

DHARMA EYE



法眼

News of Soto Zen Buddhism: Teachings and Practice



Greetings

Rev. Ryubun Kamada
 Director, Division of Education and Dissemination
 The Administrative Headquarters of Soto Zen Buddhism

I would like to extend greetings to each of you. I imagine that all the readers of *Dharma Eye* are well and everything is proceeding satisfactorily for you. I would like to thank you for your interest in this publication.

Following in the footsteps of Rev. Yoyu Miyashita, the former director of the Education and Dissemination Division, on October 22nd of last year, I was appointed to that same position. For a person of such low ability as myself, this is truly an undeserved honor. Perhaps I am late in saying this, but I recognize that our future rests on the important work of education and dissemination; I carry this thought fresh in mind daily.

October in 2009, I had the opportunity to visit San Francisco in the United States and participate in the ceremonies commemorating the 75th anniversary of Sokoji. Standing so closely with the many priests and supporters in attendance, and witnessing, in that unique environment, such a solemnly observed Dharma Combat Ceremony—with each question, each reverberation of the *shippei* striking the ground, each shout of *Banzei!*—I felt a sense of wonder arise in me that I had not experienced before.

Looking back on that moment now, what I felt was the seeds sown by Shakyamuni Buddha more than 2500 years ago, which have blossomed anew generation to generation, traveling from India to China, from China to

Japan, and entrusted to Dogen Zenji and Keizan Zenji and passed to the ancestors who followed, now on American soil, blossoming magnificently as that one flower; that is, in that moment, I truly felt the scope of the Sotoshu and its teachings.

How are we to nurture this flower? Simply put, the key is education and dissemination. This is equally true outside of Japan — there can be no greater joy than for the flower of Buddha to blossom, not just across generations, but also around the world. One major key to facilitating that process is greater multilingualism. Until now, the contents of the Sotozen-net website (<http://global.sotozen-net.or.jp>) have been displayed in six languages; we are dedicating our efforts to expanding and enriching those resources. Toward that effort, we have asked the Soto Zen Buddhism International Center and the Soto Zen Offices of Hawaii, North America, South America, and Europe to offer up their information and opinions at any time, so that we might reflect that input on the website. To that same end, we would be very happy to hear the wishes of all of you, the readers of *Dharma Eye*. The Soto Zen Text Project has completed its translation of *Standard Observances of the Soto Zen School* for publication, and translators continue to work diligently on *Shobogenzo* (Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma) and *Denkoroku* (Record of Transmission of the Light). Moreover, we are taking steps to produce new education materials and exploring how best to achieve that aim.

This year, the Sotoshu Training Monastery, which until now had been held outside of Japan, was conducted for the first time in Japan (Shogoji, Kumamoto Prefecture). Given this difference from the previous three years, no doubt the participants experienced numerous difficulties. However, to go to a country that is not your own and to breathe that air, to experience that climate, to touch those customs with one's own flesh—these were surely unforgettable, meaningful experiences for all involved. This kind of mutual exchange between Japan and other countries—and most importantly, the continuation of that exchange—surely lends great strength to the important work ahead of education and dissemination. Please know that this work would not be possible without the assistance and cooperation we receive from all of you.

In transcending barriers of language and culture, there are issues ahead yet to be resolved. At this time perhaps more than ever, then, I believe it is important for us to take “other” as “self,” to mutually approach one another with feelings and words of care. In an official statement by the Head Priest of Sotoshu, and also current abbot of Daihonzan Sojiji, Omichi Kosen Zenji, he said:

“Kind speech” means the words uttered from our kind and loving heart, wishing that all people may

live a happy life and enjoy a peaceful state of mind. It is said that this practice of kind speech fully contains the practice of generosity, beneficial action and sympathetic cooperation within itself. So for this year again we focus on “kind speech” as a pillar of our practice. Kind speech is the conduct of the bodhisattva who, whether he or she is experiencing joy or sorrow in life, always cares about and supports others and leads them to the Buddha Way.

Whether we find ourselves to the east or west of the ocean, as trainees living together in vow, let us work to encourage each other and move forward together, hand in hand.

This October, the Soto Zen Buddhism International Center is planning an international symposium with the theme of “Advance One Step Further -Soto Zen Opens The Way To The Future-” at Sotoshu Shumicho in Tokyo. This is the first time for the International Center to take on such an endeavor, so it is my hope that many people will gather from around the world to make this a memorable milestone in international dissemination.

In closing, I wish you all health and happiness, and the best of fortune in your efforts to practice and advance the Way.

Zazen with upright posture

Rev. Juko Nakano
Sotoshu Special Dissemination Teacher



Berkeley Zen Center
Berkeley, California U.S.A.
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Good evening, my name is Juko Nakano. I was sent by the Sotoshu as a specially dispatched teacher and this is my first visit to the mainland United States. I have been to Hawaii twice, but that seems like a long time ago. I cannot speak English well, so please let me speak in Japanese.

Yesterday, I visited San Francisco and this morning, I went to Green Gulch Farm. While we were at Green Gulch Farm (I am traveling with two other people), we had lunch with the practitioners there, who are now in the midst of a practice period. This afternoon, I went to Kojin-an Zendo in Oakland. Along the way, I was able to visit Muir Woods, thanks to the suggestion of Rev. Daigaku Rummé, where we walked through the redwood forest. I felt very much refreshed from that.

I am fond of traveling. In Japan, there is the tradition of making pilgrimages. The most famous is the pilgrimage to the holy sites connected with Kannon Bosatsu (Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva). In Christianity as well, there is the tradition of making pilgrimages. I would very much like one day to make the pilgrimage connected with St. Jacob in Spain called Santiago de Compostella. It is my strong wish to participate in that on foot for a month pilgrimage.

In Japan, the pilgrimage of visiting the Kannon sites has been taking place for more than 1,000 years. Previous to becoming resident priest of Chorakuji where I now serve, I lived for 37 years at a temple where my father and grandfather were born and raised. At that temple, there is a stone monument from the end of the Edo Period which commemorates a Kannon pilgrimage which took place during the Ansei Period (1854-60). It is testimony that the priest six generations ago of that temple completed that pilgrimage. The words “No. 100 Kanzeon Bosatsu” are engraved on the monument.

I decided to also do this pilgrimage of visiting 100 Kannon sites, which are: the 33 Saikoku sites in the Kinki region of Japan, the 33 Bando sites in the Kanto region, and the 34 Chichibu sites in Saitama. The Saikoku pilgrimage is the oldest one. It took me several years to complete this. After having visited the 100th site, I wasn't sure where to go to express my gratitude for being able to fulfill my wish. A Dharma friend of mine told me, “Nakano-san, you should visit Putuoshan.” This is an island off the coast of China which Dogen Zenji had visited some 800 years ago.

I went to Putuoshan with several other people who went to the pilgrimage together. There are three large temples there with over 100 stupas in the vicinity. We visited the main temple called Fusaiji (Puji). We were unable to meet the abbot, a priest named Myozen who was 93 years old at the time. However, we did meet the temple director (Kan'in), a priest named Dosho. He had lived through the Chinese Cultural Revolution. The Cultural Revolution was movement that swept through China in the 1970s which denounced Buddhism. A large portion of the temples on Putuoshan were destroyed at that time. Sadly, Buddhist priests who refused to return to

lay life were murdered. Dosho Roshi, sensing imminent danger, hid himself and survived the turmoil. His face was very gentle, with eyes that look like Kannon's.

In Buddhism, and this was true of Shakyamuni Buddha as well, we say that the deeper a person's sadness, the greater is their mind of compassion. On meeting Dosho Roshi, he taught me about the teaching of “en” or causality. It felt to me as if I had set out to complete the same pilgrimage which the priest six generations before me had accomplished. It felt to me as if I had done this according to my own wishes and that I had also visited Fusaiji for the same reason. Dosho Roshi told me and my companions, “It appears as if you came here by means of your own power, but there is a deeper connection that brought you here. That connection goes back 200, 300, 500 years.” When he said this, I felt like I had been hit on the shoulder with a kyosaku. I was touched by his teaching that the link for having visited Fusaiji had been decided previously. When I think of that, it seems as if our meeting tonight was already previously decided. I am grateful that I have been able to come here tonight and meet you.

Eight hundred years ago, Dogen Zenji visited China at the age of 24. After four years of training, he passed on the Zen teaching to Japan. While he was in China, he visited many temples and monasteries. He later wrote about his encounters there, especially the ones that lingered with him.

The encounter which impresses me the most is one that I'm sure you've heard about. Dogen Zenji related it in the “Tenzo Kyokun” (*Instructions for the Tenzo*). The Tenzo is the person responsible for preparing food in the monastery. Preparing food is also Buddhist practice and “Tenzo Kyokun” was Dogen Zenji's specific instructions to the Tenzo. These are basic Buddhist teachings.

This was an incident that took place when Dogen Zenji was training at Tiantong Shan. This was where his master, Nyojo Zenji, was the abbot. It took place on a hot summer day when Dogen Zenji was walking along a monastery corridor. In front of the Butsuden (*Buddha Hall*), there was an elderly monk drying mushrooms. When he was asked, the monk replied that he had the duty of Tenzo. Dogen Zenji asked him, “Roshi, on such a

hot day, why don't you have someone else do this work?" The Tenzo replied, "This is work that I must do." There was no one else who could do the work for him. ("Others are not me," he responded.) Hearing this, Dogen Zenji asked, "In that case, why don't you do this work later in the day when it wouldn't be so hot?" The Tenzo said, "I must do this work now." ("What time should I wait for?")

Dogen Zenji was deeply impressed by these words, "Others are not me" and "What time should I wait for?" He wrote about this encounter in the Tenzo Kyokun. As he relates in this writing, Zen practice is your own practice. It isn't something that others can do for you. Furthermore, it must be done now. It is the way of living "right here, right now."

My master, who was also my father, died ten years ago at the age of 79. He was a very strict master. Whenever I started to speak, he would hit me. I would see stars in front of my eyes and it hurt. He was truly scary. He would always say, "What is important now?" Even now, this is an important question for me.

I ask you, "What is important now?" What will you say? If you were to set out your priorities, what would be on the top of the list? I've come to think that it is expressed in the two teachings that Dogen Zenji related: "Others are not me" and "What time should I wait for?"

On November 13th of this year (2010), we will commemorate the 50th anniversary of my grandfather's death. (This ceremony was postponed ten years.) This is a ceremony that my master (and father) was unable to carry out. My grandfather passed away before I was born. I think of my grandfather from photos of his face as well as from stories told about him by people who knew him.

My grandfather was the resident priest of Chorakuji for 14 years. For 8 years of those years, he suffered a brain infarction. He could no longer use the right-side of his body freely and consequently he was also unable to fulfill all his responsibilities as resident priest. My master served my grandfather.

At the time, my grandfather was one of only two people

in our rural area who had been to university. He graduated in 1913 from the department of philosophy at Waseda University. He then went to train at Eihei-ji. Perhaps he felt sorry for his oldest son (my master) who was nursing him. He told him, "I went to university and completed my studies. But when I went to Eihei-ji, I left all that learning in front of the temple gate." My master kept those words in mind, believing them as he practiced his whole life. He did not go to university. He practiced his whole life with those words.

I also intended to leave learning in front of the temple gate when I went to Eihei-ji, but even now I'm not free of it. In our Sotoshu, we have the expression "Training and learning are one." Training and learning must be like two wheels on a cart. This is the meaning of this teaching. It was my intention to practice what I had learned, but I only feel shame when I wonder if I've really been able to practice it.

Practice is the Zen way of life, after all. The basis for this is zazen. Dogen Zenji taught, "To study the Way of Buddha is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be actualized by myriad things." (*Shobogenzo Genjokoan*) Zazen is the practice of studying the self. Zazen in the Sotoshu is zazen where we single-mindedly sit in zazen. We are not aware of this single-mindedness. Isn't it the case that when we are thoroughly one with zazen that we are first able to experience this teaching?

And so, I hang my head in shame. I think, "Am I able to do shikantaza? Zazen is the form of Shakyamuni Buddha. Am I able to practice in such a way that my zazen is in accord with the mind of Shakyamuni Buddha?"

It has been passed down to us that Shakyamuni Buddha sat in zazen and awakened to enlightenment. I think the Buddha was awakened to something. These may seem like august words, but isn't it the case that if someone had this awakening they would continue to practice it?

We sit early morning zazen and end the day with sitting in the evening. Do you sit from morning to evening? We do have the practice of sesshin. This is a practice where we

recall the spirit of Shakyamuni Buddha sitting under the bodhi tree and honor the fact of his awakening. Are you endeavoring at sesshin with the mind like Shakyamuni Buddha's?

The basis of zazen is form. When teaching others about zazen, there is the following expression, "Form makes the mind; the mind becomes the form." Regarding form, the first part is posture. By continuing the practice of the posture, we study the mind. And then, the mind we've learned becomes the form. I think this word "becomes" means that the form falls away. In my own view, I take this to mean living our everyday lives in an ordinary, common way. For this reason, the basis of zazen is the form. If we always keep remember the form and strive to practice this completely every day, I believe this is to live the Zen-like way of life of zazen. Therefore, the form of zazen is very important. First, we fold our legs – full lotus position or half-lotus position. Next, we put our hands in the cosmic mudra (*hokkai join*). This is the form that you practice every day. Next, the posture: straighten the back, pull in the chin, close the mouth, keep your teeth together, and place your tongue against the roof of your mouth just behind your teeth. Look straight ahead with your eyes, then let the eyesight fall to a place about three feet in front of you.

The form of zazen is just as it is explained in Dogen Zenji's "*Fukan-zazengi*" and Keizan Zenji's "*Zazen Yojinki*." Regulating the form just as it is taught in these two teachings is the basis for zazen. At that time, we do not lean forward or backward with the body nor do we lean either to the right or to the left. This posture is called "upright posture" in the Sotoshu. When we sit single-mindedly in zazen, it must be upright posture.

But I can't do it. How about you? When we sit, we feel sleepy. What about then? Have you ever had that experience? I never fall forward. I always fall backwards – with a jerk. I think those of you who are laughing have had that experience. And then, when I feel frustrated, I start twiddling my thumbs like this. When my legs hurt, I furrow my brows. At those times, let's ask for the kyosaku. We wake up when he hear the slap of the stick. The pain also goes away and frustration disappears. That's possible when we're in the zendo.

Who will do that when we're not in the zendo? That is why we must be grateful to be able to sit in the zendo. This seems like a Zen Question/ Answer, but this is an important frame of mind. In other words, is there anyone who gets angry when they are hit with the kyosaku? A person sitting in zazen bows in gratitude when they are hit. The person who has hit the other with the kyosaku also bows in gratitude. Isn't that how it is? This is the form of bowing to each other. This is expressed in the saying "buddha becomes buddha practices."

Zazen is the practice of studying the self. Nevertheless, to live our everyday life with the mind of zazen when we are not sitting in zazen is also practice. The Way of Buddha is what we refer to as practice. This "practice" is not something special. This is a way of living peacefully, living in an ordinary way. This is something you will understand if you do zazen. Your mind will appear in the form. To put that in order is the practice of zazen. This isn't only to endeavor just as you've been told to do; it is to do it in all facets of life, not only when you are sitting in zazen. That is the Zen way of living. Consequently, morning zazen and evening zazen are the best times to put your life in order.

Two nights ago, I spoke at the Zen Center of Los Angeles. I said that zazen is the form of giving up being a person. My usual self is one that is completely soaked in delusions and desires. When sitting in zazen, we are a buddha. In other words, it is the form where our hands and feet do not move, we also sit quietly. When the hands move and the feet move, we don't know what a person will do. You people here, do you understand yourself? There is only not understanding.

Let's sit in zazen. Let's study a quiet mind. Let's put the body and mind in order with quiet world. Then, Shakyamuni Buddha will be happy. Dogen Zenji will be happy. Keizan Zenji will be happy. I hope that will happen.

I hope that from now on all of us will live our everyday lives putting it in order with zazen as the basis, the pillar, of our way of life. "Others are not me" and "What time should I wait for?" Let's make the effort everyday – now, here – to live practicing the Way of Buddha. That is the

wish of Dogen Zenji and Keizan Zenji.

I was able to come to United States to do an errand for the Head Priest of Sotoshu. It is also the Head Priest's wish that you will make zazen the basis of your everyday life and that from now on, you will continue to endeavor at this. Tonight, we have distributed an English translation of a message from the Head Priest as well as the present teaching of the Sotoshu. I ask that you please make sure to read through it. The time allotted to me this evening has flown by.

I think that Zen is encounters and meetings. Every day, from morning to evening, we encounter all sorts of

things. Each encounter is the beginning and the end. Is that how you live your life? If we intend to bring that to realization, then each day is irreplaceable. Every single day is precious.

Now, isn't that the way it is for you as well as for me? Are my body and mind balanced, are they in order? That balance is always breaking down and falling apart. That's the actual state of affairs. Zen is "body and mind are one." Let's always maintain a balanced body and mind every day. Let's firmly do that through zazen.

Thank you for today.

One Day in the Life of Death

By Kaikyo Sara Roby, PhD, C.T.
Disciple of Rev. Shohaku Okumura

In life there is nothing other than life. In death, there is nothing other than death.

Therefore, when life comes, just live. And when death comes, just die. Neither avoid them nor desire them.

—*Shobogenzo Shoji (Life and death). Dogen Zenji (1200 – 1253)*

It is 9 a.m. I enter the third floor of the hospital, the inpatient hospice unit. There is already ongoing activity. Nurses and aides seeing to patients' needs, family members waking up from a night at the bedside of their loved ones, secretaries answering phone calls, doctors starting rounds, and the pet therapy dog anxiously waiting to spread his particular brand of joy while his owner greets the staff. Life is buzzing around.

It is not just another day. In the hospice unit, every day is unique. Each day is a whole life and each life is as precious and immeasurable as is the moment of separation from this life. Life cannot stop death. Death cannot stop life. In hospice, those who are alive take care of those who are dying. For those who are dying, the time

has come to slow down naturally, review their lives, deal with emotional and spiritual issues, or simply just lay peacefully letting the last breaths of life pass by until death arrives.

I am a chaplain in an inpatient hospice unit for VITAS Innovative Hospice Care® in Broward County, Florida. In my eight years as a hospice chaplain, I have provided spiritual and emotional support to patients of all faiths and of no faith. My training as a chaplain has taught me to meet patients and their families wherever they are on their faith journey without inserting my own faith belief into the process. As an ordained Zen priest, I am encouraged to do this by my own religious and spiritual beliefs; as a trained chaplain, I am sustained by the strong faith that above and beyond all personal religious and spiritual credos, there is just this aspiration in our hearts: to give, receive and share life/death with others. Some call it compassion.

How does this aspiration express itself in the world of everyday hospice care? As a chaplain and Zen priest,

everything has to start with my own life. I sincerely practice my spiritual path. Zen, through Zazen, is that path creating the spiritual space where I learn to let go and be afresh, ready, and emotionally available to make every encounter the first and only one. This is a major point for working in the hospice field. I have found that my spiritual practice, in a natural way, allows me to open-up and offer to another human my whole being, naturally and effortlessly.

This surrendering to another existence takes the form of active and attentive listening, a genuine interest and empathy and the creation of a sacred space of intimacy, where the vulnerability and distress of the other can find rest and understanding, while leaving her feeling protected and confident. An encounter made of words, silences, eye contact, personal stories, sorrows and joys, tears and laughter, common and extraordinary life moments, and sometimes much more—these are the things that give our lives texture.

But there are not two worlds—the patient's or family member's world and my world—with one dying and confused and one clear and grounded in reality. There is just one world, and I am in it and part of it. Everyone and everything I enter into contact with is in that world. So the patient's or family members' suffering is my suffering; their joy makes my joy, and whatever I do for them I do for me, and what I do for me I do for others. There is no separation. This understanding springs from my religious training and is confirmed by life itself. So personal awareness, personal engagement in the practice, in the path, in the real world, with all its messiness, confusion, clarity and obscurity, and all the grays in-between, is not for my own benefit ... it is for everyone in whatever context I may be, in this case in the hospice field.

My life gives to others as their life/death has given to me. I take it all, as a Zen priest, as a hospice chaplain, as the patient that I have been, and as a family friend of a patient. There is just this being for a moment in eternity, in the space of an eye and heart contact; and then all is gone forever in a blink of an eye.

It is noon. A patient has just been admitted to the inpatient unit. His eyes reflect the fear, the fatigue and the

uncertainty of his whole existence. His body, frail and exhausted, is more air than earth. I approach him and make eye contact. I smile without reserve. I want him to feel our heart and our welcoming. I hold his hand. I ground us both. He closes his eyes. He lets go for a brief moment. I can feel his life fleeing. Nurses come to do their work. I whisper in a soft and calming voice that he is in very good hands, that we will care for him and that we will not harm him in any way. I say I will be back as soon as they are done with their assessment. His eyes look into mine. He wants to trust. That is all and everything he can do for now.

The dying person opens a process not only for himself, but for all others implicated in his life. For the dying process to go well, each and every person has to find the place that is his. Like in a play, we all have to find the right role, so our voice and heart may come out naturally and truthfully. It may take time or it may happen suddenly, when a word, a silence, an action in a good intervention, hits the target on the heart and mind ready for it. This is what I call finding one's place in the living/dying process.

The patient's daughter arrives. She is teary, anxious and weary. We sit down. She is realistic about her father's condition and concerned about her frail mother losing her husband after 65 years of marriage. "He is her second skin," she says. She is conflicted about her sister's attitude, which has made it difficult for her parents to decide on her father entering the hospice program. "She is so selfish. She does not live here and cannot understand what is happening. It makes me so angry!" I listen with body and heart, holding her hands to create a contact beyond words. We open an intimate space for the tears, the words, the thoughts, the anger, the sadness and despair to flow, and for processing what is to come. There is no tomorrow, just this moment.

When someone is dying, those who are physically and emotionally close feel their own world touched by the event. All sorts of reverberations occur in other people's lives. Emotions and feelings such as sorrow, fear, anxiety, detachment, anger, guilt, remorse, relief, uncertainty, denial and desperation are very common in the everyday life of hospice care. Family issues and dynamics—often

buried or ignored for years—can suddenly resurface; this can be very messy and disturbing. It can, without a doubt, transform the end of a life into a living hell. Samsara within samsara.

From a Zen perspective, and from a chaplain's professional point of view, we let go of any particular agenda to allow—without pressure—the right view, the right listening, and the right understanding of the circumstances to come forth to help those involved in the situation. This help can come in the form of facilitating communication so each family member is able to express his/her own truth and pain and find peace within and, if possible, around. Sometimes an intervention can come in the form of just sitting silently, holding a hand and feeling the storm and life pass through.

Back at the inpatient unit, the frail wife arrives with the second daughter. There are two worlds in-between. They are torn apart. The tension can be felt in the air. All of the patients' family members are living with an untold fear of death. We find a place to sit down and talk and listen to each other in a calm atmosphere. I know by now that the patient is ready to be seen by the family and that he is dying. This reality needs to be confronted with the reality of each family member. What do they know? What are their expectations? Can they somehow verbalize it? How can we help them now? We need to bring all of this together for each one of them, so they can say goodbye in whatever way they choose, if they choose to do so—or can. I reach out to *Avalokiteshvara*, the thousand arms of compassion, the skillful means to reach all needs with one heart.

Facing reality is, from a Zen perspective, a result of our own practice and a practice in itself. It is to learn to see things beyond what we would like them to be for us. Death, from our human point of view, is a no-turn-around reality. In front of a corpse, we can create our own sense of relief through mythologies and through religious and spiritual belief. But a corpse is a corpse and it will not open its eyes to us again. This is a cold truth. Based on this understanding, coming from my practice and belief, and confirmed by my daily experience of death in the unit, I have learned to journey with a patient and her loved ones, side by side toward the death event. No

matter how painful it may seem and be, when we are able to approach it slowly and gently and see the natural cycle of life/death, there is a deep and mysterious wisdom that awakens us to reality. We then are ready to die and let die.

Strong negative emotions such as anger, hatred and ignorance veil the reality of what is happening. It makes it difficult, if not impossible, for the patient as well as the loved ones to live through and grow from the dying experience. From a chaplain's perspective, we are to be non-judgmental, no matter how strange and disturbing a story or a situation may sound and appear. We really never know what happened before these people came into our lives that day. There is always more than one side to every story.

Without rushing or brushing aside what may be important for each individual, we have to go beyond and see the wholeness of it—the pain and suffering, the certainty of death and how to integrate it into life to move forward. We need to reach the heart of the desolation that lies beneath the muddy waters. We must breathe compassion through empathy and kindness, and share it generously with everyone, because there is suffering everywhere where there is misunderstanding. A chaplain's emotions and passions here are bad advisers. Calmness, and a certain healthy detachment, allow for a better capacity to listen past words and feelings, as well as to find a middle ground to offer to the situation.

The patient, although exhausted, still has the energy to be agitated. It's not physical pain, the nurses say; it could be fear, or feelings about unfinished matters not allowing him to finally rest and let go. I ask to be alone with him for some moments. I look for his eyes. I search for his hand. I remain silent until we connect. I ask him if he is afraid. Silence. His eyes fix on a far away horizon, beyond my eyes. Then a yes comes out through an emaciated whisper. I smile. I ask about what (I don't want to assume anything). Again his eyes go far away. I ask, *is it fear of dying?* His eyes now look at me; life comes through them with a strange force. Reassurance comes out of my heart. Briefly and slowly, I explain that we do not have to decide to die. We let things happen, naturally, effortlessly. It is happening, I say. *Does it hurt?* He says no. I smile again. I trust the process.

He closes his eyes. Something has happened. It is intangible and at the same time visible in his face and wasted body. He is now letting go. Tension is receding to let life take over until death comes. It is time for me to let the family reunite with the patient. They can see that something has changed. There is peace where there was strain. Soon they too will let go, more naturally.

We can experience in almost any intervention how it reflects itself in other lives and situations. When a patient is unsettled, restless, depressed or angry, the family also suffers. It is not only the reality that their loved one will not be there anymore that makes them suffer; sometimes it is much more. If the patient is not at peace, neither is the family. So when a chaplain gets involved, the intervention may allow the patient to find the emotional and spiritual place that had not yet been found. Peace comes to the patient's body, mind and spirit, and the whole group, including the staff, benefits from this moment of enlightenment. The same can happen when a family as a whole, or a particular member of the family, has not been able to find a place in the living/dying process. For everyone, every moment is unique; we all (patient, family and team members) have to find the place inside (emotional, spiritual) and outside (the social context) to occupy in this event called life and death. The emotional and spiritual intervention touches, near and far, the net of social relations connected with the patient.

It is 7 p.m. In the inpatient unit, the rhythm of the day has changed several times. We all flow with it. It is just life, it is just death. It is not coming nor going, not disappearing nor appearing. Is just the way it is; even if we do not understand all of it, it is what it is. I will be closing my shift, as are other staff members. But life goes on, in many ways. I have learned to give it all at each moment. So when it is time to leave the unit, I leave it completely until the next day comes. We learn to let go, we learn to see life as life, death as death, a natural cycle through which we all have to go. Maybe that is what people perceive when they are around us in the unit—a sense of calmness that comes from seeing, accepting and living in the here and now, that fundamental reality. When death comes, it comes, when life is there, life is there. No more, no less.

I have no words to express the immeasurable gratitude I feel toward the many people who have graced me with their wisdom at the end of their life, or for their families and friends who have allowed me to be part of their world when I crossed their path for a brief moment. They have profoundly touched my life in so many ways. With many departed ones, before the last leap, we made an alliance of eternal gratitude and friendship: if the afterlife exists, somehow, somewhere, we have agreed they will support and guide my work for the benefit of all, as in hospice. That is my good karma.

I'd like to close with some words of recognition to the public space where I have been able to work as a hospice chaplain. VITAS Innovative Hospice Care® is the leading provider of end-of-life care in the United States. VITAS, which is from the Latin for "life," offers chaplains coming from diverse religious horizons a professional space to unite our hearts and gifts to support the life and needs of others at the end of life.



Chaplain nurse station

Outreach at San Francisco Zen Center

Jeffery Schneider
San Francisco Zen Center, California

On Monday nights for more than ten years now 60-70 people can be found sitting zazen in the Buddha Hall in the San Francisco Zen Center, on zafus for the more limber and on chairs for the less. Many of these are people who have never practiced meditation before, or never for more than a few minutes, or never with a group.

This is the Meditation in Recovery program for individuals who are in recovery from substance abuse and other forms of behavioral disorders. The alcoholics, addicts and others who come to Zen Center are often looking for a spiritual path which does not emphasize the notion of a deity. Almost all of these people are involved in traditional 12 Step programs, and it is not the design of Meditation in Recovery to replace these. In fact, the facilitators frequently make the point that Zen Center's program is in addition to, and not a substitute for, primary recovery efforts.

The group started more than ten years ago when a small number of Zen Center practitioners began meeting once a month to discuss the resonances they saw between their recovery work and their Zen practice. The notions of craving as a primary cause of suffering, vow, repentance, the desire to live for the benefit of others-----all of these find expression in both paths. And the harmonies and repetitions in different keys, so to speak, have proven to deepen the understanding and appreciation of awakening way-seeking mind.

After about a year of monthly meetings, the original group dissolved and one of the members decided to try a weekly format open to the public. It was a successful event from the first and after some experimentation, settled into the following format: the facilitator for the evening welcomes the group and offers a brief meditation instruction (with information about how to attend a longer, more in depth one). A 20 minute period of zazen follows. After this, each person introduces him or herself, adding (or not, as it is not required) the 12 Step group in

which she practices. The facilitator gives a short talk on some aspect of Buddhism and recovery which is followed by a group discussion. The evening ends with another short (usually about five minute) period of zazen and a dedication of merit.

Many individuals have been attending the group for years. Most of the current facilitators have come from the group itself. (The criteria for helping to lead the group are at least five years of continuous recovery and having received the precepts in the Jukai ceremony.) The group also hosts half day, full day and multiple day retreats. A couple of years ago another program (Sangha in Recovery) was offered for those willing to make a year long commitment to a series of classes, workshops, group meetings, retreats and meetings with individual leaders. Many of those involved went on to receive Jukai and to become more involved with Zen Center in a variety of ways.

In San Francisco, two other Mediation in Recovery groups have been started by leaders of the Monday night meeting---one meets every Friday at another Zen temple (Hartford Street Zen Center) and another women's group meets once a month.

The coming together of Buddhist teaching and practice and recovery work has both spread to, and arisen independently, in a variety of cities in the United States. One of the facilitators of the Zen Center meeting has traveled to Texas, North Carolina, Missouri and other cities in California to lead retreats there. Essays on Buddhism and recovery, stemming from the original group, are available on Zen Center's website (www.sfzc.org).

The compassionate teaching of the Buddha on the nature of suffering---its origins and its ending---can be seen as particularly pertinent to those afflicted with addictive disease. The notion of craving is no abstract principle, but rather a literally gut-wrenching reality. And

helping to point the way out of such horrendous suffering, whether called the bodhisattva vow or the 12th Step, is surely a concrete example of bodhicitta in action.

Other Zen Center Outreach Activities

Volunteers from Zen Center go three times a week to the women's jail in San Francisco, bringing yoga and meditation. Jail and prison are extremely stressful situations--constant noise, lack of privacy, personal powerlessness on almost all fronts. The ability to relax, learn techniques that allow the body and mind to come to a place of rest, is a great gift to those who have no other recourse from an environment that taxes the spirit to the utmost.

At San Quentin prison, volunteers have helped for over ten years now to create a prison sangha. Each week a number of practitioners join the inmates for zazen, classes, ceremonies. The prison sangha has been able to hold one day sittings.

Zen Center also provides dharma pen pals and books to over 100 prisoners throughout the United States. Frequently prisoners are abandoned by those on the outside, and the knowledge that someone cares enough to write can be crucial. Often inmates are in prisons where there are no Buddhist groups or chaplains and the books we are able to provide at no cost are frequently a lifeline to the dharma.

Volunteers from Zen Center are also involved with the families at a local transitional housing complex. The families are taken to Green Gulch for a day in the country, and holiday parties and trick or treating at Halloween are yearly events. This year a series of yoga classes was provided for the parents.

Zen Center is currently in communication with a rehabilitation facility, an assisted living complex and a youth services organization about providing meditation and stress reduction classes for staff and clients. Our Queer Dharma group provide outreach to the LGBT community which forms a substantial population in the Bay Area. The group, founded in 2009, meets monthly

on a Saturday afternoon to sit zazen, enjoy a dharma talk and discussion, and socialize with tea and cookies. Participants include long-time zen students, as well as those who sit with other sanghas in the Bay Area and from other cities and countries. For some, Queer Dharma is their entry gate to San Francisco Zen Center.

Recently we teamed with a church in the Tenderloin to raise money for and create an edible rooftop garden on top of an assisted living apartment building. Zen Center was able to locate funds and to provide organic gardening expertise through Green Gulch Farm, our center in Marin County.



Glide roof garden

Green Gulch is a temple, organic farm and garden, and conference center which provides educational opportunities for learning about growing food in ways that care for the earth. Hundreds of school children have passed through, some seeing where their food comes from for the first time. There are apprenticeships for organic farmers and many opportunities to learn through volunteering.

Young people also receive attention from Zen Center. The Coming of Age Program inspires, guides, and empowers our children for life-long spiritual inquiry and engagement. It provides a supportive environment of peer and mentor relationships in which young people, in 7th and 8th grade, can meet and discuss their views and perceptions of the world around them. A boys' group and

a girls' group meet separately every month for nine months on Sunday mornings from 9:30 am until noon. The meetings culminate in a Coming of Age ceremony in the Zendo in May in which participants are honored and witnessed by their friends and family.

A lot of our outreach activities come through the volunteer programs. Working in the garden at Green Gulch, the kitchen or library at City Center, helping to prepare for the guest season at Tassajara (Zen Center's monastery in the Los Padres National Forest)---all serve as an introduction to the practice. All help to create community in a culture where it is often sorely lacking. The Three Treasures of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha have been handed down to us through generations of men and women who have reached out to others. It is our privilege to be next in the line of warm hand to warm hand.

Shobogenzo Zazenshin - A Free Translation (8)

Rev. Issho Fujita
Director

Soto Zen Buddhism International Center

The wide sky, without border—birds fly beyond the unknown.

The “wide sky” mentioned here is not the sky that we see in the high above. The sky that covers the midair is not the “wide sky”. Needless to say that the sky that stretches from there to here is not the “wide sky”. Whether it is hidden or exposed, with no front and no back—that is what we call the “wide sky”.

When a bird flies in this sky, it is an absolute state called “flying sky”. We cannot measure the size of this action of “flying sky”. The action of the “flying sky” exhausts the entire world. This is because the exhaustive world is the “flying sky”. How vast is this flying?-it cannot be known. But to say it in a word that transcends human measurement, we say, “beyond the unknown.” That is equivalent to what Tozan said, “Go away with no string beneath your straw sandals(Practice without any traces).”

When the sky flies away, the bird flies away, too.

When the bird flies away, the sky also flies away.

If we try to put the investigation of this flying away into words, it is as Baso said: “It is solely in this place.” This itself is the lancet (vital point) of zazen. In zazen, how many processes of zazen are compete with each other to reveal the truth of “It is solely in this place”?!

Master Wanshi's “Lancet of Zazen” is something like above. Among all the noted teachers of all the ages, there is no one who could make such a great lancet of zazen. The crude bunch at this temple or that temple, if they are forced to express something like this “Lancet of Zazen,” even in exhausting all the strength of a lifetime, of two lifetimes, they couldn't do it. Now, in Zen monasteries of every direction, there is no one who can speak of something like this “Lancet of Zazen”; Wanshi-zenji's is the only one true “Lancet of Zazen” .

My own late teacher, Nyojo-zenji, when he ascended to the Dharma Hall to expound the Dharma, always said: “Wanshi-zenji is an old Buddha.” He never spoke this way of other people.

When there is the eye that can see a person's true worth, one can distinguish even the buddha-ancestors. One can truly understand that in Tozan's tradition, there was a buddha-ancestor who knew a buddha-ancestor as a buddha-ancestor.

Now, more than 80 years have passed since the time of Wanshi-zenji. Upon reading his “Lancet of Zazen,” I composed the following “Lancet of Zazen.” It is March 18, 1242—nearly 85 years have gone by since Wanshi-zenji's passing on October 8, 1157. Here is the “Lancet of Zazen” I composed:

Lancet of Zazen

Zazen is the essential functioning of the Buddhas; it is the function essential to the ancestors. Reality is actualized with no room for human interference—it manifests with no opposition between seer and seen.

Because reality actualizes beyond human interference, that actualization is not grasped by senses—it is intimate and being one with the reality of the self, with no observer.

Because it is a truth actualized with no opposition between between seer and seen, that actualization is not an object of perception, but the actual proof of reality.

Because the actualization of that truth is one with the

self, no defilement can stain the truth.

Because the actualization of that truth is the very proof of that truth, in zazen, there is no need to even bring up the “real” and “apparent” of Tozan’s Five Ranks.

Unstained intimacy is an emancipation that accepts no explanation or analysis. Actual proof, without real or apparent, is the truth without calculation and great effort of just practicing it directly

Water becomes clear, and the surface of riverbed can be seen straight through; a fish swims in the limitless water and has no end to swimming. Sky opens up, and it becomes transparent; no matter how far a bird flies in limitless sky, there is no end.

It is not that what is said in Wanshi-zenji’s “Lance of Zazen” is not enough. But we must dig even a inch deeper to say any further.

As far as we are the descendants of the buddhas and ancestors, we must make the practice of zazen the one great matter of study. This, above all else, is the signature mark of correct transmission only from buddha-ancestor to Buddha-ancestor.

Written at the Kosho Horin Monastery on the eighteenth day, the third month, the third year of Ninji Era(1242)
Presented to the assembly at Yoshimine Temple, Yoshida County, Echizen Province, in the eleventh month of the fourth year of Ninji Era(1243)

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

Lecture (7)

Rev. Shohaku Okumura
Sanshinji, Indiana, U.S.A.

[Text]

Shakyamuni Buddha said, "Shariputra, all these sentient beings should make offerings and prostrations to prajna paramita as they do to a living buddha. They should contemplate prajna paramita just as they make offerings and prostrations to a buddha-bhagavat. What is the reason? Prajna paramita is not

different from buddha-bhagavat. A buddha-bhagavat is not different from prajna paramita. Prajna paramita is itself buddha-bhagavat. Buddha-bhagavat is itself prajna paramita. What is the reason? Shariputra! This is because all supreme awakened tathagatas issue from prajna paramita. Shariputra! This is because all bodhisattva-mahasattvas, pratyekabuddhas, arhats, non-returners, once-returners, stream-enterers, and so on issue from prajna paramita. Shariputra! This is because the way of the ten good deeds in the world, the four quiet meditations, the four formless samadhis, and the five divine powers all issue from prajna paramita."

Making offerings (*kuyo*) and making prostrations (*raikyo*)

At the end of this fascicle, Dogen Zenji quotes a paragraph from the one-hundred-seventy-second Chapter, “Praising Prajna (讚般若品)” of *Maha-prajna-paramita-sutra*. (Taisho 5, p.925) This saying of the Buddha is the answer to the question from Shariputra, “How all sentient beings in the bodhisattva vehicle, the pratyeka-buddha vehicle, and sravaka-vehicle, should abide within the prajna-paramita?” The important point is that this question is not only about bodhisattvas but pratyeka-buddhas and sravakas are included. Pratyeka-buddha refers to those who practice alone, attain realization by themselves without teacher and enjoy their awakening without teaching and sharing with others. Sravakas are Buddha’s disciples. Commonly those are considered as *hinayana* (lesser vehicles) from Mahayana point of view. All of them can abide in Prajna paramita. Here we find the similar idea of the Eka-yana (One vehicle) appears in the Lotus Sutra.

The Buddha’s answer is that all of them, not only the bodhisattvas, but also those in the two vehicles, should abide within the prajna paramita as if they are dwelling together with the living Buddha himself, meeting with the Buddha and serving the Buddha sincerely and wholeheartedly. They should make offerings and prostrations to prajna paramita in the same way they make offerings to the actual living Buddha.

“Making offering” here is a translation of *kuyo* (供養, Skt. *pujana*), which literally means offering (*ku*, 供) and sustaining or nurturing (*yo*, 養). Originally from the time of the Early Buddhism, *kuyo* means that people in the lay Buddhist community donate four kinds of things; food/drink, clothing, bedding and medicines to the monks to support and sustain their practice.

Later people thought that there are three kinds of offerings; (1) offering of materials (*ri-kuyo*, 利供養); offering things such as food/drink, clothing, medicine, flower, incense etc. to the three treasures (2) offering of respect (*kei-kuyo*, 敬供養); expressing one's respect and gratitude by doing prostrations, *gassho* etc. to the Buddha's and great Bodhisattvas (including their images such as paintings, statues, etc.), one's Dharma teacher and other venerable monks, and (3) offering of practice (*gyo-kuyo*, 行供養); one's own studying Dharma and practicing meditation etc. are also considered as *kuyo*.

In Mahayana Buddhism, many more devotional activities became considered as *kuyo*, for example in the Chapter 2 of the *Lotus Sutra*, The Skillful Means, it is said,

“If anyone goes to stupas or mausoleums,/ To jeweled or painted images,/ With flowers, incense, flags, or canopies/ And reverently makes offerings;

Or if they have others perform music,/ By beating drums or blowing horns or conch shells,/ Or playing pipes, flutes, lutes, harps,/ Mandolins, cymbals, or gongs,/ Producing fine sounds and presenting them as offerings;

Or if they joyfully praise/ The Buddha's virtues in song,/ Even with just a tiny sound,/ They have fulfilled the Buddha way.

If anyone, even while distracted, With even a single flower,/ Makes an offering to a painted image, /They will progressively see countless buddhas.

There are those who worship by prostrating themselves,/ Some merely by putting their palms together, Others only by raising a hand,/ And others by a slight nod of the head.

All of these,/ Honoring images in various ways,/ Will progressively see countless buddhas, Fulfill the unexcelled way themselves,/

Save countless beings everywhere,/ And enter into nirvana without residue,/ As a fire dies out/ When the firewood is all consumed./

If anyone, even while distracted,/ Enters a stupa or mausoleum/ And even once exclaims, “Hail to the Buddha,”/ They have fulfilled the Buddha way.” (The Lotus Sutra, translation by Gene Reeves)

Those words with underline are the translation of *kuyo*. All of these devotional practices have been done by

monks and lay people in various Buddhist traditions. These are all considered to be *kuyo* (offering and sustaining). Our practice of studying and chanting sutras, meditation, etc. are also considered to be a form of *kuyo* to the Three Treasures; Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. In Asian Buddhist countries, arts and cultures including painting, sculpture, music, dance, theater play such as Noh play, flower arrangement, are developed from this kind of practice of *kuyo* at Buddhist temples.

Raikyo (礼敬) is a form of second kind of *kuyo* (敬供養). Rai (or rei, 礼) is a form through which we express our inner respect (kei, 敬) using our bodies. There are several ways to express our respect in Buddhism. Most common ways in Soto Zen tradition is to make a bow with *gassho* (putting the palms together and lower our head) toward the three treasures. Most formal way is making full prostration by putting five parts of our body (forehead, both knees and both arms) to ground and keep both hands palm up on the level of ears as if we receive the Buddha's feet on them.

Bhagavat is one of the ten epithets of a buddha, which is usually translated as the “World Honored One.” The Maha-prajna-paramita Sutra said that we should make offerings and make prostrations to the prajna paramita as if we do to the living Buddha. Prajna paramita (perfection of wisdom) is one of the six practices all bodhisattvas should practice, such as giving (*dana*), morality (*sila*), patience (*kshanti*), diligence (*virya*), meditation (*dhyana*) and wisdom (*prajna*). The *Maha-prajna-paramita Sutra* points out that prajna paramita is the foundation of other five practices. Without prajna, other five practices cannot be called paramita. Further more, in the forty-eighth chapter of Maha-prajna-paramita Sutra entitled the chapter of “Buddha's Mother (佛母品),” it is said that even the Buddha is born from prajna paramita. Therefore, prajna paramita is called mother of the Buddha.

Prajna paramita is itself the Buddha

Then the Sutra says that prajna paramita is not only the mother of the Buddha but, the Buddha is nothing other than prajna paramita. Prajna paramita is not different from the Buddha. The buddha is not different from prajna paramita. Prajna paramita is itself buddha. Buddha is itself prajna paramita. This is the logic familiar to us from the statement in the Heart Sutra regarding form and emptiness. “Form does not differ from emptiness,

emptiness does not differ from form. Form itself is emptiness, emptiness itself form.”

This is also the same with what I wrote about the first sentence of the Heart Sutra; “Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, when deeply practicing prajna paramita, clearly saw that all five aggregates are empty.” Avalokiteshvara is nothing other than the five aggregates. Avalokiteshvara is nothing other than what she/he is doing, that is practicing deep prajna paramita. Five aggregates are empty. And Dogen said, the five aggregates are five instances of prajna. So, we can read the sentence as, “Five aggregates, when deeply practicing five aggregates, clearly saw that all five aggregates are five aggregates.” Or, “Prajna paramita, when deeply practicing prajna paramita, clearly saw that prajna paramita is prajna paramita.” The subject, the object and the action are one and the same. The person (buddha), the action (practicing) and the object (prajna paramita) are identical. Certainly, this is a tautology and as a proposition, this is nonsensical. Dogen’s statement; “Form is itself form, emptiness is nothing other than emptiness.(色是色、空即空)” is the same. Prajna is wisdom beyond wisdom, beyond our logical, conceptual thinking. It shows the fresh reality of our actual practice before being processed by our intellection. Or rather, the prajna intentionally disturbs, shakes and even deconstructs our habitual, conceptual way of thinking.

Everything is born from Prajna paramita

After, the sentence; “What is the reason?”, the Maha-prajna-paramita Sutra repeats, “Shariputra! This is because.....” sixteen times. Dogen Zenji quotes only first three of them. Within them almost all of important Buddhist terms are included such as the Buddhas, Dharma of emptiness, and Sangha: bodhisattvas, arhats, pratyeka-buddhas etc., virtue of the practice. That means, the entire Buddhist teaching is based on prajna paramita. I only explain the part Dogen quotes.

“Arhats, non-returners, once-returners, stream-enterers,” refers to the four ranks of Sravakayana. Arhat is the one who has attained the highest rank in the early Buddhism, that of no-more-learning (無学) in the Buddhist practice. Arhat has been liberated from all defilements, the delusive desires have been extinguished completely, and therefore will not transmigrate within the six realms of samsara. Arhat attains full extinction immediately following this life. Other three are the preparatory ranks before reaching

the final rank of arhat. All buddhas, bodhisattvas, pratyeka-buddhas and sravakas are all be born from prajna paramita.

“The ten good deeds in the world (世間十善業道)” are the wholesome actions that allow us to avoid making evil karma and being born in the three lower realms of samsara; the hell, the realm of hungry ghost, and animals. (1) not taking life, (2) not stealing that is not given, (3) not committing sexual misconducts, (4) not telling lies, (5) not uttering harsh words, (6) not uttering words which cause disharmony between two or more persons, (7) not engaging in frivolous speech, (8) not being greedy, (9) not being angry, (10) not having mistaken views. These are the bases of the Buddhist ethics. These are the teachings for the living beings in the realm of desire (kama-dhatu).

“The four quiet meditations (四靜慮)” refers to the four steps of meditation in the realm of form (*rupa-dhatu*). The four formless samadhis (四無色定) are the four stages of meditation in the realm of no-form (*arupa-dhatu*). These three categories are the wholesome actions and meditation practice within the triple world of samsara. These are also came from prajna paramita.

In India, people thought a practitioner could attain “the five divine powers (五神通)” by practice of various kinds of meditation such as: 1) the ability to go anywhere at will and to transform oneself or objects at will, 2) the ability to see anything at any distance, 3) the ability to hear any sound at any distance, 4) the ability to read other's mind, 5) the ability to know the former lives of oneself and others.

The Sutra says all of these people and their practices and the fruits of the practices are all born from prajna paramita.

[Text]

Therefore, a buddha-bhagavat is itself prajna paramita. Prajna paramita is nothing other than all beings. All these beings are empty in form, without arising or extinguishing, neither defiled nor pure, without increasing or decreasing. Actualizing this prajna paramita is to actualize buddha-bhagavat. Inquire into it! Practice it! Making offerings and prostrations [to prajna paramita] is attending and serving buddha-bhagavat. Attending and serving [all beings] is itself buddha-bhagavat.

“Therefore, a buddha-bhagavat is itself prajna

paramita. Prajna paramita is nothing other than all beings.” Dogen Zenji’s comments on the quote is very short and precise. He says, the Buddha is itself prajna paramita. Prajna paramita is all phenomenal beings. The second sentence is repetition of what Dogen said in the beginning of this chapter,

“The five aggregates are forms, sensations, perceptions, predilections, and consciousness; this is the five-fold prajna. Clear seeing is itself prajna. To unfold and manifest this essential truth, [the Heart Sutra] states that “form is emptiness; emptiness is form.” Form is nothing but form; emptiness is nothing but emptiness -- one hundred blades of grass, ten thousand things. The twelve sense-fields are twelve instances of prajna paramita. Also, there are eighteen instances of prajna: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind; form, sound, smell, taste, touch, objects of mind; as well as the consciousnesses of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. Also, there are four instances of prajna: suffering, its cause, its cessation, and the path [to cessation]. Also, there are six instances of prajna: generosity, pure precepts, calm patience, diligence, quiet meditation, and wisdom. There is also a single instance of prajna manifesting itself right now -- unsurpassable complete, perfect awakening. Also, there are three instances of prajna: past, present, and future. Also, there are six instances of prajna: earth, water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness. Also, four instances of prajna are going on daily: walking, standing, sitting, and lying down.

Through the practice of profound prajna paramita as the mediation, the Buddha and all phenomenal beings are one. This is one of the key points of Dogen’s teachings. Here is a famous *waka* poem of Dogen:

峯の色、 (*mine no iro*) Colors of the mountain peaks,
谷の響きも (*Tani no hibiki mo*) Sounds of the valley streams,
皆ながら (*Mina nagara*) All of them, as they are,
吾が釈迦牟尼の (*Waga Shakymuni no*) My Shakyamuni’s
声と姿と (*Koe to sugata to.*) voice and appearance.

When we read this poem carelessly, we may interpret that what Dogen expresses is not different from the expression of spirituality based on animism or pantheism. Or, the expression of so-called, the theory of original enlightenment that was popular in Tendai school at the

time of Dogen. All sentient and insentient beings are from the beginning, without any practice, completely enlightened. Therefore, there is no need to making efforts to study and practice. When Dogen was young, he had a question about this theory and went to China to seek the answer to his question. We need to understand that this poem is Dogen’s expression of prajna paramita in which subject, object, and wisdom are one. To express this more thoroughly, he wrote *Shobogenzo Keisei sanshoku* (Sounds of Valley Stream, Color of Mountains), *Sansui kyo* (Mountians and Waters Sutra) and *Mujo seppo* (Insentients Expounding Dharma).

“All these beings are empty in form, without arising or extinguishing, neither defiled nor pure, without increasing or decreasing.” All phenomenal conditioned beings are emptiness. Therefore, actually nothing is arise or perish. Nothing is defiled or pure. Nothing increase or decrease. This is exactly the same with the sentence in the Heart Sutra.

“Actualizing this prajna paramita is to actualize buddha-bhagavat.” The words “actualizing” and “to actualize” in this sentence is a translation of “*genjo*” in “*genjokoan*.” Here we can see the connection between *Maka-hannya-haramitsu* and *Genjo koan*. Actualization of Reality (*genjo koan*) is actualization of prajna paramita and also actualization of the Buddha. Prajna paramita is always actualized as the reality of emptiness; impermanence and no-self-nature. When we awake to this reality and practice in the way we express this reality of emptiness of all beings, we see that all beings are expounding prajna paramita. And that awakening in our practice is the same with the Buddha’s awakening. Then all being are themselves prajna paramita and the Buddha.

“Inquire into it! Practice it!” We need to inquire what these all beings actually are, and how these all being are existing without fixed self-nature. What is the true reality of all beings? Dogen said in “*Genjokoan*,”

“When the Dharma has not yet fully penetrated into body and mind, one thinks that one is already filled with the dharma. When the dharma fills the body and mind, one thinks that something is [still] lacking. For example, when we sail a boat into the ocean beyond sight of land and when our eyes scan [the horizon in] the four directions, it simply looks

like a circle. No other shape appears. This great ocean, however, is neither round nor square. It has inexhaustible characteristics. [To a fish], it looks like a palace; [to a heavenly being] a jeweled necklace. [To us] as far as our eyes can see, it looks like a circle. All the myriad things are like this. Within the dusty world and beyond, there are innumerable aspects and characteristics; we only see or grasp as far as the power of our eye of study and practice can see. When we listen to the reality of myriad things, we must know that there are inexhaustible characteristics in either oceans or mountains and there are many other worlds in the four directions. This is true not only in the external world, but it is the same right under our feet or within a single drop of water.

To see the emptiness of all things is not enough. Each and every particular beings has its own characteristics. We need to study one by one in each occasion. That is how we practice in the daily lives. To do so, we need to attend all beings, and serve all beings as they are the Buddha and prajna paramita in the same way as the windbell in Rujing's poem expresses prajna together with the wind from all directions. We need to live attentively with appreciation and gratitude toward all beings we encounter each and every day to express prajna paramita.

"Making offerings and prostrations [to prajna paramita] is attending and serving buddha-bhagavat." Making offerings and prostrations to prajna paramita is making offerings and prostrations to all phenomenal beings we encounter moment by moment in any situation. And our practice with such an attitude is attending and serving the Buddha. This sentence shows the connection between prajna paramita and our day-to-day practice. We live together with all beings we encounter with wholehearted caring and attentiveness. Dogen's instructions in *Eiheishing*; the collection of six independent writings regarding monastic regulations, are very concrete and practical teaching regarding the practice of prajna paramita.

For example, in *Tenzo kyokun* (Instructions for the Tenzo), Dogen puts emphasis to keep three minds; Magnanimous mind, nurturing mind and joyful mind, toward the other people in the community and also to the food ingredients and water, fire and all other things.

"After you receive them (food ingredients), carefully protect these ingredients as if taking care of your own eyes."

"Select the rice and prepare the vegetables by yourself with your own hands, watching closely with sincere diligence. You should not attend to some things and neglect or be slack with others for even one moment. Do not give away a single drop from within the ocean of virtues; you must not fail to add a single speck on top of the mountain of good deeds."

"All day and all night, things come to mind and the mind attends to them; at one with them all, diligently carry on the Way."

"When steaming rice, regard the pot as your own head; when washing rice, know that the water is your own life."

These are the attitudes we should maintain to practice and venerate all beings we encounter as the Buddha and prajna.

"Attending and serving [all beings] is itself buddha-bhagavat." Finally, Dogen twist and shake our habitual way of thinking once again. When we live and practice with such an attitude with all beings as if we attend and serve the living Buddha, our practice is itself, prajna paramita and the Buddha. This concluding sentence in *Makahannya-haramitsu* is connected with the later chapter of *Shobogenzo* entitled, "Gyobutsu-igi. (行佛威儀)." In the very beginning of the chapter, he said;

"All buddhas without any exception, fully practice the dignified conducts. This is Practice-Buddha. Practice-Buddha is not reward-body buddha, and not transformation-body buddha either.We should know that, all buddhas in the buddha way do not wait for awakening. Only Practice-Buddha's activities completely penetrate the way of going beyond buddha."

Commonly this expression of the title is read as *gyo-butsumi* (to practice Buddha's dignified conducts), but Dogen read this as *gyobutsu-igi* (dignified conducts of Practice-Buddha). *Gyobutsu* (行佛) is the name of a buddha. Our practice is a buddha named Practice-Buddha. I think, in a sense, Dogen coins another kind of body of buddha beside *dharma-kaya*, *sambogha-kaya*, and *nirmana-kaya*, that is practice-kaya.

[Colophon]

The Second Chapter of

Shobogenzo (True Dharma Eye Treasury)

Maha-prajna-paramita (Perfection of Great Wisdom)

On a day of the summer practice period in the first year of Tenpuku (1233), expounded to the assembly at Kannon-dori-in [Monastery].

According to this colophon, Shobogenzo Makahannya haramitsu is written during the summer practice period in 1233. This is the year Dogen founded his monastery. The full name of the monastery was Kannon-dori-in Kosho Horinji. Commonly called Koshoji. Therefore, this was written during the very first practice period for Dogen as the founding abbot, and also the first practice period in Japanese Soto Zen tradition. A few month later, in the fall of the same year, he wrote *Genjo koan*. However, in the 75-fascicle collection of Shobogenzo, Genjo koan was put in the first chapter and Makahannya haramitsu, the second. Anyway, these two fascicles are the foundation of other fascicle of Shobogenzo written in the later years.

Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma Book 46

The Insentient Preach the Dharma *Mujō seppō*

Translated by Carl Bielefeldt
with the 2009 Seminar in Japanese Buddhist Texts,
Stanford University:
Isaac Blacksin, Haewon Choi, Rafal Felbur,
Joshua Hayes, Chen Li, Nicholas Witkowski

INTRODUCTION

This text was composed in the autumn of 1243, at Kippōji, the monastery in Echizen province (modern Fukui) where Dōgen taught following his move from the capital in the summer of that year. It occurs as number 46 in both the 75- and 60-fascicle redactions of the *Shōbōgenzō*.

The title theme of the essay is best known in Chan and Zen literature from the teachings of the eighth-century figure Nanyang Huizhong, a disciple of the Sixth Ancestor and the subject of a number of famous koan. Dōgen offers here commentary on a conversation on the topic between Huizhong and an unidentified monk, as well as on a very similar conversation between the ninth-century master Dongshan Liangjie and his teacher Yunyan Tansheng.

It was not uncommon in Dōgen's day for Buddhists to imagine that the natural world, including inanimate objects, was somehow expressing Buddhist truths. Indeed, in his celebrated *Mountains and Waters Sutra* and other texts of the *Shōbōgenzō*, Dōgen himself often seems to affirm such a view. Yet, in this essay, he warns us not to confuse the preaching of the dharma with "the rustling branches of the forests," and not to think that the insentient are simply the "grasses and trees, tiles and pebbles" of our natural world. Rather, as he emphasizes in his opening remarks, we should understand the insentient preaching the dharma as the fundamental activity of the buddhas and ancestors, the "realized koan" (*genjō kōan*) handed down in the lineage of Zen.

This translation is based on the text appearing in Kawamura Kōdō, *Dōgen zenji zenshū*, volume 2 (1993), pp. 2-13. An annotated version can be found on the website of the Soto Zen Text Project: <http://scbs.stanford.edu/sztp3>. Other English renderings of this text appear in Kōsen Nishiyama and John Stevens, "The Proclamation of the Law by Inanimate Beings," *Shōbōgenzō*, volume 4 (1983), pp. 68-76; Yuho Yokoi, "The Sermon by Insentient Beings," *The Shobo-genzo* (1986), pp. 555-563; Kazuaki Tanahashi, "Insentient Beings Speak Dharma," *Enlightenment Unfolds: The Essential Teachings of Zen Master Dōgen* (1999), pp. 185-195; Gudo Nishijima and Chodo Cross, "The Non-Emotional Preaches the Dharma," *Master Dogen's Shobogenzo*, Book 3 (2006), pp. 113-124; and Hubert Nearman, "On the Dharma that Nonsentient Beings Express," *The Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching* (2007), pp. 653-665. The translator expresses his debt to the members of the 2009 Seminar in Japanese Buddhist Texts, with whom he read the text at Stanford.

Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma Book 46

The Insentient Preach the Dharma *Mujō seppō*

Preaching the dharma in preaching the dharma is the fully apparent koan that the buddhas and ancestors bequeath to the buddhas and ancestors. This preaching the dharma is the dharma preaching. It is not sentient, is not insentient; it is not constructed, is not unconstructed; it is not the

causes and conditions of the constructed or the unconstructed; it is not a dharma arising from conditions. Nevertheless, it is not following “the path of the birds”: it is for the buddha assembly. When the great way is complete, preaching the dharma is complete; when the treasury of the dharma is bequeathed, preaching the dharma is bequeathed. When the flower is taken up, preaching the dharma is taken up; when the robe is handed down, preaching the dharma is handed down.

Therefore, the buddhas and ancestors, from before King of Majestic Voice, have all been paying their respects to preaching the dharma; from before the buddhas, they have all been originally practicing preaching the dharma. Do not study this only as meaning that preaching the dharma has been governed by the buddhas and ancestors: the buddhas and ancestors have been governed by preaching the dharma. This preaching the dharma does not only expound merely the collection of the dharma of 84,000 teachings; there is a collection of preaching the dharma of immeasurable, limitless teachings. Do not study this to mean that later buddhas preach the dharma of the dharma preaching of prior buddhas: just as prior buddhas have not come to be later buddhas, so with preaching the dharma, the prior dharma preaching is not made the later dharma preaching. Therefore,

The Buddha Śākyamuni said [in the *Lotus Sutra*], “In the manner that the buddhas of the three periods preach the dharma, I also now preach the dharma without discrimination.”

This being the case, just as the buddhas employ preaching the dharma, so the buddhas employ preaching the dharma. Just as the buddhas directly transmit preaching the dharma, so the buddhas directly transmit preaching the dharma; and thus there is the insentient preaching the dharma, directly transmitted from the ancient buddhas to the seven buddhas, directly transmitted from the seven buddhas to the present. In this insentient preaching the dharma, there are the buddhas, there are the ancestors. Do not study that “I now . . . preach the dharma” means new items not directly transmitted; do not attest that what is directly transmitted from ancient times is a “demon’s cave of old dens.”

The National Teacher Dazheng of Guangzhai si

in the Western Capital of the land of the Great Tang [i.e., the eighth-century figure Nanyang Huizhong] was once asked by a monk, “Can the insentient preach the dharma?”

The National Teacher said, “They’re constantly preaching with ardor; they preach without pause.”

The monk said, “Why can’t I hear it?”

The National Teacher said, “That you can’t hear it doesn’t prevent others from hearing it.”

The monk said, “I don’t understand. Who can hear it?”

The National Teacher said, “The sages can hear it.”

The monk said, “Can the Reverend hear it?”

The National Teacher said, “I can’t hear it.”

The monk said, “If the Reverend can’t hear it, how does he know that the insentient preach the dharma?”

The National Teacher said, “Fortunately, I don’t hear it. If I heard it, I would equal the sages, and you wouldn’t hear me preaching the dharma.”

The monk said, “In this case, living beings have no part in this.”

The National Teacher said, “I preach for living beings; I don’t preach for sages.”

The monk said, “After the living beings hear it, how are they?”

The National Teacher said, “They’re not living beings.”

Beginners and latecomers who would study “the insentient preach the dharma” should study with diligence this case of the National Teacher.

“They’re constantly preaching with ardor; they preach without pause.” “Constantly” is one time among all times. “Their preaching never pauses”: preaching that is already appearing is definitely “without pause.” We should not study that the manner in which the insentient preach the dharma must necessarily be like that of the sentient because [we imagine] it ought to be like the voices of the sentient and the manner in which the sentient preach the dharma.

To snatch away the voices of the sentient realm and liken them to the voices of the insentient realm is not the way of the buddha. The insentient preaching the dharma is not necessarily sound, just as preaching the dharma by the sentient is not sound. We should make concentrated effort to study this a while, asking ourselves, asking others, what is “the sentient,” “what is the insentient”?

Such being the case, we should carefully put our minds to and study in what manner it is that the insentient preach the dharma. One who considers, as the foolish think, that the rustling branches of the forests, the opening and falling of leaves and flowers, are the insentient preaching the dharma — this is not a man who studies the buddha dharma. If this were the case, who could not know the preaching of the insentient, who could not hear the preaching of the insentient? We should reflect a while. In the realm of the insentient, are there grasses, trees and forests? Is the realm of the insentient mixed into the realm of the sentient? Still, those who consider grasses and trees, tiles and pebbles as the insentient have not studied extensively; those who consider the insentient as grasses and trees, tiles and pebbles have not studied their fill. Even if, for now, we were to accept the plants seen by humans and treat them as the insentient, grasses and trees are also not what is fathomed by common thinking. Why? There is a vast difference between the forests of the heavens and those among humans; what grows in central countries and marginal lands is not the same; the grasses and trees in the ocean and in the mountains are all dissimilar. Not to mention that there are forests growing in the sky, forests growing in the clouds. Of the hundred grasses and myriad trees that grow in wind, fire, and the rest, there are in general those that should be studied as sentient, those that are not recognized as insentient. There are grasses and trees that are like humans and beasts; whether they are sentient or insentient is not clear. Not to mention the trees and rocks, flowers and fruits, hot and cold waters of the transcendentals — though when we see them we have no doubts, when we would explain them, is it not difficult? Seeing merely the grasses and trees of the one land of Shenzhou [i.e., China], being familiar with the grasses and trees of the one region of Nihon [Japan], do not consider or deliberate that the myriad quarters and all the realms must be like them.

“The National Teacher said, ‘The sages can hear it.’” This says that, in the congregation where the insentient preach the dharma, the sages stand and listen. The sages and the insentient actualize hearing, actualize preaching. Since the insentient preach the dharma for the sages, are they sages or are they commoners? Again, if we have finished clarifying the manner in which the insentient preach the dharma, we should personally realize that what the sages hear exists like this. Having gained personal realization,

we should gauge the realm of the sages. Further, we should study the activities on the road through the clouds that transcends the commoner and surpasses the sage.

“The National Teacher said, ‘I don’t hear it.’” Do not consider that these words are easy to understand. Does he “not hear it” having transcended the commoner and surpassed the sage? Or does he not hear it because he breaks down the cave of dens of “commoner and sage”? Working at it in this way, we should actualize his speech.

“The National Teacher said, ‘Fortunately, I don’t hear it. If I heard it, I would equal the sages.’” This presentation is not one word or two words. “Fortunately I” is not “commoner or sage”; should “fortunately I” be a buddha and ancestor? Because the buddhas and ancestors “transcend the commoner and surpass the sage,” [what they hear] should not be equal to what the sages hear.

Dealing with the reasoning of the National Teacher’s words, “you wouldn’t hear me preaching the dharma,” we should manage the bodhi of the buddhas and the sages. Its point is that, when the insentient preach the dharma, the sages can hear it; when the National Teacher preaches the dharma, this monk can hear it. On this reasoning, we should take long days and months of study and concentration. For now, we should question the National Teacher, “I’m not asking about ‘after living beings hear it’; how about at the very moment that living beings hear the preaching of dharma?”

The Great Master Wuben, Eminent Ancestor Dongshan [i.e., the ninth-century figure Dongshan Liangjie], when studying with the Ancient Ancestor Great Reverend Yunyan [Yunyan Tansheng], asked him, “When the insentient preach the dharma, who can hear it?”

Yunyan, the Ancient Ancestor, said, “When the insentient preach the dharma, the insentient can hear it.”

The Eminent Ancestor said, “Does the Reverend hear it?”

The Ancient Ancestor said, “If I heard it, you could not hear my preaching the dharma.”

The Eminent Ancestor said, “In that case, I don’t hear the Reverend preaching the dharma.”

The Ancient Ancestor said, “Even when I preach, you still don’t hear. How much less when the insentient preach the dharma.”

The Eminent Ancestor then expressed a verse

presented to the Ancient Ancestor:

How strange! How strange!

The insentient preaching the dharma is inconceivable.

If we use our ears to hear it, it's hard in the end to understand;

Only when our eyes hear the voices do we know it.

The meaning of these words of the Eminent Master, “When the insentient preach the dharma, who can hear it?” we should examine in detail through an entire life and many lives of concentrated effort. This question he asks should additionally be endowed with the virtue of a statement. This statement has the “skin, flesh, bones, and marrow”; it is not only “transmitting the mind by the mind.” “Transmitting the mind by the mind” is the pursuit of the beginner and latecomer. There is a pivot that is directly transmitted by taking up the robe, directly transmitted by holding up the dharma. How could people today reach its ultimate limit in three or four months of concentrated effort? The Eminent Ancestor, though he had previously heard the message of Dazheng's words, “when the insentient preach the dharma, the sages can hear it,” goes on here to have the question, “when the insentient preach the dharma, who can hear it?” Do we take this as affirming Dazheng's words, or take it as not affirming Dazheng's words? Do we take it as a question, or take it as a statement? If he is not affirming Dazheng at all, how could he talk this way? If he is completely affirming Dazheng, how could he talk this way?

The Ancient Ancestor Yunyan said, “When the insentient preach the dharma, the insentient can hear it.” There should be a study that, authentically transmitting this bloodline, sloughs off body and mind. This “when the insentient preach the dharma, the insentient can hear it” must be the nature and attributes of “when the buddhas preach the dharma, the buddhas can hear it.” The congregation that would listen to the insentient preaching the dharma — whether they be sentient or insentient, whether they be commoners or worthies and sages — must be insentient. The genuine and spurious of past and present should be judged on the basis of this nature and attributes. Even if brought from the Western Heavens [i.e., India], if it is not by a true ancestral master of authentic transmission, it is of no use. Even for one whose training has been continuous for a thousand myriad years,

if it is not what is passed down from successor to successor, it is difficult to succeed to it. Now, the authentic transmission has penetrated to the Eastern Land [i.e., China], and it ought to be easy to distinguish the passage and blockage of the genuine and spurious. Even listening to the words, “when living beings preach the dharma, living beings can hear it,” we should surely accept them as the bones and marrow of the buddhas and the ancestors. In hearing the words of the Ancient Ancestor Yunyan, in listening to the words of the National Teacher Dazheng, when we truly appraise them, the sages referred to in “the sages can hear it” must be insentient; and the insentient referred to in “the insentient can hear it” must be sages. What is preached by the insentient is insentient; for the insentient preaching the dharma is itself insentient. Therefore, the insentient preach the dharma, and preaching the dharma is the insentient.

The Eminent Ancestor said, “In that case, I don't hear the Reverend preaching the dharma.” The “in that case” we hear here is taking up the point of “when the insentient preach the dharma, the insentient can hear it”: based on the principle that, “when the insentient preach the dharma, the insentient can hear it,” “I don't hear the Reverend preaching the dharma.” At this point, the Eminent Ancestor is not merely taking a rear seat for the insentient preaching the dharma; his aspiration to preach the dharma for the insentient manifests itself and assaults the heavens. He does not simply personally realize “the insentient preach the dharma”; he has personally investigated the hearing and the not hearing of the insentient preaching the dharma. He has gone on personally to experience the preaching and not preaching, the past preaching, present preaching, and future preaching of the sentient preaching the dharma. And he has further completed the clarification of the principle by which the heard and unheard preaching of the dharma is sentient or is insentient.

In general, hearing the dharma is not merely the object of the ear organ and ear consciousness: from “before your mother and father were born,” from “before Majestic Voice,” to the end of the future, to an endless future, we hear the dharma with the whole power, the whole mind, the whole body, the whole way; there is hearing the dharma before the body and after the mind. All of these ways of hearing the dharma have their benefits. Do not say that there is no benefit in hearing the dharma when it does not register in consciousness. Those with

mind extinguished and body extinct should benefit from hearing the dharma; those with no mind and no body should benefit from hearing the dharma. The buddhas and ancestors always make buddhas and become ancestors by passing through such times. The power of the dharma to touch the body and mind — how could common thinking fully perceive it? The limits of the body and mind cannot be fully clarified. The merit of hearing the dharma plants a seed in the field of body and mind that will never decay; eventually it will sprout and grow, and with time, will inevitably bear fruit.

The foolish think that, even if we do not neglect to hear the dharma, without advancement on the road to liberation and claim to a good memory, there will be no benefit in it. Taking up the body and mind of men and gods, to be one of extensive memory and much learning — this is the most essential. To forget on the spot and be at a loss once we depart — what benefit, they think, is there in that? What merit of learning, they say, is there in that? This is because they have not met an authentic teacher, because they have not seen “that person.” One who lacks face-to-face conferral of the authentic transmission is not, we say, an authentic teacher. One who has authentically transmitted from buddha after buddha is an authentic teacher. When, as the foolish say, it is remembered in consciousness and not forgotten for a while, this is the time when the merit of hearing the dharma slightly covers the mind and covers the consciousness. At this very time, there is the merit that covers the body, covers before the body, covers the mind, covers before the mind, covers after the mind; covers cause, conditions, recompense, deed, attribute, nature, substance, and power; covers the buddhas, and covers the ancestors, covers the self and the other, covers the skin, flesh, bones, and marrow. The virtue that covers words and speech, covers sitting and reclining, manifests itself, and fills the billows and fills the heavens.

Although truly the merit such as this in hearing the dharma is not easily known, when we join the great assembly of the buddhas and ancestors and investigate the skin, flesh, bones, and marrow, there is no time when the efficacy of preaching of the dharma does not lead us; there is no place in which we are not blessed by the dharma power of hearing the dharma. In this way, making the times and kalpas sudden or gradual, we see the realization of the results. It is not that we should necessarily cast aside much

learning and extensive memory; but we are not to take that one corner alone as the essential. Students should know this. The Eminent Ancestor has personally realized this.

The Ancient Ancestor said, “Even when I preach the dharma, you still don’t hear it. How much less when the insentient preach the dharma.” Here, to the appearance of the fact that the Eminent Ancestor, beyond his verification, is still immediately verifying the verification of the accord, the Ancient Ancestor “opens his collar” and validates the bones and marrow of the forefathers.

“You do not hear even my preaching.” Here, it is not that he is like the common types. He is attesting that, while the insentient preaching the dharma is of myriad sorts, we should not have concern for them. The succession at this time is truly the secret essence. In the realms of the commoner and sage, one cannot easily reach it or hear of it.

The Eminent Ancestor then expressed a verse and presented it to the Ancient Ancestor Yunyan, saying that “the inconceivability of the insentient preaching the dharma” is “How strange! How strange.” Therefore, both the insentient and the insentient preaching the dharma are difficult to conceive. How are we to take this “insentient”? We should study that it is not commoner or sage, is not sentient or insentient. Whether commoner or sage, sentient or insentient, both their preaching and not preaching must belong to the realm of the conceivable. Here, it is “inconceivable”; it is “how strange!” and again, “how strange!” The wisdom and consciousness of commoners or sages cannot reach it; it does not have to do with the calculations of gods or men.

“If we use our ears to hear it, it’s hard in the end to understand” means that, even if they be the divine ear, even if they be the dharma ear that fills the world, that fills time, if we think to “use the ear to hear it,” “it’s hard in the end to understand.” Even if there are ears on walls or ears on staffs, they will not understand the insentient preaching the dharma; for it is not sound. It is not that there is no “if we use our ears to hear it,” but even though we spend the concentrated efforts of a hundred thousand kalpas, “it’s hard in the end to understand.” Since it is the deportment of the one way beyond sound and sight, it is not the dens and caves in the vicinity of the commoner or sage.

“Only when our eyes hear the voices do we know it.” This saying, people think must mean that the comings and goings of grass, trees, flowers and birds seen by the human

eye are “our eyes hearing the voices.” This viewpoint is completely mistaken, not the buddha dharma at all. The buddha dharma has no reasoning like this.

In studying “our eyes hear the voices” spoken of by the Eminent Ancestor, where we hear the voices of the insentient preaching the dharma, this is “the eyes”; where we manifest the voices of the insentient preaching the dharma, this is “the eyes.” We should investigate “the eyes” still more broadly. Since our eyes hearing the voices should be the same as our ears hearing the voices, our eyes hearing the voices is not the same as our ears hearing the voices. We should not study it to mean there is an ear organ in our eyes; we should not study it to mean the eye is the ear; we should not study it to mean that the voices occur within the eyes.

Of old it was said [by the ninth-century figure Changsha Jingcen], “All the worlds in the ten directions are a single eye of the *śramana*.”

We should not consider and deliberate that, if our eyes hear voices, it is the “our eyes hear the voices” said by the Eminent Ancestor. Although we study the words spoken by the ancient, that “all the worlds in the ten directions are a single eye,” all the ten directions are themselves a single eye. Moreover, there are a thousand hand eyes, a thousand true dharma eyes, a thousand ear eyes, a thousand tongue eyes, a thousand mind eyes, a thousand eyes throughout the mind, a thousand eyes throughout the body, a thousand staff eyes, a thousand eyes before the body, a thousand eyes before the mind, a thousand eyes of death within death, a thousand eyes of life within life, a thousand eyes of self, a thousand eyes of other, a thousand eyes of eyes, a thousand eyes of study, a thousand vertical eyes, a thousand horizontal eyes.

Therefore, though we study the entirety of eyes as the entire world, we still lack personal investigation of “the eyes.” We should make it our urgent business to investigate hearing the insentient preach the dharma in “the eyes.” The Eminent Ancestor’s point here is that for the ears it is “hard to understand” the insentient preaching the dharma; the eyes hear the voices. Going further, there is “throughout the body” hearing the voices; there is “the entire body” hearing the voices. Though we have not personally investigated “the eyes hear the voices,” we should personally master, and should cast off, “when the insentient preach the dharma, the insentient can hear it.”

Because this principle has been transmitted,

My former master [Rujing], the Old Buddha of Tiantong, said, “The bottle gourd vine entwines the bottle gourd.”

This is the dharma preaching the insentient that has transmitted the true eye, has transmitted the bones and marrow, of the Ancient Ancestor. On the principle that all preaching the dharma is insentient, it is “the insentient preach the dharma”; this represents the standard case. The insentient preach the dharma for the sake of the insentient. What should we call the insentient? We should know, they are the one who hears the insentient preaching the dharma. What should we call preaching the dharma? We should know, it is the one who does not know it is insentient.

Once, a monk asked the Great Master Ciji of Mt. Touzi, from Shuzhou (succeeded the Chan Master Wuxue of Cuiwei; named Dadong; [of whom,] Mingzue said, “Touzi is an old buddha.”), “What is the insentient preaching the dharma?”

The master said, “Don’t be foul mouthed.”

What Touzi says here is truly the dharma plan of the old buddhas, the edict of the ancestral lineage. The dharma preaching of the insentient and the insentient preaching the dharma are, in sum, “don’t be foul mouthed.” We should know, “the insentient preaching the dharma” is the head office of the buddhas and ancestors. The confederates of [the ninth-century figures] Linji [Yixuan] and Deshan [Xuanjian] cannot understand it; only those who are buddhas and ancestors investigate it.

Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma
The Insentient Preach the Dharma
Number 46

Presented to the assembly, the second day of the tenth month, first year of Kangen (tenth heavenly stem, fourth earthly branch) [1243],
at Kippō monastery, Yoshida district, Etsu province.
Copied the fifteenth day of the tenth month, the same tenth heavenly stem, fourth earthly branch. Ejō

Address Service Requested

NEWS

November 1, 2010 – January 25, 2011

A Sotoshu Training Monastery was held at Shogoji, Kumamoto, Japan. 16 priests attended.

October 16 – 17, 2010

Europe Soto Zen Workshop was held at Temple Zen de la Gendronnière, France

February 10, 2011

South America Soto Zen Conference was held at Busshinji, São Paulo, Brazil

February 19, 2011

Hawaii spring minister's meeting was held at Shoboji, Honolulu, Hawaii

What's New

We have made "Shakyo (tracing the sutras)-kit" as a new teaching material for dissemination. By mindfully doing Shakyo in quiet and serene environment, we can reflect on ourselves and attain mental well-being. If you are interested in this Shakyo-kit, please contact us at the information below.



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