

DHARMA EYE



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 News of Soto Zen Buddhism: Teachings and Practice
 

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## A Greeting

Rev. Gengo Akiba  
 Director, Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office

I would like write a little bit about why the Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office (Sotoshu Shumuchō) has made efforts to administer the *Sotoshu Statutes* in this country.

The Sotoshu is a Buddhist sect that is founded on the basic, eternal principle of “Abiding by the True Dharma singularly transmitted by the Buddha–ancestors, the Sotoshu doctrine is to realize for oneself *Shikantaza* (just sitting) and *Sokushinzebutsu* (the mind itself is Buddha)” and that people belonging to this sect shall primarily honor Shakyamuni Buddha and Dogen Zenji and Keizan Zenji, as the Two Founders, as well as believe in the fundamental tenets of “Zen and the precepts are one” and “practice and verification are not two.” The people of the Sotoshu, regardless of whether they are ordained or not, always keep in mind that through the mind of deep compassion and meeting others with love and mercy they will spread the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha and the Two Founders to as many people as possible throughout the world. Based on this faith and mind which seeks the Way, the *Sotoshu Statutes* have been adopted, observed, and carried out. This is all expressed this way in the *Sotoshu Constitution*. This sect has many various rules and regulations that have been set down in accordance with this basic policy. The Sotoshu, which is comprised of 15,000 temples and approximately 26,000 priests around Japan, strives to maintain the order and discipline of the group by means of these rules and regulations.

In 2007, the Sotoshu Shumuchō carried out the process of admitting overseas priests into the Sotoshu lineage with the same regulations as Sotoshu priests in Japan. These regulations are called “Regulations Concerning the Ranks of Priests and Ranks of Kyoshi of the Sotoshu” and have to do with the status of priests and teachers. With the completion of this work (several unresolved issues remain, however), overseas priests were put on an equal status with that of Japanese priests and from the standpoint of the Sotoshu have the same duties and rights.

How do overseas priests, who have been increasing in numbers, view the Sotoshu in Japan and how would they be dealt with by the *Sotoshu Statutes*? This major question, which has been a source of concern for many years, has finally been resolved. The result was that overseas priests who had devoted their lives to the practice of and spreading of the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha and the Two Founders were recognized and respected.

The next issue which lies before us is the registration of overseas temples. Different than the matter of the status of individual priests, this is a not a simple procedure because of various questions relating to the way things are decided in each country such as: laws, the management of temples, and decisions made within temples.

As a general rule, of course, when any set of regulations are applied to a group of people, it is necessary to do this based on mutual understanding that comes through

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sufficient explanation of the intentions, goals, and the vision that is intended through these regulations. These regulations should also be neither too strict nor too loose and applied according to the judgment of the group's common wisdom and good sense.

This is even more so in the case where there are different traditions, history, national characteristics, customs, cultures, and so on. People who practice Soto Zen overseas may feel under quite a bit of pressure and feel it unreasonable and unjust when the *Sotoshu Statutes*, which have been formed over a long period of time, are applied to them. There is no other way to resolve these problems than through consultation, discussion, and mutual understanding.

In this article, it is not possible to discuss these rules and regulations in detail, but first I would like to take a bird's eye view of North American Zen.

In 1960, Rev. Reirin Yamada (later to become the 75th Head Priest of Eihei-ji) arrived at his post as the North America Kaikyo Sokan at Zenshuji in Los Angeles. Not long after arriving in LA, he established the "Study Center for Encouraging and Fostering Zen Buddhism." Rev. Wako Kato took a position there as a lecturer. A regular zazen-kai was established. Rev. Hakuyu Maezumi, a young kaikyoshi, enthusiastically gave zazen instruction there. At Soko-ji in San Francisco, Rev. Shunryu Suzuki, who was appointed as a kaikyoshi in 1959, established a zazen-kai in response to the one in LA. Young Japanese priests, who aspired to practice and teach in the West, were invited to join this study center by the North American Office (Sokan-bu). In accordance with such an invitation, Rev. Dainin Katagiri and others came to the US. Later, Rev. Kobun Chino and others came to San Francisco. This was the beginning of the early developmental stage of Shikantaza and the "practice and verification are one" of Soto Zen in North America.

Since then, half a century has passed. Soto Zen has developed in North America to the point that there are presently more than 200 practice centers which have been established here and are run by priests and lay members. The spirit of devising ways to correctly transmit the True Dharma and Zen Buddhism to this land by the various

roshis mentioned above – who should be called the first generation of Soto Zen Buddhist teachers in North America – was then caused to be established and take root in North America through the efforts of the second and third generations of their disciples, their earnest efforts to succeed their teachers, ingenuity, and repeated trial and error. This outcome, over their many years of diligence, was to form sanghas throughout North America. This was thanks to the support of the sangha members who participated in the Zen life of zazen and samu, people who resonated with and esteemed the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha and the Two Founders. In addition, it can also be said that it was possible for North American Soto Zen to demonstrate an abundant and multi-colored development in a sangha format because of exchange with the Sotoshu in Japan and its cooperative support and efforts.

Now, there are also American disciples of Japanese Sotoshu teachers who have acquired practice experience at Japanese training monasteries and who have also joined in Soto Zen teaching activities and built sanghas in North America. Furthermore, Japanese-born Soto priests have come forward to go to America and participate in teaching activities. I don't think there will be an end to the Japanese Sotoshu priests who have the aspiration to teach in North America. Taking this situation into account, it is certain that priests in the Dharma lineages extending from the various streams of Dogen Zenji and Keizan Zenji will continue to be born and new sanghas will continue to be formed.

It can be said that North American Soto Zen is truly in the midst of its developmental stage and is the same as the pure Zen of Tang China. Surely, Soto Zen and its sangha groups will be founded and organized in a way that is suitable to the history, climate, regional features, customs, national characteristics, laws, and economy of North America. But the most important thing is that the Dharma as well as the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha and the Two Founders are correctly transmitted and inherited, and that the Way of Buddha is correctly practiced.

In the *Zengaku Daijiten* ("Great Dictionary of Zen Studies") published by Komazawa University, the Dharma

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lineages of the Zen sect from the time of Shakyamuni Buddha to the present day are carefully and clearly recorded. Some lineages stop, while others continue unbroken, forming wide currents. This great river of Dogen Zenji's and Keizan Zenji's Dharma lineages has reached this American land as an unbroken current. (In 1967, this same great river of Dharma lineages reached Europe through the influence of Rev. Taisen Deshimaru). In all countries of the world, Zen priests who have devoted themselves to the warm Dharma current of this great river and firmly established the Self are called Soto Zen priests.

Well, then, what is a priest? This is a person who shaves his or her head, chants and studies sutras, wears a koromo, dons an okesa, and walks the way of a Bodhisattva. What is a Zen priest? A person who studies the records of the ancestors, who does samu, who sits zazen, has one robe and one bowl, who practices, and has the Three Things. What is a Sotoshu priest? In addition to the things just mentioned, this is a person who believes in and follows the teachings of Shikantaza, practice and verification are one, and observes the Sixteen Precepts. A person who engages in these fundamentals is called a Soto Zen priest, regardless of his or her nationality.

A sangha is formed around the nucleus of such a priest. At the same time, the priest of the sangha establishes the regulations that are necessary to follow. In a Zen sangha, these regulations are called "Shingi." The shingi protect the shape of the Zen sangha. The old shingi (which no longer exist) created by Hyakujo in Tang China established the uniqueness of the Zen sect regulations by comparing the Mahayana and Theravadin precepts. Since that time, various shingi have come into effect modeled on the *Zen-en Shingi* of Song China. In Japan, the shingi that were compiled include the "Eihei Shingi," the "Keizan Shingi," the "Shosorin Ryaku Shingi," and so forth. Each individual temple formed its own rules and regulations. These shingi are established with the flavor of the teaching style of the ancestral teachers, each country's national characteristics, as well as the time in history when they were created. The shingi of Soto Zen sangha in North America are presently being established, proceeding in the direction of taking into account not only priests but lay people as well, so that as many people as possible

can make these regulations the basis of their lives and practice by coming together in a greater Mahayana model. Shall we call them shingi that are open to modern society? Should they be called shingi that can be open widely as a sangha gate for the general public?

In North America, there are more than 200 Soto Zen centers, both large and small, with these characteristics that are called sanghas or temples. There are more than 350 people who are active as Soto Zen priests. Presently, these sanghas and priests are tied together with a sense of solidarity, floating in this same great river of the Dharma lineages and the opportunity is brewing, with a historical necessity, to built one boat. In North America, this boat is the Soto Zen Buddhist Association. The practitioners of Soto Zen in North America are now designing this boat and devoting themselves to stabilizing the keel. Even though they are all very busy, they gather once every two years to speak together passionately, to discuss and debate, trying to decide about this ship's design and the size of the keel. Establishing contacts and communication, they continue to draw up the plans. This ship must be a modern-day Noah's ark.

Torn between unity and diversity, American society involves and requires dynamic boat building and at the same time embraces many problems. (These problems include the gap between the rich and the poor, problems with the family and education, violence, crime, disease, violence depicted in the media, racial discrimination, and so on.) It would be best for as many people as possible in American society to board this "21st century Noah's ark" built and designed by American Soto Zen people so that they can know about Mahayana Soto Zen, study, and help each other through practice to establish the Self through finding true peace of mind. The efforts to nail on the boards of the sides of the ship and to raise the sails is the great compassionate heart of the Zen priests who are floating on the great river of Shakyamuni Buddha and the Two Founders' Dharma lineage.

Will it take 10, 20, or 50 years to complete this Noah's ark of North American Soto Zen?

The various rules and regulations of the Japanese Sotoshu can be compared with the "Kanrinmaru." The

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Kanrinmaru was a boat built about 150 years ago and sent on a goodwill mission to carry samurai from Japan to America as part of the ratification process of a friendship treaty between Japan and America. This treaty, by the way, which only had the objective of opening Japan was unfavorable to Japan. Japan didn't have autonomous rights to impose custom duties.

Setting this question aside, however, I think that the second best path for the North American Soto Zen priests and sanghas (temples) is to board this Kanrinmaru for some time and float on the great river of Shakyamuni Buddha and the Two Founders' Dharma lineages. If you all ride on the Kanrinmaru and help with the piloting of the boat, you can become navigation officers. It is utterly impossible for me to think that by having you ride on the Kanrinmaru that the Japanese Sotoshu will bind you with disadvantageous, confining restrictions, or that it wants to control you, or make you think bitter, difficult thoughts.

In addition, the *Sotoshu Statutes* is not an aircraft carrier packed with Zero fighters like those that raided Pearl Harbor. I simply cannot think that the Sotoshu Shumuchō is crossing over to North America in order to destroy North American Soto Zen.

In the *Sotoshu Statutes*, it is resolved that the main purpose of the Sotoshu is to spread the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha and the Two Founders, so that by means of those teachings as many people as possible can return to a peaceful, settled state of mind. Nevertheless, there is, of course, the danger of deviating from the original intention of the established rules and regulations so that the rules themselves restrict the people within the frame of jurisdiction. This point is something that the people in charge of applying the regulations must really exercise sufficient caution.

In any case, when the time comes that North American priests and sangha members board the boat built by the people of North America's Soto Zen – the Noah's ark for the 21st century – and are then floating on the current of the great Soto river, then it will be fine for those passengers of the Kanrinmaru to transfer to that new ark. Together, they can start out on the great sea of Soto Zen, exchanging signals with other Soto Zen boats, sometimes sailing freely, sometimes learning from other boats the method for using a compass, studying how to keep the boat in order, how to maneuver it, and proceeding in the direction of the great religious principle of Zen Buddhism. This is what the Sotoshu envisions.



Kokusaifukyoshi who attended the 2009 North America Conference and Workshop

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## Tokozan Jikishoan's Tenth Anniversary Celebration: the Mountain of Success filled with Joy, Gratitude, and Meaning

Rev. Ekai Korematsu  
Resident Priest of Jikishoan, Melbourne, Australia

Jikishoan's tenth anniversary celebration, held at the Australian Shiatsu College on April 26, 2009, was a great success. Over 150 people attended and enjoyed this memorable occasion.

The success of this celebration was the culmination of 10 years of Jikishoan's members' practice and commitment. It was only made possible through the help, support, and contributions of many people (both monetary and non-monetary) - special guests, teachers, members and friends of Jikishoan and of other Buddhist traditions and organizations.

Special *Ryo* (department) groups were formed in order to realize the anniversary events. Eighty members took part in the two-day program which formally began the day before the official celebration. *Bansan* (an orientation meeting with teachers and guests) was held in the Zendo after the set up of the venue was completed in the late afternoon. Every participant, including the special guest teachers, were introduced by name and assigned a role in one of the respective Ryos. This was followed by a welcome dinner for our guests at the Gold Leaf, a Chinese restaurant in Preston.

We were blessed by the presence of two inspiring teachers, Ven. Traleg Rinpoche and Ven. Phouc Tan, and other representatives from local Buddhist organizations. Their participation and presence broadened our awareness and experience of Buddhism and of our community as well, opening up a new dimension for Jikishoan in the future.

We had the good fortune to welcome twelve special guests and teachers from Japan. The three official delegates attended, two from Sotoshu Shumicho (the Administrative Headquarters of Soto Zen Buddhism in Tokyo), Rev. Yoyu Miyashita Roshi (Director of the Education Division) and Rev. Shobun Yamashita and one

from the Soto Zen Buddhism International Center in San Francisco, Rev. Ikki Nambara.

Another nine guests attended, including five teachers (resident priests) from temples in Japan: Tshoji, Chukoji and Chosenji in Okayama, Tsudaiji in Miyagi and Shoshinji in Sapporo. Most of these guests came to the tenth anniversary celebration because of the strong connection and enduring gratitude they have for the late Ikko Narasaki Roshi (Jikishoan's founder) as their own teacher.

Miyashita Roshi asked me to provide a mountain name for Jikishoan prior to his visit. This was a surprise and an honor, meaning that the Sotoshu (the structural organization of Soto Zen Buddhism in Japan) was prepared to endorse Jikishoan as a full-fledged Soto temple. Buddhist temples in China and Japan traditionally have a mountain name.

After phone consultation with my elder dharma brother, Hokan Saito Roshi, in Iwakuni in Japan, "Tokozan" (洞光山) was chosen as Jikishoan's mountain name. "To" (洞) is derived from "Soto Buddhism" (曹洞宗) and it literally means "a cave." "Ko" (光) comes from my master's dharma name, "Ikko" (光) meaning "light." "Zen" or "San" (山) means "a mountain." In a way, we can relate to this new name, "Tokozan" as being our family name and Jikishoan as being our first name. This name facilitates the successful continuation of Jikishoan's Dharma lineage and the growth of our family tree.

As Jikishoan has no building or temple of its own, I have always considered the members and their activities as our "temple itself" and have thus encouraged the members in their practice. I had never thought of having a mountain name before. "Mountain" (山) has a deep meaning, and in the Zen tradition is itself a koan. I appreciate Miyashita Roshi's kindness and sagacity very

much.

As part of the morning program, Ven. Traleg Kyagbon Rinpoche gave a public talk on the topic “Tibetan Buddhism and Zen.” There were many good questions and his special teaching and answers were greatly appreciated.

The official celebration was very enjoyable for everyone. After two formal services, a dedication to Shakyamuni Buddha and to Jikishoan’s dharma lineage, co-lead by Rev. Seido Suzuki Roshi (Toshoji’s abbot) and Ekai Osho, a lunch break was held. The Tenzo Ryo, lead by Kiyoko, produced exceptionally tasty and beautifully presented food during the whole celebration.

In the afternoon, Jikishoan members and friends presented their unique talents in an entertainment show. Children and families participated in the Buddha’s birthday ceremony, lead by Ven. Thich Phouc Tan. Miyashita Roshi lead Jikishoan’s Tenth Anniversary Ceremony and everyone offered incense. After these official events, more than fifty people enjoyed an informal celebration dinner.

I want to mention some other events that added extra meaning for Jikishoan’s 10th anniversary and for myself. The first charter agreement between Jikishoan and Jikishoan Canberra Bun-in (a branch temple of Jikishoan) was signed; Kiyoko Myokan Taylor completed her book translation project *A Look at the Man: the Life the of Buddha* and offered the newly published book to members and friends in the community; a new zendo in Dromana was opened; and Paul Senryu, one of the inaugural members of Jikishoan, and Georgia Genmyo Nicholls, the first editor and creator of *Myoju* (the Jikishoan newsletter) were ordained.

Congratulations to all! In a nut shell, the members of Jikishoan demonstrated well that we are a 10-year-old sangha and fully expressed what was possible in marking this occasion. Joyfulness and a spirit of offering prevailed. I can’t wait to see what Jikishoan will be like over the next ten years as it becomes a fully-grown sangha.

Lastly, from the bottom of my heart, I would like to

express my sincere thanks to our guests and teachers, and to the members and friends for their generous contributions to and participation in the celebration.

May the merit of this event extend universally, so that we, together with all beings, can realize the Buddha Way.

Gassho, Ekai

鳳山山居の偈

### A Verse of the Phoenix Mountain Retreat

萬象之中 独露身

In the phenomenal world, the whole body revealing itself,  
更に何処にか根塵を着けん

Furthermore, where could any dust collect?

首を回らし独り枯藤に椅って立てば

Turning the head around and standing alone by the  
withered vine,

人山を見 山人を見る

A person looks at a mountain, a mountain looks at a  
person.

*By Daichi Zenji, founder of Shogoji (translation by Ekai)*





10th Anniversary Ceremony



Bathing the Buddha



Group photo

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## Zuise: Celebrating Our Dharma Relations

By Rev. Egyoku Nakao  
Zen Center of Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California

On December 18 and 19, 2008, I participated in *Zuise* ceremonies at the two main Soto Zen training temples in Japan, Eiheiji and Sojiji. The purpose of this ceremony is to serve as Honorary Head Priest for the day as a way of paying respects to the founders of the Japanese Soto Zen School, Eihei Dogen Zenji, the founder of Eiheiji in 1244 in the mountains of Fukui Prefecture, and Keizan Jokin Zenji, the founder of Sojiji in 1324. A fire destroyed the original Sojiji, which was then moved and rebuilt in urban Yokohama in 1907.

The elaborate ceremonies of *Zuise* can easily obscure its underlying importance, which is best described by the Japanese word *in-nen*. *In-nen* refers to the notion that every event occurs because of indirect and direct causes. I like to refer to it simply as karmic relations—the many intricate, seen and unseen relationships that are always at play in supporting one’s life. It was as though the glistening web of all that led to the moment of *Zuise* and of a Hakuyu Maezumi Roshi—his coming to the West, the hard and blessed work of planting Dharma seeds, and all that has flowed from that, came suddenly into view.

*Zuise*, performed after a priest has received Dharma Transmission, involves several ceremonies, which begin with offering incense in the monastery’s Founder’s Hall. Traditionally, the Founder’s Halls at Eiheiji and Sojiji are treated as an inner sanctum with restricted access, but open to the *Zuise* participants. The other ceremonies include officiating at the early morning ceremonies in the Buddha Hall and Dharma Hall and a beautiful ritual during which one receives the *Zuise* certificate from the Zenji and the implement for officiating. The morning is concluded with a special breakfast prepared just for *Zuise* participants, a notable feature of which was an elaborate flower made of seaweed.

As the first Dharma successor of Maezumi Roshi, Rev. Tetsugen Glassman became one of the first Americans to perform *Zuise*. The Japanese Soto Zen School has long

faced the challenging question of how to integrate Western-trained Dharma teachers into their system. For a time, Westerners were allowed to do *Dendoshi Haito*, a ceremony similar to *Zuise* but without the privilege of offering bows and incense at the Founder’s Halls at each monastery, upon completion of a one-month special sesshin in Japan. Rev. Gengo Akiba, Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office and colleague of Maezumi Roshi, has worked steadfastly for the past fifteen years towards enabling Western-trained teachers to do *Zuise*.

Over the past ten years, Rev. Akiba has asked me to do *Zuise*. When he came again to see me last summer and explained that there were seven Western-trained teachers who were being allowed to do the full *Zuise*, without the requirement of the one-month sesshin and not the lesser ceremony of *haito*, I thanked him for his kindness and agreed to go.

The path, however, was a bumpy one, not just for the decade it took to convince me to take the time from my heavy schedule at Zen Center of Los Angeles, but also because my Dharma Transmission teacher Rev. Glassman had, in the meantime, quit the Soto Zen School and disrobed as a priest, thereby becoming a lay person. Rev. Glassman fully anticipated the disturbance this would cause, but he remained steadfast in his support of my *Zuise*. The formalities of dropping Rev. Glassman from the Sotoshu needed to be attended to, as well as the question of who would sign my papers for *Zuise*. Rev. Junpu Kuroda, Maezumi Roshi’s younger brother and Abbot of Kirigayaji in Tokyo, stepped in and became my teacher, with the full blessing of Rev. Glassman. Thus, quite unexpectedly, I gained a new teacher, which has been a delightful karmic occurrence, and the intricacies of *in-nen* further revealed themselves.

So on December 18 at Eiheiji and December 19 at Sojiji, I joined Rev. Taigen Leighton (Ancient Dragon



Zen Gate Temple, Chicago) and Rev. Seijo Leclerc (Paris) for Zuisse. Our guide, the able and calm Rev. Kiko Tatedera saw to our care, as did the hospitable monks at both monasteries. At Eiheiiji, we were greeted by the 500-year-old cypress trees planted by the fifth abbot, Giun Zenji, and unseasonably warm December weather.

Each monastery has its own flavor and variation in details. Since Maezumi Roshi trained at Sojiji, I was most familiar with their style. At Eiheiiji, we wore our brown transmission okesa with the top corner folded and tucked in, and used a ceremonial whisk (hossu), a stick with long hair attached. At Sojiji, we wore red okesa with the top corner worn over the left arm and used a nyoi, a red lacquered ceremonial stick with a lotus face, representing the Buddha's face. At Eiheiiji, we turned to the right; at Sojiji to the left; at Eiheiiji we purified ourselves with incense; at Sojiji with water, and so forth. We wore red slippers at both monasteries, too small even for my feet, which I often lost along the way as we speedily shuffled—sometimes running—through the underground passages that connected the great halls at Sojiji and climbed hundreds of steep stairs to the great halls at Eiheiiji. It was a lot to remember and we did our best, continuing through all missteps, deeply immersed in the sanctity of tradition.

At Eiheiiji, we sidestepped high up onto Dogen Zenji's altar—his image is deeply recessed, but one can feel a presence. Keizan Zenji's altar is also high and shows him with his five disciples—we bowed to all of them, on slippery floors that made awareness not an option. One of the most moving ceremonies for me was being greeted by the Zenjis of each monastery. The Zenji read each of our certificates, and we went forward to receive them, all in a prescribed manner. Then we were served a special tea — a cup of warm water and a pair of unseparated chopsticks with a slice of delicious pickled plum at the tip. We stirred the plum into the water three times, ate the plum, then drank the tea. Then came celebratory cakes, over which we placed our certificates from the Zenji, followed by the hossu at Eiheiiji, and the nyoi at Sojiji. We were now ready to officiate.

At Eiheiiji, Rev. Hoitsu Suzuki, son of the late Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, came by to congratulate us. Rev. Hakujin Kuroyanagi, who had spent many years at Zenshuji in Los

Angeles and an old friend, came from his home temple in Nagano to guide our stay. But the most striking moment of in-nen arose for me as we were rounding a corner on the way to the Zenji's quarters at Sojiji. We sped past a monk—his eyes were shining, his smile beatific and all of a sudden, I saw that it was Maezumi Roshi, and I became completely disoriented. I felt my body swerve towards him and was about to call out to him, and then he was gone.

Recently at ZCLA, I was gardening after morning service. Walking in my boots up from the gardening bins, I encountered Rev. Bill Yoshin Jordan, who is remodeling the dokusan rooms. His face was pale. "Egyoku," he said, "for a moment I thought you were Maezumi Roshi walking towards me." "I know," I replied, "I saw Maezumi Roshi at Sojiji."



Rev. Egyoku Nakao

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When I returned from Japan, I went to Zenshuji to thank Rev. Akiba and share my experiences with him. He was greatly relieved that his promise to Maezumi Roshi to “look after me” had been fulfilled. I apologized for giving him such a hard time. Time will reveal whether any of my successors will one day do *zuisse*. However it goes, these karmic affinities find their expression in one way or another. In-nen — so much is at work on our behalf, how could it ever be obscured?

(This article first appeared in the May/June 2009 issue of ZCLA's *Water Wheel*).



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## On Completing *Zuisse*

By Rev. Doyo Kinst,  
Ocean Gate Zen Center, Santa Cruz, California

In December 2008, Rev. Eijun Cutts (San Francisco Zen Center), Rev. Josho Cabarga (Chapel Hill Zen Center), Rev. Myogen Stucky (San Francisco Zen Center) and I traveled to Japan to participate in the *Zuisse* ceremony on December 18th and 19th at the two head temples in Japan, Sojiji and Eihei-ji. The opportunity to offer respect and gratitude to the great teachers and founders of our school, Eihei Dogen Zenji and Keizan Jokin Zenji and to serve as honorary Head Priest for the Day in these two revered places of practice was a privilege. We were accompanied by Rev. Yuji Ito, who most ably and patiently guided and cared for us throughout the trip.

We began at Sojiji, and then traveled to Eihei-ji. In each place we registered, were provided with an arrival tea, received instruction in the forms of the ceremony and were given a beautiful dinner. The first morning at Sojiji, entering the Hatto, purifying my hands with the water

and climbing the steep steps in order to offer incense to Keizan Zenji, I was reminded of the care and generosity that is a part of each step we take on the Way, and of the generations of devoted teachers who have transmitted the dharma. At Eihei-ji, approaching the altar of Dogen Zenji, I felt the presence of those who had passed the teachings, warm hand to warm hand, to me, particularly my own teacher Rev. Sojun Weitsman. Offering my bows of heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to the founders and to all who followed was a deeply moving experience.

Following our offerings to Dogen Zenji and Keizan Zenji, we formally received our certificates in a simple beautiful ritual. To hear my name spoken in those halls, to receive certification, strengthened my sense of connection with the source of the tradition. After being served tea, we officiated at morning service as a group, stepping in and out of our red slippers, following chants,

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some as familiar as our own names, some less familiar requiring special attention.

Care and generosity was evident in every aspect of the journey – the instruction we received in the forms and rituals, the help we received with the unique aspects of each temple, the liveliness of the monks who took care of the myriad of details and guided us down long hallways and ancient steps, the delicious meals, all expressed the vitality of the practice in these two temples. Each night, we three women gathered around the table in our sleeping quarters and quietly reviewed the ceremony, drawing on our training and our intention to honor all we had received from our teachers. I have known, practiced with, and learned from these women for many years, being with them in that way was a delight. There was much to remember and, though all of us tried our best to remember all the instructions, there were times of forgetfulness and more than a few mistakes. Everyone was very kind and patient with us. It was a joy to whole heartedly participate in the ritual and immerse ourselves in the tradition. We then had a relaxing tea and a lovely and delicious breakfast. At Eiheiiji our tea was with Daijo Ohta Roshi, the Director of Eiheiiji, and we were delighted to hear him speak of Shunryu Suzuki Roshi and tell us of his visits to the United States. I was particularly moved by his peace work and by the book he gave to each of us “The Lantern and the Crane.”



Following Zuise, Rev. Cutts and I visited Kyoto and enjoyed the beauty of the temples and grounds. I returned to my sangha encouraged and strengthened in my efforts to carry on the Sotoshu Way. I found myself reflecting, again, on Dogen Zenji's instruction to repay our indebtedness to our Ancestors through our day to day ceaseless practice. I am deeply grateful to everyone who made this possible, particularly Rev. Gengo Akiba, the Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office, for his efforts on behalf of Western trained teachers.



Rev. Doyo Kinist

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## Shobogenzo Zazenshin - A Free Translation (5)

Rev. Issho Fujita, Leader of the Masenkai

Nangaku said, “Because you are already a sitting buddha, you are killing buddha.” (Usually this passage is read “If you are a sitting buddha, then it would be killing buddha” but it shouldn’t be read in this way in this context). To put it simply, when you are sitting in zazen, you are totally one with a sitting buddha, so there is no need to become buddha again. There is no room for buddha to enter here in addition. There is no need for another buddha. He can do without buddha. So, this is called “killing buddha.” (When Rinzai said, “When you meet the buddha, kill the buddha; when you meet the ancestors, kill the ancestors,” this meant breaking down attachment to the buddhas and ancestors. Here, however, Dogen presents killing buddha in the form of sitting buddha).

So far, various discussions have been made about sitting buddha, but proceeding one step further and investigating sitting buddha, there is the virtue of killing buddha in sitting buddha. When sitting buddha is truly embodied as sitting buddha, then there is no doubt that this is the buddha of killing buddha (a buddha who has completely killed buddha). If you want to explore the concrete form of killing buddha, then it certainly must be “sitting buddha.” The word “kill” is the same as the word used by common people in the everyday world (for example, it has the meaning of murderer when a person’s life is taken away), but in this case we shouldn’t think it has the same meaning. (In the oldest commentary on the *Shobogenzo* called “Gosho”, it says “the intimate principle of zazen is called killing buddha.”) Furthermore, When we investigate the state in which sitting buddha is killing buddha, we must study about “There is the form of *inmo* (what)” (Usually, this sentence is read “what form does it have?” as a question, but here, since killing buddha “has no fixed form”, ‘what’ implies the unlimited, formlessness of zazen itself and so, it should be read as “There is a form of What!” (=transcending limitations). This is because sitting buddha is not a particular, static form that is fixed. We must clearly keep in mind that within the virtue of sitting buddha there are the virtues of killing buddha. We

must also investigate whether we are killing a person or not killing a person (whether there is room in zazen for a person to enter or not). Zazen is just zazen and so there isn’t any room for buddha or person to enter. The reference here to “person” means an individual self-consciousness.

Nangaku said, “As you are already attached to the sitting form, you never attain the principle.” (Usually, this would be read as “If you attach to the sitting form, you won’t be able to attain the principle.” This is interpreted to mean that this is a caution against being attached to the sitting form, but that is not the meaning here). To be attached to the sitting form, in other words, if we are sitting zazen with aiming at correct posture, that is sufficient. Other than that, there is no need of trying to reach “the principle.” This is because zazen is not an activity that sets up a goal to arrive sometime at a fixed point of destination out there. (Attachment here does not mean attachment in the usual sense, but rather has the same meaning as kill; i.e. being very close or intimate (to be one with something, so that nothing else can enter between)).

The “attached to the sitting form” mentioned here is to practice the sitting form in the attitude of nothing to attain, nothing to realize, that is of no-clinging (this is called “throwing away”), correctly and precisely with the whole body (this is called “touching”). Here there is the principle that sitting buddha is only to sit to the end in zazen, ever aiming at more and more correct and better sitting posture. Since it isn’t possible to do zazen with an incorrect sitting posture, even if you can attain the correct sitting posture like a crystal-clear ball that was wonderfully pure and unadulterated, it must be an activity that never reaches a fixed destination point. This sort of practice which goes in this direction is called dropped-off body-mind. Someone who had not done correct zazen would not have been able to wonderfully express zazen in words the way that Nangaku and Baso did in their exchange.

Such an expression comes out from the time of sitting zazen, from the person who sits zazen, from the sitting buddha, and from the buddha who is learning sitting. Simply sitting down and crossing the legs like common people do is not the same as sitting buddha. Even if the

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sitting posture of a common person happens to resemble that of a sitting buddha or a buddha sitting, these two are completely different. This is because in the full-lotus position of zazen there is a human being becoming buddha (a human being making himself or herself into buddha) and there is a human being of becoming buddha (a becoming-buddha human being). Nevertheless, even if there are people becoming buddha, all people are not becoming buddha from the beginning, separated from zazen. This is because it isn't possible to become buddha without doing zazen. Also, buddhas that are sitting buddhas are not all human beings any more. All buddhas are, to the end, all buddhas and are absolutely not all human beings. Therefore, common people are not buddhas and buddhas are not common, human beings. Sitting buddha is also like this. We must never confuse the distinction between Buddha and common people (indivisible, but not the same).

This was so for Nangaku and his disciple Baso: the master was outstanding and the disciple was also great, having the same capability as his master. Baso superbly verified that sitting buddha is becoming buddha, which is expressed in the words "picture of becoming buddha." ("Zazen certainly is a picture of making Buddha"). Also, it was Nangaku who demonstrated by "polishing a tile is making a mirror" that making buddha must be realized by sitting buddha, ("ancient mirror and bright mirrors are made into mirrors by polishing tiles"). Stated differently, while Baso principally demonstrated becoming buddha and Nangaku principally demonstrated sitting buddha, both of them thoroughly taught that both sides of the truth of zazen, becoming buddha and sitting buddha, are one. Among the monks who gathered under and were taught by Nangaku, they practiced like this. Among the monks who gathered under and were taught by Yakusan, they practiced in the way that is expressed as "Thinking of not thinking."

This is something you must know well: the pivotal essence (opportunity) of every buddha and every ancestor is absolutely sitting buddha. This means that it is a mistake to understand that zazen is the pivotal essence only for beginners and latter-day students. Those who are already called buddhas and ancestors have all used this pivotal opportunity of zazen. Those people who still have

not become buddhas or ancestors have never seen it even in a dream. That the Buddhadharmas has been transmitted in India and China certainly means that sitting buddha has been transmitted. This is because this is precisely the most important point of the Buddhadharmas. If the Buddhadharmas isn't transmitted, then zazen isn't transmitted. In this way, it is zazen that has been transmitted as the only principle inherited from ancestor to ancestor. Those people who have not purely received this fundamental principle are not buddhas or ancestors. If this one dharma of zazen is not clearly illuminated, then all other dharmas will also not be illuminated and all practices as well will not be illuminated. Those people who have not illuminated myriad dharmas cannot be called "clear-eyed" nor are they people who have attained the Way. How could it be said that such people are the same as those who have been buddhas and ancestors throughout the past and present?

For this reason, we must be absolutely certain that the buddhas and ancestors have received and transmitted zazen (they received zazen from their predecessors purely, without anything mixed in, and passed it on to the next person). To be illuminated by the brightness of the buddhas and ancestors is to exert yourself in the practice of zazen. The reason is that it is through the grace of the Buddhist teaching that we are able for the first time to correctly practice zazen. Despite this, stupid people mistakenly think that the brightness of the buddhas is like the light of the sun and the moon or else they think it is like the brightness of a pearl or a flame. Nevertheless, the brilliance of objective, physical objects like the sun or the moon are at most only a form of karma that is transmigrating through the six realms and can never be compared to the light of the buddhas. "The buddha's brightness" means listening to and having faith in a single phrase which vividly captures the truth of Buddhadharmas, preserving and protecting it securely, and receiving and transmitting zazen. If they are not illuminated by that brightness, they fail to have faith and to preserve a single dharma.

(To be continued)

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

### Lecture (4)

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[Text]

*There was a monk in the assembly of Shakyamuni Tathagata. He thought to himself, "I should venerate and make prostrations to this most profound prajna paramita. Within it (emptiness), although there is neither arising nor perishing of all things, there are practical approaches such as precepts, meditation, wisdom, emancipation and insight resulting from emancipation. Also, there is a practical approach consisting of the ranks of entering the stream, once-returning, non-returning, and arhat. Also, [practices of] the self-awakening and the awakening-being are practical approaches. Unsurpassable perfect awakening is also a practical approach. The [Triple] Treasure of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha is also a practical approach. Turning the wondrous dharma wheel, saving various sentient beings, is also a practical approach.*

*The Buddha knew his thoughts and said to the monk, "So it is! So it is! The most profound prajna paramita is indeed subtle and difficult to fathom."*

#### Venerating Prajna Paramita

*There was a monk in the assembly of Shakyamuni Tathagata. He thought to himself, "I should venerate and make prostrations to this most profound prajna paramita."*

Dogen Zenji quotes three paragraphs from Chapter 291 of the 600-volume *Mahaprajna Paramita Sutra* translated by Xuanzang (玄奘, Genjo). The title of the chapter is "Forms of Attachment and Non-attachment," 著不著相品, Taisho No.220, Vol.6, p.480). This is the first of the chapters about venerating Prajna Paramita.

In this paragraph, there was a monk within Shakyamuni Buddha's assembly. When the Buddha expounded the teaching on Prajna Paramita, he thought to himself that he should venerate and make prostrations to Prajna Paramita because of its profundity.

"To venerate and make prostrations" is a translation of *keirai* (敬礼). *Kei* means to respect, to honor, to revere or to venerate. *Rai* (*rei* in common Japanese pronunciation) means "to salute", or "to bow", and as a noun, it means "courtesy", or "ceremony." *Kei*, inner respect or reverence is expressed as *rai* (*rei*), with certain forms, gestures or behaviors using our body and/or speech. In Buddhism, a more common term for this activity is *raihai* (礼拝), "to make a prostration" or "do obeisance."

Dogen Zenji wrote a fascicle of the *Shobogenzo* entitled "Raihai-tokuzui" ("Getting the Marrow by Doing Obeisance", 礼拝得髓) to point out the significance of venerating a master of the Buddha Way. This expression was taken from the story of Dharma transmission from Bodhidharma to the Second Ancestor of Chinese Zen, Huike (Eka). When Huike was asked to say something about his understanding of Dharma, he just made a prostration toward Bodhidharma without saying anything. Then the master said to him that he had attained the marrow.

In the fascicle, Dogen quotes a saying of the Buddha:

"When you meet a teacher who speaks of supreme enlightenment, you must not consider the teacher's caste; you must not look to see whether the features of the teacher's face are pleasing; you must not scorn the teacher's behavior. It is precisely because you *venerate and prize the teacher's wisdom* that you should let him or her eat food worth hundreds or thousands ounces of gold every day. You should make offerings by presenting the teacher with heavenly foods; you should *do obeisance and respectfully pay homage* to the teacher three times daily and not let feelings of disdain and weariness arise. When you behave in this way [toward your teacher], the path to enlightenment will surely appear. By having practiced in this fashion since I first set my mind [on realizing buddhahood], I have today attained supreme and perfect enlightenment."

"*Venerate and prize*" is a translation of the expression *sonju* (尊重), which literally means to respect and value. "*(The teacher's) wisdom*" is Prajna. "The teacher's" is the translator's addition. Literally this sentence is, "Because you venerate Prajna, you should let him or her eat....."

In the Soto Zen tradition, we practice making prostrations as the expression of our inner respect, veneration and gratitude. For example, during morning service, we make three prostrations (*sanpai*) before and after chanting sutras toward the enshrined Buddha or Bodhisattva. In some formal occasions, we make prostrations to our teachers or other respectable masters.

When we make full prostrations, we touch the five parts of our body (*gotai tochi*); both feet, both forearms and the head to the ground and we place our hands palm up about the height of our ears. This means, we accept the Buddha's feet on our hands bringing them up above our head. The head is the highest part of our body and the feet are the lowest parts of the Buddha's body. This obeisance means that we put the Buddha and his teachings above ourselves. We empty ourselves and become one with the Buddha and the Dharma.

The less formal way of bowing in Buddhism is to lower our heads with *gassho* (putting palms and fingers together in front of our chest) while either standing or sitting. This is done toward statues of buddhas, bodhisattvas, other symbols of sacred beings and also toward other people to show our respect, trust, gratitude and friendship.

I think originally both the posture of a prostration and *gassho* demonstrated that we weren't hiding any weapon and had no intention to attack people in front of us. The posture of the prostration was probably for slaves, servants, and ministers toward their lords. This is the most vulnerable posture since it isn't possible to attack the people in front of us and yet they can do anything they want to us. Unless we completely surrender or trust them, we cannot take such a posture. *Gassho* also shows that we don't have any weapon like a knife or a sword in our hand and that we have no intention to attack with a fist. This custom has the same meaning as shaking hands in the West.

#### Dogen Zenji's Waka Poem on Making a Prostration

In the collection of Dogen Zenji's *waka* poems reedited and published by Menzan Zuiho in the 18th century and entitled by him as *Sansho-doei* (Poems on the Way from Sansho Peak), there is a waka poem with the title *Raihai* ("Making a Prostration").

#### *Raihai* (Making a Prostration)

冬草も みえぬ雪野の しらさぎは おのが姿に 身をかくしけり

*Fuyu kusa mo/ Mienu yukino no/ Shirasagi wa/ Ono ga sugata ni/ Mi o kakushi keru*

A white heron/ Hiding itself/ In the snowy field,/ Where even the winter grass/ Cannot be seen. (Translation by Steven Heine, *Zen Poetry of Dogen*, p.120)

In Heine's translation, the order of the first part and the second part are changed. In the original poem, it says, "In the snowy field, /where even the winter grass/ cannot (be) seen, / a white heron is hiding itself within its figure." *Shirasagi* is a white heron. *Onoga sugata ni* is within its own figure; *mi* is body; *kakushi* is to hide. The white heron is not hiding its body in the snowy field, but it is hiding its body within its own figure or shape. In the winter, the field is completely covered with white snow, so no grass can be seen. The world is completely white. Probably it is still snowing heavily. The entire world is white. Within the snowy field, a white heron is standing alone. Because its body is also white, we cannot see the separation between the world and the white bird. The white heron is actually there and yet, its white body has disappeared within the world that is completely white. This is what *raihei* (making a prostration with veneration) means according to Dogen. We are there but the separation between ourselves and the Buddha, to which we are making a prostration, and the myriad dharmas in the world disappear. This is the same meaning as what Dogen said in the *Genjokoan*, "Conveying oneself toward myriad dharmas and carrying our practice/verification is delusion. Myriad dharmas come toward the self and carry out practice/verification through the self is realization." In the *Genjokoan*, Dogen also used the analogy of a drop of water and the boundless moonlight. When a tiny drop of water is illuminated by the boundless moonlight, the drop of water shine like the moon itself. This is the same in our *zazen* and in our daily activities such as making prostrations. Self is self and myriad dharmas are myriad dharmas, and yet, since the self is hiding itself within itself, the separation disappears.

As Dogen deconstructs the first sentence of the *Heart Sutra*, "Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, when deeply practicing *prajna paramita*, clearly saw that all five aggregates are

empty,” he rewrote it as, “The time of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva practicing profound Prajna Paramita is the whole body clearly seeing the emptiness of all five aggregates.” And he said, form is just form, emptiness is just emptiness (色是色、空即空). There is no one whose name is Avalokiteshvara besides the five aggregates. There is no emptiness besides the five aggregates. There is no prajna paramita besides the five aggregates. Everything is there as-it-is, and yet they are all within complete emptiness. The separations among them made by the conceptual way of thinking disappears and only emptiness is there. And the emptiness is nothing other than the five aggregates. It is there and yet it is not there, neither being (有) nor non-being (無). This is the meaning of *raihai*, making a prostration. When we venerate prajna paramita, there is no separation between the monk who venerates and the object that is being venerated.

In *Hokyoki*, Dogen Zenji’s journal written while he was practicing under the guidance of Tiantong Rujing (Tendo Nyojo), Dogen recorded an incident; when he made a prostration after receiving his instruction at his teacher’s feet. Rujing chanted a verse:

“Both the bower and the bowed-to  
Are empty and serene by nature  
And the way flows freely between them. How  
wondrous!”  
(能礼所礼性空寂、感応道交難思議。)  
(*Enlightenment Unfolds*, Kazuaki Tanahashi, p.8)

This verse of Rujing also expresses the same meaning of the practice of making a prostration as an expression of prajna paramita.

### The Profundity of Prajna Paramita

Next, the monk says why the prajna paramita is profound;

“*Within it (emptiness), although there is neither arising nor perishing of all things, there are practical approaches that are attainable such as precepts, meditation, wisdom, emancipation and insight resulting from emancipation.*”

Within emptiness, there is no fixed entity that arises and perishes. This statement corresponds with the line in the *Heart Sutra*; “All dharmas are marked by emptiness; they neither arise nor perish, are neither defiled nor pure,

neither increase nor decrease.” After this line, the *Heart Sutra* negates all the main teachings of early Buddhism: the five aggregates, the six sense organs, the six objects of the sense organs (twelve sense fields) and the six consciousnesses caused by the encounter of the twelve sense fields (eighteen elements), the Twelve Links of Causation, and the Four Noble Truths. Then it says, “With nothing to attain (無所得、*mushotoku*), the bodhisattva relies on prajna paramita, and thus the mind is without hindrance.....”

However, here the monk says, “*Although* there is no arising and perishing, there are practical approaches that are attainable.” “Practical approaches that are attainable” is a translation of the expression, “施設可得, *shisetsu (or sesetsu) katoku*.” “*Shisetsu*” literally means facility, a device provided to enable something to happen or someone to accomplish a goal. This is the same as skillful means (*upaya*). In the Zen tradition, various methods created by Zen masters such as the *koan* system are called *shisetsu*. “*Katoku* (可得)” is the opposition of “*fu-katoku* (不可得, not-attainable) or “*mushotoku* (無所得, nothing to attain).” We can see that the logic of this monk’s thought goes in the opposite direction of the *Heart Sutra*.

I think this logic is similar to Nagarajuna’s discussion in the, “Examination of the Four-fold Noble Truth,” Chapter 24 of the *Madyamakakarika*, when he was criticized by his opponent. :

“(1) If everything is *sunya* (empty) there will be neither production nor destruction. According to your assertion it will follow that the Aryan Fourfold Truths are non-existent. (2) True knowledge, relinquishing (false views), (right) practice, and (right) confirmation will not be possible because of the non-existence of the Aryan Four-fold Truths. (3) As these are non-existence, the Aryan four-fold fruits i.e., spiritual attainments (*the four ranks of entering the stream, once-returning, non-returning, and arhat*) are also non-existent. As the fruits are non-existent, there will be no one who enjoys the fruits or their fruition. (4) If the eight aspirations of men do not exist, there will be no *Sangha*. From the non-existence of the Aryan Truths, the true *Dharma* also does not exist. (5) Without *Dharma* and *Sangha*, how could there be *Buddha*? Consequently, what you assert also destroy the Three Treasures. (6) Delving in *Sunyata*, you will destroy the reality of the fruit or attainment, the proper and improper acts, and all the everyday practices relative to the empirical world.”



### Nagarujuna argues against the criticism,

“(7) Let us interrupt here to point out that you do not know the real purpose of *sunyata*, its nature and meaning. Therefore, there is only frustration and hindrance (of understanding). (8) The teaching of the *Dharma* by the various *Buddhas* is based on the two truths; namely, the relative (worldly) truth and the absolute (supreme) truth. (9) Those who do not know the distinction between the two truths cannot understand the profound nature of the Buddha’s teaching. (10) Without relying on everyday common practices (i.e., relative truths), the absolute truth cannot be expressed. Without approaching the absolute truth, *nirvana* cannot be attained. (11) A wrongly conceived *sunyata* can ruin a slow-witted person. It is like a badly seized snake or a wrongly executed incantation. ---- (14) Whatever is in correspondence with *sunyata*, all is in correspondence (i.e., possible). Again, whatever is not in correspondence with *sunyata*, all is not in correspondence. ---- (16) If you perceive the various existences as true beings from the standpoint of self-nature, then you will perceive them as non-causal conditions. (17) You will then destroy (all notions of) cause, effect, doer, means of doing, origination, extinction, and fruit (of action). (18) We declare that whatever is relational origination is *sunyata*. It is a provisional name (i.e., thought construction) for the mutuality (of being) and, indeed, it is the middle path. (19) Any factor of experience which does not participate in relational origination cannot exist. Therefore, any factor of experience not in the nature of *sunyata* cannot exist. (20) If everything were of the nature of *non-sunya*, then there would be neither production nor destruction. Then also the non-existence of the Aryan Fourfold Truths would accordingly follow.... (32) According to your assertion, anyone who is not a *Buddha* in virtue of self-existence cannot hope to attain enlightenment even by serious endeavor or by practice of the *Bodhisattva* way. --- (36) You will thus destroy all the everyday practices relative to the empirical world because you will have destroyed the *sunyata* of relational origination. (37) For one who destroys *sunyata*, it will be like a doer without an action, a non-activating action, or with nothing to act upon. (38) From the standpoint of self-existence, the world will be removed from the various conditions and it will be non-originate, non-destructive, and immovable. (39) If everything is *non-sunya*, then the attainment of a person who aspires, the actions leading to the cessation of suffering, and the destruction of all defilements will not exist (i.e., be possible), (40) One who rightly discerns relational origination will, indeed, rightly discern suffering, its origination, its extinction, and the way to enlightenment.” (Nagarujuna: *A Translation of his Mulamadyamakakarika with an Introductory Essay*, by Kenneth K. Inada)

I am sorry for the long quotation from Nagarujuna,

but I think this is a very important point to understand what Dogen is trying to say in this chapter of the *Shobogenzo*. If we read the *Heart Sutra* carelessly, we might have the similar mistaken view as Nagarujuna’s opponent had. Because of emptiness, there are no five aggregates, no Four Noble Truths, and therefore no study and practice are necessary or possible. The only necessary thing is to rely on prajna paramita. Then we can realize nirvana and attain unsurpassed, complete, perfect enlightenment. The *Heart Sutra* is often used as if it is a mantra, only for chanting without understanding what is said in it. This is especially true because there is a mantra at the end of the sutra: *Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate Bodhi Svaha!* People would also say, in any case, that the absolute truth, or emptiness, is beyond our understanding with the thinking mind.

I think that the main point of Dogen’s discussion in this fascicle of the *Shobogenzo* is that by awakening to the reality of emptiness and interdependent origination, we need to venerate all things, continue to study the dharma, practice zazen and do other daily activities as an expression of emptiness, instead of doing them to gain some desirable rewards for the sake of this self-centered person.

The monk continues to think to himself:

“*There are practical approaches that are attainable such as precepts, meditation, wisdom, emancipation and insight resulting from emancipation.*” These are called *gobun hosshin* (五分法身), the five portions of the Dharma-body. All buddhas and arhats embodied these five virtues. Precepts, meditation, and wisdom are called the “three basic studies.” In all Buddhist traditions, Buddha’s students need to study them.

In this story from the *Mahaprajna Paramita Sutra*, the monk lists many other practical approaches:

“*Also, there is a practical approach consisting of the ranks of entering the stream, once-returning, non-returning, and arhat.*” These are the four ranks of a Sravakas practice.

“*Also, [Practices of] the self-awakening and the awakening-being are practical approaches.* Self-awakening refers to *pratyekabuddha*, people who practice alone and experience awakening by themselves without a teacher. They don’t teach others. *Sravaka-yana* and *pratyekabuddha-yana* are called the “two-vehicles.” The awakening-being refers to

bodhisattvas. Adding the bodhisattva-yana to the two vehicles, these are called the “three-vehicles.”

“Unsurpassable perfect awakening is also a practical approach.” When we make the four bodhisattva vows, the fourth vow; “The Buddha Way is unsurpassable, I vow to realize it”, the Buddha Way in this case means unsurpassable perfect awakening.

“The [Triple] Treasure of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha is also a practical approach.” We take refuge in the triple Treasure and venerate it and this allows our practice to be concrete activities.

“Turning the wondrous dharma wheel, saving various sentient beings, is also a practical approach.” Turning the dharma wheel and saving all beings is what Shakyamuni Buddha did while he was alive. As the result of his activities, we can still practice his teachings.

The Buddha knew his thoughts and said to the monk, “So it is! So it is! The most profound prajna paramita is indeed subtle and difficult to fathom.”

Shakyamuni Buddha knew what the monk thought to himself and affirmed that he was right.

### Dogen’s Comment: Venerating Prajna is Venerating All Things

[Text]

The monk realizes now that by venerating and making prostrations to all things, he is venerating and making prostrations to prajna, which teaches that even though there is neither arising nor perishing, [there is arising and perishing]. In this very moment of veneration and prostration, prajna manifests itself in practical approaches such as precepts, meditation, wisdom and so forth until saving various sentient beings. This [moment of veneration] is called nothingness. The approaches to nothingness thus become practical. This [veneration] is the most profound prajna paramita, subtle and difficult to fathom.

Here, Dogen Zenji says, as he said in the beginning of this fascicle, that all beings, including such a tiny thing like a blade of grass and each of our activities, are without any exceptions, instances of prajna paramita. When we respect and venerate all beings and vow to live together with all living beings, we venerate nothing other than prajna paramita. And at the same time prajna paramita manifests itself through our actual practice.

“He is venerating and making prostrations to prajna, which teaches that even though there is neither arising nor perishing, [there is arising and perishing].” This is a difficult sentence to translate. Dogen’s expression is “雖無生滅の般若 (Sui mu shometsu no hannya)” The prajna of *sui-mu-shometsu*. “Sui (雖)” means “although” and “mu (無)” is “no.” “Shometsu (生滅)” means arising and perishing. This is the prajna of “although-no-arising-and-perishing”. Instead of “given emptiness (or because of emptiness)” in the *Heart Sutra*, Dogen emphasizes the opposite side of emptiness, “Although no arising and perishing (emptiness),” there are practical approaches that allow us to live in accordance with prajna, and through them prajna manifests itself.

“This [moment of veneration] is called nothingness. The approaches to nothingness thus become practical. This [veneration] is the most profound prajna paramita, subtle and difficult to fathom.” Nothingness here is the translation of mu (無). In Kumarajiva’s Chinese translation of Verse 18 of Chapter 24 of *Madhyamakakarika*, “We declare that whatever is relational origination is *sunyata*. It is a provisional name (i.e., thought construction) for the mutuality (of being) and, indeed, it is the middle path,” he used *Mu* (無) as the equivalent of *sunyata*.

*Mu* became an important word in Zen Buddhism. It is used as a synonym for emptiness because of the Taoist connotation of the word. Here Dogen says that to venerate the prajna of “although Mu (雖無)” is Mu (無). He is playing with words to express the same point of Nagarjuna in *Madhyamakakarika*, showing that *Mu* (*sunyata*, emptiness, 非有, *not-u*) is always bound together with the provisional name (有, *u*, 非無, *not-mu*), which is nothing other than the Middle Way.

The approaches to nothingness thus become practical. Just to study, understand or contemplate emptiness (*sunyata*, *mu*) is not enough, we need to practice it. And he calls this practice the most profound prajna paramita, subtle and difficult to fathom.

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# Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma Book 57

## Extensive Study *Henzan*

Translated by Carl Bielefeldt

### INTRODUCTION

This text is extant in two versions: one, included as book 57 in the seventy-five-fascicle redaction of the *Shōbōgenzō*, which is the version translated here; the other, similar but somewhat shorter, occurring as book 37 in the sixty-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō* collection. Both versions bear colophons indicating that the work was produced in the autumn of 1243, at Yamashibu, a temple in Echizen (modern Fukui prefecture), where Dōgen delivered several *Shōbōgenzō* texts following his arrival from the capital in the summer of the same year.

The title theme of the essay, *henzan* (also read *hensan*) is the traditional Zen practice of traveling widely to study with various masters. The essay opens with a conversation between two famous Tang-dynasty monks, Xuansha and his teacher Xuefeng. Xuefeng suggests that his student undertake a trip of extensive study, but Xuansha remarks that the first Zen ancestor, Bodhidharma, never came to China and the second ancestor, Huike, never went to India.

In his comments on this conversation, which occupy the first half of the essay, Dōgen makes it clear that “extensive study” is not a matter of consulting widely but of penetrating the essential meaning of the buddha dharma — what he describes at one point as jumping into Bodhidharma’s eye and plucking it out. Extensive study is not about traveling from place to place but about understanding that, in the words of Xuansha, “all the worlds in the ten directions are the true human body.”

In the second half of the essay, Dōgen turns to an example of extensive study: the odd claim by Xuansha that he and the Buddha Śākyamuni studied together under “the Xie’s third boy in a fishing boat” — i.e., under

Xuansha himself when he was boy who loved fishing. Here Dōgen’s comments focus on the notion that extensive study means studying together with another. He quotes a verse by his own master, Rujing, celebrating an assembly of friends with whom Rujing had trained, and goes on to cite the examples of famous Chinese monks who spent years of study with their teachers.

Finally, Dōgen concludes this brief text by invoking two famous expressions he attributes to Rujing: “Extensive study,” he says, “is just sitting and sloughing off body and mind.”

The translation here is based on the edition appearing in Kawamura Kōdō, *Dōgen zenji zenshū*, volume 2 (1991), pp. 112-117. A more fully annotated text, together with a translation of the 60-fascicle version, can be found on the web site of the Soto Zen Text Project: [hcbss.stanford.edu/research/projects/sztp](http://hcbss.stanford.edu/research/projects/sztp). Other English translations can be found in Kōsen Nishiyama and John Stevens, *Shōbōgenzō*, volume 2 (1977), pp. 94-98; Kazuaki Tanahashi, ed., *Moon in a Dewdrop* (1985), pp. 197-202; Yuho Yokoi, *The Shobo-genzo* (1986), pp. 665-671; Gudo Nishijima and Chodo Cross, *Master Dogen’s Shobogenzo*, Book 3 (1997), pp. 207-214; and Hubert Nearman, *Shōbōgenzō: The Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching* (2007), pp. 718-726.

## 正法眼藏第五十七徧參

# Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma Book 57

## Extensive Study

The great way of the buddhas and ancestors is study and penetration of the ultimate limit; it is to “go without a string at your feet”; it is “clouds arose underfoot.” Nevertheless, though this is so, it is “a flower opens and the world arises”; it is “I always care for this.” Therefore, “the sweet melon is sweet through to its stem”; “the bitter gourd is bitter to its root”; the sweet sweetness is sweet through to the stem. This is how it has been studied.<sup>1</sup>

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The great master Zongyi of Mt. Xuansha [i.e., Xuansha Shibe] was once addressed by Xuefeng [Yicun], who said, “Bei Toutuo [i.e., Shibe], why don’t you go off on extensive study?”

The master said, “Bodhiharma didn’t come to the Eastern Land [i.e., China]; the Second Ancestor didn’t go to the Western Heavens [India].”

Xuefeng deeply approved this.

The principle of extensive studying is the study of a flip; it is “don’t do even the noble truths”; it is “what stages are there?”<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

When the Chan master Dahui of Nanyue [i.e., Huairang] first visited the Old Buddha of Caoqi [Huineng], the Old Buddha said, “What is it that comes like this?”

He extensively studied this “ball of mud” for eight years from start to finish. In the end, he announced to the Old Buddha “the one move” of his extensive study, saying, “I’ve understood what the reverend preceptor put to me when I first came: ‘What is it that comes like this?’”

Thereupon the old buddha of Caoqi said, “How do you understand it?”

At this point, Dahui said, “To say it’s like anything wouldn’t hit it.”

This is the realization of extensive study, the realization of eight years.

The Old Buddha of Caoqi said, “Then is it contingent on practice and verification?”

Dahui said, “It’s not without practice and verification, but it’s not defiled by them.”

Caoqi said, “You’re also like this, I’m also like this, and all the ancestors of the Western Heavens are also like this.”

Thereafter, he spent eight years more in extensive study. True from head to tail, all told it was fifteen autumns of extensive study.

“Coming like this” is extensive study. “To say it’s like anything wouldn’t hit it”: to open the hall and see the buddhas and ancestors is the extensive study of “also like

this.” Ever since he “entered the picture” and looked, he has extensively studied transforming the body “sixty-five hundred thousands of ten thousands of hundred millions” times. He does not take casually “entering a grove” and “leaving a grove” as extensive study; he takes seeing the entire eye as extensive study, being able to penetrate it as extensive study. Seeing through the thickness of the skin of the face — this is extensive study.

The meaning of the extensive study spoken of by Xuefeng naturally does not recommend his leaving the peak, does not recommend his going north and coming south: it helps him in the extensive study of “Bodhiharma didn’t come to the Eastern Land; the Second Ancestor didn’t go to the Western Heavens” spoken of by Xuansha. The “Bodhidharma didn’t come to the Eastern Land” spoken of by Xuansha is not some confused words about coming or not coming: it is the principle that “the great earth lacks an inch of land.” “Bodhidharma” here is the point of the vital artery [of the Zen lineage]. Even if the entire land of the Eastern Land were suddenly completely to gush up and attend upon him, this would not be transforming the body, nor would be it be “flipping the body in the stream of words.” Since he “didn’t come to the Eastern Land,” he meets the Eastern Land face to face. Though the Eastern Land encounters buddha faces and ancestor faces, this is not “coming to the Eastern Land”: it is “taking hold of the buddhas and ancestors but missing their nose.”

In general, the “land” is not east or west; east and west have nothing to do with the “land.” “The Second Ancestor didn’t go to the Western Heavens” [means that,] in extensively studying the Western Heavens, “he didn’t go to the Western Heavens.” If the Second Ancestor went to the Western Heavens, one arm would fall off. Now, why did the Second Ancestor not go to the Western Heavens? Because he jumped into the eye of Blue Eyes [i.e., Bodhidharma], he “didn’t go to the Western Heavens.” If he had not jumped into the eye of Blue Eyes, he would definitely have gone to the Western Heavens. He made plucking out Bodhidharma’s eye his extensive study. Going to the Western Heavens or coming to the Eastern Land is not extensive study. Going to Mt. Tiantai or Mt. Nanyue is not extensive study; we do not take going to Mt. Wutai or to the heavens as extensive study. If we have

not passed through and beyond the four seas and five lakes [of China], it is not extensive study. Coming and going to the four seas and five lakes does not make the four seas and five lakes study extensively: it makes the road slippery; it makes the footing slippery; hence, it makes [one] miss extensive study.

In general, because he makes mastery of [Shibeī's saying] "all the worlds in the ten directions are the true human body" his extensive study, he has the investigation of "Bodhidharma didn't come to the Eastern Land; the Second Ancestor didn't go to the Western Heavens." Extensive study is "the bigness of a stone is big, the smallness of a stone is small"; it is, without moving the stones, to make them a big study, a small study. To see the hundreds of thousands of ten thousands in the hundreds of thousands of ten thousands is not yet extensive study; the turning of the body hundreds of thousands of ten thousand times within the flow of half a word is extensive study. For example, "Dadi just struck the ground" is extensive study. Once striking the ground, once striking the sky, once striking the four quarters and eight sides is not extensive study. Juzhi studying with Tianlong and getting one finger is extensive study; Juzhi just holding up one finger is extensive study.<sup>3</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

Xuansha [Shibeī] addressed the assembly, saying, "Old Master Śākyamuni and I studied together."

At that time, a monk came forward and asked, "I don't understand. With whom did you study?"

The master said, "The Xie's third boy on a fishing boat."<sup>4</sup>

The study of Old Master Śākyamuni that is right from head to tail is itself studying together with Old Master Śākyamuni. The study of Old Man Xuansha that is right from head to tail is itself studying together with Old Man Xuansha; hence, Old Master Śākyamuni and Old Man Xuansha study together. Old Master Śākyamuni and Old Man Xuansha exhaustively investigating whether their study is sufficient or insufficient is the principle of extensive study. Because Old Master Śākyamuni studies together with Old Man Xuansha, he is an old buddha; because Old Man Xuansha studies together with Old

Master Śākyamuni, he is the progeny. This principle, we should extensively study in detail.

We should clarify and study the meaning of "the Xie's third boy on a fishing boat." This is the concentrated effort at extensive study of the moment when Old Master Śākyamuni and Old Man Xuansha study together at the same time. They study together as Old Man Xuansha is there studying with "the Xie's third boy on a fishing boat"; they study together as the Xie's third boy is there studying with the baldhead on Mt. Xuansha. We should have ourselves concentrate, have others concentrate, on studying together and not studying together. Old Man Xuansha and Old Master Śākyamuni study together, study extensively. We should study extensively, study together, the principle of "with whom" the Xie's third boy and "I" studied. So long as the principle of extensive study is not immediately present to us, our study of ourselves is not possible, our study of ourselves is insufficient; our study of the other is not possible, our study of the other is insufficient; study of the person is not possible, study of the self is not possible; study of the fist is not possible, study of the eye is not possible; fishing for oneself and raising oneself is not possible, raising [oneself] before fishing is not possible.

When extensive study has been fully exhausted, it is extensive study sloughed off. "When the ocean dries up, you cannot see the bottom"; "when a person dies, he does not leave his mind behind." "When the ocean dries up" means the entire ocean is entirely dried up. Nevertheless, when the ocean is entirely dried up, "you cannot see the bottom." "Not leaving" and entirely leaving are both the person's mind. When the person dies, the mind is not left behind. Since he has taken up death, the mind is not left behind. Therefore, we know that the entire person is mind, the entire mind is the person. This is the study of the front and back of such a single side.<sup>5</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

My former master, the Old Buddha of Tiantong [Rujing], on one occasion when old acquaintances among the elders from all quarters assembled and requested a lecture, ascended the hall and said,

The great way has no gate,  
It springs forth from the crown in all quarters;  
Empty space ends the road,  
It comes into the nostril of Qingliang.  
Meeting like this,  
Seeds of Gautama's traitors,  
Embryos of Linji's misfortune.  
li!

The great house topples over, dancing in the spring  
wind;  
Startled, the falling apricot blossoms fly in crimson  
chaos.

This lecture is from the time when my former master, the Old Buddha, was abbot of Qingliang monastery, in the district of Jiankang, to which the elders from all quarters had come. That these were "old acquaintances" means they had once been guest and host or been neighboring seats [in the monks' hall]. While from all quarters, they were thus his old friends; how could they not have been many? It was a time when they had assembled and requested a lecture. Elders "completely lacking a saying" were not his friends, were not numbered among those who requested [the lecture]. Though themselves great worthies, they attended him and requested [a lecture].

In general, the extensive study of my former master was not something fulfilled by those from all quarters. In the last two or three hundred years in the land of the great Song, there have been no old buddhas like my former master.

"The great way without a gate" is "four or five thousand lanes of flowers and willows, twenty or thirty thousand pavilions of flutes and zithers."<sup>6</sup> Still, when the whole body springs forth, without using anything else, it springs from the crown of the head, it enters into the nostril; and both of these are study. One who has not sprung forth from the crown, has not turned the body in the nostril, is not a person of study, is not a man of extensive study. We should just study with Xuansha the point of extensive study.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Fourth Ancestor [Daoxin] spending nine years in study with the Third Ancestor [Sengcan] is extensive study. The Chan Master Yuan of Nanquan [i.e., Nanquan Puyuan] staying at Chiyang for some thirty years without ever leaving the mountain is extensive study. Yunyan [Tancheng], Daowu [Yuanzhi], and others, concentrating and studying during forty years at Yueshan [with Yueshan Weiyuan] is extensive study. The study of the Second Ancestor [Huike] at [Bodhidharma's residence at] Songshan was eight years; he exhausted the extensive study of [Bodhidharma's] "skin, flesh, bones, and marrow."<sup>7</sup>

Extensive study is simply "just sitting" and "sloughing off body and mind."<sup>8</sup> The present going that goes there and coming that comes here, as though there were no interval between them, is extensive study with the whole body, is the whole body of the great way. "Walking on [the Buddha] Vairocana's head" is "the samādhi without feeling." Definitely getting such is the "walk of Vairocana." To penetrate the extensive study that springs forth is the bottle gourd springing forth from the bottle gourd; for long, the crown of the bottle gourd has been made the seat of the way where the buddha is selected. His life is like a thread. The bottle gourd extensively studies the bottle gourd. We have merely "set up a single blade of grass" and taken it as extensive study.<sup>9</sup>

Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma  
Extensive Study

Presented to the assembly on the twenty-seventh day, the  
eleventh month, first year of Kangen, [cyclical year]  
*mizunoto-u*;  
at a thatched hut below Yamashibu, in the region of Etsu.

Copied the twenty-seventh day, in the month of *rō*, the  
same [cyclical year] *mizunoto-u*;  
in the attendant's residence of the same hermitage.  
Ejō

NOTES

1. A series of allusions to Zen sayings. To “go without a string at your feet,” a saying of Dongshan Liangjie, is typically interpreted to mean untrammelled freedom. “Clouds arose underfoot,” an allusion to the power of flight, comes from the biography of Bodhidharma. “A flower opens and the world arises,” is a well-known line from the transmission verse of Bodhidharma’s master, Prajñātāra. “I always care for this” is a remark by Dongshan about the body of the buddha. The saying on “the sweet melon” and “bitter gourd” is a Zen reference to experiencing something through and through.

2. “Don’t do even the the noble truths” and “what stages are there?” are from a conversation on the Buddhist path between the Sixth Ancestor, Huineng, and his disciple Nanyue Huairang.

3. “Dadi just struck the ground” is a reference to the monk nicknamed Venerable Strike the Ground, who just struck the ground with his staff whenever asked a question. “Juzhi studying with Tianlong” refers to the Tang-dynasty monk Juzhi, who learned from his teacher Tianlong to hold up one finger to teach his students.

4. I.e., with Xuansha, whose family name was Xie and who loved fishing as a youth.

5. “When the ocean dries up” is a variation on the Chinese saying, “When the ocean dries up, you finally see the bottom; but when a person dies, you cannot find his mind.”

6. A common Zen reference to the pleasure quarters, as representative of the ordinary human world.

7. A reference to the tradition that, at the time he was to choose a successor among his four disciples, Bodhidharma said of each in turn that he (or she) had got “my skin,” “my flesh,” “my bones,” and, to Huike, “my marrow.”

8. Two expressions that Dōgen attributes to his master, Rujing.

9. Another string of allusions to Zen sayings. “Walking on Vairocana’s head” is from a conversation between the Tang emperor Suzong and the Chan Master Nanyang Huizhong on the “samādhi without conflict” (or, in Dōgen’s version, “without feeling).” The “bottle gourd” recalls a saying of Rujing that “the bottle gourd entwines the bottle gourd,” used by Dōgen in reference to the relationship between master and student. “His life is like a thread” suggests the warning of the Fifth Ancestor, Hongren, to Huineng that, having received the robe of Bodhidharma, his life now “hangs by a thread.” “A single blade of grass” likely invokes the story of King Sakra using a single blade of grass to build a monastery for the Buddha.



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## NEWS

### **Sept. 10-11, 2009**

The annual workshop for Kokusaifukyoshi of Japanese-American temples in California was held at Sokoji, San Francisco, CA.

### **Oct. 2-4, 2009**

North America Soto Zen Conference and Workshop was held at Sokoji, San Francisco, CA.

### **November 1, 2009**

Rev. Genshu Imamura resigned as the Director of Soto Zen Buddhism Europe Office and Rev. Jiso Forzani was appointed as the Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism Europe Office.

### **November 13-15, 2009**

The 50th Memorial Celebrations of the Soto Zen Buddhism South America Office and Busshinji were held at Busshinji in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

### **Dec. 15, 2009 – March 10, 2010**

A Sotoshu Training Monastery will be held at Yokoji, USA from Dec. 15, 2009 through March 10, 2010. This will be the third officially recognized Sotoshu training monastery angō to be held in the West and the first to be held in the US.

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