the 50th issue of Dharma Eye p1  
Gengo Akiba

100th Anniversary Jukai-e, Taking Refuge in the Three Treasures p3  
Shohaku Okumura

A Record of a Conversation between Rev. Shundo Aoyama,  
Seido of Daihonzan Sojiji, and Rev. Konjin Godwin,  
Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism International Center p6

Lecture on the Chapter of Kannon (*Avalokiteshvara*) (6) p18  
Shohaku Okumura

The Old Mirror (*Kokyō*) p23  
Carl Bielefeldt

My footnotes on Zazen (23) p49  
Issho Fujita

法  
眼

Number

50

September 2022



## On the Occasion of the 50th Issue of *Dharma Eye*

**Rev. Gengo Akiba**

Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism  
North America Office

I would like to congratulate the Soto Zen Buddhism International Center on the 50th issue of its newsletter, *Dharma Eye*. I would also like to thank all of the past and present International Center staff members who have been involved in the publication of this newsletter, as well as all of the contributors and readers for their hard work and dedication.

When I was asked to write an article for the next issue of *Dharma Eye*, which will be its 50th issue, it was deeply moving as I had a somewhat retrospective feeling about the International Center. The Soto Zen Buddhism International Center was originally established in Los Angeles, California, in April 1997 as a part of the Kaikyo Sokanbu (Soto Zen Buddhism Administrative office in North America) named Kaikyo Center (Soto Zen Education Center) at Zenshuji. This took place on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the founding of Zenshuji and the 75th anniversary of the beginning of Soto teaching activities in North America. The Center's director was Rev. Shohaku Okumura, and Rev. Risai Furutani, who had been a Zenshuji priest, was appointed as the center's secretary. At that time, I was appointed as an Assistant Director of Kaikyo Sokanbu to help Bishop Yamashita, and in May of the same year, I was appointed as the Kaikyo Sokan (Director of the Kaikyo Sokanbu).

In June of the same year, Rev. Taiken Yokoyama and Rev. Ikki Nambara (who also served as the priest of Sokoji in San Francisco) were appointed as secretaries of the Kaikyo Sokanbu. A system was then in place for full-scale activities in cooperation with the Kaikyo Center.

The idea of establishing the Kaikyo Center had been discussed since the time of Rev. Hakuyu Maezumi and Rev. Dainin Katagiri, both of whom were actively teaching in North America. At that time, the Kaikyo Sokanbu held a conference once a year, which was mainly attended by Japanese missionaries who had been appointed and dispatched to the area. At one of these yearly meetings, Maezumi Roshi and Katagiri Roshi said "We are doing our best to teach Americans about Soto Zen, which is based on Shikantaza and realizing the tenets of the Zen school such as *Soku Shin ze butsu* (Mind itself is Buddha) that is the truly transmitted Dharma of the buddha-ancestors and which include the teachings of Zen Masters Dogen and Master Keizan. We practice and transmit the basics such as zazen, daily services, and eating with oryoki together with our students." They said that it would be desirable to establish an organization similar to Japan by Shumuchō (Soto Zen Headquarters in Japan,) with a full-time staff to systematically propagate Soto Zen teachings.

In 1995 and 1990, respectively, Maezumi Roshi and Katagiri Roshi passed away. During the preparations for the 75th anniversary of the opening of the Soto Zen mission in North America, the Kaikyo Sokanbu proposed the above-mentioned idea to the International Divi-

sion of the Soto Zen Headquarters in Japan, which led to the establishment of the Kaikyo Center after discussions at the Soto Zen Headquarters. The first issue of *Dharma Eye* was published in October 1997; the Chinese characters for “Dharma Eye” were written by me.

At that time, the Kaikyo Sokanbu including the Kaikyo Center, had many discussions about how to develop activities for Soto Zen to spread through North America. The American priests who had inherited the Dharma from Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, Hakuyu Maezumi Roshi, and Dainin Katagiri Roshi were actively engaged in teaching activities by opening Zen centers in various parts of the United States. Yet, they were faced with various difficult issues such as what status they should be given in the Japanese Soto Zen system. In addition, although each Zen center had various exchanges with other priests in their own lineages, there was little exchange between different Dharma lineages and traditions.

The first task was to create an awareness of Soto Zen as the Dharma lineage of Zen Masters Dogen and Keizan. At the suggestion of Director Okumura, the Soto Zen Education Center published a biannual *Dharma Eye* magazine and sponsored three Sesshins a year at Zen centers, inviting Zen center leaders as lecturers to deepen mutual exchange and understanding among the Zen centers of different Dharma lineages.

Looking back on those days, I am still amazed at how I managed to do all of the sesshin sponsored by the Kaikyo Center, the two

sesshin I did each year at my own temple, Kojin-an Zendo, as well as sesshin twice a year at Zenshuji, and my duties taking care of the temple’s parishioners at Zenshuji. In 1999, the “Dogen Zenji Symposium” was held at Stanford University in California to commemorate the 800th anniversary of Dogen’s birth, and a project to translate Dogen Zenji’s “Instructions for the Monastery Cook” (*Tenzo Kyokun*) into English was underway. At the same time, the Education Center office was relocated from Los Angeles to Sokoji Temple in San Francisco. Looking back, I still feel a sense of pride in the work of the staff of the Kaikyo Sokanbu and the Education Center, all of whom had a sense of mission and worked with a lion’s share of zeal. It was an invaluable experience for me to be able to participate in all these activities at such a period in my life. In the year 2000, forty people from Zen centers across the U.S. attended a conference held at Zenshuji Temple, which brought together Japanese and American Soto priests for the first time, and was the fruit of the new organization’s activities.

In 2002, the Soto Zen Education Center was reorganized as the “Soto Zen Buddhism International Center,” while the Kaikyo Sokanbu was renamed as Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office, and Kaikyoshi (Soto missionaries) were renamed as Kokusaifukyoshi (Soto priests who officially registered at Shotoshu and has teacher license.) The Sokanbu plays the administrative role of how to apply the Japanese Soto school system to Soto Zen in the United States. The International Center was established to promote and share the role of the Soto Zen doctrines of Shikantaza and Soku Shin ze Butsu (Mind itself

in Buddha), which are based on the teachings of the “Shyakamuni Buddha and Two Founders,” as well as the doctrines of “The oneness of Zen and the Precepts” (Zenkai Ichinyo) and “Practice and enlightenment are not two” (Shusho-funi), teachings which have been cultivated for over 700 years. Since then, the International Center has been actively engaged in international teaching activities outside of Japan in accordance with the needs of the times. I pray that the staff of these offices will continue to work with a firm mind and body. I sincerely hope that you will continue to publish *Dharma Eye* and that you will be even more active in the future.

Last but not least, the year 2022 marks the 100th anniversary of Soto Zen teaching activities in North America. In 1922, when Soto Zen missionary activities in North America first began, Zen Master Hosen Isobe Roshi established the “Zenshuji Temporary Church” on the second floor of Mr. Nagasaki’s home in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, and twelve years later, in 1934, Sokoji Temple was opened in San Francisco’s Japantown.

Today, the Soka Gakkai has more than 300 ordained monks registered under its jurisdiction, and there are more than 1,000 ordained monks, if we include all of them under the various Soto Zen Dharma lineages, in North America. One hundred years of Soto Zen history will be celebrated on American soil this year and next. Activities for the next 100 years have already begun. We wish you to join us.



## 100th Anniversary Jukai-e Taking Refuge in the Three treasures

**Rev. Shohaku Okumura**

Sanshinji, Indiana, U.S.A

(Edited by Rev. Hoko Karnegis)

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Soto Zen activities in North America, Soka Gakkai decided to hold a *Jukai-e* following the Japanese tradition. I am honored to be asked to talk on the precepts in the Soto Zen tradition. When we study the precepts our main text is *Comments on Teaching and Conferring the Bodhisattva Precepts That Have Been Authentically Transmitted by Buddhas and Ancestors* (Busso Shoden Bosatsu-Kai Kyojukai-mon, 仏祖正伝菩薩戒教授戒文). Here we will call it *Kyojukai-mon*.

### **Precepts (Sila) : Guidelines For Our Basic Attitude Towards Life**

Since Buddhism is not a folk religion, one is not a Buddhist by birth. To become Buddhists, we arouse bodhi-citta (bodhi-mind), take vows, and receive the Bodhisattva precepts as guidelines for our lives. In *Shôbôgenzô Jukai* (*Receiving Precepts*), Dôgen Zenji said, “In India and China, where [the buddha dharma] has been transmitted by buddhas and ancestors, in order to enter the dharma we must receive the precepts. Unless we receive the precepts we cannot be disciples of buddhas or descendants of ancestors. Avoiding misdeeds and misconduct is itself studying Zen and inquiring into Dharma. The true treasure of the dharma eye is identical with the primary importance of precepts.”<sup>1</sup>

### Three refuges

In the Soto Zen tradition both priests and lay people receive the sixteen bodhisattva precepts. These consist of the Three Refuges, Threefold Pure Precepts, and Ten Major Precepts. The first set of the three precepts is taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha Treasures. In *Kyo-jukaimon*, Dogen Zenji said, “When we recite, ‘I take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha,’ we will acquire the great precepts of the buddhas.” He is saying that when we take refuge in the three treasures, we attain all the precepts of the buddhas. We may think that taking three refuge is the prerequisite for receiving other 13 precepts but taking refuge in the Three Treasures is itself receiving the other 13 precepts. The 13 precepts are included in taking refuge in the Three Treasures. In other words, the 13 precepts are the explanation of what taking the three refuges means. Taking the three refuges and receiving the precepts are the same thing.

### The Virtue of three refuges

*Shobogenzo Kie-bu-ppo-so-bo* (歸依仏法僧宝, taking refuge in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha Treasures), Dogen Zenji says:

The virtue of this taking refuge in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha is completed without fail when the interaction of empathy [of a sentient being] and response [of the Buddha’s compassion] and the way of both merge with each other (感応道交, *kanno-doko*). Whether we are in the realms of heavenly beings, human beings, hell-dwellers, demons or animals, when [our empathy and their compassion] correspond and the way of both merge with each other (*kanno-doko*), we take refuge in them without fail.<sup>2</sup>

“The interaction of empathy [of a sentient being] and response [of the Buddha’s compassion] and the way of both merge with each other” is a translation of *kanno-doko* (感応道交). Tiantai Zhiyi (天台智顗, Tendai Chigi, 538 - 597) explains this expression using the analogy of a child in a danger and the parents’ efforts to rescue their child. When a child falls into water or is endangered in any way, his/her parents give up everything and single-mindedly rescue the child by any means. In such a situation, the child’s cry, saying, “Help me!” and the parents’ compassion toward their child work together from both sides, and the child’s need for help and the parents’ love for the child merge. When we look for some spiritual path, in most cases we are in difficulties in one way or another, like the child who fell into water. When we seek some help, somehow, we find that something is offered. For example, when I was a teenager, I was lost and did not know how to live, I encountered my teacher Kosho Uchiyama Roshi’s book. Reading his book, I felt I was sucked into his teaching and his way of life.

Dogen wrote the same thing in *Shobogenzo Hotsubodaishi* (発菩提心, Arousing Bodhi Mind), However, when we experience the interaction of empathy [of a sentient being] and response [of a buddha] (*kanno-doko*), we arouse bodhi-mind. It is not given by the buddhas or bodhisattvas; it is not something we attain with our personal capability. Upon experiencing the interaction of empathy and response (*kanno-doko*), we arouse bodhi-mind; therefore, it is not something that happens by itself.<sup>3</sup>



In the case of Dogen's teaching, living beings' empathy and the Buddha's compassion function together as one to allow them to arouse bodhi-mind. He calls this movement "total function (*zenki*, 全機)." We take refuge in the Buddha, continue to walk the bodhisattva path to study and practice the Dharma, and help other living beings as much as our capability allows us. Dogen Zenji says in the same fascicle:

After having aroused this mind, we further meet with innumerable buddhas and make offerings to them, we see buddhas and hear dharmas, and further arouse bodhi-mind. It is like adding frost on the snow.<sup>4</sup>

Taking refuge in the Three Treasures is the first step of the bodhisattva practice to walk toward Buddhahood. At the same time, taking refuge is also returning to where we are from. It is like the story of the destitute son returning to his father in the Lotus Sutra.<sup>5</sup>

Taking refuge is like finding a shelter. In this case, the Three Treasures are like a home. When I was a kid, I went to school, and after school I did many things outside with friends. When it got dark and I became hungry and tired, I returned home. When I was outside there were many adventures and fun experiences, but occasionally, I might meet some danger that caused me to feel angry, sad or anxious. However, when I returned home, I was released from such conditions. Dinner was ready for my empty stomach. Then I could rest and sleep peacefully and comfortably without worrying about anything. I felt protected. That was the way I restored my energy for the next day. Taking

refuge in Three Treasures is like returning home and being rested and relaxed.

In his comment on the 10th major precept, Not ignorantly slandering the Three Treasures, Dogen Zenji says,

[The Buddha] manifested his body and expounded the Dharma. [These Three Treasures] are the crossing point of the world. The virtues [of the Three Treasures] return to the ocean of all-knowing wisdom and are immeasurable. We should respectfully accept, attend, and serve the Three Treasures.

"The ocean of all-knowing wisdom" refers to the myriad things in the network of interdependent origination. In *Shobogenzo Zanmai-O-zanmai* (Samadhi that is the King of Samadhis):

Cross-legged sitting (*Kekkafuza*) is the essence of all of the sutras. This is when the Buddha sees the buddha. At the very time of sitting, sentient beings attain buddhahood.

According to Dogen Zenji, our zazen practice is the posture of keeping the precept of taking three refuges, and we return to the ultimate home.

---

<sup>1</sup> Okumura's unpublished translation.

<sup>2</sup> Okumura's unpublished translation. Another translation is in *Treasury of the True Dharma Eye* (edited by Kazuaki Tanahashi), p.839

<sup>3</sup> Okumura's unpublished translation. Another translation is in *Treasury of the True Dharma Eye: Zen Master Dogen's Shobo Genzo* (edited by Kazuaki Tanahashi), p.656.

<sup>4</sup> Okumura's unpublished translation.

<sup>5</sup> See chapter 4 of the Lotus Sutra.

## **A Record of a Conversation between Rev. Shundo Aoyama, Seido of Daihonzan Sojiji, and Rev. Konjin Godwin, Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism International Center**

**Date:** Monday, April 11, 2022

**Place:** Aichi Soto Training Monastery

**Discussants:** Rev. Shundo Aoyama and  
Rev. Konjin Godwin,  
Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism  
International Center

**Facilitator:** Rev. Tenshi Matsuyama

**Interpreters:** Rev. Yusho Sasaki (for Aoyama Roshi),  
Rev. Hojun Szpunar  
(for Director Godwin)

Rev. Shundo Aoyama and Rev. Konjin Godwin were interviewed together at Aichi Soto Training Monastery in Nagoya, Japan on Monday, April 11, 2022. Aoyama Roshi is the first woman appointed as Seido of Daihonzan Sojiji. Konjin Godwin is the first woman appointed as Director of the International Center, North America. This is a condensed record of the wide-ranging and important conversation which took place over several hours.

Rev. Doryu Ando, Director of the International Division at Sotoshu Headquarters began by introducing the moderator, Rev. Tenshi Matsuyama.

### **Rev. Tenshi Matsuyama**

First of all, I would like to give you a brief background of both of the speakers. First, Konjin Godwin Roshi trained at the San Francisco Zen Center from 1985 to 2003. She also trained in Japan, from 1992 to 1993, at Hosshinji Temple in

Fukui Prefecture. In 2003, She was invited by the Zen community in Houston, Texas, U.S.A., to establish the Houston Zen Center, where she currently serves as abbot. In April 2009, she was appointed a Soto Zen Kokusaifukyoshi (international missionary). In 2018 she was appointed as the director of the Soto Zen Buddhism International Center, and is working daily with the International Center.



Next, I would like to introduce Shundo Aoyama Roshi. At a young age, she entered Muryoji Temple in Nagano Prefecture. At the age of fifteen, she was ordained as a Soto Zen nun. After that, she entered Komazawa University, a Soto school, and graduated from its graduate school. After that, she worked for some time at the Soto Zen Aichi Training Nunnery, and later was appointed as abbot of that nunnery. In 2009, she became the first nun to be appointed Daikyoshi, a rank of priest in Soto Zen Buddhism. In January of this year, she became the first woman to be appointed Seido of Sojiji Temple, one of the two head temples of Soto Zen. Aoyama Roshi has also been a traveling teacher in North America in the past. She is familiar with international Soto Zen missionary work on the West Coast of North America, where the Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office and the Soto Zen Buddhism International Center are located.

The theme of today's talk is gender, and I hope that each one of you can think about gender as you consider the words of the two speakers today. First of all, I have a question. Currently, the Soto Zen Headquarters in Tokyo is promoting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We have set up an SDGs Promotion Committee within the Headquarters to discuss how to create an environment in which women can play an active role within the school. My first question is about the principle of the SDGs "No one is left behind."

### **Rev. Shundo Aoyama**

First of all, I would like to say that the fact that I, as a woman, have taken this kind of role seems to have attracted a lot of attention. As you know, Dogen Zenji said, "Do not make an issue of whether a person is man or woman. This is a most wondrous law of the way of the buddhas." I do not have any thoughts of men or women in my mind, but I would like to focus on the Dharma to the fullest, as a wish, to attain the Dharma. Well, Dogen Zenji is an amazing person who said this eight hundred years ago, but I would like to focus on "attaining the Dharma," not on "male/female" thinking.

### **Rev. Konjin Godwin**

Shakyamuni Buddha, from the very first, accepted women as equals and ordained women. Soto Zen Buddhism has long recognized women as equals. Among all religions, Buddhism is the only one that has treated women as equals from the very beginning. It's deeply woven into the fabric of our practice together that there is no difference between men and women. We manifest that by our way of accepting everyone.

### **Rev. Shundo Aoyama**

Then, as I think about the earlier phrase "none of us [is left behind]," "none of us" means human beings, right? In Buddhism, the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha are not limited to human beings, but include all beings on earth, from plants and trees to animals, and all have Buddha nature. The words "all things have the nature of Buddha" mean "all things are the nature of Buddha." The word "existence" does not mean "being" or "not being," but rather existence itself. All existence is a manifestation of the Buddha's beneficence throughout the heavens and the earth. In this way, Buddhism is not only concerned with human beings, but with all beings on earth, or in other words, with the universe and the earth as a whole.

### **Rev. Konjin Godwin**

Yes, that is really so. I think that our understanding and our actualization of this understanding is manifested in the way we treat our gardens; the way we treat the rocks on the land, the way we take care of everything, the way we don't waste [anything], in Soto Zen.

This is one of our main offerings as Buddhists to the world. Because for us, it's a part of the fabric of our being. Now, in our world today, it is a really important time for Buddhism to step forward into the world, and articulate these teachings to the world. We can do it poetically, as well as very directly. The world really needs to hear this from us over and over, that the trees and the stones are our equals. We have to take care of everything, we can't leave anything behind.

### **Rev. Shundo Aoyama**



Another thing that I really want to think about here, or I should say “everything.” For example, a single violet. John Muir, the American who was called the father of the national parks said, “For one violet, the earth turns, the rain falls, and the wind blows.” For a single violet, the rain falls and the wind blows. For a single violet to bloom, all of heaven and earth work together. In the case of Buddhism, all things are equal in terms of value. However, only human beings have the ability to be aware of the fact that I can speak like this or that a single violet flower can bloom. Flowers and animals may not be aware of this work, but only human beings have the ability to be aware of it. That is wonderful. This is one thing.

However, if we do not encounter a person or a teaching that teaches us this, we will not be aware of the function that we have received, and therefore we may waste our own lives and the lives of others. In this sense, we can be deeply grateful for having received human life and for having met the Buddhadharma.

### **Rev. Tenshi Matsuyama**

Thank you very much for your kind words, not only for people, but also for all things. Thank you very much. I would like to return to the topic of gender once again for a moment. Yes, one of the keywords for the realization of the SDGs is, I believe, “dialogue.” As I mentioned earlier, the SDGs Promotion Committee has been established within Sotoshu Headquarters and is currently discussing the SDGs. The members of the committee include female monks, male monks, temple family members, and various others.

### **Rev. Yusho Sasaki**

I heard that you had a hard time in the Promotion Committee.

(All of them laugh.)



### **Rev. Tenshi Matsuyama**

It is very important to continue the process of discussion, and I myself, through participating in the committee, have come to realize that there is such a value system, such a way of seeing things, and such a way of thinking. I am very grateful to have been able to realize that there is such a way of thinking and such a way of seeing things. I would like to hear your opinions on the importance of accepting the differences in values, such as the way we see things and the way we think.

### **Rev. Shundo Aoyama**

It is natural that there are differences, but everyone thinks that they are right. Dogen Zenji said in his “*Genjo Koan*,” “We see and understand only what is reached by the strength of the eye of study.” What you have learned and experienced, what kind of life you have led, what kind of teachings you have learned, and so on, become the basis for your own judgment of things. In the end, there are ten different people, and no two people are the same, so you can only see things from your own perspective. We can

only listen to what we have experienced. Therefore, it is natural that all ten people are different from each other. If you are aware of the fact that you have only a very narrow view of life and the way you look at things.... then it's natural that everything is different. If the position changes, it is different again. If the angle changes, it is different. It is natural for things to be different. So, the important thing is to listen with humility to these different perspectives. Every opinion is based on the individual's way of study, experience, and various other aspects. So, it is important to listen with humility to different points of view.

Or let's talk about something else. For example, in the case of Christianity, it is a religion of the desert, and in the case of Buddhism, it is from India through the warm agricultural region of China to the south, to Japan, and so on. Therefore, it is natural that they are different in many aspects, like a religion that grew up in the desert is different from a religion that grew up in an agricultural region.

Therefore, I listen to differences with a sense of humility. Also, one's own thinking can only be based on one's own narrow standards, so one should not impose one's own ideas. No matter how much you think this way, do not impose it on the other person. That is the attitude of "I'm not going to impose my ideas on others." [Dogen Zenji] said, "I can only see one way of thinking. That's why we should learn from each other's perspectives. We shouldn't impose our own way of thinking on the other person." I think it would be good to have such a humble attitude, but it's not easy (laughs).

### **Rev. Konjin Godwin**

I absolutely agree. When we meet face to face, we are more willing to hear other people's opinions; we are more interested in people. Increasing the exposure between male and female monks at all levels might help people see that they don't need to bring their abstract ideas of what is right and wrong into situations. In the West, men and women practice together at every level in the monasteries. There is no separation. The brand-new monks are men and women, the middle level, men and women, and high level, men and women. Incoming male monks are used to seeing women in positions of power all the time. And incoming middle level monks are used to having junior females, and senior females. It might be possible then that people are willing to listen to a variety of opinions, but if we are not in the same room, then it just remains abstract. I humbly suggest that mixing people together in the same monasteries helps expose people to different opinions in a different way. But that's my opinion.

### **Rev. Shundo Aoyama**

The Buddha used the same expression, "Showing an elephant to the blind." It is difficult to use this as an analogy now, but he said, "Let's show an elephant to people who are unable to see." Then, he gathered several blind people together and brought out an elephant. Everyone touched it with their hands. Those who touched the trunk said, "It feels like a wall." Those who touched its nose said, "It feels like a hose," and those who touched its tail said, "It feels like a brush." Those who touched the ears said, "It's like a fan." Well, that's what they said. "I am sure of it, but I can only see a part of it." You

cannot see the whole. So, you may be sure of one part, but you don't see the whole picture. In the Buddhist classics, the Buddha taught that we can only see to such an extent that we are unable to see the whole picture. I think that the Buddha has been teaching about this for a long time.

### **Rev. Tenshi Matsuyama**

Thank you very much. First of all, I would like to ask Aoyama Roshi about the diversity of values and ways of being, which I think is the same here as in the Aichi Training Nunnery. At this time of the year, there are many nuns who have just entered the nunnery. I think that each of them has their own way of being. For example, there are those who have come to take over a Buddhist temple, or laypersons who have brought forth the aspiration to enter the Buddha Way, and there are those who have come from different age groups. There may also be people of different ages, and there may be people with different professional backgrounds. I would like to hear Aoyama Roshi's thoughts on what she would like practicing monks and nuns to value in the midst of such diverse values.

### **Rev. Shundo Aoyama**

The most important thing, as I often say, is that Basho used the words "unchangeable" and "fashionable." "Unchangeable" means that things should not change, and "fashionable" means that it's fine that things can change rapidly. I use the analogy of the axle and the periphery of a wheel. There are these two words: "unchangeable" and "fashionable." No matter how many thousands of years pass, no matter how many countries change, from America to Europe to Japan, there is one point

that must never change. If this one point is not maintained, the Buddhadharma will cease to be Buddhadharma.

With this one point in mind, we can develop in an infinite number of ways, such as in China, Japan, Europe, and the United States. Or we can respond in an infinite number of ways depending on the other party. This is the so-called "Thousand-Armed Avalokiteshvara." We have to keep in mind both aspects of the "fashionable" and the "unfashionable." For example, in Japan, there is the development of the Japanese way of doing things. Or, if we go to the United States, there will be the development of the [way things are done in the] United States.

However, what I want to keep in mind first and foremost is the one point that must not change. This is the axle of the wheel, and how we should develop on that basis.

### **Rev. Konjin Godwin**

In terms of the first thing [you mentioned], when Buddhism arrives in a new country, as in America, the teachers -Suzuki Roshi, Maezumi Roshi, Katagiri Roshi, picked certain parts of practice and brought them over. They couldn't bring everything. They had to bring Zazen, "*Shobogenzo*," Keizan Zenji's "*Denkoroku*." They brought a few teachings at the beginning. The hope was that the pipeline, the connection between our countries, would stay open. Teachings would keep coming through the pipeline in both directions.

In terms of meeting people when they come to Zen Centers in the West, all people come for

something different: certification or enlightenment or stress relief in the United States. I feel that they come because their heart brings them there. We try to honor their aspiration. We even offer stress relief at the Houston Zen center. We are open to this heart opening up when people arrive. Then the Buddha nature can manifest in some way that we don't try to control. I feel the strength of Soto Zen is that we are open to everyone. We stay in place. We stay here. So that everyone can come.

Change is going to happen all the time, and I hope we have the strength to watch the change and that we can take care of our world.

#### **Rev. Shundo Aoyama**

Well, I think that it is because of such things as sadness, suffering, and the impasse in life, that our antennae are raised, and we try to seek the Way. First of all, the antenna is raised by the suffering [you experience], and then you encounter the teachings. As the Buddha first taught about in the Four Noble Truths, "suffering is the path to enlightenment." So we should be aware of suffering, be guided by suffering, have our antennae go up, encounter the teachings, and through being guided by the teachings, we will awaken to the true way of life. That is how it is. At first, we are never grateful for the suffering caused by sorrow and pain. I think it is better to receive sorrow and suffering as a gift of mercy from the Buddha, who says, "Raise your antenna." There are many kinds of sorrows, such as illness and failure, but I think we should receive them as a compassionate gift from the Buddha, who says, "Raise your antenna."

#### **Rev. Tenshi Matsuyama**

I would like to talk about the values of the monastery, and now I would like to ask Director Konjin a question. I hope that you will be able to teach us the importance and splendor of this way of practicing together.

#### **Rev. Konjin Godwin**

As Aoyama Roshi said, we all have our own opinions. Another natural phenomenon, in humans, is a sense of hierarchy. Because we believe in time, we believe in seniority. We think some people are higher, some people are lower. One of the things that is really good about practicing together is that we get to watch the opinions that our minds create. We create the stories about "men are better," or "women are better" or "that person is better." The main advantage I feel to us practicing together is the opportunity to study how our minds work. We learn that we are just making up stories all the time. If we practice separately, we tend to think we believe all the stories that we make. The challenges aren't different when men and women practice together, unless they have made up the story that they are better because they are a man or a woman. It all goes back to the way the mind works and the working of opinions. Anything that helps us break down our stories is Dogen Zenji's way.

#### **Rev. Shundo Aoyama**

I think there are both strong and weak [long and short]. In the case of Japan, or rather, the Buddha clearly knew the weakness of human beings, and I think this is the reason why he did not allow nuns to be ordained. As you can see, human beings are weak. When they are together, they can become delusional. In this



sense, in Japan, the dojo for nuns and the dojo for male monks are clearly separated. Recently, male monks have started to accept nuns in their monasteries, but if you ask them behind their backs, they are still treated in a special way. I have heard behind the scenes, however, that nuns are still treated in a special way, although that's inevitable to a certain extent.

I often tell Trainee monks [monks/nuns in training; literally, "clouds and water"] that Dogen Zenji said, "Even if you practice zazen to the point of breaking the floor, you must not practice with the small self." He said, "Practice is selflessness." In the context of Trainee monks, I refer to this practice of selflessness as "the practice of becoming water." It is the ice that says, "I am." It is the practice of melting the ice of "I am" into water with the light of Buddhadharma. If either person were water, they would not collide. If both are ice, it can't be helped that there will be a collision. Therefore, one of the major aspirations of this practice is to live in a large room. There are five or even ten people living in one room. There are all kinds of people. It is very difficult to live 24 hours a day, 365 days a year with all kinds of people. That is why it is training. That's why I told them to think of the training in a big room as training to become selfless and training to become water. If both of them are ice, there is no way [there won't be collisions], but if one of them is water, there will be no collision. As long as there is a collision, you say, "Oh, I'm also ice." Another thing is, "Thanks to the other person's ice, I was made aware of my own ice." "Worship the other person's ice," that is what I say to Trainee monks.

In this sense, the meaning of practicing together in the same room, in a large room, is that it is fine for a man and a woman to live together in one building, but it would be impossible for them to live together in a single room. In that sense, I think there are two sides to a dojo where people can practice together. When you know the weakness of human beings, I think there are many difficult aspects.



### Rev. Konjin Godwin

We tried an experiment at Tassajara. A few years ago, we realized that the young people thought that all teachers had been men because we say "*Bibashibutsu daiosho, shikibutsu daiosho, Bishafubutsu...*" We chant that and people thought that all the ancestors had always been men. When Zoketsu Roshi was the abbot, we created a list of women teachers from India, China, and Japan. The list of women teachers included Buddha's mother, and the names of women teachers over the centuries. It is not as long as the "*Bibashibutsu daiosho...*" but we started chanting the women ancestors also.

You could see some of the women were the ice blocks. They did not want to change the traditional practice. After we started chanting the women ancestors' names, a young man, a

monk, came to me and said this was the first time he had heard the names [of women ancestors]. He started to cry, because he had finally realized how important women had been in the long history of Buddhist practice, and how important his mother had been.

### **Rev. Shundo Aoyama**

You know, it's hard for me to say this in the presence of men, but I think the earth will be safer if women really get serious (laughs). The most basic, the most life-long basics of a person's life are created when a child is the age of 3 to 5 years old. If the mother does a good job during those years, then the child will be all right. The attitude the mother has during that time will determine the rest of that person's life. So, you see, I say that if women are strong, the human race of tomorrow will already be fine, and the earth will be fine (laughs).

### **Rev. Konjin Godwin**

In the *Avatamsaka Sutra* (*Kegon kyo*), one of the teachers that Sudhana visits is Buddha's aunt, Mahapajapati. Sudhana asked her, "What is your practice, what is your teaching?" And she said, "I give birth to Buddhas."

(Everyone laughs)

### **Rev. Shundo Aoyama**

The Buddha also lost his mother within a week. When you think about it, in a week, there were no photographs of his mother's face, so I think the Buddha must have had feelings for his mother, whom he had never seen in his life, in his heart for a long time. In the *Dhammapada*, there is a phrase, "It is fortunate in the world to have a

mother." Therefore, the *Jizo Bodhisattva Hongan Sutra* was preached to the mother who is said to have been reborn in Trayastrimsa the heaven of the thirty-three gods. Jizo Bodhisattva is said to have taught about motherly feelings, and in this way, I believe that the Buddha had feelings for his mother throughout his life. The fact that Lady Maya is depicted in the image of the Reclining Buddha at the end of his life symbolizes the fact that he still had feelings for his mother.

### **Rev. Tenshi Matsuyama**

Earlier, Aoyama Roshi also said, "If women do their best, the earth will be safe," so I would like to talk about the most important part of today's discussion. Today, we spoke on the themes of "diversity" and "dialogue," but when I think about the current state of our religious order, I sometimes wonder what is going on. I also have some thoughts. Most of the people who hold posts and positions that make decisions are male-dominated. Even today, the people around me are all men. In this way, things are decided mainly by men, things are decided from men's viewpoints, and opinions are not expressed in a rich variety of ways.

Earlier, you mentioned that you were ordained as a nun at the age of fifteen. From that time until the present, you've been associated with the Soto sect. I'm sure you've seen many things during that time. I believe that there is an issue that women's voices are not reflected in the decision-making process. I would like to know if you could speak honestly about the negative aspects of this male-centered decision-making process.

## Rev. Shundo Aoyama

In the case of Soto Zen Buddhism, as I mentioned earlier, Dogen Zenji said, “Do not make an issue of whether a person is man or woman.” He also said, “There is a funny thing in Japan. There are places of practice that are restricted and will not allow women to enter. What fault do women have?” Dogen Zenji went as far to say this and yet in the long history of Japan, during the Tokugawa Shogunate and so on, the Confucian aspect has always been present, and in the Meiji era, and until recently. Therefore, there was this influence of Confucianism. When I shaved my head at the age of fifteen and entered this Soto school, nuns were not allowed to take disciples whom they had raised themselves. They did not have the qualifications to ordain another person. There was no Dharma transmission [for women]. There was nothing. It was about my second year here at the nunnery, when I was 16 or 17, that for the first time, nuns were allowed to ordain their own disciples. The teachers here were so happy that they cried and asked me to write down my impressions. I was 16 years old when I cheekily brought a copy of Dogen Zenji’s “Making Prostrations and Attaining the Marrow” (*Raihai Tokuzui*) and said, “Isn’t it obvious that this is the way it should be?” Dogen Zenji had said 700 or 800 years ago, “Do not make an issue of gender,” and “In gaining the Way, all gain the Way. All should hold in esteem one who has gained the Dharma.” The teachers thought, “What a great idea!” and the essay apparently went to the Sotoshu Headquarters (laughs).

However, at the age of sixteen, nuns were finally allowed to ordain their own disciples. They were allowed to receive Dharma transmis-

sion, even though there were still some things that were not allowed. One by one, nuns from all over the country applied and were allowed to do these things. The last thing for women to be allowed to do was the *Shike* (Zen Master) Training Institute, where nuns could also become a *Shike*. The *Shike* Training Center should be located in the head temple, but they could not allow nuns to enter the *Shike* Training Center in the head temple [*Eiheiji* or *Sojiji*], so the *Shike* Training Center was set up here in the nunnery. That was in 1970, I think. In 1970, a training school for nuns was established here, and in a manner of speaking, the system has been completely equal since 1970.

However, to be honest, I was the only nun in the university, in graduate school, and at the training institute. Since the university had just become co-educational, there was only one woman in the English Literature Department and one in the Literature Faculty, so the number of women was small. There were only about four women in the entire school. When I went to the training institute or graduate school, I was almost always alone. After graduation, I came here and attended various meetings, such as the Abbots Conference and the Association of Zen Masters, but I was almost always alone. So, somehow, I have always lived alone among men until today, although I have not been conscious of it. Well, when I think about it, it may be that women’s opinions are not reflected in my life.

Even so, it seems that my presence in this way is seen as very dazzling by other religions. For example, some teachers at the nun’s school at Koyasan, a Shingon sect of Buddhism, came

to me and said, “We are not qualified to do anything.” I was so dazzling that they came to me for advice.

### **Rev. Konjin Godwin**

Roshi, you should just know, how profound your impact has been on women in the west. Jisho Warner, and Chozen Bays... and many others told me to tell you how important you have been to us. Your authority made them understand it would be possible for them to move ahead and have positions of authority. Probably half the monasteries in the United States have women who are the head priest of their center (*Jushoku*). Your book, *Zen Seeds* has been very important in America. People read that and understand the heart of your teaching. There is no barrier between your teachings and the reception of authentic students. So, *Arigato gozaimasu* (Thank you) for all of your teachings.

### **Rev. Shundo Aoyama**

Now, in the case of Japan, the number of nuns is decreasing rapidly. This is because of what I mentioned earlier: the “unchangeable” and the “fashionable.” The fashionable aspect, the Japanese fashionable aspect is memorial services for the family ancestors. For example, when we look at the history of Japan, the Tokugawa Shogunate reformed the religious order in order to exclude Christianity such that it was necessary for all families to be registered with a Buddhist temple. The temple priest took care of this registration and every year he had to submit a list of names to the government. This was one aspect of the *danka* (parishioner) system. Then, in the Meiji era (1868-1912), in order to change the national religion to Shintoism, all monks were

forced to return to lay life. This was the so-called “abolition of Buddhism.” I’m not sure if it’s fair to say that Buddhism in Japan was rather compliant with politics, but both in terms of the “unchangeable” and the “fashionable,” the so-called *danka* system is a unique form of Buddhism.

Someone who has “left home” to become a monk has to abandon everything and risk his or her life to become a monk. And what should be “Dharma transmission” may become a parent-child inheritance when one’s master is your father. In the parent-child inheritance, there is inevitably a tendency to be lenient. In other words, if you are born in a temple and have a strong aspiration to enter the Way, you have an advantage. But it is very difficult to have such good fortune. The fact is that there has been a considerable increase in the spoiling of inheritance between master [father] and disciple [son] as if to say, “I was born in a temple, so it can’t be helped. I’ll simply inherit my [father’s] Dharma.”

I thought it was fortunate that nuns were not under the *danka* system, but in the current situation in Japan, the number of successors to nuns is decreasing at an alarming rate. If we return to the original form of Buddhism, there should be people who are willing to put their lives on the line for the best, but because of the current state of Japan, the number of nuns is decreasing at a very high rate.

### **Rev. Konjin Godwin**

I feel... what my faith is that when people see a true practitioner they feel it, when they meet someone who’s really steeped in the Way with a heart of practice they feel it. I don’t know



where it will go, or what will happen, but as long as there are true practitioners then the Way will live. What we need to do is to keep encouraging true practitioners when they arise. My faith is that the Way will spring up beneath our feet as we are walking the Way together.

### **Rev. Shundo Aoyama**

That is a noble thing. Earlier, I said that in Japanese Buddhism, ancestor services and the fashionable aspect of ancestor memorial services are too much on the surface. I don't mean that ancestral offerings are bad, but there is a saying that goes something like this: "There are 84,000 troubles in a day. There are 84,000 buddhas in a day." There are as many teachings as there are vexations, there are as many buddhas as there are afflictions. This is the "Thousand-Armed Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva." Therefore, although it is acceptable to make offerings to one's ancestors for three or five of the 1,000 hands, in Japan today, offerings to one's ancestors are made for up to seven or eight hundred of the 1,000 hands. This, you see, is the true meaning of the lack of successors. It is to break the one point of immutability and the one who bets everything on this one life. Instead, we see more and more that people are unable to take this form of risking their lives [for the Way]. This is very unfortunate. In this respect, I think that in the U.S. and Europe, people are much closer to the original form of practice, which is closer to the Buddha's original form and not to the ancestral memorial service. Therefore, I think it would be better to import this back to Japan and make it the best teaching of the original Buddhaharma, the only one to put one's life on the line. Everyone's life is important. In this way, I think

that we should imitate the way of the other side and change the attitude of Buddhism in Japan by reimporting it back into Japan.

### **Rev. Konjin Godwin**

In the West we don't worship ancestors, but we tend to worship Dogen Zenji and Keizan Zenji. We are very studious in the West which I think is a good thing. We are getting in touch with the Way through Dogen Zenji's teachings and we are very hungry for more. We have a good appetite for the teachings of Dogen Zenji. We need more translations and more demonstrations of Dogen Zenji's teachings.

### **Rev. Shundo Aoyama**

Well, Dogen Zenji and Keizan Zenji are, in other words, one of the points of nonduality that I mentioned earlier. It is very important to keep this point in mind. Ancestral memorial services are the most fashionable.

### **Rev. Tenshi Matsuyama**

Thank you very much for today. Today, I wanted to talk about the theme of gender equality. I believe that the appointment of Aoyama Roshi as Seido of Daihonzan Sojiji Temple and Konjin Roshi as Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism International Center will have a great significance in the future.

I would like to ask you what we should do in the future to create an environment where people can play an active role and can speak out in various ways. What do you expect from monks in the future, although there are no male or female monks? Although there are no men or women, I would like to ask you about your

expectations for monks in the future.



### **Rev. Shundo Aoyama**

What I am aiming for is not a small thing such as a head temple or a sect, but a religion that will save mankind tomorrow. This is what Einstein said, isn't it? Einstein from Germany said, "If there is a religion that can save the future of science, it is Buddhism." Dr. Kazuo Murakami of Tsukuba University, who unfortunately passed away, said the same thing: "Two thousand five hundred years ago, Buddha discovered the truth of heaven, earth, and the universe through his awakening." I myself believe that Buddhism is the only way to realize the future of humankind, not just the small talk of religious sects or head temples. Therefore, I would like to ask the monks who will bear the burden of tomorrow, "Please do me a favor." I am now 90 years old, so I would like to make this role of Seido my last will and testament. Buddhism is such a wonderful teaching, so I would like you to seriously work on it. I want you to make a serious effort to save the humanity of tomorrow and to save the earth as a person who bears the responsibility of Buddhism.

I was given the role of Seido to ask for such a thing, but after consulting with the staff, I was

told that they would like me to talk to young trainee monks as much as possible, so that is exactly what I intend to do as my testament. This will be my testament. The future of the Soto school, in a small way, is Sojiji, one of the head temples. In a bigger way it is the whole Soto school. And in an even grander way, it is the Buddhist community. More specifically, we must carry the teachings that will carry humanity on our shoulders. With that determination and awareness, I would like to go and say that I will study, devote myself, and ask for your help.

### **Rev. Konjin Godwin**

Thank you so much. I only want to add to that beautiful statement, that we share so much, and we in are helping to carry the teachings. For example, I have seen several plants that are native to Japan and native to Texas, although they are slightly different varieties. There is a kind of red bud, a kind of wisteria, there is a cherry that is native to Japan and also native to Houston. The heart of our practice is native to Japan and it springs up everywhere. What I also would like from Sotoshu Headquarters is openness and curiosity about the different plants, the different forms of practice. We can bring them fertilizer from Japan to the US, and back again. We all need the same Dharma rain from Sotoshu Headquarters. We are all carrying the responsibility.

### **Rev. Tenshi Matsuyama**

Thank you very much for the long time you both spent talking to us today and for the teachings you gave us.



## Lecture on the Chapter of *Kannon (Avalokiteshvara)* (6)

**Rev. Shohaku Okumura**

Sanshinji, Indiana, U.S.A

(Edited by Rev. Shoryu Bradley)

### 22. “I understand!”

(15)

雲巖道の「我會也、我會也」は、道吾の道を我會するといふにあらず。

When Yunyan says, “I understand! I understand!” he does not mean he understands what Daowu said.

用恁麼の手眼を道取に道得ならしむるには、「我會也、我會也」なり。

To express in a statement the hands and eyes of using thusness, [Yunyan said,] “I understand! I understand!”

無端用這裏なるべし、無端須入今日なるべし。

It must be boundlessly using this place, and boundlessly entering this day.

Here Yunyan says, “I understand”(ga-e ya; 我會也) twice, but he does not say what it is that he understands. There is no object in these sentences, so what he means isn’t obvious. I am sure most readers think he is saying he understands the meaning of what Daowu said, chiming in with him. However, Dogen does not think so. He insists Yunyan is not simply responding to Daowu’s expression, rather when he says “ga-e ya, ga e ya,,” he is further expressing the reality that he and Daowu together pointed to in the previous exchange.

This is the reality referred to in Yunyan’s

saying, “Avalokitesvara is doing ‘what’ (thusness) using many hands and eyes.” As one of these hands and eyes, a practitioner behaves like a sleeping person groping for a pillow in complete darkness, where there is no separation between the person and the pillow, or subject and object.

Yunman’s statement indicates that to accept, understand, and awaken to this reality and make it my life, “I” (ga; 我) need to meet (e;會) it. “To understand” is the correct meaning in the original Chinese sentence, but 會 (e) can also mean “to encounter” or “to meet,” as in “to become one.” Or when we use this 會 as a compound, as in *e-toku* (會得), it means to not only understand an idea but “to understand and attain,” or “to master,” or “to embody.” So Dogen means that to truly understand reality, we have to embody it or actually practice it using the body and mind, and when Yunyan says “I understand,” (ga-e; 我會), he is saying, “I meet with it, I found it, and I participate in this reality of interconnectedness.” It’s not that Yunyan simply gives a response to what Daowu said.

*To express in a statement the hands and eyes of using thusness, [Yunyan said.] “I understand! I understand!” It must be boundlessly using this place and boundlessly entering this day.*

In Yunyan’s saying, “Avalokitesvara is doing thusness using innumerable hands and eyes,” Avalokitesvara is the entirety of the network of interdependent origination, and “innumerable hands and eyes” are individual beings within the network. Each of us functions in this network as

if we are a sleeping person who, without discriminating, gropes for a pillow. Here Yunyan says he meets this reality and participates in it. For him it's not about understanding Buddhist theory, but rather meeting what is happening within our lives. This is the way we use not only our own hands and eyes, but all of the five skandhas, our entire body and mind, to express thusness (用恁麼). This is because the person of thusness is groping for or seeking thusness, and the person is living, expressing, and using thusness, because we are all completely within thusness. We are used by thusness, and we use thusness simultaneously. To do so, we need to say, “*ga-e*” (我會), or “I meet with it.”

In the next sentence, “this place” means “right here,” and “this day” means “right now.” So it is saying we have to use this body and mind to use thusness, right now, right here. Here the English word “boundlessly” might not be the right word; I feel I need a better one to express the meaning of the original, *mu-tan* (無端). *Mu* is “no,” and *tan* is like an edge. So the meaning is “no edge.” That means there is no beginning, no first step, no second step, no third step, and so on. There is no edge (starting point) from where we enter and begin. And there is no other edge (arriving point) we have to reach and then exit. So I am not sure “boundlessly” is the appropriate word. I used “boundless” because in a sense, there's no boundary that we enter and no boundary from which we exit and graduate from practice. That means we are always in this time and place, here and now, and we should therefore continually practice and express reality using thusness, right now, right here, in each moment. We can never say, “I have done it.”

Instead, we should always say, “I am meeting with it, and I never graduate from meeting and working in reality.” We use thusness and thusness uses us to keep Avalokitesvara's activities continuous.

This is the same idea Dogen expresses in *Genjokoan* using the analogy of firewood and ash. He said at the time of the firewood, firewood abides completely within the dharma position of firewood. Even though it has the past as its history, and continuance as its future, before and after are cut off in this moment; there is no before and no after. But in the next moment when firewood becomes ash, there's no before and no after of ash; it is entirely ash, and the time of firewood is completely gone. Each moment we are changing, and yet in each moment, the entire past and the entire future are reflected. That is the basic idea of time in Dogen's teaching.

Each moment is a perfect moment, the only real moment –the past has already gone, and the future has not yet come, so “here and now” is the only actual time and place. And yet, this actual moment has no length; if there were even the slightest length, we could cut it into two, with one half already gone and the other half not yet arrived. This present moment, which is the only actual moment, is zero. This moment doesn't exist, so time disappears, which is a very interesting idea. But anyway, we are what we are doing, not only at the time we practice, but always, since there is only this moment.

It seems to me that in Dogen's writings there are three kinds of time: 1. time that flows, as we



commonly think, from the past to the future through the present moment, and this present moment is “one time.” (1). 2. “Zero time” (0), time that is zero, because when we take a closer look at this one moment, it disappears; there is no such moment. 3. “Eternal time” ( ) that we find when we see this moment is zero. In zero time, time doesn’t flow and is the eternity that has existed as one seamless moment from the big bang until now.

Time flows because we measure it. We measure time using units such as seconds, minutes, hours, weeks, years, centuries and so on. Because we measure time, it seems it is flowing. But if time were not measured, for example if all human beings were erased from this universe, there would simply be one moment; there would be no such segments in time such as one second or one hour. From a human point of view, it seems time exists objectively –one hour or one week– and we follow a schedule or the calendar believing this, but if human beings entirely disappeared from this universe, there would be no such thing as flowing time. All of time since the Big Bang to this moment would be one moment, having no segments. This time doesn't flow. I call it “eternity,” time beyond time.

We think we are living in one time of a certain day, or in one year of one lifetime, or in one point of human history, but we can think in such a way only by being present right now, right here. When we look closely, this “one time” (1) disappears; it becomes zero. When it becomes “zero time,” we see it becomes one with eternity. That is my understanding of Dogen’s time. One equals zero equals infinity

( $1 = 0 = \infty$ ). This is a strange idea according to our commonsense. But when I read Dogen’s writings, it seems he mentions these three kinds of time.

At this “one time” (1), time doesn't exist (0), and at the same time it is eternity ( $\infty$ ), time which doesn't flow, or one moment without segments. Anyway, he is saying if we want to understand or awaken to this reality, we have to practice right now, right here, using our own body and mind.

### 23. “How do you understand?”

(16)

道吾道の「你作麼生會」は、いはゆる「我會也」、たとひ我會也なるを罣礙するにあらざれども、道吾に「你作麼生會」の道取あり。

Daowu said, “How do you understand?” This is to say, “I understand!” Even though it does not obstruct Yunyan’s “I understand!”, Daowu raises the query, “How do you understand?”

すでにこれ我會你會なり、眼會手會なからんや。

This is already “I understand! You understand!” How could it not be eyes’ understanding and hands’ understanding?

現成の會なるか、未現成の會なるか。

Is this an understanding that is manifested, or is it understanding that is not yet manifest?

「我會也」の「會」を「我」なりとすとも、「你作麼生會」に「你」あることを功夫ならしむべし。

Even if the understanding in “I understand!” is the self, we should make efforts [to know] that there is “you” in “How do you understand?”

This is Dogen’s comment on Daowu’s saying. When Yunyan said, “I understand, I understand,” Daowu said, “How do you under-

stand?” This is a question to make sure that Yunyan really understood. But Dogen says that Daowu’s saying, “How do you understand?” (你作麼生會) is not simply a question but simultaneously a statement expressing his agreement with Yunyan’s “I understand.” In this way it is the same as Yunyan’s first statement, “What is Avalokitesvara doing using innumerable hands and eyes?”, which is also both a question and a statement. As Dogen says in paragraph (8), “This question elicits expression.”

This word *somosan* (作麼生), that I translated as “how,” can mean the same as *inmo* (恁麼). Dogen’s writing is, as usual, so confusing. He’s entirely freed from the conventional meaning of the words, and he uses word-play without any explanation. Probably he does this because he thinks his only readers will be monks who have practiced with him in his monastery and listened often to his teachings. I don’t think he supposed Westerners would study his writings using English translations.

*Even though it does not obstruct Yunyan’s “I understand!”, Daowu raises the query, “How do you understand?”*

According to the conventional interpretation, Daowu’s, “How do you understand?” is a question asking Yunyan to offer another expression to make sure his understanding is really in accordance with Daowu’s. So Dogen says Daowu “raises the query.” Though I translated it as “the query,” the word Dogen uses is “*doshu*” (道取), which means “saying.” I translated it in this way because I think Dogen reads this sentence in two ways. One is as an inquiry

into how Yunyan understood the saying, and another is as the statement, “Not only ‘I’ but also ‘you’ meet and embody thusness.” Here “I” and “you” are not specifically either Yunyan or Daowu, but anyone in the network of interdependent origination acting as the hands and eyes of Avalokitesvara.

Yunyan spoke about the relationship between one individual being, “I,” and the entirety of the network, and Daowu spoke about the relationship between two or more individual beings within the network. In this case, Daowu said we need to keep inquiring about this relationship because it is constantly changing.

“I understand” (*ga-e ya*; 我會也), and “how do you understand” (你作麼生會) should always be together. This “you” does not refer to just Yunyan, rather it can signify anyone, including Daowu himself. And actually, Daowu and Yunyan are saying the same thing, with just a little difference in their responses. The difference is that there is “you” (你) and there is “I” (我); this means Daowu is Daowu and Yunyan is Yunyan. As I said in a previous article, when we are in the mountains, our view of the mountains looks different, depending upon our location. So Yunyan’s view, which is dependent upon his karmic conditions, might look different from Daowu’s view. Even though Yunyan said “I understand,” and Daowu also said, “I understand,” it’s important to see there is “you,” a person who might have different views. And even though all these different views are conditioned views, all views are manifestations of the hands and eyes of Avalokitesvara. Therefore, we need to continue asking, “How do you understand?”

Some views are completely distorted, and others might be slightly distorted, but these views are the way various people see the world, arising due to certain conditions. But as bodhisattvas we have to see the world from a Buddhist point of view, in light of what the Buddha taught. That means we need to see the world while letting go of the distorted views produced by our karmic consciousness. Then we can understand that there must be other ways of seeing things, which allows us to listen to other people's points of view. This allows us to broaden our view as we consider what others have to say. When we are open to other people's experiences, opinions and views, we know there is not only "I", but there is also "you."

*This is already "I understand! You understand!"*

My understanding and your understanding might be different, but both are views from a certain perspective or produced by certain conditions within this interconnectedness. We are all participating in Avalokitesvara's activities as one of his/her hands and eyes. Daowu is speaking from the phenomenal, individual side, seeing reality as a collection of individual beings.

*How could it not be eyes' understanding, and hands' understanding?*

Your understanding and my understanding, are both the understanding of Avalokitesvara's hands and eyes. We have to respect and inquire into other people's views. "Eyes' understanding" refers to wisdom, and "hands' understanding" refers to skillful activity to help other beings. We

need both of these to be bodhisattvas.

*Is this an understanding that is manifested, or is it understanding that is not yet manifest?*

This "manifest" (or manifested) is a translation of *genjo* as in *genjokoan*. This sentence means that if someone's view is only based on intellectual knowledge or understanding, it may not be embodied or practiced in how the person behaves. But for some people, views and thinking are the same as the behavior. There are many different variations on this relationship between views and behaviors, but somehow all of them are parts of the function or work of this totality.

This is also a question for us. We have to inquire of ourselves, "Is this just my thinking, or is this manifested within my life? Am I just trying to understand Dogen's words while not doing what he asks us to do?" We have to keep examining our own lives in this way.

*Even if the understanding in "I understand!" is the self, we should make efforts [to know] that there is "you" in "How do you understand?"*

This means that even if I think I have awakened to this interconnectedness, I need to understand that other people see this interconnectedness in different ways. We have to respect other people and their views and opinions.

## Treasury of the True Dharma Eye Number 19

### The Old Mirror *Kokyō*

Translated by  
The Soto Zen Text Project

#### *Introduction*

This essay was composed at Kōshōji, Dōgen's monastery near Kyōto, in late autumn of 1241. It occurs as number 19 in both the seventy-five and sixty-chapter *Shōbōgenzō* compilations, and as number 20 in the modern vulgate edition.

In common parlance, “old mirror” refers to the ancient bronze mirrors of China, often thought of as somehow magical for their reflective power. More importantly for our essay is the Buddhist use of the mirror as a metaphor for consciousness, especially for the type or feature of consciousness that perfectly reflects its object — the “mirror wisdom,” often said to be inherent in all consciousness and fully realized in the awakened mind.

Dōgen's essay takes up a series of passages on this mirror appearing in Zen literature — from the strange case of the Indian Zen ancestor Gayasata, who was from birth always accompanied by a mirror, through the famous poem by the Sixth Ancestor, Huineng, on polishing the mirror of the mind, and the odd discussion between the ninth-century masters Xuefeng Yicun and Xuansha Shibeī about what happens when two mirrors reflect each other, to the story, much cited in the *Shōbōgenzō*, of Nanyue Huairang's likening Mazu Daoyi's

meditating in order to become a buddha to someone's trying to make a mirror by polishing a clay tile. Not surprisingly, given his emphasis on practice, Dōgen ends his essay by encouraging us to take up our own tile and make ourselves a mirror.

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

### Treasury of the True Dharma Eye Number 19 The Old Mirror

What the buddhas and the ancestors receive and keep and uniquely transmit is the old mirror. They are the same view, the same face; they are the same image, the same casting; they study together, and verify together.<sup>1</sup> It is, when a foreigner comes, a foreigner appears — one hundred eight thousand; when a Han comes, a Han appears — ten thousand years in one moment of thought.<sup>2</sup> It is, when the past comes, the past appears; when the present comes, the present appears; when a buddha comes, a buddha appears; when an ancestor comes, an ancestor appears.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Eighteenth Ancestor, Venerable Gayasata, was a person of the Land of Magadha in the Western Regions.<sup>3</sup> His family name was Yutoulun; his father's name was Tiange; his mother's name was Fangsheng.<sup>4</sup> His mother once reported a dream in which a great deity came to her holding a large mirror. She then became pregnant, and, after seven days, the



Master was born. When the Master was first born, his skin was like burnished *vaidūrya*, and before he was bathed, he was naturally fragrant and clean.<sup>5</sup> From an early age, he loved the quiet, and his words were different from those of ordinary boys.

When he was born, a clear, bright, round mirror was born together with him. The term *enkan* means “round mirror.”<sup>6</sup> It was a rare event. To say that it was born together with him does not mean that the round mirror was born from his mother’s womb; the Master was born, and, at the same time that he emerged from the womb, the round mirror came and spontaneously appeared in the vicinity of the Master, just like an ordinary implement. The behavior of this round mirror was not ordinary: when the child approached, he seemed to be holding up the round mirror with both hands, but the boy’s face was not hidden [by it]; when he departed, he seemed to be carrying the round mirror on his back, but the boy’s body was not hidden. When the boy slept, the round mirror covered him, like a flowered canopy; when the boy sat up, the round mirror was in front of him. It followed him when he moved or was still, when he advanced or stopped. Moreover, all Buddhist affairs from the past to the present could be seen in this round mirror. Again, the affairs and phenomena in the heavens and among humans all floated without any blurring on this round mirror. What was seen, for example, with this mirror was clearer than the illumination of the past and illumination of the present one could get from consulting books.

However, once the boy had left home and received the precepts, the round mirror no

longer appeared. Hence, those in nearby villages and distant quarters alike praised this as rare and marvelous. Truly there are few comparable examples in this Sahā world, but we should not be suspicious of, should be circumspect about, the fact that, elsewhere over there, there may be families that have such progeny.<sup>7</sup> We should realize that, “whether on trees or on rocks,” there are sūtra scrolls that convert [beings]; “whether in fields or in villages,” there are wise friends that spread [the dharma].<sup>8</sup> They are also the round mirror. This yellow paper and vermilion spindle are the round mirror.<sup>9</sup>

Once, as he was traveling, upon meeting Venerable Samghānandi, he went right up in front of Samghānandi.<sup>10</sup> The Venerable asked, “What is shown in what you have in your hands?”

We should study this, hearing it not as a question about “what is shown.”<sup>11</sup>

The Master said,

The great round mirror of the buddhas,  
Without flaw or blur inside or out.

Both people can see the same;  
Mind and eye, all alike.<sup>12</sup>

Such being the case, how could the great round mirror of the buddhas be born together with the Master? The birth of the Master is the brightness of the great round mirror. The buddhas study together and see together by this round mirror. The buddhas are the cast image of the great round mirror. The great round mirror is not wisdom, is not principle, is not the nature, is not the form. The term “great round mirror” may occur in the dharma of the ten sages and three worthies, but it is not this great round mirror of the buddhas.<sup>13</sup> Since the

buddhas are not necessarily [the same as] wisdom, the buddhas have wisdom; we do not identify wisdom as the buddhas.<sup>14</sup>

Students should realize that to talk of wisdom is not the ultimate talk of the way of the buddhas. Although we experience that the great round mirror of the buddhas has been born together with us, there is a further principle: that we do not contact this great round mirror in this birth, we do not contact it in that birth.<sup>15</sup> It is not a jeweled mirror; it is not a bronze mirror; it is not a flesh mirror; it is not a marrow mirror.<sup>16</sup> Is this a gāthā said by the round mirror? Is this a gāthā spoken by the boy? The boy's speaking this four-line gāthā is not something ever learned from another, not whether from a sūtra scroll, not whether from a wise friend; he spoke this way from holding up the round mirror.<sup>17</sup> From his childhood, the Master made it his usual practice to face the mirror. It is as if he had the discriminating wisdom of knowledge at birth.<sup>18</sup> Was the great round mirror born together with the boy? Was the boy born together with the great round mirror? There should also be births before or after.<sup>19</sup> The great round mirror is the virtue of the buddhas.

To say that this mirror is without blurring "inside and out" is not [referring to] an inside that depends on an outside or an outside blurred by an inside. It does not have front or back; "both can see the same; mind and eye are alike."<sup>20</sup> To say they are "alike" means a person meets a person. The image on the inside has mind and eye, and "both can see"; the image on the outside has mind and eye, and "both can see." This secondary recompense and primary recompense before us are alike on the inside and alike on the outside.<sup>21</sup> They are not

I; they are not another. This is "both people" seeing each other, "both people" alike. The other is also called "I"; I am also the other.

To say that the mind and eye are "all alike" means the mind is like the mind, means the eye is like the eye, means "alike" is "mind and eye." It is as if we were to say that mind and eye each are like each. What is the mind like the mind? It is the Third Ancestor and the Sixth Ancestor.<sup>22</sup> What is the eye like the eye? It is "the eye of the way is obstructed by the eye."<sup>23</sup> Such is the essential point of this saying of the Master. This is the original account of how he first had audience with Venerable Sanghānandi. Taking up this essential point, we should study the buddha faces and ancestor faces of the great round mirror.<sup>24</sup> They are the attendants of the old mirror.

\* \* \* \* \*

Once, when the Thirty-third Ancestor, Chan Master Dajian, was working away at the dharma seat of Mount Huangmei, he said in a gāthā written on a wall and presented to the Ancestral Master,<sup>25</sup>

Bodhi originally has no tree,  
The bright mirror, no stand.  
From the beginning, not one thing;  
Where is there any dust?<sup>26</sup>

Thus, we should study these words. People in the world called the Eminent Ancestor Dajian an "old buddha." The Zen Master Yuanwu said, "I make prostrations to Caoxi, a true old buddha."<sup>27</sup> Thus, we should realize that the Eminent Ancestor Dajian shows the bright mirror: it is, "From the beginning, not one thing; where is there any dust?" "The

bright mirror, no stand”: this has the vital artery. We should work away at it. All that is “perfectly clear” is the bright mirror.<sup>28</sup> Hence, it is said, “when the bright comes, the bright does it.”<sup>29</sup> Since it is not anywhere, there is no “where.”<sup>30</sup> How much less does there remain throughout all the worlds in the ten directions one mote of “dust” that is not the mirror; how much less does there remain on the mirror one mote of “dust” that is not the mirror. We should realize that all the worlds are not *ksetra* like dust motes.<sup>31</sup> Hence, they are the face of the old mirror.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the community of Chan Master Dahui of Nanyue, a monk asked, “If a mirror were cast as an image, where would its light return?”<sup>32</sup>

The Master said, “Most Virtuous One, your appearance before you left home — where has it gone?”

The monk said, “After it’s finished, why doesn’t it reflect.”

The Master said, “Even though it doesn’t reflect, it can’t deceive anyone even one jot.”<sup>33</sup> While it is not clear what the ten thousand images are, when we seek them, the proof that they are cast from a mirror is in the words of the Master.<sup>34</sup> The mirror is not metal; it is not jewel; it is not bright; it is not an image. Yet that it is immediately a cast image is truly the ultimate discernment of the mirror.

“Where would its light return?” is a saying in which “a mirror cast as an image” is “a mirror cast as an image.” For example, the image returns where the image is; the casting casts a mirror.<sup>35</sup>

His saying, “Most Virtuous One, your appearance before you left home — where has it gone?” holds up the mirror and reflects the face. At this time, which of the faces is his own face?<sup>36</sup>

“The Master said, ‘Even though it doesn’t reflect, it can’t deceive anyone even one jot.’” This says, “the mirror can’t reflect”; it says, “it can’t deceive anyone.”<sup>37</sup> We should learn that “though the ocean dries up, it does not reveal the bottom.”<sup>38</sup> It is, “Don’t spoil it; don’t move!”<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, we should study it further. There is a principle of taking up an image to cast a mirror. This very time is deception after deception, jot after jot, in a hundred, thousand, myriad reflections.

\* \* \* \* \*

Great Master Zhenjue of Xuefeng once addressed the assembly, saying, “If you wish to understand this matter, I’m here like one old mirror: a foreigner comes, a foreigner appears; a Han comes, a Han appears.”<sup>40</sup>

At that time, Xuansha came forth and asked, “How about when all of a sudden a bright mirror comes?”<sup>41</sup>

The Master said, “Foreigner and Han would both disappear.”

Xuansha replied, “I’m not like this.”

Feng said, “How about you?”

Xuansha replied, “Ask me, Reverend.”

Feng said, “How about when all of a sudden a bright mirror comes?”

Xuansha replied, “A hundred fragments.”

We should study for awhile Xuefeng’s saying, “this matter,” as “what matter is this?”<sup>42</sup> We should try learning for awhile about

Xuefeng's old mirror. In the words, "like one old mirror," the [numerical classifier] "one face" means limits long severed, without any inside and outside; it means the self of a pearl rolling on a tray.<sup>43</sup> This "a foreigner comes, a foreigner appears" is one red beard.<sup>44</sup> On [the saying,] "a Han comes, a Han appears," it has been said of this Han that, since the chaos, following Pangu, the three powers or five powers appeared [as Han]; but now, in Xuefeng's saying, the virtues of the old mirror have "appeared as Han."<sup>45</sup> Because this Han is not a Han, "a Han appears." Where Xuefeng says, "Foreigner and Han would both disappear," we should say further, "the mirror will itself disappear." On Xuefeng's saying, "A hundred fragments," while what he says should be said like this, I've been asking you to return the fragments; why have you returned the bright mirror?<sup>46</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

At the time of the Yellow Emperor, there were twelve mirrors.<sup>47</sup> It is said in house instructions that they are the bestowal of heaven; again, it is also said that Guang Chengzi bestowed them at Mount Kongtong.<sup>48</sup> The rites for using these twelve mirrors were to use one for each of the twelve times, or to use one every month of the twelve months, or to use mirror after mirror in year after year over the twelve years.<sup>49</sup> This is to say that the mirrors were the scripture of Guang Chengzi. When he bestowed them on the Yellow Emperor, the twelve times and the rest were mirrors; thereafter, they reflected the past and reflected the present.<sup>50</sup> If the twelve times were

not a mirror, how could they reflect the past? If the twelve times were not a mirror, how could they reflect the present? This means the twelve times are twelve faces; the twelve faces are twelve mirrors.<sup>51</sup> Past and present are what the twelve times use; it is pointing out the reason for this.<sup>52</sup> Though this is a secular saying, the "Han appearing" is within the twelve times.

The Yellow Emperor Xuan Yuan approached Kongtong on his knees and questioned Guang Chengzi.<sup>53</sup>

At that time, Guang Chengzi said, "The mirror is the root of yin and yang. Governing the body and prolonging the span come from three mirrors: heaven, earth, and human. These mirrors are without seeing and without hearing. They embrace the spirit and make it calm; the body will naturally be correct. Always calm, always pure, your body is without troubles, your spirit without agitation. And thus, you will extend your life."

In ancient times, they used these three mirrors to govern the realm and govern the great way. The one who is clear about the great way is considered the lord of heaven and earth. The secular [sources] say that Taizong made the human his mirror; from this, he fully reflected security and danger, order and disorder.<sup>54</sup> He used one of the three mirrors. One thinks, upon hearing that he made the human his mirror, that because he questioned people of broad learning about past and present, he knew how to employ the sage and the worthy — as, for example, he got Wei Zheng and got Fang Xuanling.<sup>55</sup> To understand it in this way is not the meaning of the saying that Taizong made the human his mirror. To make the human a mirror is to make a mirror a



mirror; it is to make oneself a mirror; it is to make the five phases a mirror; it is to make the five constants a mirror.<sup>56</sup> In watching the going and coming of beings, that they come without traces and go without direction is called the meaning of the human mirror. The wise and the otherwise are of ten thousand types, resembling heavenly bodies, truly like the warp and woof.<sup>57</sup> It is the human face, the mirror face, the sun face, the moon face.<sup>58</sup> The essence of the five peaks and the essence of the four channels, passing through the world, purify the four seas.<sup>59</sup> This is the familiar practice of this mirror. To measure the warp and woof by clarifying beings is called the way of Taizong; we are not talking about people of broad learning.<sup>60</sup>

The Land of Japan, from the age of the gods, has had three mirrors.<sup>61</sup> They have been transmitted down to the present, together with the seal and the sword. One is at the Grand Shrine at Ise; one is at the Hinokuma Shrine in the Land of Kii; one is within the imperial court.

Thus, it is clear that countries all transmit and keep mirrors. To get a mirror is to get a country. In what is reported by the people, it is handed down that these three mirrors have all been transmitted like the divine seat, transmitted from the gods.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, the bronze refined a hundred times is also fashioned by yin and yang.<sup>63</sup> This might be [put], “the present comes, the present appears; the past comes, the past appears.”<sup>64</sup> It would mean the reflection of past and present is the old mirror.

\* \* \* \* \*

Xuefeng’s essential point can also be put, “a

[person of] Silla comes, a [person of] Silla appears; a [person of] Japan comes, a [person of] Japan appears.”<sup>65</sup> It can also be put, “a deva comes, a deva appears; a human comes, a human appears.” While we study “appearing” and “coming” in this way, we do not know the root and branches of this “appearing.”<sup>66</sup> We just see the “appearing.” We should not learn that “coming and appearing” is what we know or what we understand. Is the point of what is said here that the “foreigner coming” is the “foreigner appearing”? The foreigner coming is the single instance of a foreigner coming; the foreigner appearing must be the single instance of a foreigner appearing: it is not coming in order to appear.<sup>67</sup> The old mirror is the old mirror, but there should be this sort of study.

Xuansha came forth and asked, “How about when all of a sudden a bright mirror comes?”

We should pursue and clarify this saying. What is the extent of the word “bright” mentioned here? These words are saying that the “bright mirror” is the fact that the “coming” is not necessarily [that of] the foreigner or the Han, and that it should not appear as the foreigner or the Han. A bright mirror coming may be a bright mirror coming, but they are not two things.<sup>68</sup> They may not be two, but the old mirror is the old mirror, the bright mirror is the bright mirror. The proof that there is an old mirror and there is a bright mirror is in what Xuefeng and Xuansha said. We should take this as the nature and marks of the words of the buddha. We should understand that Xuansha’s remark on the bright mirror coming is seven passes and eight arrivals; we should understand that it is eight sides crystal clear.<sup>69</sup> It should be, in “meeting a person,” “I immediately come

forth”; it should be, in “coming forth immediately,” I engage [the person].<sup>70</sup> This being the case, should we take the “bright” of the “bright mirror” and the “old” of the “old mirror” as the same or as different? Is there a principle of “old” in the “bright mirror” or not? Is there a principle of “bright” in the “old mirror” or not? Do not learn from the words “old mirror” that it must be “bright.” The essential point lies in “I’m also like this,” in “you’re also like this.” We should quickly polish the principle that “the ancestors of Sindh in the West are also like this.”<sup>71</sup> In the words of the Ancestral Master, it says that there is polishing of the “old mirror.”<sup>72</sup> Is this true as well of the “bright mirror”? How about it? More broadly, there should be [such] study across the words of the buddhas and the ancestors.

Xuefeng’s saying, “Foreigner and Han would both disappear,” means that, at the time of the “bright mirror,” the foreigner and the Han would both disappear.<sup>73</sup> How do we express the principle of this “both disappear”? Since the coming and appearing of the foreigner and Han do not obstruct the “old mirror,” why do they both disappear? The “old mirror” may be “a foreigner comes, a foreigner appears; a Han comes, a Han appears,” but because the “bright mirror comes” is itself “the bright mirror comes,” the foreigner and the Han that appear in the “old mirror” both disappear. Therefore, in Xuefeng’s words, there is the one “old mirror,” there is the one “bright mirror.” We should clarify and be certain of the principle that, precisely at the time that the “bright mirror comes,” it does not obstruct the foreigner and Han that appear in the “old mirror.” This saying, “a foreigner comes, a

foreigner appears; a Han comes, a Han appears,” of the “old mirror,” is not saying that they come and appear on the “old mirror,” not saying that they come and appear within the “old mirror,” not saying that they come and appear outside the “old mirror”; it is not saying that they come and appear together with the “old mirror.” We should hear these words. On the occasion that the foreigner and the Han come and appear, the “old mirror” causes the foreigner and the Han to appear and come. On the occasion as well when foreigner and Han may both disappear, to say that the mirror remains is ignorant of appearing and oblivious to coming; to say it is confused is hardly the word for it.

At that time, Xuansha said, “I’m not like this.”<sup>74</sup>

Xuefeng said, “How about you?”

Xuansha replied, “Ask me, Reverend.”

We should not idly pass over Xuansha’s words, “Ask me, Reverend.” The coming of the Reverend’s asking and the requesting of the Reverend’s asking, were they not father and child in perfect fit, would be, why is it like this?<sup>75</sup> At the moment of “Ask me, Reverend,” such a person surely understood what is asked.<sup>76</sup> Since what is asked thunders, there is no place to escape.

Xuefeng said, “How about when all of a sudden a bright mirror comes?”

What is asked here is an instance of the old mirror in which father and child investigate together.

Xuansha said, “A hundred fragments.”

This saying means to be fragmented into a hundred, thousand, myriad pieces. When “all of a sudden a bright mirror comes” is “a

hundred fragments.” That which studies “a hundred fragments” is the bright mirror; for, when one is made to speak of the “bright mirror,” it is “a hundred fragments.” Where the fragments hang is the “bright mirror.”<sup>77</sup> Do not take the narrow view that there is previously a time that is not yet “fragments,” or there is subsequently again a time of not “fragments.” It is just “a hundred fragments.” Facing a hundred fragments is one that is solitary and steep.<sup>78</sup> So, is the “hundred fragments” mentioned here speaking of the “old mirror,” or is it speaking of the “bright mirror”? We should ask for a turning word.<sup>79</sup> Again, it is not speaking of the “old mirror”; it is not speaking of the “bright mirror.” We have been asking about the “old mirror” and the “bright mirror,” but when we consider Xuansha’s saying, was it only the sand, pebbles, fences, and walls appearing before us that become the tip of the tongue and are “a hundred fragments”?<sup>80</sup> What about their shape when they’ve been fragmented? “Blue depths ten thousand ages old, the moon in an empty realm.”<sup>81</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

Once, when Great Master Shenjue of Xuefeng and Chan Master Huiran of Sansheng Cloister were traveling, they saw a group of monkeys.<sup>82</sup>

Xuefeng said, “Each of these monkeys is bearing an old mirror on its back.”

We should study these words well. [The term] *mikō* means “monkey.”<sup>83</sup> How about these monkeys Xuefeng saw? We should ask like this and go on to work on it. Do not look around at the passing kalpas.<sup>84</sup> “Each is bearing

on its back an old mirror” means that, while the old mirror is the face of the buddhas and ancestors, the old mirror is the old mirror beyond as well.<sup>85</sup> To say that each of the monkeys bears on its back its own mirror does not mean that among the mirrors there are large ones and small ones: they are one old mirror. To say they “bear on their backs” is, for example, to say of a painted buddha image that it “bears on its back” what is attached behind it. When the monkeys bear their backs, they bear them as the old mirror.<sup>86</sup> What kind of paste have they used?<sup>87</sup>

If we try to say this, the backs of the monkeys are the old mirrors that they bear on their backs. Are the backs of the old mirrors the monkeys that they bear on their backs? The backs of the old mirrors are born on the backs of the old mirrors; the backs of the monkeys are born on the backs of the monkeys. The words “each bears one” are not an empty contrivance; they are a saying that says it right.<sup>88</sup> Therefore, is it old mirrors? Is it monkeys? In the end, what can we say? Are we monkeys or not monkeys? Whom can we ask? That we are monkeys is not something we know, not something others know. That we are ourselves, our gropings do not reach.

Sansheng said, “It has been nameless across the kalpas. Why do you express it as ‘an old mirror’?”

This is one face, one piece, with which Sansheng has demonstrated the old mirror. “Across the kalpas” means before one mind or one thought has yet to sprout; it means without putting oneself forward for a kalpa.<sup>89</sup> “Nameless” means the sun face, moon face, old mirror face across the kalpas; it means the

bright mirror face. When “nameless” is truly “nameless,” “across the kalpas” is not yet “across the kalpas.” Since “across the kalpas” is not “across the kalpas,” Sansheng’s saying must not be a saying. Nevertheless, “before one thought has yet to sprout” means today. We should polish it so as not to let today pass us by. Truly, “nameless across the kalpas” is a name of high repute. What is it you express as “an old mirror”? The head of a dragon with the tail of a snake.<sup>90</sup>

At this time, Xuefeng should address Sansheng and say, “The old mirror. The old mirror.” Xuefeng does not say it. He goes on to say, “a flaw’s developed,” meaning a scratch has appeared.<sup>91</sup> We may think, how could it be that “a flaw’s developed” on the old mirror? But [to say that] “a flaw’s developed” on the old mirror is taking the scratch as saying “nameless across the kalpas.” “A flaw’s developed” on the old mirror is the whole old mirror. Because Sansheng has not yet emerged from the cave of “a flaw’s developed” on the old mirror, the investigation he speaks of is entirely given over to a flaw on the old mirror.<sup>92</sup> Thus, we study that a flaw develops even on the old mirror, that a flaw develops is the old mirror. This is the study of the old mirror.

Sansheng said, “What’s your predicament? I don’t even know what you’re talking about.”<sup>93</sup>

The meaning of what he says is, “What is your predicament?”<sup>94</sup> We should make concentrated effort on and study of this “predicament” in detail. Is it today? Is it tomorrow? Is it ourselves? Is it another?<sup>95</sup> Is it all the worlds in the ten directions? Is it in the Land of the Great Tang?

In regard to the “talking” of “I don’t even

know what you’re talking about,” there is talking that is said; there is talking that has not been said; there is talking that was already said. Here, the meaning that is “what you’re talking about” appears. For example, has “what you’re talking about” “attained the way together with the whole earth and sentient beings”?<sup>96</sup> It is not refinished brocade.<sup>97</sup> Therefore, he “doesn’t know.” It is “the one before us doesn’t know”; it is “face-to-face, they don’t know each other.”<sup>98</sup> It is not that there is nothing he is “talking about”; it is just that he “doesn’t know.” “Not knowing” is “the bare mind in each instance”; furthermore, it is not seeing what is perfectly clear.<sup>99</sup>

Xuefeng said, “This old monk made a mistake.”<sup>100</sup>

This is saying, “I said it wrong”; while such may be said, it may not be understood like this. Saying “this old monk” means the old man who is master within the house: that is, one who does not study other things and solely studies “this old monk.”<sup>101</sup> He may have a thousand changes and a myriad transformations, he may have spirit heads and demon faces; but his study is just the one move of “this old monk.”<sup>102</sup> Buddhas may come and ancestors may come, for ten thousand years in one moment of thought; but his study is just the one move of “this old monk.”<sup>103</sup> His “mistake” is “the abbot’s business is complicated.”<sup>104</sup> If we think about it, Xuefeng is a single horn of Deshan; Sansheng is the spirit foot of Linji.<sup>105</sup> The genealogy of these two venerables is not humble: they are distant descendants of Qingyuan, a distant branch of Nanyue.<sup>106</sup> They have maintained the old mirror like this. They should be a tortoise mirror for latecomers.<sup>107</sup>



Xuefeng addressed the assembly, saying, “If the breadth of the world is ten feet, the breadth of the old mirror is ten feet; if the breadth of the world is one foot, the breadth of the old mirror is one foot.”<sup>108</sup>

At that point, Xuansha pointed at the brazier and said, “Tell me, what’s the breadth of the brazier?”<sup>109</sup>

Xuefeng said, “It’s like the breadth of the old mirror.”

Xuansha said, “The old Reverend’s heels haven’t touched the earth.”<sup>110</sup>

He says ten feet is the world; the world is ten feet. He takes one foot as the world; the world is one foot. He is speaking of the present ten feet; he is speaking of the present one foot; there are no other ten feet or one foot. When we study this episode, we think that the breadth of the world is the incalculable, limitless three-thousandfold world, or the inexhaustable dharma realms; but this is like being the small self just pointing out what is outside the village.<sup>111</sup> Taking up this world, he takes it as ten feet. Hence, Xuefeng says, “the breadth of the old mirror is ten feet; the breadth of the world is one foot.” In studying this “ten feet,” we should see one edge of the breadth of the world.

Again, on hearing the words “old mirror,” we take the view that it is one sheet of thin ice. This is not the case. Its ten-foot breadth practices together with the ten-foot breadth of the world, but we should work on [the questions,] is its shape of equal stature to, does it practice together with, the limitlessness of the world? The old mirror is not like “one bright

pearl.”<sup>112</sup> Do not understand it as bright or dark; do not see it as square or round. Even if all the worlds in the ten directions are “one bright pearl,” they are not equal to the old mirror. Hence, the old mirror, regardless of the coming and appearing of the foreigner and the Han, is each instance in the crystal clarity of vertical and horizontal. It is not many; it is not big. “Breadth” holds up its measure; it does not mean its width. To say “breadth” is like saying the ordinary two inches or three inches, or counting seven things or eight things.<sup>113</sup> In calculations on the way of the buddhas, when we calculate great awakening or not awakening, we clarify two taels or three taels; when we calculate by buddha after buddha and ancestor after ancestor, we present five sheets or ten sheets.<sup>114</sup> Ten feet is the breadth of the old mirror; the breadth of the old mirror is one sheet..

Xuansha’s saying, “what’s the breadth of the brazier?” is a saying that is not hidden.<sup>115</sup> We should study it for a thousand ages, ten thousand ages. [On] seeing the brazier, who is it we become when we see it? When we see the brazier, it is not seven feet, it is not eight feet.<sup>116</sup> This is not talk about the moment of moving and grasping; it is the realization of a new instance and a special place.<sup>117</sup> It is, for example, “what thing is it that comes like this?”<sup>118</sup> When “what’s the breadth?” has been said, what has been the size in the past will not be the size. We should no longer doubt the principle of liberation in this very place. The essential point that the brazier is not forms or measures, we should hear [in] Xuansheng’s words. Do not idly let the dumpling right before you fall on the ground.<sup>119</sup> We should break it.

This is our concentrated effort.

Xuefeng said, “It’s like the breadth of the old mirror.” We should quietly reflect on these words. Since he ought not say the breadth of the brazier is ten feet, he says this. It is not that saying “ten feet” says it right, while saying “like the breadth of the old mirror” says it wrong. We should consider the conduct of “like the breadth of the old mirror.”<sup>120</sup> Many people have thought that not to say, “the breadth of the brazier is ten feet,” is to say it wrong. We should work on the independent positing of “breadth”; we should reflect on the one piece of “the old mirror”; we should not let pass the conduct of “like.”<sup>121</sup> This is “action and rest promote the old path; I won’t be sinking into worry.”<sup>122</sup>

Xuansha said, “The old Han’s heels haven’t touched the earth.”<sup>123</sup> The point here is that, though we call him “the old Han” or we call him “the old Reverend,” this is not necessarily Xuefeng; for Xuefeng is an “old Han.” About “heels,” we should ask, “where are they?” We should investigate, “What are heels?” “We should investigate” means, is it the treasury of the true dharma eye? Is it empty space? Is it all the earth? Is it the vital artery? How many are there? Is there one? Is there a half? Are there a hundred, thousand, myriad? We should diligently study like this.

“Haven’t touched the earth.” What is it that he calls “the earth”? The earth of the present whole earth, he calls “the earth,” for the time being, in accordance with the view of one type. There are types that see it as the dharma gate of inconceivable liberation. There is a type that sees it as the way practiced by the buddhas. Therefore, in regard to the earth that heels should touch, what is it that we take as earth?

Does earth really exist? Really not exist? Again, more generally, we should keep asking again and again, we should keep saying to others and ourselves, is there not, on the great way, even an inch or so of what we call earth? For “heels,” is touching the earth right, or is not touching the earth right? Why is it that he says, “haven’t touched the earth”? At the time when “there isn’t an inch of ground on the whole earth,” “touched the earth” is “haven’t” and “haven’t touched the earth” is “haven’t.”<sup>124</sup> Therefore, “the old Han’s heels haven’t touched the earth” is the circumstances of “the old Han,” the quickness of his “heels.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Chan Master Hungtou of Guotai Cloister on Mount Jinhua in Wuzhou was once asked by a monk, “Before the old mirror is polished, what’s it like?”<sup>125</sup>

The Master said, “The old mirror.”

The monk said, “After it’s polished, what’s it like?”

The Master said, “The old mirror.”

We should realize that this old mirror has a time of polishing, a time before polishing, a time after polishing; yet it is a single old mirror. Therefore, at the time of polishing, it is the old mirror polishing the whole old mirror. It is not polishing by mixing in something other than the mirror like mercury; it is not polishing itself or self polishing.<sup>126</sup> Yet there is “polishing the old mirror.” In the time before it is polished, the old mirror is not dim; we may say it is dark, but it is not dim: it is the living old mirror. Generally speaking, we polish a mirror to make a mirror; we polish a tile to make a mirror; we polish a

tile to make a tile; we polish a mirror to make tile.<sup>127</sup> There is polishing without making; there is making without being able to polish. They are both the family occupation of the buddhas and ancestors.<sup>128</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

In the past, when Xiangxi Mazu was studying with Nanyue, Nanyue had Mazu secretly receive the mind seal.<sup>129</sup> It was the beginning of the beginning of “polishing a tile.”<sup>130</sup> For over ten years, Mazu, residing at Chuanfa Cloister, always did seated meditation. We should try to think of his grass hermitage on a rainy night. It is not said he neglected his cold couch sealed in by snow.<sup>131</sup>

One time, when Nanyue went to Mazu’s hermitage, Mazu stood to attend him. Nanyue asked, “What are you doing these days?”<sup>132</sup>

Mazu said, “These days, Daoyi just sits.”<sup>133</sup>

Nanyue said, “What are you figuring to do, sitting in meditation?”

Mazu said, “I’m sitting in meditation figuring to make a buddha.”

Nanyue thereupon took up a tile and polished it on a stone by Mazu’s hermitage. Upon seeing this, Mazu asked, “Reverend, what are you doing?”

Nanyue said, “I’m polishing a tile.”

Mazu said, “What’s the use of polishing a tile?”

Nanyue said, “I’m polishing it to make a mirror.”

Mazu said, “How can you produce a mirror by polishing a tile?”

Nanyue said, “How can you make a buddha by sitting in meditation?”

From the past for several hundred years, many people have thought that the great matter of this passage was simply Nanyue’s exhorting Mazu. This is not necessarily the case. The conduct of the great sages simply escapes the realm of the commoner. If the great sages had no dharma of polishing a tile, how could they have expedient means to help people? The power to help people is the bones and marrow of the buddhas and ancestors. Though they construct it, it is their domestic furnishings. If it is not their domestic furnishings and implements, it is not passed down in the house of the buddhas.<sup>134</sup> How much more, then, does this immediately engage Mazu.<sup>135</sup> [From this] we know that the virtues directly transmitted by the buddhas and ancestors are direct pointing.<sup>136</sup> Truly we know that when polishing a tile becomes a mirror, Mazu makes a buddha; when Mazu makes a buddha, Mazu quickly becomes Mazu. When Mazu becomes Mazu, seated meditation quickly becomes seated meditation. Therefore, polishing a tile to make a mirror has been maintained in the bones and marrow of the old buddhas.

Therefore, there are old mirrors made from a tile. When we have been polishing this mirror, even up till now it is not stained. It is not the case that the tile has dirt. We just polish a tile that is a tile. From this, the virtue of making a mirror is realized. This is the concentrated effort of the buddhas and ancestors. If polishing a tile did not make a mirror, polishing a mirror would not make a mirror. Who could think that, in this “making,” there is making a buddha or making a mirror? Again, what I doubt is, when we are polishing the old mirror, could we mistakenly polish it as

a tile? The circumstances at the time of polishing are not something that can be judged by other times. Nevertheless, because Nanyue's words must say a saying, ultimately they should be "polishing a tile to make mirror." Present people should try taking up present tiles and polishing them. They will surely become mirrors. If tiles do not become mirrors, people do not become buddhas. If we disdain tiles as clods of mud, we will disdain people as clods of mud. If people have minds, tiles should also have minds. Who knows that there are mirrors of "a tile comes, a tile appears"? Who knows that there are mirrors where "a mirror comes, a mirror appears"?

Treasury of the True Dharma Eye

The Old Mirror

Number 19

[Ryūmonji MS:]

Presented to the assembly at Kannon Dōri

Kōshō Hōrin Monastery; ninth day, ninth month of the junior metal year of the ox, the second year of Ninji [15 November 1241]137

[Tōunji MS:]

Copied at the Sendan Grove; thirteenth day, first month, junior water year of the rabbit, the fourth year of the same [era] [3 February 1510]

Copied in the abbot's quarters of Keirin; auspicious [first] day, fifth month, senior metal year of the horse, the seventh year of Eishō [7

June 1510], by Yōken138

## Notes

1. **the same image, the same casting** (*dōzō dōchū*): The term "image" here may refer either to an image, or reflection, in a mirror or to an image, or icon, such as a painting or statue of a buddha or an ancestor. Both senses are at play in this essay. The term "casting" may refer to the making either of an image or of a metal (typically bronze) mirror. It is not clear what terms are being identified by the adjectives "same" (*dō*) in this sentence; it could be the "the buddhas" and "the ancestors" but is more likely "the buddhas and the ancestors" and "the old mirror."

2. **when a foreigner comes, a foreigner appears** (*ko rai ko gen*); when a Han comes, a Han appears (*kan rai kan gen*) : Dogen is here introducing a saying of Xuefeng Yicun (822-908) that he will discuss below, section 19.

3. **The Eighteenth Ancestor, Venerable Gayasata** (*daijūhachi so Kayashata sonja*): Dogen is here retelling in Japanese a biography of the ancestor that can be found in the Jingde chuandeng lu. The Sanskrit name is unattested and the reconstruction tentative.

**Land of Magadha** (*Madai koku*): Kingdom of north India corresponding roughly to modern Bihar.

4. **Yutoulun** (*Uzzuran*); **Tiange** (*Tengai*); **Fangsheng** (*Hosho*): Chinese names for which, given that Gayasata is unknown from Sanskrit sources, there are likely no attested Indic originals.

5. **vai ūrya** (*ruri*): A Sanskrit term used for beryl, crystal, and other minerals; one of the seven



precious substances.

6. **The term enkan means “round mirror”** (*enkan to wa enkyō nari*): Dogen is here simply offering a synonym for the graph *kan*, used in the preceding sentence. Dogen’s source for the legend that Gayasata was born with a mirror, as well as the following account of its presence throughout his life as a householder has not been identified.

7. **elsewhere over there** (*ta nari ni*): Presumably, in worlds other than our *Sahā* world.

8. **“whether on trees or on rocks,” there are sūtra scrolls that convert [beings]** (*nyaku ju nyaku seki ni keseru kyōkan ari*); **“whether in fields or in villages,” there are wise friends that spread [the dharma]** (*nyaku den nyaku ri ni rufu suru chishiki ari*): The former phrase is associated with the tale, in the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, of the “boy of the Himalayas” who vowed to write the teachings of the Buddha on trees and rocks; the latter phrase is associated with the account, in the *Lotus Sūtra*, of followers of the Buddha preaching the dharma in fields and villages. The juxtaposition of “sutra scrolls” (*kyōkan*) and “wise friends” (*chishiki*; i.e., teachers) here likely reflects the fixed expression, “whether from a wise friend, whether from a sūtra scroll”); the phrase, occurring several times in Dogen’s writing, appears below, in section 8.

9. **yellow paper and vermilion spindle** (*ōshi shujiku*): I.e., the paper and spindle of a roll of text; here, doubtless a scriptural text. Some manuscript witnesses follow this sentence with the line, “Who could think that the Master alone was extraordinary?” The “Master” here no doubt

refers to Gayasata.

10. **Once, as he was traveling** (*aru toki, shutsuyu suru ni*): Dogen here retells in Japanese part of a conversation that appears in the biographical notice of the Seventeenth Ancestor, Samghānandi (*Sengjianandi*), in the *Jingde chuandeng lu*. In the original, Samghānandi encounters Gayasata as a boy dwelling on a mountain peak covered by purple clouds. After their conversation, Samghānandi inducts him into the Buddhist order and gives him the name Gayasata.

11. **hearing it not as a question about “what is shown”** (*u ka shohyōō, o monjaku ni arazu to kikite*): Usually interpreted to mean that we should not take Samghānandi’s words as a question. “What is shown” translates the four-word interrogative phrase of the Chinese source, *yu he suo biao*, which, if read as a declarative, could only yield something strange like, “Being is the expression of what.”

12. **The Master said** (*shi iwaku*): Dogen here quotes Gayasata’s verse in Chinese. Exactly who is indicated in the phrase, “both people can see the same” (*ryōnin dō tokuken*) is unclear; it could refer to both the person holding and the person looking at the mirror or to both the person looking at and the person appearing in the mirror. **Mind and eye, all alike** (*shingen kai soji*): One might well prefer to read this “the mind’s eye, all alike”; the translation here seeks to accommodate Dogen’s discussion of the phrase below, sections 9-10.

13. **ten sages and three worthies** (*jissshō sanken*): I.e., the traditional path of the bodhisattva: the

ten stages, or “grounds” (*chi*; S. *bhūmi*), of the “sage,” or “noble” (*shō*; S. *ārya*) — i.e., those on the advanced levels of the path — and the three types of “worthy” (*ken*; S. *bhadra*) — i.e., those on the levels just preceding the *ārya*.

14. **we do not identify wisdom as the buddhas** (*chie o shobutsu to seru ni arazu*): I.e., Buddhas may have wisdom, but they cannot be defined simply by their wisdom. The point here seems to be that, while the mirror is commonly used in Buddhist literature as a metaphor for wisdom, the mirror under discussion here is not limited to this virtue of the buddhas. The English of the two final sentences of this paragraph follows the most common punctuation of the text. It is also possible (and seems to make somewhat better sense) to read the Japanese here as follows:

The term “great round mirror” may occur in the dharma of the “ten sages and three worthies,” but it is not this great round mirror of the buddhas, since the buddhas are not necessarily [the same as] wisdom. The buddhas have wisdom; we do not identify wisdom as the buddhas.

15. **we experience** (*kenmon su*): Or, perhaps, “we learn.” A common compound verb (literally, “see and hear”) that can mean “to perceive” or “to experience,” “to learn of,” “to have knowledge (or information) about,” etc. **this birth** (*kono shō*); **that birth** (*tashō*): Or “this life,” “that life.” The translation tries to retain the repetition here of the term *shō* in the preceding “born together.”

16. **flesh mirror** (*nikukyō*); marrow mirror (*zuikyō*): Dogen is here alluding to the phrase

“skin, flesh, bones, and marrow” (*hi niku kotsu zui*), regularly appearing in his writings to indicate the essence or entirety of the Zen transmission.

17. **whether from a sūtra scroll** (*waku ju kyōkan*); whether from a wise friend (*waku ju chishiki*): See above, Note 8.

18. **knowledge at birth** (*shōchi*): I.e., innate knowledge, a term that could be applied to the inherent wisdom suggested by the story of Gayasata’s birth with the mirror.

19. **births before or after** (*zengo shō*): I.e., boy and mirror born at different times.

20. **“both can see the same; mind and eye are alike”** (*ryōko onajiku tokuken ari, shin to gan to ainitari*): Putting the last two lines of Gayasata’s verse into Japanese, though Dogen has altered the numerical classifier from the poem’s “both people” (*ryōnin*) to what would more commonly indicate “both things” (*ryōko*). Hence, his version might suggest that both “front and back” can see, though his subsequent comments seem to refer to the person and image.

21. **secondary recompense and primary recompense** (*ehō shōhō*): Standard Buddhist terms for the two aspects of karmic consequences: the environment, or circumstances, into which one is born; and the makeup of the person — hence, the self and its world.

22. **the Third Ancestor and the Sixth Ancestor** (*sanso rokuso*): It is not obvious why Dogen picks out these two ancestors here. Most com-

mentators suggest that it is simply because both have the glyph for “mirror” (*jian*) in their names: respectively, Jianzhi (“Mirror Wisdom”) Sengcan and Dajian (“Great Mirror”) Huineng.

23. **“the eye of the way is obstructed by the eye”** (*dōgen hi gen ge*): After the words of Fayuan Wenyi (885-958), quoted in Dogen’s *shinji Shōbōgenzō*.

24. **buddha faces and ancestor faces** (*butsumen somen*): Dogen is here beginning to play with the numerical classifier *men*, used to count flat objects like mirrors, which has the primary senses, “face,” “surface.” He will continue to exploit this term in his subsequent commentary.

25. **the Thirty-third Ancestor, Chan Master Dajian** (*dai sanjūsan so Daikan zenji*): I.e., the Sixth Ancestor, Huineng.

**Huangmei Shan** (*Ōbaisan*): The mountain in present-day Hunan that was the site of the communities of the Fourth and Fifth Ancestors. According to his legend, as a layman, Huineng was put to work at the Fifth Ancestor’s monastery. **the Ancestral Master** (*soshi*): I.e., the Fifth Ancestor, Hongren (602-675). According to the famous legend, Hongren held a contest to determine his successor. The head monk Shenxiu (d. 706) wrote a poem on a monastery wall to which Huineng’s poem was a response.

26. **Bodhi originally has no tree** (*bodai hon mu ju*): Huineng’s famous verse appears in several slightly variant versions. Dogen’s version here follows that recorded in the *Tiansheng guangdeng lu*. The verse to which Huineng is responding also has several slight variants.

27. **Zen Master Yuanwu** (*Engo zenji*): I.e., Yuanwu Keqin (1063-1135). His words can be found in the *Yuanwu Foguo chanshi yulu*. “Caoxi” (*Sōkei*) is the place, in present-day Guangdong, where Huineng is said to have resided.

28. **“perfectly clear”** (*meimei*): The translation loses the repetition of *mei*, the term being otherwise translated here as “bright.” Possibly an allusion to the words of Layman Pang (*Hō koji*; 740?-808), cited elsewhere in Dogen’s writing.

29. **“when the bright comes, the bright does it”** (*meitō rai meitō ta*): A tentative rendering of a vexed saying attributed to the Chan monk Puhua (dates unknown), quoted in Dogen’s *shinji Shōbōgenzō*.

30. **there is no “where”** (*izure no tokoro, nashi*): From the final line of Huineng’s verse: “Where is there any dust?”

31. **all the worlds are not k etra like dust motes** (*jinkai wa jinsetsu ni arazaru*): The translation tries to retain Dogen’s punning on the term *jinsetsu*, which refers to “lands (*ksetra*) as numerous as motes of dust.”

32. **Chan Master Dahui of Nanyue** (*Nangaku Daie zenji*): I.e., Nanyue Huairang (677-744), disciple of the Sixth Ancestor, Huineng. This story appears in many Zen collections; see, e.g., *Zongmen tongyao ji*; *shinji Shōbōgenzō*.

**“If a mirror were cast as an image”** (*nyo kyō chū zō*): I.e., if a bronze mirror were recast as an icon.

33. **“Even though it doesn’t reflect, it can’t deceive anyone even one jot”** (*man ta itten ya*

*futoku*): Usually interpreted to mean that the recast image is not a reflection that one might mistake for the real thing.

<sup>34.</sup> **the ten thousand images** (*banzō*): A common term usually denoting “the myriad things” that appear in the world. Dogen seems here to be shifting the sense of “image” from the icon to phenomena.

<sup>35.</sup> **the image returns where the image is** (*zō ki zō sho*); the casting casts a mirror (*shu nō shu kyō*): Usually interpreted to mean that the image is just the image, the casting is just the casting.

<sup>36.</sup> **which of the faces is his own face?** (*izure no menmen ka sunawachi jiko men naran*): The referent of “own” (*jiko*) here is unclear; the question could as well be put, “which of the faces is our own face?” or “which of the faces is the face of the self?”

<sup>37.</sup> **“the mirror can’t reflect”** (*kanshō futoku*); “it can’t deceive anyone” (*man ta futoku*): Presumably this means that there is a perspective from which the mirror is not merely a reflector that might “deceive” someone by its images.

<sup>38.</sup> **“though the ocean dries up, it does not reveal the bottom”** (*kai ko futō rotei*): Variation on a saying, drawn from a verse by the poet Du Xunhe (846-907), that occurs often in Zen literature (see, e.g., *Zongjing lu*):

When the ocean dries up, we finally see the bottom;

When a person dies, we do not know his mind.

<sup>39.</sup> **“Don’t spoil it; don’t move!”** (*maku taha, maku dōjaku*): Colloquial expressions sometimes used in Zen texts to warn students away from erroneous words or deeds.

<sup>40.</sup> **Great Master Zhenjue of Xuefeng** (*Seppo Shinkaku daishi*): Posthumous title of Xuefeng Yicun. A version of this exchange can be found in the *Liandeng huiyao*.

**“one old mirror”** (*ichimen kokyo*): The translation loses the numerical counter, *ichimen* (literally “one face”), with which Dogen will play in his comment.

<sup>41.</sup> **Xuansha** (*Gensha*): I.e., Xuefeng’s disciple Xuansha Shibe (835-908).

<sup>42.</sup> **“what matter is this?”** (*ze jūmo* [or *shimo*]): The sentence could be understood simply as, “We should study ‘what this matter is’ that Xuefeng calls ‘this matter’”; but it also lends itself to a reading, “We should study ‘this matter’ as ‘what matter’” (i.e., an ineffable ultimate matter).

<sup>43.</sup> **“one face”** (*ichi men*): Dogen is here playing with the numerical counter for mirror in Xuefeng’s “like one old mirror.”

**a pearl rolling on a tray** (*isshu sōban*): An idiom expressing unhampered movement.

<sup>44.</sup> **one red beard** (*isseki no shakushu*): The term “red beard” is regularly used for a foreigner from the west, especially Bodhidharma. The significance of the numerical classifier *seki* here is ambiguous; it is used to count some types of animals, as well as to indicate one of a pair. In any case, the implication seems to be that there is one foreigner who both “comes” and “appears.”



45. **the chaos** (*konton*); **Pangu** (*Banko*): References to the formation of the world according to Chinese cosmological accounts. The mythical figure Pangu is said to have been born from the primordial chaos and, in dying, created the heaven and earth.

**three powers or five powers** (*sansai gosai*): Chinese cosmological categories: the former refers to the triad, heaven, earth, and human; the latter, to the five phases (*wu xing*): wood, fire, earth, metal, and water.

**the virtues of the old mirror have “appeared as Han”** (*kokyō no kudoku no, kangen seri*): Or, perhaps, “‘a Han appears’ as the virtues of the old mirror.” The original has the awkward play, “The virtues of the old mirror have ‘Han-appeared.’”

46. **what he says should be said like this** (*dō ya shu ze inmo dō*): I.e., Xuefeng has said it right. Here and in the following sentence, Dogen shifts to Chinese, replicating a classical style of Chan comment.

**return the fragments** (*gen go saihen rai*); returned the bright mirror (*gen ga myōkyō rai*): The Chinese imperative construction here, *huan wu . . . lai*, and the closely similar *huan wo . . . lai* (“give me back . . .”), is a fairly common challenge in Chan texts, appearing several times in the *Shōbōgenzō*.

47. **Yellow Emperor** (*Kōtei*): Legendary early Chinese ruler and cultural hero, traditionally dated in the third millennium BCE. Twelve great mirrors are mentioned in the *Shiwu jiyuan*, where it is said that the emperor cast the mirrors and used one of them each month. Beginning here, Dogen embarks on an excursus, to discuss mir-

rors in China and Japan; he will return to his commentary on the conversation between Xuefeng and Xuansha in section 26, below.

48. **house instructions** (*kakun*): I.e., records of traditions and admonitions passed down within a family, though the specific referent here is unknown.

**Guang Chengzi** (*Kō Seishi*); **Mount Kongtong** (*Kōtōzan*): Reference to a legend that the Yellow Emperor visited the sage Guang Chengzi on Kongtong. The story is found in *Zhuangzi* 11, but no mention is made there of the twelve mirrors.

49. **the twelve times** (*jūni ji*); **the twelve years** (*jūni nen*): The twelve times are the periods, of two hours each, into which the day was divided in traditional China; the twelve years represent one cycle through the traditional Chinese astrological signs.

50. **the twelve times and the rest** (*jūni ji tō*): Presumably, “the twelve times, the twelve months, and the twelve years. Dogen is here beginning his comment on the tradition of the twelve mirrors as themselves times.

**thereafter, they reflected the past and reflected the present** (*kore yori shō ko shō kon suru nari* これより照古照今するなり): Perhaps, in the sense that history (*kokon* 古今; “past and present”) was illumined through the marking off of the divisions of time.

51. **the twelve times are twelve faces; the twelve faces are twelve mirrors** (*jūni ji wa, jūni men nari, jūni men wa, jūni kyō nari*): The translation attempts to preserve something of Dogen’s play here again with the numerical classifier for

mirrors, *men* (“face,” or “surface”).

52. **it is pointing out the reason for this** (*kono dōri o shiji suru nari*): The subject here is unexpressed; most likely, “this story of the twelve mirrors of the Yellow Emperor.”

53. **The Yellow Emperor Xuan Yuan** (*Ken'en kōtei*): Dogen seems here to be quoting from a Chinese text, but his source is unclear. Most commentators cite the *Zhuangzi* story noted above, Note 48. This text does begin with the Yellow Emperor approaching Kongtong on his knees, as well as the passage beginning, “Without seeing and without hearing”; however, the conversation here is not about the three mirrors but about the supreme way (*zhidao*).

54. **Taizong** (*Taisō*): Second Tang emperor, reigned 627-650. His use of people as one of his three mirrors occurs in the account of his rule, the *Zhenguan zhengyao*:

With bronze as the mirror, one can adjust one's attire; with the past as the mirror, one can know prosperity and decline; with a person as the mirror, one can clarify gain and loss.

55. **Wei Zheng** (*Gi Chō*): 580-643. Famous Chinese statesman; served as Grand Councilor (*zaixiang*) and trusted advisor under Taizong, who lamented after Wei Zheng's death that he had lost one of his mirrors. Wei was the lead author of the *Suishu*, the official history of the Sui dynasty.

**Fang Xuanling** (*Bō Genrei*): 579-648. Along with Du Ruhui (585-630), often held up as an exemplary minister; served Li Shimin during the cam-

paign to establish the Tang dynasty and rose to Grand Councilor (*zaixiang*) after Li took the throne as Emperor Taizong. Fang was the lead author of the *Jinshu*, the official history of the Jin dynasty.

56. **five phases** (*gogyō*); **five constants** (*gojō*): The “five phases” (*gogyō*) are equivalent to the five “powers” (*gosai*; see above, Note 45). Which of the lists of “five constants” (*gojō*; C. *wuchang*) Dogen had in mind here is not obvious. It is usually thought to be the five virtues of traditional Chinese ethical thought: benevolence (*ren*), righteousness (*yì*), propriety (*lǐ*), wisdom (*zhì*), and sincerity (*xìn*); but he might as well have been thinking of the five social relationships (*gorin*; C. *wulun*): ruler and subject (*jūn chén*), father and son (*fù zǐ*), brother and brother (*xiong dì*), husband and wife (*fū qī*), and friend and friend (*péng you*).

57. **the warp and woof** (*keii*): I.e., the very structure of the world.

58. **It is the human face, the mirror face, the sun face, the moon face** (*ninmen kyōmen nichimen gachimen*): Dogen is again exploiting the term *men*. In addition to referring to the sun and moon, the terms “Sun Face” and “Moon Face” appear in Buddhist literature as the names of buddhas. Presumably the grammatical subject here is still the “human mirror.”

59. **five peaks** (*gogaku*): Sacred mountains located at the four cardinal directions and the center of China; the list varies with the source, the most common being Taishan (east), Hengshan (south), Huashan (west), Hengshan

(north), and Songshan (center).

**four channels** (*shitoku*): Four great rivers of China: the Huang, Chang (i.e., Yangze), Huai, and Ji.

**four seas** (*shikai*): A term used for all the water surrounding China.

60. **we are not talking about people of broad learning** (*hakurannin o iu ni arazaru nari*): I.e., we are not talking about Taizong's using learned people as mirrors.

61. **The Land of Japan** (*Nihon koku*): Dogen here again shifts to Chinese, as if quoting a text; the source, if any, is unidentified. The Japanese imperial regalia includes (along with a sword and jewel) the so-called *yata no kagami* ("eight-foot mirror"), said today to be housed at the Grand Shrine at Ise; but whether it corresponds to any of the three mirrors Dogen mentions is uncertain.

62. **the divine seat** (*shin'i*): Usually the altar, tablet, or image in which a divine being is thought to reside; here, likely applied to the imperial throne.

63. **bronze refined a hundred times** (*hyakuren no dō*): I.e., even though the mirror is the result of the human activity of refining the bronze, it is ultimately the product of the cosmic forces of yin and yang.

64. **This might be [put]** (*naran*): An attempt to suggest Dogen's use here of the dubative form of the copula *nari*; the subject is unexpressed. Perhaps the implication is something like, "the above might be expressed by the statement . . ."

The translation is based on the assumption that, in these last two sentences, Dogen is summarizing his excursus into mirror legends and bringing the reader back to his interpretation of the conversation between Xuefeng and Xuansha on the "old mirror."

65. **"a [person of] Silla comes"** (*Shinra rai*); **"a [person of] Japan comes"** (*Nihon rai*): I.e., a native of the ancient kingdom of Silla on the Korean peninsula and a native of Japan.

66. **root and branches** (*honmatsu*): A common expression for "the nature and characteristics" or "source and outcome" of something.

67. **it is not coming in order to appear** (*gen no tame no rai ni arazu*): I.e., the "coming" is just coming; the "appearing" just appearing.

68. **they are not two things** (*nimai naru bekarazaru nari*): While the antecedent of the pronoun here is unclear, the sentence that follows suggests it should be "the old mirror" and "the bright mirror."

69. **seven passes and eight arrivals** (*shittsu hattatsu*): A common expression in Dogen's writings and earlier Chan texts for "thorough understanding," "complete mastery."

**eight sides crystal clear** (*hachimen reirō*): A common term for perfect clarity; the image is of the sound of a crystal (*reirō*) throughout the eight points of the compass.

70. **"immediately come forth"** (*sokushutsu*); **"coming forth immediately"** (*shutsusoku*): The translation here struggles to preserve Dogen's

play with the words of Sansheng and Xinghua, quoted in case 92 of the *shinji Shōbōgenzō* and alluded to elsewhere in the *Shōbōgenzō*:

Chan Master Huiran of the Sansheng Cloister (succeeded Linji) said, “When I meet a person, I come forth; but, when I come forth, I don’t benefit the person.”

Xinghua said, “When I meet a person, I don’t come forth; but, when I do come forth, I benefit the person.

Dogen treats the Chinese adverbial glyph *ji* (“then,” “as soon as”; also “is namely”) as if it were part of two compound verbs, *jichu* and *chuji*.

71. **“I’m also like this”** (*go yaku nyo ze*); **“you’re also like this”** (*nyo yaku nyo ze*); **“the ancestors of Sindh in the West are also like this”** (*Saiten shoso yaku nyo ze*): Words of the Sixth Ancestor, Huineng, in response to his disciple Nanyue Huairang’s claim that he is undefiled by Buddhist practice and verification; a conversation recorded in the *shinji Shōbōgenzō* and much cited by Dogen.

72. **In the words of the Ancestral Master, it says that there is polishing of the “old mirror”** (*soshi no dōtoku ni, kokyō wa ma ari, to dōshu su*): No doubt a reference to the words of Chan Master Guotai Hungou in the story Dogen will quote below, section 48.

73. **at the time of the “bright mirror,” the foreigner and the Han would both disappear** (*ko mo kan mo, meikyō ji wa guin nari*): Dogen seems here simply to be explaining the Chinese passage in Japanese.

74. **At that time, Xuansha said** (*toki ni Gensha iwaku*): Dogen here provides Japanese translation of his Chinese text.

75. **father and child in perfect fit** (*fushi no tōki*): I.e., master and disciple in accord. The term *toki* is a colloquial expression meaning “harmonious” or, as we might say, “to see eye to eye.”

**why is it like this?** (*i jin nyo shi*): Dogen here slips into Chinese. I.e., How could they talk like this if Xuefeng’s question and Xuansha’s request were not an instance of a perfect fit.

76. **such a person surely understood what is asked** (*inmo nin sadamete monsho o nyakue su beshi*): “Such a person” (*inmo nin*) can be used in reference to an awakened person, as in the Chan saying, “if you want such a thing, you must be such a person”; here, likely indicating “a person in perfect fit with his teacher” — i.e., Xuansha.

77. **Where the fragments hang is the “bright mirror”** (*zassui no kakareru tokoro, myōkyō nari*): This passage could also be parsed differently: “That which studies ‘the fragments’ is the bright mirror. When one is made to speak of the bright mirror, it is ‘a hundred fragments’; for where the fragments hang is the ‘bright mirror.’”

78. **one that is solitary and steep** (*koshun no itsu*): “One” (*itsu* —) here is usually interpreted as referring to the unity of the mirror; “solitary and steep” suggests an unapproachable, insurmountable state.

79. **turning word** (*itten go*): A phrase, often encountered in Zen dialogues, for a statement

that expresses what is at stake in the conversation.

80. **sand, pebbles, fences, and walls** (*sha ryaku shō heki*): I.e., the myriad things of the world around us.

**become the tip of the tongue** (*zettan to nari*): I.e., get put into words.

81. **“Blue depths ten thousand ages old, the moon in an empty realm”** (*banko hekitan kūkai getsu*): Quoting the *Shi xuantan*, by Tong’an Changcha (dates unknown).

82. **Great Master Shenjue of Xuefeng** (*Seppō Shinkaku daishi*): I.e., Xuefeng Yicun; see above, Note 40.

**Chan Master Huiran of Sansheng Cloister** (*Sanshōin E’nen zenji*): A Tang monk (dates unknown), who studied with Linji and other masters. Sansheng Cloister was in present-day Hebei. Slightly variant versions of this story appear in several Chan sources, none of which seems exactly to match Dogen’s account here.

83. **mikō means “monkey”** (*mikō to iu wa, saru, nari*): Dogen is here simply defining the Chinese word *mihou* for his Japanese audience.

84. **Do not look around at the passing kalpas** (*kyōkō o kaerimiru koto nakare*): I.e., don’t waste time.

85. **the old mirror is the old mirror beyond as well** (*kokyō wa kōjō ni mo kokyō nari*): Dogen is playing here with the physical features of “face” and “back.” The mirrors born on the backs of the monkeys are “beyond” the “faces” of the buddhas and ancestors.

86. **When the monkeys bear their backs** (*miko no hai o hai suru ni*): Dogen is here exploiting the term *hai* in its two meanings of “back” and “to bear on the back.”

87. **What kind of paste have they used?** (*shi toku jūmo [or shimo] ko rai*): Dogen here shifts to Chinese, as if quoting a saying, though the source is unknown.

88. **not an empty contrivance** (*kosetsu*): I.e., not a statement empty of significance.

89. **one thought has yet to sprout** (*isshin ichinen mibō izen*): The expression “before X has yet to sprout” (*mibō izen*) is a common one in Zen for the state preceding the appearance of X. Perhaps best known in a phrase that Dogen also uses, “before any portent has yet to sprout” (*chincho mibō izen*).

**without putting oneself forward for a kalpa** (*kōri no fushuttō*): Literally, “putting forth the head,” *shuto* is a colloquial idiom for making an appearance or for making one’s way in the world.

90. **The head of a dragon with the tail of a snake** (*ryūtō dabi*): An idiom usually used pejoratively to indicate something that seems impressive at the outset but fails to deliver. Often used in Zen texts to describe a person who pretends to be awakened but is actually deluded. Here, seemingly, a criticism of Sansheng’s saying.

91. **meaning a scratch has appeared** (*kizu idekinuru, to nari*): Dogen is simply explaining the Chinese phrase *xia sheng ye* in the original text.



92. **is entirely given over to a flaw on the old mirror** (*ichinin ni kokyō ka nari*): I.e., only talks about the flaw. The phrase might also indicate that Sansheng's remark is itself a flaw on the old mirror.

93. **“What’s your predicament? I don’t even know what you’re talking about”** (*u jūma shikyū, watō ya fushiki*): The grammatical subject is unexpressed; so the phrase could be read, “You don’t even know what you’re talking about.” Dogen here seems to be following the text in the *Jingde chuandeng lu*; other versions (including Dogen’s own *shinji Shōbōgenzō*) read:

Fifteen hundred wise friends wouldn’t even know what you’re talking about.

94. **The meaning of what he says** (*iwaku no shūshi*): Dogen merely puts Sansheng’s question into Japanese.

95. **Is it another?** (*tamon*): A term usually referring to another house, tradition, or teaching; here, probably just “someone else.” The only occurrence in the *Shōbōgenzō*.

96. **“attained the way together with the whole earth and sentient beings”** (*daichi ujō doji jōdō*): A reference to the Buddha’s awakening under the bodhi tree. The expression, which appears in several of Dogen’s texts, is from a line that he will quote in his “Shōbōgenzō hotsu bodai shin” and *Eihei kōroku*:

The Buddha Sakyamuni said, “When the dawn star appeared, I, together with the whole earth and sentient beings, simultaneously attained the way.”

Although the passage appears in Chan texts from

this period (see, e.g. *Jianzhong jingguo xudeng lu*), it has not been located in any extant sūtra. The translation here follows the usual reading of *daichi ujō* as a compound subject; the phrase could also be read, “sentient beings of the whole earth.”

97. **refinished brocade** (*saizen no nishiki*): An idiom suggesting something akin to English “icing on the cake”: i.e., something that provides an additional value; from the tradition of the brocades of Szechuan, which are said to have become more lustrous with washing.

98. **“the one before us doesn’t know”** (*tai chin sha fushiki*): “Us” (*chin*) here refers to the Emperor Wu of Liang. An allusion to the story of Bodhidharma’s encounter with him. When asked by the Emperor who he was, Bodhidharma replied, “I don’t know.”

**“face-to-face, they don’t know each other”** (*taimen fusōshiki*): A fairly common idiom in Zen texts, perhaps best known from a saying of the early figure Yang Dajian (dates unknown).

99. **“bare mind in each instance”** (*jōjō no seki-shin*): A “bare (or ‘red’) mind” (*chixin*) is a common Chinese idiom for a sincere, or straightforward, mind (or heart).

100. **“This old monk made a mistake”** (*rōsō zaika*): Again, seeming to reflect the *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄.

101. **the old man who is master within the house** (*okuri no shujin ō*): Typically interpreted as the true person inside the body.

102. **a thousand changes and a myriad transformations** (*senpen banka*): A fixed phrase found throughout Chinese Buddhist texts and appearing elsewhere in the *Shōbōgenzō*.

**spirit heads and demon faces** (*jinzu kimen*): I.e., “weird things”; a fixed phrase used in self-deprecating reference to monks.

**one move** (*itchaku*): From a move in a board game, often used in Zen texts for a “move” in a dialogue.

103. **ten thousand years in one moment of thought** (*ichinen bannen*): A common expression in Zen literature for eternity in each moment.

104. **“the abbot’s business is complicated”** (*jūji ji han*): Quoting Xuefeng’s “excuse” for his “mistake.” The final exchange between Sansheng and Xuefeng in this story exactly matches another of their well-known conversations found in the *shinji Shōbōgenzō*:

Sansheng asked Xuefeng, “The golden-scaled one that slips the net — what does it eat?”

Feng said, “Wait till you’re out of the net, and I’ll tell you.”

The Master [Sansheng] said, “Fifteen hundred wise friends wouldn’t even know what you’re talking about.”

Feng said, “This old monk’s abbot’s business is complicated.”

105. **a single horn of Deshan** (*Tokusan no ikkaku*); **the spirit foot of Linji** (*Rinzai no jinsoku*): Both “single horn” and “spirit foot” are used to indicate top disciples.

106. **distant descendants of Qingyuan** (*Seigen no onson*); **a distant branch of Nanyue** (*Nangaku*

*no onpa*): I.e., Xuefeng belongs to the lineage descended from Qingyuan Xingsi (d. 740); Sansheng, to the lineage of Nanyue Huairang.

107. **a tortoise mirror for latecomers** (*banshin no kikyō*): Reference to the ancient Chinese practice of augury by the use of tortoise shells. A “latecomer” (*banshin*) here refers to latter-day students of the tradition.

108. **Xuefeng addressed the assembly** (*Seppo jishu*): An episode recorded in various texts; see, e.g., *Liandeng huiyao*; *shinji Shōbōgenzō*.

**ten feet** (*ichijō*); **one foot** (*issaku*): The Chinese unit *zhang* varied somewhat with time and place; the *chi* was one tenth of a *zhang*.

109. **brazier** (*karo*): Probably a charcoal hibachi or stove used for heating.

110. **“The old Reverend’s heels haven’t touched the earth”** (*rō oshō, kyakukon miten chi zai*): The term “heels,” rather like “nose,” is often used in Zen talk as a synecdoche for the person.

111. **three-thousandfold world** (*sanzen sekai*): A standard Buddhist reference to the cosmos, also given as “worlds of three thousand, great thousand” (*sanzen daisen sekai*; Skt. *tri-sāhasra mahā-sāhasra loka-dhātu*). One billion worlds. (Some versions of the text give *sanzen daisen sekai* here.)

112. **“one bright pearl”** (*ikka myōju*): Some versions of the text give *ikka ju* here. From a conversation, featuring Xuansha, about the saying, “all the worlds in the ten directions are one bright pearl,” Recorded in Dogen’s *shinji Shōbōgenzō*

and discussed in “Shōbōgenzō ikka myōju.”

113. **two inches or three inches** (*nisun sansun*): The Chinese unit *cun* is one tenth of a *chi*; approximately an inch.

114. **two taels or three taels** (*niryō sanryō*): The Chinese *liang* is a unit of weight, sometimes translated “ounce,” that varied with time and place; also, a coin of that weight.

**five sheets or ten sheets** (*gomai jūmai*): An awkward attempt to preserve Dogen’s play with numerical classifiers. Here, he uses the counter *mai*, normally indicating flat things (like mirrors), for buddhas and ancestors.

115. **a saying that is not hidden** (*kakurezaru dōtoku*): I.e., a statement the meaning of which is obvious.

116. **it is not seven feet, it is not eight feet** (*shichi shaku ni arazu, hachi shaku ni arazu*): Perhaps reflecting the words of Xuansha Shibeī (835-908) in conversation with Xuefeng Yicun (822-908), in which the former requests a seamless stūpa (i.e., memorial stone) of “seven or eight feet.” Dogen comments on the episode in his “Shōbōgenzō juki.”

117. **realization of a new instance and a special place** (*shinjō tokuchi no genjō*): Generally taken to mean that the brazier talked about here is not the familiar thing of our ordinary world of “moving and grasping.”

118. **“what thing is it that comes like this?”** (*ze jūmo butsu inmo rai*): The question put to Nanyue Huairang 南嶽懷讓 by the Sixth Ancestor

in the conversation quoted above, Note 71.

119. **Do not idly let the dumpling right before you fall on the ground** (*genzen no ichi dansu, itazura ni rakuchi seshimuru koto nakare*): Some take the term *ichi dansu* here to refer to a “single lump,” rather than a “dumpling.” In either case, the reference would seem to be to the “brazier” in Xuangsheng’s words.

120. **“like the breadth of the old mirror”** (*nyo kokyō katsu no anri*): I.e., what Xuefeng is doing when he says, “like the breadth of the old mirror.”

121. **the independent positing of “breadth”** (*katsu no dokuryū*); **the one piece of “the old mirror”** (*kokyō no ippen*); **the conduct of “like”** (*nyonyo no anri*): Dogen is here encouraging us to take apart Xuefeng’s sentence and consider each of its individual words in turn.

122. **“action and rest promote the old path; I won’t be sinking into worry”** (*dōyō yō koro, fuda shōnen ki*): Lines from a verse celebrating his awakening by Xiangyan Zhixian (d. 898); recorded in *shinji Shōbōgenzō* and quoted in “Shōbōgenzō keisei sanshoku.”

123. **“The old Han’s heels haven’t touched the earth”** (*rōkan kyakukon miten chi zai*): Dogen here replaces Xuansha’s “old Reverend” with “old Han” (presumably to invoke Xuefeng’s earlier comment about the Han coming and appearing); hence, his following comment.

124. **“there isn’t an inch of ground on the whole earth”** (*daichi mu sun do*): A fairly common

expression in Chan texts occurring elsewhere in the *Shōbōgenzō*. From the saying of Changling Shouzhou (1065-1123):

If a person knows the mind, there isn't an inch of ground on the whole earth.

**“touched the earth” is “haven’t” and “haven’t touched the earth” is “haven’t”** (*ten chi ya mi, miten chi ya mi*): Or “‘touched the earth’ is ‘not yet’; ‘not yet touched the earth’ is ‘not yet.’” The translation struggles to preserve Dogen’s odd Chinese syntax.

<sup>125.</sup> **Chan Master Hungtou of Guotai Cloister on Mount Jinhua in Wuzhou** (*Mushu Kinkasan Kokutaiin Kōtō zenji*): Guotai Hungou (dates unknown), disciple of Xuansha Shibei. This dialogue appears in the *Jingde chuandeng lu* and Dogen’s *shinji Shōbōgenzō*.

<sup>126.</sup> **polishing itself or self polishing** (*ma ji ji ma*): Or, as this phrase is often understood, “polishing the self or the self polishing.”

<sup>127.</sup> **we polish a tile to make a mirror** (*sen o mashite kyō to nasu*): Dogen is here introducing the material from the story of Huairang and Mazu that he will discuss in the next section.

<sup>128.</sup> **the family occupation of the buddhas and ancestors** (*busso no kagō* [or *kagyō*]): I.e., the spiritual practice in the “house” of the buddhas and ancestors.

<sup>129.</sup> **Xiangxi Mazu** (*Kōzei Baso*); **Nanyue** (*Nangaku*): I.e., the famous Tang-dynasty master Mazu Daoyi (709-788) and his master, Nanyue Huairang (see above, Note 32).

<sup>130.</sup> **the beginning of the beginning of “polish-**

**ing a tile”** (*masen no hajime no hajime*): I.e., Huairang’s granting of the mind seal was the initial instance of the “polishing a tile” that will be discussed here.

<sup>131.</sup> **his cold couch sealed in by snow** (*hōsetsu no kanjō*): The “couch” here no doubt refers to the seat, or dais, on which monks practice meditation.

<sup>132.</sup> **One time** (*aru toki*): A vernacular retelling of a famous story found in the *Jingde chuandeng lu*, as well as in Dogen’s *shinji Shōbōgenzō*. Reference to it appears frequently in the *Shōbōgenzō*. After the first sentence here, Dogen adds his own interpolation; he returns to the Chinese sources beginning with Nanyue’s question, “What are you figuring to do, sitting in meditation.”

<sup>133.</sup> **“Daoyi just sits”** (*Dōitsu shikan taza suru nomi*): Though not found in any extant source for this story, Dogen introduces here one of his favorite and most famous terms for Zen practice.

<sup>134.</sup> **domestic furnishings and implements** (*kagu chōdo*): Dogen is here playing with the metaphor of the Zen tradition as the “house of the buddhas” (*bukke*).

<sup>135.</sup> **How much more, then, does this immediately engage Mazu** (*iwanya sude ni Baso o sessuru koto sumiyaka nari*): The exact implication of this sentence is unclear; from the context, presumably it means something like, “how much more does Nanyue use his skill in helping others directly to instruct Mazu.”

<sup>136.</sup> **direct pointing** (*jikishi*): As in the famous

line, sometimes attributed to Bodhidharma, “pointing directly at the person’s mind” (*zhi zhi ren xin*).

137. The Tōunji MS shares an identical colophon.

138. **Yōken** 用兼: I.e., Kinkō Yōken 金岡用兼 (1437–1513?).



## My Footnotes on Zazen (23) Meeting Thoughts in Relaxation (3)

Rev. Issho Fujita

(Continued from previous article)

Now, if this approach does not work, the Buddha recommends that we “pay no mind or attention to these thoughts.” When we teach zazen, we often say, “Don’t pay attention to your thoughts,” but in the case of the Buddha, the procedure is to first look closely at the thoughts themselves and become familiar with their unwholesomeness, and only after that should one begin to pay attention to them. Only then does it happen that a resolution is established not to be involved any more with the unwholesome thought, and the thought is understood and then disappears. There, the attraction of the thoughts has already weakened, and this can be done easily.

In the Soto tradition, the phrase “don’t chase after [thoughts], don’t sweep them away” is used to describe the “middle way.” This is to avoid falling into one dead end, which is to indulge in thoughts, and another dead end, which is to struggle with thoughts. While I don’t think there is anything wrong with that teaching, I have been thinking that this phrase alone is insufficient in practice, or perhaps I should say it is unkind, and that there may be more to be said about this. Of course, I shouldn’t dare to say, “From that point on, zazen practitioners



should let themselves explore this on their own.” It is also a well-founded opinion that “it is a mistake to say unnecessary things in a friendly manner around people [who may misunderstand them].” However, as shown in the sutras introduced in this article, there is a reference in which the Buddha explains the details of “Don’t chase after [thoughts] and don’t sweep them away,” so why not learn from it? Whether it is “don’t chase after thoughts and don’t sweep them away” or “let go of thoughts,” a term coined by Rev.Uchiyama Kosho, they are not difficult technical terms, so we may have passed them by thinking that we understand them at first glance. We may think that we have a shallow understanding (or a wrong understanding), but we may also think that we are able to put these teachings into practice.

Our predecessors developed the plain expressions “don’t chase after [thoughts] and don’t sweep them away” and “let go of your thoughts” in order to prevent us from black-boxing the difficult technical terms “think of not thinking” and “non-thinking” or “beyond thinking.” We who have inherited them may be black-boxing “Don’t chase after [thoughts] and don’t sweep them away” and “Let go of your thoughts.” Have we not turned these phrases into mere slogans? As heirs of Dogen Zenji’s precious teaching, “*Dotoku*” (道得, this refers both to the act of saying something and to the saying itself), we should not sit back at the point of “it is difficult to say,” but rather, we should get up and take a step forward and dare to speak up. In facing the reality of “don’t chase after [thoughts], don’t sweep them away” and “let go of your thoughts,” you will be meticulously and accurately approaching the

limits of what you can say.

Let us return to the sutras. If, after “paying no mind or attention to those thoughts,” the unwholesome thoughts still persist, the Buddha recommends that we “put our mind into relaxing the formative effects of the thoughts that form those thoughts.” I am not sure at this point exactly what this expression means, but perhaps it means not to focus on the thoughts that come to mind, but rather to focus on the mother of all thoughts that give birth to them.

If thoughts are like grass growing on the ground, it may refer to something like the ground that nurtures them, or to the information processing process in the subconscious mind that is the “root” of thoughts. Is this what is called “the mind ground” in Buddhism? If we focus our attention on the very ground that gives rise to our thoughts, on what is behind the thoughts that make us talk to ourselves inside our heads, the thoughts will gradually slow down and finally stop, as a side effect. I would like you, the readers, to try this out and see for yourselves.

So far, as material for further discussion of zazen, I have taken up the *Vitakkasanthana Sutta* (“Stop Thinking Sutra”, the twentieth sutra in the Majjhima Nikāya of the Pali Buddhist canon) in which the Buddha specifically explains how to deal with unwholesome thoughts that arise during zazen. It describes five ways of dealing with the problem, and I have discussed four of them in the above section. If the first method does not work, the second method is used, and if that does not work, the third method is used. In this way, a

step-by-step explanation is made according to the degree of difficulty in letting go of unwholesome thoughts.

So the fifth method is the last and final coping method, which is what to do if none of the four preceding coping methods have been successful. In a sense, it is the worst-case scenario. That is, “grit your teeth, press your tongue against your upper palate, and use your awareness to defeat, block, and crush the mind.” When I first read the “Stop Thinking Sutra,” my first impression was that it was much more violent or forcible than the previous four methods, and that it did not fit my image of the Buddha as a peaceful and compassionate being. I was uncomfortable with what he was saying, which was not in keeping with my image of the

peaceful and compassionate Buddha.

The allegory of this approach is also given as follows: “It is just like a strong person grabbing a weak person by the head, throat, or shoulders, beating, blocking, and crushing him. In the same way .....,” which evokes a combative image. Is the Buddha saying that after trying various methods recommended by him and failing to achieve success in any of them, one has no choice but to suppress one’s thoughts at all costs by force at the last moment? I was a little disappointed. I was honestly puzzled by the fact that this would not be consistent with Dogen Zenji’s teaching that “zazen is simply the dharma gate of joyful ease.”

(To be continued)

---

## NEWS

**June 21, 2022**

Europe Soto Zen Conference was held at Zoom



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

Please address all inquiries or comments to: Soto Zen Buddhism International Center  
633 Fallon Avenue, San Mateo, CA 94401 Phone: 650-344-4021 Fax: 650-344-4022