Deepest Practice, Deepest Wisdom

Three Fascicles from *Shōbōgenzō* with Commentaries

KŌSHŌ UCHIYAMA

Translated by Daitsū Tom Wright
and Shōhaku Okumura

Copyrighted material

Contents

Introduction *by Tom Wright* vii

Part I. Practicing Deepest Wisdom
1. Maka Hannya Haramitsu 3
2. Commentary on "Maka Hannya Haramitsu" 9

Part II. Refraining from Evil
3. Shoaku Makusa 63
4. Commentary on "Shoaku Makusa" 83

Part III. Living Time
5. Uji 187
6. Commentary on "Uji" 205

Part IV. Comments by the Translators
7. Connecting "Maka Hannya Haramitsu" to the Pāli Canon 263
by Shōhaku Okumura
8. Looking into Good and Evil in "Shoaku Makusa" 273
by Daitsū Tom Wright
9. The Ramifications of Time in Dōgen's Zen 279
by Daitsū Tom Wright

Translators' Acknowledgments 301
Bibliography 305
Index 307
About the Contributors 317

Copyrighted material

Copyrighted material

Introduction

Interest in Buddhist thought and practice has grown immensely during the past thirty or forty years. Zen Buddhism in particular has caught the eye of scholars in Western philosophy and ethics and also of ordinary people (nonspecialists), young and old alike. Among exponents of Zen thought, enthusiasm has centered on the writings of the great thirteenth-century Japanese Zen master Eihei Dōgen (道元). Dōgen was not the first to talk about Zen in Japan, but his complete devotion to explicating the teachings of the Buddha and putting those teachings into action left a most impressive legacy for many generations following. Dōgen also coined many expressions and wrote in a style that has had a lasting influence on the Japanese language. Dōgen's ideas were revolutionary, fresh, and thoroughly rooted in the Buddha's teachings.

Today, more and more translations of Dōgen's works are emerging, as well as commentaries on the depth of his teachings. If scholars find this book helpful, that is fine, but if this book were only for scholars, then the audience would indeed be a small one. It is my sincere hope that this book will be most helpful to anyone who raises the questions "Who am I?" or "What is all of this around me?" or "How can we be free of suffering?"

A Brief History of Dōgen's Life

Eihei Dōgen lived during the Kamakura period (鎌倉時代, 1185–1333) in Japan. Only fifteen years prior to Dōgen's birth, the emperor was overthrown and a military government called the *bakufu* took over. The military government controlled most or all of Japan for the next several hundred years with frequent conflicts and battles between clans and

Copyrighted material

classes. Dōgen's father died when he was three years old, and his mother died when he was seven. So he was orphaned as a child and lost several relatives due to military conflict. Thus, it was in no ideal state of calm and peace that Dōgen surely carried within himself the questions of "Who am I?" "What is all this?" and "How can we be free from suffering?"

At thirteen years of age, young Dōgen was ordained as a novice priest on Mt. Hiei in the Tendai tradition. At Mt. Hiei, he studied the *Lotus Sūtra* extensively, which led to the question *if we are already enlightened, why do we have to practice*? Dōgen's teachers were unable to answer him and advised him to visit Eisai Zenji, abbot of Kenninji monastery in the capital, Miyako. Eisai had returned from China a few years earlier and had brought the Zen teaching with him to Japan. Whether Dōgen actually met Eisai Zenji or not[1] no one really knows, but it is certain that Dōgen stayed at Kenninji for several years before taking the very hazardous journey to China, together with Myōzen, Eisai's first disciple, in 1223. Dōgen spent the first two years visiting various teachers in Sung China, but he became rather disillusioned at the quality of the practice there. Before returning to Japan, however, he heard that a new abbot had been installed at Keitokuji Monastery on Tendōzan and decided to see for himself. Dōgen was very impressed with the new abbot, Tendō Nyojō,[2] and was invited to visit the abbot's room at any time.

On one occasion at the monastery, Dōgen presented his dilemma to Nyojō, who had now become his teacher. If we are all enlightened, as is written in the *Lotus Sūtra*, why do we need to practice? Nyojō's reply turned Dōgen's life around. He said that practice is a manifestation of enlightenment. In other words, the practice of zazen was not something one did in order to gain enlightenment; rather, sitting itself fully manifests enlightenment and the Buddha's teaching.

1. It appears that Eisai had died or was on his deathbed around the time Dōgen visited Kenninji.

2. Tendō Nyojō (天童如淨, Chi. Tiantong Rujing; 1163–1228).

Copyrighted material

Dōgen returned from China in 1227 or 1228 and reentered Kenninji Monastery, where he lived for three more years. But, from a few brief statements among his writings, we understand that he was very disappointed in the collapse of the practice there and left.

Dōgen then lived in a small hermitage southeast of Miyako, present-day Kyoto. Finally, in 1233, Dōgen was able to found his first temple, Kannon-dōri Kōshō Hōrinji in Fukakusa, a district south of the city of Kyoto. This is not the same Kōshōji monastery that is today located on the north side of the Uji River across from Byōdō-in Temple in the city of Uji. The former burned down after Dōgen moved to Echizen, in today's Fukui Prefecture, and was rebuilt in Uji in the seventeenth century.

As *kōan* practice was gaining in strength and popularity in Miyako, and as increasing criticism came from Mt. Hiei, Dōgen decided to leave the area of the capital completely and move to the countryside. So, in 1243, Dōgen left Kōshōji and made the arduous journey to the province of Echizen. The following year, he moved into Daibutsuji Monastery. Later, Daibutsuji was renamed Eiheiji, and it was there that Dōgen spent his final ten years of teaching. In 1253, Dōgen fell ill and decided to seek treatment in Miyako. When he left Eiheiji, Koun Ejō (孤雲懐奘) became the next abbot. After his arrival in the capital and a brief stay at the home of a lay follower, Dōgen passed away.

Dōgen's Writing Style

Dōgen wrote in a Japanese as far removed from the present-day language as Chaucer's work is from modern English. His writing style is incisive and also very poetic. He used metaphors and hyperbole, as well as Zen *mondo* or kōans in his writings. Dōgen often quoted from various scriptures, many times tweaking them with his own turn of phrase. He also coined many new words to express his vision of Buddhadharma. It takes several readings to even begin to grasp the connection of Dōgen's writing to our practice, but the effort is worth it; every reading deepens one's

Copyrighted material

understanding. As Alexander Pope says: "A little learning is a dangerous thing, drink deeply, or taste not the Pierian spring, for shallow draughts intoxicate the brain, and drinking largely sobers us again." In fact, even having much knowledge about something is incomplete unless it can come to function in our day-to-day life through wisdom. And the way to begin to unfold the many layers of the teaching of Buddhadharma as wisdom is to practice it.

Context for the Chapters

Each part in this book will begin with a fascicle from Dōgen Zenji's *Shōbōgenzō*. Next, there will be a commentary by Kōshō Uchiyama Rōshi. The fourth section of the book is comprised of comments from the translators.

All of Uchiyama Rōshi's remarks were derived from Dharma talks he gave at Sōsenji Temple in Kyoto at the monthly zazen gatherings there between 1978 and 1988, after Uchiyama Rōshi's retirement as abbot of Antaiji Monastery in 1975. The talks were at the invitation of then-abbot Hosokawa Yūhō Rōshi and recorded and later transcribed by Ishiguro Bunichi. The transcriptions were then edited and published by Hakujusha Publishers, Tokyo, in the volumes *Shōbōgenzō: Appreciating Makahannya-Haramitsu, Ikka no Myōju, and Sokushin Zebutsu* (正法眼蔵：摩訶般若波羅蜜/一顆の明珠/即心是仏を味わう) in 1982 and in 1984 *Shōbōgenzō: Appreciating Uji and Shoaku Makusa* (正法眼蔵：有時/諸悪莫作を味わう).

The first fascicle in this book is "Maka Hannya Haramitsu" (摩訶般若波羅蜜, "Practicing Deepest Wisdom"), Dōgen's commentary or teaching on the *Heart Sūtra*. Presented to the assembly during the first practice period in the summer of 1233, "Maka Hannya Haramitsu" was one of the first of Dōgen's writings that were later put together and became known as *Shōbōgenzō*.

The second fascicle from *Shōbōgenzō* in this book takes up the problem of the relationship of good and evil to our lives and is entitled "Shoaku

Copyrighted material

and called all his disciples to join him there. At the time, Japan was still suffering from the ravages of war, and the temple had been occupied by squatters. When Sawaki Rōshi took over the temple and established a routine of daily zazen and study, most of those residing there left.

Kōshō Uchiyama stayed at Antaiji from this point until his retirement in 1975. Sawaki Rōshi was a very severe teacher, which can be seen by the fact that Uchiyama was the only disciple to stay with him from 1949 until his death in 1965. Other than for the regular monthly sesshins, Sawaki Rōshi was rarely at Antaiji. He traveled all over the country conducting sesshin—several days or, sometimes, weeks, concentrating on just sitting zazen—at various temples and giving Dharma talks. Just before his death, Sawaki Rōshi told his disciple Kōshō that he knew he would not have enough money to pay for a fancy funeral, so he should donate his corpse to Kyoto University Hospital and have them use it for their research. The significance of this is that in the Japanese Buddhist tradition once a body has been cut up, a funeral can no longer be held. Kōshō did exactly as he was told and, in lieu of a funeral, held a forty-nine-day sesshin at Antaiji. Anyone who wanted to pay their respects to Sawaki Rōshi could do so by going up to the *zendō* and sitting zazen with Uchiyama.

At the same time, Kōshō's own father was quite ill and hospitalized with throat cancer. Kōshō's mother had died in 1955, and his father finally passed away in 1967, two years after Sawaki Rōshi's death.

After his teacher's death, Kōshō Uchiyama became abbot of Antaiji and, for the first time, was addressed as Rōshi. He often joked about how he had been a novice monk (*shami*) until old age. When Sawaki Rōshi died, Uchiyama Rōshi vowed to stay at Antaiji for ten more years to write texts for ordinary people and to raise young people to face the twenty-first century.

Rōshi retired from Antaiji in 1975, and he and his third wife and ardent disciple, Keiko, moved to Ōgaki, in Nagano Prefecture, where they lived for two years. Then, in 1977, he returned to Kansai, living at a small hermitage, Nōke-in, in Kohata, a district in southern Kyoto Prefecture.

Copyrighted material

During Rōshi's final years, he often spent several months of the year in bed with a type of tuberculosis; his wife looked after him with great care in order that he might continue to write texts for the next generation for as long as possible. Finally, on the evening of March 13, 1998, just after his evening walk, Rōshi passed away quietly at Nōke-in.

Uchiyama Rōshi often said that he felt that the twenty-first century would become the century of true religion. He defined the word *religion* quite differently from most people; Rōshi felt religion was to "develop the most refined and distilled life attitude." And I believe that is what he did.

Uchiyama Rōshi's Style

Many years ago, Uchiyama Rōshi stated that his aim as a teacher was to produce texts for people to read and study and to nurture young practitioners in their practice. He did both. Despite being very busy preparing his talks on the Dharma teachings (*teishō*, 提唱), writing books, meeting with the many guests who visited Antaiji, and of course, sitting the bimonthly sesshins, Rōshi always found time after meals to be with all of those who resided in the monastery.

As difficult as Dōgen's thinking and writings are to penetrate, Uchiyama refused to explain these matters using Buddhist jargon or philosophical discourse. Rather, he chose to talk about Buddhadharma in everyday language. For this reason, his style may be somewhat deceptive, because on first reading, it may appear that he is being too simplistic. I think that is why it is necessary to read through his commentaries again and again.

One more thing about Rōshi that will gradually become apparent to readers is that he never said, "Do as I say, not as I do." He never hesitated to show through personal example how he himself had made plenty of mistakes before and during his many years of practice; he never tried to cover them up. And quite often he told us that he was serving as a model

Copyrighted material

to others, but whether he was a good one or bad one was up to us. If there is something to emulate, then go ahead, if not, then discard it.

My Relationship with Uchiyama Rōshi

In December 1968, I hitchhiked my way from Sapporo, Hokkaido, down to Kyoto. It took me two days. When I arrived at Antaiji, the day before the sesshin for that month was to begin, I was ushered into Rōshi's room to speak with him and give him a letter of introduction written by Kawamura Kōyu Rōshi, who was at the time abbot of his own temple in Hokkaido. Kawamura Rōshi had finished reading Uchiyama Rōshi's *How to Cook Your Life* (*Jinsei Ryori no Hon*) and was very impressed with the regimen of zazen that was available at Antaiji. Somehow, from my very first visit, even though my Japanese was still very basic, Rōshi made me feel as though I were fluent in the language. His warmth and directness left a deep impression on me, and I was eager to return the next day to begin the sesshin.

I arrived at the temple just after dinner and was assigned a room and given some bedding. The room was cold, and it took some time for me to fall asleep; even in my futon, I remained cold for several hours. Then, at 4:00 A.M.—BOOM CLANG, BOOM CLANG, BOOM CLANG CLANG CLANG—the wake-up call! Up to the zendō, find a cushion, and sit still. The time passed so slowly I thought I was going to die after the first period. I lived, though, and the sesshin continued minute after minute, hour after hour, slow day after slow day. After three and half days, I became sick from the cold and had to rest for the remainder of that day. Somehow, I managed to get through the final day, and the sesshin ended. When I left Antaiji, I thought I would never, ever return to that *refrigerator* again.

However, during the ensuing days and months, I put the experience behind me; January soon became March, which soon became July. By August, it was blazing hot when I hitchhiked down to Kyoto once more

Copyrighted material

in order to visit Antaiji and wait for a friend who was to join me later that month. The plan was that our next stop would be India, in order to find a guru.

When I arrived at Antaiji this time, I was again ushered in to see Uchiyama Rōshi, who graciously invited me to stay for as long as I wished. He also asked me something that rather startled me: "Did you bring your Bible?" A bit shocked, I inquired, "Isn't this a Buddhist monastery?" Rōshi replied, "Yes, of course, it is. But you have come from a very different culture and tradition. So, while you're at Antaiji, it would be good for you to reread your Bible while practicing zazen and find out the wonderful things that Jesus had to say." Well, this time I stayed three months at Antaiji, after which I moved into a tiny apartment just across the road from the temple. And for the next three years, I commuted to the temple in the mornings and evenings for zazen and survived by teaching English part-time wherever I could find work.

The long hours of zazen were never easy for me. My legs were like two stiff boards, but with the support of the other monks living there and the many other American and European practitioners who came and went from Antaiji, I somehow managed to continue. The daily schedule at Antaiji consisted of three hours of zazen in the mornings and two more hours in the evenings. Besides the monthly sesshins of five days, we also had mid-monthly sesshins of three days. There were also several months of the year when we sat not five hours daily, but nine.

Besides the zazen schedule, there were two other "pillars" of the practice there—work and study. Work consisted of laboring in the fields growing a few vegetables, while study meant finding and reading whatever books on Buddhism in English I could. As Antaiji had no parishioners, we had to go out on mendicant begging called *takuhatsu* (托鉢) several times a month. Takuhatsu was, in a sense, the fourth pillar of our practice.

Little by little, I also continued my study of Japanese so I could read and eventually translate Uchiyama Rōshi's books. During these years,

Copyrighted material

besides sitting the sesshins with everyone, Rōshi was working on his own writings to explain Buddhadharma to us and preparing for his Dharma talks. There was also an endless trail of guests to and from his room. It's a wonder he was able to study at all! Nevertheless, Rōshi always managed to find time to listen to and speak with his disciples. After meals, he would often sit on the porch at Antaiji and talk informally with us while he smoked three of the four cigarettes he allowed himself every day.

One day I went in to see Rōshi to ask him a question about something I had read in *Shōbōgenzō Zuimonki* (正法眼蔵 随聞記), a compilation of notes taken down by Dōgen Zenji's disciple Koun Ejō. Coincidentally, Rōshi had a copy of the book open on his desk. He showed it to me, and I couldn't help but sense how old the copy was, because it was all beaten up and every page was filled with notes in the margins. I kidded him that it must be about time to buy a new copy. Silently, he lifted his hand and pointed his finger at the bookshelf behind me. When I found the shelf he was pointing to, he said to take a look at the books there. In all, I counted fourteen copies of the same *Zuimonki* and every one of them was as raggedy as the next. And all of them had many lines underlined with notes in all the margins. I asked Rōshi what changes when you read the same book so many times. His reply was quite interesting. He said that "the lines you underline change." What he meant was that when first reading a book like that, you might be impressed by some idea of Dōgen's and think that it is very important. But after you read the book again and again, what is truly important changes. What had seemed important on first reading seems less so in the context of several hundred readings. And what you hadn't noticed in earlier readings begins to stand out.

After I'd been at Antaiji for some time, Rōshi would ask me to translate for him when he had foreign guests. One day he had a visitor from the Middle East, and I was called on to interpret. The young man began by saying that he was already enlightened but simply came to Antaiji to get his enlightenment confirmed by Uchiyama Rōshi. I prefaced my

Copyrighted material

In fact, during one of my visits to Nōke-in to see Rōshi just after his eighty-first birthday, he remarked, "You know, at eighty-one, I'm finally beginning to understand just a little about the depth of Buddhadharma."

In the late afternoon of March 13, 1998, Rōshi went for his usual walk along the river. When he returned, however, Keiko noticed something peculiar in his walk, and when he entered Nōke-in, Rōshi collapsed in the entryway. His wife soon called the doctor, who came immediately. Just a few hours later, as Keiko was holding his head, Rōshi looked up at her and smiled, saying, "Today I finished my poem 'Ogamu.'" Those were his last words, and below is the poem he was referring to, translated as "Just Holding Precious," along with one other poem, "Undivided Life," which he composed during the final two years of his life. Another poem, "The Expansive Sky," written around the same time, features in his commentary to "Shoaku Makusa."

Undivided Life:
The Final Resting Place for a *Jiko*
That Has Clarified All That Is to Be Clarified

At the end of aging
We can see that
Lifedeath is one Life
Not life *and* death
Lifedeath is one undivided
Lightness and darkness
One vast blue sky
Is like the depth of
One Lifedeath is
The depth of Life—
Encountering right now
That depth-ful Life
While holding it precious

Copyrighted material

To revere that depth
Walking toward that Lifedepth

To divide, classify, separate
Letting go of the hand of thought
Just holding precious
Undivided Life
Life as it is.

Just Holding Precious

Meeting right hand with left hand—just holding precious
God and Buddha becoming one—just holding precious
Everything encountered becoming one—just holding precious
All things coming together as one—just holding precious
Life becoming life—just holding precious

In closing, I would like to dedicate this book to my teacher and friend, Kōshō Uchiyama Rōshi. His life will always be an inspiration to me and serve as a model for one way to live in a vibrant and alive way. I had the good fortune to meet both Uchiyama the practitioner and bodhisattva and also Uchiyama the man.

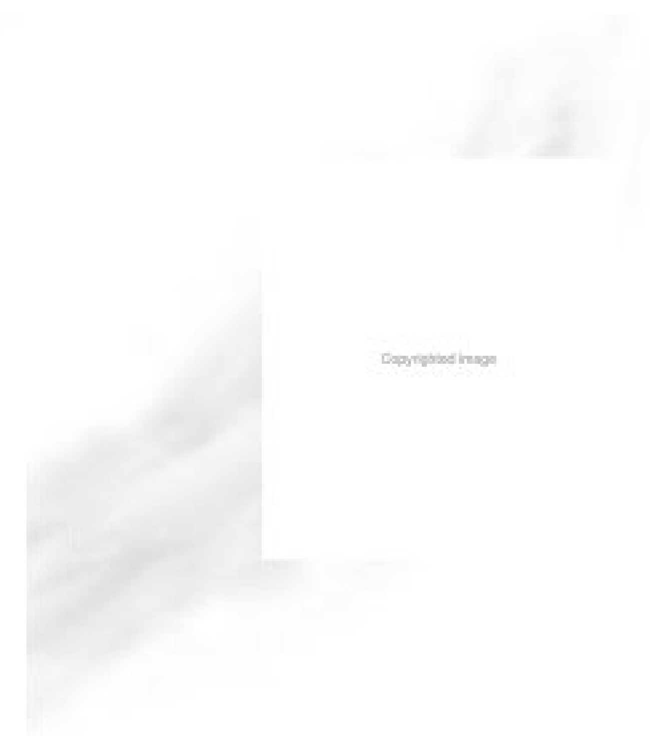
Daitsū Tom Wright

Copyrighted material

Copyrighted material

Part I. Practicing Deepest Wisdom

Copyrighted image



Copyrighted material

Copyrighted material

the arhats.[11] Self-awakening is also a practical approach.[12] Unsurpassable perfect awakening is yet another practical approach. The [Triple] Treasures of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha are also a practical approach. Turning the wondrous Dharma wheel, saving various sentient beings, is also a practical approach."

The Buddha, knowing the monk's thoughts, said, "So it is! So it is! The most profound prajñāpāramitā is indeed subtle and difficult to fathom."

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

Indra asked the Elder Subhūti, "Venerable one, when bodhisattva-mahāsattvas want to study the most profound prajñāpāramitā, how should they do it?" Subhūti replied; "Kausika,[13] when bodhisattva-mahāsattvas want to study the most profound prajñāpāramitā, they should study it as empty space."[14]

11. These are the four ranks of śrāvaka, which means those who listened to the Buddha's voice: (1) stream-enterers (Skt: *srota-āpatti-phala*; Jpn: *yoruka*, 預流果), (2) once-returners (Skt: *sakṛd-āgāmi-phala*; Jpn: *ichiraika*, 一来果), (3) nonreturners (Skt: *anāgāmi-phala*; Jpn: *fugenka*, 不還果), and (4) arhats (Skt: *arhat-phala*; Jpn: *arakanka,* 阿羅漢果).

12. This refers to *pratyekabuddhas*, who practiced by themselves, attained enlightenment without a teacher, and did not teach others. The path of pratyekabuddhas and *śrāvakas* were called the "two small vehicles" by Mahāyāna (greater vehicle) Buddhists.

13. Indra is a guardian god of Buddhadharma; Kausika was his name when he was a human being before he became a god.

14. This refers to Mahāyāna practitioners. Literally *bodhisattva* means one who has aroused a Way-seeking mind (道心), and *mahāsattva* refers to a great being.

Copyrighted material

Therefore, to study prajñā is itself empty space. Empty space is studying prajñā.[15]

Indra spoke again to the Buddha, "World-honored one, when good men and women accept and keep, read and recite, ponder in accord with reality, and expound to others this profound prajñāpāramitā [which you have just] presented, how can I protect them? World-honored one, I simply wish that you bestow your compassion and teach me."

At that time, the Elder Subhūti said to Indra, "Kausika, do you see a Dharma that can be protected, or not?"

Indra replied, "No! Venerable one, I don't see any Dharma that I can protect."

Subhūti said, "Kausika, when good men and women speak as you have, the most profound prajñāpāramitā is itself protection. If good men and women act as you said they do, they are never separate from the most profound prajñāpāramitā. You should know that, even if all human and nonhuman beings wanted to harm them, it would not be possible to do so. Kausika, if you want to protect them, you should do as you said. Wanting to protect the most profound prajñāpāramitā and all bodhisattvas is not different from wanting to protect empty space."

You should know that accepting and keeping, reading and reciting, pondering in accord with reality, is nothing other than protecting prajñā. The desire to protect is accepting and keeping, reading and reciting, and so on.

My late master, the ancient buddha, said:

> The whole body [of the wind bell] is like a mouth hanging in
> empty space—
> Without distinguishing the winds from east, west, south, or
> north
> Together expressing prajñā equally to all beings—
> Di ding dong liao di ding dong.[16]

15. To study prajñā is to study things just as they are, in their ungraspable nature.

16. Dōgen's teacher Tendō Nyojō wrote this poem about a wind bell hanging under

Copyrighted material

This is how prajñā has been expressed authentically through the buddhas and ancestors. The whole body is prajñā. All others [which include the self] are prajñā. The whole self [which includes others] is prajñā. The entire universe—east, west, south, and north—is prajñā.

Śākyamuni Buddha said, "Shariputra, all these sentient beings should make offerings and prostrations to prajñāpāramitā as they do to a living buddha. They should contemplate prajñāpāramitā just as they make offerings and prostrations to a *buddha-bhagavat*.[17] What is the reason? Prajñāpāramitā is not different from a buddha-bhagavat. A buddha-bhagavat is not different from prajñāpāramitā. Prajñāpāramitā is itself a buddha-bhagavat. A buddha-bhagavat is itself prajñāpāramitā. What is

---

the temple roof. In the *Hōkyō-ki* (寶慶記), Dōgen recorded his conversation with Nyojō about this poem.

Dōgen made one hundred prostrations and said, "In your poem about the wind bell, I read in the first line, 'The whole body [of the wind bell] is like a mouth hanging in empty space' and in the third line, 'Together expressing prajñā equally to all beings.' Is the empty space referred to one of the form [*rūpa*] elements? Skeptical people may think empty space is one of the form elements. Students today don't understand Buddhadharma clearly and consider the blue sky as the empty space. I feel sorry for them."

Nyojō replied with compassion, "This empty space is prajñā. It is not one of the form elements. The empty space neither obstructs nor unobstructs. Therefore, this is neither simple emptiness nor truth relative to falsehood. Various masters haven't understood even what the form is, much less emptiness. This is due to the decline of Buddhadharma in this country."

Dōgen remarked, "This poem is the utmost in excellence. Even if they practice forever, the masters in all corners of the world would not be able to match it. Every one of the monks appreciates it. Having come from a far-off land, and being inexperienced, as I unroll the sayings of other masters in various texts, I have not yet come across anything like this poem. How fortunate I am to be able to learn it!

"As I read it, I am filled with joy and tears moisten my robe and I am moved to prostration because this poem is direct and also lyrical."

When Nyojō was about to ride on a sedan-chair, he said with a smile, "What you say is profound and has the mark of greatness. I composed this poem while I was at Chingliang monastery. Although people praised it, no one has ever penetrated it as you do. I acknowledge that you have the Eye. You must compose poems in this way."

17. *Bhagavat* is one of the ten epithets of a buddha, which is usually translated as "World-Honored One."

Copyrighted material

the reason? Shariputra! This is because all supreme awakened tathāgatas issue from prajñāpāramitā. Shariputra! This is because all bodhisattva-mahāsattvas, pratyekabuddhas, arhats, nonreturners, once-returners, stream-enterers, and so on issue from prajñāpāramitā. Shariputra! This is because the way of the ten good deeds in the world, the four quiet meditations, the four formless samadhis, and the five divine powers all issue from prajñāpāramitā."[18]

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

Expounded to the assembly at Kannon-dōri-in [Monastery],
on a day of the summer practice period in the first year of Tenpuku [1233].
Copied by Ejō while serving at the attendants office [*jisharyo*] of the
Yoshimine Monastery on the twenty-first day of the third month,
spring of the second year of Kangen (1243).

18. The ten good deeds are (1) not killing living beings, (2) not stealing what is not given, (3) not committing sexual misconduct, (4) not telling lies, (5) not uttering harsh words, (6) not uttering words that cause disharmony between two or more persons, (7) not engaging in idle talk, (8) not being greedy, (9) not giving in to anger, and (10) not having mistaken views.

The four quiet meditations refer to the four steps of meditation in the realm of form (Skt: *rūpadhātu*). The four formless samadhis are the four stages of meditation in the realm of no-form (*arūpadhātu*).

In India people thought a practitioner could attain five super-human powers by the practice of meditation: (1) the ability to go anywhere at will and to transform oneself or objects at will, (2) the ability to see anything at any distance, (3) the ability to hear any sound at any distance, (4) the ability to read another's mind, and (5) the ability to know one's and others' former lives.

Copyrighted material

2. Commentary on "Maka Hannya Haramitsu"

KŌSHŌ UCHIYAMA

Translated by SHŌHAKU OKUMURA

Reality is prior to comparison.

Dōgen Zenji always sets forth his comments about the most significant points in the opening of his writings. It would be easier for me to give a talk on Dōgen Zenji's writings if he began with a light story and gradually introduced important points after people became interested and were ready to listen. But in the case of "Maka Hannya Haramitsu" ("Practicing Deepest Wisdom"), the title itself is one of the most essential matters in Buddhadharma.

Let us turn the ignition key and warm up the engine to prepare for listening. The first part of the title, *maka* in Japanese (摩訶) or *mahā* in Sanskrit ("great" or "greatness"), itself expresses the Buddhadharma as a whole. In the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, we read, "Generally speaking, Mahāyāna is to be expounded from two points of view. One is the principle [Dharma], and the other is the significance."[19] A common Japanese expression is *makafushigi* (摩訶不思議), meaning

19. *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* (Jpn: *Daijō Kishin-ron*, 大乗起信論) is attributed to Aśvaghoṣa (80–150). Yoshito S. Hakeda, trans., *The Awakening of Faith* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 28. I have taken the liberty to insert the word "Dharma" here because the Dharma that Uchiyama Rōshi talks about in the latter part refers to this.

Copyrighted material

is body. In *Bendōwa*, the same function of reality is called an "unsurpassable, unfabricated, wondrous method."[23] In short, it is zazen.

All Buddhist teachings are ultimately the same. They are not difficult to understand. Yet, if you don't clarify the fundamental expressions, they are ungraspable. Once you make it clear, you will know that "Mahāyāna," "one-mind," "wondrous Dharma," and other expressions in Buddhist literature indicate only one reality. The one reality is mahā. Prajñā, Mahāyāna, or jijuyū zanmai work on the basis of mahā.

Therefore, first we must understand mahā, then actually practice zazen. As a result, mahā-prajñā will begin to function.

Traditionally, in Japanese Buddhism, the most significant terms such as "mahā," "Dharma," "wondrous Dharma," "mind of living beings," "one-mind," and so forth have not been translated into the Japanese vernacular. Japanese Buddhist priests have been using them simply as technical Buddhist terms. They've preserved them like canned foods. From ancient times, Buddhist scriptures have been stored away in the treasuries of Buddhist temples. Cans are a convenient way to preserve or carry food, but unless we open the can and eat the food, just carrying it around is meaningless. We cannot appreciate the taste.

What I am attempting now is to open these canned Buddhist terms, taste them myself first, and if they taste good, recommend them to you. This is why I named our gathering *midokkai* (味読会): a gathering for reading and "tasting" or appreciating *Shōbōgenzō*.

Now, I would like to explain the deeper meaning of *mahā*. *Mahā* refers to the reality of life itself. I want to examine our lives on the basis of this reality. I will take a simple example. Each one of us was born of a woman. We can understand the reality of life when we carefully observe a newborn baby. About one week after birth, a baby begins to perceive things visually. All beings in the world are reflected on the baby's retinas. Yet

23. Ibid.

Copyrighted material

because of its immaturity, the baby doesn't see things clearly or recognize things as independent entities. The same face regularly appears in front of the infant's eyes. The figure speaks and puts her nipple into the baby's mouth. Gradually, in the baby's brain, images of mama and nipple are formed. In other words, the baby starts to grasp things as concepts after abstracting them from the reality of life. Later we obtain the ability to abstract things by using words.

Within a few years, the young child begins to differentiate using words when she/he comes across something like a dog or a pig. If the child is male, he eventually questions why a female friend does not have a penis, and he begins to understand the distinction between male and female. The concept of "I" is being gradually formed. He understands that "I" belongs to one specific group of people (males, Japanese, etc.) and then to a larger group of all humankind.

Thus when someone comprehends his- or herself as part of a group, we think he or she has become an individual adult. Therefore, in the usual process of human growth, every person develops the habit of viewing his- or herself as a separate human being among humans. Consequently, one loses sight of a self that can be understood as all-over-all (all/all), that all beings are the self as the true form that is the reality of life.

Buddhadharma always teaches about the reality of life. So, isn't the world that is created by discrimination through the use of abstract words also the reality of life? Yes, it is. The power to conceptualize, that is, to grasp things using categories resulting from abstraction, is nothing other than the reality of life.

This is a very difficult point. If there were a clear distinction between one side of the world where we grasp things by abstract concepts and the other side where we see the reality of life prior to any such abstraction, then this dimension of the reality of life would be rather easy to understand. However, such a clear distinction is not the case.

Although we think that we are looking at the same cup, the reality of life is that each one of us looks at this cup with their own retinas,

Copyrighted material

with their own feelings, and from their own particular angle. The most understandable example is money. A one-thousand yen bill for a penniless person is totally different in value as well as in actual feeling than it would be for a millionaire. The same is true for an item of clothing or a drop of water. Each of us lives within our own world.

Nevertheless, since childhood we have been trained to abstract reality by using words. We do so by habit and then we come to believe that all of us share the same social world in which we express everything in words. For instance, now I am speaking and you are listening. It seems we understand each other. But it is questionable whether each one of you understands my words completely and in the same way. These days we trust instruments to measure brain waves. Even when we measure our brain waves by computers, it is questionable whether the result coincides completely with the reality of the person. I think it strange that science encourages the assumption that under the same conditions, no matter how many times we repeat certain experiments, we will get the same results. For example, if I push this cup with the same force, it moves this far. Each time I repeat the same action, if conditions are the same, the cup moves exactly the same distance. People think this is an objective truth. Repeated measurements confirm this. But this is merely belief in the world of science.

The reality of life, however, is that the same thing never occurs twice. The world of reality is always flowing moment by moment. We casually believe that spring, summer, fall, and winter repeat in the same way every year. But does the same thing really happen every year? No, never. On the same date of any year, the weather will be different. In any one year, we say that we had an exceptionally hot summer or an unusually cool summer compared to last year. It varies. The temperatures we have for this year are never exactly the same as the temperatures for an average year. If we do, it is really exceptional. We do have four seasons every year in the same order. Roughly speaking, the same things repeat. But, as a matter of fact, the same events never occur again. We must realize that

Copyrighted material

to consider natural science as an exact study is actually to think very loosely. We cannot understand our lives with such a loose way of seeing things. Life itself is not so simple a matter that it can be dealt with by mere measurement of brain waves.

The reality of life as we are actually living it here is truly subtle. This moment lives with no comparison to past and future.

That which created the natural science that I am criticizing now is also a part of the reality of life. We cannot say that natural science is outside of life. This is a very difficult point. *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* points to this when it says "the mind of living beings includes all dharmas both within the world and beyond the world." The loose way of seeing things scientifically and the subtler way of seeing are both included in the one-mind. The abstracted world and the world beyond abstraction are both within this life—that is the mind of living beings, Dharma, mahā.

Usually we each see things as if we were one of all myriad beings (one/all). In Buddhadharma, *mahā* means all/all. Dharma and one-mind are like this. Infinity divided by infinity (∞/∞) is 1, even in mathematics. But this one is different from the 1 in mathematics. All-divided-by-all, all-inclusive reality is entirely impermanence itself. There is nothing fixed. This is why it is said in the *Xinxin Ming*, "Do not cling even to the oneness."[24]

People often say that Christianity is a monotheistic religion, that God is only one. This common view is a mistake. God is one and God is simultaneously all beings. In the book of Exodus, God said, "I am who I am." The Christian God must be one and, at the same time, all beings. Such an idea is conveyed in Buddhism with expressions such as "one is everything, everything is one" (*ichi soku issai, issai soku ichi*; 一即一切、一切即一). On this point, Buddhism and Christianity are not different.

24. *Xinxin Ming* (信心銘; Jpn: *Shinjinmei*) or *On Faith in Mind* or *Clarifying Mind* was written by the Third Ancestor, Kanchi Sōsan (鑑智僧璨; Chi: Jianzhi Sengcan; ?–606).

Copyrighted material

There are many scholars who insist that Christianity is monotheistic and Buddhism is pantheistic. Such scholars' heads are too loose.

Next, *prajñā* means "wisdom," or in Japanese *chie* (智慧). In Buddhist terminology *chi* and *e* have different connotations. As for the fundamental definition of the word, *chi* means making selections, and *e* means making distinctions.

All Christian theological terms have been largely defined since the Middle Ages. In the same way, almost all Buddhist terms were defined in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* written by the Indian master Vasubandhu in the fourth–fifth century CE. This definition of wisdom is mentioned there.

When we buy something, we compare this thing and that thing and choose the most appropriate one. This comparing and making distinctions is *e*. The choosing and selecting is *chi*. In our daily lives, we compare this with that, right with left, good with bad, like with dislike. In any situation, we make choices, judge, select one thing, and reject another. Our life is a continuum of this kind of choosing. There are some people who say of themselves that they are just coasting along. Such people choose coasting. These days it seems that everybody wants to buy a house. Buying a house is the largest purchase most people will make in their lifetime. Some people have been badly taken in by real estate brokers and have lost all their money and property. Making a choice is a very significant matter for us. Yet, if every time we need to make a choice we think too much about choosing one thing over another, we might become neurotic. Even in our daily affairs, making a choice can be pretty difficult.

In Buddhism, wisdom, prajñā, is neither intelligence in such worldly matters, nor is it scientific knowledge. By prajñā, the reality of life itself, mahā, starts to work. Mahā is the foundation from which we make choices. In other words, each time we make a choice, we are to make it from the perspective of universal life (all things being equal and interconnected).

Copyrighted material

This is also true for *śīla pāramitā*, perfect keeping of the precepts. Through observation of the precepts, the self that permeates all beings as total life is manifested. Therefore we cannot in truth say, "I am good because I keep the precepts, and you are not good because you don't keep the precepts." If we say so, we are violating the precepts. In an old scripture we read, "Neither having evil desires nor clinging to the proper forms of precepts—this is called keeping the pure precepts." The precepts are truly maintained when we live out our lives according to them, but without clinging to them. We just live out our lives in a straightforward way. Through this practice the self as inclusive of all beings is being completed.

Kṣānti pāramitā, the perfection of patience, does not mean that I put up with meanness. If we try to be patient in our relationships with someone we perceive to be outside of rather than within us, anger can accumulate until we think we cannot stand it anymore, and the anger bursts forth. We must practice the patience of *jiko*, or self that is only and wholly self.[25]

Vīrya pāramitā, the perfection of diligence, means to be diligent in genuinely living out all-inclusive life and continuing to courageously practice good deeds and cut off bad deeds. That's it. Diligence is to pour our whole self into each moment and each activity, animated by our life force. Some people try hard to avoid work. I think such people suffer instead. Since the life force works naturally, we're at peace when we work in harmony with our own life force. This is the perfection of diligence.

25. I haven't been consistent in translating the Buddhist term *jiko* (自己) in order to suggest various ways to look at the term. "Self before individuation" would be another legitimate way to look at it. In other words, in Buddhism, *jiko* includes two aspects; self as an individual, separate from other people and things (separate, of course, not intrinsically but by our thoughts, which by their own nature create a thought-dichotomy between self and other), and self that is actually the whole universe itself. Uchiyama Rōshi goes into more detail on this in chapters 3 through 6 of his book *Jiko: Religion without Sects* (自己——宗派でない宗教), which was first published by Hakujusha Publishers in 1965 and later republished by Daihorin-kaku Publishers as *Jiko: The Spiritual Travels of a Zen Monk* in 2004.

Copyrighted material

Dhyāna pāramitā, the perfection of meditation, is the reality of life settling into the reality of life itself.

Prajñāpāramitā, the perfection of wisdom, is choosing the reality of life as reality.

In summary, *pāramitā* means this: The true self manifests the true self and completely lives out that self.

> The time of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva practicing profound prajñāpāramitā is the whole body clearly seeing the emptiness of all five aggregates.

In this first sentence of the text, we have to examine the Japanese names for two different Chinese translations of the Sanskrit name Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva—Kanjizai Bosatsu (観自在菩薩) and Kanzeon Bosatsu (観世音菩薩)—and we have to examine the meaning of *kan* (観) in those names. Kanjizai Bosatsu is a translation by Genjō,[26] and Kanzeon Bosatsu is an earlier translation by Kumārajīva. Often *kan* is used as a compound with *shi* (止) as *shikan* (止観). In this case, *shi* is a translation of the Sanskrit term *śamatha* (single-pointed concentration), and *kan* is a translation of the Sanskrit term *vipaśyanā* (insight). In the Tendai[27] school, for instance, there are two texts on meditation, one called *Makashikan* (摩訶止観) or *Larger Śamatha-Vipaśyanā*, and the other called *Shoshikan* (小止観) or *Shorter Śamatha-Vipaśyanā*. Here, *shikan* refers to zazen.

In a little more detail, *shi* means to stop doing everything. In my own expression, this is "letting go of thought" or "opening the hand of thought." We always grasp things with our thoughts. When we stop doing that, we let go of thoughts, and what we have been grasping falls away—though the thoughts do spring up again repeatedly. Thoughts are secretions of the brain, which is of course also a part of our life. To see

26. Genjō (玄奘; Chi: Xuan-zang; 602–64).

27. Tendai (天台; Chi: Tientai).

Copyrighted material

that these secretions are nothing other than secretions is kan—insight. Usually, we act basing our actions on those thoughts. We live, so to speak, for the sake of these secretions of the brain. Many people say that they live for the sake of seeking happiness, as if they know what happiness is.

But what is happiness? Happiness is nothing more than what we feel when we have joy or pleasure in our mind. What we call happiness is merely the condition in which our desire for self-satisfaction is fulfilled. This is the root of our confusion: what do we human beings live for? Until recently, there were quite a few people in the East who thought they lived for the sake of Buddhadharma and people in the West who lived for the sake of following God's will. Such people saw God or Buddha as the absolute supreme value in their lives. However, these days, people have begun to think that God or Buddha exists only in the world of myths and fairy tales. Not many people find value in God or Buddha. So, ultimately, people live for the sake of their own happiness. Human beings these days can be motivated only if we can convince them that something will improve their standard of living and will fulfill their desire for self-satisfaction.

Nevertheless, "happiness," "a better standard of living," or "a prosperous society" are concepts, just secretions of the brain. We are living upside down if we find the meaning of our lives solely in fulfilling desires that are based only on secretions. Kan is to understand this well and see thoughts just as thoughts. See secretion simply as secretion, neither more nor less than that. See everything as reality of life just as it is. This is kan.

The meaning of the name Kanjizai Bosatsu is that, as the reality of life, we clearly see self as all beings as it is and we actually live out that self. To be a Kanjizai Bosatsu is to see (*kan*) the true reality (*zai*) of the self (*ji*) as life.

Kanjizai Bosatsu is not someone outside us. Each one of us must be Kanjizai Bosatsu. All of us, without exception, are actually living out the self that is only the self. This is the only possible way of life, and yet we mistakenly chase after secretions of the brain and live as if we are separated from the self that is only the self. We live, just floating around.

Copyrighted material

Each one of us is originally Kanjizai Bosatsu. We have to apply what Dōgen Zenji is saying to our own lives because Kanjizai Bosatsu is not someone other than ourselves.

"To practice profound prajñāpāramitā" means to actually do it, to carry out the perfection of wisdom in our lives. We often take the phrase only as words without putting it into practice. Right now I am talking about prajñā or wisdom, not practicing it. But isn't this talk a practice? Yes, it is. I am practicing by talking wholeheartedly about prajñā. It is not so easy to distinguish what is practice from what is not practice. In short, to practice means to actually live out the life of Kanjizai Bosatsu in its true meaning.

The word *jin* (深) or "profundity" in the opening line ("practicing profound prajñāpāramitā") is, as with mahā, not a matter of comparison between shallowness and depth. It means to thoroughly penetrate reality. Reality is infinitely profound.

The whole body.

> The five aggregates are forms, sensations, perceptions, predilections, and consciousness; this is the fivefold prajñā. Clear seeing is itself prajñā.

Whole body, in Japanese *konshin* (渾身), means that there is no separation between subject and object. Since each of us is life-as-all-beings, there is no separation between the seer and things seen. The seer is also seen. Things seen also see. For example, when we talk about the sun, we see everything as if we are the sun itself. We emit the light, and so see all beings. This is what I mean when I say that the sun sees us. Although we imagine the sun is vast, it is not something vast in comparison to ourselves. As the reality of life, the sun is just an aspect of ourselves. Because we illuminate the sun with our own light as life-as-all-beings, it is possible for us to see the sun as the sun.

Since I illuminate all beings with the light of my life force, I can see all beings. This is what *shōken* (照見), or "clear seeing," means. Right now

Copyrighted material

I am talking to you, and while I am talking, I am looking at the faces reflected on my retinas. There are some faces that seem to understand what I am saying, and others that look a bit sleepy. I wholeheartedly try to make those faces show understanding if possible. But actually, self is speaking to self. Seeing self speaking to self is clear seeing—shōken.

The five aggregates of forms, sensations, perceptions, predilections, and consciousness make up a well-known Buddhist concept. The Japanese term for "forms," *shiki* (色), refers to material elements, and a different character, also read *shiki* (識), refers to elements of the mind or consciousness. But Buddhism doesn't divide everything into just mind and matter, but into these five categories. The other three categories are between mind and matter. The definition of *rūpa*, the Sanskrit term for "form," is things, which change and obstruct each other. Material things constantly change between the time of arising and passing away, and two things cannot be in one place at the same time. Consciousness (Skt: *vijñāna*; Jpn: *shiki*, 識) is mind itself that recognizes and differentiates between objects.

Matter and mind already include all beings, but in Buddhism, phenomena are categorized into impersonal elements to help us let go of the idea of ego and overcome deluded desires. The other three elements—sensations, perceptions, predilections—are the psychological functioning that arise between matter and mind.

Sensation (Skt: *vedanā*; Jpn: *ju*, 受) refers to receiving stimulation from objects when we encounter them and accepting them into our mind. *Perception* (Skt: *saṃjñā*; Jpn: *sō*, 想) refers to labeling sensations and creating images of the objects. *Predilection* (Skt: *saṃskāra*; Jpn: *gyō*, 行) means "fabrication" and "flowing." For instance, when we see a cup, we not only create an image but also add previous associations from our mind. We may think, "I like the shape of this cup," or "I want to touch it." We entertain those kinds of thoughts. In other words, predilections include all the psychological functions except sensation and perception, and encompass all conditioned beings except materials. To think that the cup has a good shape or that I want to touch it is a kind of psychological

Copyrighted material

As I quoted from the *Zōagon-kyō*, Śākyamuni Buddha taught that we should see that form is impermanent. It seems that for Indian people during the Buddha's time, sexual desire was thought to be the biggest problem. People today in Japan and North America do not consider it to be a problem in the same way; if a novelist describes sexual activities, it isn't usually considered indecent. However, at the time of Buddha, Indian society was much stricter, and talking even a little about sex was considered immoral. Even today, movie audiences in India become excited when they see the hero and heroine merely holding hands with each other at the end of the movie. It was probably this attitude that made it important to teach monks that a beautiful woman becomes an old woman, and when she dies, her body is abandoned in the mountains, eaten by birds or animals, and finally becomes white bones. Because forms are impermanent, monks should detach themselves from them. They shouldn't be greedy for pleasure from forms, and they should never hold on to sexual desires. In the Āgamas, this stage or state of mind was referred to as liberated mind.

However, in the *Zōagon-kyō*, we find the following story. Several decades after Śākyamuni Buddha passed away, the monk Channa visited many elders in the sangha and asked how he could see the Dharma truth. The elders told him that the five aggregates are impermanent and egoless. And yet he still had a question and said to himself, "I have heard more than enough about the teaching that form, sensation, perception, predilection, and consciousness are impermanent. I understand that, but still I am not liberated from attachments to the five aggregates. What prevents me from seeing reality as it is? Isn't there someone who could give me an expression that better hits home?" Someone suggested to him to visit Venerable Ānanda who had been Śākyamuni's attendant for a long time. Since Venerable Ānanda had practiced with Śākyamuni, he must have been very old at the time.

The monk Channa went to the Venerable Ānanda and asked, "Isn't there a teaching of Buddha that would touch me more deeply?"

Copyrighted material

The Venerable Ānanda started to speak. "A long time ago, the Buddha said to one of his ten prominent disciples, whose name was Kātyāyana (Jpn: Kasennen, 迦旃延), 'The Tathāgata teaches the Middle Way, which is free from the extreme views of being [existence] and nonbeing [non-existence]. Why? A person who sees correctly the arising of things as they are does not arouse the view of nonbeing. A person who sees correctly the perishing of things as they are does not arouse the view of being. This is right view.'"

This sūtra shows that the same teaching of reality, the same Buddha-dharma, has been maintained from the very beginning of Buddhism. All beings fade and perish into nonbeing. There is no substance that will not be destroyed. But this does not mean nothing exists. Things are always arising and perishing. Conceptually, this is not easy to grasp. From the temporary collections of causes and conditions, everything arises and perishes the same as a whirlpool in a river or clouds in the wide-open sky. Clouds are collections of drops of water. Although they seem to exist as fixed entities, they gradually disappear.

Human beings constantly fight over power and money. Sawaki Rōshi said such struggles are like a tug of war over clouds. As ordinary human beings, we take for granted that money, social status, and power surely exist as something we can win through competition. But we're just playing tug of war. Everything is a result of temporary collections of causes and conditions. Nothing is substantial, just like clouds. From the beginning of Mahāyāna Buddhism, this reality has been called *emptiness* (Skt: śūnyatā; Jpn: *kū*, 空). We should understand emptiness in this way.

In chapter 35 of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Śāstra*,[28] we read, "Since all things are born of collections of causes and conditions, they lack self-

28. The *Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom* (Jpn: *Daichidoron*, 大智度論; Chi: *Ta-chih-tu-lun*), a commentary on the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, is said to have been written by Nāgārjuna (龍樹, c. 150–c. 250 CE) in the third century and later translated into Chinese in the fourth century by Kumārajīva.

Copyrighted material

nature.[29] Since all have no self-nature, they are ultimately empty." And in chapter 6 of *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Śāstra*, it is written: "All things born of causes and conditions, we declare them to be empty. Also all things are called by expedient names. These two truths—emptiness and expedient names—together are called the Middle Way." This last sentence also appears in Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (*Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way*).

The Middle Way means that since all things neither exist nor do not exist, we see them as they are, in the same way we see whirlpools just as whirlpools, clouds as clouds. We cannot say clouds or whirlpools don't exist, but since they don't have a fixed self-nature, we cannot say they do exist. Although we cannot grasp them as entities with fixed self-nature, we cannot say they don't exist. This is the reality of life. This reality is expressed as "Form is emptiness; emptiness is form." A newborn baby grows quickly and becomes a beautiful woman. And the next moment, she becomes a middle-aged woman. Then age lines her face, her body starts to shrink, and she is old. Finally, she dies. This is truly the reality of our life. Form is emptiness and emptiness is form. Intellectually, we can understand that everything is empty. However, in our actual lives, it is not so easy to arouse the mind of departure and become free of greed for pleasure from objects simply by understanding the theory of emptiness of all beings.

A charming person is still attractive. We still try to grasp forms as fixed entities. A biology teacher taught a class: "Eighty percent of the human body is water. The power that maintains the shape of the human body is the same as the surface tension of water." A student was deeply impressed with this fact. When he left the class, he saw a good-looking woman walking down the street. He admired her and said to himself, "What charming surface tension!" We see things only on their "surface tension" and act accordingly.

29. The Japanese term is *mujishō* (無自性), literally meaning "no self nature," although a further interpretive translation might be "having no independent self."

Copyrighted material

The other day, a young woman visited me and talked about her life. She seemed very kindhearted. She had felt taking care of sick people was her calling and had become a nurse. In the beginning, she completely devoted herself to her work. However, after she got accustomed to her job, she noticed one day that she was thinking about where she wanted to go on her next vacation right in front of a patient who was suffering with pain from cancer. She was shocked to discover this aspect of herself. She thought she could not be qualified to be a nurse because of her egocentricity and lack of compassion toward the person in front of her. So she quit her job.

As I was listening to her story, I thought she was a very gentle and sincere person, but if nurses had to live up to her ideal image, I don't think anyone in the world could qualify as a nurse. The most important practice is to see that thoughts springing up in our minds are merely secretions and then, here and now, wholeheartedly take care of the sick person. Although various thoughts come up in our minds, if we're not caught up in them, we are able to care single-mindedly for someone who is ill—and we can be good nurses.

This is the same in the case of a husband and wife. I don't think there are many men who are never attracted to other beautiful women, even men who are faithful and care deeply about their wives. Reflecting upon myself, I really think this is true. If a man with such a tendency ought not marry, then no man but a saint could marry. We are fickle-minded beings. But an important point is to see that such fickle-mindedness is merely a secretion of our brain and let go of it. Men who see this point care for their wives and put themselves in the place of their wives in their daily lives. If both husband and wife have this attitude, they can be a wonderfully married couple.

Practitioners of Buddhadharma are the same. A community of practitioners traditionally is called a "pure and clean, great ocean of people."[30] Don't defiled thoughts arise at all in their minds? Yes, they do!

30. *Shōjōtaikaishū* (清浄大海衆), the assembly of a practicing sangha. The implication is

Copyrighted material

In fact, because monks live in a quiet setting without moving around so much, they actually have more random thoughts that are difficult to deal with. Even though various thoughts can be as powerful as a typhoon, an important point of practice is to remain unmoved by them. While they may very well have various mental or emotional problems, monks in a monastery just keep practicing quietly. By doing this, they truly understand that thoughts are merely the brain's secretions. This is the reality of practice in a monastery.

It is off the mark to think that delusive thoughts and desires will be eliminated as a result of practice. Mahāyāna Buddhists criticized a certain early Buddhist attitude as being *hīnayāna* ("small vehicle"), partly because monks with that attitude thought they could gradually reduce delusive thoughts and desires and finally attain arhathood when they eliminated them.

Practice is not something like vacuuming a room when it is dusty. As human beings, even if we clean ourselves up, dust and rubbish appear repeatedly according to causes and conditions. We should thoroughly understand that thoughts are merely temporary collections of causes and conditions as secretions from our brains, and we should keep practicing wholeheartedly whatever it is that we have to practice. Dōgen Zenji expressed this in *Gakudō Yōjinshū* (学道用心集), *Points to Watch in Practicing the Way*, as "Practice within delusion and attain realization before enlightenment." We mustn't wait to practice until after we have cleaned up all delusive desires. Rather, we must keep carrying on our practice as a practice in the midst of delusions that are hard to deal with. This is called "buddha practicing within delusion." If we think that we practice in order to gradually reduce delusive thoughts and desires and that after we have finished cleaning up all the rubbish we can be true practitioners, we will become completely confused. Delusive thoughts

---

that, once ordained, all secular names and ethnic and racial identities are finished. Hence, the community is undefiled and pure, free from the three poisons and other shackles.

Copyrighted material

Wisdom Publications
199 Elm Street
Somerville, MA 02144 USA
wisdompubs.org

© 2018 Daitsu Tom Wright
All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photography, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system or technologies now known or later developed, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Dōgen, 1200–1253, author. | Uchiyama, Kōshō, 1912–1998, writer of added commentary. | Wright, Thomas, 1944– translator. | Okumura, Shōhaku, 1948– translator.
Title: Deepest practice, deepest wisdom: three fascicles from *Shōbōgenzō* with commentaries / Kōshō Uchiyama; translated by Daitsū Tom Wright and Shōhaku Okumura.
Description: Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2018. | Includes bibliographical references and index. |
Identifiers: LCCN 2017018055 (print) | LCCN 2017020908 (ebook) | ISBN 9781614293392 (ebook) | ISBN 1614293392 (ebook) | ISBN 9781614293026 (paperback) | ISBN 1614293023 (paperback)
Subjects: LCSH: Sōtōshū—Doctrines—Early works to 1800. | BISAC: RELIGION / Buddhism / Zen (see also PHILOSOPHY / Zen). | RELIGION / Buddhism / Sacred Writings. | PHILOSOPHY / Zen.
Classification: LCC BQ9449.D654 (ebook) | LCC BQ9449.D654 S53213 2018 (print) | DDC 294.3/85—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2017018055

ISBN 978-1-61429-302-6 ebook ISBN 978-1-61429-339-2

22 21 20 19 18 5 4 3 2 1

Copyrighted material