



SOTO ZEN JOURNAL

DHARMA EYE

News of Soto Zen Buddhism: Teachings and Practice

Past, Present and Future of Soto Zen Buddhism in Hawaii p1
Shugen Komagata

Tempyozan Zendo Project p4
Gengo Akiba

Zazen at hospital p7
Koun Campos

Lecture on the Chapter of *Shobogenzo Zenki* (3) p9
Shohaku Okumura

Being-Time(*Uji*) p17
Carl Bielefeldt

My Footnotes on Zazen (3) p28
Issho Fujita

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Number

30

September 2012



Past, Present and Future of Soto Zen Buddhism in Hawaii

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Nearly all of the first Buddhists in Hawaii were the Japanese immigrants who came to work in Hawaii's sugar cane fields as three-year contract laborers. They were met with a harsh life in the fields, sometimes whipped by the intolerant and seemingly soulless *lunas* (field supervisors). Driven beyond exhaustion after working 10-12 hours a day in cane fields or mills, laborers returned to dismal, bug-infested bunkhouses. In the beginning, only a few men had wives. Combined with drinking water that was unsanitary, inadequate nourishment caused such diseases as "night blindness." Workers not only received substandard pay, but were subject to unwarranted fines by dishonest *lunas*. Debts piled up at the plantation store.

According to "History of Hawaii Sotoshu," a group of 150 Japanese immigrants came to Hawaii on June 19, 1868—the first year of the Meiji Restoration—on a ship called the "*Cyotto*." Encouraged by Van Lead, the United States Consul General stationed in Yokohama, this first group of immigrants was mostly from working class families in the Tokyo-Yokohama areas. The flood of Japanese immigrants coming to Hawaii did not, however, begin until the year 1885, when the Japanese and Hawaiian governments negotiated the commencement of Japanese contractual laborers to work on sugar plantations in Hawaii.

With the era of Japanese immigration to Hawaii underway, the total number of contract laborers swelled above 29,000 by 1893. Besides Hiroshima and Yamaguchi, the prefectures that strongly encouraged farmers to emigrate to Hawaii were mostly Fukushima, Niigata, Wakayama, and Shizuoka. Unexpectedly in 1894, the steady flow of government sponsored contract laborers coming from Japan was halted. The ship "Number 26," named "*Miiki Maru*," became the last ship carrying contract laborers. However, Japanese immigration continued through the assistance of the private sector, and by 1901, approximately 40,000 Japanese immigrants settled on the four major islands of Hawaii: Hawaii, Kauai, Maui and Oahu.

Prior to 1900, priests who came over to Hawaii were called "*Imon-shi*." Their primary purpose was to "lift" the spirits and morale of the immigrants who came from the same prefecture as them. They visited the various plantations, sometimes on foot or horseback, helping the many illiterate immigrants write letters to their families in Japan, and educating and tutoring the young Japanese children on the plantations. As the *Imon-shi* addressed the many problems troubling the immigrants and counseled the down hearted, they became a stabilizing force within the plantation community, bringing a sense of social order and community responsibility through Buddhist teachings. They performed memorial services and funeral rites familiar to the people living in a foreign environment. As the years passed, new priests from the same traditions and denominations were called in to Hawaii to help the *Imon-shi*.

The history of Soto Zen Buddhism in Hawaii goes back to 1903 (36th year of *Meiji*) when two ministers from Hiroshima prefecture came to Hawaii as representatives from the head office. Rev. Sen'ei Kawahara settled in Waipahu, Oahu, while Rev. Ryouun Kan settled in Wahiawa, Kauai—two plantation communities where early Japanese immigrants came to work as three-year contract sugarcane laborers. This arrival of the two Soto Zen ministers was welcomed by the poor Japanese immigrants who were longing for the familiar customs and traditions of their homeland. Immediately, both ministers, with the overwhelming support from the immigrants and the local sugar plantations, started to establish what was most vital need for the settlers: Japanese schools for their children and temples for everyone to congregate at, where they would share and practice the traditional Buddhist activities, and also socialize and exchange the latest news from their homeland.

In the plantation communities, the priests' work was not limited to the propagation of Buddhism. In addition to conducting wedding ceremonies, baby blessing, funeral services and memorial services, they played the roles of school teacher, counselor, advisor, social worker, match maker, and community social event planner and coordinator. They also helped immigrants prepare and submit legal documents, for things like marriage, child birth and death notifications to the Japanese government, often at great personal and material sacrifice to themselves.

Currently, there are nine Soto Zen temples

in Hawaii. Located in the heart of Honolulu, next to the Consulate General of Japan, is Soto Mission of Hawaii, also known as *Betsuin* Shoboji. Founded in 1913, *Betsuin* Shoboji was officially recognized in 1921 as a *Betsuin* of the Two Head temples in Japan with the blessing of then Arai Sekizen Zenji. In 1904, Kawailoa Ryusenji was founded on the north shore of Oahu. Ryusenji later relocated to its present location Wahiawa, Oahu in 1976. In 1906, Mantokuji Soto Mission of Paia was founded on the island of Maui, and in 1914, Daifukuji Soto Mission was founded in Kona, on the island of Hawaii. A year later in 1915, Taishoji Soto Mission was founded in Hilo, also on the island of Hawaii. Soto Mission of Aiea Taiheiji, located near Pearl Harbor, was founded in 1918. Guzeiji Soto Mission of Molokai, the last of the Soto Zen temples in Hawaii, and the only Buddhist temple on the island, was founded in 1927.

Our Soto Zen Buddhist teachings in Hawaii since 1903 have been blessed, nourished, and cultivated by the pioneer *Issei* immigrants, pioneer ministers, *Niseis*, and later by older *Sanseis*. Most of the *Isseis* are now gone and the majority of *Niseis* are in their eighties and nineties. We are fortunate to have inherited the rich spiritual, cultural, and social heritage our predecessors have handed down to us. However, the passage of time and history has brought many changes to Soto Zen Buddhism in Hawaii.

What makes us feel comfortable as Soto Zen Buddhists in Hawaii today is not only our personal religious conviction and faith, but the

familial heritage that helps us identify ourselves as Buddhists. In this fortunate historical context we realize the importance of the positive karmic factors we have inherited from the past. As we decide the best course of action for our religion, we move forward into the future with the guidance from our forefathers.

We must cherish our Buddhist heritage with appreciation and gratitude. However, the spirit of family-togetherness is less likely to be seen today. Younger generations are most likely to live in nuclear households, away from the once large network of extended families living in a single home or same neighborhood. The elderly are now often living on their own or in retirement communities. Due to socioeconomic changes, finding a family consisting of two or three generations living under a single roof is rare. It is also rare to find families that share the same religious beliefs. By living separately, elders in the family have lost the opportunity to share their family traditions and values directly with their children and grandchildren. Consequently, good or bad, the *Niseis* and *Sanseis* are fragmented from one another in many ways.

Embracing the four great teachings of the practical virtues (*Shishobo*), we must take on the challenge to actively fill this existing gap between the generations. Temples should be the place to share common ideals of Buddhist teachings for both young and old. The temple, with the help from volunteers and instruction by the ministers, is an ideal place for preschoolers to acquire basic and fundamental religious guidance. For young and old alike, a variety of

programs at the temples—with the help from a professional coordinator—can be planned and carried out. The opportunities are many: weekly Sunday services, monthly services such as *Kannon-ko*, annual services including *San-Bukki*, new year *Daihannya* Blessing service, *Higan* services, *Eitai-kyo* service, Mother's Day and Father's Day services, Thanksgiving service, weekly zazen meditation and study sessions, weekly *Baika* practice sessions, monthly meetings, counseling sessions, Japanese cultural and social activities which include *Sado*, *Kado*, *Minyo* dancing, *taiko*, *koto* classes, sports activities such as *Judo*, *Aikido*, *Kendo*, and *Karate*, and organizing volunteer service projects for the local community. Other major undertakings the Hawaii Soto Mission temples run include operating and managing a Japanese Language School, *Kumon* Math and Reading Centers, and Soto Academy, an elementary school for kindergarteners to sixth graders.

One giant step we should consider taking in the near future is building and operating Buddhist day care center facilities for both preschoolers and elders of the temple and for any interested persons from the local community. Such centers will provide a safe and nurturing environment for both young and old to share positive life experiences with one another.

For over a century, the Soto Zen temples in Hawaii have followed the teachings of "*Shishobo*"—offering, giving, kind words, and beneficial actions. With the guidance from our past, we are able to have a positive outlook on the next 100 years ahead of us. The ministers and congregations of the Soto Zen temple in

Hawaii will work hard to provide elders with the dignity they deserve as Buddhists and to foster spiritual growth in the youth. By reverently taking refuge in the Buddha, everyone connected to the temple Sangha will be able to renew their vows to contribute positive actions towards promoting peace and serenity.



Tempyozan Zendo Project

Rev. Gengo Akiba
Kojin-an Zendo
California, U.S.A.

The Sotoshu is a Zen Buddhist School based on the eternal and universal principle of “abiding by the True Dharma singularly transmitted by the Buddha-ancestors, and realizing *shikantaza* (just sitting) and *sokushinzebutsu* (Mind itself is Buddha).” Priests as well as the temple members and supporters of the Sotoshu revere the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha, Dogen Zenji, and Keizan Zenji and practice the wonderful and subtle truths that “zazen and the precepts are one” and “practice and realization are not two.”

Based on the practices and the teachings of this tradition, we envision a harmonious society where the teachings of the Buddha and the Two Founders will spread to all people of the world, and where all living things can live together peacefully and happily through the mind of compassion and intimacy that cares for and honors other people.

The effort of teaching Soto Zen internationally began 109 years ago in Hawaii and South America, 90 years ago in North America, and 45 years ago in Europe. This is the result of the ceaseless effort of *Kaikyoshi* (now known as *Kokusaifukyoshi*), as well as others who were connected to Sotoshu. They left Japan to go to faraway places, putting their whole heart into steady and quiet work in their teaching activi-



ties. Thanks to the activities of our forerunner teachers, the teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha and the Two Founders has been inherited and continuously passed down to people in the West. Now throughout the world temples called “Zen centers” are being built one after another and approximately 700 overseas Soto priests are now active. Furthermore, the second and third generation of disciples of the *Kaikyoshi* and *Kokusai Fukuyoshi* are diligently inheriting their teachings and are engaged in teaching activities. With originality and ingenuity, and through repeated trial and error, they are continuing to develop and extend the practice of Soto Zen teachings throughout the world. Because of this the general public in the West has become very interested in Zen, the practice of *shikantaza* has transcended culture and custom, and people are practicing the Zen teachings regardless of age or gender. Also, *Shobogenzo* and *Denkoroku* as well as many of the records of the successive ancestral teachers have been translated into English and recently have been also translated into other Western languages.

This expansive spread of teaching activities overseas gives evidence of the universal nature of Soto Zen and it is clear that from now on this teaching will continue to steadily spread and that the number of Soto Zen priests will increase in no small measure. In this situation, the most important questions for the Sotoshu in continuing its overseas teaching are how to ensure the education and training of an increasing number of priests and how to cultivate and root Soto Zen all over the world so that it continues to grow into the far future. For this it is necessary to transmit correctly the subtle truths

of the genuinely transmitted Buddhadharma of Shakyamuni Buddha and the Two Founders, the oneness of Zen and the precepts, and the oneness of practice and verification, as well as the actual form of practice that is the lifeline of Soto Zen.

In order to transmit *shikantaza* and daily activities as “Buddha’s practice” based on the teaching of “everyday decorum itself is the Buddhadharma,” a traditional Zen place of practice for the training and cultivation of Western priests overseas is indispensable. I’ve felt deeply about this for thirteen years as the Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office and as a *Kokusai Fukuyoshi* who has been active overseas for many years. Furthermore, this is not only my idea. This is an idea that those *Kokusai Fukuyoshi* who were our forerunners as well as others involved with teaching activities always had in mind.

Last July, blessed with good connections and timing, we were able to purchase land located three hours by car from San Francisco in the mountains of Lower Lake in Lake County, California. Here we can build a full-fledged temple complex with *Sanmon* (Mountain gate), *Butsuden* (Buddha hall), *Sodo* (Monks’ hall), *Shuryo* (Assembly’s quarter), *Kuri* (Kitchen), *Tosu* (Toilet), and *Shoro* (Bell tower) that will comprise the Tempyozan Zendo. With carpenters from Japan in the lead, we will build wooden structures according to Japanese traditional architectural techniques and we hope to complete the project by the end of 2015.

For us, living in the highly advanced mate-

rial civilization of the 21st century, it is of very great significance both historically and culturally to build such a monastery on American soil, in this country at the forefront of modern change. I am convinced that creating a training monastery which exemplifies the lucid and rational practice of Soto Zen cultivated for nearly 800 years in Japan will be a great contribution to human society.

I would like to ask all of you to understand the value of Tempyozan Zendo and to help us accomplish this great, epoch-making project successfully. I really appreciate your support and cooperation .



Model of Buddha Hall



The Rendering of Tempyozan Zendo





Zazen at hospital

Rev. Koun Campos
Busshinji, San Paulo, Brazil

San Paulo's Public Workers' Hospital is a huge nine-floor public building full of attendance and waiting rooms, clinics, surgery rooms, patient rooms, restaurants and all the kinds of facilities that a big hospital has. Millions of people pass through this place every day, coming from every part of the city, including medical and nursing staff, technicians and employees as well as patients and their families and friends. They form a complex and variable human network around life-and-death matters.

On the ninth floor, above the public halls, there is a room that for the last ten years has housed several practices that aim at promoting well-being and improving people's quality of life. There are reiki sessions, reflexology, group therapy and other activities. In this same place, since 2008 Busshinji's monks have led zazen sessions that are open to everyone.

A monk goes twice a week to the hospital and for sits in zazen for two to three hours, being available to anyone interested in learning this practice. There is no fixed schedule or regular method. People are led to the meditation room for medical reasons, out of curiosity, or because they are interested in meditation. Sometimes they are just passing by and decide to sneak in, or are feeling lonely and tired, needing somewhere to rest for a while and take

a breath before returning to their relative's care.

Movement at the hospital is frenetic. Ambulances come and go, people lie in beds, lines form at the clinic, relatives wander through corridors or take a nap in waiting rooms. In this intense and unpredictable environment the practice happens.

Many people go to the hospital for regular treatments and join zazen. They practice for some time, and when their treatment ends they disappear. Few continue to go to the hospital only to do zazen. Actually, the hospital is a place that causes aversion and everybody wants to keep their distance. However, even though they may not engage in a regular practice, participants take this experience home in their body-and-mind and, if possible, continue zazen practice at home. Others accompany friends or relatives for some time. People who come are tired, tense, afraid. Some feel anger because of their situations, others are hopeless and resigned to a fate that seems inevitable to them. There are also others who arrive agitated, talkative, complaining of family or work issues, afraid about life. Everyone has a common need - to return, for a bit of time, to the present moment's tranquility.

This can be done in various ways. It is necessary to look at a visitor without reservations, wait for his or her manifestation, let him or her take their place and their time, be held by the environment's silence and peace. One cannot attribute anything to the visitor. It is necessary to listen, invite, and show you are available.

Many times people have no idea of what meditation is nor have they heard about zazen. Many have pain in body or mind that keeps them from stillness even for a short while. First they need to speak about their anguish and heartaches. They tell of life stories and family conflicts.



Zazen Practice at hospital

We hear openhearted. That is all we can do for people. That is what we are trained for. We don't have answers for their questions. The only help we can offer is to be with them, integrally, to hold their presence and their life. We let ourselves be with them and let them be with us. Then, slowly, they sit on the zafu or the chair, calm down, feel better and begin to balance in the posture. They become straight naturally, regain contact with breathing and body sensations, with the sound and the smell of incense. So, together, we look to regain contact with the flow of life, with the creative impermanence and the interconnection among all beings, reintegrating ourselves with the whole Universe.

The work at the hospital goes on. We never know who will show up. We frequently practice alone, sometimes for several weeks. Our training, moment after moment, consists of renewing the vows of not-knowing and not-judging, staying open to welcome people, regardless of what they need during their presence in the room. And, with kindness, we offer a peacemaking silence, a respectful and present hearing, and the opportunity for them to know zazen in the *shikantaza* way.

May all beings be healed and safe.





The 23rd Chapter of Shobogenzo: Zenki (Total Function) Lecture (3)

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

In the last two issues of Dharma Eye, I discussed the koan story of “Daowu’s Alive-or-Dead” using various versions of the same story. The comment by Yuanwu Keqin (1063-1135) on this story is the origin of this expression, “total function (*zenki*).” In this fascicle, Dogen Zenji discusses life and death as the manifestation of total function (*zenki*). Before starting to read the text of Zenki, I would like to introduce both Giun’s capping word and verse and Menzan’s summary and praising verse.

Giun’s Capping Word and Verse

Giun (1253-1333) was the fifth abbot of Eiheiiji. He was the dharma heir of Jakuen (1207-1299). Jakuen was a co-practitioner with Dogen under the guidance of Rujing (1163-1227) at Tiantong monastery in China. After Rujing passed away, he came to Japan to practice with Dogen. After Dogen’s death, Jakuen founded Hokyoji in Ohno, not far from Eiheiiji. Giun became the second abbot of Hokyoji after Jakuen’s death in 1299. In 1314, when Giun was sixty years old, he became the fifth abbot of Eiheiiji. After Giun, the abbacy of Eiheiiji was occupied by Jakuen’s lineage for several centuries. Giun wrote the capping word (*jakugo* 著語) and verse on each fascicle of the sixty-fascicle version of *Shobogenzo*. These are included in the *Recorded Saying of Giun Zenji*. His capping words and verses are the expres-

sion of his appreciation of each fascicle of *Shobogenzo*. These are important because Giun’s verses and *Okikigaki-sho* (the collection of commentaries made by Sen’ne and his disciple, Kyogo) are the only two examples of Soto Zen masters’ understanding of *Shobogenzo* before the Edo (Tokugawa) period (1603-1868). Here is his capping word and verse on Zenki (Total Function):

[義雲頌著] (Giun’s capping word and verse)
第二十三全機 (23rd Fascicle Zenki)
(Capping Words): 機先事什麼生 (What is the matter prior to the function?)

盡乾坤裡露全身
人物會通方乃親
不動萬機一機穩
箇中阿誰著根塵

Within the entirety of heaven and earth,
the whole body is exposed.

The person and things are all penetrating
each other and they are intimate.

Without moving any of the ten thousand
things, one person is in peace.

Within this, who can place the sense
organs and their objects?

Zenki is the 23rd fascicle in the sixty-fascicle-version *Shobogenzo*.

One person is living together with myriad things in the network of interdependent origination. The person and all things are penetrating each other and are very intimate as one reality. Without changing any of the things, the person can be in the peace of nirvana. Where is the separation and confrontation between the sense organs (subject) and all things (objects)?

Menzan's Summary and Praising Verse.

Menzan Zuiho (1683-1769) is one of the most important Soto Zen monk-scholars in the Edo period. He studied and practiced with eminent masters such as Manzan Dohaku (1626-1715), Sonno Shueki (1649-1705), Tokuo Ryoko (1649-1709) and so on. He received transmission from Sonno Shueki. Menzan wrote commentaries on many of Dogen's writings. He wrote a summary and praising verse for each of the ninety-five fascicles of *Shobogenzo*. This is a part of the *Extensive Record of Menzan (Menzan Koroku)*. Menzan's summary and praising verse on Zenki is as follows:

[面山述讚]

(Menzan's summary and praising verse)

第二十二全機 (22nd Fascicle Zenki)

述云、全機は無機、無機是全機、超脫六根而非自、究盡十方而無多他、三世佛之安坐、歷代祖之密室、隱顯有時、動靜不二、實衲子之命脈也。

Summary:

Total function is no-function. No-function is total function. Going beyond the six sense organs, there is no self. Penetrating the ten-directions, there are no others. Peaceful sitting of all buddhas in the three times; the intimate room of the ancestors of the successive generations. There are times of hiding and appearing. Moving and stillness are not two. This is truly the life vein of patched-robed monks.

In the seventy-five fascicle version of *Shobogenzo*, Zenki is the 23rd fascicle.

In total function, there is no subject that is func-

tioning and no object that is being functioned. Nothing is functioning and nothing is being functioned, and there are no observers. All observers and their observations are parts of this total function. We cannot say anything about this total function; whatever we say is a part of this function. This is what Menzan means when he says that total function is no function and no-function is total function. Or we might say that the total function is the function of nothingness (*mu*); nothingness functions as the total function. This is completely transpersonal and beyond individuality; it transcends the function of our six sense organs though these are included. Because it is completely penetrating the entire universe, there is nothing that can be called "other." This total function is manifesting within the peaceful sitting of zazen of each and every buddha in the past, present and future. And this total function is what has been transmitted intimately from generation to generation within the rooms of the ancestors. Sometimes it is revealed; sometimes it is concealed. Within this total function, movement (our activities) and stillness (immovable sitting) are not two separate things. This is our essential life.

贊言。波騰鼎沸、起必全真、八万毛孔、一一本身、如草含水、似花由春、明明妙妙、刹刹塵塵、在吾三昧忘吾處、水月鏡像一等親。

Praising verse:

Waves are soaring; the tripod kettle is boiling.

When it arises, it is always the total truth. Eight thousand skin pores, each and every one of them the original body.

It is like each and every stalk of grass has

water; and every flower blooms in the spring.

Clearly clear, wondrously wondrous; each and every land and each and every thing. My Samadhi is where I forget myself.

Waters and the moon, mirror and reflection, are equally intimate with each other.

“Waves are soaring” probably came from the conversations between Jianyuan (Zengen) and Shishuang (Sekisho) on Daowu’s life and death: “Vast waves spread far and wide, foaming billows flood the skies.” These are examples of large-scale universal functions.

“The tripod kettle is boiling” is an example of small function in our day-to-day lives. Both are total functions that express the total truth.

“Eight thousand skin pores” came from the expression in the *Vimalakirti Sutra*:

“Furthermore, reverend Sariputra, the bodhisattva who lives in the inconceivable liberation can pour into a single pore of his skin all the waters of the four great oceans, without injuring the water-animals such as fish, tortoises, crocodiles, frogs, and other creatures, and without the nagas, yaksas, gandharvas, and asuras even being aware of where they are. And the whole operation is visible without any injury or disturbance to any of those living beings.”

The tiny skin pores can contain the entire water of the vast ocean. The skin pores are the place where the sweat is perspired. Sweat and

seawater are similar liquid, but the quantity is very different. This analogy is like saying that a poppy seed and Mt. Sumeru—the largest thing and the tiniest thing—are penetrating each other. Dogen says the same thing when he says in Genjokoan, that the small birds and the big birds are all flying the entire sky and the small fish and the big fish swim the entire ocean. Each and every small being is, as it is, the original dharma body. Each and every small grass and flower is blooming in the universal, timeless spring. Each and every thing in each and every land is clear and yet wondrous. In our zazen of *jijuyu zanmai*, we let go of our ego-centeredness, separation and confrontation, and forget ourselves. By letting go of our thoughts, the separation between the self and myriad things is removed. This is how we study the Buddha way and study the self. Water and the moon, the mirror and the reflection of objects, are one total reality.

When Sawaki Roshi gave lectures on a fascicle of *Shobogenzo*, he often introduced Giun’s capping word and verse, as well as Menzan’s summary and verse. These are examples of how ancient Soto masters expressed their understanding of Dogen’s teachings in *Shobogenzo*. I think it is helpful for us to understand the essential point of this fascicle by reading these summaries and verses before we start to read the text.

In Zenki, both Giun and Menzan follow Dogen Zenji’s definition of delusion and realization in Genjokoan. Delusion and realization are within the relation between the self and myriad things. “Conveying oneself toward myriad things and practice-verification is delusion. Myriad things

come toward the self and allow the self to carry out practice-verification as realization.” Through being verified by myriad things, the separation and confrontation between the self (subject) and myriad things (objects) is transcended. Subjects and objects are working together as one reality. This is the way to avoid contact between subject and object, that is, the origin of the three poisonous minds, and the cause of transmigration within samsara.

Liberation and manifestation

Now I will start to read the text of Zenki. I put the Japanese original and my translation together for the people who want to know the original. This is the unpublished translation I made for the November, 2009 Genzo-e at San-shinji.

[text]:

正法眼蔵第二十二 全機

The 22nd Chapter of Shobogenzo Zenki; Total Function

(1) 諸仏の大道、その究尽するところ、透脱なり、現成なり。

The great Way of all buddhas, when it is completely penetrated, is liberation and is manifestation.

その透脱といふは、あるひは生も生を透脱し、死も死を透脱するなり。

Liberation means that life liberates itself from life and also that death liberates itself from death.

このゆえに、出生死あり、入生死あり、ともに究尽の大道なり。

Therefore, there is leaving life-and-death, and there is entering life-and-death; both are the great Way that is completely penetrated.

捨生死あり、度生死あり、ともに究尽の大道なり。

There is abandoning life-and-death, and there is crossing over life-and-death; both are the great Way that is completely penetrated.

現成これ生なり、生これ現成なり。

Manifestation is life; life is manifestation.

その現成のとき、生の全現成にあらずといふことなし、死の全現成にあらずといふことなし。

At the time of the manifestation, there is nothing but the total manifestation of life; there is nothing but the total manifestation of death.

[text]

The great Way of all buddhas, when it is completely penetrated, is liberation and is manifestation.

The great way of all buddhas: “Way (道, dao, do)” is used in various meanings in Chinese Buddhist texts. For example, in the case of Unsurpassable Way (*mujodo*, 無上道), way (*dao*) is used as a translation of the Sanskrit word *bodhi* (awakening). In the case of the six realms (*rokudo*, 六道), the same word is used as the translation of *gati* (destination). In the noble eightfold path (*hasshodo*, 八正道), *dao* is used as the equivalent of *marga* (path), the path we should walk with our feet to reach cessation of suffering. In the bodhisattva path (*bosatsudo*, 菩薩道), *dao* is used as a translation of Sanskrit word *carya* (practice). But this also can refer the path bodhisattvas walk from the starting point of arousing bodhi-citta through fifty two stages toward the buddhahood. In the case of the Buddha way (仏道), sometimes this is the translation of *buddha-bodhi*, buddha’s awaken-

ing, for example, the fourth bodhisattva vow: “The Buddha’s Way is unsurpassable, we vow to realize it.” This buddha’s way is buddha’s awakening. But often, Buddha way (仏道) is used in a broader sense that includes bodhi, carya and marga. Shakyamuni walked the path after he aroused bodhi-citta in past lifetimes as a bodhisattva, he practiced the six paramitas, and even after he completed awakening, he did not stop practicing. He continued walking the same path as the buddha. Awakening, practice and the path are one in the life of all buddhas.

So, here, I think we can understand “the great way of all buddhas,” as the path of practice we walk with bodhi-citta (awakening mind) as a bodhisattva following the teachings of buddhas.

When it is completely penetrated: “Completely penetrated” is a translation of “究尽, gujin). *Gu* (究) means “investigate,” “research,” “study.” *Jin* (尽) means “be exhausted,” “come to an end,” “to the limit.” As a compound, this means “to study to the end”; I think “to completely penetrate” is a good translation. Dogen Zenji used this expression in the way used in the second chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, Tactfulness. “唯佛與佛乃能究尽諸法実相; Only a Buddha together with a Buddha completely penetrates the true reality of all beings.” In *Shobogenzo Yuibutsu yobutsu* (Only a Buddha Together with a Buddha), Dogen wrote the following:

“Buddha dharma cannot be known by human beings. Therefore, since ancient times, no ordinary human beings have

realized buddha dharma, and no practitioners of the two vehicles have penetrated buddha dharma. Because it can be realized only by buddhas, it is said, “Only a buddha together with a buddha are able to completely penetrate.”

So, this means, “when we walk the path of bodhisattva practice awakening to the true reality of all beings.” When we completely penetrate this path of practice, we find that there are two sides in this practice: liberation and manifestation.

Liberation and manifestation: Liberation is a translation of *todatsu* (透脱) and manifestation is a translation of *genjo* (現成).

To (透) means “pass through,” “transparent,” “permeate,” or “show through.”

Datsu (脱) means “take off,” “remove,” “get out,” “come off,” “slip off,” or “cast off”.

For example, when a glass is transparent, all light freely penetrates the glass without any restriction, and everything can be seen through it clearly. *Datsu* is the same word in *shinjin-datsuraku* (身心脱落, dropping off body and mind). I translate this as liberation—*jin* a sense, all things are not restricted in the form they are in because of emptiness. Everything is liberated from its form as it is.

Gen (現) means “present,” “current time,” “now,” “actually,” “appear.”

Jo (成) means “finish,” “complete,” “accomplish,” “become,” “turn into,” “win,” “succeed,” “capable.”

Genjo is one of the key words in Dogen’s writings: manifestation of all things at this present

moment. Firewood manifests itself as firewood as the dharma position of this present moment.

Todatsu (liberation) and *Genjo* (manifestation) are two sides of one reality. Dogen uses the analogy of firewood and ash in Genjokoan to express *genjo* and *todatsu*. When a tree is cut down, split and dried, it becomes a pile of firewood. When firewood is burned, it becomes ash. At the present moment, firewood is staying in the position of firewood. There is before and after, and yet the before and after are cut off. The present moment is the only present moment. The past is already gone and the future has not yet come, so both are not reality. When we “think” we can say the firewood used to be a tree, and it will become ash. But that is only thinking or man-made story. The tree is not reality anymore; the ash is not reality yet. The only thing that exists here is firewood. Firewood is manifesting itself as firewood. It is not the continuation of the tree and it is not a stage to become ash. Firewood is hundred percent firewood at this moment. And yet at the same time, firewood is liberated from being firewood. That is why when it is burned, without any hesitation, it will become ash. Firewood disappears without clinging to the dharma position of firewood.

Another example is a baby. A baby is hundred percent a baby. But a baby has life force that negates her/his babyhood, and freely becomes a boy or a girl. A boy or a girl becomes a teenager. A teenager becomes a young adult, a middle-aged person and a senior citizen. And an aged person passes away, disappears and becomes ash. Each moment, we manifest ourselves as we

are—a baby, a girl or a boy, a teenager, a young adult, a middle-aged person, then a senior citizen, and finally a dead person. But in each stage, our life force constantly negates its condition and grows for certain periods of time, then begins to decline and shrink, and finally disappears. In each moment, everything is staying at its dharma position hundred percent as it is, and yet at the same time, it is liberated from the position and moving to the next dharma position. A baby is completely a baby, and yet at the same time, a baby is not a baby.

It is the same in the case of bodhisattva practice. When I was a novice priest in my 20’s, I was one hundred percent a novice priest. But now I am an aged priest. The young priest has gone, there is no way I can find him again. Each moment I am completely “I,” but that “I” is always escaping from the “I” and changing.

In the Diamond Sutra, this reality is expressed as, “凡所有相皆是虛妄、若見諸相非相則見如來。 Red Pine’s translation of these sentences as follows:

“Since the possession of attributes is an illusion, Subhuti, and no possession of attributes is no illusion, by means of attributes that are no attributes the Tathagata can, indeed, be seen.”

The second part of the Chinese sentence can be translated; “To see all forms as no form is too see the Tathagata.” Since all forms are illusion, seeing all forms as no form is seeing the true reality. In this case, all forms are negated as illusion. However, Dogen Zenji reads the same sentence in different ways, as he often does. In

Shobogenzo Kenbutsu (Seeing Buddha) Dogen quotes the sentence and says, “しるへし諸相を見取し、非相を見取る、即見如来なり、如来あり、非如来あり; We should know that seeing all forms and seeing no-form is seeing Tathagata. There is a tathagata and non-tathagata.” In this case, “tathagata” is not a person, but reality as it is. Commonly in Mahayana Buddhism, “form (相)” is negated and seeing “no-form (非相 or 無相)” or emptiness is considered to be realization. But Dogen says that seeing both “form” and “no-form” at the same time is seeing reality as it is. Seeing forms is not negated, but we need to be free from both because form and no-form negate each other.

Here in Zenki, Dogen is saying the same thing. *Todatsu* (liberation) is seeing “no-form”: firewood is not firewood therefore it can become ash. *Genjo* (manifestation) is seeing “form”: firewood is hundred percent firewood here and now. Form and no-form, liberation and manifestation, negate each other and at the same time support each other. Seeing both sides at the same time is seeing true reality.

[text]

***Todatsu* (liberation):**

Liberation means that life liberates itself from life and also that death liberates itself from death. Therefore, there is leaving life-and-death, and there is entering life-and-death; both are the great Way that is completely penetrated. There is abandoning life-and-death, and there is crossing over life-and-death; both are the great Way that is completely penetrated.

Life liberates itself from life and also death liberates itself from death. Life is not fixed as life, death is not fixed as death. Life is free from life; death is free from death. The life of Daowu is not fixed within the body and mind of an individual person; therefore, his life is like “Vast waves spread far and wide, foaming billows flood the skies.” And even after his death, “Daowu’s relics still there” within Jianyuan (Zengen) and Shishuang (Sekisho)’s practice.

The concepts of “life” and “death” cannot change. “Life” is not “death”, “death” is not “life.” The concept of “babyhood” does not change. It is like a photo of a baby. The baby in the picture does not change. Ten or twenty years later, the baby is the same baby, but the actual baby is different from the one in the photo, even in the next moment. We are born and live going through changes, then we die. Our body and mind are always changing. Beside the five aggregates, and our body and mind (which are always changing) there is nothing else. Life can negate itself and change into death at any moment. And when it is gone, it never comes back. This is called impermanence and no-fixed self (*anatman*) in Buddhism.

Therefore, there is leaving life-and-death, and there is entering life-and-death; both are the great Way that is completely penetrated. Life-and-death as a Buddhist term refers to transmigration within samsara. Because life and death are liberated from life and death, buddhas and bodhisattvas can freely leave samsara and enter nirvana. At the same time, they can enter sam-

sara to help others. There is a concept of nirvana called no-abiding (*mujusho nehan*, 無住処涅槃). Bodhisattvas do not stay in life-and-death because of wisdom and they do not stay in nirvana because of compassion. They stay in neither samsara nor nirvana. They have nowhere to abide. To help others, bodhisattvas need to stay where all beings are staying. The first bodhisattva vow, “Beings are numberless, we vow to save them,” means that we never enter nirvana until all beings enter nirvana. To do so, bodhisattvas need to stay in samsara. But they actually do not stay in samsara. When bodhisattvas practice with this attitude, they are already within the nirvana called “no-abiding,” free from both samsara and nirvana, or transcending the distinction between samsara and nirvana.

There is abandoning life-and-death, and there is crossing over life-and-death; both are the great Way that is completely penetrated. When Shakyamuni Buddha entered perfect nirvana (*parinirvana*), he abandoned life-and-death. “Crossing over” is a translation of the original Chinese word that is sometimes translated as “save.” This means to cross over the river from this shore of samsara to the other shore of nirvana. The Buddha enables living beings to cross over the river and enter nirvana. Freely abandoning and entering “life-and-death” is the buddha’s great way when it is completely penetrated.

Genjo (Manifestation)

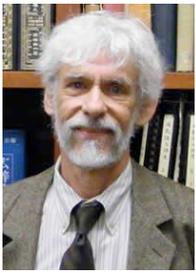
Manifestation is life; life is manifestation. At the time of the manifestation, there is nothing but the total manifestation of life; there is nothing but the total manifestation of death.

According to Kishizawa Ian Roshi (1865-1955), as a rhetorical method in Japanese literature, half of what is meant here is not written. But we should understand what is not written. The full expression is as follows:

Manifestation is life; life is manifestation. *Manifestation is death; death is manifestation. At the time of the manifestation of life, there is nothing but the total manifestation of life; at the time of the manifestation of death, there is nothing but the total manifestation of death.*

Although life and death have no fixed self-nature, life can become death at any moment. But when we are alive, we are one hundred percent alive. There is no death at all. Life and death never meet each other. When we are alive, death does not exist at all. When we are dead, life is completely gone. There is never half and half. No matter how sick we are, even if we are in a near-death experience, we are hundred percent alive. Like the dharma position of firewood, firewood is completely at the dharma position of firewood. The tree in the past has already gone; the ash of the future has not yet come. Firewood is only firewood. Life is only life—in reality, it is not dichotomous with death. Life and death can be dichotomous only when we think about the concepts of “life” and “death.” In our thinking, “life” is desirable and death is not. When we think of dying, we have fear. We worry about things happening after our death. When someone told Sawaki Roshi that he could not die because he worried about his family after his death, Sawaki Roshi said, “Don’t worry, you can die.”

Treasury of the True Dharma Eye *Shobogenzo* Book 20



Being-Time *Uji*

Translated by
Prof. Carl Bielefeldt

INTRODUCTION

This short essay is one of the most celebrated, most closely studied chapters of the *Shobogenzo*. It was composed in the autumn of 1240, when Dogen was living at Koshoji, his monastery just south of the capital of *Heian-kyo* (modern *Kyoto*). It occurs as number 20 in both the 75- and 60-fascicle redactions of the *Shobogenzo*, and as number 11 in the vulgate edition.

The essay plays with two senses of its title. The expression *uji* is normally used in Chinese as an adverb meaning “at times,” “sometimes,” “at one time,” and so on. Dogen cites examples of such use at the the outset of his essay and again in quotations from the Chan masters Mazu and Guisheng later in the piece. For his part, however, Dogen wants us also to read the expression *uji* as “being-time,” a novel interpretation that takes advantage of the fact that the first graph, *u*, has the sense “to be” and is regularly used as a noun for both “being” in the abstract and individual “beings.” Thus, he begins his comments with the statement, “[The expression] ‘at one time’ means times are themselves beings; all beings are times.” Dogen then proceeds in the essay to an exploration of the implications of identifying time and being.

The following translation is based on the text appearing in Kawamura Kodo, ed., *Dogen zenji zenshu*, volume 1 (1991), pp. 240-46. A digital version will also be available on the website of the Soto Zen Text Project: <http://scbs.stanford.edu/sztp3>. Other English renderings of this text can be found at “Being-time,” in Kosen Nishiyama and John Stevens, *Shobogenzo*, volume 1 (1975), pp. 68-72; “Uji (Being-Time, or the Identity of Being and Time),” in Yuho Yokoi, *The Shobogenzo* (1986), pp. 279-286; “Being Time,” in Thomas Cleary, *Shobogenzo: Zen Essays by Dogen* (1986), pp. 102-110; “Existence-Time,” in Gudo Nishijima and Chodo Cross, *Master Dogen’s Shobogenzo*, Book 1 (1994), pp. 109-118; “Being-Time,” in Norman Waddell and Masao Abe, *The Heart of Dogen’s Shobogenzo* (2002), pp. 47-58; “On ‘Just for the Time Being, Just for a While, For the Whole of Time is the Whole of Existence,’” in Hubert Nearman, *The Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching* (2007), pp. 106-118; and “The Time Being,” in Kazuaki Tanahashi, *Treasury of the True Dharma Eye: Zen Master Dogen’s Shobogenzo*, vol. 1 (2010), pp. 104-111.

TRANSLATION

The old buddhas say,

At one time, standing atop the highest peak; at one time, walking the floor of the deepest ocean. At one time, the three heads and eight arms; at one time, the sixteen feet and eight feet. At one time, the staff and whisk; at one time, the columns and lanterns. At one time, Zhang’s third and Li’s fourth; at one time,

the whole earth and empty space.¹

“At one time” here [when read as “being-time”] means the times are themselves beings; all beings are times. The “sixteen-foot” golden body is a time; because it is a time, it has the splendor and radiance of time. We should study it in the present twelve times. The “three heads and eight arms” are a time; because they are a time, they are one with the present twelve times. Although we have not measured how long or short the twelve times are, we call them the twelve times. Since the traces of their going and coming are clear, people do not doubt them; though they do not doubt them, they have not understood them. Since, naturally, living being’s doubtings of the things and events they do not understand are not fixed, the future of their doubtings will not necessarily match their present doubts. It is just that the doubting is a time for a while.²

We line ourselves up and make it the entire world; we should see the individual things of this entire world as times. That the things do not obstruct each other is like the times not obstructing each other. Therefore, there is bringing forth the mind that aspires to bodhi at the same time; it is bringing forth the time at the same mind. And practicing and attaining the way are also like this. We line ourselves up, and we see this. The reasoning that the self is time goes like this.³

Since there is such reasoning, we should study that there are on the entire earth the myriad phenomena, the hundred grasses; and that a single grass, a single phenomenon is the entire earth. Going and coming like this is the start of practice. When one reaches such a field,

it is one grass, one phenomenon; it is understanding the phenomenon, not understanding the phenomenon, understanding the grass, not understanding the grass. Since it is only just such a time, all “being-times” are the entirety of time, and both “being-grass” and “being-phenomena” are time. In the time of time after time, there is the entirety of beings, the entirety of worlds. We should reflect for a while whether or not there is any entirety of beings or entirety of worlds left out of this present time.⁴

Nevertheless, at the point where one is a commoner who has not learned the buddha dharma, in everyone’s view on hearing the word *uji* [“being-time”] they think: “at one time,” he became three heads and eight arms; “at one time,” he became sixteen feet or eight feet. It is like having crossed a river or crossed a mountain. They think: while that mountain and river may exist, I have crossed them and now reside in a jeweled palace and vermilion tower. The mountain and river and I are like heaven and earth.⁵

However, this is not the only line of reasoning: at the time we climbed the mountain or crossed the river, we existed, and the time existed in us. Since we exist, the time should not pass away. If time does not have the character of coming and going, the time of climbing the mountain is the present of “being-time”; if time does maintain the character of coming and going, the present of “being-time” exists in us. This is “being-time.” Do not the times of climbing the mountain and crossing the river swallow up the time of the jeweled palace and vermilion tower? Do they not vomit them out? The “three heads and eight arms” are yesterday’s time; the “sixteen and eight feet” are today’s

time. Nevertheless, the principle of yesterday and today is that they are just the time when we enter directly into the mountains and gaze out at the thousand peaks, the ten thousand peaks; they do not pass away. The “three heads and eight arms” pass as our “being-time”; they seem to be over there, but they are now. “The sixteen and eight feet” pass as our “being-time”; they seem to be elsewhere, but they are now.

Therefore, the pine is time; the bamboo is time. Do not understand time simply as flying away; do not study only that flying away is the function of time. If time resigned itself entirely to flying away, there would be gaps. That one has not heard the word “being-time” is due to studying only that it has flown away. In essence, in the entire world, all the entirety of beings, while connected, are times; because they are “being-time,” they are my “being-time.”⁶

“Being-time” has the virtue of passage: it passes from today to tomorrow; it passes from today to yesterday; it passes from yesterday to today; it passes from today to today; it passes from tomorrow to tomorrow — for passage is a virtue of time. Past and present times do not pile up or accumulate in a row. Nevertheless, Qingyuan is time, Huangbo is time, Jiangxi is time, Shitou is time. Since self and other are time, practice and verification are times; “entering the mud and entering the water” are similarly time.

Although we say the views of the commoner and the conditions of his views are what the commoner sees, they are not the dharma of the commoner: it is merely that the dharma temporarily conditions the commoner. Because we study that this time, this being, is not the dharma, we consider “the sixteen or

eight feet” as not ourselves. Trying to escape ourselves as not “the sixteen or eight feet” is also pieces of being-time. It is “looking, looking” by “those who haven’t verified it.”⁷

The manifestation of the horse and the sheep lined up in this world is such an ascent and descent, rise and fall, of “abiding in its dharma state.” The rat is time; the tiger is time. Living beings are time; the buddhas are time. This time, as “three heads and eight arms,” verifies the entire world; as “the sixteen foot golden body,” verifies the entire world. Using the entire world, entirely to make a world of the entire world is called investigating entirely. Using “the sixteen foot golden body,” to make being “the sixteen foot golden body” appear as bringing forth the mind, practice, bodhi, and nirvana — this is being; this is time.⁸ One only entirely investigates the entirety of time as the entirety of being; there is no dharma left over, for a dharma left over is a leftover dharma. Even the being-time of a half entire investigation is the entire investigation of a half being-time. Even forms seen as mistakes are beings. If, moreover, we leave it to them, what precedes and follows the appearance of the mistake is itself being-time’s “abiding in its state.” The brisk liveliness of “abiding in its dharma state” is being-time. We should not move it to nonbeing; we should not force it to being.⁹

Thinking of time solely as passing, we do not understand it as not yet arrived. Although our understandings are times, they are not occasioned by them. There is no “skin bag” who, recognizing them as going and coming, has discerned them as the being-time of “abiding in a state.” How much less have they had a time of “passing through the barrier”? Even if

they recognize “abiding in a state,” who can say something that maintains their “having got such.” Even if they have long said it is such, they cannot but grope for it in front of their face. If we leave them to the being-time of commoners, even bodhi and nirvana are merely the being-time only of the attributes of going and coming.¹⁰

In sum, this is the appearance of “being-time” unimpeded by “nets and cages.” The heavenly kings and heavenly hosts, now appearing in realms to the right and appearing in quarters to the left, are the “being-time” of our now exerting ourselves completely. The “being-times” of those elsewhere, in the water and on land, appear as we now exert ourselves completely. The types and individuals that are the “being-time” in the dark and light are all the appearance of our complete exertion, are the passage of our complete exertion. We should study that, if they were not the passage of our complete exertion, there would not appear, there would not pass, even a single dharma, a single thing.¹¹

We should not have been studying that the meaning of “passage” is like the wind and rain moving east to west. The entire world is not immovable; it is not advancing and retreating; it is passing. Passage is like the spring: spring takes many forms; this is its passage. We should study that it passes without any external thing. For example, the passage of spring always passes spring. The passage is not the spring; but, since it is the passage of spring, passage has attained the way at this time of spring. We should continue examining this in detail. To think that, in saying “passage,” we mean that, while the object is external, the dharma accom-

plishing the passage proceeds to the east a hundred thousand worlds, over a hundred thousand kalpas — this is not devoting oneself single-mindedly solely to the study of the way of the buddha.¹²

* * * * *

The Great Master Hongdao of Yueshan, on the advice of the Great Master Wuji, once questioned the Chan Master Jiangxi Daji: “The message of the three vehicles and the twelve divisions of the teachings, I’ve largely clarified; but what is the intention of the ancestral master coming from the west?”

Questioned like this, the Chan Master Daji said, “At times, I make him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes; at times, I don’t make him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes. At times, making him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes is right; at times, making him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes is not right.”

Hearing this, Yueshan had a great understanding and said to Daji, “When I was with Shitou, it was like a mosquito on an iron bull.”¹³

What Daji says is not the same as others. The “eyebrows” and “eyes” are mountains and oceans; for the mountains and oceans are “eyebrows” and “eyes.” “Making him lift” them is to see the mountains; “making him blink” them is to merge with the oceans. “Right” is familiar to “him”; “him” is enticed by “making.” “Not right” is not “I don’t make him”; “I don’t make him” is not “not right”: They are both “at times”

[or “being-time.”] The mountains are time; the oceans are time. If they were not time, there would be no mountains and oceans; we should not take it that there is no time in the present of the mountains and oceans. If time is destroyed, the mountains and oceans are destroyed; if time is not destroyed, the mountains and oceans are not destroyed. By this principle, the morning star appears; the Tathagata appears; his eye appears; the flower he raised appears. They are time; if they were not time, they would be not such as this.¹⁴

* * * * *

The Chan Master Guisheng of Yexian was a descendant of Linji, the direct heir of Shoushan. On one occasion, he addressed the great assembly and said,

At times, the intention reaches it, and the words don't reach it. At times, the words reach it, and the intention doesn't reach it. At times, both the intention and the words reach it. At times, both the intention and the words don't reach it.¹⁵

“The intention” and “the words” are both “at times” [or “being-time”]. “Reaching it” and “not reaching it” are both “being-time.” Although the time of “reaching it” is not yet completed, the time of “not reaching it” arrives. “The intention” is “the donkey”; “the words” are “the horse.” He has taken “the horse” as “the words” and taken “the donkey” as “the intention.” “Reaching it” is not “arriving”; “not reaching it” is not “not yet”: “being-time” is like this. “Reaching it” is obstructed by “reaching it,” not

obstructed by “not reaching it.” “Not reaching it” is obstructed by “not reaching it,” not obstructed by “reaching it.” “The intention” blocks “the intention” and sees “the intention”; “the words” block “the words” and see “the words.” The obstruction blocks the obstruction and sees the obstruction; the obstruction obstructs the obstruction: this is time. Although we say obstruction is made use of by another dharma, there is no obstruction that obstructs another dharma. It is “I meet a person”; it is the person meets the person; it is I meet myself; it is “coming forth” meets coming forth. If these did not get a time, they would not be like this. Again, “the intention” is the time of “the obvious koan”; “the words” are the time of “the higher pivot.” “Reaching it” is the time of “the body cast off”; “not reaching it” is the time of “identical with this, apart from this.” In this way, we should assent to it, we should “be-time.”¹⁶

Previous venerables have all spoken like this, but is there nothing further we should say? We should say, “the intention and the words half reaching it is ‘being-time’; the intention and the words half not reaching it is ‘being-time.’” There should be an investigation like this.

Making him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes is a half “being-time”; making him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes is a wrong “being-time”; not making him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes is a wrong, wrong “being-time.”¹⁷

In this way, examining coming, examining going, examining “reaching it,” examining “not reaching it,” is the time of “being-time.”

Treasury of the True Dharma Eye
Being Time

First winter day, the first year of *Ninji*
 (seventh stem, first branch) [October 17,
 1240], written at *Kosho Horinji*
 Copied during the summer retreat, the tenth
 stem, fourth branch year of Kangen [1243].

NOTES

“The old buddhas” (*kobutsu*): There is no known source for these lines, and the translation therefore treats the term *kobutsu* (“old buddha”) here as a reference to the various Chan masters in whose sayings one can find such expressions. The passage is often treated as if a quotation from Yueshan Weiyuan (745-828, or 751-834), to whom is attributed a variant version of the first two lines, at *Jingde chuan-deng lu*, T.51.2076:440c13: “You should stand atop the highest peak, walk the floor of the deepest ocean.”

“At one time” (*uji*): Or “at times.” Here, the translation follows the natural reading of the Chinese, rather than Dogen’s play with the term *uji* as “being-time.”

“Three heads and eight arms” (*sanzu happi*): A fixed expression, generally taken as reference to wrathful forms of Buddhist icons; seemingly synonymous with “three heads and six arms” (*sanzu roppi*).

“Sixteen or eight feet” (*yoroku hasshaku*): Reference to the body of a buddha, reckoned as sixteen *zhang* when standing, eight chi when seated. The Chinese measurement *zhang*, while varying somewhat according to time and place,

equals roughly 10 feet; the chi is one-tenth of a *zhang*.

“A staff and a whisk” (*shujo bossu*): The staff (*shujo*) is a walking stick, often carried by the master when he “ascends the hall” (*jodo*; i.e., gives a formal lecture); the whisk (*bossu*) is a ceremonial fly-whisk, often held by the master during lectures and other rituals.

“Columns and lanterns” (*rochu toro*): Two terms appearing often in Dogen’s writings, used especially as symbols of the objective, insentient world. The term *rochu* (“exposed column”) refers to the free-standing pillars of monastic buildings.

“Zhang’s third and Li’s fourth” (*Chosan Lishi*): From the Chinese idiom *Zhang san Li si* (“Zhang’s third son, Li’s fourth son”), used (as we might use “Tom, Dick, and Harry”) to indicate any ordinary person.

2. “The times are themselves beings; all beings are times” (*ji sude ni kore u nari u wa mina ji nari*): Or, as more commonly read, “time is itself being; all being is time.”

“Splendour and radiance” (*shogon komyo*): Standard attributes describing the body of a buddha.

“The present twelve times” (*ima no juni ji*): I.e., the ordinary hours of the day, which was traditionally divided into twelve two-hour periods.

“Although we have not measured how long or short the twelve times are” (*juni ji no choon tansoku imada takuryo sezu to iedomo*): Presumably an ironic suggestion that we might somehow use time to measure time.

“The doubting is a time for a while” (*gijaku shibaraku ji naru*): More often read “doubt is

temporarily time.” The translation takes the phrase to mean that, in the ongoing, shifting course of our doubts, each act of doubting time is itself a brief time.

3. **“The entire world”** (*jinkai*): A loose translation of a common term, typically taken as an abbreviation for “all realms in the ten directions” (*jin jippo kai*). The expression, very common in Dogen’s writings, seems to be used in both singular (“the entire world” [in the ten directions]) and plural (“all worlds” [in the ten directions]) senses.

“Bringing forth the mind at the same time” (*doji hosshin*): “Bringing forth the mind” translates *hosshin*, the standard term for the bodhisattva’s aspiration for buddhahood. Presumably, the claim here is that, at the time “we” arouse such an aspiration, the “things” of the world simultaneously arouse the aspiration. A related account of “bringing forth the mind” occurs in *Shobogenzo hotsu bodai shin* (DZZ.2:163):

Hence, bringing forth the mind, practice, bodhi, and nirvana must be a “simultaneous” (*doji no*) bringing forth the mind, practice, bodhi, and nirvana. The body and mind on the way of the buddha is grass and trees, tiles and pebbles, is wind and rain, water and fire. To turn these into the way of the buddha—this is bringing forth the mind. . . . Practice and verification are also like this.

“It is bringing forth the time at the same mind” (*doshin hotsuji nari*): Some texts read *ari* (“there is”) here for *nari* (“it is”).

4. **“Going and coming like this”** (*kaku no*

gotoku no orai): The exact sense is unclear; perhaps something like, “studying back and forth like this between the two ways of thinking about phenomena and grasses.

“All being-times are the entirety of time, and both being-grass and being-phenomena are time” (*uji mina jinji nari uso usho tomo ni ji nari*): Here, Dogen is playing with the graph *u* (the “being” of “being-time”), attaching it to “grass” and “phenomena.” Outside of such play, the terms *uso* and *usho* could probably be read respectively simply as “any grass,” “any phenomenon.”

5. **“Jeweled palace and vermilion tower”** (*gyokuden shuro*): Or “vermillion tower in a jeweled palace.” Some would take this as a reference to the state of buddhahood or buddha nature (see, e.g., Kishizawa Ian, *Shobogenzo zenko* 4:334.)

“Like heaven and earth” (*ten to chi to nari*): I.e., are as distant as heaven from earth.

6. **“There would be gaps”** (*kenkyaku arinubeshi*): Generally taken to mean that, were there no continuity in time, each time would be separated from what precedes and follows it.

“That one has not heard” (*kyomon* 經聞): An unusual binomial not occurring elsewhere in Dogen’s writings.

7. **“For passage is a virtue of time”** (*kyoryaku wa sore ji no kudoku naru ga yue ni*): The translation here follows the punctuation at Kawamura 1:242:15. It is also possible to end the sentence after “tomorrow to tomorrow” and read this phrase as introducing the following sentence: “because passage is a virtue of time, past and

present times do not pile up”

“Qingyuan” (*Seigen*): I.e., the Chan master Qingyuan Xingsi (d. 740). **“Huangbo”** (*Ōbaku*): Huangbo Xiyun (fl. 9th c.). **“Jiangxi”** (*Kozei*; also read *Kosai*): Mazu Daoyi (709-788). **“Shitou”** (*Sekito*): Shitou Xiqian (700-790).

“Entering the mud and entering the water” (*nyudei nyusui*; also read *nyudei nissui*): A common idiom referring to the Chan master’s “getting his hands dirty,” as we might say, in the teaching of his students; synonymous with *dadei taisui*.

“It is looking, looking by those who haven’t verified it” (*mishokosha no kankan nari*): After words, common in Chan teachings, often attributed to Linji Yixuan (d. 867); e.g., *Linji lu*, T.47.1985:496c10-11:

[Linji] ascended the hall and said, “In this ball of red meat, there’s a true person of no rank, always coming and going from your faces. Those who haven’t verified it, look! look!”

8. “The horse and sheep” (*muma hitsuji*): I.e., the hours of the horse (*wu*; 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.) and the sheep (*wei*; 1:00-3:00 p.m.).

“Abiding in their dharma state” (*ju ho i*): I.e., each thing occurring in its own proper moment, without extending into the subsequent moment; from one of the most popular lines in the *Lotus Sutra* (T9.262:9b10), which, in the traditional reading of Kumarajiva’s translation, comes out something like:

The dharmas abide in their dharma state;

The marks of the world constantly abide.

“The rat” (*nezumi*): The hour of the rat (*zi*; 11:00 p.m.-1:00 a.m.). **“The tiger”** (*tora*): The hour of the tiger (*yin*; 3:00-5:00 a.m.).

“This time” (*kono ji*): The phrase could also be read as the adverbial “at this time” (*kono toki*), in which case the unexpressed subject of the sentence might be understood as “they” (i.e., living beings and buddhas).

“Entirely to make a world of the entire world” (*jinkai o mote jinkai o kaijin suru*): The translation attempts to retain Dogen’s play here with the expression *jinkai* (“entire world”; “exhaustive worlds”), transposed and used as a predicate, *kaijin* (“to world entirely or exhaustively”). **“Being the sixteen foot golden body”** (*yoroku konjin suru*): Here again, Dogen has created the verbal form “to sixteen foot golden body.”

9. “For a dharma left over is a leftover dharma” (*joho kore joho naru ga yue ni*): The translation here follows Kawamura’s punctuation at DZZ.1:243:10. The phrase could also be read with the following sentence: “Because a dharma left over is a leftover dharma, even the being-time of a half entire investigation is the entire investigation of a half being-time.”

“If, moreover, we leave it to them” (*sara ni kare ni makasureba*): Perhaps meaning something like, “if we go on to take [these mistaken forms] as beings.”

“Brisk liveliness” (*kappatsupatsuchi*) is a loose translation of a Chinese idiom expressing the quick, powerful movements of a fish; the elements *patsupatsu* (Chinese *popo*) are likely onomatopoeic. While the graph *di* in the Chinese suggests an adverbial construction, Dogen tends to use the phrase as a nominal.

10. “They are not occasioned by them” (*ta ni hikaruru en nashi*): Literally, “they lack a condition [or object] drawn from that”; perhaps

meaning, “our understandings have no real basis in time.”

“Skin bag” (*hitai*): A common term for the body, especially of humans; often used by Dogen in reference especially to Chan monks. A variant of “stinking skin bag” (*shu hitai*).

“Passing through the barrier” (*tokan*): a common Zen expression for understanding, as in the phrase, “the eye that passes through the barrier” (*tou guan yan*).

“Can say something that maintains their having got such” (*ki toku inmo no honin o dotoku sen*): I.e., “can truly express what they have recognized.” Dogen here uses the Chinese phrase *de renmo*, (“get such”), often encountered in Chan texts in casual reference to spiritual attainment.

11. “This is the appearance of being-time” (*uji genjo nari*): The subject here is unexpressed; perhaps to be understood as the preceding discussion of each thing “abiding in its dharma state.”

“Nets and cages” (*raro*): I.e., for trapping fish and birds; regularly used in Chan texts for the limiting categories of our understanding.

“Heavenly kings and heavenly hosts” (*tenno tenshu*): I.e., the deva kings and the devas, deities dwelling in the various heavens, or *deva-loka*, recognized by Buddhist cosmology.

“Appearing in realms to the right and appearing in quarters to the left” (*ukai in genjo shi saho ni genjo suru*): Probably meaning simply “appearing left and right”; the translation tries to preserve the parallel of *saho* (“to the left”) with the more unusual expression *ukai* (“righthand world” or “boundary”).

“Our now exerting ourselves completely”

(*ima mo waga jinriki suru*): The translation loses the parallel in the term *jinriki* (“to exhaust one’s strength”) with the uses of *jin* above, in *jinkai* (“entire world”), *gugin* (“entire investigation”), *jinji* (“entirety of time”), and *jin’u* (“entirety of being”).

12. “Has attained the way” (*jodo seri*): Dogen uses here a standard term for the attainment of bodhi, perhaps in the sense, “has been fully realized.”

“While the object is external, the dharma accomplishing the passage” (*kyo wa geto ni shite no kyoryaku no ho wa*): Dogen here introduces terms commonly used to distinguish the object of perception (*kyo*) from the perceiver (*no*); here perhaps indicating merely a fixed, external point past which something passes.

13. “Great Master Hongdao of Yueshan” (*Yakusan Gudo daishi*): Posthumous title of Yueshan Weiyao (751-834). **“Great Master Wuji”** (*Musai daishi*): Honorific title of Yueshan’s teacher, Shitou Xiqian (700-790). **“Chan Master Jiangxi Daji”** (*Kozei Daijaku zenji*): I.e., Mazu Daoyi (709–788).

There is no known source for this version of Yueshan’s exchange with Mazu. In his *shinji Shobogenzo* (DZZ.5:204, case 150), Dogen quotes only Mazu’s famous answer, without Yueshan’s question. A variant of the conversation occurs at *Liandeng huiyao*, ZZ.136:738b1-10 (see also *Zongmen tongyao ji*, *Zengaku tenseki soka* 1:141a8-b7):

[Yueshan] asked, “The three vehicles and the twelve divisions of the teachings, I generally know; but I’ve heard that in the south [they say], “pointing directly at the

person's mind; seeing the nature and becoming a buddha." This, I really haven't clarified. I beg the reverend in his mercy to instruct me." . . .

The Great Master Ma[zu], said, "At times, I make him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes; at times, I don't make him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes. At times, making him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes is right; at times, making him raise his eyebrows and blink his yes is not right."

With these words, [Yue]shan suddenly understood, and made a bow.

The Great Master Ma said, "What principle did you see that you made a bow?"

The master said, "When I was with Shitou, it was like a mosquito on an iron bull."

The Great Master Ma said, "Now that you're such, guard it well."

"The three vehicles and the twelve divisions of the teachings" (*sanjo junibun kyo*): A fairly standard expression for the teachings of the Buddhist canon: the teachings of the three vehicles (*Śravaka*, *pratyeka-buddha*, and *bodhisattva*), and the twelvefold division of the canon according to genre.

"The intention of the ancestral master coming from the west" (*soshi seirai e*): A favorite topic in Chan literature, often the subject of lectures and discussions; the title theme of Dogen's *Shobogenzo soshi seirai i*. The "ancestral master" here is of course the first ancestor of Chan in China, Bodhidharma, said to have come from India in the sixth century. The Chinese term *yi*, translated here as "intention," can indicate either (a) "intent," or "purpose"; or (b) "meaning, or "significance"; hence the phrase

can be (and perhaps more often is) read "the meaning of the ancestral master's coming from the west."

"At times, I make him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes" (*uji kyo i yobi shunmoku*): As in the opening quotations, the translation treats this sentence as it would normally be read in Chinese; reading the initial adverbial phrase in Dogen's terms here would yield, "Being-time makes him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes."

The expression "raising the eyebrows and blinking the eyes" (*yobi shunmoku*) is a set phrase used in Chan texts to represent the ordinary actions through which Buddhism is expressed; often said to reflect the blink of the Buddha in the story of the first transmission of Chan to Mahakaśyapa on Vulture Peak.

"At times, making him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes is right" (*uji kyo i yobi shunmoku sha ze*): The final *ze* ("is right") here could be taken as "is it" (i.e., the answer to Yueshan's question).

14. "Merge with the oceans" (*umi o shu subeshi*): Taking the unusual verbal form *shu su* in the sense *choshu*, used to describe the convergence of rivers in the sea.

"Right is familiar to him; him is enticed by making" (*ze wa i ni kanju seri i ni yuin seraru*): With this odd play on the terms of the quotation, Dogen seems to be identifying both what is "right" and the person ("him") with his practiced acts.

"The morning star appears" (*myojo shutsugen su*): Reference to the arising of the planet Venus at the time of the Buddha's attainment of bodhi.

"The flower he raised appears" (*nenge shutsu-*

gen su): Reference to the flower held up by the Buddha on the occasion of his transmission of Zen to Mahakāśyapa on Vulture Peak.

15. “The Chan master Guisheng of Shexian” (*Sekken no Kisei zenji*): I.e., Shexian Guisheng (dates unknown). **“Shoushan”** (*Shuzan*): I.e., Shoushan Shengnian (926-993). His saying appears at *Liandeng huiyao*, ZZ.136:622b13-15. Here again, the translation “at times” retains the normal adverbial reading of the expression *uji*.

16. “Although the time of reaching it is not yet completed, the time of not reaching it arrives” (*to ji miryo nari to iedomo futo ji rai nari*): Perhaps meaning that when the intention or the words have not yet “reached it,” this is itself the distinct time of “not reaching it.” **“The intention is the donkey; the words are the horse”** (*i wa ro nari ku wa ba nari*): Allusion to a saying first attributed to Lingyun Zhiqin (dates unknown) (*Jingde chuandeng lu*, T.51.2076:285b12-13):

A monk asked, “What is the great meaning of the buddha dharma?”

The master said, “Before the donkey business is over, the horse business arrives.”

The saying is generally taken to mean something like “It’s just one damned thing after another.”

“Reaching it is obstructed by reaching it, not obstructed by not reaching it” (*to wa to ni keige serarete futo ni keige serarezu*): Probably meaning that “reaching it” is just “reaching it,” not the opposite of “not reaching it.” Reflecting a recurrent use in Dogen’s writings of the passive *keige seraru* (“to be obstructed or impeded”) in

the sense “to be identified or defined.”

“Although we say obstruction is made use of by another dharma, there is no obstruction that obstructs another dharma” (*gi wa taho ni shitoku seraru to iedomo taho o gi suru gi imada arazaru nari*): Generally interpreted to mean that, while in one sense things are contingent on other things, each thing retains its identity — a reiteration of the preceding claim that “reaching it” is obstructed by itself.

“I meet a person” (*ga ho nin*): Dogen seems to have in mind here the words of Sansheng and Xinghua, quoted in case 92 of the *shinji Shobogenzo* (DZZ.5:172):

The Chan Master Huiran of Sansheng cloister (successor to Linji) said, “When I meet a person, I come forth. My coming forth is not for the sake of the person.”

Xinghua said, “When I meet a person, I don’t come forth. Coming forth is for the sake of the person.”

“The obvious koan” (*genjo koan*): Or “the realized koan.” One of Dogen’s favorite expressions and the title theme of one of his earliest, most celebrated, essays. In its original Chinese setting, the term carries the juridical connotation of a “settled, or obvious, legal case.” Its use in Chan likely derives from a highly popular saying attributed to the Tang figure Daoming (dates unknown): “It’s an obvious case, but I spare you the thirty blows” (*xiancheng gong’an fang ru sanshi bang*). (*Jingde chuandeng lu*, T.51:291b17.)

“The higher pivot” (*kojo kanrei*): The term *kanreisu* refers to the pivots at the top and bottom of a door frame, on which the door turns; hence, the pivotal point of something.

“The body cast off” (*dattai*): A term indicating

a state of liberation; in Chan texts, it often carries the sense “to reveal all,” or, as we might say, “to say it as it is” — hence, “the very thing itself,” “the ‘naked’ thing.”

“Identical with this, apart from this” (*soku shi ri shi*): Perhaps reflecting a question posed by Baizhang Huaihai (749-814) to his teacher, Mazu Daoyi (709-788) (e.g., at *Baizhang Huihai chanshi yulu*, ZZ.119:6a3-7):

[Ma]zu was looking at a whisk on the corner of his bench. The master [Baizhang] said, “Is it identical with its use or apart from its use?”

[Ma]zu said, “In the future, when you open those two pieces of skin, what will you have for people?”

The master took the whisk and stood it up.

[Ma]zu said, “Is it identical with its use or apart from its use?”

The master placed the whisk back where it had been.

“We should be-time” (*uji subeshi*): The translation seeks to preserve Dogen’s novel use of *uji* here as an imperative verb.

17. “Wrong, wrong being-time” (*shaku shaku uji*): “Wrong! Wrong!” (or “Mistake! Mistake!”) is a common retort of Chan masters, sometimes used in ironic praise. This entire passage is put in Chinese, of which some texts give a variant version:

Making him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes is a half “being-time”; making him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes is a wrong “being-time”; not making him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes is a half “being-time”; not making him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes is a wrong “being-time.”



My Footnotes on Zazen 3 Nothing to attain, Nothing to enlighten

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We, as ordinary human beings, are always seeking for something that will give us self-satisfaction. In the Japanese Buddhist tradition, this way of being is called “*bonpu*.” It literally means “an ordinary person.” It is so difficult for us as *bonpu* to become relaxed or restful because we are constantly seeking for something. This pattern of restlessness is so deeply rooted in us that we naturally feel zazen practice as something very unsatisfying, disappointing, and non-responsive. This might sound strange, but in zazen we as *bonpu* are satisfied with this unsatisfactoriness, or we rest in deep peace with uneasiness. That is exactly what zazen is all about. It is the most wonderful thing about zazen. It is, of course, very hard for us as *bonpu* to understand and accept this. But it is, above all, important to sincerely study and wholeheartedly practice this kind of zazen without distorting it. When we start zazen practice, we should clearly understand this point beforehand.

While we are sitting in zazen, we definitely have a feeling of disappointment and unsatisfactoriness, a sense of uncertainty or fruitlessness. We think, “I am working so hard but I’m not experiencing the ‘response’ or ‘effect’ that I wish. Maybe I am doing something wrong. Maybe my effort is not enough. Or maybe I am not suited for zazen...” These kinds of doubts and questions arise one after another in our

mind. At that time we feel at a complete loss, thinking, “Should I keep doing such an unresponsive thing or not? Is not this a waste of time?” But that is totally all right for *zazen*. Rather, it is a good sign that we are doing *zazen* in the right direction.

Buddhism teaches that we human beings cannot be fully satisfied after all, however hard we strive for it. I think that is the true meaning of the word *dukkha* in Sanskrit which is the first truth of Four Noble Truths. This word is often translated as “suffering” but it should be understood as a description of the fundamental fact in life that it is impossible for us to get ultimate satisfaction in this transient world.

When this feeling of unsatisfactoriness is driving us, we are never able to be settled and rest in peace and relaxation at the bottom of our heart. We need to let go of our deep-rooted tendency to look for exciting experiences to fill up the empty feelings of unsatisfactoriness or to try to distract ourselves from confronting unsatisfactoriness by indulging in all kinds of diversions. And we also need to settle down to unsatisfactoriness itself without trying to change it. To do *zazen*, we should clearly and deeply admit that there is no other way to authentic peace and just sit down with unsatisfactoriness.

In *Shobogenzo Genjokoan*, Dogen Zenji said, “When dharma does not fill your whole body-mind, you may assume it is already sufficient. When dharma fills your body-mind, you feel something is missing.” This means that when we are sincerely practicing *zazen* while feeling somehow unsatisfied, dharma actually

fills our mind-body beyond consciousness. So we should sit *zazen* being completely reassured, trusting *zazen*, however disappointing it may appear to our consciousness. On the contrary, when we feel *zazen* satisfying us, we should think, “I have slipped away from *zazen*” because we have created an unguarded moment by being caught up in pleasant thoughts.

Dogen Zenji says in *Shobogenzo Genjokoan*, “When Buddhas are truly buddhas, they do not necessarily notice that they are buddhas. However, they are actualized buddhas, who go on actualizing Buddha.” So when we are practicing *zazen* without consciously feeling that we are realizing the Way, we are actually realizing the Way, perfectly and fully receiving all the benefits of *zazen* apart from what we think or feel about it. *Zazen* cannot see the result or effect of *zazen* (the realization of the Way) as an external object. *Zazen* and the realization of the Way have such an interesting relationship with each other. For example, when we are in deep sleep, we are not thinking we are sleeping. But that is totally fine with sleep. We are, in fact, perfectly sleeping (The fact that we never care about whether we are sleeping or not is a proof that we are truly sleeping. If we care about it, it means we are not really sleeping). We are receiving all the benefits of sleep, for instance, rest for body, brain, and central nervous system, renewal of the cells, etc... We have not yet understood everything about sleep - sleep is far deeper than our current understanding of it. Therefore, what we need to do is just to sleep peacefully. In this sense, *zazen* very much resembles sleep. Religiously speaking, *zazen* is to awaken from the sleep of fundamen-

tal ignorance. It is very interesting that sleep is a very useful metaphor to understand zazen.

As we cannot see ourselves sleeping while we are sleeping, we cannot see zazen as a whole from outside while doing zazen. Even though we cannot see it as an object, sleep is perfectly happening as sleep and zazen is perfectly happening as zazen. We should understand this fully and clearly.

What we can become consciously aware of is not the totality of zazen. Zazen is much bigger and much deeper than the territory of conscious grasping. Its size and depth is beyond our imagination. Its subtlety is beyond our scope. When we do zazen, we should put a higher priority on what is quietly happening beyond our knowing by perceiving and thinking than on what we can experience consciously. This is very distressing for us who live with the assumption that what we can perceive is all that exists. As humans we deeply desire to know everything, to be satisfied by understanding everything. Therefore, it is unbearable that, however hard we practice zazen, we cannot expect to see the results and effects of the effort ourselves. Usually we can only feel satisfaction, fulfillment, pride and so forth only when we can clearly see the results and effects of our effort. Nevertheless, in the case of zazen we cannot do it. So zazen is exactly “to have all our efforts for nothing.” So we have tremendous difficulty in finding a positive reason to do zazen. Then how can we motivate ourselves to do zazen? Nothing to gain. Nothing to enlighten. Nothing to satisfy us.... There is absolutely nothing in zazen. We can never find

the meaning or reason to sit zazen when we look at zazen from a *bonpu's* viewpoint.

We feverishly and busily move around, always figuring out how to manage things so that we can get the maximum profit with the minimum effort and gain what we want with the least labor. But we should ponder on how much happiness we enjoy by gaining those “profits” in that way. Shouldn't we calm down and deeply reflect upon this matter? We cannot help but feel empty and lonesome in living out our whole life restlessly like that. This feeling makes us aspire to do something completely different, without any specific reason, even for a short time. Kodo Sawaki Roshi said, “Stop being restless and have a short break.” We certainly have something within us which encourages us to move in this direction. This kind of encouragement does not come from rational and utilitarian reasoning, an idea of “I will try zazen because it is good for something.” It is a kind of “gut feeling,” a strong call stemming from a deeper part of our existence beyond intellectual explanation. I think we cannot find an answer to the question of “Why do you do useless zazen?” without getting access to the source of this gut feeling.

We are, as a whole, a part of nature. We usually ignore this and overuse our “human mode,” or *bonpu*, way of acting. That is why we are sometimes called to come back and be a part of nature by taking a break from “human mode” and becoming nature itself. When we are sleeping, we are in that state. (Here is the metaphor of sleep again.) This is true rest for human beings. Zazen is exactly an activity

which actualizes this in the purest way.

In his book titled *The Prayer*, Father Ichiro Okumura, a Japanese Carmelite, quotes Ms. Toshiko Takada's poem titled "*Empty Bench*".

Empty Bench

Mother and her child
All day long, frequently
They talk to each other
But not so as expected
They are not so often
Engaged in a true talk
Therefore on the way back home from
shopping
Or after doing laundry
Even only for ten minutes
Getting out of the house
Let us have a talk
 For that, the gentle shade of a tree is
 waiting
 For that, an empty bench is waiting

Father Okumura gives his comments on this poem in the context of prayer and says, "Just ten minutes are enough. Getting out of the house, make a special time to talk to each other. Whatever is said in such a situation, it is a true talk. Here the fact they talk in that way is much more important than the content they talk about." I think this is a very deep comment. Fr. Okumura is trying to say that a true talk is possible

not in the content of the talk but through the concrete action of making a special time, getting out of the house, sitting down together on a bench in a park and talking to each other.

I would like to replace "true talk" in this poem with "zazen." Zazen is "to study the self" (*Shobogenzo Genjo Koan*) - that is, to study how the true and original self is made alive by myriad things through engaging ourselves with actual practice with our body-mind. The reality of this true and original self has nothing to do with whether we practice or not. It is always with us. But, in fact, we are living our daily life while totally losing the sight of this reality and never making time to be intimate with the true self. That is why we need to make a time - even for a short time - to get out of the busyness of everyday life and to intimately contact the true self. That is why an empty zafu is waiting for us to sit down. The most important point here is not the content of zazen - what you experience or what happens during zazen - but the fact that you carry your body-mind onto the zafu and sit zazen even when you feel "I am so busy that I cannot leisurely sit down even for a short time." We do zazen for the sake of zazen, not for any other reason. In that sense, zazen has no other purpose and is totally self-sufficient. Therefore, whatever happens during zazen, even what might be called "defilement," becomes precious nourishment for zazen and is solemnly decorating zazen.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

May 9, 2012 South America Soto Zen Conference was held at Busshinji, Sao Paulo, Brazil

May 25-27, 2012 Europe Soto Zen Conference was held at Temple Zen de la Gendronnière, France

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