

DHARMA EYE**法眼**

News of Soto Zen Buddhism: Teachings and Practice

The Centennial Anniversary for Japanese Immigration to Brazil and the 50th Anniversary of the Soto Zen Buddhism South America Office and of Ryo Daihonzan Betsuin Busshinji

Rev. Dosho Saikawa,
Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism
South America Office

This year marks the centennial anniversary of the entry of the Kasado-maru boat into Santos Harbor, the first boat carrying Japanese immigrants to Brazil in 1908. This year, there will be more than 50 events marking this anniversary.

Since the first group of immigrants arrived 100 years ago, the people who remember this time are already few. Those people who would have arrived on the Kasado-maru as infants and been the living witnesses of that event are no longer on this earth. Nevertheless, it is possible to recall those days through valuable photographs and records as well as the through memories passed down from their descendants.

Sometime ago, I had the opportunity to visit the Japanese International Cooperation Agency in Yokohama, a group that runs a museum dedicated to the first period of Japanese immigration. I remember receiving a deep and powerful impression on seeing the museum artifacts. In response to the question of what were the most useful things for the immigrants to take with them to Brazil, the museum guide explained that two items were especially useful: wicker baskets made of willow and a device to administer enemas. Wicker baskets were convenient for holding sleeping children while their parents worked in the

farm fields. A device to give enemas was indispensable when children became ill as a sick child was first given an enema and then several hours later taken to see a doctor in town.

At any rate, the immigrants of the first years were forced to live in a way that was no different from that of a slave. It was truly a time when an employer could shoot and kill anyone who tried to escape and there was no recourse for making complaints about that situation. (When slavery was abolished, immigrants were forced to do heavy labor in the place of slaves).

At such times, religious faith was surely a spiritual support for these immigrants. There is no wonder about this when you see how many families brought their family ancestors' memorial plaques with them on the ship. It was because they had the pride of being Japanese and because they were being watched over by their ancestors that they had the mettle to open up new lands and, passing this on from generation to generation, that they were able to endure all sorts of trials and tribulations.

It was within these circumstances that following World War II religions other than Catholicism were finally acknowledged. For the Sotoshu, that was in 1955, the year

that the Head Priest of the Sotoshu, Takashina Rosen Zenji, spent two months traveling and teaching in Brazil. Regardless of the fact that he was 80 years old, he gave several teachings every day and then would move to his next site, working energetically each day with this hard schedule. The foundation for establishing the present Sotoshu temples in Brazil was set during this two-month teaching tour. Ten years later, Takashina Zenji toured Brazil again at the age of 90. He followed up on the various temples he had visited previously: Zengenji, the temple in Mogi das Cruces where he had performed the ceremony for enshrining the Buddha; Busshinji in Sao Paolo; and the splendid Sotoshu temple that had been erected in Rolandia. One year after Zenji's first trip, Ryohan Shingu Roshi was installed as the first director of the Soto Zen Buddhism South America Office, a position he held for nearly 30 years.

As one generation passes to the second and third generations, there is a general tendency for the Japanese-Brazilian people to lose the ability to understand the Japanese language. At an inverse proportion, however, there is an increase in their pride of being Brazilian because these people are born in Brazil. This is only natural and with regard to religion as well, since each individual is free, they don't necessarily follow the religion of their ancestors. There is also more and more intermarriage with non-Japanese people and so it's very natural that within the family, different people believe in different religions. Yet, even in a fervently Catholic country like Brazil, there is much respect shown for the religion (Buddhism) of their parents. Even if the children are Christian, many of them have funerals and memorial services performed in the religion in which their parents believed.

While the arena for social activity has widened for Japanese-Brazilians so that they now have great power, there is also the phenomena of many Japanese-Brazilians losing their connection to Buddhism whether it is by leaving their family memorial tablets in the care of the temple and returning to Japan to work, by becoming Christians, or by joining various "new religions." Conversely, we see more and more Westerners who have an interest in Buddhism, with more of them coming to practice zazen and participate in ceremonies. This isn't

something restricted only to South America. People in Europe and North America who are not satisfied with Christianity also come to Buddhism through zazen and especially take up an interest in Zen. South America is within that same current. The point of difference for South America is that people are often interested not only in zazen, but in various ceremonies, too. There are many people who are happy to participate in the ceremony for hungry spirits (*Sejiki-e*), the arhat ceremony (*Rakan Kuyo*), and the repentance ceremony (*Fusatsu*). There is also an increase in the number of people asking for Buddhist wedding ceremonies and baby blessings. Furthermore, there is an interest in studying brain waves during zazen from doctors specializing in psychology and sports medicine. So there are certainly indications of a bright future for Buddhism in Brazil and especially for Sotoshu.

Taking the opportunity for the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Soto Zen Buddhism South America Office as well as Ryo Daihonzan Betsuin Busshinji, we have launched a plan to build a zazen-do, a founder's hall, another hall, and so forth as part of this commemorative event. The successive directors of this office have all particularly dreamed of building a zazen-do, so it is my strong hope that when it is completed, this will contribute to fostering human resources for Sotoshu and bring about a further leap in Sotoshu activity.

I would like to express by deepest thanks to all those people both in Japan and in Brazil who have helped to sponsor this commemorative building project.





You Are Zen

Rev. Kogaku Ishikawa,
Sotoshu Special Dissemination Teacher

[A Talk Given at Green Gulch
Farm, Oct. 4, 2007]

My name is Kogaku Ishikawa. I am glad to see you. Many people have come this evening. Thank you for coming.

Looking at this setting from the outside, it looks as if I, as one person, am speaking to many people. Yet, none of you can hear what I'm saying in the way the person next to you hears it nor can another person hear what you've heard. In that sense, I'm not speaking to many people, but rather I'm speaking only to you and it's as if I've come from Japan to convey this teaching to you. So, no matter how many people are around you, there is you and me, this one-to-one relationship.

Earlier, we had a delicious meal. Life at Green Gulch Farm is pleasant, isn't it? In the wonderful environment of the practice center, you practice zazen, listen to Dharma talks, think, and read sutras; there are some who dress like monks and some who wear their hair short. I have a question: What is the difference between a monk or a priest and a layperson? If the way you live your life as well as your appearance is the same, what is the difference between these two?

I wasn't involved in producing the food we just had for dinner. I didn't plant the seeds, harvest, cut, cook, or season the vegetables or other ingredients. I didn't do any of the cooking and yet, I did eat dinner. I didn't produce the thread or fabric of the clothes I'm wearing and yet, I am wearing these clothes. How is it possible to receive food and wear clothing?

In an ordination ceremony, the following words are chanted, "Throughout the round of rebirth in the three realms, it is difficult to sever the bonds of attachment; by casting off these thoughts that are difficult to cast off, it is precisely by seeking the way of the unconditioned, being

one with conditions where the ego doesn't intervene, that is the true repayment of gratitude." *Dana* (generosity in the form of food, clothing, etc.) is given to those people who practice. For those people who give such *dana*, this means "Those of you who have become monks, please practice in order to attain the true Dharma, without having to care for your own life." Do you have that determination? Do you practice with that feeling? These are questions asked of monks.

There is the story of taking a step off a 100 foot pole. (Climbing to the top of a very high pole, you will die if your feet leave the pole, so you strongly cling to it. To take one more step from the pole means that if you don't practice in such a way that you throw away your whole life, you will not attain the Way). This is to be a monk. People give *dana* to such people thinking, "Monks live in a way that I could never imitate, so please practice wholeheartedly."

It is difficult not to be confused. However, if you go this Way, then certainly you will meet your Self and become aware of the condition of yourself as you are. This is called "attaining the Way." Monks are those people who proceed without doubt, vigorously pushing forward. Nevertheless, monks are not the only people who can know their true Self. This is something you can do at any place and at any time. You are the Way and you are Zen. That means your condition as it is right now. "My condition now?!" some of you will say, "Well, there is only greed, anger, and dissatisfaction in my life." In Buddhism, these are called the three poisons of delusion. This is your condition that has been labeled "delusion." It is the way of delusion; it is Zen.

In April 2007, I became ill with a condition where the right side of my face became paralyzed. My right eye couldn't open, my lips on the right side drooped down, and my face was contorted. Now, my face has returned to its original shape. However, before coming to the United States, I was asked to send a photo of my face at the time my face was contorted by this illness. I thought that if I

sent a photo with my face bent out of shape, everyone would say, "His face is different," when they met me now in October. So, I decided to send a photo taken of me ten years ago. My condition has mostly healed, but when I eat, tears fall from my eyes. When the food is good, I especially find that many tears well up and tonight, when I ate dinner in your dining room, the tears wouldn't stop flowing.

Tonight, I am speaking about Zen, but particularly in the context of the desire between men and women. If I gave this talk in Japan, I think most people wouldn't understand it. In Japan, desire between man and woman is always suppressed. "Stop it, quench it, use that energy for something else;" in Japan, it is said that we should think like this. But I don't say that we should extinguish desire between men and women. I thought of what I'm going to say tonight while we were eating dinner, so you are the first people in the world to hear this.

When I heard about Zen from a certain teacher, he told me, "It's all right to understand and it's all right not to understand." I could understand "it's all right to understand," but for a long time, I didn't understand what he meant when he said, "it's all right not to understand." It happened many times that I thought I understood what he meant, but I didn't understand it completely. It took me twenty years to understand this. I'll be very happy if you understand this in one hour. It may be that no one will understand it, but after twenty years, there may be someone who does.

The precept about desire between man and woman is "Don't misuse sexuality." A Zen teacher told me, "When you think 'that's a woman,' you are breaking this precept." Do you understand the meaning of this story? I hadn't seen a woman or spoken to one and of course, I hadn't touched one. Simply by thinking a woman might be there, he said that I was breaking the precepts. Why was simply sensing that a woman was there breaking the precepts? The opposite could be said that if a woman is sitting here, she would be breaking the precepts simply by sensing that there was a man walking by. When I first heard this, I was completely unable to understand this.

In Zen, there are koans. I am going to speak about a well-known koan, so I'm sure you've heard it many times.

An old woman lived in the countryside. A Zen monk (man) came to visit her and told her that he wanted to practice there. The old woman gave him a small house to live in and the monk practiced zazen there for a long time. The woman had a seventeen or eighteen-year-old woman carry meals to him on a regular basis everyday. Twenty years passed. The old woman thought, "It must be about time," and told the young woman to suddenly embrace the monk after delivering the next meal to him. After she embraced the monk, she asked, "What will you do when I do this?" He replied, "I'm like a dead tree leaning against a cold cliff. In the middle of coldest winter, there isn't the least warmth. No matter what you do, I won't feel anything." This means that the monk was unmoving toward the young woman and didn't feel the slightest sexual desire for her. When the young woman returned, the old woman asked her, "When you embraced him, what did he do?" When the old woman heard what had happened, she was angry and said, "I'm very disappointed. To think I took care of this worldly person for twenty years!" She then drove him away and burnt down the small house where the monk had lived. This is the end of the story.

This is all there is to the story and yet it has been passed down for more than 1,000 years. What does it mean? When the young woman embraced him, the monk had said, "I'm like a dead tree leaning against a hard cliff in the midst of winter. Desire doesn't arise. I don't feel anything." Then, the old woman got angry, chased the monk away, and burnt down the house he had been living in. What would have been an appropriate response for the monk? At first, I thought I would tell the woman, "I love you, too" and it would be all right for us to love each other. But then, I thought that would be strange and continued thinking about this for a long time. When I was young, I heard a well-known Zen teacher say, "The monk was awakened and because of his enlightenment he didn't feel anything from the young woman's advances. It was the old woman who was wrong for having the young woman try to seduce an awakened monk." When I heard him say that, I thought, "If that was the correct answer, it isn't possible that this story would have been passed down for more than 1,000 years."

Often, when people sit zazen, they say, "I'm not

thinking anything.” They say, “I shouldn’t think, I shouldn’t think, I shouldn’t think.” Over and over, we earnestly tell ourselves “I shouldn’t think, I shouldn’t think, I shouldn’t think.” Our heads are filled with the idea that it isn’t good to think.

I would like to introduce one more old story from China. This is also a well-known story. When a certain person was asked to express the condition of the mind, he said, “The mind is like a mirror.” He said that we must constantly clean this mirror to keep dust from collecting. This is the same as what I’ve just been saying about zazen. “I shouldn’t think, I shouldn’t think,” this is the same as thinking dust shouldn’t collect on the mirror. Zazen is used like a broom in completely the same way dust collects on a mirror. Zazen becomes a broom. Another person said, “Essentially, there never has been a mirror and so from the beginning, it has been impossible for dust to collect.”

I thought for a long time about these two answers. Dust means something dirty and unpleasant. What does it mean that dust doesn’t collect? I looked for something dust couldn’t collect on. At first, I thought it would be good to be a river. If I was a river, the dust would quickly flow away. When the dust entered the ocean, it would mix with the ocean water. Next, I thought it would be good to become the ocean. Yet, it’s a fact that dust does collect in the ocean. Then, I thought it would be good to be air. If I were air, it wouldn’t be possible to tell where the dust is. But even though we can’t see it with the eyes, dust is still there, even though it’s small. Finally, I thought it would be good to be wind. If I were the wind, dust would all be blown away. However, all of these thoughts were mistaken.

What is it after all that dust cannot collect on? That is for the self to be one with dust. If everything in the world is dust, then there would be nothing that isn’t dust. It isn’t possible for dust to collect on dust. Dust doesn’t change into dust. Right now, there are women in this room and there are men. What if all the people in the world were men? If all the people in the world are men, that would mean that there would be no women. If there are no women, that would mean that there are no men. We use the word “men” only in opposition to “women.” This would be the same if all the people in the world were women; there would be no men. If there were no men,

then there would be no women. If the color white was the only color in the world, what would happen? There would be no black. This is the same with understanding and not understanding. If there were no not understanding in the world, there would be no understanding. If there were no understanding, there would be no not understanding.

In Buddhism, *dana* is an important teaching. Everyone thinks “I give something to you.” What would happen if there were only “giving”? If there is no you, then there is no other. We don’t think of giving something to ourselves. Since there is a self, there are others. If with regard to the woman, the monk had only said, “I want,” then it would have only been desire. When I say “I want you,” this is a desire where I perceive myself. If there is no “me,” then there is no “you.”

In Buddhism, we have the teaching “delusion is enlightenment.” If, for example, a cup of water is dirty and in order to make the water clean, we throw away the water and put clean water into cup, that isn’t “delusion is enlightenment.” If the whole world is dirty, there would be nothing clean. If there is nothing clean, then there is nothing dirty. If there is only one thing, there is nothing opposed to it.

There was a Japanese priest named Keizan Zenji. He was asked by his master about the Dharma, about the Way. This is how he answered that question. In this room where we are sitting, the lights are turned on, but imagine that the room is completely dark. Keizan Zenji said that a black ball goes flying by in the pitch-black darkness. What does this mean? If a white ball or a red ball or a green ball were to shine in a dark room, then it would contrast with the black color. If a black ball rolls along in a black room, then there is no boundary line between them. It means that they are one. It means they are not opposed to each other. What color would it be good to be in order not to be dyed black? Would it be yellow or white or red – some color that isn’t black? Black is the color that cannot be dyed because it isn’t possible to die black more black.

Zen is one mind. It is unnecessary to try to not think. It is all right to leave your mind feel as it is. In the koan of the monk and the young woman, this is the story of the relationship between perceiving another person because we

perceive ourselves. If it were only a desire where you wanted another person, then the other person wouldn't be necessary. You also wouldn't be necessary. If there were only that desire, then that desire would eventually disappear. When you sit in zazen, many thoughts appear and disappear, appear and disappear. This is the same thing. This koan isn't asking you to give an answer about the best way for the monk to respond to the woman. Rather, it raises the questioning mind, the problem consciousness, and reminds us that we are hung up on perception. "I want to get closer to her; to be her friend," the thought that this idea isn't good and that you must get rid of it is a perception arising because you perceive another person. When it's the condition where this is only "want," this is delusive desire itself. It is all thought that is thinking as-it-is. It is to leave yourself as-you-are. The forms manifested (conditions, circumstances, and so on) through the condition of being embraced by a young woman are the law of causality itself. In the Dharma, there is no gap for the discrimination to enter in which you make the judgment that it's best not to think a certain thought because it is the condition of that moment. Then, by means of other conditions, it will always continue to change. The law of causality has no relation or connection with the function of human thought or value judgments. The human condition is the law of causality.

In the condition of our minds, the condition of desire arises. For that reason, we suffer and worry. But if there were no desire, then you wouldn't have come to hear me speak tonight. You came here because the desire arose of "I want to hear what he has to say." The condition where you throw out desire is a desire of the Way of delusion.

You are now seeing the face of Kogaku Ishikawa (me). But when I see myself as Kogaku, I see without perceiving myself. The monk tried to do something about the "me" who raised the desire for the young woman. He is only purposely changing himself into a "cold cliff." Nowhere is there a "me" who must do something. There is only desire. This is suffering as just suffering, pleasure as just pleasure, desire as just desire – this is to say it isn't possible for your value judgments and preferences to enter in.

To elucidate your condition now, to clearly know it, is

Zen. The fact now of raising the desire for the woman is something that has arisen through conditions. The facts that arise and disappear by means of conditions are not manipulated by human thoughts nor are they something we choose. It is to not doubt this. It is because we doubt that we suffer, thinking "Shall I take it or shall I reject it?" This sort of doubt arises through our value judgments regarding the condition now.

People can do nothing about desire that arises because of conditions. So, it would be fine simply to leave that function of desire be as it is. And yet, human consciousness can't do that and tries to function. The result of the condition of being embraced by the young woman is that desire arises. So, if you become one with the desire, it will disappear. This is not to pull this fact closer or to drive it away. Even if you think of grasping it, it will naturally leave when the condition disappears. No matter how desirable a woman is she will not serve you forever. It is the same thing.

With the conditions of birth, death, old age, and sickness in our lives as well, it is to not try to change these conditions according to our own preferences.



The lecture at Green Gulch

Notes from My Experience at the 2007 Sotoshu Ango at La Gendronniere

Rev. Yusen Hugues Naas,
Seikyu-ji, Spain (Disciple of Rev. Doko Triet)



In Europe, many comments were made when it was announced that the first Sotoshu training monastery convened outside of Japan would be held at La Gendronniere, the practice place founded in France by Rev. Taisen Deshimaru, with the stated objective of fostering Sotoshu monks. There was much discussion about this matter, both for and against. For those people who had already experienced angō in Japan, this was not a problem. But the rest of us didn't know what sort of issues were involved. We only knew that this would be an historical event with important implications for changes that were being made in the Sotoshu priest regulations.

At the time, I was neither for nor against it. But when Rev. Taiken Yokoyama of the Soto Zen Buddhism Europe Office called me to ask if I felt like participating, I felt, as the person responsible for La Gendronniere, that I couldn't refuse.

The preparations for setting up the Sotoshu training monastery went smoothly and so did the ceremony opening the monastery on September 15th, which was attended by many Dendokyoshi from around Europe. After the customary commemorative photo was taken, however, the atmosphere suddenly changed when everyone returned to their rooms.

We had to learn everything over again from the beginning. That was the tone from the beginning of the angō. From the time we got up in the morning until the time we went to bed at night, everything was new.

My first shock was to see a monk who had been practicing for 33 years put on a black okesa again as a training monk. I thought of Deshimaru Roshi who always repeated the words, "Always remember the first time you practiced zazen. Never forget beginner's mind." Until then, I had thought that it was easy to not forget beginner's mind. It was enough simply to remember Roshi's words. But that was a big mistake. I had been

living within this fantasy for many years. This spirit of not forgetting beginner's mind was not a question of choice nor was it something that came out of some beautiful thought. When your body and mind are one, the spirit of really living with true beginner's mind will appear and you will then be able to really live like that. Then, there will no longer be anything known nor will there be any objectives.

In an instant, I was steeped in a blank world where there was no time. I was completely concentrated on each moment; facing the moment, I was concentrated. This had nothing to do with the choice between liking it and not liking it, but rather because, in the words of Dogen Zenji, "You must train as though you are attempting to save your head from being enveloped in flames."

As the weeks went by, the way we read the sutras as well as the ceremonial practice improved and we became proficient to the point that they were almost beautiful. A ceremony without errors was a triumph and this triumph inevitably brought about the next dismal result that brought us back to earth.

Ultimately, not one thing was achieved. In this way, many teachers came from various temples to teach us and it was necessary for us to negotiate frequently about how they would teach us to move. How should we hold our hands when doing kinhin? How should the bell be hit before the meals? At what point should we hold our hands in gassho when leaving the Dharma hall? And so forth. There was no single, absolute way to do these things. Nevertheless, once it was decided, we were instructed in the precise way to do it.

My second shock was that we had to practice so much that there wasn't one millimeter or one sound or one second of discrepancy from the way we had been taught. Then, the next day, everything would be changed. It was here I understood that it wasn't the form itself which was

important. The principle was to aim at precision. Nevertheless, I wasn't able to forget myself and I never even hoped to forget myself and yet in all movements, it was to renounce the self, it was to forget the self. Studying all of these movements and ceremonies, this was completely different from the nature of learning the techniques. Through learning the correct manners and behavior, we studied the self that is like clouds and water – in other words, forgetting the self and abandoning body and mind. It was by means of this that I was able to flow like a river of living water where the body and mind is like a cloud flying through the sky.

Rev. Genshu Imamura, abbot for the three-month ango held at La Gendronniere this past fall, said, "Ango is only to study the way of living together in the spirit of harmony." Until now, I truly had no idea that harmony was an outcome of such subtlety. This subtlety was cultivated everyday through precise and detailed movements.

The teaching of the Buddhadharma takes many shapes. One form is oral tradition and for these three months we were bathed in the blessing of that form. We had 19 different lecturers and were able to hear more than 50 lectures, the flavors of which ran a wide spectrum. Not only did these lectures illuminate our practice in different ways, but they also provided us with accurate knowledge. At the end of the first round of lectures, I was surprised that we were given a written test. But I imagine that we were all able to smoothly pass through this barrier.

Whether it was the teaching of our master's or whether

it was the teaching we received during the ango, we had to practice it and we always rediscovered everything. I have no impression of having obtained eternal knowledge or ability. Imamura Roshi always reminded us to be harmonious with everyone, to follow other people's requests, to relearn everything we thought we already knew and that we should accept those bitter thoughts that arose and even accept those customs we finally were able to acquire as-they-were.

During these three months, I was able to recognize that there are all sorts of styles practiced in Japanese temples. In view of the diversity of Japanese temples and the present reality in the West, the style practiced here at our monastery of La Gendronniere has been decided and adjusted along the way.

The teachers, lecturers, and monks who came from Japan attended the ango by truly taking part with an open spirit. They attended us in a genial way and patiently gave us instruction and guidance. This ango became an opportunity for true meeting in which the barriers of language and culture were transcended regardless of whether we were practicing ceremonial ritual, exchanging opinions, or in silence.

At the end of November, we buried the bones of the late Takizawa Roshi, former Director of the Education Division at the Shumicho, in the earth of La Gendronniere, with his family in attendance. I would like to make use of this space to express my deep gratitude to the achievements of Takizawa Roshi as well as to all of the people who were involved in bringing about this ango.

The Time of Blossoming in an Ecclesiastical Dimension

By Rev. Myosen Vera Rovesti,
Fudenji, Italy (Disciple of Rev. Taiten Guareschi)



For the first time outside of Japan (September 15th – December 15th 2007), a Monastic Practice Period was organized for Western novices at a Sotoshu Training

Monastery. So, for the first time, eleven students of the first Teachers' generation inspired by the mission of the first Kaikyo Sokan of Europe, Rev. Taisen Deshimaru, were meeting, entrusted to the accurate care of a staff

composed of four generations of Japanese teachers. Rev. Genshu Imamura (Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism Europe Office - Paris), Rev. Taiken Yokoyama, of the same office, and Rev. Tozen Akiyama (from U.S.A.) – respectively took care of the functions of Abbot, Administrator and Senior Member, and were therefore always present throughout the Ango. The participation of young monks and teachers from the major Japanese Soto temples, alternating themselves in helping the teaching staff to accomplish or improve their monastic training, was also an important factor of our educational training.

The site of the Ango, La Gendronnière (Blois, France), founded by Taisen Deshimaru Roshi, offered us its majestic, inspirational spaces to share a concentrated monastic life through the way and patterns of a traditional Soto Zen activity. We were sustained by the protective and benevolent eyes of Buddhas and Ancestors (*busso gonen*), like the magnificent golden Buddha which appeared in November as a wondrous gift in the wide Dharma hall. It was a propitious and surprising occasion for many aspects, which in my opinion focused on central points concerning our communities in the present society.

In our age of disenchantment, of secularization of the sacred, one widely finds himself living the crucial moments of his life by himself, often denying the constitutive religious dimension of the existence and subrogating it with ephemeral satisfactions, generally increasing a further desperation. Even the time of religious feasts, no more being marked by liturgical celebrations, which are able to regenerate the original human and spiritual body at a personal and social level, often become a space of an anxious rest or a kind of work searching for stimuli that distract from the ordinary life. The anti- or extra institutional markers of a religious dimension in new forms and scenes were yet recognized by anthropologists, theologians, and researchers of human sciences - young people's meetings being the focus to pay a particular attention to - but in every domain, also in that of our religious practice, the worrying trend of reducing every profane and sacred thing to one self's limited sight, power and judgment, has yet arisen. It is difficult to find, or even hope to find, the proper communitarian references at every level, including the religious domain, even if one is feeling a deep longing for it.

About these kinds of problems, I think that the central focus is the establishment of a European ecclesiastical community of Zen Soto Order as an inspirational and reliable reference at a personal and social level, through suitable criteria, manners and instruments. I believe that this Ango 2007 has brought a great contribution in this perspective and that the possibility to develop this experience is calling all of us to directly engage with our Teachers, so the generous investment of resources and hopes by Sotoshu could help us do that.

In the last decennial period the Teachers who were disciples of Rev. Taisen Deshimaru, the new pioneers of Zen Soto in Europe, moved in an institutional direction, but never in this occasion the different Communities were open, even from different standpoints, to sharing and collaboration. Most of the Teachers were coming from different European Countries, but there were also Teachers from Japan (Dr. Shugen Kaneko - Soto Institute for Buddhist Studies, Tokyo and Rev. Shinjo Yoshino - Kasuisai Zen Monastery) and from U.S.A. (Rev. Gengo Akiba - Director Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office, L. A. and Rev. Shohaku Okumura - Director Soto Zen Buddhism International Center, San Francisco). They all brought the contribution of their lessons and debates with the students, also taking part in the practical and ritual sphere. The relationship between educators and students extended to the moments of pause and feast, giving us the opportunity to know each other at a personal and intercultural level. In a concentrated, serene and collaborative atmosphere, a productive dialogue on practical and theoretical points was going on between students and teaching staff at any moment, for solving arising problems or pointing out how to organize work.

It was considered a necessity to face the training guidelines, being respectful of doctrine and rules and in the meantime, their realization and adaptation in the given context. In fact the first phase of the period was characterized by the very interesting agreement among the components of the staff (formed or still training in different Temples - Eiheiji, Sojiji, Aichi Senmon Nisodo...), and between the staff and the participants in Ango, on the most appropriate ritual form in any specific situation, considering the disposition of spaces, the available instruments and the capacities and competencies

of the students - one by one and as a whole body – in order to improve the occasion in the best way.

This allowed us to pick out and sometimes also to propose the possible modifications which could let unaltered the fundamentals, so that the proper sense of the rite could find a fully satisfying expression.

The Meal Service was a meaningful example of the manifold issues of this way of planning, giving us the chance to perceive the religious sense and the symbolic language of eating together in a ritual performance offered to the sacred statue at the altar, the Holy Monk, with sounds and chanting, rhythm and manners nourishing the receivers so as the servers more than the material food itself. Also the need to provide the supports for the containers of the rice soup, the way to keep it hot, to present all the elements of the meal with the existent

furnishing, carrying them along the route outside, many times in the rain, between the kitchen and the Sodo, gave us the chance of a collaborative attitude, harmonizing our different sensibilities and making an effective service team.

This process of growing as a religious community is just beginning and the project demands critical study and elaboration, passionate debate and experience inside every Center and in connection with the other Centers, to point out the priority points to face together; but if we continue in the direction of this Training, with this spirit and this operative capacity, the objectives will be realized, according to the wish expressed by Taisen Deshimaru Roshi in a calligraphy in the Dharma hall, which means in translation: “The holy throne / Pacifies the Earth / Stars and sky / And protects / The country where rises / The Castle of Dharma / During 1000 Autumns.”

About the 2007 Sotoshu Ango in Europe

By Rev. Sengyo Patrick Van Leuven,
Gyobutsu-ji, France (Disciple of Rev. Yuno Rech)



The beginning of this first Sotoshu training monastery in the West and my participation in it were decided shortly before it actually started. This is to say that my teacher asked me to participate in this angu at the moment when the commemoration ceremonies and symposium of 40 years of Soto Zen teachings in Europe were held at La Gendronnière. I first declined but agreed to it when he asked me again. I first declined because a lot of things to do for Zen were planned and a short time notice like this is not so easy to manage, since we are actively participating in social society (work, bills to pay, etc.). And my 72-year old father was just diagnosed with a spreading colon cancer. So, this was bad timing (as such things usually are)! Cancelling my commitments and/or finding somebody to do them for me was in a way already the beginning of angu. Going to see my father who was dying and say goodbye was the next thing to do. We had a few talks, I

wished him a peaceful death and went on my way to La Gendronnière. The next day, the first day of angu, he died. My sister gave me a hard time afterwards and still is resentful to me for not having attended to the funerals. All along I faced my commitment I took some 18 years ago when being ordained as a monk. What does it mean for me to give freely so that *bodhaishin* (Way-seeking mind) can be realised? What is the importance in this existence of this monastic ordination, of leaving home as a monk? What importance do I really give to my greatest desire of simply living a religious life, and when and how is this deep desire obscured, pushed away in a far away corner by some idealistic or romantic desires that disperse my attention and bring along so much suffering and frustration in this life, in this society?

I consider it as a great honor and privilege to have been able to participate in this historical event which was this

first official Soto Zen training monastery outside of Japan. It brought around a great religious experience. There is a great gratitude towards all those in Japan and in Europe who made this possible. Thanks to their continuous practice of the Way, we (the 11 participants) were able to experience the joy of the Way in a monastic setting. Through the vows of the Bodhisattva we took already so many years ago to help all sentient beings, a reinforced and growing gratitude is experienced towards all the ancestors in near and far away past times, for knowing about the practice of Buddhadharma and that it can be practiced for the benefit of all. The importance of this event for the practice of further generations of sentient beings is big. The final success of it will hopefully make it possible to install a permanent, and not only a virtual, training monastery on the different continents of the Earth. Our small number, the fact that we were not to leave the monastery and all the other regulations, brought along, that there was no merchandising possible. The initial desire of *bodhaishin* was continuous and all the way long stimulated and made one look into the more obscure parts of this existence, which improved a great deal the spiritual quality of this training period. A good balance between restrictions and permissions was continuously created by the Abbott, which prevented one from getting lost in a harsh ascetic environment, which wants to break the body and the mind. A delicate equilibrium that unified body/mind, that permits to leave aside, in a gentle and smooth way, all the obstacles to the practice-realisation of the Way which are our old habits. Those two aspects are the basis for a more vast development of compassion and wisdom towards oneself and towards the others. Delicate and highly necessary qualities in one's life as a human being, as a monk.

The setting of La Gendronnière, which is an extremely beautiful place, of course, contributed a lot in the appreciation of life during this angō. Beyond general marvel or enchantment was the immense joy of life and nature.

At the same time participating and observing the way of establishing the rules to follow in this temporary training monastery has been of extreme value to me, for making me understand the reason for some rules, their inherent flexibility and subtlety and the openness of mind they require. Studying with other teachers and being in

entirely other roles from the ones I'm used to, brings the beginner's mind to live in a whole other color composition, suppressing the "certainties", the habits in one's practice.

The whole angō was deeply rooted in the old tradition of the Japanese monasteries and temples, but already a great deal was done to adapt to our western habits. It made the universality of Zen practice and monastic life come to evidence. The universality of the basic rules of Dogen Zenji, when one is not attached to the phrases itself, but with the open, flexible mind that characterise so well the Buddhadharma. It showed so well that it would be useless and dangerous for a lasting development of authentic Zen practice if we should claim to transfer as a whole entity the corps of rules and settings from Japan to Europe, or on the contrary wanting to change them according to our own appreciation and convenience. In mutual consultation with those who were born and bred in this tradition evaluating how to adapt and make changes with a deep understanding that often goes beyond intellectual thinking. It means dropping the arrogance of wanting to do it on our own; or blindly following rigid, conservative minds that cannot see the bridges between cultures in order to transmit the essentials. The general feeling amongst us was one of being impressed by the profoundness of the foreign traditions and still being at ease, as if moving in your own usual habitat. All of a sudden I did not regret anymore not to have had the possibilities of going to Japan. Japan came to here! Now I don't feel the urge anymore (that is if the training monastery were to be permanent) to go and practice in Japan, but then again, I don't see any reason also to stay here. The initial wish of Rev. Otogawa, expressed on the first evening of angō, to realize "wago; harmony together" felt true. Not only the participants of this Angō were one single body going forth, but also oneness of "western" and "Japanese" Zen-practice.

A great effort considering the teachings by inviting several teachers from Japan, America, and Europe has been made. The translations were sometimes hardship on each side of the phenomena (teacher, translator, and student) and the number of lectures (50) was slightly too important. The teachings of Abbott Imamura Roshi were clear and mostly far beyond common words. An intimate communication of his practice to our practice! Without

saying a word he could touch the most profound fibre of our practice. The most impressive teaching was his acceptance of what he didn't really approve. This brought us to a change of feeling for our practice from within ourselves, more in accordance with the fundamentals of the tradition. The dharma of peace and happiness manifested itself more and more, and surely will contribute to a consolidation of further practice and spreading of Zen on this continent. Based on the Japanese tradition, with its adjustments to the characteristics of European countries, authentic Zen practice will influence the many future generations of people to come and bring along a recognised globalization of the Buddhadharma, the Soto Zen practice established by Dogen Zenji and Keizan Zenji.

I made a choice to do something that didn't suit me very much in my agenda (filled with "plenty useful and urgent things to do for the Dharma" and socio-family circumstances) and of which many people in my environment said was an absolute waste of time. I observe the evolution, the letting go, the movements towards the center, seeing the spiritual and religious benefits. Leaving aside words and their inherent dualism! There is the trust, the confidence in the Roshi, my co-disciples; it gave a total freedom.

In short, one could say of Ango the same thing as about life itself: it is long and sometimes very difficult, etc. But it's marvellous and it goes by way too fast! One can feel it a nuisance, but one can also chose to practice the Way during those 3 months. What is the meaning of three months of practice in a span of 30 years? They do not represent much on a timescale, but they permit to go and draw from the very profoundness of one, not finding anything substantial there. This is a basic religious experience which will nourish the next 30 years to come.

It is letting burst into pieces the myths and the mythical.

Remaining here and now.

Gassho

Shobogenzo Zazenshin - A Free Translation (2)

Rev. Issho Fujita

The following is something that we really must keep in mind. In the study of Buddhism, there is a particular way to study the Dharma that must not be avoided and that is: as long as we practice at all, we must exert ourselves to the utmost in zazen, regardless of whether we are beginners or veteran practitioners. The fundamental point that must serve as the model and bastion for the practice of zazen must be: "The practice of being a buddha (=zazen) without *seeking* to become a buddha." The practice of being a buddha, in other words the practice of zazen, is self-sufficient and complete of itself and so it is not a practice to make an extra effort to newly become a buddha from now on. So, truth as-it-is, with nothing whatever lacking, is manifesting itself as the conditions of right here and now (*koan genjo*). Zazen is already the actual practice of the buddha by means of the body-mind and so there is absolutely no room for the unnecessary intention to become a buddha to enter in. We mustn't view the practice of zazen as the cause and becoming a buddha as the result by dividing the two into before and after. (The non-interaction, *fuego*, of sitting buddha *zabutsu* and becoming buddha *sabutsu*).

At the same time, however, when we can let go of a dualistic way of thinking, which works like a cage and net catching and keeping birds and fish and restricts our freedom, there isn't the slightest hindrance between sitting buddha (= practicing buddha = body-buddha = zazen) and becoming a buddha. There is no problem at all in saying that sitting buddha is becoming buddha itself (the interaction, *ego*, of sitting buddha and becoming buddha).

Thus, when we are totally free of the restrictions of words and concepts (the dropping off of both interaction and non-interaction), from the far distant past until the present day, zazen always has this power to freely enter the world of buddhas as well as the world of demons. It also has the vastness to crossover and fill in our activities like walking forward or backward, and all ditches and valleys (See Bendowa).

[This is the first part of *Zazenshin* and concludes Dogen Zenji's commentary on the story of Yakusan's "Beyond Thinking", which belongs to the Soto dharma lineage.]

Next, Dogen Zenji refers to a story belonging to the Rinzai dharma lineage called "Nangaku Polishes a Tile" and he explains the essential nature of zazen as understood within the Rinzai lineage. The result is that Dogen Zenji shows the source of both schools of Zen to be the same: the correct practice of zazen.

[The following is a further exploration of the correct way to do zazen by referring to the story "Nangaku Polishes a Tile.]

Kozei Daijaku Zenji, namely Baso Doitsu (709-788), practiced the Way under Nangaku Daie Zenji. (Dogen Zenji uses Baso's honorific name and we can see from this that Dogen Zenji thought very highly of him.) **Baso had deeply experienced and realized the Zen tradition, having received the Mind Seal directly from his master (true mind-to-mind meeting of master and disciple) and after that he always practiced zazen earnestly.** This proves that the viewpoint criticized by Dogen Zenji earlier that "Zazen is a practice for beginners" is totally a mistake. In other words, the mondo that develops between these two Zen figures isn't a shallow story in which Baso is mistakenly sitting zazen with the intention of becoming a buddha and his master Nangaku cautions him because of that. We must understand this story in such a way that it highlights two people who are equals and who have both gotten to the essence of zazen and then cooperate together to express the true nature of zazen. So, Dogen Zenji is, in the same way he did with the earlier story of Yakusan and the monk, examining through their dialogue, which is not simply questions and answers, as an exchange using different expressions, between two standpoints about the true nature of zazen.

One day, Nangaku went to Baso's place and addressed him in the following way: "Virtuous monk! (Notice the honorific is being used. This form of address would be too polite if a teacher were using it to his disciple). **I understand that you are earnestly doing zazen as a concrete picture (=specific form, manifestation or expression) of 'What'** (this can be pointed out only by using the interrogative because it is beyond all sort of descriptions

with words)." We must understand the Sino-Japanese character used here "圖" as "form", "figure", or "picture" and it does not mean "intention" to think of something that does not exist now. So, we must read Nangaku's statement not as a question but as an affirmation of Baso's zazen as a picture of "What."

Quietly considering this question, we must deeply investigate into this through actually practicing zazen. Is there some other purpose we must aim for that goes beyond zazen? Is there something outside of zazen that we must intend for that hasn't been expressed yet? Or, is it that there must be no intentions which exist "beyond" or "outside of" zazen? Or, is Nangaku asking: When we are sitting in zazen, what sort of picture is being realized? We must think about such things and clarify them.

(There is the story of Sekko who loved dragons and decorated his room with sculptures and paintings of dragons, but when a real dragon came to visit him, he fainted). We must proceed beyond the level of loving carved dragons (=sitting buddha) to the level where we love real dragons (=becoming buddha). We must study the fact that both carved dragons as well as real dragons have the same capability to make clouds form and rain fall. We mustn't think that something far away (=becoming buddha) is valuable. We mustn't think of something far away as being worthless, either. Rather, we must be familiar with and master things that are far away. Also, we mustn't look down on things that are close (=sitting buddha=zazen). We mustn't value things that are close. We must be familiar with and master things that are close. We mustn't disparage things we see with the eyes (=close). We mustn't esteem things we hear with the ears (=far). We mustn't disparage things we hear with the ears. Without leaning either way, we must make the eyes and ears sharp and clear. This concludes Dogen Zenji's comments on Nangaku's first statement.

Then, Baso answers, "Yes, zazen is certainly a picture of making a buddha." We must clearly understand this expression and penetrate it. No matter what happens, we must say this expression is "making a buddha". This is to say that you are being made into a buddha by zazen. It is also saying that you are making a buddha through practicing zazen which is a form of being a buddha.

Furthermore, this statement is saying that the tangible form of buddha is appearing in each moment, one after the other during zazen. “A picture of making a buddha” is the form of “dropping off body -mind” (emptiness) itself. The dropped-off body-mind is actualized as a picture of making a buddha. In this way, there are various aspects of this fact of making a buddha. The picture of making a buddha implies, in a sense, that a zazen practitioner is being dragged around by this form or picture called zazen and getting tangled up in it.

This is something we must know all about. Baso is saying that surely zazen is a picture of making a buddha. Zazen is always a tangible picture of making a buddha. And then, that picture must come before becoming a buddha. (This is because I am being made into a buddha by the work of the picture=zazen). That picture must also come after becoming a buddha (because I am verifying the reality of the originally being a buddha by doing zazen=picture). And also that picture exists exactly at the same moment of becoming a buddha (because the tangible form of buddha is appearing in zazen).

Now, let's try posing the following question: How much ‘making buddha (*sabutsu*)’ is entwined (*katto*) around this one picture, in other words, this concrete form of zazen? It isn't possible for a person sitting in zazen to be conscious of the totality of zazen itself. In fact, even if it isn't possible to be conscious of this, all kinds of “making buddha” is entangled with this picture. It is by means of entanglement and further entangling this entanglement and continuing this entanglement that zazen continues to be zazen. At that time, the entanglement that each branch of every making buddha makes up is certainly the whole of making buddha itself. Each branch is the realization of each picture. It is impossible for one picture to circumvent this entanglement (zazen and making Buddha are two sides of the same coin). If you go ahead and try to avoid this entanglement, in short, if zazen and making buddha are separated, then the life of making buddha is immediately lost. Losing life is, however, also one of the pictures.

Nangaku then picks up a tile and starts to polish it on a rock. Daijaku (Baso) then says, “Master, I understand that you are polishing a tile to demonstrate that in zazen we are solely doing what can only be indicated as the

interrogative ‘What’ because it is beyond all sort of descriptions with words.” (On the surface, it sounds as if Baso is asking, “Master, what are you doing?” But we must notice that Dogen Zenji doesn't understand it that way). Anyone who saw Nangaku doing this would think he was polishing a tile. But that is only to see the façade. No one sees the true meaning of polishing a tile. That is why Baso expressed the form of his question about polishing a tile as “What?” “What” is the only way he could have said it. The practice of zazen that casts off all limits is surely the polishing of a tile. This world and other worlds are different, but in this sense of polishing a tile, there is a principle that never ceases. It is important to clearly decide that there is a fundamental point in humbly studying various kinds of work rather than only being attached to our own views as our own views.

(To be continued).

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

Lecture (1)

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(This article is rewritten based on my lecture at Clouds in Water Zen Center, Minnesota in 2004, transcribed and edited by Rev. Charlie Korin Pokorny. Rev. Kando Dorsey edited the revised version.)

About the text of *Shobogenzo* “Maka-Hannya-Haramitsu”

This is the second chapter of the 75 chapter *Shobogenzo*. The first chapter is *Genjokoan*. Yet “Maka-Hannya-Haramitsu” was written earlier than *Genjokoan*. In terms of the chronological order of Dogen Zenji's life, this was the first chapter written within *Shobogenzo*.

Dogen Zenji came back from China to Japan in 1227. He was 27 years old and for a few years he stayed at a Rinzai monastery named Kenninji in Kyoto. He had practiced there for several years with his first teacher of Zen, Myozen, before he went to China. In that year, immediately after he

came back from China, he wrote the first version of *Fukanzazengi* (Universal Recommendation of Zazen). This version was lost therefore we cannot read it. He probably revised it in 1233, the year he wrote “Maka-Hannya-Haramitsu” and *Genjokoan*. This version in his holograph still remains and is stored at Eihei-ji. Much later, probably in his forties, he revised *Fukanzazengi* again and put it in the eight volumes of *Eiheikoroku* (“Eihei Dogen’s Extensive Record”), which is the version we recite, read and study today.

After a few years staying at Kennin-ji, he left the monastery because he did not think that it was a good place for him. Kennin-ji was a Rinzai monastery, and Dogen had studied with a Chinese Soto Zen master whose name was Nyojo (Ch. Rujing), and who transmitted Soto Zen. He also found that Kennin-ji monastery had lost a genuine spirit of practice after the founder Eisai died and Myozen went to China. Myozen and Dogen went to China together in 1223. Myozen died there and Dogen came back by himself.

He left Kennin-ji in 1230, and started to live by himself in Fukakusa south of Kyoto when he was thirty years old which was the year he wrote his second writing, *Bendowa*. My translation of *Bendowa* is *The Wholehearted Practice of the Way*, and I translated Uchiyama Roshi’s *teisho*, or commentary, on this writing. The title of that book is *Wholehearted Way* (Tuttle, 1997). *Bendowa* is an excellent and important text to understand Dogen’s teaching about zazen practice. Since the 17th century when it was found, *Bendowa* has been considered as the first chapter of the 95 volume version of *Shobogenzo*. However, *Bendowa* was not included in any collection of *Shobogenzo* by Dogen Zenji and his successors.

Dogen lived by himself, or probably with a few of his students, in this hermitage, outside of Kyoto for a few years. Here he established his first monastery named Koshoji, in 1233, and during that first summer practice period, which was the very first practice period of the Soto Zen tradition in Japan, he wrote this writing, “Maka-Hannya-Haramitsu.” This is his third writing after *Fukanzazengi* and *Bendowa*.

In the very beginning of practice with his own sangha, he wrote these comments on the *Heart Sutra*. This shows that his zazen practice was based on his insight of the Mahayana teaching of *prajna paramita* or *Hannya-Haramitsu*.

In my understanding, “Maka-Hannya-Haramitsu” and *Genjokoan* are very closely related. *Genjokoan* is one of the most important writings of Dogen to understand his basic teaching. “Maka-Hannya-Haramitsu” was written in the summer during the practice period and *Genjokoan* was written in the fall of the same year, 1233. A few months after he wrote “Maka-Hannya-Haramitsu” he wrote *Genjokoan*, so those two are even chronologically very close.

After he wrote those two early writings in the *Shobogenzo*, he did not write another chapter of the *Shobogenzo* until 1238 when he wrote *Shobogenzo* “Ikka-no-myōju” (“One Piece of Bright Jewel”). For almost five years he did not write anything in the *Shobogenzo*, but instead he wrote more basic or practical writings such as *Tenzo Kyokun*. *Tenzo Kyokun* is “Instruction for the Cook”, or *tenzo*.

He also wrote *Gakudo Yojinshu* (“Points to Watch in Studying the Way”), which is a collection of 10 independent, short essays about the important points we should keep in mind when we practice the buddha way. He also wrote a manual for the tokudo ceremony to become a home leaver. He wrote those practical writings in order to establish practice at his monastery, because that was the first time Soto Zen had been transplanted to, and actually practiced in Japan.

Whole Body Seeing Emptiness

(Text)

“*The time of Avalokiteshvara bodhisattva practicing profound prajna paramita is the whole body clearly seeing the emptiness of all five aggregates. The five aggregates are forms, sensations, perceptions, predilections, and consciousness. This is the five-fold prajna. Clear seeing is itself prajna.*”

This chapter is almost like a commentary on the *Heart Sutra*. This is a translation I made when I lived in Minneapolis. With a small number of people I had a translation workshop once a week for 3 years, and we translated this chapter of the *Shobogenzo*, and also my teacher, Uchiyama Roshi’s *teisho*, on “Maka-Hannya-Haramitsu.” Unfortunately after I left Minneapolis I did not have time to really work on it, so it is not yet published.

When you read the first sentence, it is very clear that this is just a paraphrase of the first sentence of the *Heart Sutra*. If you are familiar with the Japanese version of the *Heart*

Sutra, the first sentence is:

“*Kan ji zai bo satsu gyo jin han-nya ha ra mi ta ji sho ken go on kai ku do issai ku yaku.* (觀自在菩薩行深般若波羅蜜多時照見五蘊皆空度一切苦厄)

The English translation in *Soto School Scriptures for Daily Services and Practice* is as follows: “Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, when deeply practicing prajna paramita, clearly saw that all five aggregates are empty and thus relieved all suffering.”

Dogen Zenji did not mention that last part, “thus relieved all suffering.” This is interesting to me because in the Sanskrit version of the *Heart Sutra* we can read today, this part is not there, and Dogen took it out.

This sentence in the *Heart Sutra*, and Dogen’s first sentence in this *Shobogenzo* “Maka-Hannya-Haramitsu”, are almost the same. The only difference is that he put in one word - that is ‘whole body’. In Japanese what Dogen wrote is:

“*kan ji zai bo satsu no gyo jin han-nya hara mita ji wa konshin no sho ken go un kai ku nari.*” (觀自在菩薩の行深般若波羅蜜多時は、渾身の照見五蘊皆空なり。)

The words in bold face are what Dogen added to the sentence in the *Heart Sutra*. “*kan ji zai bo satsu no.*” “No (の)” is a Japanese word to show ‘of or “s”, “Avalokiteshvara’s.” “*Wa (は)*” is a particle which shows the subject of the sentence. In Dogen’s sentence, the subject of the sentence is not Avalokiteshvara as a person, but “the time of Avalokiteshvara’s deeply practicing prajna paramita.” “*Nari (なり)*” is an auxiliary verb which shows that the subject and the predicate are equal. A particle and an auxiliary verb are called dependent words which cannot be used independently. They are always together with independent words such as noun, verb, adjective etc. and they themselves have no meaning.

The only independent word which shows some concept Dogen added to the original sentence in the *Heart Sutra* is “*kon shin (渾身)*”, whole body. I think this word is really important because this insertion shows Dogen’s understanding of what *prajna paramita* is.

In my translation, “The time of Avalokiteshvara

Bodhisattva practicing prajna paramita is the whole body clearly seeing the emptiness of all five aggregates.” This is a strange sentence not only in English but also in Japanese. It does not make sense in our logic or common sense. Some people who were working with me on this translation had a question about what this meant. This is a strange sentence, but I wanted to keep the Japanese structure for this sentence because to me this is a very important point Dogen would like to teach us. If we read in Japanese, probably because you are familiar with the Japanese way of chanting the *Heart Sutra*, this is something like: *Kan ji zai bo satsu gyo jin hannya hara mi ta ji*, is “*kon shin*” no (whole body’s) *sho ken go on kai ku* (clearly seeing five skandhas are empty). This time of practicing profound *prajna paramita* of Avalokiteshvara is the whole body’s clearly seeing the emptiness of the five skandhas. Dogen Zenji changes the subject of this sentence from “Avalokiteshvara” to “the time” of Avalokiteshvara. Basically what this sentence says is that “the time” is “the whole body.” How can a certain time be the whole body, or the whole body clearly seeing the emptiness of all five aggregates?

This expression of “whole body” came from, or is at least related to, the koan story about Avalokiteshvara from the *Blue Cliff Record*. Dogen Zenji wrote one chapter of the *Shobogenzo* on this koan story. The chapter is entitled “Kannon.” Kannon is another name of *kan ji zai bosatsu*. This name, Kannon *bosatsu* is more well known in the Buddhist community. *Kan ji zai bosatsu* and Kannon *bosatsu* (or Kanzeon *bosatsu*), are different translations of one name in Sanskrit - that is Avalokiteshvara.

Kanzeon *bosatsu* is a translation made by Kumarajiva in the Lotus Sutra. *Bosatsu* is bodhisattva and Kanzeon (觀世音) means “seeing the sounds of the world.” *Ze* is world, and *on* is sound. The bodhisattva who sees or contemplates the sounds of the world is the meaning of the name of Kanzeon *bosatsu*. In the case of *Kan ji zai bosatsu*, *ji zai* is freedom, liberation, or being within the self, so *kan ji zai* is the bodhisattva who sees liberation or who sees freely.

The difference in meaning came from the difference of interpretation of the Sanskrit word Avalokiteshvara. In Kumarajiva’s interpretation (kanzeon) Avalokiteshvara is *avalokita* and *shvara*. *Shvara* means the sound and *avalokita* is to see. The other translation, *kan ji zai bosatsu*,

was made by Genjo (Hsuan Tsang), the great Chinese translator who traveled to India and lived there to study Buddhism for 17 years and went back to China with masses of Buddhist texts which he translated from Sanskrit to Chinese. The *Heart Sutra* we usually chant was translated by Genjo (Hsuan Tsang), and he interpreted this name of the bodhisattva as *avalokita* and *ishvara*. *Ishvara* is to be free, or a person liberated. That is the meaning of *kan ji zai*, seeing freely or seeing freedom.

In this koan story Avalokiteshvara was called Great Compassion Bodhisattva (Daihi-bosatsu) who has thousands of hands and eyes. The koan story is about two Chinese Zen masters in our lineage; Dogo Enchi (Daowu Yuanzhi, 769-835) and Ungan Donjo (Yunyan Tansheng, 780-841). Ungan Donjo was the teacher of Tozan Ryokai (Dongshan Liangjie, 807-869), who was the founder of the Chinese Soto School. Dogo Enchi was Ungan's dharma brother, and it is also said that they were literally brothers.

They practiced together for many years visiting different teachers and one time Ungan, the younger brother, asked Dogo, "What does the Great Compassion Bodhisattva do with so many hands and eyes?" Avalokiteshvara can manifest his/her body in thirty-three different forms. Thirty-three here means numberless, or infinite, and one of the forms of Avalokiteshvara is with 1,000 hands and 1,000 eyes. You may have seen a picture of the bodhisattva with a thousand hands (where the hands look like wings). Each hand holds something, which means Avalokiteshvara is helping each and every being in the way each and every one need. Avalokiteshvara's thousand hands and eyes are the symbol of Buddha's compassion.

The question in this koan is: What does Avalokiteshvara do with so many hands and eyes? This is an interesting question. Dogo, the elder dharma brother said, "It (Avalokiteshvara's activity) is like a person groping for a pillow at night with his hands behind his back." This means while this person is sleeping in the night, and night actually means total darkness. These days, even at midnight we have some light, so we do not experience real darkness unless we are in the basement and switch the light off. But in ancient times, when it was dark, it was really dark. While sleeping, when we move our bodies, sometimes we lose the pillow. The pillow goes somewhere. As this person

is within complete darkness and is half asleep, while trying to find the pillow, the thinking mind is not operating. The person cannot see anything, but still by groping, somehow the person can find the pillow and go back to deep sleep.

That means she/he has no thinking, or no discrimination, and yet she/he responds to each person and every need people have, and she/he freely helps those people. This darkness, or night, is an important word in this koan. It means that at night we do not see anything and we have no discrimination. Avalokiteshvara's work to help living beings is not based on her/his discriminating mind, but it is a natural response to each and every situation. That is what compassion means according to Dogo's saying.

Then Ungan, the younger brother of Dogo, said, "I get it." Dogo asked, "How do you understand it?" Then Ungan said, "**The whole body is hands and eyes.**" In the original sentence this whole body is *henshin* (遍身). *Henshin*, Avalokiteshvara's entire body, is hands and eyes means that for Avalokiteshvara her/his entire body is hands and eyes to see things clearly, as in the *Heart Sutra*. This seeing clearly is not discrimination. To see things as they are without discrimination is prajna. Avalokiteshvara's one thousand hands and eyes clearly see the reality of all beings without discrimination and perform skillful means to help each and every being. What Ungan said is that Avalokiteshvara's entire body is hands and eyes. Hands and eyes are not a part of his body, but the entire body is eyes and hands. This is referring to wisdom and the functioning of wisdom that is compassionate activities.

Then Dogo said, "You expressed it almost completely, but only 80 or 90%." Your answer is almost complete and yet it is not perfect. There is a little bit more we should say. Ungan then asked, "My understanding is like this, how about you, respected brother?" Then Dogo said, "**The whole body is hands and eyes.**"

This is almost the same thing, but the difference is that Ungan said *henshin* and Dogo said *tsushin* (通身). The words are different but the meanings are the same. *Hen* and *tsu* both mean entire or whole and *shin* means body. When we read this very short Chinese sentence, we do not really understand what the difference is between Ungan's expression and Dogo's expression. Both of them are saying

that Avalokiteshvara's entire body, or whole body, is hands and eyes.

To make one possible interpretation, in the case of Ungan, it seems like hands and eyes are in all parts of Avalokiteshvara's body. I think that might be the meaning; that each and every part of Avalokiteshvara's body is his or her hands and eyes. Dogo's expression probably means that it is not a matter of hands and eyes are all different parts of his body, but rather that his single body as a whole *is* eyes and hands. There is a very slight difference. As an expression it is not really clear, the meanings are almost the same.

One English translation - is that the first one is translated as the whole body is covered with eyes and hands and the other is that the whole body is eyes and hands. I think that is a similar interpretation of the difference. In the case of Ungan he still thinks about the body of Avalokiteshvara and hands and eyes as *two things and he says these are one*. In the case of Dogo, these are not two things in one, these are one and the same thing. I think that is the difference. Dogen put the similar word, *konshin* (渾身), *whole body*, or *entire body*, into the first sentence of the *Heart Sutra*, so when we understand Dogen's sentence in *Shobogenzo* "Maka Hannya-Haramitsu," we need to understand this koan, otherwise we do not really understand why Dogen was writing this way. This word *konshin* has the connotation "with all one's might," and used for example, in such expressions as: to put all *one's* energies into one's work or to give it everything *one* has got.

The activity of using the hands is the function of wisdom because when we see the reality of a situation, we try to do things based on that reality that we see or are awakened to. That is the connection or meaning, of hands and eyes. In the case of the *Heart Sutra*, when we see the emptiness of the five skandhas, we have to do things based on this seeing or understanding or awakening of emptiness. That is the meaning of eyes and hands. Avalokiteshvara is the symbol of compassion, but that compassion needs to work. It needs to do something to help living beings. Darkness or night, in some Zen literature such as in the *Sandokai*, "Merging of Difference and Unity" refers to the absolute or ultimate truth beyond any discrimination. Light, or brightness, in the *Sandokai* refers to our day-to-day life in which we see things clearly with discrimination.

In the darkness we have no discrimination, but the point is that the branching stream, which is our day-to-day lives, flows within the darkness. That means our concrete, actual, day-to-day life is actually flowing in the darkness. This means wisdom beyond discrimination. So this is a very paradoxical expression. It is almost like discrimination within nondiscrimination, or actual concrete activity or practice based on ultimate reality beyond any discrimination. Those two are really one thing and interact with each other. That is our actual life.

In our practice, when we sit facing the wall in the zendo we are completely free from discrimination. We can let go of all discrimination, all thoughts, and we can be really free from any thought, even the thought that discriminates between discrimination and non-discrimination. Do you understand? We do nothing. But within this doing nothing, all different kinds of thoughts are coming up, and yet we do nothing. Within nondiscrimination, all discriminating thoughts are coming up and going away, that is our zazen. Dogen Zenji describes this in *Fukanzazengi* as, "Think of not thinking. How do you think of not thinking? Beyond thinking."

However, in our daily lives outside of the zendo, we have to do something, and in order to do something, we have to make distinctions and make choices—which is better, which is the best, in this certain situation and these conditions. And yet when we are doing things using our discriminating mind, still this entire activity is done within the reality that is beyond discrimination. These two are what are referred to when the *Sandokai* says, "the spiritual source shining clearly in the light."

The spiritual source is ultimate reality (darkness), but this is within light, and branching streams (light) are within darkness, which is reality beyond discrimination. These two lines are a paradox. These are two seemingly opposite things mentioned within one sentence, and that is the most important part of the *Sandokai*. Two opposite things are penetrating each other, and yet, as they are, completely one.

In both cases thinking and not-thinking, or thinking-of-not-thinking and beyond thinking, are working with each other. Both are there in our zazen in which we let go of everything, and in our daily lives where we need to use our discriminating mind. This relates to Katagiri Roshi's

expression, *total dynamic work*. Both sides are really working as a total dynamic work (zenki, 全機) whether we are sitting quietly or doing things in our busy day-to-day lives.

Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma Book 63

Bringing Forth the Mind of Bodhi *Hotsu bodai shin*

Translated by Carl Bielefeldt
with the 2008 Seminar in Japanese Buddhist Texts,
Stanford University: Brenda Cooper, Jason Protass,
Sakakibara Sayoko, Mollie Vallor

INTRODUCTION

This fascicle of the *Shōbōgenzō* was composed in the spring of 1244, at the monastery of Kippōji, in the province of Echizen (present-day Fukui prefecture). It appears as number 63 in the 75-fascicle redaction of the *Shōbōgenzō*. The work is perhaps more often known as *Hotsu mujō shin* (“bringing forth the mind of the supreme [awakening]”), the title supplied in the 60-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō*, where it occurs as number 53. This text is not to be confused with another essay bearing the title *Hotsu bodai shin* that is found in the 12-fascicle collection of the *Shōbōgenzō*: although the colophons of the two works give the same time and place of composition, there is no overlap in their content.

The term *hotsu bodai shin* refers to the aspiration of the bodhisattva to attain the supreme awakening of a buddha. In his treatment of this theme, Dōgen expands the sense of the term in two directions. On the one hand, from the very outset, he identifies the bodhisattva’s aspiration with “trees and rocks,” with “the whole earth,” with the mind that is the reality of all things. On the other hand, he associates this aspiration with the concrete acts of Buddhist piety and practice—from offering alms, reciting a buddha’s name, and sponsoring temple building, to entering the clerical order, practicing meditation, and preaching the dharma. Dōgen describes such acts as “unconditioned” and “unproduced,” and strongly criticizes those Buddhists who dismiss them as merely good deeds generating merit for the

agent. Fashioning an icon or erecting a stupa, he says, is itself “making a buddha and practicing buddhahood.”

The celebration here of the common acts of Buddhist ritual practice seems something of a departure from a teaching Dōgen elsewhere attributes to his master Rujing: that offering incense, bowing, invoking the buddhas, practicing repentance, and reading scriptures are all unnecessary in the study of Zen. Some interpreters have suggested that the message of the *Hotsu bodai shin* was intended especially for the lay supporters of Dōgen’s new temple, Daibutsuji, the ground breaking ceremony for which took place only five days after the composition of the text.

This translation is based on the text appearing in Kawamura Kōdō, *Dōgen zenji zenshū*, volume 2 (1993), pp. 160-168. A more fully annotated version can be found on the website of the Soto Zen Text Project: <http://scbs.stanford.edu/sztp3>. Other English renderings of this work appear in Kōsen Nishiyama and John Stevens, “Developing the Supreme Mind,” *Shōbōgenzō*, volume 2 (1977), pp. 121-125; Yuho Yokoi, “Awakening to the Highest Supreme Mind,” *The Shobogenzo* (1986), pp. 715-725; Thomas Cleary, “Awakening the Unsurpassed Mind,” *Rational Zen: The Mind of Dōgen Zenji* (1992), pp. 95-103; and Gudo Nishijima and Chodo Cross, “Establishment of the Will to the Supreme,” *Master Dogen’s Shobogenzo*, Book 3 (1997), pp. 253-263.

The translator expresses his debt to the members of the 2008 Seminar in Japanese Buddhist Texts, with whom he read the text at Stanford.

Shōbōgenzō Book 63

Bringing Forth the Mind of Bodhi *Hotsu bodai shin*

The Eminent Ancestor of the Western Country [i.e., India] said, “The Snowy Mountains are comparable to the great nirvana.”¹

We should realize that this compares what should be compared. To say that they should be compared is to say

they are “personally once,” they are “immediately obvious.”² To take up “the Snowy Mountains” is “comparable to the Snowy Mountains”; to take up the great nirvana is to compare it to the great nirvana.

The First Ancestor of Cīnasthāna [i.e., China] said, “Each mind is like trees and rocks.”³

“Mind” here is “mind is like.” It is the mind of the whole earth. Therefore, it is the mind of self and other. Each mind of the humans of the whole earth, as well as of the buddhas and ancestors, and of the devas and dragons of all the worlds of the ten directions—these are trees and rocks; there is no mind apart from them. These trees and rocks are by their nature not cooped up in the realm of being and nonbeing, emptiness and form. With this mind of trees and rocks, we bring forth the mind, practice and verify [bodhi]; for they are trees of mind, rocks of mind. Through the power of these trees of mind and rocks of mind, the present “thinking of not thinking” is realized. Upon hearing the “sound of the wind” in the trees of mind and rocks of mind, we first transcend the followers of the alien ways; before that, it is not the way of the buddha.

The National Teacher Dazheng [Nanyang Huizhong] said, “Fences, walls, tiles, and pebbles—these are the old buddha mind.”

We should try studying in detail, “Where are these “fences, walls, tiles, and pebbles”; we should ask, “What is it that appears like this?” “The old buddha mind” is not on “that side of the King of Emptiness”: it is “the gruel is enough, the rice is enough”; the “grass is enough, the water is enough.”⁴

Taking it up like this, “sitting as a buddha” and “making a buddha” are called “bringing forth the mind.” Broadly put, in the examples of those bringing forth the mind of bodhi, rather than taking up the mind of bodhi from elsewhere, they take up the mind of bodhi itself and bring forth the mind. To “take up the mind” means to take up “a single blade of grass” and construct a buddha, to take up “a tree without roots” and construct a sutra. It is to offer sand to the buddha, to offer slop to the buddha. It is to provide one ball of food to living beings, to offer five flowers to a tathāgata. To practice a bit of good when encouraged by another, to bow to the buddha when

charmed by a demon, are also to bring forth the mind of bodhi. Not only this: [those who bring forth the mind] recognize that the home is not a home, abandon the home and leave the home, enter the mountains and practice the way, proceeding by faith and proceeding by dharma. They construct buddhas and construct stupas; they recite sutras and remember the buddhas. They preach the dharma for the multitude; they seek a master and inquire of the way. They sit with legs crossed; they make a single bow to the three treasures; they make a single invocation, “*namo buddhāya.*”

In this way, the examples in the eighty-thousand fold collection of dharma [i.e., the Buddhist scriptural canon] are without exception bringing forth the mind. There are those who attained the way having brought forth the mind in a dream; there are those who attained the way having brought forth the mind while drunk. Or they bring forth the mind and attain the way amidst flying blossoms and falling leaves; or they bring forth the mind and attain the way amidst plum blossoms and jade bamboo. Or they bring forth the mind and attain the way while being in the heavens; or they bring forth the mind and attain the way while being in the ocean. All of these bring forth the mind of bodhi while being within bringing forth the mind of bodhi. They bring forth the mind of bodhi while being within body and mind; they bring forth the mind of bodhi while being within the body and mind of the buddhas; they bring forth the mind of bodhi while being within the “skin, flesh, bones, and marrow” of the buddhas and ancestors.

Thus, the present constructing of stupas, constructing of buddhas, and the like, are surely bringing forth the mind of bodhi. They are bringing forth the mind of “directly becoming a buddha”; they should not be abandoned half way. They represent the merit of the “unconditioned”; they represent the merit of the “unproduced.” They are the contemplation of suchness; they are the contemplation of the dharma nature. They are the samadhi of the assembly of the buddhas; they are acquiring the *dhāraṇī* of the buddhas. They are the mind of *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*; they are the fruit of the arhat; they are the realization of the buddha. Beyond these, there is no unconditioned or unproduced dharma.

Nevertheless, stupid people of the Lesser Vehicle say that constructing images and erecting stupas are “conditioned”

meritorious deeds; one should leave off and not perform them. “To stop thinking and congeal the mind”—this is “the unconditioned”; “the unborn,” “the unproduced”—this is the true reality; the contemplation of the “real mark of the dharma nature”—this is the unconditioned.⁵ They have made this kind of talk their custom in past and present throughout the Western Heaven and the Eastern Earth [i.e., India and China]. Accordingly, though they commit grave offenses and heinous offenses, they do not construct images or erect stupas; though they are defiled in the thicket of affliction, they do not remember the buddhas or read the scriptures. This is a bunch that not only damages the seeds leading to birth as humans and devas but discards the buddha nature of the tathagatas. It is truly sad that, though they have encountered the time of buddha, dharma, and sangha, they have become enemies of buddha, dharma, and sangha. While climbing the mountain of the three treasures, they have returned empty handed; while entering the ocean of the three treasures, they have returned empty handed. Thus, though they encounter the advent of a thousand buddhas and ten thousand ancestors, they have no prospect of attaining deliverance and have lost the means to bring forth the mind. They are like this because they do not follow the scriptures and do not follow good friends; they are like this because many of them follow the false teachers of alien ways. We should quickly discard the opinion that constructing stupas and the like is not bringing forth the mind of bodhi. Washing our minds, washing our bodies, washing our ears, washing our eyes, we should not listen to it. Following Buddhist scripture, following good friends, we should return to the true dharma and study the buddha dharma.

In the great way of the buddha dharma, there is a chiliocosm of scriptures within a single dust mote; there are innumerable buddhas within a single dust mote. A single blade of grass, a single tree, are both the body and mind. Where “the myriad dharmas do not arise,” the one mind also does not arise; where it is “the real mark of the dharmas,” it is the real mark of a single dust mote. Therefore, the one mind is the dharmas; the dharmas are the one mind, are the entire body. Were constructing stupas and so on conditioned, buddhahood, bodhi, suchness, and the buddha nature would also be conditioned. Since suchness and buddha nature are unconditioned, constructing images, erecting stupas, and so on, are not

conditioned: they are an unconditioned bringing forth of the mind of bodhi; they are merit unconditioned and uncontaminated. We should firmly believe that constructing images and erecting stupas are bringing forth the mind of bodhi. From them will grow a vow to last a million kalpas; they are bringing forth the mind that will not decay for millions of millions of myriad kalpas. They are called seeing the buddha and hearing the dharma.

We should realize that to construct a buddha or erect a stupa by collecting wood and stone, piling up mud, or collecting gold, silver, and the other seven treasures is to construct a stupa or construct an image by collecting the one mind. It is to make a buddha by collecting emptiness after emptiness; it is to construct a buddha by taking up mind after mind. It is to construct a stupa by piling up stupa after stupa; it is to construct a buddha by making buddha after buddha appear.

Hence, it is said [by the Buddha Śākyamuni] in the [Lotus] sutra, “When I had this thought, the buddhas of the ten directions all appeared.” We should understand that, when one thought is “making a buddha,” the “thought buddhas of the ten directions” all appear. When one dharma is “making a buddha,” all the dharmas are making a buddha.

The Buddha Śākyamuni said, “When the morning star appeared, I, together with the sentient beings of the earth, simultaneously achieved the way.”⁶

Hence, bringing forth the mind, practice, bodhi, and nirvana must be a “simultaneous” bringing forth the mind, practice, bodhi, and nirvana. The body and mind on the way of the buddha is grass and trees, tiles and pebbles, is wind and rain, water and fire. To turn these into the way of the buddha—this is bringing forth the mind. We should take a pinch of empty space and construct a stupa, construct a buddha; we should swallow a handful of the valley stream and construct a buddha, construct a stupa. This is bringing forth *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*. It is a hundred thousand myriad instances of bringing forth a single instance of bringing forth the mind of bodhi. Practice and verification are also like this.

Despite this, to hear only that bringing forth the mind is a single bringing forth without any further instances of

bringing forth the mind, or that the practices are innumerable while the fruit of verification is a single verification—this is not hearing the buddha dharma, is not knowing the buddha dharma, is not encountering the buddha dharma. Bringing forth the mind of a thousand million instances of bringing forth is definitely bringing forth a single instance of bringing forth the mind. The bringing forth the mind of a thousand million people is the bringing forth of a single bringing forth the mind; a single bringing forth the mind is a thousand-million instances of bringing forth the mind. Practice and verification, turning the dharma are also like this. Were they not grass, trees, and the rest, how could they be body and mind? Were they not body and mind, how could they be grass and trees? This is so because, were they not grass and trees, they would not be grass and trees.

Pursuing the way in seated meditation—this is bringing forth the mind of bodhi. Bringing forth the mind is neither one with nor different from [pursuing the way in seated meditation]; seated meditation is neither one with nor different from [bringing forth the mind]; they are not twice or three times; they are not arranged [in some order]. Each should be studied in this way. If collecting grass, trees, and the seven treasures to construct stupas and construct buddhas were conditioned throughout and did not realize the way, the thirty-seven aids to bodhi would also be conditioned; the effort of humans and devas of the three realms taking up body and mind to practice would all be conditioned and would have no ultimate stage.⁷ Grass and trees, tiles and pebbles, as well as the four major elements and the five aggregates, are all only mind, are all the real mark. All the worlds of the ten directions, the buddha nature of true suchness, are equally “the dharmas abiding in their dharma position.”⁸ How could grass, trees, and the like, be within the buddha nature of true suchness? How could grass, trees, and the like, not be the buddha nature of true suchness? The dharmas are not conditioned, not unconditioned; they are the real mark. The real mark is the real mark of suchness; suchness is the present body and mind. We should bring forth the mind with this body and mind. Do not dislike walking on water or walking on rocks. Just taking up a single blade of grass and constructing a sixteen-foot golden body [of a buddha], taking up a single atom and building a stupa shrine for an old buddha—this is bringing forth the mind of bodhi. It is seeing the buddha; it is seeing the dharma; it is hearing the dharma; it is making a buddha; it is practicing buddhahood.

The Buddha Śākyamuni said, “*Upāsakas* and *upāsikās* [i.e., lay men and women], sons and daughters of good family, offer the flesh of wives and children to the three treasures, offer the flesh of their own bodies to the three treasures. How could bhiksus who have received these donations of the faithful not practice?”⁹

Therefore, we know that making offerings to the three treasures of food and robes, bedding and medicines, monastic lodgings, fields and woodlands, and the like, is making offerings of the flesh, skin, bones, and marrow of “one’s own body” and of the bodies of one’s “wife and children.” Entered into the ocean of the merit of the three treasures, they are of “one taste.” Since they are of one taste, they are the three treasures. The merit of the three treasures appearing in the skin, flesh, bones, and marrow of “one’s own body” and that of one’s “wife and children” is exerted effort at pursuing the way. Now, taking up the nature and marks of the World Honored One, we should study the skin, flesh, bones, and marrow of the way of the buddha. These “donations of the faithful” are bringing forth the mind; how could the bhiksus who receive them not practice? They must be right from head to tail.

Hence, as soon as one dust mote is brought forth, one mind is brought forth in accordance with it. Once one mind is brought forth, a bit of one emptiness is brought forth. In sum, it is when students or non-students bring forth the mind that they can first plant a single buddha nature.¹⁰ When, turning the four major elements and five aggregates, they practice with a sincere mind, they will attain the way; when, turning the grass and trees, fences and walls, they practice with a sincere mind, they will attain the way: for the four major elements and five aggregates and the grass and trees, fences and walls, have the same study, for they have the same nature, for they have the same mind, the same life, for they have the same body, the same function.

Hence, in the communities of the buddhas and ancestors, there are many who pursued the way by taking up the mind of grass and trees; this is a form of bringing forth the mind of bodhi. The Fifth Ancestor was once a practitioner who grew pines. Linji worked at planting fir and pine on Mt. Huangbo. On Dongshan, there was old Mr. Liu, who planted pines. In this, they take up the discipline of pine and cypress and gouge out the eye of the

buddhas and ancestors; in this, they show that the power to play with the living eye is opening the clear eye.

To construct stupas, construct buddhas, and the like, is to play with the eye, is to imbibe bringing forth the mind, is to employ bringing forth the mind. Those who have not acquired the eye of constructing stupas and the like have not attained the way of the buddhas and ancestors. It is after we acquire the eye of constructing buddhas that we make a buddha and make an ancestor. To say that constructing stupas and the like will eventually turn to dust, that it is not the true merit, to say that training in the unborn is firm, that it is not defiled by dust—these are not the words of the buddha. If we say that stupas turn to dust, then the unborn will also turn to dust. If the unborn does not turn to dust, the stupas also will not turn to dust. Where are we, that we're talking about “conditioned” and talking about “unconditioned”?

It is said in the [*Avatamsaka*] sūtra,
When the bodhisattva in the midst of birth and death
First brings forth the mind,
Solely seeking bodhi,
Firmly and immovably,
The merit of that single thought
Is so deep, broad, and boundless
That were the tathāgata to describe its particulars,
He could not exhaust them by the end of the kalpa.

We should clearly recognize that taking up birth and death and bringing forth the mind is “solely seeking bodhi.” “That single thought” must be the same as a single blade of grass, a single tree; for it is a single “birth,” a single “death.” Nevertheless, the depth of its merit is “boundless,” the breadth of its merit is “boundless.” Though the tathāgata, taking “the end of the kalpa” as his words, were to “describe its particulars,” he could not expect to exhaust them. He could not exhaust them because, “when the ocean dries up,” the bottom remains, “though a person dies,” the mind remains. Just as the depth and breadth of “that single thought” are boundless, so the depth and breadth of a single blade of grass, a single tree, a single rock, a single tile, are also boundless. When a single blade of grass, a single rock, is seven feet or eight feet, “that single thought” is also seven feet or eight feet, and bringing forth the mind is likewise seven feet or eight feet.

Therefore, “entering the deep mountains and thinking of the way of the buddha” is easy; constructing stupas and constructing buddhas is extremely difficult. Both may be developed from vigor and perseverance, but there is a great difference between taking up the mind and being taken up by the mind. As this kind of bringing forth the mind of bodhi builds up, the buddhas and ancestors appear.

Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma
Bringing Forth the Mind of Bodhi
Book 63

Presented to the assembly on the fourteenth day of the second month of the second year of Kangen (*kinoe-tatsu*) [i.e., 1244], at Kippō shōja, in the Yoshida district of Etchū.

Copied this on the tenth day of the third month of the second year of Kōan (*tsuchimoto-u*) [i.e., 1279], at Eiheiji. Ejō

Bringing Forth the Mind of Bodhi

NOTES

1. A saying attributed to the Chan Master Baizhang Huahai (749-814). “Eminent ancestor” here refers to the Buddha Śākyamuni; the “Snowy Mountains” refers to the Himalayas.
2. The odd expression “personally once” here probably indicates something like “they directly encounter each other.”
3. A continuation of the quotation from Baizhang. The “First Ancestor of Cīnasthāna” refers to Bodhidharma.
4. I.e., “the old buddha mind” is not a transcendental state but Zen practice itself.
5. The “real mark” is a technical term for the ultimate reality of something.
6. A saying found in Chan texts for which there seems no source in extant sutras. The sentence is often parsed “I, together with the earth and sentient beings.”
7. The “thirty-seven aids to bodhi” is a common list of the factors in the attainment of awakening; the “ultimate stage” refers to the culmination of the bodhisattva path.
8. Quoting a popular line in the *Lotus Sutra*: “the dharmas abide in their dharma position; the marks of the world constantly abide.”
9. Accounts of bodhisattvas offering their bodies, their wives, and their children for the sake of their quest for awakening can be found in the sutras, but no source is known for this particular passage.
10. “Students and non-students” refer respectively to those on the Buddhist path and those who have completed the path.

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NEWS

January 5, 2008

Miyazaki Ekiho Zenji, the 78th Abbot of Daihonzan Eiheiji, passed away at the Dharma age of 92 and physical age of 108. The main funeral for Miyazaki Zenji will be held at Daihonzan Eiheiji on April 5, 2008.

Fukuyama Taiho Zenji was installed as the 79th Abbot of Daihonzan Eiheiji. The official installation ceremony for Fukuyama Zenji will be held at Daihonzan Eiheiji on April 5, 2008.

International Events

North American Soto Zen Conference and Workshop

Place: Zenshuji, Los Angeles, California

Date: March 9 and 10

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