Shōbōgenzō (selections)

DŌGEN
1200–1253

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正法眼藏

Translated from the Japanese with AI (Claude) and edited



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INTRODUCTION

Dōgen (1200–1253) is the founder of the Sōtō school of Zen in Japan and one of the most original thinkers in its history. Ordained young on Mount Hiei, he left dissatisfied, studied Zen at Kenninji in Kyoto, and in 1223 sailed to Song China, where under the master Rujing at Mount Tiantong he experienced what he called "body and mind dropped off." Back in Japan he taught at Kōshōji near Kyoto and from 1244 at Eiheiji, the remote mountain monastery he founded in Echizen.

The *Shōbōgenzō*, "Treasury of the True Dharma Eye," collects the essays and talks he wrote in Japanese over some twenty years—an unusual choice when Buddhist learning was written in Chinese. They read Chinese scriptures and Zen cases word by word, bending their grammar to say that practice and realization are one, that being is time, that "all sentient beings have buddha-nature" means all being is buddha-nature. The prose is dense, paradoxical and often beautiful.

This selection gives five fascicles: *Bendōwa*, the early manifesto for seated meditation; *Genjōkōan*, with its lines on studying and forgetting the self; *Uji*, on being-time; the first half of *Busshō*, on buddha-nature; and the short vernacular sermon *Shōji*, on life and death.

Bendōwa: On the Practice of the Way

辨道話

Why seated meditation (zazen) is the true gate of the buddha-dharma: how the practice came from India and China, practice and realization as one, and eighteen questions and answers on zazen.

1.1 All buddhas, the thus-come ones, singly transmit the wondrous dharma and realize unsurpassed bodhi, and for this there is a wondrous means, supreme and unconditioned. What is handed only from buddha to buddha, without any deviation, is the samādhi of self-fulfilling activity: this is its standard. To roam freely in this samādhi, sitting upright and practicing Zen has been the true gate. This dharma is abundantly present in each person, yet where it is not practiced it does not appear, and where it is not realized it is not attained.[1] Let go, and it fills the hands: how could it be bounded by one or many? Speak, and it fills the mouth: vertically and horizontally it has no limit. The buddhas always dwell in it and maintain it, yet leave no trace of awareness in any quarter. Sentient beings forever use it, yet no quarter appears in their awareness. The effort and pursuit of the way that I now teach lets the ten thousand dharmas be on the ground of realization, and practices oneness on the road of

1 The samādhi of self-fulfilling activity (jijuyū zanmai): the samādhi in which a buddha receives and enjoys the dharma for itself; Dōgen's name for the activity of zazen.

going beyond. When one passes the barrier and drops off, how could one be bound by these knots and joints?[2]

1.2 Since I first aroused the mind and sought the dharma, I visited teachers everywhere in our land. In the course of this I met Myōzen of Kenninji. Nine years of frost and flowers swiftly passed as I followed him, and I learned something of the house style of Linji. Myōzen, as the foremost disciple of the ancestor, the priest Eisai, alone had correctly received the unsurpassed buddha-dharma; no one else could stand beside him. I then went on to the land of the Great Song, visited teachers in the two Zhe provinces, and learned the house styles of the five gates. At last I studied with Chan Master Jing of Taibai Peak, and there the great matter of a lifetime's study came to its end.[3] After that, at the beginning of the Shaoding era of the Great Song (1228), I returned to my homeland. From then on I made it my aim to spread the dharma and save beings. It was like carrying a heavy load on my shoulders. Yet I would set aside the intention of spreading it, to wait for a time when it could be vigorously raised up. For a while I would drift like clouds and duckweed, and so make the ways of the former sages heard. But there may be true students who, of themselves unconcerned with fame and gain, put their aspiration for the way first. Led astray in vain by false teachers, they would recklessly cover over right understanding, be drunk to no purpose on their own madness, and sink long in the land of delusion. How could they nurture the true seed of prajñā and reach the time of attaining the way? Since this poor monk is now given to drifting like clouds and duckweed, what mountains and rivers would they visit to find me? Out of compassion for them, I am writing down and gathering what I saw and heard firsthand of the customs and rules of the Zen monasteries in the land of the Great Song, and the pro-

2 Bendō, "pursuing the way," gives this fascicle its title, Bendōwa ("A Talk on Pursuing the Way"). The ten thousand dharmas: all things, every phenomenon.

3 The buddha-dharma: the Buddha's teaching, and the truth it teaches. Myōzen (1184–1225) was a disciple of Eisai (1141–1215), who brought the Linji (Rinzai) line to Japan; Chan Master Jing is Rujing (J. Nyojō, 1162–1228) of Tiantong monastery on Mount Taibai.

found teaching of the teachers that I received and keep, to leave it to people who study and are at ease in the way, so that they may know the true dharma of the buddha house. This may indeed be the true secret.

THE TRANSMISSION TO CHINA AND JAPAN

Dōgen traces the dharma from Śākyamuni through Bodhidharma and Huineng to the five Zen houses.

1.3 It is said: the great teacher Śākyamuni, in the assembly on Vulture Peak, entrusted the dharma to Mahākāśyapa. It was correctly transmitted from ancestor to ancestor and came to the venerable Bodhidharma. The venerable one himself went to the land of China and entrusted the dharma to the great teacher Huike. This was the beginning of the buddha-dharma's arrival in the eastern lands. Singly transmitted in this way, it came of itself to the Sixth Ancestor, Chan Master Dajian. At that time the true buddha-dharma spread through the eastern land of Han, and its principle, not bound by knots and joints, became manifest. The Sixth Ancestor then had two outstanding disciples, Huairang of Nanyue and Xingsi of Qingyuan. Both received and held the buddha seal, and both alike were guides of humans and gods.[4] As these two lines spread, five gates opened: the Fayan school, the Guiyang school, the Caodong school, the Yunmen school and the Linji school. In the Great Song at present, only the Linji school is found everywhere under heaven. Though the five houses differ, there is only the one seal of the buddha mind. In the land of the Great Song too, from the Later Han onward, scriptural texts left their traces and spread through the whole realm, but which was the stronger had not yet been settled. After the ancestor came from the west, the root of the tangled vines was cut directly, and the pure, unmixed buddha-dharma spread. We should earnestly wish that it may be so in our country too.

4 Vulture Peak (Skt. Gṛdhrakūṭa), where the Buddha is said to have transmitted the dharma to Mahākāśyapa. Dajian is an honorific title of Huineng (638–713).

1.4 It is said: the ancestors and the buddhas who have maintained the buddha-dharma have all taken sitting upright and practicing in the samādhi of self-fulfilling activity as the right path to opening awakening. Those in India and China who attained realization followed this way. This is because teacher and disciple intimately transmitted the wondrous means and received and kept the true secret.

1.5 In the correct transmission of our school it is said: this singly transmitted, upright buddha-dharma is the supreme within the supreme. From the time one first meets a teacher, one has no further use for burning incense, bowing, reciting the buddha's name, repentance or reading sutras. Just sit, and attain body and mind dropped off. If a person, even for a single time, marks the three kinds of action with the buddha seal and sits upright in samādhi, the entire dharma realm becomes the buddha seal and all of space without exception becomes realization. Therefore it increases the dharma joy of the original ground of all buddhas, the thus-come ones, and renews the adornment of their way of awakening.[5] Moreover, beings of every kind in the dharma realms of the ten directions, in the three evil paths and the six paths, all at once become bright and clear in body and mind and realize the ground of great liberation. When the original face appears, all dharmas realize and comprehend right awakening, and the myriad things all make use of the buddha body. They swiftly leap at once beyond the bounds of realization, sit upright beneath the king of trees of awakening, at a single time turn the great dharma wheel that is equal to the unequaled, and expound the profound prajñā, ultimate and unconditioned. Because these equal and right awakenings in turn come back, and there is a path by which they intimately and invisibly assist one another, the person sitting in zazen firmly drops off body and mind, cuts off the mixed and defiled views and thoughts of the past, and realizes and comprehends

5 Body and mind dropped off (shinjin datsuraku): the phrase Dōgen received from Rujing for the realization of zazen. The three kinds of action are those of body, speech and mind.

the heaven-true buddha-dharma. In every place of practice of the buddhas, the thus-come ones, as countless as specks of dust, this person assists and brings forth buddha work, lets it reach widely those capable of going beyond buddha, and vigorously raises up the dharma of going beyond buddha. At this time, since the earth, grasses and trees, fences and walls, tiles and pebbles of the dharma realms of the ten directions all do buddha work, those who receive the benefit of the wind and water they raise are all invisibly assisted by the buddha's teaching, most wondrous and inconceivable, and manifest the realization close at hand.[6] For all those who receive and use this water and fire circulate the buddha's teaching of original realization. Those who live together with them and speak with them also all mutually possess inexhaustible buddha virtue, and, unfolding it widely in turn, spread the buddha-dharma, inexhaustible, unbroken, inconceivable, immeasurable, inside and outside the whole dharma realm. Yet that all this is not mixed into the awareness of the persons themselves is because, in stillness, it is uncontrived and is direct realization. If, as ordinary people think, practice and realization were two stages, each would be aware of the other. What mixes with awareness is not the mark of realization, for deluded feeling does not reach the mark of realization. Again, although in stillness both mind and its objects enter in realization and come forth in awakening, because this is the sphere of self-fulfilling activity, it does not move a single speck of dust or break a single form, yet it does vast buddha work and the most profound and subtle buddha teaching. The grasses, trees and earth that this teaching reaches all emit a great light and expound the profound and wondrous dharma, without ever ending. Grasses, trees, fences and walls proclaim it for ordinary people, sages and all living beings; ordinary people, sages and living beings in turn expound it for grasses, trees, fences and walls. The sphere of awakening oneself and awakening others is from the beginning endowed with

6 Zazen (坐禪): seated meditation, the sitting practice at the center of this text.

the marks of realization and lacks nothing, and the mark of realization is carried out without ever lapsing. Therefore, even if it is only the zazen of one person for one time, because it is invisibly at one with all dharmas and passes perfectly through all times, it does the constant, eternal work of the buddha's teaching in past, future and present within the inexhaustible dharma realm. Each and every one is the same practice, of one equality; the same realization. It is not only practice while sitting. It is like striking space and making a sound: before and after the striker, the wondrous sound goes on and on. How could it be limited to this moment alone? The hundred heads are all endowed, in their original face, with original practice, beyond all measuring. Know that even if the buddhas of the ten directions, countless as the sands of the Ganges, all exerted their strength and tried with buddha wisdom to measure, know and exhaust the merit of one person's zazen, they would never reach its edge.

WHY ZAZEN IS THE TRUE GATE

The questions and answers begin: why zazen alone, and why sitting is not idle.

1.6 Now you have heard how high and great the merit of this zazen is. Someone foolish may doubt and say: "There are many gates in the buddha-dharma. Why do you recommend zazen alone?" Answer: Because it is the true gate of the buddha-dharma.

1.7 Question: Why do you take it alone as the true gate? Answer: The great teacher Śākyamuni correctly transmitted it as the wondrous means of attaining the way, and the thus-come ones of the three times all attained the way through zazen. For this reason it has been handed down as the true gate. Not only that: the ancestors of India and China all attained the way through zazen. Therefore I now show the true gate to humans and gods.

1.8 Question: Whether it rests on correctly transmitting the wondrous means of the thus-come one or on following the traces of the ancestors, it is truly beyond the reach of ordinary thought. Even so, reading sutras and reciting the buddha's name will of themselves become causes and conditions of realization. But merely sitting idle and doing nothing: how could that be a means of attaining realization? Answer: If you now think that the samādhi of the buddhas, the unsurpassed great dharma, is sitting idle and doing nothing, you are one who slanders the Great Vehicle. Your delusion is very deep; it is like saying there is no water while sitting in the middle of the great ocean. You are already, gratefully, sitting at ease in the samādhi of self-fulfilling activity of the buddhas. Is this not accomplishing vast merit? How pitiable that your eyes are not yet open and your mind is still drunk. On the whole, the sphere of the buddhas is inconceivable; consciousness cannot reach it. How much less could those without faith and of inferior wisdom know it? Only those of great capacity with right faith can enter it. People without faith, even if taught, find it hard to accept. Even on Vulture Peak there were those of whom it was said, "It is also good that they withdraw." On the whole, if right faith arises in your mind, you should practice and study. If not, you should stop for a while, and regret that from the past you have lacked the moisture of the dharma. Further, do you know the merit gained from such observances as reading sutras and reciting the buddha's name? To think that merely moving the tongue and raising the voice is the merit of buddha work is utterly futile.[7] Compared with the buddha-dharma, it is ever farther and more remote. Further, one opens the sutras in order to understand clearly the rules of sudden and gradual practice that the Buddha taught, so that by practicing as taught one will surely attain realization. It is not in order to waste thought and reflection and take that for the merit of attaining bodhi. To try foolishly to reach the buddha way by piling up the verbal action of thousands and

7 In the Lotus Sutra, when five thousand arrogant monks left the assembly, the Buddha said their withdrawal was also good.

tens of thousands of recitations is like pointing the shafts of one's carriage north and thinking to go to Yue.[8] It is also the same as trying to put a square peg into a round hole. To look at the words while remaining in the dark about the way of practicing them is like reading a medical prescription and forgetting to compound the medicine: what use is it? Keeping the voice going without pause is like the frogs in the spring paddies croaking day and night: in the end, again, no use. How much more do those deeply confused by fame and gain find these things hard to give up, for their greed for gain runs very deep. It was so in the past; how would it not be so in the present age? This is most pitiable. Just know this: the wondrous dharma of the seven buddhas is correctly transmitted when a student whose mind accords with it and who realizes it follows a master who has attained the way and clarified the mind; then its exact meaning appears and is received and kept. It is not something that dharma teachers who study letters can know or reach. So put an end to these doubts and confusions, rely on the teaching of a true teacher, pursue the way in zazen, and realize the samādhi of self-fulfilling activity of the buddhas.

1.9 Question: The Lotus school and the Flower Garland school, which have been transmitted to our land, are both the culmination of the Great Vehicle. Still more, in a school like Shingon, Vairocana, the thus-come one, personally transmitted it to Vajrasattva, and the line of teacher and disciple is in no disorder. The principle it discusses, "this very mind is buddha; this mind becomes buddha," proclaims the right awakening of the five buddhas in a single sitting, without passing through many kalpas of practice. It should be called the utmost wonder of the buddha-dharma. Yet what superiority does the practice you speak of have, that you set those aside and recommend this alone?[9] Answer: Know that in the buddha house we do not debate the superiority or inferiority of teachings, nor choose

8 Yue lay in the far south; the image is of heading the opposite way.

9 The Lotus school is Tendai, the Flower Garland school Kegon, and Shingon the esoteric school, the main established schools of Dōgen's Japan.

between the shallowness and depth of the dharma. We should only know whether practice is true or false. There have been those drawn into the buddha way by grasses and flowers, mountains and waters. There are those who receive and keep the buddha seal by grasping earth, stones, sand and pebbles. Still more, the vast letters overflow the myriad forms and are yet abundant; the turning of the great dharma wheel is contained in a single speck of dust. That being so, the words "this very mind is buddha" are still the moon in the water, and the principle of "becoming buddha in this very sitting" is again a reflection in a mirror. One should not be caught up in skill with words. In now recommending the practice that directly realizes bodhi, I wish to show the wondrous way singly transmitted by the buddhas and ancestors and let you become true people of the way. Further, in transmitting the buddha-dharma one must take as one's master a person who has realized and accorded with it. A scholar who counts letters is not sufficient as a guide; that would be like one blind man leading a crowd of blind men. Now, under the gate of the correct transmission of the buddhas and ancestors, all revere wise masters who have attained the way and realized and accorded with it, and have them maintain the buddha-dharma. For this reason the gods of the unseen and the seen worlds come and take refuge, and arhats who have realized the fruit come and ask about the dharma, and to every one of them is given a hand that opens and clarifies the mind-ground. This is something not yet heard of in other gates. Disciples of the Buddha should simply learn the buddha-dharma. Know also that we are from the beginning not lacking in unsurpassed bodhi. Though we receive and use it forever, because we are unable to accept it as our own, we are in the habit of recklessly raising views and chasing it as a thing; and so the great way is missed in vain. Through these views, flowers in the sky appear of every kind. Some think of the twelvefold turning wheel and the spheres of the twenty-five existences; views of the three vehicles and the five vehicles, of there being buddha and there being no buddha, never end. One should not learn these views

and take them for the right path of buddha-dharma practice. Yet now, truly relying on the buddha seal, when one lets go of all affairs and sits in zazen single-mindedly, one passes beyond the bounds of delusion and awakening, feeling and calculation, is unconcerned with the paths of ordinary and sage, swiftly wanders at ease beyond all standards, and receives and uses great bodhi. How could those caught in the fish-traps and snares of letters stand shoulder to shoulder with this?[10]

1.10 Question: Among the three studies there is the study of concentration; among the six perfections there is the perfection of meditation. Both are what all bodhisattvas learn from the first arousing of the mind, and they practice them without distinction of sharp or dull. The present zazen must be one of these. Why do you say that the true dharma of the thus-come one is gathered in it? Answer: This question comes because this treasury of the true dharma eye, the one great matter of the thus-come one, the unsurpassed great dharma, is called "the Zen school." Know that this name, the Zen school, arose in China and eastward; it was not heard of in India.[11] At first, during the nine years that the great teacher Bodhidharma faced the wall at Shaolin monastery on Mount Song, monks and laypeople did not yet know the Buddha's true dharma and called him a brahmin who made sitting meditation his teaching. Later the ancestors of generation after generation all constantly devoted themselves to zazen. Foolish laypeople who saw this did not know the truth and carelessly called it the "zazen school." In the present age the word za, "sitting," has been dropped, and it is simply called the Zen school. Its meaning is clear in the extensive sayings of the ancestors. It should not be spoken of on a par with the meditative concentration of the six perfections and the three studies. That this buddha-dharma is the direct intent of the

10 The twelve links of dependent origination and the twenty-five realms of rebirth. The fish-trap and rabbit-snare are Zhuangzi's image for words, to be forgotten once their meaning is caught.

11 The three studies are precepts, concentration and wisdom; the six perfections are generosity, discipline, patience, effort, meditation (Ch. chan, J. zen) and wisdom.

transmission is hidden from no one in this age. When the thus-come one long ago, in the assembly on Vulture Peak, entrusted the dharma solely to the venerable Mahākāśyapa with the treasury of the true dharma eye, the wondrous mind of nirvana, the unsurpassed great dharma, there were gods, now present in the heavens, who saw the ceremony with their own eyes; there is no reason to doubt it. On the whole, the buddha-dharma is something those gods protect forever, and their efforts have not yet grown old. Know truly that this is the whole way of the buddha-dharma; there is nothing to speak of alongside it.

1.11 Question: Why, among the four postures, does the buddha house rely solely on sitting, recommending meditative concentration and speaking of entering realization? Answer: The way in which the buddhas since ancient times have practiced and entered realization one after another is hard to know fully. If you ask the reason, know that the reason is simply that it is what the buddha house uses; you should not look for another. Yet an ancestor praised it, saying, "Zazen is the dharma gate of ease and joy." One may infer that this is because, of the four postures, it is the one of ease. Still more, it is not the way of practice of just one or two buddhas; all buddhas and all ancestors have this way.[12]

PRACTICE AND REALIZATION ARE ONE

Zazen is practice on the ground of realization, even for one who has already realized.

1.12 Question: As for this practice of zazen, those who have not yet realized the buddha-dharma should pursue the way in zazen and attain that realization. But for a person who has already clarified the Buddha's true dharma, what would zazen be waiting for? Answer: Although one does not tell dreams to a fool, and it is hard to put an oar in the hands of a mountain man, I will give you instruction nonetheless. To think that practice and realization are not one is precisely the view of non-Buddhist teachers.

12 The four postures are walking, standing, sitting and lying down.

In the buddha-dharma, practice and realization are one. Because even now it is practice on the ground of realization, the pursuit of the way with a beginner's mind is itself the whole body of original realization. Therefore, even in giving instruction on the attitude of practice, we teach: do not think to wait for realization outside practice. This must be because it is original realization directly pointed out. Since it is already the realization of practice, realization has no bound; since it is the practice of realization, practice has no beginning. Thus Śākyamuni, the thus-come one, and the venerable Mahākāśyapa were both received and used by practice on the ground of realization; the great teacher Bodhidharma and the high ancestor Dajian were likewise drawn along by practice on the ground of realization. The traces of maintaining the buddha-dharma are all like this. There is already practice not separate from realization. We have fortunately received, in single transmission, a share of wondrous practice; our pursuit of the way with a beginner's mind is itself the attainment of a share of original realization on the unconditioned ground. Know that, in order not to defile the realization that is not separate from practice, the buddhas and ancestors constantly teach that practice must not be slackened. Let go of wondrous practice, and original realization fills the hands; step free of original realization, and wondrous practice is carried out through the whole body. Further, as I saw with my own eyes in the land of the Great Song, the Zen monasteries everywhere had all built zazen halls, housed five or six hundred, and even one or two thousand, monks, and encouraged zazen day and night. When I asked the masters who presided over them, transmitters of the seal of the buddha mind, about the great meaning of the buddha-dharma, I heard the principle that practice and realization are not two stages. Therefore they urged not only the students under their gate, but also noble seekers of the dharma and people who seek the true within the buddha-dharma, without choosing between beginners and the advanced and without discussing ordinary people or sages, to follow the teaching of the buddhas and ancestors, follow the way of the

masters, and pursue the way in zazen. Have you not heard? An ancestor said, "It is not that there is no practice and realization; only, it cannot be defiled." And again, "One who sees the way practices the way." Know that one must practice within the attainment of the way.[13]

1.13 Question: The teachers who spread the teachings in former generations of our land all went to Tang China and transmitted the dharma. Why did they set this principle aside and transmit only the teachings? Answer: That the teachers of old did not transmit this dharma was because the time had not yet come.

1.14 Question: Did those teachers of earlier times grasp this dharma? Answer: Had they grasped it, they would have made it known.

AGAINST AN ETERNAL MIND

Dōgen rejects the view that the mind survives while the body perishes.

1.15 Question: Someone says this. Do not grieve over birth and death. There is a very quick way to leave birth and death: namely, to know the principle that the mind-nature is permanent. The gist of it is this. This body, since it has birth, will surely be carried off into extinction; but this mind-nature never perishes. Once one knows that the mind-nature, which is not carried off by arising and perishing, is present in one's own body, one takes it to be one's original nature. Therefore the body is a temporary form, dying here and being born there without fixity.[14] The mind is permanent; in past, future and present it does not change. To know this is called being free of birth and death. For one who knows this principle, the birth and death of the past end forever, and when this body ends, one enters the ocean of the nature. When one flows into the ocean of the nature, one is endowed with wondrous virtues like the buddhas, the thus-come ones. Now, even if one knows it, because one's body was made by deluded karma from past lives, one is not equal to the

13 The first saying is Nanyue Huairang's reply to the Sixth Ancestor, Huineng.
14 Birth and death (Skt. saṃsāra): the round of rebirth.

sages. One who does not yet know this principle will long revolve in birth and death. So one should simply hurry to understand that the mind-nature is permanent. What could one be waiting for by sitting idly and spending one's whole life? Is what is said like this truly in accord with the way of the buddhas and ancestors? Answer: The view you speak of is not the buddha-dharma at all. It is the view of the non-Buddhist Śreṇika. That is, the view of that non-Buddhist is this: within one's body there is a spiritual intelligence. When that intelligence meets conditions, it discerns good and bad and discerns right and wrong; it knows pain and itching, knows suffering and pleasure.[15] All this is the power of that spiritual intelligence. And that spiritual nature, when this body perishes, slips out like a cicada from its shell and is born elsewhere. Therefore, though it seems to perish here, since there is birth there, it never perishes and is permanent: so they say. The view of that non-Buddhist is like this. To learn this view and take it for the buddha-dharma is even more foolish than grasping tiles and pebbles and thinking them gold and jewels. The shamefulness of such folly has no comparison. National Teacher Huizhong of the Great Tang strongly warned against it.[16] Now to hold the false view that the mind is permanent while its forms perish, to equate it with the wondrous dharma of the buddhas, and to think one has left birth and death while raising the very root cause of birth and death: is this not foolish? It is most pitiable. Know that this is simply the false view of non-Buddhists; do not let it touch your ears. Since there is no help for it, if I am still to extend compassion and save you from your false view: know that the buddha-dharma has from the beginning taught that body and mind are one and nature and form are not two. This is known alike in India and China and must not be contradicted. Still more, in the gate that speaks of permanence, the ten thousand dharmas are all permanent;

15 Śreṇika (先尼) is a non-Buddhist in the Nirvana Sutra who held that an eternal self survives the body.

16 Nanyang Huizhong (d. 775), a disciple of Huineng, criticized this teaching of a permanent mind in a perishing body.

body and mind are not divided. In the gate that speaks of quiescent extinction, all dharmas are quiescent extinction; nature and form are not divided. How then can you say that the body perishes and the mind is permanent? Does that not go against right principle? Not only that: you should fully awaken to the fact that birth and death is nirvana; nirvana has never been spoken of outside birth and death. Still more, even if you falsely suppose that the understanding that the mind is permanent apart from the body is the buddha wisdom that has left birth and death, this mind that understands and is aware still arises and perishes and is not permanent at all. Is this not futile? Try to contemplate it. That body and mind are one is what the buddha-dharma always teaches. How then, when this body arises and perishes, could the mind alone leave the body and not arise and perish? If there were times when they are one and times when they are not one, the Buddha's teaching would naturally be false. Further, to think that birth and death is a dharma to be got rid of is the fault of rejecting the buddha-dharma; should you not be careful? Know that what the buddha-dharma calls the dharma gate of the mind-nature as the great comprehensive form embraces the whole great dharma realm, does not divide nature and form, and does not speak of arising and perishing. Down to bodhi and nirvana, there is nothing that is not the mind-nature. All dharmas, the myriad forms in their dense array, are just this one mind; there is nothing it does not include and embrace. To teach that all these dharma gates are the one equal mind, without any difference at all: this is how the buddha house knows the mind-nature. How then, within this one dharma, could one distinguish body and mind, or separate birth and death from nirvana? You are already a child of the Buddha; do not let the babble of a raving man who speaks the views of non-Buddhists touch your ears.

PRECEPTS, OTHER PRACTICES, LAYPEOPLE

Answers on keeping precepts, mixing practices, lay practice and the final age.

1.16 Question: Must one who devotes oneself to this zazen strictly keep the precepts pure? Answer: Keeping the precepts and pure conduct is the standard of the Zen gate and the house style of the buddhas and ancestors. Yet those who have not yet received the precepts, or who have broken them, are not without their share.

1.17 Question: Is there any harm if one who practices this zazen also practices the disciplines of Shingon and of calming and contemplation? Answer: When I was in China, on an occasion when I heard the true secret from my master, he said that he had never heard of any of the ancestors who correctly transmitted the buddha seal in India and China, past or present, also practicing such disciplines. Truly, if one does not devote oneself to one thing, one does not penetrate one wisdom.[17]

1.18 Question: Should laymen and laywomen also engage in this practice, or is it practiced only by those who have left home? Answer: I have heard that an ancestor said that in grasping the buddha-dharma one must not choose between men and women, noble and humble.

1.19 Question: Those who have left home are quickly free of all entanglements and meet no obstacle in pursuing the way in zazen. How can someone in lay life, with many duties, practice single-mindedly and accord with the unconditioned buddha way? Answer: On the whole, the buddhas and ancestors, out of overflowing compassion, have opened a vast gate of compassion, in order to let all sentient beings enter realization. Who among humans and gods could not enter? So when we look at past and present, the proofs of this are many. To take a few: the emperors Daizong and Shunzong, while on the throne with countless affairs of state pressing on them, pursued the way in

17 Calming and contemplation (shikan) is the meditation system of the Tendai school.

zazen and penetrated the great way of the buddhas and ancestors.[18] Minister Li and Minister Fang, both serving as ministers assisting the throne, the arms and legs of the whole realm, pursued the way in zazen and entered realization of the great way of the buddhas and ancestors. It depends simply on whether one has the aspiration or not; it has nothing to do with whether one lives at home or has left home. Further, one who deeply discerns what is superior and inferior will naturally come to faith. Still more, those who think that worldly affairs hinder the buddha-dharma know only that there is no buddha-dharma in the world, and do not yet know that there are no worldly dharmas within buddha. Recently in the Great Song there was one called Minister Feng, a high official who excelled in the ancestors' way. Later he wrote a poem speaking of himself, which says: "In the leisure after public affairs I like to sit in zazen; seldom have I laid my side on a bed to sleep. Though I appear in the form of a minister, the name of elder spreads across the four seas." He was a man with no leisure from official duties, yet because his aspiration for the buddha way was deep, he attained the way. Reflect on yourself through others, and look at the present in the mirror of the past. In the land of the Great Song, the kings, ministers, officials, laypeople, men and women of the present age all without exception set their minds on the ancestors' way.[19] Military houses and literary houses alike aspire to practice Zen and study the way. Of those who aspire, many open and clarify the mind-ground. From this it is naturally known that worldly duties do not hinder the buddha-dharma. When the true buddha-dharma spreads in a nation, the buddhas and the gods protect it without pause, so the king's rule is at peace. When the sage ruler's reign is at peace, the buddha-dharma gains its strength. Further, when Śākyamuni was in the world, people who had committed grave offenses and held false views attained the way. In the assemblies of the ancestors, hunters and old

18 Daizong (r. 762–779) and Shunzong (r. 805) were Tang emperors.
19 Feng Ji (d. 1153), a high official and lay student of Chan.

woodcutters opened realization, to say nothing of other people. Just seek the teaching and guidance of a true teacher.

1.20 Question: If one practices this practice now, in the evil world of the final age, will one attain realization? Answer: Even the doctrinal schools, busy with names and forms, say that in the true teaching of the Great Vehicle there is no distinction of the ages of the true, semblance and final dharma, and that all who practice attain the way. Still more, in this singly transmitted true dharma, entering the dharma and stepping free alike are receiving and using the treasures of one's own house. Whether realization is attained or not, those who practice will know for themselves, just as one who uses water discerns for oneself whether it is cold or warm.

KNOWING THE SELF IS BUDDHA

The case of Xuanze and Fayan shows that understanding alone is not the buddha-dharma.

1.21 Question: Someone says: "In the buddha-dharma, once one has fully understood the principle that this very mind is buddha, then even if one does not recite sutras with the mouth or practice the buddha way with the body, one lacks nothing of the buddha-dharma. Just to know that the buddha-dharma is from the beginning in oneself: this is the complete attainment of the way. Beyond this, one should not seek it by turning to others. How much less should one trouble oneself with pursuing the way in zazen?" Answer: These words are most futile. If it were as you say, who with a mind would fail to know this principle when taught it? Know that the buddha-dharma is studied precisely by putting an end to views of self and other. If knowing that oneself is buddha were the attainment of the way, Śākyamuni would not have troubled himself long ago with guiding others. Let me prove this with a wondrous case of the ancients. Long ago a monk, the director Xuanze, was in the assembly of Chan Master Fayan. Chan Master Fayan asked him,

"Director Xuanze, how long have you been in my assembly?"[20] Xuanze said, "I have been in your assembly, Master, for three years now." The master said, "You are a junior. Why do you never ask me about the buddha-dharma?" Xuanze said, "I must not deceive you, Reverend. When I was formerly with Chan Master Qingfeng, I fully understood the place of ease and joy in the buddha-dharma." The master said, "Through what words were you able to enter?" Xuanze said, "I once asked Qingfeng, 'What is the self of this student?' Qingfeng said, 'The Bingding boy comes seeking fire.'" Fayan said, "Good words. But I fear you did not understand them." Xuanze said, "Bing and ding belong to fire. I understood it to mean that seeking fire with fire is like seeking the self with the self." The master said, "Now I truly know that you did not understand."[21] "If the buddha-dharma were like that, it would not have been transmitted to this day." At this Xuanze, troubled and upset, got up and left. Halfway along the road he thought: "The master is a good teacher for the whole realm, and the great guide of five hundred people. His admonishing me for my error must surely have some merit." He returned to the master, repented, bowed in thanks, and asked, "What is the self of this student?" The master said, "The Bingding boy comes seeking fire." At these words Xuanze greatly awakened to the buddha-dharma. It is clearly known that the understanding that the self is buddha is not knowing the buddha-dharma. If the understanding that the self is buddha were the buddha-dharma, the master would not have guided him with those earlier words, nor admonished him as he did. Just, from the time you first meet a good teacher, ask about the rules of practice, pursue the way single-mindedly in zazen, and do not keep a bit of knowledge or half an understanding in your mind. Then the wondrous means of the buddha-dharma will not be in vain.

1.22 Question: When we hear of India and China, past and present, there are those who awakened to the way on hearing

20 Baoen Xuanze was director (監院) of the monastery of Fayan Wenyi (885–958), founder of the Fayan school.

the sound of bamboo, and those who clarified the mind on seeing the color of flowers. Still more, the great teacher Śākyamuni realized the way when he saw the morning star, and the venerable Ānanda clarified the dharma where the temple's banner-pole fell; not only that, but since the six generations of ancestors, within the five houses, many have clarified the mind-ground at a single word or half a phrase. Were they necessarily all people who had pursued the way in zazen? Answer: You should know that those people of past and present who clarified the mind on seeing forms and awakened to the way on hearing sounds all pursued the way without deliberation or calculation, and that at that very moment there was no second person.[22]

ZAZEN IN A REMOTE LAND

Can people of Japan realize the dharma? Dōgen answers and closes the talk.

1.23 Question: In India and China people are by nature honest and upright. Because theirs is the central land of civilization, when the buddha-dharma is taught to them they understand and enter very quickly. In our land, since ancient times, people have had little benevolence and wisdom, and the right seeds are hard to accumulate. This is because we are a remote borderland; how could we not regret it? Further, those who have left home in this country are inferior even to laypeople in the great countries. The whole world here is foolish and narrow-minded. We cling deeply to conditioned merit and like goodness in outward forms. Can people like this, even if they sit in zazen, at once realize the buddha-dharma? Answer: It is as you say. The people of our country are not yet widely benevolent and wise, and people are also crooked. Even if one shows them the upright dharma, the nectar may turn into poison. They readily go after

21 Bing and ding are the two celestial stems assigned to fire in the Chinese calendar.

22 Xiangyan awakened when a pebble struck bamboo, Lingyun on seeing peach blossoms; Ānanda awakened when Mahākāśyapa told him to take down the banner-pole at the gate.

fame and gain, and their deluded attachments are hard to dissolve. Even so, entering realization of the buddha-dharma does not necessarily take the worldly wisdom of humans and gods as the boat for crossing beyond the world. While the Buddha was in the world, one realized the four fruits through a ball, and one clarified the great way by putting on a monk's robe; both were dull and ignorant people, foolish and deluded creatures.[23] It was only that, helped by right faith, there was a way for them to leave delusion. Again, a laywoman who was offering a meal saw a foolish old monk sitting in silence and opened realization. This was not through wisdom, not through texts; it did not wait for words, did not wait for speech. It was only that she was helped by right faith. Again, the spread of Śākyamuni's teaching through the three thousand worlds has taken only some two thousand years. The lands are of many kinds; they are not necessarily lands of benevolence and wisdom. Nor are the people necessarily all sharp and clever. Even so, the true dharma of the thus-come one is from the beginning endowed with the great power of inconceivable merit, and when the time comes it spreads in that land. If people practice with right faith, they attain the way equally, without distinction of sharp or dull. Do not think that because our land is not a land of benevolence and wisdom and its people are dull in understanding, they cannot grasp the buddha-dharma. Still more, all people have the true seed of prajñā in abundance. It is only that few have accepted it as their own, and they have not yet received and used it. The foregoing questions and answers, going back and forth, guest and host interchanging, have been disorderly. How many flowers have I made appear in a flowerless sky? Even so, in this country the essential teaching of pursuing the way in zazen has not yet been transmitted. Those who aspire to know it are to be pitied. Therefore I have gathered a little of what I saw and heard in a foreign land and recorded the true secrets of clear-eyed teachers, so that those who wish to study may hear them. Bey-

23 An old monk attained the fourth fruit (arhatship) when struck on the head with a ball; a courtesan who put on a monk's robe in jest is said to have later awakened.

ond this, the rules of the monastery and the regulations of temples I have no time to show now; nor should they be treated hastily.

1.24 On the whole, our land lies east of the dragon sea, and though it is far beyond the clouds and mist, from around the times of Kinmei and Yōmei the buddha-dharma of the western lands has spread east; this is the good fortune of the people. Yet names and forms, affairs and conditions have grown thick and confused, and people are troubled in the place of practice. Now, if one makes torn robes and a mended bowl one's life, ties a grass hut beside blue cliffs and white rocks, and sits upright in training, the matter of going beyond buddha suddenly appears, and the great matter of a lifetime's study is swiftly completed. This is the sincere instruction of Longya, the legacy left on Cock's Foot Mountain. As for the procedures of zazen, follow the Fukan zazengi that I compiled in the Karoku years (1225–1227).[24]

1.25 Now, although spreading the buddha-dharma through the country should await the king's command, when I think again of the bequest on Vulture Peak, the kings, lords, ministers and generals now appearing in hundreds of myriads of millions of lands have all been born having gratefully received the Buddha's command, not forgetting their original wish from past lives to protect and maintain the buddha-dharma. Within the bounds where their rule extends, what place is not a buddha land? Therefore, to spread the way of the buddhas and ancestors, one need not necessarily choose a place or wait for conditions. Why not simply think of today as the beginning? So I have gathered these things and leave them to wise masters who seek the buddha-dharma, and also to the true stream of students who seek the way, drifting like clouds and duckweed.

24 Buddhism reached Japan under the emperors Kinmei and Yōmei (6th century); Longya Judun (835–923) praised the hermit's life, and on Cock's Foot Mountain Mahākāśyapa is said to await Maitreya. Fukan zazengi: "Universal Recommendation of Zazen."

1.26 Written on the mid-autumn day of the year kanoto-u in the Kangi era (1231) by Dōgen, a monk who went to Song China and transmitted the dharma.

Genjōkōan: The Matter at Hand, Fully Realized

現成公案

Delusion and realization, "to study the self is to forget the self," firewood and ash, the moon in a dewdrop, the fish and the bird, and Master Baoche's fan.

2.1 When all dharmas are the buddha-dharma, just then there is delusion and realization, there is practice, there is birth and there is death, there are buddhas and there are sentient beings. When the ten thousand dharmas are, all of them, not the self, there is no delusion and no realization, no buddhas and no sentient beings, no birth and no extinction. Because the buddha way from the start leaps clear of abundance and lack, there is arising and extinction, there is delusion and realization, there are beings and buddhas. And yet, though it is like this, flowers fall amid our longing, and weeds spring up amid our aversion, and that is all.[1] To carry the self forward and practice and verify the ten thousand dharmas is delusion; that the ten thousand dharmas advance and practice and verify the self is realization. Those who greatly realize delusion are buddhas; those who are greatly deluded about realization are sentient beings. Further, there are people who attain realization on top of realization, and people who are deluded within delusion. When buddhas are truly buddhas, they have no need to be aware that they are buddhas. Yet they are verified buddhas, and they go on verifying

1 Genjōkōan, "the kōan realized": genjō is "to be realized, to manifest"; kōan is "a case, a public document."

buddha. When one takes up the whole body and mind and sees forms, takes up the whole body and mind and hears sounds, one grasps them intimately. Yet it is not like a mirror holding an image, not like water and the moon: when one side is verified, the other side is dark. To study the buddha way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be verified by the ten thousand dharmas. To be verified by the ten thousand dharmas is to let the body and mind of the self and the body and mind of others drop off. There is a trace of realization that comes to rest, and one lets this resting trace of realization go forth on and on.

2.2 When a person first seeks the dharma, one has strayed far from the borders of the dharma. When the dharma has already been correctly transmitted to oneself, one is at once the person of one's original share. When someone goes along in a boat and turns their eyes to the shore, they mistake the shore for moving. If one keeps one's eyes close on the boat, one knows that it is the boat that moves. In the same way, when one discerns and affirms the ten thousand dharmas with body and mind in confusion, one mistakes one's own mind and one's own nature for permanent. If one makes one's activity intimate and returns here, the principle that the ten thousand dharmas are not the self will be clear.[2]

FIREWOOD AND ASH

Each thing abides in its own dharma-position, cut off from before and after.

2.3 Firewood becomes ash; it cannot turn back and become firewood again. Yet one should not see it as ash afterward and firewood before. Know that firewood abides in its dharma-position of firewood, and has a before and an after. Though there is before and after, it is cut off from before and after. Ash is in its dharma-position of ash, and has an after and a before. Just as

2 "Activity" renders 行李 (Ch. xingli), literally "baggage," hence one's conduct, one's whole way of going about things.

that firewood, once it has become ash, does not become firewood again, so a person, after dying, does not become alive again. Yet not to say that life becomes death is the settled custom of the buddha-dharma; therefore it is called "not-arising." That death does not become life is the Buddha's settled turning of the dharma wheel; therefore it is called "not-perishing." Life is a position of one time, and death too is a position of one time, like winter and spring, for example. We do not think that winter becomes spring, and we do not say that spring becomes summer.

THE MOON IN THE WATER

Realization lodges in a person as the moon lodges in a dewdrop.

2.4 A person's attaining realization is like the moon lodging in water. The moon does not get wet, the water is not broken. Though it is a broad and great light, it lodges in a foot or an inch of water; the whole moon and the whole sky lodge even in the dew on the grass, lodge even in a single drop of water. That realization does not break the person is like the moon not piercing the water. That the person does not hinder realization is like the drop of dew not hindering the moon in the sky. The depth must be the measure of the height. As for the length and shortness of the time, one should examine the great water and the small water, and discern the breadth and narrowness of the moon in the sky. When the dharma has not yet fully filled body and mind, one feels that the dharma is already sufficient. If the dharma fills body and mind, one feels that one side is lacking. For example, when one boards a ship and goes out into the middle of the sea where there are no mountains, and looks in the four directions, it appears only round; no other form appears at all. Yet this great ocean is neither round nor square; its remaining qualities as ocean are inexhaustible. It is like a palace; it is like a jeweled necklace. Only as far as my eyes reach

does it appear, for the moment, round. As with that, so it is with the ten thousand dharmas.[3]

THE FISH AND THE BIRD

Fish and bird never leave water or sky, and so find their way and place.

2.5 Within the dust and beyond the bounds, they bear many aspects, but we see and grasp only as far as the power of our eye of study reaches. If we would hear the household style of the ten thousand dharmas, we should know that beyond their appearing square or round, the remaining qualities of ocean and qualities of mountain are many and without end, and that there are worlds in all directions. It is not only so around us; know that right here beneath us, and in a single drop, it is so as well. When a fish goes through the water, however far it goes there is no end to the water; when a bird flies in the sky, however far it flies there is no end to the sky. And yet bird and fish have never, from of old, left water or sky. Only, when the use is great, the use is great; when the need is small, the use is small. In this way, though there is no point at which it does not reach its limits, and no place where it does not tread and turn, if the bird leaves the sky it dies at once; if the fish leaves the water it dies at once. Know that water is taken as life; know that sky is taken as life. There is bird taken as life, there is fish taken as life; it must be life taken as bird, life taken as fish. Beyond this there must be further steps forward. There is practice and realization, and that there is a life span and a living one is like this. Yet if there were a bird or fish that meant to go through water or sky only after exhausting the water or the sky, it would find no way and no place in water or in sky. If one finds this place, this activity accordingly realizes the kōan. If one finds this way, this activity accordingly is the kōan realized. This way, this place, is neither large nor small, neither self nor other; because it neither existed

3 Traditionally the same water appears as a palace to fish and as a jeweled necklace to heavenly beings.

from before nor manifests now, it is thus. In the same way, when a person practices and verifies the buddha way, to attain one dharma is to penetrate one dharma; to meet one practice is to practice one practice. Here there is a place, and the way has been passed through; and that the bounds of what is known are not known is so because this knowing is born together with, and studies together with, the full exhaustion of the buddha-dharma. Do not learn that what has been attained must become one's own knowledge and be known by discursive thought. Though the verified exhaustion is at once realized, the intimate being is not necessarily manifest; manifestation is "why necessarily?"

MAGU'S FAN

Magu fans himself to show that the constant nature of wind still needs the fan.

2.6 Chan Master Baoche of Mount Magu was using a fan. A monk came and asked, "The nature of wind is constant, and there is no place it does not reach. Why then, Reverend, do you use a fan?" The master said, "You know only that the nature of wind is constant, but you do not yet know the principle that there is no place it does not reach." The monk said, "What is the principle of there being no place it does not reach?" The master just used the fan. The monk bowed. The verification of the buddha-dharma, the living road of correct transmission, is like this. To say that because it is constant one should not use a fan, that even without using one we should hear the wind, is to know neither constancy nor the nature of wind. Because the nature of wind is constant, the wind of the buddha house makes the gold of the great earth manifest, and ripens the ghee and cream of the long river.[4]

2.7 This was written around mid-autumn in the first year of Tenpuku (1233) and given to the lay disciple Yō Kōshū of Chinzei.

4 Magu Baoche (J. Mayoku Hōtetsu, 8th–9th c.), a dharma heir of Mazu.

Collected and arranged in the year mizunoe-ne of Kenchō (1252).[5]

5 Chinzei is Kyushu; nothing else is known of Yō Kōshū.

Uji: Being-Time

有時

"Time is already being, and all being is time": the passing of time as continuous presence (kyōryaku), and the old sayings on being-time of Mazu and Guixing.

3.1 An old buddha said: "At times, standing on top of the highest peak; at times, walking on the bottom of the deepest sea. At times, three heads and eight arms; at times, sixteen feet or eight feet. At times, a staff or a whisk; at times, a pillar or a lantern. At times, Zhang the Third and Li the Fourth; at times, the great earth and empty sky." This "at times," being-time, means that time is already being, and all being is time. The sixteen-foot golden body is time; because it is time, it has the adornment and radiance of time. Study it in the present twelve hours. Three heads and eight arms are time; because they are time, they must be one and the same as the present twelve hours.[1] Though the long stretches and short spans of the twelve hours have never yet been measured, we call them the twelve hours. Because the traces of their going and coming are clear, people do not doubt them; but though they do not doubt them, this is not knowing them. Since sentient beings' doubting of each thing and each matter they do not know is never fixed, the course of their earlier doubts does not necessarily accord with their present doubt. It is only that doubt itself is, for the moment, time. We set the self out in array and make it the whole world. Each and

1 有時 (uji) ordinarily means "at times"; Dōgen reads its two characters as "being" (有) and "time" (時), "being-time." Three heads and eight arms are the form of a wrathful guardian; sixteen and eight feet, the height of a buddha's body.

every thing of this whole world, one should see as each and every time. Things do not hinder one another, just as times do not hinder one another. Therefore there is arousing the mind at the same time, and there is arousing the time with the same mind; and so too with practice and attaining the way. We set the self out in array, and the self sees this. Such is the principle that the self is time. Because the principle is so, there are ten thousand forms and a hundred grasses throughout the whole earth, and one should study that each grass and each form is throughout the whole earth. Going back and forth like this is the first step of practice. When one arrives at such a field, it is just one grass, one form; it is understanding the form and not understanding the form, understanding the grass and not understanding the grass. Because there is only the very time of just this, being-time is all of it the whole of time, and being-grass and being-form are both time. In time upon time there is all being, the whole world. Consider for a while whether there is any all-being, any whole world, that has leaked out of the present time, or not.

THE ORDINARY VIEW OF TIME

Time is not something left behind like a crossed mountain; the pine and bamboo are time.

3.2 Yet the view of the ordinary person who has not studied the buddha-dharma, on hearing the words being-time, is this: at one time I became three heads and eight arms; at another time I became sixteen feet or eight feet; it is as if I crossed a river or crossed a mountain. Now, though that mountain and river may still exist, I have crossed them and come away, and now I dwell in a jeweled palace and vermilion tower; the mountain and river and I are as far apart as heaven and earth. Yet the principle is not this one strand alone. At the time I climbed the mountain and crossed the river, I was there; time must be in me. Since I am already here, time cannot go away. If time is not a mark of going and coming, the time of climbing the mountain is the very

now of being-time. If time maintains a mark of going and coming, then that there is in me the very now of being-time: this is being-time. Does not that time of climbing the mountain and crossing the river swallow this time of the jeweled palace and vermilion tower? Does it not spit it out? Three heads and eight arms are yesterday's time; sixteen feet or eight feet are today's time. Yet the principle of this yesterday and today is just the time of going straight into the mountains and looking out over a thousand peaks, ten thousand peaks. It has not gone by. Three heads and eight arms pass at once as my being-time; though they seem to be over there, they are the very now. Sixteen feet or eight feet pass at once as my being-time; though they seem to be over there, they are the very now. So the pine is time, the bamboo is time. One should not understand time only as flying away; one should not study flying away only as what time does. If time were left wholly to flying away, there would be gaps. Not to have passed through and heard the way of being-time comes from studying it only as having gone by.

PASSAGE

Being-time passes from today to tomorrow and from today to today without leaving the present.

3.3 To put the essentials: every being in the whole world is, while continuous, time upon time. Because it is being-time, it is my being-time. Being-time has the virtue of passage: it passes from today to tomorrow, passes from today to yesterday, passes from yesterday to today, passes from today to today, passes from tomorrow to tomorrow. Because passage is the virtue of time, the times of past and present do not pile on one another, nor line up and accumulate; and yet Qingyuan is time, Huangbo is time, Jiangxi and Shitou are time.[2] Since self and other are already time, practice and realization are the times; entering the

2 "Passage" renders kyōryaku (經歷), time's continuous passing without leaving the present. Qingyuan Xingsi, Huangbo Xiyun, Jiangxi (Mazu) and Shitou Xiqian are Tang-dynasty Chan masters.

mud and entering the water are likewise time. The present view of ordinary people, and the conditions of that view, are what ordinary people see, but they are not the dharma of ordinary people; the dharma has only for the moment taken ordinary people as its conditions. Because one learns that this time and this being are not the dharma, one takes it that the sixteen-foot golden body is not oneself. Trying to escape by saying "I am not the sixteen-foot golden body" is also, in turn, a fragment of being-time, the looking and looking of one who has not yet verified it. The horse and the sheep now arrayed in the world: that they are made to be is the rising and falling, up and down, of just thus abiding in its dharma-position. The rat is time, the tiger is time; beings are time, buddhas are time. This time verifies the whole world as three heads and eight arms, verifies the whole world as the sixteen-foot golden body. To world-exhaust the whole world by the whole world is what is called fully exhausting it. To sixteen-foot-golden-body the sixteen-foot golden body by the sixteen-foot golden body, realized as arousing the mind, practice, bodhi and nirvana: this is being, this is time. It is only fully exhausting the whole of time as the whole of being; there is no surplus dharma.[3] Because a surplus dharma is a surplus dharma, even half-exhausted being-time is the full exhaustion of half being-time. Even a form that seems to have slipped past is being. Further, if one leaves it to that, both before and after the slipping-past is realized, it is the abiding position of being-time. Abiding in its dharma-position, vividly alive: this is being-time. One must not shift it into nonbeing; one must not force it into being. One reckons time only as passing on in one direction and does not understand it as not yet arrived. Though understanding is time, there is no condition by which it is drawn by another. Taking it as going and coming, no skin bag has seen through to being-time in its abiding position, still less is there a time of passing through the barrier. Even if one recognizes the abiding position, who can express the maintaining of

3 Horse, sheep, rat and tiger are among the twelve zodiac animals that name the hours of the day.

having already attained thus? Even if one has long expressed it as thus, there is no one who is not still groping for the face to appear. If it is left wholly to the being-time of ordinary people, even bodhi and nirvana are being-time that is merely a mark of going and coming. On the whole, no net or cage holds it: it is being-time realized. The heavenly kings and heavenly hosts now realized in the right-hand world and realized on the left are also, now, the being-time of my full exertion. The being-time of the hosts of water and land beyond them is realized now by my full exertion. All the kinds and all the beings that are being-time in the dark and in the light are all my full exertion realized, my full exertion's passage. One should study that unless it were my full exertion and passage now, not a single dharma, not a single thing, would be realized, would pass. Passage is not to be studied as like wind and rain moving east and west. The whole world is not unmoving and unchanging, nor without advance and retreat; it is passage. Passage is like spring, for example. Spring has many and various aspects; this is called passage. One should study that it passes with nothing outside it. For example, the passage of spring always passes through spring. Passage is not spring, but because it is the passage of spring, passage has now attained the way at the time of spring. Study this in detail, coming and going. In speaking of passage, to think that the sphere is outside, and that the dharma that passes moves east through hundreds of thousands of worlds and goes on through hundreds of thousands of kalpas, is not to devote oneself single-mindedly to the study of the buddha way.

MAZU AND GUIXING ON BEING-TIME

Dōgen reads two old sayings that begin "at times" as sayings about being-time.

3.4 Great Master Hongdao of Yaoshan, at the direction of Great Master Wuji, went to inquire of Chan Master Daji of Jiangxi. "I have roughly clarified the essential meaning of the three vehicles and the twelve divisions of the teaching. What is the

meaning of the ancestor's coming from the west?" When he asked this, Chan Master Daji said, "At times I have him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes; at times I do not have him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes. At times having him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes is right; at times having him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes is not right." Hearing this, Yaoshan had great realization and said to Daji, "When I was with Shitou, I was like a mosquito climbing an iron ox."[4]

3.5 What Daji says is not the same as others. Eyebrows and eyes must be mountains and seas, because mountains and seas are eyebrows and eyes. In that "have him raise," one should see the mountain; in that "have him blink," one should take the sea as the source. "Right" is accustomed to "him"; "him" is led on by "have." "Not right" is not "not have him"; "not have him" is not "not right." These are all being-time. The mountain is time, the sea is time. If they were not time, there could be no mountain and sea; one must not say there is no time in the very now of mountain and sea. If time breaks down, mountain and sea break down; if time does not break down, mountain and sea do not break down. In this principle the morning star appears, the thus-come one appears, the eye appears, the holding up of the flower appears. This is time; if it were not time, it would not be thus.[5]

3.6 Chan Master Guixing of Shexian was a dharma descendant of Linji and the direct heir of Shoushan. Once he addressed the assembly, saying: "At times the meaning arrives but the words do not arrive. At times the words arrive but the meaning does not arrive. At times meaning and words both arrive. At times meaning and words both do not arrive." Meaning and words are both being-time; arriving and not arriving are both being-time. Though the time of arriving is not yet finished, the time of not arriving has come. Meaning is the donkey, words are the horse;

4 Yaoshan Weiyan (Great Master Hongdao); Wuji is Shitou, and Daji of Jiangxi is Mazu.

5 Śākyamuni awakened on seeing the morning star; holding up a flower, he transmitted the dharma to Mahākāśyapa.

the horse is made words, the donkey is made meaning. Arriving is not coming; not arriving is not not-yet-come. Being-time is like this. Arriving is hindered by arriving and not hindered by not arriving.[6] Not arriving is hindered by not arriving and not hindered by arriving. Meaning blocks meaning and sees meaning; words block words and see words; hindrance blocks hindrance and sees hindrance. Hindrance hinders hindrance: this is time. Though hindrance is employed by other dharmas, there has never been a hindrance that hinders other dharmas. I meet a person; a person meets a person; I meet myself; going out meets going out. If these did not get time, they would not be thus. Again, meaning is the time of the kōan realized; words are the time of the pivot beyond; arriving is the time of the body slipped free; not arriving is the time of "one with this, apart from this." Discern and affirm it like this; be being-time with it. Though the venerable elders up to now have all spoken thus, is there nothing further to say? We should say: "Meaning and words half arriving is also being-time; meaning and words half not arriving is also being-time." There should be investigation like this. "Having him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes is also half being-time; having him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes is also mistaken being-time; not having him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes is also half being-time; not having him raise his eyebrows and blink his eyes is also mistaken being-time." Studying, coming and going like this, studying, arriving and not arriving: this is the time of being-time.

3.7 Written at Kōshō Hōrinji on the first day of winter in the year kanoe-ne, the first year of Ninji (1240). Copied during the summer retreat in the year mizunoto-u of Kangen (1243). Ejō.[7]

6 Shexian Guixing (10th c.), heir of Shoushan Xingnian in the Linji line.

7 Koun Ejō (1198–1280), Dōgen's disciple and successor, who copied many of the fascicles.

Busshō: Buddha-Nature (first part)

佛性

"All sentient beings without exception have buddha-nature": its time and conditions, the Fifth and Sixth Patriarchs on no buddha-nature, impermanence as buddha-nature, and Nāgārjuna's body manifested as the round moon.

4.1 Śākyamuni Buddha said: "All sentient beings without exception have buddha-nature; the thus-come one abides constantly, without change." This is the lion's roar of our great teacher Śākyamuni turning the dharma wheel, yet it is the crown of the head and the eyes of all buddhas and all ancestors. It has been studied for two thousand one hundred and ninety years already (as of the year kanoto-ushi, the second year of Ninji in Japan, 1241), through barely fifty generations of legitimate heirs (down to my late teacher, Reverend Rujing of Tiantong): in India, twenty-eight generations, each generation dwelling in and maintaining it; in China, twenty-three generations, each dwelling in and maintaining it. The buddhas and ancestors of the ten directions have all dwelt in and maintained it. What is the essential meaning of the World-Honored One's words "All sentient beings without exception have buddha-nature"? They are the dharma wheel turned by the words "What thing is it that thus comes?"[1] Whether one says sentient beings, or beings with feeling, or the mass of the living, or the multitude of kinds, it is sen-

1 Buddha-nature (Skt. buddhadhātu, Ch. foxing): the nature of a buddha, which the sutras say all beings have. 悉有佛性, plainly "all … have buddha-nature," Dōgen reads as "all being is buddha-nature." "What thing is it that thus comes?" is the Sixth Ancestor's question to Nanyue Huairang.

tient beings, it is the multitude of beings. That is, all being is buddha-nature; one "all" of all being is called sentient beings. At just such a time, the inside and outside of sentient beings is the all-being of buddha-nature. It is not only the skin, flesh, bones and marrow singly transmitted, because it is "You have attained my skin, flesh, bones and marrow." Know that the being now made all-being by buddha-nature is not the being of being and nonbeing. All being is the Buddha's words, the Buddha's tongue, the eyes of the buddhas and ancestors, the nostrils of patch-robed monks.[2] The word "all being" is not being that begins, not original being, not wondrous being or the like, still less conditioned being or deluded being. It has nothing to do with mind and object, nature and form and the like. So the body and the environment of sentient beings' all-being are not at all the increasing power of karma, not deluded dependent arising, not things as they naturally are, not supernatural power or practice and realization. If sentient beings' all-being were the increase of karma, or dependent arising, or things as they naturally are, then the verified way of the sages, the bodhi of the buddhas, and the eyes of the buddhas and ancestors would also be the increasing power of karma, or dependent arising, or things as they naturally are. That is not so. The whole world has no adventitious dust at all; right here there is no second person, because "Cutting straight to the root source, people have not known it; busy, busy, karmic consciousness, when will it rest?" It is not the being of deluded dependent arising, because "the whole world has never been hidden." "The whole world has never been hidden" does not necessarily mean "what fills the world is being." "The whole world is my being" is the false view of non-Buddhist teachers. It is not the being of original being, because it spans all past and all present. It is not the being of beginning-arising, because it does not admit a single speck of dust. It is not being strand by strand, because it is gathered together. It is not the being of beginningless being, because "What thing is it that thus

2 "You have attained my skin, flesh, bones and marrow" are Bodhidharma's words to his disciples.

comes?" It is not the being of being that arose at a beginning, because "the ordinary mind is the way." Know indeed that within all being, sentient beings, swift and nimble, are hard to meet. When all being is grasped like this, all being is the body passed through and dropped off. Hearing the word buddha-nature, many students wrongly conceive it as like the self of the non-Buddhist Śreṇika. This is because they have not met a person, have not met themselves, have not seen a teacher. They idly take the mind, intention and consciousness set moving by wind and fire to be the awareness and clear awakening of buddha-nature. Who said that buddha-nature has awareness and clear awakening? Even if those who are aware and those who know are buddhas, buddha-nature is not awareness and clear awakening. Still less does the awareness by which buddhas are called aware ones and knowers take the false understandings you go on about as awareness; it does not take the movement and stillness of wind and fire as awareness. Only one or two buddha faces, ancestor faces: this is awareness. Again and again old masters and former worthies, some who went to India and back, some who taught and guided humans and gods, as numerous from the Han to the Song dynasty as rice, hemp, bamboo and reeds, have mostly taken the movement of wind and fire to be the awareness of buddha-nature. How pitiable! Because their study of the way grew ever looser, there is this present error. Now, latecomers and beginners in the buddha way should not be like this. Even if one studies awareness, awareness is not movement. Even if one studies movement, movement is not thus. If one ever grasps real movement, one must grasp real awareness and clear awakening. Buddha and nature: reaching that, reaching this. Buddha-nature is always all being, because all being is buddha-nature. All being is not a hundred fragments; all being is not one bar of iron; because it is a raised fist, it is neither large nor small. Since it is already called buddha-nature, it must not stand shoulder to shoulder with the sages; it must not stand shoulder to shoulder with buddha-nature. One group thinks that buddha-nature is like the seed of plants and

trees: when the moisture of the dharma rain soaks it again and again, sprouts and stems grow, branches, leaves, flowers and fruit flourish, and the fruit in turn bears seeds. To see it like this is the sentiment and measure of ordinary people. Even if one sees it like this, one should investigate that the seed and the flowers and fruit are each, strand by strand, the bare heart. In the fruit there is a seed; though the seed is not seen, it produces roots, stems and the rest. Though no one gathers them, so many branches grow to a great girth. This is not a discussion of inside and outside; it is not empty in the times of past and present. So even if one leaves it to the views of ordinary people, roots, stems, branches and leaves must all be buddha-nature that is born together, dies together, and is all being together.

TIMES AND CONDITIONS

"If the time arrives" means the time has already arrived.

4.2 The Buddha said: "If you wish to know the meaning of buddha-nature, you should observe times and conditions. If the time arrives, buddha-nature manifests." Now, "if you wish to know the meaning of buddha-nature" does not mean only knowing; it also says "if you wish to practice it," "if you wish to verify it," "if you wish to expound it," and also "if you wish to forget it." That expounding, practicing, verifying, forgetting, erring and not erring are, all of them, times and conditions. To observe times and conditions, one observes by times and conditions; one observes by a whisk, a staff and the like. Further, if one uses wisdom such as defiled wisdom, undefiled wisdom, original awakening, initial awakening, no awakening or right awakening, it cannot be observed. "You should observe" has nothing to do with observer and observed, and is not to be measured by right observing or wrong observing; this is "you should observe." Because it is "you should observe," it is not observing oneself, not observing another; it is the voice of times and conditions, it is beyond conditions; it is the voice of buddha-nature, it is buddha-nature with the body slipped free; it is the voice of

buddha upon buddha, the voice of nature upon nature. As for the words "if the time arrives," people past and present have often thought they mean waiting for a time to come later when buddha-nature will manifest. They say: as one goes on practicing like this, one naturally meets the time when buddha-nature manifests; if the time does not arrive, it does not manifest, even if one visits teachers and asks about the dharma, even if one makes effort in pursuing the way. Seeing it like this, they idly return to the red dust and vainly gaze at the Milky Way. This kind are probably of the stream of the naturalist non-Buddhists. "If you wish to know the meaning of buddha-nature" is like saying "you should know the meaning of buddha-nature." "You should observe times and conditions" means "you should know times and conditions." That is, if you wish to know buddha-nature, know that it is times and conditions. "If the time arrives" means: the time has already arrived; what is there to doubt? Let doubts about the time be as they may: "Give me back my buddha-nature!" Know that "if the time arrives" is not passing the twelve hours in vain. "If it arrives" is like saying "it has already arrived." If the time arrives, buddha-nature does not arrive. So, since the time has already arrived, this is the manifesting of buddha-nature, or "its principle is self-evident." On the whole, there has never been a time in which the time did not arrive, and there is no buddha-nature in which buddha-nature does not manifest.

4.3 The twelfth ancestor, Venerable Aśvaghoṣa, expounding the ocean of buddha-nature for the thirteenth ancestor, said: "Mountains, rivers and the great earth are all established in dependence on it; samādhi and the six powers appear from it." So these mountains, rivers and great earth are all the ocean of buddha-nature. "All established in dependence" means that the very time of their being established is mountains, rivers and the great earth. Since it already says "all established in dependence," know that the form of the ocean of buddha-nature is like this; it has nothing to do with inside, outside or in between. If so, to see mountains and rivers is to see buddha-nature, and to

see buddha-nature is to see a donkey's jaw and a horse's mouth.[3] "All dependent" is grasped, and not grasped, as whole dependence, as dependence on the whole. "Samādhi and the six powers appear from it": know that the appearing and arriving of all samādhis is likewise all in dependence on buddha-nature; the whole six powers' "from it" and "not from it" are both all in dependence on buddha-nature. The six spiritual powers are not merely the six spiritual powers spoken of in the Āgama teachings. "Six" means that "three three before, three three after" is called the perfection of the six spiritual powers. So do not investigate the six spiritual powers as "clear, clear, the tips of the hundred grasses; clear, clear, the intention of the buddhas and ancestors." Though one lets it be held up in the six spiritual powers, it is what hinders the rivers' flowing home to the ocean of buddha-nature.[4]

YOU HAVE NO BUDDHA-NATURE

The Fourth Ancestor meets the child Hongren; Dōgen reads their exchange word by word.

4.4 Chan Master Daman, the Fifth Ancestor, was a man of Huangmei in Qizhou. He was born without a father and attained the way as a child; he was the pine-planting wayfarer. Earlier he planted pines on West Mountain in Qizhou. He met the Fourth Ancestor, who was out traveling, and the ancestor told the wayfarer, "I wish to transmit the dharma to you, but you are already advanced in years. If you come again, I will still wait for you." The master agreed, and went and took birth through a daughter of the Zhou family. She threw him into a muddy creek, but divine beings protected him, and for seven days he was unharmed, so she took him back and raised him. At seven, as a boy, he met the Fourth Ancestor, Chan Master Dayi, on the road

3 Aśvaghoṣa is the twelfth Indian ancestor in the Zen lineage; the thirteenth is Kapimala.

4 "Three three before, three three after" comes from a well-known exchange between Mañjuśrī and the monk Wuzhuo.

at Huangmei. The ancestor saw that though the master was a small child, his bone structure was remarkable, unlike ordinary children. The ancestor asked him, "What is your surname?" The master answered, "A surname I have, but it is not an ordinary surname." The ancestor said, "What surname is it?" The master answered, "It is buddha-nature." The ancestor said, "You have no buddha-nature."[5] The master answered, "Because buddha-nature is empty, it is called 'no.'" The ancestor recognized him as a vessel of the dharma, made him his attendant, and later entrusted to him the treasury of the true dharma eye. He lived on the East Mountain of Huangmei and greatly spread the profound wind. So, when we investigate the ancestors' words: the Fourth Ancestor's "What is your surname?" has its essential meaning. Of old there were people of what country, there were surnames of what surname; he is expounding "you are what surname." It is like saying, "I too am thus, you too are thus." The Fifth Ancestor said, "A surname I have, but it is not an ordinary surname." That is: "being is just surname" is not an ordinary surname; an ordinary surname "is not" "just being."[6] The Fourth Ancestor's "What surname is it?" means: "what" is "is"; it has made "is" into "what"; this is surname. What makes it "what" is because of "is"; what makes it "is" is the power of "what." Surname is "is" and "what." This is steeped into mugwort tea, steeped into tea as well, and made into the everyday tea and rice of the household. The Fifth Ancestor said, "It is buddha-nature." The essential meaning of these words is that "is" is buddha-nature. Because of "what" it is buddha. Has "is" been fully investigated only as "what surname"? When "is" is already "is not," it is buddha-nature. So, though "is" is "what" and is buddha, once it has dropped off and passed through, it is always surname, and that surname is Zhou. Yet he did not receive it from a father, did not receive it from ancestors, and it does not resemble his mother's; how could it stand shoulder to shoulder

5 Daman Hongren (601–674), the Fifth Ancestor; Dayi Daoxin (580–651), the Fourth.
6 Empty (空, Skt. śūnyatā, Ch. kong): without any fixed nature of its own; emptiness is the Mahāyāna teaching of the Heart Sutra and Nāgārjuna.

with onlookers? The Fourth Ancestor said, "You have no buddha-nature." These words set forth that "you" are not anyone, and though it is left wholly to "you," it is no-buddha-nature. Know it and study it: at what time now is it no-buddha-nature? Is it no-buddha-nature at the head of buddha? Is it no-buddha-nature beyond buddha? Do not block up the seven paths; do not grope about the eight directions. There is also practicing no-buddha-nature as a samādhi of one time. One should ask, one should say: when buddha-nature becomes buddha, is it no-buddha-nature? When buddha-nature arouses the mind, is it no-buddha-nature? Have the pillar ask too; ask the pillar too; have buddha-nature ask too. So the words no-buddha-nature are heard far off from the ancestral room of the Fourth Ancestor: seen and heard at Huangmei, circulated by Zhaozhou, raised up by Dagui.[7] In the words no-buddha-nature one must surely strive; do not skip over them. Though one must feel one's way along no-buddha-nature, there is a standard that is "what," a time that is "you," a meeting of minds that is "is," a shared surname that is Zhou: it goes straight on. The Fifth Ancestor said, "Because buddha-nature is empty, it is called 'no.'" He says clearly that emptiness is not "no." In saying that buddha-nature is empty, he does not say half a catty, does not say eight taels; he says "no."[8] He does not say "empty" because it is empty, nor "no" because it is no; he says "no" because buddha-nature is empty. So each fragment of "no" is a signpost for saying "empty," and "empty" is the strength to say "no." The emptiness spoken of here is not the emptiness of "form is emptiness." "Form is emptiness" does not mean forcing form to be emptiness, nor splitting emptiness to fashion form; it must be the emptiness of "emptiness is emptiness." The emptiness of "emptiness is emptiness" is a single stone within emptiness. So buddha-nature-no, buddha-

7 Zhaozhou famously answered "No" (Ch. wu, J. mu) when asked whether a dog has buddha-nature; Dagui (Guishan Lingyou) said, "All sentient beings have no buddha-nature."

8 Half a catty and eight taels are the same weight.

nature-empty and buddha-nature-being: the Fourth and Fifth Ancestors ask them and say them.

THE MAN FROM LINGNAN

The Fifth Ancestor tells Huineng that a man of Lingnan has no buddha-nature.

4.5 When Chan Master Dajian of Mount Caoxi, the Sixth Ancestor of China, first came to study at Mount Huangmei, the Fifth Ancestor asked, "Where have you come from?" The Sixth Ancestor said, "I am a man of Lingnan." The Fifth Ancestor said, "What have you come seeking?" The Sixth Ancestor said, "I seek to become a buddha." The Fifth Ancestor said, "A man of Lingnan has no buddha-nature; how could you become a buddha?" This "A man of Lingnan has no buddha-nature" does not say that a man of Lingnan lacks buddha-nature, nor that a man of Lingnan has buddha-nature; it is "a man of Lingnan, no-buddha-nature."[9] "How could you become a buddha?" means "What kind of becoming a buddha do you expect?" On the whole, few forerunners have clarified the principle of buddha-nature. It is not something the Āgama teachings or the masters of sutras and treatises could know; only the descendants of the buddhas and ancestors singly transmit it. The principle of buddha-nature is this: buddha-nature is not fully present before becoming a buddha; it is fully present after becoming a buddha. Buddha-nature always studies together with becoming a buddha. This principle should be investigated and worked at thoroughly; work and study at it for twenty or thirty years. It is not what the ten sages and three worthies clarify. To say "sentient beings have buddha-nature" and "sentient beings have no buddha-nature" is this principle; to study it as a dharma fully present since becoming a buddha is the right mark. Not to study it like this would not be the buddha-dharma; had it not been studied like this, the buddha-dharma could never have come down to

9 Lingnan, "south of the passes," was the far south of China, regarded as a remote frontier.

today. If one does not clarify this principle, one does not clarify becoming a buddha, nor see or hear it. Therefore the Fifth Ancestor, speaking to him, says, "A man of Lingnan has no buddha-nature." What is hard to attain and hard to hear at the very first, in seeing the Buddha and hearing the dharma, is "sentient beings have no buddha-nature." Whether from a teacher or from the scriptures, what one should rejoice to hear is "sentient beings have no buddha-nature." Those who have not been fully filled with "all sentient beings have no buddha-nature" in seeing, hearing, perceiving and knowing have not yet seen, heard, perceived and known buddha-nature. When the Sixth Ancestor single-mindedly sought to become a buddha, the Fifth Ancestor, well able to make the Sixth Ancestor become a buddha, had no other words and no skillful means; he only said, "A man of Lingnan has no buddha-nature." Know that saying and hearing no-buddha-nature is the direct way to becoming a buddha. So the very time of no-buddha-nature is becoming a buddha. Those who have not yet seen, heard or said no-buddha-nature have not yet become buddhas. The Sixth Ancestor said, "People have north and south, but buddha-nature has no north and south." Taking up these words, one should work at what is within the phrase. The words "north and south" should be reflected on with a bare heart. In the phrase the Sixth Ancestor spoke there is an essential meaning; it has hold of one corner, namely that people become buddhas but buddha-nature cannot become a buddha. Did the Sixth Ancestor know this or not? Receiving one corner of the far-reaching strength to hinder that is in the words no-buddha-nature spoken by the Fourth and Fifth Ancestors, the buddhas, Kāśyapa Buddha, Śākyamuni Buddha and the rest, in becoming buddhas and turning the dharma, have the strength to say "all being is buddha-nature." How could the being of "all being" not succeed to the dharma of the "no" of "no-no"? So the words no-buddha-nature are heard far off from the rooms of the Fourth and Fifth Ancestors. At that time, if the Sixth Ancestor were that very person, he should have worked at these words no-buddha-nature. Setting aside for now the "no" of being and

no, he should have asked, "What is buddha-nature?" He should have inquired, "What thing is buddha-nature?" People today too, when they hear "buddha-nature," do not go on to ask "What is buddha-nature?" but seem to talk about the meaning of buddha-nature's being or no and the like. This is hasty. So the "no" of all the nos should be studied through the "no" of no-buddha-nature. The Sixth Ancestor's words "people have north and south, buddha-nature has no north and south" should be dredged and gathered up again and again for a long time; there must be strength in the dredging net. The Sixth Ancestor's words "people have north and south, buddha-nature has no north and south" should be quietly taken up and let go. Foolish people think that, because humans are solid and obstructed, they have north and south, but buddha-nature is empty and fluid and beyond any talk of north and south; to guess that this is what the Sixth Ancestor said is the ignorance of those who have no share in it. Throw away this false understanding, and you must simply study diligently.

IMPERMANENCE IS BUDDHA-NATURE

Huineng teaches that impermanence itself is buddha-nature.

4.6 The Sixth Ancestor taught his disciple Xingchang: "Impermanence is buddha-nature. Permanence is the mind that discriminates all dharmas, good and bad." The impermanence the Sixth Ancestor speaks of is not something that non-Buddhist teachers, the two vehicles and the like can measure and conjecture. Even if the founders and the last descendants of the two vehicles and the non-Buddhist teachers say that it is impermanent, they cannot exhaust it. So it is that when impermanence itself expounds, practices and verifies impermanence, all of it will be impermanent. This is "to those who are to be saved by the manifesting of one's own body, one's own body is manifested and the dharma is expounded for them." This is buddha-nature. Further, it will be "at times manifesting a long dharma-body, at

times manifesting a short dharma-body."[10] The permanent sage is impermanent; the ordinary person is impermanent. If ordinary people and sages were permanent, that could not be buddha-nature. It would be a foolish view of small measure, the narrow view of conjecture. Buddha would be a body of small measure, and nature would be a working of small measure. Therefore the Sixth Ancestor says, "Impermanence is buddha-nature, permanence is not-yet-turned." "Not-yet-turned" means this: even if it changes into what cuts off, even if it transforms into what is cut off, it is not necessarily bound to the traces of coming and going. Therefore it is permanent. So it is that the impermanence of grasses, trees and thickets is itself buddha-nature. The impermanence of the bodies and minds of people and things is buddha-nature. This is because the impermanence of lands, mountains and rivers is buddha-nature. Unsurpassed, complete and perfect awakening is impermanent because it is buddha-nature. The great nirvana is buddha-nature because it is impermanent. The narrow views of the two vehicles, and the masters of sutras and treatises and of the threefold canon, will be startled, doubtful, afraid and fearful at these words of the Sixth Ancestor. Those who are startled and doubt are of the kind of demons and non-Buddhists.

NĀGĀRJUNA'S ROUND-MOON BODY

Nāgārjuna manifests a body like the full moon, and Kāṇadeva recognizes it as buddha-nature.

4.7 The fourteenth ancestor, the venerable Nāgārjuna—in Sanskrit Nāgārjuna, in Chinese Longshu ("Dragon Tree"), also Longsheng ("Dragon Victor"), also called Longmeng ("Dragon Fierce")—was a man of western India. Nāgārjuna went to southern India. Many of the people of that country believed in the karma of merit. The venerable one expounded the wondrous dharma for

10 Xingchang (also known as Zhiche) is a disciple of Huineng in the Platform Sutra. The first quoted line comes from the Universal Gate chapter of the Lotus Sutra.

them. Those who heard said to one another: "For a person to have the karma of merit is the first thing in the world. To talk idly of buddha-nature—who can see it?" The venerable one said, "If you wish to see buddha-nature, you must first remove self-conceit." The person said, "Is buddha-nature large or small?" The venerable one said, "Buddha-nature is not large and not small, not wide and not narrow. It has no merit and no reward. It does not die and is not born." Hearing that the principle excelled, they all turned from their first mind. The venerable one again, on the seat, manifested a body of freedom, like the disc of the full moon. The whole assembly heard only the sound of the dharma and did not see the master's form. In that assembly was the son of an elder, Kāṇadeva, who said to the assembly, "Do you recognize this form?"[11] The assembly said, "What is here now is what our eyes have never seen, what our ears have never heard; our minds have nothing to know it by, our bodies have nowhere to abide." Deva said, "This is the venerable one manifesting the form of buddha-nature to show us. How do we know it? Through formless samādhi, the shape is like the full moon. The meaning of buddha-nature is vast, empty and bright." When these words were finished, the disc-form at once vanished. Again sitting on the original seat, the venerable one spoke a verse: "The body manifested as the round-moon form expresses the body of all buddhas. Expounding the dharma has no form of its own; its functioning is not sound or form." Know this: true functioning is not the immediate manifesting of sound and form. True expounding of the dharma "has no form of its own." The venerable one once expounded buddha-nature widely, beyond counting. Here, for now, only one corner is briefly raised. "If you wish to see buddha-nature, you must first remove self-conceit": the essential point of this expounding must be discerned and affirmed without passing it by. It is not that there is no seeing. That seeing is removing self-conceit. The self is not one, conceit is of many kinds, and the ways of remov-

11 Nāgārjuna (c. 2nd century AD), the Indian founder of the Madhyamaka (Middle Way) school; Kāṇadeva (also Āryadeva) was his disciple and successor.

ing must also differ in ten thousand ways. Yet all of these are seeing buddha-nature. Learn it as seeing with the eyes and observing with the eyes. Do not liken the words "buddha-nature is not large and not small" and the rest to those of ordinary worldlings and the two vehicles. They have stored up the false thought, lopsided and withered, that buddha-nature must simply be vast. Not large and not small: the principle of being hindered by the words of exactly this very time must be thought through just as we now hear it. Because we make use of a hearing that is thinking, let us for now listen to the verse the venerable one spoke. It says: "The body manifested as the round-moon form expresses the body of all buddhas." Because it is a body-manifestation that has already expressed the body of all buddhas, it is the round-moon form. So it is that all long and short, square and round, must be studied in this body-manifestation. To grow distant from "body" and from "manifesting" is not only to be in the dark about the round-moon form; it is not to be the body of all buddhas. Fools think that the venerable one provisionally manifested a transformation body and that this is called the round-moon form. Such thinking is the false thought of a faction that has not inherited the buddha way. In what place, at what time, could it be a manifestation of something other, not the body? Know this: at that time the venerable one was simply sitting on the high seat. The manner of the body-manifestation was just like anyone today sitting. This body is the round-moon form manifesting. Body-manifestation is not square or round, not being or nonbeing, not hidden or revealed, not the eighty-four thousand aggregates; it is just body-manifestation. The round-moon form is the moon of "What place is this, here, to speak of the fine and speak of the coarse?" Because this body-manifestation is "you must first remove self-conceit," it is not Nāgārjuna; it is the body of all buddhas. Because it expresses, it passes through and beyond the body of all buddhas. Therefore it is not bound up with the side of buddha. Though there is the empty brightness that is "the shape like" the full moon of buddha-nature, it is not a lining-up of round-moon

forms. Still less is the functioning sound and form. Body-manifestation is not the physical body either; it is not the aggregates, sense-fields and elements. Though it closely resembles the aggregates, sense-fields and elements, it is expressing; it is the body of all buddhas. This is the aggregate of expounding the dharma; it "has no form of its own." When "having no form of its own" is, further, formless samādhi, it is body-manifestation. Though the whole assembly now gazes at the round-moon form, that it is "what our eyes have never seen" is the turning moment of the aggregate of expounding the dharma. It is the not-sound-and-form of "manifesting a body of freedom." "At once vanishing, at once manifesting" is the stepping forward and stepping back of the disc-form. Exactly at the very time of "again, on the seat, manifesting a body of freedom," "the whole assembly hears only the sound of the dharma"; it is "not seeing the master's form." The venerable one's rightful heir, the venerable Kāṇadeva, clearly "recognized this" full-moon form, "recognized this" round-moon form, "recognized this" body-manifestation, "recognized this" buddha-nature of all buddhas, "recognized this" body of all buddhas. Though many entered the room and received the teaching as water poured from vase to vase, none could stand shoulder to shoulder with Deva. Deva was the honored one of the half-seat, the guide of the assembly, the one with whom the whole seat was shared. Deva's receiving the correct transmission of the treasury of the true dharma eye, the unsurpassed great dharma, was like the venerable Mahākāśyapa's being head seat at Vulture Peak. Before Nāgārjuna turned the mind, while still in the dharma of the non-Buddhist teachers, there were many disciples, but all of them were sent away. When Nāgārjuna had become a buddha and ancestor, Deva alone, as the rightful heir to whom the dharma was entrusted, received the correct transmission of the great treasury of the dharma eye. This is the single transmission of the unsurpassed buddha way.[12] Yet false and presumptuous

12 Pouring from one vase into another is an image of complete transmission. The half-seat recalls Śākyamuni sharing his seat with Mahākāśyapa.

groups sometimes call themselves "we too are dharma heirs of the great being Nāgārjuna." The treatises they compose and the doctrines they collect often borrow Nāgārjuna's hand; they are not Nāgārjuna's works. This is the crowd of followers who were cast off long ago, confusing humans and gods. Disciples of the Buddha should know, without wavering, that whatever is not transmitted by Deva is not Nāgārjuna's way. This is true faith reaching it. Yet many receive these works while knowing them to be false. The folly of sentient beings who slander the great prajñā is to be pitied and grieved.

4.8 The venerable Kāṇadeva, on that occasion, pointed to the venerable Nāgārjuna's body-manifestation and told the assembly: "This is the venerable one manifesting the form of buddha-nature to show us. How do we know it? Through formless samādhi, the shape is like the full moon. The meaning of buddha-nature is vast, empty and bright." Among all the skin-bags, earlier and later, who have seen and heard the buddha-dharma as it has spread through the heavens, the human world and the dharma world of the great thousandfold universe, who has said that the body-manifested form is buddha-nature? In the great thousandfold universe only the venerable Deva has said it. Others only say that buddha-nature is not what the eye sees, the ear hears, the mind knows, and so on.[13] Because they do not know that body-manifestation is buddha-nature, they do not say it. It is not that the ancestors begrudge it. Rather, their eyes and ears are blocked and they cannot see or hear. Body-consciousness has not yet arisen, so they cannot discern it. Gazing at and bowing to the formless samādhi that is "the shape like the full moon," their eyes have not yet met it intimately. "The meaning of buddha-nature is vast, empty and bright." So it is that the body-manifestation that expounds buddha-nature is empty brightness; it is vastness. The body-manifestation that is expounding buddha-nature is "expressing the body of all buddhas." What one buddha, what two buddhas, would not take this expressing as buddha-body? Buddha-body is body-manifest-

13 "Skin-bags" is a Zen expression for human beings.

ation. There is a buddha-nature that is body-manifestation. Even the measure of buddhas and the measure of ancestors that speak of and understand the four elements and five aggregates are, on the contrary, a passing moment of body-manifestation. Since it is called the body of all buddhas, the aggregates, sense-fields and elements are like this. All merits are this merit. The merit of buddha exhausts and wraps up this body-manifestation. The coming and going of all limitless, boundless merits is a single passing moment of this body-manifestation. Yet since the master and disciple Nāgārjuna and Deva, those in every quarter of the three countries, in earlier and later ages, who have now and then studied buddha, have never yet spoken as Nāgārjuna and Deva did.[14]

THE PAINTED MOON

Dōgen criticizes Song paintings that show the scene as a mere disc.

How many masters of sutras and treatises have stumbled past the way of the buddhas and ancestors! In the land of the Great Song, from long ago, people tried to paint this episode. They could not paint it in the body, paint it in the mind, paint it in the sky, paint it on the wall. Painting it to no purpose with the tip of a brush, they drew on the dharma seat a single disc like a mirror and took it to be Nāgārjuna's body manifested as the round-moon form. The frost-flowers of several hundred years have already bloomed and fallen, and though it is becoming gold dust in people's eyes, no one says it is a mistake. How pitiable that all things go astray like this![15] If you understand the body manifested as the round-moon form to be a single disc, it is truly one painted rice-cake. To toy with it like this would be laughable—laughable enough to make one die laughing. How sad that of all the lay people and monastics in the whole land of the Great Song, not a single one has heard or known Nāgārjuna's words, or

14 The three countries are India, China and Japan.
15 Gold dust in the eye: a Chinese saying, "gold dust is precious, but in the eye it blinds."

penetrated or seen Deva's way. Still less are they intimate with body-manifestation. They are in the dark about the round moon and have let the full moon wane. This is carelessness in studying the ancients; their longing for the ancients falls short. Old buddhas and new buddhas, meet the true body-manifestation, and do not prize painted rice-cakes.[16] Know this: to paint the form of the body manifested as the round-moon form, there must be a body-manifested form on the dharma seat. Raising the eyebrows and blinking the eyes must be upright. The skin, flesh, bones and marrow, the treasury of the true dharma eye, must sit immovably. Breaking into a smile must be transmitted, because this is becoming buddha and becoming ancestor. While this painting is not yet the moon form, there is no "shape like," no expounding of the dharma, no sound and form, no functioning. If you seek body-manifestation, draw the round-moon form. If you draw the round-moon form, draw the round-moon form, for it is the body manifested as the round-moon form. When you would paint the round-moon form, draw the full-moon form; manifest the full-moon form.[17] Yet they do not paint body-manifestation, do not paint the round moon, do not paint the full-moon form. They do not draw the body of all buddhas, do not embody expressing, do not draw expounding the dharma. To no purpose they draw a single painted rice-cake. What use is it? Look at it sharply: who is there who, right up to now, is "full and not hungry"? The moon is a round shape; roundness is body-manifestation. When you study roundness, do not study it like a single coin; do not make it resemble a single rice-cake. The body-form is the round-moon body; "the shape like the full moon" is shape. A single coin and a single rice-cake must be studied in roundness.

4.9 Formerly, while traveling like a cloud, I went to the land of the Great Song. Around autumn of the sixteenth year of Jiading, a guiwei year (1223), I first came to the Guangli Chan Monastery

16 "A painted rice-cake does not satisfy hunger" is a Chinese saying for empty representation; Dōgen takes it up in the Gabyō fascicle.

17 Breaking into a smile: Mahākāśyapa's smile when the Buddha held up a flower.

on Mount Ayuwang. On the walls of the western corridor I saw paintings of scenes of the thirty-three ancestors of the Western Heaven and the Eastern Land. At that time I did not grasp them. Later, during the summer retreat of the first year of Baoqing, an yiyou year (1225), I went there again. While walking down the corridor with the guest master Chenggui of Western Shu, I asked the guest master, "What scene is this?" The guest master said, "Nāgārjuna's body manifested as the round-moon form." The face that said this had no nostrils; in the voice there were no words. I said, "This truly looks like a painted rice-cake."[18] The guest master burst out laughing, but in the laughter there was no blade; it could not break the painted rice-cake. Then, while the guest master and I went to the relic hall, the six excellent sites and so on, I raised it several times, but it never rose even to a doubt. Of the monks who offered a word of their own accord, most were all wrong. I said, "Let me ask the abbot." At that time the abbot was the priest Daguang. The guest master said, "That one has no nostrils and could not answer. How would he know?" So I did not ask old Guang. Though I spoke this way, brother Gui could not understand it, and none of the skin-bags who heard it had anything to say. The heads of gruel and rice, earlier and later, saw the painting without finding it strange, and did not correct it.[19] Again, a dharma that cannot be painted should not be painted at all. If it is to be painted, it should be painted upright. Yet body-manifestation as the round-moon form has never once been painted. In general, because people do not wake from the view that buddha-nature is our present thinking, knowing, recollecting and perceiving, they seem to have lost the thread for penetrating both the words "have buddha-nature" and the words "no buddha-nature." Those who learn that it must be spoken are rare. Know that this negligence comes from abandonment. Among the heads of gruel and rice in every quarter there are even those who have ended their whole lives without

18 Mount Ayuwang (Mount Aśoka) is near Ningbo. Western Heaven and Eastern Land are India and China; "having no nostrils" means lacking any real grasp.
19 "Heads of gruel and rice" is a term for abbots.

ever speaking the words "buddha-nature." Some say that those who listen to the teachings discuss buddha-nature, but the cloud-robed monks who practice Zen should not speak of it. People like this are truly beasts. What band of demons is this, trying to mingle with and defile the way of our buddha, the thus-come one? Is there such a thing as "listening to the teachings" in the buddha way? Is there such a thing as "practicing Zen" in the buddha way? Know that there has never yet been any such thing as "listening to the teachings" or "practicing Zen" in the buddha way.

Shōji: Life and Death

生死

A short vernacular sermon: life and death are the life of the Buddha; throw body and mind into the house of the Buddha.

5.1 "If there is buddha within birth and death, there is no birth and death." It is also said, "If there is no buddha within birth and death, one is not deluded by birth and death." As for their sense, these are the words of two Chan masters, known as Jiashan and Dingshan. Since they are the words of people who attained the way, they were surely not set out in vain. Whoever wishes to leave birth and death should clarify this point.[1]

5.2 If one seeks buddha outside birth and death, it is like turning the shafts of the cart north to head for Yue, or facing south to look at the Northern Dipper. One gathers the causes of birth and death all the more, and loses the way of liberation further still. Just understand that birth and death is itself nirvana. Then there is nothing to loathe as birth and death and nothing to wish for as nirvana. Then, for the first time, one has a share in leaving birth and death.

5.3 To understand that one moves from birth to death is a mistake. Birth is a position of one time; it already has a before and an after. Therefore, within the buddha-dharma, it is said that birth is itself not-birth. Extinction too is a position of one time; it too has a before and an after. For this reason it is said that extinction is itself not-extinction. When one says "birth," there is nothing apart from birth. When one says "extinction," there is

1 Shōji ("Birth and Death") is an undated sermon in plain Japanese. Jiashan Shanhui and Dingshan Shenying were Chinese Chan masters of the ninth century.

nothing apart from extinction. Therefore, when birth comes, it is just birth. When extinction comes, facing this extinction, do not say that you must serve it; do not wish for it.

THE LIFE OF THE BUDDHA

Birth and death is the Buddha's life; throw body and mind into the Buddha's house.

5.4 This birth and death is the very life of the Buddha. If you try to loathe it and throw it away, you are trying to lose the very life of the Buddha. If you stay in it and cling to birth and death, this too is losing the very life of the Buddha; it is holding back the Buddha's way of being. Only when there is no loathing and no longing do you for the first time enter the mind of the Buddha. But do not measure it with the mind; do not say it in words. Just let go of and forget your own body and mind, throw yourself into the house of the Buddha, and let it be done from the Buddha's side. When you go along, following it, then without putting in strength and without spending the mind, you leave birth and death and become buddha. Who, then, would stay stuck in the mind?

5.5 There is a very easy way to become buddha. Do no evil; have no mind that clings to birth and death; be deeply compassionate toward all sentient beings; respect those above and have compassion for those below; have no mind that loathes anything and no mind that longs for anything; have nothing to think about in the mind and nothing to worry about. This is called buddha. Do not seek it anywhere else.

5.6 Year not recorded.