

DHARMA EYE**法眼**

News of Soto Zen Buddhism: Teachings and Practice in North America



Eihei-ji Monastery
founded by Dogen Zenji

The 750th Anniversary of Dogen Zenji's Entering Nirvana

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(Translated by Shohaku Okumura, Edited by Seiko Yanasak)

From April to October in 2002, the 750th Anniversary of Dogen Zenji's Entering Nirvana will be observed at Daihonzan Eihei-ji incorporating the full participation of Soto-shu.

This year, on Saturday, the 12th of May at Zenshuji in Los Angeles, a preliminary memorial ceremony will take place.

I would like to invite as many North American Soto Zen practitioners as possible to attend this ceremony. This is an excellent opportunity to express your sincere way-

seeking mind, to get together with others and offer your respect and yearning to our founder Dogen Zenji.

In this article, I would like to explain about the Great Anniversary (Daionki) of Dogen Zenji's Entering Nirvana.

This great anniversary is observed every fifty years by the entire Soto Zen sangha in Japan. People renew their respect and yearning mind and recall the great work Dogen Zenji accomplished. This is also used as a chance to renew the structure of our order by having many



Joyoden

The memorial hall of Dogen Zenji at Eihei-ji

events and constructions.

We celebrated the 800th anniversary of Dogen Zenji's birth in 2000. Many events were planned and took place throughout Japan by priests and lay people in the entire Soto School. In America, we celebrated his birth with a Dogen Zenji Symposium and academic conference.

In Christianity, people celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. At churches all over the world, people sing Christmas carols while services are being held. Because of that influence in the Western society, people celebrate great people's birthday while recalling their virtue. That was why we had various commemorative events planned by many followers of Dogen Zenji in America.

By the way, because Confucianism has influenced Japanese people's mentality from ancient times, we Japanese emphasize the date of people's death. It became the custom to repay the debt of gratitude to the spirits of ancestors.

The Soto masters who lived in such a cultural and spiritual soil have been observing the anniversary of the founding ancestor. I think the meaning of this is as follows.

The founders of each Zen Center devoted their lives to transplant the teaching of Dogen Zenji to take its root in

this country. Without respect and yearning toward Dogen Zenji, they could not wholeheartedly carry out such heavy work. American practitioners who succeeded their founders' dharma are making a lot of efforts to express their gratitude and respect to their founders through various works, daily practice and trying to transmit it to the future generations. This is exactly the practice of repaying the debt of gratitude toward Shakyamuni Buddha, Dogen Zenji, and successive ancestors. The wish for beautiful continuity in the religious world, both in the West and East, came out of a lofty hope and we should not lose such dignity.

Japanese Soto Ancestral masters expressed their respect and gratitude on the occasion of the anniversary of Dogen Zenji's death every fifty years. I think this is a most humane, natural and venerable activity.

By the way, I would like to trace how the Japanese ancestors expressed their respect to Dogen Zenji using Rev. Chuko Kumagai's article entitled "The History of the Great Anniversary (Daionki)."

The Second Abbot, Ejo Zenji wrote in the postscript of Dogen Zenji's final writing of the Shobogenzo "Hachidainingaku (Eight Awakening of Great Beings)" as follows.

"If you yearn and respect my late master, you should copy these twelve chapters, protect and maintain them." Rev. Kumagai thinks that Ejo Zenji considered that the first thing for repaying the debt of gratitude to the Founder was copying Dogen Zenji's writings, compiling them and maintaining them.

According to the History of Eihei-ji, on the occasion of the twenty-third anniversary of Dogen Zenji's death, Ejo Zenji wrote his vows. Ejo Zenji said, he would protect Dogen Zenji forever, constructed a stupa for Dogen Zenji called Joyo-to, and served Dogen Zenji as if he was alive. He continued this practice until his final days.

Even today, at Joyoden, monks make prostrations toward Dogen Zenji's statue with a greeting, "Are you waking up all right?" Monks wash Dogen Zenji's face as Dogen Zenji prescribed in the Shobogenzo Senmen (Washing Face). They make tea, serve gruel for morning meals, and offer chanting three times a day. This is the symbol that the Second Abbot's filial piety was to his own teacher and has been transmitted to this today.

At the time, together with Ejo Zenji, the Third Abbot Tetsu Gikai and The Fifth Abbot Giun made efforts to develop Eihei-ji monastery by copying and compiling Dogen Zenji's writings.

In 1295, thirty-two years after Dogen Zenji's death, at Daijoji in Kaga (Ishikawa Prefecture), Keizan Zenji entered the room of Gikai and received the dharma robe of the Second Abbot, Ejo. Keizan Zenji wrote Denkoroku (Transmission of Light), Keizan Shingi (Pure Standards of

Keizan), spread the Dogen Zenji's teachings to many people and Sotoshu as a religious order was formed. After him, Sotoshu was developed and continued to grow.

When did the Great Anniversary of Dogen Zenji begin? We know for sure as it was recorded in a record since the 300th anniversary. In Kenzeiki (The Biography of Dogen, the Founder of Eihei-ji, recorded by Kenzei, the Fourteenth Abbot of Eihei-ji), it is recorded that they observed the anniversary on the twenty-eighth day of the eighth month in 1552.

After that, the Great Anniversary has been held every fifty years, recorded in various documents. I would like to introduce some of them.

The 350th Great Anniversary was observed at the time of the Twentieth Abbot Monkaku in the Eighth month of 1602, that is in the beginning of the Edo (Tokugawa) period. The Sanmon (Main Gate) was constructed at this occasion.

The 400th Great Anniversary was observed at the time of the Twenty-seventh Abbot Eishun in 1652. He constructed Butsuden (Buddha Hall) and other buildings. Eishun was the first Abbot appointed, following the regulation made by the Tokugawa Shogunate, who decided that the Abbot of Eihei-ji should be selected from the abbots of the three temples in the Kanto district.

The 450th Great Anniversary was observed in the eighth month of 1702 at the time of the Thirty-seventh Abbot Tenryo. Around this time, Doyo copied the oldest commentary of the Shobogenzo, Shobogenzo Eishitsu (30 volumes). The government admitted the petition submitted to the Shogunate by Manzan Dohaku. Manzan requested the government make it a rule that a priest can have only one teacher from whom one receives dharma transmission.

The 500th Great Anniversary was held in the eighth month of 1752 at the time of the Forty-third Abbot Mitsugon. Before this anniversary, the present Sanmon (Main Gate) was constructed and the Dharma Hall was newly built on the occasion of the Anniversary. Also, the well-known Soto scholar, Menzan Zuiho collected and arranged the copies of Dogen Zenji's writings. Banjin Dotan, who was the attendant of Dogen Zenji's statue during the ceremony, recorded that around twenty-five thousand priests came together at Eihei-ji.

The 550th Great Anniversary was held in the eighth month of 1802. The Fiftieth Abbot Gento Sokuchu made diligent efforts to reconstruct the Eihei-ji temple buildings. As soon as Gento started to serve as the abbot, he took the Ming dynasty style sodo (Monks' Hall) apart and constructed a new sodo according to Eihei Shingi (4.4 feet _ 3.3 feet) and made the sodo the place where the monks would eat their morning and noon meals, read sutras, and practice nenju (reciting) on the 3rd and 8th days of the

month. He reconstructed the Myokodai (abbot's room). Gento Sokuchu also started the movement called "restoration of ancient (Dogen Zenji's) regulation" in order to restore Dogen Zenji's genuine spirit. He appointed Ontatsu and Shunryo as chiefs of the Shobogenzo publication project and had them edit various versions as well as work on fund-raising. It took them more than ten years and was presented on the occasion of the anniversary ceremony.

The 600th Great Anniversary was done by the Sixtieth Abbot Garyu in the eighth month of 1852. That was when Perry arrived in Japan with the four American warships in Edo (Tokyo) Bay. At Eihei-ji, the temple buildings were fixed and reconstructed, the new bonsho (large bell) was made, the sutra storage was built and the memorial ceremony was observed. Around this time, Emperor Komei gave the title of Busshodento Kokushi (the National Teacher who transmitted Buddha nature to the East) to Dogen Zenji. This was done because of the help from Ii Naosuke, the main minister of the Shogunate. One hundred thousand people visited Eihei-ji for the memorial ceremony.

The 650th Great Anniversary was done by the Sixty-fourth Abbot Morita Goyu in May 1902. The present Buddha Hall and Monks' Hall were newly built. The main buildings were fixed and enlarged. The present layout of Eihei-ji buildings was established.

The 700th Great Anniversary was done by Abbot Kumazawa Taizen in May 1952 after the confusion of post World War . Furokaku (Abbot's room), Shuryo (Study hall) and Seppin (Office and dormitory for teachers and shuso) were built.

That was the brief history of the Great Anniversary.

The theme of the 750th Great Anniversary is Moko (Yearning the Ancient Way). This means yearning and studying the true way of Shakyamuni Buddha. To practice zazen is to study the truth taught by Shakyamuni with our body and mind. Dogen Zenji said in the "Genjo Koan":

"To practice zazen is to inquire what is the self. To inquire what is the self is to forget the self, that is, not seeking the answer within the self. The self is already verified in the phenomenal world. To verify the self within all things and verify the way of the self within the phenomenal world is to forget the self. We drop off the self that supports the self-recognition and verify the true-self-nature within the boundless true form. Then the truth is, without being recognized, revealed within the self. At the time, the self is completely forgotten. Zazen is simply to practice the Dharma (the empty nature is the ultimate source of all existences). That is nothing other than form is emptiness. And at the same time, "emptiness is form" is clearly recognized by the self."

Dogen Zenji taught that is Shakyamuni Buddha's zazen. Shakyamuni Buddha awakened to the world of truth by practicing such zazen, transcended the suffering of human beings and actualized a deep peace of mind. That is how Dogen Zenji grasped the Buddha's teachings.

Dogen Zenji thoroughly transmitted this teaching to resolve the fundamental problem of human lives through zazen. Keizan Zenji spread this wonderful teaching widely to Japanese people. Fortunately, during the last fifty years from the 700th Great Anniversary to this 750th Great Anniversary, many American people began to practice Dogen Zenji's teachings by wholeheartedly practicing zazen in order to inquire what is the self and study the self. I have a hope that the more people live the same peaceful way of life with Shakyamuni who resolved the suffering of human life, the more peaceful this world become.

I think it is very important for more American people who will lead the highly developed civilization from the 20th Century to the 21st Century, find Shakyamuni and Dogen Zenji's teachings and practice them, for the sake of the earth that is the foundation of happiness of all living beings.

For example, Shakyamuni Buddha thought that the complete resolution of suffering of human life is possible by controlling desires and taught "having small desire" and "knowing how much is enough" in the final discourse before his death.

Dogen Zenji defined "having small desires" and "knowing how much is enough" as follows: "Not seeking widely the objects of the five desires (eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body) that have not yet gained is called 'having small desire.' Limiting what has been received that has already gained is called 'knowing how much is enough.' "

The definition of the way of life based on the view of the world of emptiness is the best way that helps to modify the serious problems such as increasing population or shortages of natural resource. Shortage of food, worsening of the environment and so on increase not only human suffering but also suffering for all living beings. This is because all problems come from the way the "self" of human beings are and live.

When the world and earth is rich, our selves that are truly verified within the rich natural phenomena become rich.

On the occasion of memorial service at Eihei-ji in 2002 and the preliminary memorial service at Zenshu-ji in Los Angeles on May the 12th of this year, I would again like to invite everyone who has a dharma connection with Dogen Zenji, who understands the meaning of the theme moko (yearning the ancient way) to join us.

The True Transmission of Buddha Dharma and Chinese Chan in the Southern Sung Dynasty

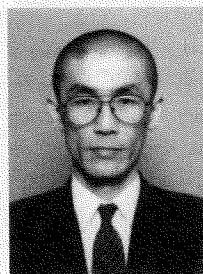
What Kind of Zen Did Dogen Create from Chinese Chan?

Rev. Seijun Ishii

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(Edited by Sarah Alizah Fremmerman: Ph D Candidate,
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*Recently I returned to my homeland with empty hands.
And so I, a mountain monk, have no Buddha Dharma.
(Eihei-koroku vol.1; Trans. By Okumura & Leighton)*



Introduction

The Five Houses (五家, goke) of the Chinese Chan school, which arose and grew in popularity during the Tang (唐, 618-907) dynasty, were unified into Yang-ch'i branch of the Rinzai/Linchi House (臨濟宗楊岐派) because dominate during the Southern Sung dynasty (南宋, 1127-1279). However, Chinese Soto/Ts'ao-tung House (中國曹洞宗) was at the same time continuing its lineage as 'Silent Illumination Chan' (默照禪, Mokusho Zen). This Zen/Chan style was fully developed by Tan-hsia Tzu-ch'un (丹霞子淳: 1064-1117) and his disciples.

Dogen (道元禪師, 1200-1253) had observed these two streams of Zen/Chan since he had gone to China to learn continental Chan Buddhism in the 1220's. Then, he decided to belong not to the Rinzai/Linchi lineage, but to the Soto/Ts'ao-tung lineage, even though the fact that the Rinzai/Linchi House was the most mainstream at that time.

Dogen's Shisyo (嗣書: *The Record of Transmission*) indicates that his lineage was as follows:

*Fu-jing Tao-chieh — Tan-hsia Tzu-ch'un —
Chen-hsieh Ching-liao — T'ien-t'ung Tsung-chueh —
Hsueh-tou Chih-chien — T'ien-t'ung Ju-ching — Dogen*

This list shows us that Dogen definitely belongs to the Chinese Soto/Ts'ao-tung lineage. However, Dogen disliked calling his Buddha dharma the 'Soto School'. For example, in the Shobogenzo-butsudo (正法眼藏仏道, *Treasury of the True Dharma Eye, The Way of Buddha*), his

main work, he writes, "This name, Soto School, is foolishly used by pseudo-masters proclaiming it as their equivalent to true dharma."

Why did Dogen make this assertion?

I would like to compare Dogen's Zen to Chinese Chan in the Southern Sung dynasty, and clarify the solution to the above question.

Silent Illumination Chan (黙照禪, Mokusho Zen) and Dogen Zen

Not only the lineage to which Dogen belonged, but also in many features of his thought, Dogen's view on sitting practice has affinities with Chinese Soto/Ts'ao-tung Chan, i.e. Silent Illumination Chan, though they are not exactly the same.

Silent Illumination Chan was one form of Chan practice style, fully developed by Chen-hsieh (真歇, Shinketsu), included in the above list, and one of his fellow disciples, Hung-chih Cheng-chueh (宏智正覺, Wanshi Shogaku, 1091-1157).

The character 'silent' (黙) means 'cross-legged sitting practice (zazen)'. The character 'illuminate' (照) means 'the enlightened state' (satori).

The characteristics of this form of Zen/Chan practice could be summarized as follows:

- (1) *Emphasis of the innate pure self*
- (2) *Denial of the feeling of attained enlightenment,*
- (3) *Emphasis of sitting practice as the activity of the innate Buddha.*

That is to say, 'Silent Illumination Chan' insisted on 'one's original Buddha nature' and that 'one's original pure nature may become active only during one's sitting practice'. In this view, there is no room to be possessed by enlightened state as a special experience. This view is expressed in Hung-chih's remark, "The truth becomes active just as one sits calmly and silently penetrates one's nature." (宏智錄, *Hung-chih lu*)

Here I would like to show the resemblance between Silent Illumination Chan and Dogen's view on zazen practice.

First of all, both of them denied the perception of becoming a Buddha, or the experience of attaining enlightenment. Dogen said in *Bendowa* (弁道話), "My self-cultivation in my life is finished." However, he had never called it 'satori' (the enlightened state). As you know, he called his final stage 'shinjin-datsuraku' (身心脱落, casting off both body and mind).

Second, Dogen emphasized 'shikan-taza' (只管打坐, just sitting) in daily religious practice. Since this concept

was based on his particular view of 'zazen as Buddha', it would correspond with the third characteristic of Silent Illumination Chan. Moreover, 'original pure nature' is a traditional idea in Zen/Chan, established by the Sixth Patriarch Hui-neng (六祖慧能, Rokuso Eno).

In this sense, we cannot object to the idea that Dogen's Zen basically inherited the teachings of the main figures in Silent Illumination Chan.

However, recently Dr. Shudo Ishii made the point that Dogen's Zen did not directly inherit Silent Illumination Chan, or several other aspects of Chinese Chan in the Southern Sung dynasty. Hence, I would like to introduce his assertion by offering an excerpt from his book, *Dogen Zen no Seiritsu-shi-teki Kenkyu* (*A Historical Study of the Establishment of Dogen Zen*, 道元禪の成立史的研究 1991, Daizo-shuppan Japan), which demonstrates the difference between Silent Illumination Chan and Dogen's Zen.

First, I will cite a passage in the *Hung-chih lu* to clarify the problem Dr. Ishii addresses.

He needs neither practice nor enlightenment, as he has 'it' originally. He has never been polluted, but is completely clear and pure from the beginning.

This passage should be interpreted as Hung-chih's assertion based upon the virtue of sitting practice. That is, the subject of this passage, 'he', refers to, 'the person doing sitting practice'. This is because Hung-chih always focused on sitting practice in his teachings.

However, if we interpret this passage literally, without talking sitting practice as its premise, it reflects an emphasis on the idea that 'all persons are enlightened from the beginning' (本証, honsho). In this sense, the necessity of practice never arises. In other words, there is a strong possibility that this passage ignores the necessity of any kind of religious self-cultivation. Silent Illumination Chan emphasized the doctrine of original pure nature much more than any other form of practice. Some practitioners of Silent Illumination Chan said that practice has not necessary, thereby distorting this doctrine.

Dogen had misgivings about this emphasis on 'denial of practice (or self-cultivation)', no doubt. Those who rest on their own pure nature could never perform any activities positively, because they would lack in religious motivation to work at self-cultivation. Hence, Dogen insisted on 'practice as Buddha' (妙修, myoshu). Dogen asserted that all beings should practice as the activity of their own pure nature. Since this 'nature' equals Buddha, all beings have no alternative but to practice as Buddha. To put it another way, Dogen asserted that Buddha nature surely works through sitting practice and other self-cultivating activities.

As I mentioned above, 'original pure nature' is a tradi-

tional doctrine established by Hui-neng. Hence, I can say that Dogen adopted the basic idea of original pure nature, and practice, without changing their definitions. This is one of the prominent characteristics of Dogen Zen.

Dogen called this particular view 'Correctly Transmitted Buddha Dharma (正伝の仏法, Shoden-no-buppo)'.

This phrase comes out of his confidence that he had surely inherited Shakyamuni's true dharma and practice leading to enlightenment.

Finally, I am sure that this is the reason Dogen refused to call his Buddha dharma the 'Soto School' or even the 'Zen/Chan School'. He did not want to put his 'Correctly Transmitted Buddha Dharma' into the small frame of sectarianism.

Dogen's Critiques of Koan/Kung-an Contemplation Chan (看話禪, Kan'na zen)

As I mentioned above, Koan Contemplation Chan emerged during the Southern Sung dynasty along with Silent Illumination Chan. It was established by Ta-hui Tsung-kao (大慧宗杲, Daie Soko 1089-1163) for criticizing Silent Illumination Chan. As you know, Dogen strongly objected to Ta-hui's views.

Now, I would like to talk about a prominent feature of Koan Contemplation Chan, to clarify the nature of Dogen's critiques.

First, Koan Contemplation Chan rejected the non-practical inclination of Silent Illumination Chan. In this sense, Ta-hui had the same criticism of Silent Illumination Chan as Dogen. However, Ta-hui and Dogen adopted quite different methods to overcome this tendency.

Ta-hui dared to assert that all people were in a deluded state in the present, though all could attain Buddhahood eventually. For this purpose, he required trainees to contemplate koan/kung-an in their daily activities. He also insisted that they have an experience of awareness as a result of gradual practice. That is, he aimed to re-emphasize the necessity of practice, both mental and physical, and the motivation to attain enlightenment by relying on the notion of 'shikaku' (始覺, entering into the enlightened state). This view is the opposite of traditional Chan thought, which focuses on 'hongaku' (本覺, original enlightenment).

Because it was so easy to understand, Ta-hui's Koan Contemplation Chan was accepted not only by the clergy but also by the laypeople, and prospered greatly, nearly sweeping over the whole Chan scene in Southern Sung China.

Why, then, did Dogen disagree so strongly with Ta-hui's style of practice?

Now, I would like to show you one passage in the

Shobogenzo Jisho-zanmai (正法眼藏自証三昧, *Treasury of the True Dharma Eye, The Self-awakened Samadhi*):

Ta-hui did not understand 'self-attainment, self-awakening,' much less did he completely understand other koans in his lifetime. Moreover, all Ta-hui's disciples were even less educated than he, so who knew the real meaning of 'self-attainment'?

In this passage, Dogen criticizes Ta-hui for changing the definition of enlightenment from 'original Enlightenment' to 'entering into the enlightened state'. Dogen insists, therefore, that all monks in Ta-hui's lineage did not understand 'real' attainment. Dogen saw Ta-hui's view as a departure from the true transmission of Buddha dharma. Dogen, like Ta-hui, attempted to re-construct the practice of Zen/Chan, but he never changed the basic doctrine of 'original pure nature'. Hence, Dogen felt a need to criticize Ta-hui.

Dr. Shudo Ishii concludes in his book as follows:

Dogen did not adopt all the aspects of Silent Illumination Chan unquestioningly. He overcame the misconceptions of Silent Illumination Chan in a way different from that of Ta-hui, while resisting Ta-hui. He established his Zen as 'Pure United Buddha Dharma' (純一の仏法, Jun'itsu-no-Buppo), and made it prosper in Japan. Therefore, we should grasp Dogen Zen as 'Pure United Buddha Dharma', which transcended Chinese Soto/Ts'ao-tung Chan. (Dogen-zenn no Seiritsu-shi-teki kenkyu.)

Monastic Rituals as Correctly Transmitted Dharma

Earlier, I mentioned the doctrinal relationship between Dogen Zen and Chinese Zen/Chan in the Southern Sung dynasty. Finally, I would like to mention another element of Zen/Chan practice that Dogen treated as true transmission from Chinese Chan.

He placed great importance in the ancient Chinese monastic system, including its regulations, rituals, and even monastic architecture.

Since Dogen's attitude toward his religious community rarely appears in the *Shobogenzo*, we Dogen scholars have overlooked them until recently. However, we can study this aspect of Dogen's Zen teachings in the *Eihei-koroku* (or *Dogen-osho-koroku*). This work of Dogen's was written in a Japanese form of literary Chinese (kanbun).

In this particular work, Dogen claims to have imported many rituals, e.g. ceremonies for celebrating the Buddha's enlightenment (成道会, jodo-e, held on December 8th); many types of discourses, e.g. formal discourses in the dharma hall (上堂, jodo) and informal discourses in the evening (晩参, bansan); and even the structural equipment of Zen temples, referred to as the monks' hall (僧堂, sodo).

I will show you two instance of this claim:

(1) December 8th Jodo. [Dogen said] " [Our] Japanese ancestors have been holding ceremonies to celebrate the birth of Shakyamuni Buddha and commemorate his death from a previous age. However, they have not yet received transmission of the annual ceremony to celebrate his enlightenment. I, Eihei, imported it twenty years ago and held it. It must be transmitted in the future."
(vol.5, no. 406 Jodo)

(2) Here, on Mt. Kichijo [Eihei-ji temple], there is a monks' hall. All Japanese may listen to its name, see its shape, enter it and sit in it, all for the first time.
(vol.4, no.319 jodo)

As you know, Dogen was also the author of the Tenzo-kyokun (典座教訓), which was written with the intention to popularize the significance of the monastery cook, called the 'tenzo' (典座). In this book Dogen also declared that he was the first person who inherited the true manner of practice for the tenzo in Japan.

In any case, Dogen was confident that these monastic rules and activities were the truly transmitted ones. He treated them as the ideal forms for the monastery in which true Buddhists assemble.

If we examine their historical background, we can see that these forms and traditions were not restricted only to the Chinese Soto/Ts'ao-tung House. They reflected the energetic movement of the early Chan School in the Tang dynasty. At that time, Zen/Chan established its original monastic style, and began to take its first independent steps forward.

From this view, we can also see why Dogen refused to call himself a Soto monk.

Chinese Chan is said to have become an independent school during the 9th century C.E., transforming the traditional Indian monastic system based on the Vinaya into an emphasis on common daily activities as part of religious practice. Hence, we can say that the Chan School was a kind of innovative movement within the traditional Buddhist monastic system.

Subsequently, the Chan school developed under the 'Five Mountains and Ten Temples System' (五山十刹制度, gozan-jisetsu system) in the 12th century. This system had been imported into Japan in the Muromachi period (室町時代, in the 14th century). At this time, the Japanese Zen schools established a solid foundation. At the same time, this system was, no doubt, a political institution ruled by the government.

Dogen, however, refused to have any relationship with political affairs. He attempted to establish an independent religious community centered at Eihei-ji (temple) in Echizen, in central Japan. The above citations from the *Eihei-koroku* clearly show us that this community system was based on early Zen/Chan monastic practices in during the Tang dynasty in China. Of course, Dogen did not

directly experience Chan monastic life in the Tang dynasty. Therefore, he idealized them in his mind. In fact, however, he adhered closely to a traditional and original style of early Chan.

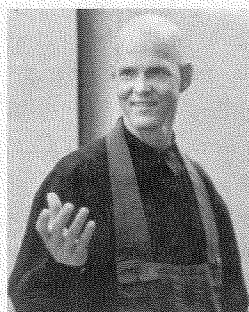
The concept of 'following the footsteps of tradition' sounds like a kind of formalism, an unquestioning adherence to an ancient lifestyle. But Dogen must not have had such a fixed notion of tradition. In this essay I have offered some evidence to support this claim.

In historical fact, Dogen Zen was a little bit different from both the Indian Buddhism and the Chinese Chan Buddhism he experienced. I believe that he wished to inspire to live energetic and flexible religious lives focused on ordinary daily activities.

Next year will mark the 750th anniversary of Dogen's death. As we begin the 21st century, this would be good occasion to reconsider his spirituality, activism, and flexibility.

Our Pilgrimage to China The Roots of Our Spiritual Tradition

Rev. Tenshin Reb Anderson
Green Gulch Farm



We set off for China in September of last year in order to encounter the source of our tradition. It was a pilgrimage to the birthplace of the specifically Zen form of Buddhist practice and expression. Our group included priests and laypeople, with residents, members and friends of Zen Center. The tour was called the

"Southern Founders Tour."

In 1223 Dogen-zenji traveled to China in search of a true teacher and the resolution of his doubt. Our motivation was different. We went to pay our respects to the true teachers of the past - through whose kindness we are now able to devote our lives to the Buddha Way. We did not go to resolve our doubt so much as to appreciate the concrete setting in which the founders of Soto Zen cultivated and matured their practice and realization.

During the tour we visited thirteen temples. We usually awoke before breakfast for one or two periods of zazen. We also maintained silence on the bus as we made our way to a temple in order to engender a sense of intimate presence with which to encounter the ancient sites.

We typically explored a temple for one to two hours. Most of the temples were open to the public and some of them were crowded. Lay devotees far outnumbered the monks at many of the temples. It all had quite a different feeling from what we are accustomed to here in America. Copious amounts of incense, often bright pink, burned in large incensors outside of the main halls. The lay visitors, who were mostly women, typically offered some incense, did three full prostrations on a bowing pedestal, and in some cases seemed to offer a prayer at that point. The first two temples we visited were not notable in terms of the history of Zen, but they allowed us to adapt to the general scene in a Chinese temple.

As we arrived in Guangzhou (Canton), a large city near the Southern coast of China in Guangdong province, our thoughts were with the 6th ancestor, Eno (Huineng). As he was walking through a marketplace in this city, he heard the passage from the Diamond Sutra which states: "The bodhisattvas should produce a mind which does not dwell on anything." Upon hearing this, the illiterate workman had an awakening. Also in Guangzhou, we visited the temple Guangxiaosi. This is the temple where Eno was ordained as a monk after spending twenty years living in the forests.

We then traveled by train North to Shaoguan city in order to visit Caoxi, the temple where Eno taught. For many of us this was a deeply significant temple on the pilgrimage. Eno was the spiritual genius whose words are recorded in the Platform Sutra. He was the first of the early founders of Zen who extensively formulated the teachings of Buddhist practice without recourse to the technical terminology of the scriptures and commentaries. It was his direct and radical style of teaching that flowered into the wealth of brilliant and original Zen masters who defined "The Golden Age of Zen" of the Tang dynasty.

As we passed through the front gate entitled "The Dharma Gate of Nonduality," and went on to the Buddha hall, I was deeply struck with the feeling that the whole temple was Eno's body. It was unexpected and overwhelming and moved me to tears. Bowing in the Buddha hall, there was a living sense of the true life of the great ancestor. As with all the temples we visited, almost none of the temple structures actually dated to the time of the early ancestors. However, the earth and the mountains and the sky did. As well, there was a sense of vital practice life passed down through the centuries. The halls had crumbled and been rebuilt, but with the intention of honoring the great ancestors and continuing to nurture the light they shared with the world. The virtue of Eno's practice and realization lives on as the temple where he is honored.

Just a short walk behind the main temple buildings, there was a courtyard. The entire Platform Sutra was carved in the stone walls and at the back there was "nine

dragons" spring. It was said that Eno had planted his staff on the ground at this spot and a spring bubbled up. Many visitors crowded around the spring to share in its auspicious waters. Within the crowds and heat, the laughter and splashing was joyful and vital.

The next temple was nearby, Dajuesi, Great Enlightenment Temple, where Ummon (Yunmen) taught. We were told that the figure in the founder's hall was Ummon's mummified body. This was the first temple where we had a chance to observe a practicing community perform a service.

We then traveled back down to Guangzhou and flew up to Nanchang city in the next province North, Jianxi. We went to Youminsi, Blessing the People Temple, where Great Master Ma had taught. At this temple, we were actually allowed to join the service. Although we could not chant along with the monks and laypeople, we joined them in expressing our devotion through our bowing, circumambulating and presence.

We then headed to Lushan, a mountain celebrated by poets for its scenic beauty and also the site of many temples. At the base of Lushan we went to Donglinsi, East Woods Monastery, where the monk Huiyuan had taught. Huiyuan was one of the most important monks in Chinese history. It was beautiful temple with a spectacular hall filled with hundreds of statues of arhats.

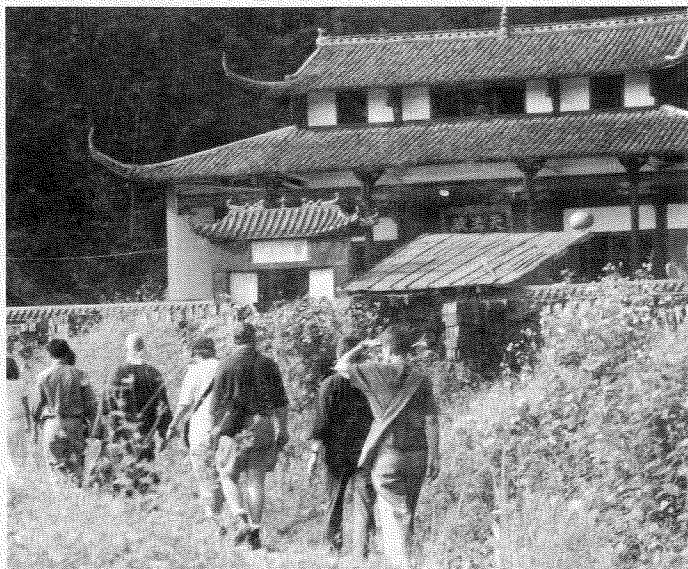
An important stop for many on the tour was an unplanned visit to Xilinsi, the West Woods nunnery just next to the East Woods Monastery. A nun named Enlightenment Ocean greeted us with great enthusiasm and joy. Although it was a brief stay, it gave us a glimpse into the vitality and generosity of an all women monastic training temple.

We spent the next two nights on one of the summits of Lushan where the jagged mountain peaks floating in an ocean of mist were reminiscent of Chinese landscape paintings. Near the summit, we made our way to a Tantric temple named Xiaotianchi, Little Heavenly Pool. It was unexpected to encounter Tibetan iconography including a large stupa. We were greeted warmly by the caretakers and also had a discussion with a lay teacher from Taiwan.

Going down the other side of Lushan, we visited Nengrensi, Capable of Benevolence Temple. They were holding a month-long ordination ceremony and our visit was consequently brief. Over a hundred monks were receiving ordination on a large platform in front of the Buddha hall. We also enjoyed a quick meeting with Yi Cheng, the abbot of Yunju Temple, one of the main training centers for Zen practice in present-day China.

We then traveled north to Hubei province, in order to visit the temples of the fourth and fifth ancestors, Doshin (Daoxin) and Konin (Hongren). The fourth ancestor's temple was just in the final stages of being completely rebuilt. There was still a huge amount of

work happening as the official opening was just a few days away. The atmosphere was energetic with all the workers and their children as well as a large number of visitors present. We walked a quarter of a mile up to the fourth ancestor's stupa located on a hill overlooking the monastery. The sun was shining brightly and the stupa was surrounded by colorful flowers. We then circumambulated the stupa of the great ancestor who taught the "One-practice Samadhi."



We then drove to the fifth ancestor's temple. It was off the beaten track and quiet. This was the temple where Eno had met the fifth ancestor and then proceeded to work pounding rice. We were directed to the rice pounding room where we saw the stone mortar that Eno himself had reportedly used. That night we made it back to Nanchang.

The next day we set out on a long excursion to Pulisi, Universal Benevolence Temple. This temple was established by Tozan (Dongshan), one of the founders of Soto Zen. This trip took us deep into rural China, as we traveled on hours of dirt roads. We came to the end of the road and started walking up the path to the temple. After a few hundred yards we came to a stream. This was the stream in which Tozan saw his reflection and was profoundly awakened. Tozan celebrated this by composing a verse:

*Avoiding seeking elsewhere, for that's far from the self.
Now I travel alone, everywhere I meet it.
Now it's exactly me, now I'm not it.
It must thus be understood to merge with thusness.*

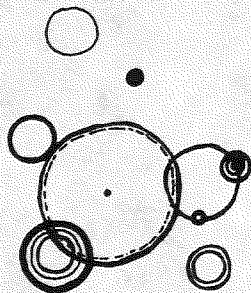


Tozan then established a monastery right next to the stream. Seeing the stream and walking on the beautiful forest path, Tozan's spirit was tangible. The monastery itself was another few hundred yards up the path. There were only two monks taking care of the small temple. They showed us around the temple structures and then took us up to Tozan's stupa which was over one thousand years old. We circumambulated the stupa and offered our heart-felt respect and gratitude to the great teacher.

The remote location of the temple reminded some of us of Tassajara Zen Mountain Center, where a number of the tour participants had trained. The long voyage to get there, as well as the deep quiet and natural beauty, made it a wonderful conclusion to our pilgrimage. We had arrived at the founder's temple, the concrete origin of our tradition. We felt like we were home. Many of us felt that visiting this temple alone would have made our trip worthwhile.

In 1227 Dogen-zenji returned to Japan. With the resource of his practice and realization with Nyojo-zenji (Rujing) and others, he soon began his teaching career, the records of which we can enjoy over seven hundred years later. We, too, have now returned from China. We return with the resource of our encounters with the sites of some of the root temples of our tradition. These encounters allowed us to feel in our bodies, hearts and minds the joy

of the continued life of the ancestors. The stories and teachings of these ancient masters, which we have studied with attention and gratitude, now have a new concrete physical component in our imagination. We were also able to express the gratitude and devotion in our hearts at these great sites which pay homage to the founders of this wonderful way of life.



Soto Zen in America (3) Wimpy Missionaries at Work

Prof. John R. McRae
Indiana University

Buddhists are wimpy missionaries. Although there have been occasional examples of aggressive or at least energetic proselytizing in Buddhist history, the more common pattern has been to teach when asked rather than to force one's own religion on others. This is an old pattern. Buddhism was actually the world's first missionary religion, and Shakyamuni Buddha's brilliance was evident not only in his spiritual insights but in his capacity as an organization builder. As the Sangha that he and his followers designed spread throughout various principalities and regional conclaves of what is now India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia, there were more than enough groups that eagerly sought out their instructions. The importation of Buddhism to China, Korea, Japan, and later Tibet was often accompanied by political conflict over whether the new religious powers of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas would benefit or disrupt local society, but the issues at stake involved efficacious ritual action rather than belief. Christianity and Islam became far more energetic missionary religions than Buddhism, and especially the latter developed programmatic strategies to enhance mass conversion. Historically, tax breaks seem to have been far more widely effective than the sword in promoting the spread of Islam.

Many of us who have converted to Buddhism in America or who through our participation have experi-

enced what might be termed partial conversion deeply appreciate the profoundly non-aggressive posture of the religion, which openly declares that we should accept it only after thinking about it for ourselves, not because someone else is pushing it. Soto Zen Buddhists in America are continuing this passive attitude toward the spread of their religion. Of course, it is absurd to imagine a street-corner Zen evangelist, thumping his copy of the Shobogenzo in the manner of a fundamentalist Christian preacher with the Bible. Dogen's injunction "just sit!" (shikantaza) certainly doesn't lend itself to high-energy mass appeal. Soto Zen Buddhists go where they're invited, teach when there are opportunities, and help others develop their religious practice according to a host of local and personal realities. Whether or not some other approach might be more effective is profoundly irrelevant: Zenheads are not going to change their style, and they don't particularly care about evangelical expansion. Making the teaching more widely available would be wonderful, but each individual is expected to decide whether the way of zazen is appropriate in his or her life. There is no shared sense of urgency that the world must learn about Dogen Zen in order to save itself.

Last December I spent a few days at Zen Center of Asheville in North Carolina. I had been to Asheville many years before, on a vacation to the Smoky Mountains and Blue Ridge Parkway, and I remembered it as a spectacularly beautiful place. On this trip Asheville also struck me as something of a Santa Cruz or Big Sur for its new age and spiritual diversity. While there I briefly visited the Southern Dharma Center, a retreat facility used by a variety of Buddhist and other groups in the mountains up in the mountains outside the city. On the airplane trip back to Atlanta the two middle-aged (by which I mean they were older than I think of myself as being!) women in the row behind me talked of their weekend's vision quest workshop, and by eavesdropping as much as the cabin noise would allow I realized that they devoted considerable time to such pursuits.

Rev. Teijo Munnich has been in Asheville since 1992, when she accepted the invitation of local Zen Buddhists who wanted the assistance and instruction of a resident teacher. Based on this foundation of local interest, Teijo's energetic guidance and devoted efforts have led to the development of a strong and dynamic community. They rent a small (900 square feet, plus basement) house in a residential area, where they carry out a regular schedule of evening instruction and discussion meetings, Saturday meditation days, several sesshin throughout the year, and occasional potluck dinners and other group celebrations. The weekend I was there, for example, came on the heels of a ZCA craft fair and potluck dinner attended by some one hundred people. The Saturday sittings and evening discussion groups are attended by far fewer people, of course; about a dozen people sat for a period or two, and some for the entire schedule, on the Saturday I was there.

ZCA is a friendly and informal center, as befits both Teijo's personality and local culture. People come and go according to their own timing, and there is none of the stiff formality of some larger centers. Nor are there too many zendo rules I was wearing dark colors, required for zazen periods elsewhere, but certainly not the norm here. During kinhin my eyes were unavoidably attracted by the variety of seating arrangements used, especially one zafu with a tastefully understated brocade top and a beginner's set of pillows with modernesque polygons in warm earth tones of pink, turquoise, and brown. Lunch was served in the zendo and was a time for friendly conversation; I am told that silence is however the rule during sesshins. I am also happy to report that Southern hospitality still lives: Teijo and the members of her community I met were absolutely wonderful in their welcome and in responding to my requests for interviews, and I am profoundly grateful to them all!

Thanks to Teijo's scheduling assistance, I did eight interviews in Asheville, ranging from forty minutes or so up to an hour and a half. The range of individuals (and one couple) involved, in terms of their backgrounds and differing levels of involvement with Zen practice, was also very impressive, and I believe that several of their life stories deserve to be told already. I also spent hours chatting informally with Teijo and members of the group, and although I did not hear her teach it was very clear that her strong emphasis on zazen had played an important role on attracting them to ZCA and in guiding their different approaches to their own practice.

Due to limitations of space, I wish to focus here on just one interviewee, whose experience in the religious culture of western North Carolina is an inspiring example of the power of Buddhism to change human lives. Richard Dellinger is now 50 years old, single, and working at present as a stock clerk/data entry clerk. (I suspect he's had a succession of similar jobs, although only one other a brief stint as orderly at an institution for developmentally disabled came up in our discussions.) Although now a resident of Asheville, Richard grew up in the little mountain town of Spruce Pine, which is just off the Blue Ridge Parkway, about an hour's drive from the city and even closer to the Tennessee state line. In Spruce Pine he grew up as a Southern Baptist, although as a boy he briefly attended a Roman Catholic youth program. (There he began to learn the rosary, but was frustrated when neighborhood gossip led to him being pulled out of the classes by his parents.) Always interested in religious and philosophical matters, at one point in his life he took seminary classes and was planning to become a minister. Looking back on those years, he now describes his approach to Christianity as based on the hope that if he learned more about it would eventually make sense.

Around 1987 Richard's mother became ill, and he took care of her until her death in 1994. During this period a

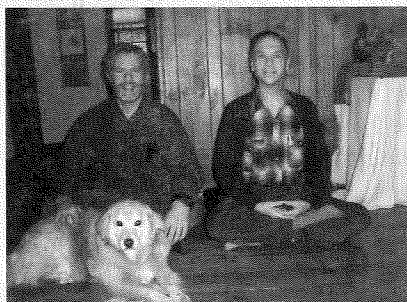
column appeared in a Memphis newspaper, stating that those who had not heard of and therefore had not accepted Christ were destined for eternal damnation. Richard wrote a reply, suggesting that the God of Christian love would certainly not have condemned people to hell for no fault of their own. Some letters to the editor suggested he had unfairly attacked the minister who had written the original column, which had not been his intention at all, and others suggested that Richard was sentencing himself to perdition because of his heretical views. In his own mind, though, there had been no question of personal invective, and there certainly was no worry about life after death: he was simply trying to figure out what he should believe, and fundamentalist Christianity turned out not to be it.

Around the same time Richard discovered the Unitarian Universalist Church, which he joined and is still active in today. Where he once drove down to Asheville every Sunday for services, after his mother's death in 1995 (his father had died three decades earlier), he moved to Asheville and so that he could attend services and other meetings more easily. In contrast to the rigid dogmatism of the Southern Baptist churches he had attended in Spruce Pine, the Unitarian Universalists were warm and open in both their ideas and sense of community. Although he had tried some meditation on his own as far back as 1990, it was only a few years ago that he gained any real introduction to the practice, on the basis of a series of teachings that Teijo offered at the church. For the past year he has been sitting for twenty minutes every evening, doing breath counting. He told me that Teijo has suggested he try a Saturday sitting, but thus far he's been reluctant to do so. He pointed out that he's very used to the pillows he uses at home, and the "pillow potluck" of the zendo might result in a painful day. When I pointed out that he could certainly bring his own sitting cushions he agreed that this was true; the real thing holding him back, as I see it, is simply that he is taking one step at a time.

Another important part of his story is that Richard suffers from a partial hearing loss, which has influenced his life in ways I can only begin to imagine. He had no apparent trouble understanding me, but his own pronunciation is a bit indistinct, and a couple of times I had to ask him to repeat himself. I mention this only because of my impression that, over the course of his life, people around Richard have probably often underestimated him. In contrast to this first impression, he has a deeply inquisitive mind and has read widely in Christian and Buddhist religious literature (and no doubt in other areas we didn't touch on as well). In our discussions he rattled off the names of books and authors who had influenced him, from the Episcopal Bishop Spong and the Jesus Seminar writings to a variety of Buddhist teachers. Richard also remembers a tape recording by Rev. Jiyu Kennett, in which she described the Buddha's attitude toward testing

assertions on one's own rather than accepting them because they might have come from the mouth of some religious authority. Characteristically, Richard's appreciation of Kennett's presentation was nuanced, since he recognized her approach as unusually theistic for a Buddhist teacher.

I am confident that in the remaining decades of his life Richard will continue to walk his own religious path. At present it seems certain that this will include ever-greater involvement with Soto Zen, especially increased participation in zazen practice. He is an example of the manner in which Buddhism as a whole, and in particular Soto Zen, have penetrated even the backwoods of American society. Although he was calm in recounting his life story, I am certain that a significant measure of individual anguish was involved in the living of it. To borrow a feminist idiom, I celebrate the sincerity with which he approaches his spiritual path, and I thank him for sharing his story with me. (Richard kindly agreed to the telling of his story here, as well as the use of the picture Teijo took of the two of us "including Daisy, the zendo superdog!" with his digital camera.)



Richard Dellinger's life story embodies a number of important lessons about Soto Zen in contemporary America. First, of course, it is heartwarming to learn that Buddhism has penetrated so deeply into American society that it can provide guidance to someone whose original life circumstances were so culturally restricted. I have not been to Spruce Pine, and my touristy jaunts up and down the Blue Ridge Parkway do not qualify me as even remotely knowledgeable, but the sense of cultural distance is palpable in Richard's own telling of his story. Obviously, Richard's ability to learn about Buddhism was based on the availability of print and media information throughout late twentieth-century America, as well as on the increasing number of resources about Buddhism itself.

Second, Richard's quest has been completely self-directed. His deep curiosity in religious and philosophical matters is a life-long matter, and even that brief contact

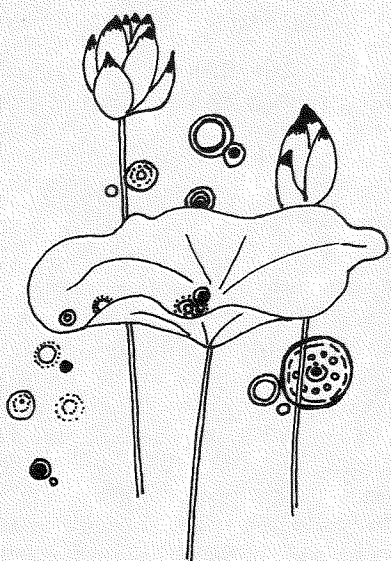
with Catholic education left him with an "itch" that he was only able to satisfy much later in life, when he completed the study of the rosary he had not been allowed to finish as a child. Although he mentioned several members of different churches who had helped him along the way, and whom he considered noble exemplars of religious being, he never referred to any one individual as the guiding force in his life. Teijo's role in his spiritual path remains within this pattern, since she is a respected source of guidance but not an emotionally demanding or intrusive presence. Richard is a self-starter.

Third, I was struck by the role played by the Unitarian Universalist Church in Richard's story, and it reminded me of accounts I have heard from Soto practitioners in other communities, such as Framingham, Massachusetts, and Bloomington, Indiana. It would be useful to study the extent to which this and other liberal churches and synagogues function as gateways to Zen practice in North America. Actually, in sociological terms, I suspect such gateway functions apply not just to Zen but to a whole range of non-mainstream religious and self-awareness endeavors.

Fourth, although Richard is now practicing according to the model provided by Teijo and Soto Zen, there is little indication from our one brief interview that the principles of Dogen's distinctive Buddhist philosophy have moved him in any unique or profound way. This impression may simply be an artifact of how little time we spent together, and I will follow up on this point in a subsequent visit. However, it seems noteworthy that in this one individual case at least Soto Zen is "working" without a very prominent explicit role played by the founder of the Soto school himself. I am reminded of a comment I once heard from a priest at Zen Mountain Monastery, who claimed that the participants there had little awareness of the sectarian identities of either Soto or Rinzai Zen. In Richard's case, Jiyu Kennett was the only Soto Zen teacher mentioned, and he seemed far more profoundly influenced by Thich Nhat Hahn, Pema Chodron, Lama Surya Das, and Joseph Goldstein. These observations cut both ways: while Dogen's name is not foremost in Richard's religious identity, the capacious flexibility of Soto Zen teaching has provided him with a nurturing spiritual environment.

In an article published in *Tricycle* several years ago, Jan Nattier suggested that there were three different patterns by which Buddhism had come to America, for which she used the nicknames "import," "export," and "baggage." When Asian Buddhists bring the religion to America along with the rest of their culture and continue to practice it here as a means of maintaining a connection with their roots, she wrote (without any negative connotations) that it was present in their overall cultural "baggage." When other Asian Buddhists took it upon themselves to spread the Dharma around the world the most prominent

example of which is Soka Gakkai International, the lay Nichiren "new religion" this active missionary effort is the "export" of a religious system. According to her typology, American Zen is primarily a demonstration of a different phenomenon, in which participants in American society not necessarily connected to Asia by ethnic or other cultural links take an active role in seeking out the religion for themselves, what she labels an "import" enterprise. Richard Dellinger's case is a striking example both of the reach of Buddhism's appeal and of the internal dynamics of the "import" phenomenon.



My Zazen Sankyu Notebook (7)

Rev. Issho Fujita
Pioneer Valley Zendo

(with translation assistance from Tesshin
Brooks)

Fragmentary Thought XVII

<Just Sitting>

In the previous Fragmentary Thought I wrote about "Sealing up human foolishness (bonpu-ness)" and "breaking open the seal of Buddha nature". I surely think that this is what is happening during zazen. We might describe this as the "benefit (kudoku)" of zazen. However, it does not mean that in order to get the benefit

of zazen, we have to set up the goal of attaining it and practice zazen aiming at it. As a matter of fact there is no such necessity at all. To the degree that zazen becomes zazen, it naturally provides this benefit. So we do not have to worry about it at all. The harder we work to attain it, the more we are driven by the desire for it, the farther we are from it. This is really an irony.

We are strongly advised not to insert any kinds of "anticipation", "aim" or "intention" into the practice of zazen. If you bring any goal, however noble it may be, into zazen, this calculating frame of mind will, in a sense, split into two facts: one doing zazen and one who's attending to the goal. This kind of zazen has a crack inside, which prevents the practitioner from hitting the mark of zazen. Dogen's Manual of Zazen said, "Do not try to become Buddha". Therefore, when practicing zazen, we need to let go of all of unnecessary considerations like "I should try to become like this or that in the future". We should only do our best to just sit zazen.

In addition to this, the person who is sitting zazen should avoid the temptation to sneak a look at the result or effect of his or her zazen. The moment he/she yields to this temptation to peak, he/she slides away from zazen. This is similar to the fact that you can not watch yourself sleeping deeply. If you try to, you wake up and the sleep is gone. (...all this does not mix into the perception of the person sitting, because it takes place within stillness without any fabrication and they themselves are enlightenment. ...What is associated with perceptions cannot be the standard of enlightenment...*Bendowa*) In zazen there is no place for judgement from an outside point of view. There is no viewpoint from which to say "My zazen is getting better" or "I'm doing a good job." What we can do is to just sit zazen, adjusting our sight toward zazen, without looking away from it.

The point is to sit zazen, not to do it aiming at certain "benefits or results." If zazen is thoroughly zazen, that is all. Zazen is so completed in itself that it does not need anything else. Therefore when we practice zazen properly, we do not need to have any "sales pitches" or "statements of virtues". As Yokoyama Roshi said (Fragmentary Thought XV), it is enough to instruct, "Cross your legs like this, put your hands together, straighten your back and tuck in your chin, etc..."

But a strange thing happens here. When you just sit zazen without doing anything to do with "benefits/results", the unlimited and immeasurable "benefits/results" are naturally given to you beyond your expectation. Therefore if we say that zazen has some benefits and results, they are not what we attain as the results for which we seek with our will and intention but what is given to us unexpectedly. That is why we can not take credit for them as if they were the results of our own efforts.

Let us assume that we hear or see the sentence, "If you practice zazen, you will get X results". Examples of X

might be "enlightenment", "peaceful mind", "freedom", "calmness", "compassion and love", etc. Hearing this kind of formulation people who think that they lack "X" within themselves will imagine that X must resemble their mental image of X and so they start practicing zazen very hard in order to get closer to their ideal. There may be a lot of people like this. However, as I have argued so far, this type of zazen practice is misdirected. It can not be called zazen. And this X, what is guaranteed as the benefits/results of zazen, will never ever be attained.

Let me explain this by using one example. Here is a man who feels he is always irritated and short-tempered. He is suffering from this trait and wishing, by all means, to become a person whose mind is always calm and peace. One day he hears from someone that he can attain calmness by zazen. He thinks, "This is a good news. I might be able to change myself by this method". He, then, immediately starts practicing zazen. He tries to find out what he imagines is the peaceful mind in his zazen. And by accumulating the benefits of zazen little by little, he also expects to increase the degree of imagined calmness in his mind.

Do you think that he will succeed in becoming a calm and peaceful man? I do not think if he keeps practicing zazen this way. The peaceful mind which he pictured to his mind as an ideal is nothing but a kind of photographic negative or projection of the very same irritated mind which disturbs him. He does not really understand what the peaceful mind is like. Therefore, each and every effort he makes to attain peace contains subtle irritation, which sneaks into his practice. The fact that he can not accept his irritated mind as it is, is by itself the manifestation of his deep-seated irritation. Even if he feels that he is becoming calmer a little bit, it only implies that his irritation is becoming subtler and better at disguising itself. Then his irritation will simply become deeper and deeper part of him.

If this is the case, how do we avoid this pitfall in our practice? First, we should temporarily stop looking at ourselves through words, concepts and judgements such as, "I am always irritated and short-tempered. It is not good". And then we should set aside the impulse to change ourselves as we wish. In fact, to sit proper zazen is not to try to calm down his irritated mind and forcefully create the peaceful mind but to put oneself in the state of completely setting aside all over personal agendas. When this is accomplished, we can directly see the reality of ourselves; the reality of our irritation in our body, speech and mind. This is not the fabricated self grasped by thoughts but the real and true self.

It is possible for us to "see deeply the reality of irritation as it is" only when zazen is being practiced as zazen. This seeing enables the irritation to transform itself into true peace. There is no peace outside the irritation. They are not separate.

I used the case of irritation as an example of how the transformation is brought about by seeing it as it is. Roughly speaking, I think the deep transformation as the result of zazen happens in the same way.

Dogen Zenji's Genjo-koan Lecture (8)

Rev. Shohaku Okumura
Director, Soto Zen Education Center

(Text: section 9)

When a person attains realization, it is like the moon reflecting on the water. The moon never becomes wet; the water is never destroyed. Although it is a vast and great light, it reflects itself on a small amount of water. The whole moon and even the whole sky reflects on even a drop of dew on a blade of grass, or a single tiny drop of water. Realization does not destroy the person, as the moon does not make a hole in the water. The person does not obstruct realization, as a drop of dew does not obstruct the moon in the sky. The depth is the same as the height. [In order to investigate the significance of] the length and shortness of time, we should consider whether the water is great or small, and understand the size of the moon in the sky.

Realization and the moon

In this section Dogen Zenji discusses the experience of a person who has attained realization. Here, "realization" is the translation of a Japanese word "satori." Dogen does not use the Chinese characters here but rather he wrote this in *hiragana* (one of two systems of the Japanese phonetic alphabet, the other being *katakana*).

All things are like "the moon reflecting in water"

The image of "the moon reflecting in water" has been used as an analogy for emptiness throughout the history of Buddhism. It occurs in scriptures dating all the way back to India. Here is an example that comes from the *Vimalakirti Sutra*. Speaking to Upali, one of the Buddha's disciples, the lay person Vimalakirti says;

"Reverend Upali, all things are without production, destruction, and duration, like magical illusions, clouds, and lightning; all things are evanescent, not remaining even for an instant; all things are like dreams, hallucinations, and unreal vision; all things are like the

reflection of the moon in water and like a mirror-image; they are born of mental construction."
(The Holly Teaching of Vimalakirti, translated by Robert Thurman, The Pennsylvania State University Press, p.31)

"The moon in water" is used as an analogy of the emptiness of all beings. All beings have no fixed self-nature, therefore they are ungraspable, and transitory. All beings neither arise nor perish.

Our body is like "the moon in water"

In the *Ryoga-sijiki* (Lengga-shizi-ji); The Record of Teachers and Disciples of the Ryoga Tradition, (a history of the Northern School of Chinese Zen written in the early 8th Century), the Forth Ancestor of Chinese Zen, Doshin (Daoxin, 580-651), after giving instruction for zazen practice, says,

"Days and nights, in walking, standing still, sitting and laying down, if you always contemplate in this way, you will know that your own body is like the moon in water, the reflection in a mirror, the heat waves in a hot day, the echo in the empty valley. You cannot say it is a being (u) because even if you try to catch it you cannot see its substance. You cannot say it is non-being (mu) either because it is clearly in front of your eyes."

In this saying, the moon in water is used as an analogy of the emptiness of our own body, which is neither being nor non-being. In Mahayana Buddhism and the Chinese Zen tradition, all dharmas (things) and the self (our body) are both like "the moon in water." It is clear that Dogen Zenji uses this analogy from the same source in the same context; as an analogy of prajna and emptiness.

"The moon in water" is buddha's dharma body

Dogen Zenji wrote a chapter of the Shobogenzo entitled "Tsuki (the Moon)". Instead of using the usual Chinese character 月, he uses *manyo-gana* 都機. Manyo-gana is a way to indicate the sounds of Japanese words by using the Chinese characters phonetically. Manyo-gana was the method used before the previously mentioned *hiragana* and *katakana*, were invented. It was named *Manyo-gana* because it was the system used when the Japanese people compiled the Manyoshu, the oldest collection of Japanese poems collected in the Nara period (710-794). The Chinese characters for moon that Dogen used here are 都機, although these Chinese characters are used phonetically, they mean "total-function" this is the same as the expression "zenki" 全機. Dogen is obviously playing with words here. Dogen Zenji took this well-known analogy of "the moon in water" from the Buddhist scriptures. But he uses the analogy not simply as an example of the emptiness of all things, or of our own body, as in the Vimalakirti Sutra or in the saying of the

Fourth Ancestor. Here, he uses it as an expression of "total-function" - the dynamic movement of the network of interdependent origination that includes the self and all dharmas.

Anyway, Dogen Zenji quotes several expressions that include "the moon in water" from Buddhist sutras and sayings of the Chinese ancestors.

In the very beginning of the chapter, he quotes from the *Konkomyokyo* (金光明經, Sutra of Golden Radiance).

*Shakyamuni Buddha says,
"The true dharma-body of the Buddha
Is like empty space.
Responding to things, it manifests its form.
It is like the moon in water."*

Dogen's comment on this saying is as follows;

"The thus-ness (如如, nyo-nyo) of 'like the moon in water (如水中月, nyo-sui-chu-getsu)' is water-moon (水月, sui-getsu). It is water-thus (水如, sui-nyo), moon-thus (月如, getsunyo), thus-within (如中, nyo-chu), within-thus (中如, chu-nyo). "Thus" (如, nyo) does not mean 'to be like.' Thus-ness (如, nyo) is this-ness (是, ze, concrete, definite each and every thing)."

The common meaning of the Chinese word *nyo*(如) is "be like", "such as," "as if," or "to be equal to." The Chinese sentence, "如水中月" means "It is like the moon in water." This is a very accurate translation. But Dogen reads this *nyo* (如) as the *nyo* in *shinnyo* (真如). *Shinnyo* is a Chinese translation of a Sanskrit word "*tathata*" that is translated into English as "thus-ness", "such-ness," "as-it-is-ness," or simply "true reality".

Also, the Chinese word *chu* (中) that is translated in the sentence as "within" can also mean "middle" as in the "middle way." And this "middle" is important in Nagarjuna's philosophy and also in the Tendai teachings that Dogen studied while he was in the Tendai monastery on Mt. Hiei in Japan before he started to study Zen.

In his *Madhyamaka-karika*, Nagarjuna discussed the Two Truths as the basis of his philosophy. The absolute truth and the conventional (relative) truth. Nagarjuna said;

"The teaching of the Dharma by the various Buddhas is based on the two truths; namely, the relative (worldly) truth and the absolute (supreme) truth."

Those who do not know the distinction between the two truths cannot understand the profound nature of the Buddha's teaching.

Without relying on everyday common practices (i.e. relative truths), the absolute truth cannot be expressed. Without approaching the absolute truth, nirvana cannot be attained." (24/8, 9, 10)

"We declare that whatever is relational origination is

sunyata. It is a provisional name (i.e., thought construction) for the mutuality (of being) and, indeed, it is the middle path." (24/ 18)

(Nagarjuna: A translation of his Mulamadhyamakakarika with an Introductory Essay, by Kenneth Inada, The Hokuseido Press, Tokyo, 1970, p.146, p.148)

"Relational origination" is another translation of "interdependent origination" that is the reality of our life. *Sunyata* (emptiness) is beyond any wording, conceptualization, or categorization and is the absolute truth. "A provisional name" is what we use to grasp things using words, concepts and categories and is the conventional truth. Seeing the reality from both sides without clinging to either side is the middle path.

Tendai Chigi (Tiantai Zhiyi, 538-597), the great master of the Chinese Tendai School, used the same principles to make up the "Three Truths". This is one of the essential teachings in the Tendai School. The "Three Truths" refers to the Truth of Emptiness (空諦), the Truth of the Expedient (假諦) and the Truth of the Middle (中諦). Those three truths are again based on Buddha's teachings of interdependent origination.

The Truth of Emptiness refers to the way of seeing the reality of interdependent origination as no-substance or egoless-ness (*anatman*). The Truth of the Expedient refers to the way of seeing the reality of inter-dependent origination as follows; each and everything exists as an expedient and temporal collection of infinite different causes and conditions. Nothing exists without a relationship to something else. So when other things change, the one thing has to change. The point here is there are things that are a collection of causes and conditions and that exist as temporal and expedient beings such as Shohaku. This is the Truth of the Expedient.

Shohaku has no substance; he is just a collection of body parts that are always changing depending on the conditions inside and outside. Shohaku's mind is also simply a collection of the results of his experiences since his birth. Also, in addition to his body and mind, there is no Shohaku who owns and operates his body and mind. But Shohaku is here as an empty collection of body and mind. He is Japanese, a Buddhist, and a priest. He is talking about the Buddhist teachings as part of his responsibilities as a Buddhist priest. He is here but he does not really exist as fixed entity; neither his body nor his mind is Shohaku. He is talking about, Dogen, but those are things he has studied from many Buddhist texts in the past. What he is talking about is just a collection of the results of what he did in the past, that is, simply his karma. His knowledge and his words are a gift from the society in which he grew up and was educated in. This is the truth of the Middle.

The Truth of Middle means to see the reality of each and every being from both sides; the emptiness (there is not) of everything and the existence as a temporal being

(there is). I think the first two truths are the equal to the first two sentences in *Genjo-koan*. And *chu* (中) is what Dogen said in the third sentence of *Genjo-koan*. In other words we need to live, practice and do things using our transitory body and mind based on the first two truths. This transcends both "abundance (expedient being)" and "deficiency (emptiness)". In this part of the *Shobogenzo* "Tsuki (The Moon)" he is saying that "the moon in water" is not just simply the symbol of emptiness of all beings or of our own body, or merely the reflection of the buddha's dharma body, but it is the reality as *chu* (middle).

I think what Dogen wants to show us in this writing is that our practice of the buddha way is based on the two truths but it transcends the two truths in the living reality of our life.

Dogen is not a philosopher but a Zen master. He is not giving us a lecture on the basic philosophy of Mahayana Buddhism. He is showing the actual reality of our life explained with the theory of Mahayana Buddhism. Dogen would laugh at me if he heard me talk in this way just as the Zen master Dogo (Daowu) laughed at a lecture by Kassan (Jiashan). But still, I believe it is important for us modern people who are so highly trained to think using our intellect to understand what Dogen is saying on a philosophical basis in order to be free from our intellectual understanding. When we find *chu* (中), in Dogen's writings, it is important to have an association of the meaning of the *chu* in Mahayana philosophy and not cling to it as a logical or philosophical concept. We need to accept those teachings as the reality of our own lives right "within (中, *chu*)" our own ordinary day-to-day lives.

The Buddha's dharma-body has no form like empty-space. But the formless dharma-body manifests itself within the phenomenal world as each and every phenomenal thing, just as the moon reflects in the water. In this verse from *Konkomyokyo*, the moon in water is a manifestation of the formless dharma-body of the buddha. Formless thus-ness (如) should be expressed as concrete this-ness (是), that is, as our day-to-day activities using our own body and mind.

The moon is the self

The second quote in the *Shobogenzo* "Tsuki" is a poem by a Chinese Zen Master Banzan Hoshaku (Panshan Baoji, ?-?), a disciple of Baso Doitsu (Mazu Daoi, 709-788).

*"The perfect circle of the mind-moon is alone.
It's light swallow's ten-thousand things.
The light does not illuminate objects.
Neither do objects exist.
The light and objects both cease to exist.
What is this?"*

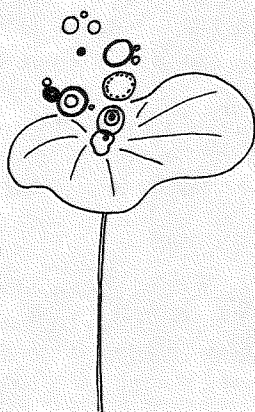
In his comment on this poem, Dogen says:

"The ancient Buddha said, 'One mind is all dharmas and all dharmas are one-mind. (一心一切法, 一切法一心)'

Therefore, the mind is all things. All things are one mind. Because the mind is the moon, the moon is the moon. Because all things that are the mind, are without exception the moon, the entire universe is the entire moon. The whole body is the whole moon. Within the "before and after three and three" in the ten-thousand years of a moment, which one is not the moon? Sun-face Buddha and moon-face Buddha, that are our body, mind and environs are all within the moon. Coming and going within [the cycle of] birth and death are both within the moon. The ten-direction world is the up and down, the left and right of the moon. The present activities in our daily lives are the bright hundred grasses within the moon and the bright ancestral-teacher's mind within the moon."

I think this part of Shobogenzo "Tsuki (The Moon)" is an explanation of what Dogen says in section 9 of *Genjo-koan*. In the case of this poem, the moon is the self and it illuminates all phenomenal beings. But I think the topic is the same: the inter-connected-ness and the total function of the self and the myriad things.

The mind in "one mind is all dharmas" is not our psychological mind. My teacher Kosho Uchiyama Roshi called this mind "the reality of our life." As the reality of our life, we are connected with all beings. Or, the reality of our life is before the separation of self (subject) and others (objects). We separate our self from others by discriminative thinking, when we "open the hand of thought" (or release our discriminating views), we are right in the network of interdependent origination. We are connected with everything. Uchiyama Roshi called this oneness of self and all things "original self" or "universal self." Our zazen practice manifests this reality before separation between self and all beings. In "Tsuki" Dogen Zenji calls the same reality "moon." The moonlight swallows all things, all things disappear and become part (or the contents) of the self. There are no objects to illuminate. The entire universe becomes the moonlight. The entire body of the self is the entire moon. All things are the entire moon. We are born, live and die within the moon. Our ordinary daily activities become the moon. This is what Dogen Zenji means when he says, "when a person attains realization."



The rabbit in the moon

There is another meaning of the analogy of "the moon in water" to me. This analogy does not only refer to vast, boundless light and the tiny self. When I read this part of *Genjo-koan*, I am reminded of a story that I was familiar with in my childhood. In Japan, all children know the story about the rabbit in the moon. This story originally came from the Jataka Tales; the Indian collection of stories about the Buddha's previous lives. In Japanese literature, this story was introduced in the *Konjaku-monogatari-shu* (Stories from the Ancient to the Present), a collection of various stories from India, China and Japan. It was compiled in the eleventh century.

The modern Japanese translation of this collection was one of my favorite books when I was a child. A Japanese Soto Zen Monk and poet Ryokan (1758- 1838) also loved the story and wrote a poem about the rabbit in the moon. I would like to introduce the story with Ryokan's poem. This poem is written in beautiful Japanese.

The Rabbit in the Moon

It took place in a world/ long long ago they say:

*A monkey, a rabbit, / and a fox /struck up a friendship, /
mornings / frolicking in field and hill, / evenings / com-
ing home to the forest, / living thus / while the years
went by, when Indra, / sovereign of the skies, / hearing of
this, / curious to know / if it was true, / turned himself
into an old man, / tottering along, / and made his way to
where they were.*

*"You three," / he said, / "are of separate species, / yet I'm
told play together / with a single heart.*

*If what I've heard/ is true, / pray save an old man / who's
hungry!"*

Then he set his staff aside, / and sat down to rest.

*Simple enough, they said, / and presently / the monkey
appeared / from the grove behind him / bearing nuts /
he'd gathered there, and the fox returned from the rivulet
in front of him, / clamped in his jaws / a fish he'd caught.*

*But the rabbit, / though he hopped and hopped / every-
where / couldn't find anything at all, / and the others /
cursed him because / his heart was not like theirs.*

Miserable me! / he thought and then he said,

"Monkey, go cut me / firewood!

Fox, build me / a fire with it!"

*and when they'd done / what he asked, / he flung himself
/ into the midst of the flames, / and made himself an
offering for an unknown old man.*

When the old man saw this / his heart withered.

*He looked up to the sky, / cried aloud, / then sank to the
ground, / and in a while, beating his breast, / said / to the
others, / "Each of / you three friends has done his best, /
but what the rabbit did / touches me most!"*

Then he made the rabbit / whole again/ and gathering the

*dead body / up in his arms, / he took it and laid it to rest
/ in the palace of the moon.*

*From that time till now / the story's been told, this tale of
how the rabbit / came to be / in the moon, / and even I /
when I hear it / find the tears / soaking the sleeve of my
robe.*

*(Ryokan: Zen Monk-Poet of Japan, translated by Burton
Watson, Columbia University Press, New York, p.46-49)*

It is clear that Dogen does not refer to this story in *Genjo-kōan*, but when I read Dogen's writing about the moonlight, I naturally think of this story. It is important to me. The moonlight is not just something simply vast and boundless but also, for me, it is the symbol of the bodhisattva vow to save all beings as an expression of Buddha's compassion.

I was ordained when I was twenty-two years old while a student at Komazawa University. Since then, I have been practicing zazen and as a result I have not developed any skills to have a regular job. I have been pretty poor. But I think the quality of my life has also been very rich with wonderful teachers and my many dharma friends. I am very grateful to live such a life. But, it's true I don't have much money or possessions. Often I felt I was like the rabbit and had nothing to offer except my body and mind. One of the most important teachings of Kodo Sawaki Roshi was "Gaining is delusion; losing is enlightenment." A problem for me was that I did not have anything to lose. Particularly when I lived on takuhatsu (begging), I felt I only received offerings from many people without offering anything back to them. I felt guilty about it. So, the story of the rabbit has a very significant meaning for me. I did not burn my body, but I tried to practice zazen as my offering of body and mind to the buddhas and all beings. But still sometimes, I felt that I used my zazen practice as an excuse not to help others who were in need. Our vow, practice and psychological conditions are so fragile. Without being illuminated by the moonlight of the Buddha's vow and compassion, I think I could not continue to practice.

When Dogen Zenji says that the vast moonlight reflects on a tiny drop of water, I felt that even though I have to practice using this tiny, weak, impermanent body and, deluded self-centered mind, the Buddha's boundless compassion is reflected in my practice if I can let go of my ego-centered thought.

(text)

*The moon never becomes wet, the water is never
destroyed. Although it is a vast and great light, it
reflects itself on a small amount of water. The whole
moon and even the whole sky reflects on even a drop of
dew on a blade of grass or a single tiny drop of water.
Enlightenment does not destroy the person as the moon
does not make a hole in the water. The person does not
obstruct realization as a drop of dew does not obstruct
the moon in the sky.*

In this section, the drop of water is the self and the moon is the ten-thousand dharmas. We need to keep in mind that the self is a knot in the network of interdependent origination of the myriad things. Without a relationship with the myriad things, there is no self. Actually the relationship itself is the self. As Zen Master Banzan Hoshaku said, the self swallows the myriad things and the myriad things swallow the self. What is this thing swallowed by both the self and myriad things? The moon is reflected each and every drop of water no matter how small it is.

Dogen wrote a waka poem entitled "Impermanence";

"What is this world like?"	世の中は
As a waterfowl shakes its bill,	何にとへん、水鳥の、
On each drop of dew,	はしふる露に
The moon is reflected"	やどる月影

A waterfowl dives into the water and comes out of a pond and shakes its bill. Tiny drops of water scatter in the air and return to the surface of the pond. On each and every drop of the water that exists for only less than a second, the moon is reflected. Our life is like the moonlight on a drop of dew. We are so tiny, weak and transitory, like a dewdrop. But the vast, boundless and eternal moonlight reflects on each and every drop of dew. This is really a beautiful expression of a life that is the intersection of impermanence and eternity, individuality and universality. I think within this short poem, the essential point of Mahayana Buddhist teachings is vividly expressed.

To awaken to the tininess and shortness of our lives, and discover the vastness and eternity of the moonlight (of Buddha's wisdom and compassion) reflecting on our lives is Dogen's message in section (4), "Conveying oneself toward all things to carryout practice/verification is delusion and all things coming and carrying out practice/verification through the self is realization." In our practice, the reality awakens to the reality and the reality actualizes the reality. We are not the subjects of a practice that is trying to attain some desirable thing called "enlightenment".

Even though the vast moonlight is reflected, we are still tiny drops of dew as individual persons. The vastness of the moon does not destroy the dewdrop. And the small size of our lives does not prevent the moonlight from reflecting. When Dogen talks about satori (realization, verification, awakening), this is not a concrete one time psychological experience. It is rather an awakening to the very ordinary reality that we are tiny, impermanent and self-centered and the network of interdependent origination in which we are living is vast, boundless and beyond discrimination.

(text)

The depth is the same as the height. [In order to investigate the significance of] the length and shortness of time, we should consider whether the water is great or small, and understand the size of the moon in the sky.

Although we are so tiny, impermanent, and ego-centered as individual persons, our life is immeasurably deep and boundless. The depth of our life is the same as the height of the moon. As our practice, we need to investi-

gate how high and vast the moon is and how deep and subtle the reality of our life is. We need to go higher and higher, deeper and deeper endlessly trying to understand and express the height and depth within our activities.

NEWS

FROM THE SOTO ZEN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE AND EDUCATION CENTER

- The service to celebrate the 800th Anniversary of the birth of Dogen Zenji was held with Japanese American Soto Zen community in North America and Hawaii in Las Vegas, Nevada on October 28, 2000.
- The Preliminary Memorial Service for the 750th Anniversary of Dogen Zenji's Entering Nirvana will be held in May 12, at Zenshuji Soto Mission.
- The first book from Soto Zen Education Center entitled, "Sitting Under The Bodhi Tree" was published in April. This book is the fruition of the sesshins held at Tassajara from October 14 to 22, 1998.
- The Annual Soto Zen Conference was held at San Francisco Zen Center from March 9 through 11. We had a wonderful discussion about the "The Present Situation and Future of Soto Zen in North America" with thirty-two participants from nineteen Zen Centers and Temples.

We had discussed as followed;

1. What do we need for American Soto Zen in the future?
(Possibility to create the Soto Zen Seminary in America)
2. Definition of Jukai ceremony for ordination, specially Lay ordination.

In the morning of 11th, we had an explanation of the Preliminary Memorial Service for the 750th Anniversary of Dozen Zenji's Entering Nirvana, which will be held on May 12th at Zenshuji in Los Angeles.



SOTO ZEN EDUCATION CENTER ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

April to October, 2001

DHARMA STUDY GROUP

At Sokoji Temple, San Francisco, CA.

Led by Rev. Shohaku Okamura in English

Text: Shobogenzo (Buddha Nature)

On Sundays

April 8, May 6, June 3, July 15, August 12

September 9, October 14, 2001

8:30am Zazen, 9:10am Morning Service, 9:30am Work Period,
10:00am Lecture

(Dates of Dharma Study Group in July have been changed. On July 15,
lecture will be held at 2:00 pm. On this day we have no Zazen and service.)

For more information call *Soto Zen Education Center: (415) 567-7686*

LECTURE SERIES ON BUDDHISM

At Zenshuji Temple, Los Angeles, CA.

Led by Rev. Wako Kato in English

On Sundays

April 1, May 6, June 3, July 1, August 12

September 2, October 7, 2001

10:00 am Lecture

April 1:

The Birth of the Buddha and the Flower Festival.

May 6:

What is Zen?

June 3:

A brief history of Zen.

July 1:

The Observance of Obon

August 12:

The Essence of Zen: Watch your step!

September 2:

The Essence of Zen: Freedom from Life and Death.

October 7:

The Higan is the time to reflect on paramita.

For more information call *Zenshuji Temple: (213) 624-8658*

SESSHIN

June 18 - 22, 2001 (Gathering of Soto Zen Sangha)

At Pioneer Valley Zendo in Claremont, MA.

For more information call *Pioneer Valley Zendo: (413) 339-4000*

October 19 - 26, 2001 (Gathering of Soto Zen Sangha)

At Tassajara Zen Mountain Center in Carmel Valley, CA.

For more information call *San Francisco Zen Center: (415) 863-3136*

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