Enlightenment Unfolds

THE ESSENTIAL TEACHINGS OF ZEN MASTER DŌGEN

EDITED BY
KAZUAKI TANAHASHI

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Preface and Acknowledgments

A PROFOUND THINKER and imaginative writer of medieval Japan, the monk Dōgen remains an extraordinary source of inspiration for readers of our time. The dramatic increase of translations and criticisms of his works published in the English language in the last two decades reflects a sudden recognition in the Western world of the greatness of this literary giant. Although Dōgen's work has been studied mainly by Buddhist practitioners, the interest seems to extend further to circles of scholars and artists as well as peace and environmental workers.

We present this selection of Dōgen's writings in chronological order. We hope the texts in this book illustrate Dōgen as a whole person—not only as a seeker, traveler, teacher, and priest who brought Zen from China to Japan, but as a poet, thinker, scholar, administrator, and woodcarver. The text consists of formal and informal talks, essays, monastic rules, journals, poems, and notes, including Dōgen's words as recorded by his disciples. Some were originally written in Chinese, others in Japanese.

This book is intended to be accessible to readers who are not familiar with Zen texts as well as to those who are. We have tried to make our translation as clear and readable as possible, while maintaining the original images and tone. At times we have added some interpretive words to explicate implied meanings behind the lines. Brackets indicate our own explanations. Full texts are presented unless otherwise indicated in the Texts and Translation Credits.

Dōgen's writings are full of technical terms, both Buddhist and

non-Buddhist, and also of paradox and ambiguity. We chose, however, not to give multiple meanings of lines, or sources of quotations and references. Instead of referring to earlier masters with respectful titles, as Dōgen does, we usually use their best-known names (such as Bodhidharma instead of the First Ancestor or Great Master). Likewise, where more than one name of a person is given, we have put the best-known name first. We divided the texts into sections, with ornamental symbols in between, so that shifts in topics are easily seen.

A follow-up to *Moon in a Dewdrop: Writings of Zen Master Dōgen* (North Point Press, 1985), the present translation project of *Enlightenment Unfolds* has been sponsored by the San Francisco Zen Center. My cotranslators are all long-term practitioners of Zen in Dōgen's lineage. Some of them are teachers at the Zen Center and some are celebrated for their own literary work. The cotranslator's name on each text is shown in the section Texts and Translation Credits. We reprinted some pieces from *Moon in a Dewdrop* and credited my collaborators on these works as contributing translators on the frontispiece. We also credited Abbot John Daido Loori of Zen Mountain Monastery, Mt. Tremper, New York, as this book includes an excerpt from the translation he and I did of Dōgen's three hundred *kōans*.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to all my cotranslators. Studying thoroughly and translating Dōgen's texts with special friends has given me unspeakable joy. The earliest translation in this book was done with Robert Aitken Rōshi at the Diamond Sangha in Honolulu in 1965. Some other translations were done after 1977, when Richard Baker Rōshi, the abbot at San Francisco Zen Center at that time, invited me to work there as a scholar in residence, which I did for seven years. The translation work continued after I became a freelancer, and intensified in 1995 when the Zen Center approved the two-year project for creating this book. I appreciate the staff and leaders of the Zen Center community for their continuous friendship and support. My special thanks go to Michael Wenger, former president and current dean of Buddhist Studies of

the Zen Center, for initiating and overseeing the project, and to Barbara Kohn, the current president.

Among my collaborators, Susan Moon has provided invaluable guidance by reading the entire manuscript and offering detailed editorial suggestions. Taigen Daniel Leighton has defined some words in the Glossary of Terms and created the Selected Bibliography. As we listed published books only, those who are interested in academic articles may refer to the bibliography in *Dōgen's Pure Standards for the Zen Community*, which he coauthored with Shōhaku Okumura. I would like to thank Abbot Mel Weitsman of the Berkeley Zen Center for meeting with me almost every week these several years, including the time when he was busy as coabbot of San Francisco Zen Center. Katherine Thanas, the dharma teacher at Santa Cruz and Monterey Bay Zen centers, often drove a long way to meet with me in my garage office in Berkeley. Rebecca Mayeno read aloud a number of translated texts to me while I reviewed the original. Her editorial suggestions are also appreciated. Dr. Gil Fronsdal provided his expert advice on some passages of my introduction. My partners have worked with me so many times for so many hours just for the love of Dōgen.

Those who have participated in translation sessions and helped improve the texts include Victoria Austin, Gaelyn Godwin, Michael Katz, Robert Lytle, and Meiya Wender. Basya Petnick and Robert Lytle have done some typing, and Victoria Austin did some research for us. Andy Ferguson, compiler of "Map of the Zen Ancestors," was kind enough to check the accuracy of the Chinese spellings and dates in the Glossary of Names. Also helpful was the discussion among scores of participants who attended the review meetings which took place in San Francisco, Berkeley, and Green Gulch in the spring of 1997. Linda Hess has responded to my frequent questions about English expressions. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the readers of *Moon in a Dewdrop*, as the enormous appreciation from many of them has allowed us to take on this current project. "The Teachings of Zen Master Dōgen," the audio cassettes of Gary Snyder's reading of the selections from that book, has added a new dimension to the literary heritage of Dōgen.

Michael Katz represented us in concluding a contract with Shambhala Publications. We are very happy that Peter Turner from Shambhala Publications encouraged us to make a proposal and accepted it. His editorial suggestions have helped improve many aspects of this book. I would also like to thank his colleagues David O'Neal, for overseeing the final stage of editing, and Brian Boland for directing the design process of the book. Jisho Warner has contributed to this book with her thorough and expert copyediting. Katharine Thanas, Linda Groteleuschen, and Michael Wenger helped in the process of proofreading.

We owe much gratitude to a number of Japanese scholars who have published accurate texts, detailed annotations, and historical examinations. The books we most frequently consulted are listed in the Selected Bibliography. Among those that are not listed, *Zengaku Daijiten* or *Comprehensive Dictionary of Zen Studies* has always been helpful. I have had the pleasure of working with Dr. Carl Bielefeldt and Dr. Griffith Foulk in the Sōtō Text Translation Project organized by the Sōtō School Headquarters in Tokyo. My conversations with these experts have put me in touch with current scholarship in Dōgen studies.

Jokingly, I sometimes ask my partners, "Are you ready to go back to the thirteenth century?" After being immersed in the dense world of Dōgen, we would reenter the present century, with the sense of having lived a very long time. Now it is time for me to wish the reader a marvelous journey.

Kazuaki Tanahashi

Notes to the Reader

Transliteration. Chinese terms are represented by the pinyin system, which is an official way of transliteration in the People's Republic of China. Sanskrit words are simplified and their diacritical marks are omitted, except for macrons.

Names. The abbots of Zen monasteries are often called by the name of the mountain, monastery, or region where they resided. Monasteries are also sometimes represented by the name of the mountain they were on.

Dates. This book follows the lunar calendar, used traditionally in East Asia. The first to third months correspond to spring, and the other seasons follow in three-month periods. The fifteenth day of the month is the day of the full moon. An extra month was occasionally added to make up a year.

Time. According to the traditional East Asian system, the daytime from sunrise to sunset is divided into six hours. The nighttime has six hours in the same manner. Hence the length of each hour changes daily.

Age. A person is one year old at birth and gains a year on every New Year's Day.

Years. A partial year is counted as a full year.

Introduction

Aspiration for Enlightenment

The founder of an early Zen* monastic community in Japan, Eihei Dōgen wrote extensively for the benefit of his students. Originals and hand-written copies of his writings were scattered in the course of time in temples all over Japan. But thanks to traditional and contemporary scholarship, a critical edition that compares variants in all available versions of Dōgen's texts has been published and is available for study.[1] Now the life of this thirteenth-century monk can be reconstructed with amazing detail, mainly using information from his own work. This book consists of some of the writings that reflect the progression of his life. In the following account I will try to let Dōgen speak as much as possible to describe his own life. When necessary, however, I will use information from the three main early biographies, all of which were written more than a century after Dōgen's death.[2]

We have no accounts by Dōgen himself about his family and personal history before he became a monk. He simply says, "When I was young, I loved studying literature that was not directly connected to Buddhism."[3]

According to the early biographies, Dōgen was born in 1200 CE, near the capital city of Kyōto. He was a member of a noble family and was believed to be an illegitimate son of an influential figure in the imperial court who died when Dōgen was an infant. He lost his mother when he was eight. Possibly referring to this early misfortune, Dōgen himself says, "Realizing the impermanence of life, I began to arouse the way-seeking mind."[4] At thirteen, he visited the

monk Ryōkan who had a hut at the foot of Mt. Hiei, east of Kyōto, and entered the monkhood. In the following year he was formally ordained by Kōen, the head priest of the Tendai School. Probably Kōen was the one who named this novice Buppō Dōgen, meaning Buddha Dharma, Way, Source.

At that time Tendai and Shingon were the two most influential schools of Buddhism in Japan. The Shingon School exclusively practiced esoteric teachings—the secretly transmitted teachings of Tantric Buddhism—with emphasis on prayer rituals dedicated to guardian deities of supernormal appearance. Tendai, the Japanese form of the Chinese Tiantai School, was the most comprehensive school of Buddhism and included both esoteric and exoteric (non-Tantric) practices. Thousands of monks lived in huts and monasteries on Mt. Hiei, the Tendai center, where a wide range of practices and academic studies of Buddhism were conducted.

It was a dark and confusing time for Buddhists. All the high positions of the Tendai establishment were occupied by people from aristocratic families. Temples were competing with one another to gain imperial patronage, offering a variety of magical prayers. Mt. Hiei housed one of the strongest of the various armies of monk soldiers who frequently engaged in battle, often burning other monasteries. The Tendai armed forces were noted for their frequent demonstrations in Kyōto and for forcing their demands upon the imperial government.

According to Buddhist texts, the period of five hundred years after the time of Shākyamuni Buddha is the Age of True Dharma, which is followed by another five hundred years of the Age of Imitation Dharma. Then the Age of Declining Dharma emerges. Many Japanese Buddhists believed that this last period—of no true practice* or enlightenment*—had started in 1052. People attributed calamities such as famines, epidemics, social disorder, and wars to the decline of dharma. The wish for attaining rebirth in the Pure Land prevailed among those who felt that it was hopeless to attain enlightenment in the present world. Monk Hōnen emphasized an exclusive, intense practice of chanting the name of the Buddha of the Pure Land, Amitābha, and found a multitude of dedicated fol-

lowers. Threatened by the popularity of this new spiritual movement, the Tendai community put constant pressure on the imperial government and finally had Hōnen and his noted disciple Shinran expelled from Kyōto in 1207.

Dōgen left Mt. Hiei after receiving basic training as a monk and studying the scriptures. Later he reflects, "After the thought of enlightenment arose, I began to search for dharma, visiting teachers at various places in our country."[5] We don't know whom he visited, except Kōin, who was abbot of the Onjō Monastery, a noted Tendai center of esoteric practices, and a dedicated follower of Hōnen. Dōgen reflects later, "The late Bishop Kōin said, 'The mind of the way is acquired after understanding that one thought embraces all existence in the three thousand realms.' "[6] Dōgen summarizes the first four years of his pursuit: "I had some understanding of the principle of cause and effect; however I was not able to clarify the real source of buddha, dharma, and *sangha*.* I only saw the outer forms—the marks and names."[7]

Dōgen continues, "Later I entered the chamber of Eisai, Zen Master Senkō, and for the first time heard the teaching of the Linji School." Myōan Eisai, who had visited China twice and received dharma transmission* from Xuan Huaichang, was among the first to teach Zen in Japan. But because the Tendai establishment was oppressing new movements of Buddhism, he had to teach conventional practices along with Zen. It was around 1214 when Dōgen visited Eisai at the Kennin Monastery in Kyōto, one of the three monasteries Eisai had founded. Eisai was seventy-four years old and he died the following year.

In 1217 Dōgen became a disciple of Butsuju Myōzen, Eisai's successor as abbot of the Kennin Monastery. We can assume that Dōgen was trained by Myōzen in *kōan** studies, which was the principal method of training in the Linji School. Kōans are exemplary stories of ancient masters pointing to realization, which are investigated by students under the personal guidance of their teacher and which may lead to direct experience of the nondual aspect of all things beyond intellect. In 1221 Dōgen received a certificate of full accomplishment from Myōzen.

Meanwhile, Dōgen was affected by the tragic bloodshed that took the lives of some court nobles related to his family: In 1221, after a long-standing power struggle between the Kyōto palace and the warrior government in Kamakura, Former Emperor Gotoba attempted to regain imperial rule. He ordered the monk-warriors of Mt. Hiei and other monasteries to attack the armies of the Kamakura administration. Quickly defeated in battle, the leading courtiers involved in the rebel plot were executed in Kyōto, and Gotoba and two other former emperors were exiled to remote areas.

Myōzen was respected in Kyōtō and even gave the bodhisattva precepts* to Former Emperor Gotakakura, but he was aware of the need to deepen his studies. As China was the only place where he could study authentic Zen, he wanted to follow Eisai's example of traveling to the Middle Kingdom. A young but outstanding student at the Kennin Monastery, Dōgen was allowed to accompany Myōzen.

Due to difficulties in navigation, trade ships between China and Japan sailed infrequently, sometimes at intervals of several years. As Myōzen's company was getting ready to leave, his first teacher Myōyū became quite ill and asked him to stay. Myōzen gathered his students and asked for their opinions. All of them, including Dōgen, suggested that Myōzen stay. But Myōzen responded, "Although it would go against the wish of my teacher, if I can fulfill my wish to go to China and unfold enlightenment, this may help many people to realize the way."[8] Thus, leaving the care of Myōyū to other students, Myōzen went ahead and obtained a travel permit from the Kamakura government. This permit was endorsed by the imperial office.

Search in China

Myōzen's company, including Dōgen and two other disciples, left Japan from the Port of Hakata on Kyūshū Island in the second month of 1223. Two months later the boat arrived at the main trading port of Qingyuan, Zhejiang Province. Reflecting on this, Dōgen

writes, "After a voyage of many miles during which I entrusted my phantom body to the billowing waves, finally I have arrived."[9]

Dōgen's first encounter with Chinese Zen happened in the following month, while he was still on board waiting for permission to enter a monastery. Myōzen, acknowledged as Eisai's dharma heir, had already left the boat and been admitted to the monastery. An old monk who was the head cook of a nearby monastery came on board to buy dried mushrooms. After some conversation Dōgen said, "Reverend Head Cook,* why don't you concentrate on zazen* practice and on the study of the ancient masters' words, rather than troubling yourself by holding the position of head cook and just working?" The old monk laughed and replied, "Good man from a foreign country, you do not yet understand practice or know the meaning of the words of ancient masters." Dōgen was surprised and ashamed.[10]

China's highest ranking Zen monasteries, known as the Five Mountains, were located in Zhejiang Province, where Dōgen arrived. He entered one of them, the Jingde Monastery on Mt. Tiantong, also known as Mt. Taibo. Soon he noticed monks around him holding up their folded dharma robes, setting them on their heads, and chanting a verse silently with palms together, "How great! The robe of liberation . . ." Seeing this solemn ritual for the first time, he made a vow to himself: "However unsuited I might be, I will become an authentic heir of the buddha-dharma, receive correct transmission of the true dharma, and with compassion show the buddha ancestors' correctly transmitted dharma robes to those in my land."[11]

The abbot of the Jingde Monastery was Wuji Liaopai, a dharma descendant of Dahui Zonggao, the most influential advocate of kōan studies in the Linji School. While studying in Liaopai's community for a year and a half, Dōgen familiarized himself with formal monastic practices. Then he started visiting other monasteries in search of a true master.

In early 1225 Dōgen went to meet Abbot Yuanzi of the Wannian Monastery on Mt. Tiantai, who showed Dōgen his document of dharma heritage and said, "Following a dharma admonition of

buddha ancestors, I have not shown this even to a close disciple or a long-term attendant monk.* But I had a dream five days ago that an old monk gave me a branch of plum blossoms and said, 'If a true man comes who has disembarked from a boat, do not withhold these flowers.' So I have taken this document out for you. Do you wish to inherit dharma from me? I would not withhold it if so."[12] Dōgen had learned the significance of documents of heritage in the Chinese Buddhist tradition, as the proof of the completion in studies and succession of the dharma lineage. They were often kept strictly confidential, but Dōgen had managed to see some and made careful studies of them. Moved by Yuanzi's offer to transmit dharma to him, Dōgen bowed and burned incense, but he did not accept.

The more closely he saw what was happening in monasteries in the heartland of Chinese Zen, the more he was disappointed. He comments in his journal: "Nowadays elders of different monasteries say that only direct experience without discrimination—to hear the unhearable and to see the unseeable—is the way of buddha ancestors. So they hold up a fist or a whisk, or they shout and beat people with sticks. This kind of teaching doesn't do anything to awaken students. Furthermore, these teachers don't allow students to inquire about the essentials of the Buddha's guidance and they discourage practices that aim to bear fruit in a future birth.* Are these teachers really teaching the way of buddha ancestors?" [13]

Dōgen also saw corruption in monastic practices. Even documents of dharma heritage that were supposed to be valued with utmost respect were given to those who were not qualified. Monks tended to try to get credentials from famous masters who had given dharma heritage to retainers of the king. When monks were old, some of them bribed public officials in order to get a temple and hold the abbot's seat.

In 1225 Dōgen heard that Rujing, who had been abbot* of the Qingliang and Jingci monasteries, had just become abbot of the Jingde Monastery on Mt. Tiantong, where Dōgen had first stayed. Rujing was a monk from the Caodong School, in which "just sitting," rather than kōan studies, was emphasized. He was known as

a strict and genuine teacher, not easily admitting monks into his community and often expelling those who did not train seriously. Dōgen returned to Mt. Tiantong. While he participated in the practice of the monastery as one of the many monks, he wrote to Rujing explaining why he had come from Japan and requesting the status of a student who could enter the abbot's room to receive personal guidance. This letter impressed Rujing, who must have heard from officers of the monastery that Dōgen was a remarkable student. Rujing wrote back and granted his request, saying, "Yes, you can come informally to ask questions any time, day or night, from now on. Do not worry about formality; we can be like father and son."[14]

On the first day of the fifth month of 1225, Dōgen entered the abbot's room and met Rujing for the first time. On this occasion Rujing affirmed his recognition of Dōgen and said, "The dharma gate of face-to-face transmission from buddha to buddha, ancestor to ancestor, is realized now."[15]

This exhilarating time for Dōgen was also a time of great loss. Myōzen died from an illness on the twenty-seventh day of the same month. He had been Dōgen's teacher for eight years, as well as a traveling companion and fellow seeker.

Expressing his doubt to Rujing about the current trend of Zen teachers who emphasize "transmission outside scriptures" and discourage students from studying the Buddha's teaching, Dōgen asked for Rujing's comment. Rujing said, "The great road of buddha ancestors is not concerned with inside or outside. . . . We have been followers of the Buddha for a long time. How can we hold views that are outside the way of the Buddha? To teach students the power of the present moment as the only moment is a skillful teaching of buddha ancestors. But this doesn't mean that there is no future result from practice."[16] Thus, Rujing demonstrated that he was an ideal teacher for Dōgen, who was seeking Zen that fully embodied the teaching of the Buddha described in the scriptures.

While receiving rigorous training from Rujing, Dōgen asked him further questions in a respectful but challenging way, showing his sincerity as well as his brilliance. Rujing was confident of himself

as an authentic carrier of the Zen tradition, and Dōgen sought to experience the heart of his teaching. The culmination of his practice came one day in zazen when he heard Rujing speak in the monks' hall.* Reflecting on this experience, Dōgen says, "Upon hearing Rujing's words 'dropping off,' I attained the buddha way."[17] In the fall of 1227, after completing his study and receiving a document of heritage from Rujing, Dōgen ended his four-year visit to China. He went back to Japan to teach people in his own country.

Hope for a Rising Tide

In the tenth month of 1227, soon after returning to the community of the Kennin Monastery in Kyōto, Dōgen recorded that he had brought home Myōzen's relics.[18] In the same year he wrote a short manifesto called "Recommending Zazen to All People," in an elaborate, formal style of Chinese.[19] It was his declaration establishing a new form of Buddhist practice in Japan, based on his understanding of the traditional Zen teaching he had studied in Song China. Dōgen was twenty-eight years old.

In the following year, Monk Jiyuan from Mt. Tiantong traveled to Japan to inform Dōgen of Rujing's death. In 1230, under pressure from the Tendai establishment, Dōgen was forced out of Kyōto. In this year of extraordinary, nationwide famine that filled many cities with the dead, he settled in a small temple in Fukakusa, a village in the vicinity of Kyōto. In this quiet environment, he wrote dharma essays in Japanese. In the following year he summarized his teaching in a fairly extensive discourse called, "On the Endeavor of the Way," later collected in *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*, in which he says, "I came back to Japan with the hope of spreading the teaching and awakening sentient beings*—a heavy burden on my shoulders. However, I put aside the intention of having the teaching prevail everywhere until the occasion of a rising tide. Yet there may be true students who are not concerned with fame and gain and who allow their thought of enlightenment to guide them. They may be confused by incapable teachers and ob-

structed from the correct understanding. . . . Because I feel concerned for them, I would like to present the standards of Zen monasteries that I personally saw and heard in Great Song as well as the profound principle that has been transmitted by my teacher."[20]

In this essay he emphasized that the understanding of buddhadharma is possible for both men and women, noble and lowly, laity and home-leavers.* Disagreeing with the widespread view of the need for an expedient practice in the Age of Declining Dharma, he says, "The genuine teaching of the Mahāyāna does not divide time into the three Ages of True, Imitation, and Declining Dharma. It says that all those who practice will attain the way."[21]

In the spring of 1233 Dōgen established a small practice place called the Kannondōri Kōshō Hōrin-ji (Avalokiteshvara's Guiding Power, Raising Sages, Treasure Forest Monastery) in Fukakusa. In the eighth month of the same year he wrote "Actualizing the Fundamental Point," and gave it to lay student Kōshū Yō.[22] In the following year monk Ejō, a student of the Zen teacher Ekan, joined Dōgen's community. Ejō was two years older than Dōgen.

Dōgen had been selecting ancient Zen stories from various Chinese texts to be the core of his lifetime teaching. This selection became a book of three hundred cases, titled *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye.*[23] Its preface is dated 1235. (Nowadays this text is called *The Chinese-language Version Treasury of the True Dharma Eye* to distinguish it from his major work of the same title.)

In the twelfth month of that year he wrote a fund-raising letter for the construction of the monks' residential training hall of the Kōshō Hōrin Monastery.[24] The construction was completed in the tenth month of the following year. Two months later Ejō was appointed head monk and was asked to give a dharma talk.[25] In 1237 Dōgen wrote "Instructions for the Head Cook."[26] In 1240 he wrote "Mountains and Waters Sutra,"[27] "The Time Being,"[28] "The Power of the Robe,"[29] and "Valley Sounds, Mountain Colors."[30]

In 1241 Monk Ekan, the main teacher of the Japanese Daruma (Bodhidharma) School, joined Dōgen's community. This Zen school had been founded by Nōnin over half a century before. Ekan, a student of Kakuan and a dharma brother of Ejō, brought

along many students, including Gikai, Giin, and Gien. In this year Dōgen gave over fifty formal talks. The next five years were Dōgen's most prolific time of writing. In 1241 he wrote ten fascicles of *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*, including "Document of Heritage,"[31] "Buddha Nature,"[32] and "Miracles."[33] His writings in 1242 included "Going beyond Buddha,"[34] "Continuous Practice,"[35] "Body and Mind Study of the Way,"[36] and "Within a Dream, Expressing the Dream."[37]

In the twelfth month of 1242, he presented the short text "Concerted Activity"[38] at the home of Lord Yoshishige Hatano, a high official in the office of the governor of Kyōto appointed by the Kamakura government. It was probably about this time that Hatano asked Dōgen to establish a full-scale training monastery in Hatano's home province, Echizen.

Community in the Mountains

In the middle of 1243 Dōgen moved to a village deep in the mountains of Shibi County, Echizen, a province on the Japan Sea, northeast of Kyōto. He took Ejō and his other main students with him, leaving the leadership at the Kōshō Monastery to Senne. Dōgen continued his writing spurt with new portions of *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye* delivered as talks to his community at a hut near Yamashi Peak and at the Yoshimine Monastery. Sometimes he talked at both places on the same day.

As plans for building the Daibutsu (Great Awakened One) Monastery progressed, Dōgen's dream of establishing the first full-scale Zen monastery in Japan slowly became a reality. Its construction was started in the seventh month of 1244. The dharma hall was completed in the ninth month, and the monks' hall in the tenth month. Dōgen appointed Gikai head cook. To facilitate full-scale practice at the new monastery, in 1245 he wrote, "Method of the Practice of the Way,"[39] a detailed guideline for monastic life. This was when his writing of philosophical essays started to slow down.

It was customary for the abbot of a monastery to call himself

after the name of the monastery or the mountain where he resided. Thus Dōgen called himself Daibutsu or Great Buddha at that time. But he must have felt that calling himself in this way was rather awkward. This may be one of the reasons why he decided to change the name of the monastery. On the fifteenth day of the sixth month of 1246 Dōgen renamed it Eihei, the Japanese sounds that correspond to the Chinese Yongping, an allusion to the time Buddhism was first brought to China, in the tenth year of the Yongping Era—67 CE. In his formal talk he said, "In the heavens above and on the earth below, this very place is Eihei (Eternal Peace)."[40] He presented over seventy formal talks to his community in that year.

Soon he completed "Guidelines for Officers of the Eihei Monastery."[41] Dōgen's life was more and more focused on training a limited number of monks who would transmit dharma to future generations. In "Home-leaving," a fascicle of *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*, delivered to his community in the ninth month of the same year, he said emphatically, "You should clearly know that the attainment of the way by all buddhas and ancestors is no other than leaving your household and receiving the precepts. The life vein of all buddhas and ancestors is no other than leaving the household and receiving the precepts. . . . The unsurpassable enlightenment is fulfilled upon leaving the household and receiving the precepts. It is not fulfilled until the day of leaving the household."[42]

Meanwhile he occasionally received lay visitors from Kyōto or nearby towns and talked to them about dharma. In 1247 he made a departure from his monastery for an exceptionally long journey eastward to Kamakura at the request of Regent Tokiyori Hōjō, who, as head of the warrior government, was the ruler of the nation. Dōgen was housed at the residence of a lay person, probably his major supporter Yoshishige Hatano, during his six-month stay in Kamakura.

According to the biographies, Dōgen gave the precepts to a number of people including Tokiyori. Tokiyori asked Dōgen to stay longer and to open a monastery in Kamakura, but Dōgen declined. Aside from the ten poems Dōgen gave Tokiyori's wife, practically

no writings of Dōgen remain from this period.[43] It seems that his visit to Kamakura was disappointing because of the lack of opportunity to explore dharma in depth with his students. Returning to the Eihei Monastery in the third month of 1248, he gave a formal talk and said, "I was away over half a year, a lonely moon in a great void."[44]

Toward the Ultimate Simplicity

During the five years between 1248 and 1252, Dōgen gave more than fifty formal talks each year. He wrote further guidelines on monastic activities. Although he did not write any new fascicles of *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*, he presented the fascicle "Face Washing,"[45] first written in 1239, to his community for the third time. By giving detailed instructions on formal ways of cleansing, he emphasized the importance of cleanliness both inside and out.

In 1252 Dōgen revised "Actualizing the Fundamental Point," one of his earliest pieces in *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*.[46] In the fall of 1252 he became sick. In the first month of 1253, Dōgen wrote "Eight Awakenings of Great Beings."[47] This was the last piece in *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye* and consisted largely of a full quotation of Shākyamuni's admonitions from the *Buddha's Final Will Sūtra*. Dōgen wrote this piece in a very simple style with little trace of the brilliance he had demonstrated in his prime. In the same year the monk Nichiren started teaching the intense solo practice of chanting the name of *The Lotus Sūtra*.

In the fourth month of 1253, Dōgen asked the senior student Gikai about the last days of Ekan. The first Zen teacher of Ejō and Gikai, Ekan had joined Dōgen's community twelve years before and had served as head monk of the Eihei Monastery, but he had died in 1251. Gikai said that Ekan had died with great regret as Dōgen had not given him the opportunity of seeing a document of dharma heritage. Dōgen was sorry for Ekan and asked Gikai to dedicate to Ekan whatever merit Gikai acquired when he was given the opportunity to see Dōgen's document of dharma heritage.[48] Al-

though Dōgen himself had seen and received documents of heritage in China, he had made it extremely difficult to receive or even to see such a document. Perhaps he wanted to make sure that only fully mature students would be allowed to examine certificates of teachers' highest approval.

In the seventh month of the same year, 1253, Dōgen became sick again and knew that his current life was coming to an end. He said to Gikai, "Even though there are ten million things that I have not clarified concerning the buddha-dharma, still I have the joy of not having formed mistaken views and having genuinely maintained correct faith in the true dharma."[49] In the same month Dōgen gave Ejō a robe he had sewn, appointing him abbot of the Eihei Monastery.

On the fifth day of the eighth month, acceding to Lord Hatano's repeated request, Dōgen left for Kyōto for medical treatment. He was accompanied by Ejō and other students. He asked Gikai to run the monastery while they were away.

On the fifteenth day of the eighth month, under a harvest moon, he wrote a poem:

> In autumn
> even though I may
> see it again,
> how can I sleep
> with the moon this evening?[50]

On the twentieth day of the eighth month of 1253, Dōgen died in Kyōto at the home of lay student Kakunen.

Circle of the Way

The "way" is a common image in many religious traditions for the process of spiritual pursuit. It often implies that a seeker is bound to toil on a long path, wandering about and overcoming numerous obstacles before arriving at the final destination. There is a huge

distance between the starting point and the goal. In the context of the Mahāyāna or Great Vehicle teaching—a developed form of Buddhism that spread through North and East Asia—this process represents the journey a seeker, or bodhisattva,* takes to become a fully awakened one, a buddha. The time span between the initial practice and the achieved goal—enlightenment—is described in scriptures as "hundreds and thousands of eons."

Dōgen accepts this image of a linear process of seeking. But he also talks about the way as a circle. For him, each moment of practice encompasses enlightenment, and each moment of enlightenment encompasses practice. In other words, practice and enlightenment—process and goal—are inseparable. The circle of practice is complete even at the beginning. This circle of practice-enlightenment is renewed moment after moment.

At the moment you begin taking a step you have arrived, and you keep arriving each moment thereafter. In this view you don't journey toward enlightenment, but you let enlightenment unfold. In Dōgen's words, "You experience immeasurable hundreds of eons in one day."[51] The "circle of the way" is a translation of the Japanese word *dōkan*, literally meaning "way ring." Although this word, which Dōgen coined, appears only four times in his writing, it may be taken to represent the heart of his teaching.

This circle of practice-enlightenment describes not only the journey of one individual, but also the process and goal of the entire collection of practitioners of the way throughout past, present, and future. Dōgen says, "On the great road of buddha ancestors there is always unsurpassable practice, continuous and sustained. It forms the circle of the way and is never cut off. Between aspiration, practice, enlightenment, and nirvāna,* there is not a moment's gap; continuous practice is the circle of the way. This being so, continuous practice is unstained, not forced by you or others. The power of this continuous practice confirms you as well as others. It means your practice affects the entire earth and the entire sky in the ten directions. Although not noticed by others or by yourself, it is so."[52]

Thus the practice of all awakened ones actualizes the practice of each one of us. And the practice of each one of us actualizes the

practice of all awakened ones. The practice of each one of us, however humble and immature it may be, is seen as something powerful and indispensable for the entire community of awakened ones. Our life at each moment may be seen likewise in the context of all life.

Dōgen usually describes "life" as "birth," for Buddhism sees one's life as a continuous occurrence of birth and death moment by moment. He says: "Birth is just like riding in a boat. You raise the sails and row with the pole. Although you row, the boat gives you a ride, and without the boat no one could ride. But you ride in the boat and your riding makes the boat what it is. Investigate such a moment."[53] Dōgen's understanding of the interconnectedness of all things at each moment sheds light on the absolute value of the present moment.

Treasury of the True Dharma Eye

Dōgen calls the path of practice-enlightenment "the buddha way." It is the path of all awakened ones of past, present, and future. He cautions against calling his own community part of the Caodong School, the Zen School, or even the Buddha Mind School. For him this teaching is the universal road of all awakened ones.

The path may be wide and limitless in theory but narrow in practice. Dōgen calls it "the great road of buddha ancestors," the "ancestors" being those who hold the lineage of a certain teaching. In the Zen tradition this lineage is restricted to dharma descendants of Shākyamuni Buddha and Bodhidharma, the First Ancestor in China, and no other teachers are called ancestors.

Following the Zen tradition, Dōgen attributes the authenticity of this lineage to the legend about the great assembly of beings at Vulture Peak where Mahākāshyapa alone smiled when Shākyamuni Buddha held up a flower. The Buddha said, "I have the treasury of the true dharma eye, the wondrous heart of nirvāna. Now I entrust it to you."[54] Dōgen affirms that this treasury has been transmitted from teacher to disciple, face to face, throughout generations.

The heart of this teaching is zazen, or meditation in a sitting

posture, from which all understanding derives. Dōgen offers a highly defined way of doing zazen, as well as guidelines for activities in the monastic community. Details of what and how to eat, and what and how to wear, are all presented as indispensable aspects of the life of the awakened ones.

Dōgen constantly talks about true dharma, genuine teaching, correct lineage, and correct ways. He often uses the word *zheng* in Chinese or *shō* in Japanese many times in one sentence. This is the word that means "genuine," "true," or "correct." Establishing authenticity in understanding and in the daily activities of a monastic community was one of Dōgen's primary concerns as a thinker and teacher.

Wondrous Heart of Nirvāna

Enlightenment in the Buddhist context is represented by the Sanskrit word *bodhi*,* which essentially means "awakening." A buddha, or one who embodies bodhi, is an awakened or enlightened one. In the Zen tradition Shākyamuni, the original teacher of Buddhism, is the main figure called the Buddha.

A buddha can be understood as someone who experiences nirvāna and fully shares the experience with others. "Nirvāna," another Sanskrit word, originally means "putting out fire," which points to a state where there is freedom from burning desire or anxiety, or from the enslavement of passion.

According to a common Asian view that originated in ancient India, one is bound to the everlasting cycle of birth and death in various realms, including those of deities, of humans, of animals, and hell. In Buddhism nirvāna is where the chain of such transmigration is cut off and one is free from suffering. That is why the word *nirvāna* is also used as a euphemism for "death."

Nirvāna is often described in Buddhist scriptures as "the other shore." One crosses the ocean of birth and death toward the shore of total freedom. In Mahāyāna teaching bringing others across the ocean of suffering to the shore of enlightenment is considered to

be as important as or even more important than bringing oneself over. Those who vow to dedicate their lives to this act of "ferrying" others are called bodhisattvas, or beings who are dedicated to bodhi. In some schools of Mahāyāna, Zen in particular, there is a strong emphasis on the immediacy of enlightenment, indicating that the ocean of birth and death is itself nirvāna.

As quoted earlier in this introduction, Dōgen says, "Between aspiration, practice, enlightenment, and nirvāna, there is not a moment's gap." Thus, nirvāna is one of the four elements in a practitioner's spiritual activity. For Dōgen, nirvāna is inseparable from enlightenment, and it is inseparable from one's practice at each moment. In other words, there is no authentic practice that lacks enlightenment or nirvāna.

While Dōgen discusses aspiration, practice, and enlightenment in detail, he does not explain the last element, nirvāna, which seems to be an invisible element in his teaching. It is as though he talks about the experience of nirvāna without using this word.

Nirvāna is regarded as the realm of nonduality, where there is no distinction between large and small, long and short, right and wrong, appearing and disappearing, self and other. It may be called reality itself, or the absolute place beyond time and space. This is a realm that cannot be grasped objectively. The intuitive awareness or transcendental wisdom that goes beyond dualistic, analytical thinking and leads us into this realm is called *prajnā** in Sanskrit.

Dōgen calls this place of inner freedom the buddha realm. It is where one is many, part is whole, a moment is timeless, and mortality is immortality. To experience this beyondness in the midst of the passage of time, change, and decay is a miracle. For Dōgen, this miracle can happen each moment, as each moment of duality is inseparable from a moment of nonduality.

Duality and nonduality, change and no-change, relative and absolute, coexist and interact with each other. Dōgen calls the experience of this dynamic "actualizing the fundamental point." It is an immediate but subtle and mysterious unfolding of nirvāna within a life of change and decay. Dōgen suggests that we can realize this dynamic of "not one, not two" by going into and maintaining the

deep consciousness that is experienced both in zazen and in daily activities conducted in a meditative state of body and mind.

Enlightenment as a Breakthrough Experience

Enlightenment is commonly seen as a spiritual breakthrough experience. Scriptures say that Shākyamuni Buddha, upon seeing the morning star after days of rigorous meditation, suddenly realized that mountains, rivers, grass, and trees had all attained buddhahood. When a monk was sweeping his hermitage yard, a pebble hit a bamboo stalk and made a cracking sound, and he was awakened. As in these examples, a dramatic shift of consciousness occurs after a seeker goes through a period of intense pursuit and has an unexpected transformative experience. The breakthrough may not only be an in-depth understanding of reality, but a physical experience—such as an extraordinary vision, release of tension, and feeling of exuberance.

In the Zen tradition many stories of this sort are studied as exemplary cases of great enlightenment. In the Linji School and its Japanese form, the Rinzai School, such enlightenment stories are used systematically as kōans to help students break through the conventional thinking that is confined by the barrier of dualism.

Dōgen himself often quotes enlightenment stories of earlier masters and comments on them. Kōans were certainly important elements for his teaching. But Dōgen's journal of studies with Rujing does not mention any occasion when Rujing gave him a kōan to work on, nor do any of Dōgen's writings suggest that he himself used this method for guiding his own students. Unlike teachers of the Linji way, Dōgen did not seem to use kōans as tasks for students to work on and pass, one after another. In fact he often used the word *kōan* to mean reality itself, translated here as "fundamental point."

Here lies the paradox of enlightenment. On the one hand, when one practices the way of awakening, there is already enlightenment moment after moment. On the other hand, one has to endeavor

long and hard to achieve a breakthrough. Dōgen says, "There are those who continue realizing beyond realization."[55] Thus, enlightenment unfolds itself, but the unfolding is fully grasped by one's body and mind only when one has a breakthrough. In other words, unfolded enlightenment is initially subconscious awakening, which is spontaneously merged with conscious awakening at the moment of breakthrough.

The kōan studies of the Linji-Rinzai line are an excellent method for working consciously toward breakthrough. By contrast, Dōgen's training method was to keep students from striving toward breakthrough. Although he fully understood the value of breakthroughs and used breakthrough stories of his ancestors for teaching, he himself emphasized "just sitting," with complete nonattachment to the goal of attainment. But isn't freedom from attachment an essential element for achieving breakthroughs?

Cause and Effect Revisited

The experience of nonduality is the basis for the Buddhist teaching of compassion. When one does not abide in the distinction between self and other, between humans and nonhumans, and between sentient beings and insentient beings, there is identification with and love for all beings. Thus, the wisdom of nonduality, prajnā, is inseparable from compassion.

An action that embodies compassion is wholesome and one that does not is unwholesome. Any action, small or large, affects self and other. Cause brings forth effect. Thus, the dualistic perspective of Buddhist ethics—good and bad, right and wrong—is based on nondualism.

Here emerges a fundamental dilemma of Buddhism. If one focuses merely on prajnā, one may say that there is no good and bad, and one may become indifferent and possibly destructive. On the other hand, if one only thinks of cause and effect, one may not be able to understand prajnā. The legendary dialogue of Bodhidharma

with Emperor Wu of southern China is revered in the Zen tradition exactly because it illustrates this dilemma in a dramatic way:

> The Emperor said, "Ever since I ascended the throne, I have built temples, copied sūtras, approved the ordination of more monks than I can count. What is the merit of having done all this?"
>
> Bodhidharma said, "There is no merit."
>
> The Emperor said, "Why is that so?"
>
> Bodhidharma said, "These are minor achievements of humans and *devas*,* which become the causes of desire. They are like shadows of forms and are not real."
>
> The Emperor said, "What is real merit?"
>
> Bodhidharma said, "When pure wisdom is complete, the essence is empty and serene. Such merit cannot be attained through worldly actions."
>
> The Emperor said, "What is the foremost sacred truth?"
>
> Bodhidharma said, "Vast emptiness, nothing sacred."
>
> The Emperor said, "Who is it that faces me?"
>
> Bodhidharma said, "I don't know."
>
> The Emperor did not understand.[56]

Thus the primary concern of the Zen practitioner has been described as the experience of "the pure wisdom" that sees reality as "empty and serene." This experience was regarded as the source of all scriptural teachings. Often Chinese Zen Buddhists talked about the transmission of teachings "outside scriptures." Are living buddhas, or those who are awakened, free from ethics? Are they free from cause and effect?

The Zen answer to this question may be found in the parable of Baizhang and an earlier Zen teacher, who was reborn as a wild fox because of his belief that he was free from cause and effect.[57] This story clearly illustrates that practitioners of the "pure wisdom" of nonduality have no license to abandon ethics. It is not a coincidence that Baizhang, a great master of eighth- and ninth-century China, was credited with establishing guidelines for monastic communities.

Mahāyāna Buddhism calls for the six completions as the essential elements for arriving at nirvāna. They are: giving, ethical conduct, perseverance, enthusiasm, meditation, and prajnā. The first five may be seen as elements for sustaining compassion in prajnā. Thus, keeping and transmitting the precepts are the core of Zen teaching.

Soon after beginning to study with Rujing in China, Dōgen expressed his concern about the widespread tendency to overemphasize the "here and now" and disregard the future effect of practice. Rujing agreed with Dōgen about his concern and said, "To deny that there are future births is nihilism; buddha ancestors do not hold to the nihilistic views of those who are outside the way. If there is no future there is no present. This present birth definitely exists. How could it be that the next birth doesn't also exist?"[58]

Dōgen's own understanding on this issue is clear in his fascicle "Identifying with Cause and Effect" in *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*, where he says, "Thus, the significance of studying cause and realizing effect is clear. This is the way of buddhas and ancestors. . . . Those of you who have pure aspiration for enlightenment and want to study buddha-dharma for the sake of buddha-dharma should clarify causation as past sages did. Those who reject this teaching are outside the way."[59] Thus, Dōgen makes it clear that authentic Zen practice is not divorced from the teachings expressed in scriptures. For him deep trust in and identification with causation should be the foundation for practice of the way.

Bilingual Zen

Dōgen used the Chinese language for writing formal addresses such as recommendations for zazen and formal lectures, as well as for most of the monastic guidelines, poems, and his own study journals. It was natural for him to write in Chinese, as he had received the major part of his Zen training in China, and his formal lectures and poems followed the tradition of Chinese Zen masters. Writing in Chinese was also appropriate for addressing the larger Buddhist

community, as most scholarship in Japan at that time relied on this language, although the texts were read in a special Sino-Japanese way due to the differences in sound and grammar between the two languages.

Dōgen's early informal talks were recorded by Ejō in Japanese, but his later informal talks were recorded by Gikai in Chinese. Dōgen wrote some Japanese traditional-style *waka* poems, written in thirty-one syllables. He used Japanese for writing his lifework, the ninety-five fascicles of *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*, except that he kept quotations from sūtras and Zen texts in Chinese, for he almost exclusively used Chinese books as research materials.

Thousands of ideograms are used in the Chinese writing system. Each ideogram represents a word and embodies a wide range of meaning and connotation derived from the long social and literary tradition of China. Parts of speech are quite flexible in this language; the same word can function as a noun, verb, or adjective. There is no conjugation by cases or inflection by number, and subjects and objects are often implied. Word order often indicates syntax, but there can always be exceptions. Thus, because of its richness of meaning and ambiguity, the Chinese language was instrumental in the development of highly intuitive thinking in the Zen tradition, both for earlier masters and for Dōgen himself.

In the Japanese writing system Chinese ideograms are used particularly for major parts of speech such as nouns, stems of verbs and adjectives. Japanese phonetic letters are added to indicate conjugations as well as conjunctions and connecting words somewhat analogous to prepositions in English. The Japanese language shares with the Chinese language the richness of ideograms and ambiguity of expression. The poetic ambiguity in Japanese writing has to do with its tendency to imply subjects and with its usual absence of plural forms. On the other hand, parts of speech are clearly defined in a Japanese sentence, and all words in a sentence, including those that are implied, have well-defined functions as the subject, object, predicate, or modifier. Thus, writing prose in Japanese is grammatically demanding. Much of the acuteness of Dōgen's writings is the

result of expressing vastly intuitive thoughts through the logical structure of the Japanese language.

Words beyond Words

In Zen teaching awakening is regarded as something beyond intellectual studies, or beyond understanding what has been said in the past. It ought to be a direct experience, which is personal, intuitive, and fresh. The dilemma is that the experience of awakening needs to be approved by an authentic master, and to be transmitted to the next generation without distortion.

Dōgen wrote his essays to convey to students his understanding of what he regarded as most essential and authentic in Buddhist teaching. He focused on the theoretical aspects of the teaching, while constantly reminding students that awakening is beyond thought. In some of his essays and monastic guidelines he gave detailed instructions on the practical aspects of zazen and communal activities, often with philosophical interpretations and poetic expressions. Dōgen regarded all daily activities, such as washing the body, wearing robes, cooking, or engaging in administrative work, as sacred.

It is clear that Dōgen's thinking and understanding deepened as he wrote his essays and read them to his community. He made a careful revision of his texts with the help of his senior student Ejō. Either he or Ejō calligraphed the final version of the texts. The fascicle "Actualizing the Fundamental Point" was revised nineteen years after it was first written.

Extensively quoting stories and poems from the Chinese Zen tradition, Dōgen often comments on each line of these ancient dialogues, and makes a detailed examination of the meaning behind the words. He does not hesitate to criticize great masters like Linji and Yunmen, while revering their teachings in other passages. But he places ultimate value in the accounts of the earliest Chinese masters such as Bodhidharma and the Sixth Ancestor, Huineng, as well as later "ancestors" in his lineage.

Dōgen introduces the full range of traditional Zen rhetoric on the paradox of awakening beyond thought. The rhetoric includes nonverbal expressions such as silence, shouting, beating, and gestures, which have been recorded in words. It also includes repetitious statements, turning around the word order, non sequiturs, tautology, and seemingly mundane talks. The use of absurd images and upside-down language is also common. Sacrilegious and violent words that are intended to crush stereotypical thinking are not uncommon in the Zen heritage. These Zen expressions are called "turning words,"* as they can turn students around from limited views. Dōgen would call it "intimate language," as it bypasses the intellect and directly touches upon the matter of duality and nonduality.

The Zen tradition sometimes loads a word with positive, negative, concrete, and transcendental meanings, thus making its semantics ambiguous or enigmatic. A well-known example of that is Zhaozhou's *wu* (*mu* in Japanese, originally meaning "no" or "not") in response to the question of whether a dog has buddha-nature. Following and extending this tradition, Dōgen uses some words in opposite meanings. By the word "self," he sometimes means a confined ego and sometimes the universal reality that is based on selflessness. "To be hindered" can also mean "to be fully immersed."

Commenting on earlier Zen masters' words, Dōgen develops his own thinking and finds a way to expand the meaning of their words to elaborate his understanding of the ultimate value of each moment. A remarkable example of this may be found in his interpretation of Yaoshan's words, "For the time being, stand on a high mountain." From here Dōgen starts his explication that time is no other than being, and presents the concept of "the time-being," or existence, as time. Another example of expanding the meaning of the original words is his reading of a line of *The Mahā Pari-nirvāna Sūtra*, "All beings have buddha-nature," as "All beings completely are buddha-nature."

In the Chinese Zen tradition there are a number of stories in which a teacher of scriptures gives up lecturing and starts practicing

Zen, or of Zen teachers who make paradoxical comments on passages of scriptures. There are almost no cases in which Zen teachers make extensive efforts to examine the meaning of scriptural phrases. But Dōgen does a thorough investigation of phrases from a number of sūtras, which makes him unique as a Zen teacher. His writings in *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye* provide syntheses of these two traditional aspects: studies of scripture that contain vast systematic expressions of the Buddhist teaching, and Zen, which emphasizes direct experience of the essence of the Buddhist teaching.

Heritage of Dōgen

Dōgen spent most of his later life training a small number of students in a remote countryside monastery. The audience for his writing was quite limited, as he used customary Zen language, which often consisted of colloquial Chinese expressions unfamiliar to most Buddhists in his country. The theme of his writing was a specific practice, centered around "just sitting" in the monastic environment. None of his prose or poetry was published during his lifetime.

He produced a dharma heir, Ejō, a fully dedicated practitioner of the way, and several mature students to whom Ejō gave dharma transmission for Dōgen after his death. Dōgen's dharma descendants eventually formed the Sōtō School—the Japanese form of the Caodong School—which is now the largest Buddhist organization in Japan. The other major school of Japanese Zen is the Rinzai School, which regards Eisai as its founder.

Dōgen is known as one of the reformers of Buddhism in the Kamakura Period (1192–1333). Other prominent reformers during this period include Hōnen, Shinran, and Nichiren. The communities they started are now called respectively the Jōdo (Pure Land) School, the Jōdoshin (True Pure Land) School, and the Nichiren School. The members of the schools formed in the Kamakura Period outnumber by far the members of the organizations that started earlier.

While Dōgen's dharma descendants increased, gaining popular support and building temples all over, most of his writings were quickly forgotten. No one wrote a substantial commentary on his essays between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. Ryōkan, a mendicant monk of the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries, now famous for his calligraphy and poetry, wrote a poem about reading the *Record of Eihei Dōgen:*

> For five hundred years it's been covered with dust,
> just because no one has had an eye for recognizing dharma.
> For whom was all his eloquence expounded?
> Longing for ancient times and grieving for the present, my heart is exhausted.[60]

There was a movement in the Sōtō community after the seventeenth century, however, for restoring the founder's spirit. The movement included extensive studies of his writings, along with the emergence of commentaries on Dōgen's writings by several monk scholars, which resulted in the publication of *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye* by the Eihei Monastery in 1816.

Studies about Dōgen remained in the domain of Sōtō sectarian scholarship until the 1920s, when Japanese scholars of Western philosophy started to realize the importance of Dōgen's thinking. That was when Tetsurō Watsuji's *Shamon Dōgen* (Monk Dōgen) awakened interest in Dōgen's work among intellectuals.

In the 1960s Dōgen began to be recognized as one of the greatest essayists in the history of Japanese literature. His writings were included in various collections of classical literature. Six modern Japanese translations of the entire *Treasury of the True Dharma Eye* have been published, making much of Dōgen's thought available to Japanese readers.

As Zen meditation began to spread to the Western world in the 1950s, translations of some of Dōgen's writings started to appear in Western languages. Over thirty books of Dōgen translations and studies have been published in English, which makes Dōgen by far

the most extensively studied East Asian Buddhist in the Western world. How his influence will extend is yet to be seen.

The Contemporary Meaning of Dōgen

Over seven hundred years after his time, Dōgen's writings are still fresh and captivating for both Buddhists and non-Buddhists. The paradoxes, absurd images, and often impenetrable language in his essays are not merely exotic or intriguing. They point to a part of human consciousness that is often unnoticed. Dōgen's writing reveals a reality that is only experienced through a life-long investigation of nonduality. The freedom—including freedom from thinking itself and language itself—that we see in Dōgen's writing is stunning. It is ironic that his mind was so free while he was following a highly defined practice of meditation and while he was establishing meticulous guidelines for his monastery. It makes us wonder if his form of practice and teaching was part of the foundation of his freedom.

His meditation instructions remain among the most useful for Zen practitioners. Many of the forms he brought from China are still used in Japan, and are taking root in Western Zen groups. Although modern modes of cooking, cleaning, and earning a livelihood are vastly different from those in his time, Dōgen's teaching on attention to details and care about others is still valid.

Those of us who are familiar with contemporary Buddhist scholarship may have a different perspective from Dōgen on the historical development of Buddhism. Based on scientific findings since the nineteenth century, we now know that Mahāyāna sūtras were compiled in India centuries after the time of Shākyamuni Buddha and that many of the teachings may not represent the actual words of the Buddha himself. Also, the story that Mahākāshyapa smiled when he saw the Buddha hold up a flower, and that he received the treasury of the true dharma eye, may have been constructed in China, as there is no mention of it in Indian texts. The succession of Indian ancestors named in the Zen lineage is also seen

by scholars as a Chinese creation. Thus Dōgen's emphasis on the authenticity of the Zen lineage does not convince the scientific mind of modern times.

We now appreciate the teachings and practices of many religious traditions, as we have opportunities to witness and learn from them first hand. From this perspective, Dōgen's criticisms of other schools of Buddhism as mistaken or inferior may appear narrow-minded. Nevertheless, his pure dedication to the path he followed, passionately conveying to his students his understanding about it, is moving. What makes practice authentic is not necessarily historical evidence or comparative arguments, but genuine and sincere intention to practice.

Rich in scientific knowledge and highly advanced technology, humans still face the transience of life, fear of death, and individual and social suffering. We are back to the same question people have been asking from the beginning of human society: how can we become free from suffering? Dōgen's invitation to us to experience nonduality in meditation can be a way to inner freedom—freedom from driving desires, self-centeredness, and the fear of isolation. His teaching on the ultimate value of each moment is increasingly relevant today, as we become more and more aware of the interconnectedness of all things throughout space and time.

Kazuaki Tanahashi

Notes

In the following notes, *SG* = *Shōbōgenzō, The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*, of Eihei Dōgen. *MD* = *Moon in a Dewdrop*, San Francisco: North Point Press, 1985. "The editor" refers to Kazuaki Tanahashi.

1. Ōkubo, Dōshū, ed. *Dōgen Zenji Zenshū* (Entire Work of Zen Master Dōgen), 3 vols. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1970.
2. *Eihei-ji Sanso Gyōgō-ki* (Biographies of the First Three Ancestors of the Eihei Monastery), author unknown, already in existence in the Oei Era (1394–1428). *Shoso* Dōgen Zenji Oshō Gyōroku (Biography of the First Ancestor, Zen Master, Priest Dōgen), author unknown,

published in 1673. *Eihei Kaisan Gyōjō Kenzei-ki* (Kenzei's Biography of the Founder Dōgen of Eihei) by Kenzei (1417–1574).

3. Ejō, *SG Zuimon-ki* (Record of Things I Heard).
4. Ejō, ibid.
5. Dōgen, *SG Bendōwa* (On the Endeavor of the Way), *MD*.
6. *Dōgen*, ibid.
7. Dōgen, *Hōkyō-ki*, (Journal of My Study in China). See p. 3.
8. Ejō, ibid.
9. Dōgen, ibid.
10. Dōgen, Tenzo Kyokun (Instructions for the Tenzo), *MD*.
11. Dōgen, *SG* Kesa Kudoku (Power of the Robe). See p. 77.
12. Dōgen, *SG* Shisho (Document of Heritage), *MD*.
13. Dōgen, *Journal of My Study in China*. See p. 3.
14. Dōgen, ibid.
15. Dōgen, *SG Menju* (Face-to-face Transmission), *MD*.
16. Dōgen, *Journal of My Study in China*. See p. 3.
17. Dōgen, *Eihei Kōroku* (Extensive Record of Eihei, Fascicle Two).
18. Dōgen, *Shari Sōdenki* (Record of Bringing Master Myōzen's Relics). See p. 30.
19. Dōgen, *Fukan Zazen-gi* (Recommending Zazen to All People).
20. Dōgen, On the Endeavor of the Way.
21. Dōgen, ibid.
22. Dōgen, *SG Genjo Kōan* (Actualizing the Fundamental Point).
23. Dōgen, *Shinji SG* (The Chinese-Language Treasure of the True Dharma Eye). See Cases for Study, p. 40, for excerpt.
24. Dōgen, *Kannondōri-in Sōdō Konryū Kanjin-so* (Donation Request for a Monks' Hall at Kannondori Monastery). See p. 47.
25. Ejō, ibid.
26. Dōgen, Instructions for the Tenzo.
27. Dōgen, *SG Sansui-kyō* (Mountains and Waters Sutra).
28. Dōgen, *SG Uji* (The Time-Being). See p. xx.
29. Dōgen, *SG Kesa Kudoku* (The Power of the Robe). See p. 77.
30. Dōgen, *SG Keisei Sanshoku* (Valley Sound, Mountain Color). See p. 59.
31. Dōgen, *SG Shisho* (Document of Heritage), *MD*.
32. Dōgen, *SG Busshō* (Buddha Nature).
33. Dōgen, *SG Jinzū* (Miracles). See p. 104.
34. Dōgen, *SG Bukkōjōji* (Going beyond Buddha), *MD*.

35. Dōgen, *SG Gyōji* (Continuous Practice). See p. 114.
36. Dōgen, *SG Shinjin Gakudō* (Body and Mind Study of the Way), *MD*.
37. Dōgen, *SG Muchū Setsumu* (Within a Dream Expressing the Dream). See p. 165.
38. Dōgen, *SG Zenki* (Undivided Activity). See p. 173.
39. Dōgen, *Bendōhō* (Method of the Practice of the Way).
40. Dōgen, *Extensive Record of Eihei, Fascicle Two.* See p. xx.
41. Dōgen, *Eihei-ji Chiji Shingi* (Guidelines for Officers of the Eihei Monastery). See p. 210.
42. Dōgen, *SG Shukke* (Home-leaving).
43. Dōgen, waka poems for Lady Hōjō. See p. 256 for selected poems.
44. Dōgen, *Extensive Record of Eihei, Fascicle Three.*
45. Dōgen, *SG Semmen* (Face Washing).
46. Dōgen, Actualizing the Fundamental Point. See p. 35.
47. Dōgen, *SG Hachi Dainingaku* (Eight Awakenings of Great Beings). See p. 271.
48. Dōgen, Eihei Shitchū Kikigaki (Final Instructions at the Abbot's Room of the Eihei Monastery).
49. Dōgen, ibid.
50. Translated by Brian Unger and the Editor.
51. Dōgen, *Home-leaving*.
52. Dōgen, Continuous Practice, *Fascicle One.* See p. 114.
53. Dōgen, Undivided Activity. See p. 173.
54. Dōgen, *SG Mitsugo* (Intimate Language). See p. 179.
55. Dōgen, Actualizing the Fundamental Point. See p. 35.
56. Dōgen, Continuous Practice, Fascicle Two. See p. 137.
57. Dōgen, *SG Shinjin Inga* (Identifying with Cause and Effect). See p. 264.
58. Dōgen, *Journal of My Study in China*. See p. 3.
59. Dōgen, Identifying with Cause and Effect. See p. 264.
60. Ryōkan, "Reading the Record of Eihei Dōgen." An excerpt, translated by Taigen Daniel Leighton and the editor.

Texts and Translation Credits

All the texts in this book are translated from materials published in Dōshū Ōkubo's *Dōgen Zenji Zenshū* or *The Entire Work of Zen Master Dōgen.* We have also referred to *Dōgen Zenji Zenshū* or *The Entire Work of Zen Master Dōgen* by Tokugen Sakai, et al. The "Editor" refers to Kazuaki Tanahashi.

Journal of My Study in China (p. 3)

Known in Japan as *Hōkyō-ki*, or *Record of the Baoqing Era*, this is Dōgen's record of study with his teacher Rujing at Mt. Tiantong between the first and third year of the Baoqing Era (1225–1227). As Dōgen's successor Ejō wrote in the colophon, Dōgen did not show this text even to Ejō in his lifetime. Ejō found the draft soon after Dōgen's death and made a fair copy in 1253. It was written in Chinese and first published in 1750. Translated by Norman Fischer and the Editor.

Poems (p. 28)

These poems are written in Chinese and found in *Eihei Kōroku*, or *The Extensive Record of Eihei*, compiled by Dōgen's students after his death. They are among the six poems Dōgen wrote in exchange with the poet Wenben in 1226 during his stay at Mt. Tiantong. Translated by Jane Hirshfield and the Editor.

On a Portrait of Myself (p. 29)

This poem is calligraphed by Dōgen on a portrait of himself, owned by the Hommyō Temple, Kumamoto Prefecture. It is signed "Monk Dōgen of the Kennin Monastery, the third year of the Karoku Era (1227)." The poem is also found in *The Extensive Record of Eihei.* Translated by Tensho David Schneider and the Editor.

Record of Bringing Master Myōzen's Relics (p. 30)

Known in Japan as "Shari Sōden-ki," this text was written in Japanese in 1227 soon after Dōgen returned to Japan, according to the colophon. The photograph of a copy by one of his dharma descendants is owned by the Institute of Archive, Tokyo University. Translated by Gil Fronsdal and the Editor.

Recommending Zazen to All People (p. 32)

Known as "Fukan Zazen-gi" in Japan, this is one of the most revered texts in the Sōtō School, as it summarizes Dōgen's intention of establishing Zen practice in Japan. He wrote it in Chinese in 1227, as the colophon states. His own calligraphed text, dated 1233, still exists. We present the version edited by Dōgen even later, which is included in *The Extensive Record of Eihei.* Translated by Edward Brown and the Editor.

Actualizing the Fundamental Point (p. 35)

Titled "Genjō Kōan" in Japanese, this is probably the best known and most studied text of Dōgen. The word "kōan" usually means an exemplary Zen story given by a teacher to a student for investigation. But Dōgen used the word here to mean truth that is experienced. As the colophon states, Dōgen wrote this text and gave it to Kōshū Yō, a lay student, in 1233. This became the first fascicle of the seventy-five-fascicle version of *Shōbōgenzō*, or *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*, which was compiled later, probably by Dōgen himself. Dōgen revised this fascicle in 1252. ("Fascicle" is a chapter or a part of a book, originally bound in an independent bundle.) Translated by Robert Aitken and the Editor. Revised at San Francisco Zen Center, and later at Berkeley Zen Center.

Cases for Study (p. 40)

We are presenting the first ten of the three hundred enlightenment stories that Dōgen selected from Chinese Zen literature. Dōgen kept the text in Chinese and called it *Shōbōgenzō*, or *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye.* But in order to distinguish this text from his collection of essays of the same title, it is called "Shinji" or "Mana" Shōbōgenzō (Shōbōgenzō written in Chinese), or Shōbōgenzō Sambyaku-soku (Shōbōgenzō Three Hundred Cases). Its preface is dated the first year of the Katei Era (1235). Translated by John Daido Loori and the Editor.

Donation Request for a Monks' Hall at the Kannondōri Monastery. (p. 47)

Dōgen wrote this fund-raising letter in Chinese, as a common form for writing a formal letter. It is dated the first year of the Katei Era (1235). The oldest known version is found in *Eihei Kaisan Gyōjō Kenzei-ki*, or *Kenzei's Biography of the Founder Dōgen of Eihei*, published in 1754. This text is known in Japanese as *Kannondōri-in Sōdō Konryū Kanjin-so.* Translated by Michael Wenger and the Editor.

Formal Talk upon Establishing the Kōshō (p. 49)

A formal talk in the Zen tradition is called *jōdō* in Japanese, which means ascending (the teaching seat) in the hall. The hall may be the dharma hall in a full-scale monastery, but in Dōgen's case at this time it was the monks' hall. This particular piece is Dōgen's first recorded jōdō, dated the fifteenth day, the tenth month, the second year of the Katei Era (1236). The attendant monk Senne recorded in Chinese a series of formal talks Dōgen gave in the Kōshō Hōrin Monastery, and these

became the first fascicle of *The Extensive Record of Eihei.* Translated by Alan Senauke and the Editor.

Informal Talks (p. 50)

Dōgen calls an informal talk *yawa*, which literally means an "evening talk." These are excerpts from *Shōbōgenzō Zuimonki*, or *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye: Record of Things Heard*, written in Japanese. Ejō collected the main materials for this book during the Katei Era (1235–1238), but some of his students completed the book after his death, based on his notes and words. Translated by Michael Wenger and the Editor, in part with Tensho David Schneider.

Valley Sounds, Mountain Colors (p. 59)

The original title of this piece is "Keisei Sanshoku." It is written in Japanese as part of *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye.* Its colophon is dated the fifth day of the practice period in 1240. It is very likely that for Dōgen the practice period meant the summer practice period, which ran from the fifteenth day of the fourth month to the fifteenth day of the seventh month.

As with many other fascicles of *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*, this piece was presented to the assembly in the form of *jishu*, which is a dharma talk. It is likely that Dōgen's jishu consisted mainly of reading his draft to the group of practicing students. Translated by Katherine Thanas and the Editor.

The Time-Being (p. 69)

One of the philosophical pieces by Dōgen, it is called "Uji" and written in Japanese as part of *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye.* As the colophon says, it was written on the first day, the tenth month of 1240. Translated by Dan Welch and the Editor.

The Power of the Robe (p. 77)

Its original title is "Kesa Kudoku." Dōgen wrote this fascicle of *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye* in Japanese in 1240. As the colophon indicates, he presented this to the assembly of the Kōshō Hōrin Monastery on the day he completed "The Time-Being." Translated by Blanche Hartman and the Editor.

Encouraging Words (p. 102)

As formal talks, these two pieces were written in Chinese. They were recorded by Senne in 1241 and were later included in *The Extensive Record of Eihei.* Translated by Alan Senauke and the Editor.

Miracles (p. 104)

A fascicle of *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*, it was written in Japanese in 1241 under the title "Jinzū." Translated by Katherine Thanas and the Editor.

Continuous Practice, Fascicles One (p. 114) *and Two* (p. 137)

Written in Japanese, these texts are called "Gyōji." Exceptionally long as a chapter of *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*, Dōgen divided this collection of biograph-

ies of Indian and Chinese teachers into two fascicles. In Fascicle One, stories of three Indian ancestors are arranged in chronological order, followed by stories of Chinese teachers that seem to be arranged roughly by themes. In Fascicle Two, stories of Chinese teachers from Bodhidharma to Rujing are arranged, not necessarily following chronological order.

Dōgen wrote a colophon to Fascicle Two on the fifth day, the fourth month, the third year of Ninji (1242) at the Kōshō Hōrin Monastery. Ejō made a fair copy of Fascicle One and completed the checking of Fascicle Two on the eighteenth day, the first month of the following year. Translated by Mel Weitsman and the Editor, in part with Tensho David Schneider.

Within a Dream Expressing the Dream (p. 165)

A fascicle of *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*, this piece titled "Muchū Setsumu" was written in Japanese in 1242. "Expressing" in the title may also be translated as "explaining," "expounding," or "disclosing." Translated by Taigen Daniel Leighton and the Editor.

Undivided Activity (p. 173)

"Zenki," a fascicle of *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*, was written in Japanese in 1242. Translated by Edward Brown and the Editor.

Intimate Language (p. 179)

"Mitsugo," a fascicle of *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*, was written in Japanese in 1243, soon after Dōgen had moved to Echizen Province. "Mitsugo" can be translated "sacred words." Translated by Michael Wenger and the Editor.

Insentient Beings Speak Dharma (p. 185)

"Mujō Seppō," a fascicle of *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*, was written in Japanese in 1243. Translated by Alan Senauke and the Editor.

Turning the Dharma Wheel (p. 196)

Written in Japanese under the title "Tembōrin," this is a fascicle of *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye.* It was written in Echizen Province in 1244, several days after construction of the Daibutsu Monastery had started. Translated by Taigen Daniel Leighton and the Editor.

In Honor of Master Rujing (p. 199)

According to the note for this Chinese-style poem, Dōgen wrote it on the seventeenth day, the seventh month of 1244, for the sixteenth memorial day of his teacher Rujing's death. As the official opening of the Daibutsu Monastery was scheduled for the following day, the community could not have a full service. So Dōgen presented this poem, possibly with some talk to the assembly. The text has been transmitted in the Keifuku Temple, Tottori Prefecture. Translated by Jane Hirshfield and the Editor.

On Carving the Buddha Image for the Daibutsu Monastery (p. 200)
This short record was written in Japanese and published in *Kenzei's Biography of the Founder Dōgen of Eihei.* The Daibutsu Monastery was constructed in 1244 and was renamed the Eihei Monastery in 1246. As the buildings of the Eihei Monastery burned down in 1473, the main statue of the monastery that Dōgen carved no longer exists. Translated by Gil Fronsdal and the Editor.

Space (p. 205)
Under the title "Kokū," this piece was written in Japanese in 1245 as part of *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye.* Translated by Alan Senauke and the Editor.

Formal Talk on the First Day of the Practice Period (p. 205)
This jōdō, or formal talk, was given at the Daibutsu Monastery at the beginning of the summer practice period in the fourth month, the third year of the Kangen Era (1245). The text, written in Chinese, is found in Fascicle 2 of *The Extensive Record of Eihei.* Translated by Alan Senauke and the Editor.

Given to Hironaga Hatano (p. 206)
This Chinese-style poem is found in *Teiho Kenzei-ke Zue*, or *The Revised and Illustrated Version of Kenzei's Biography of Dōgen*, published in 1806. Translated by Jane Hirshfield and the Editor.

Formal Talk, upon Naming the Eihei Monastery (p. 209)
This talk was given on the occasion of naming the Eihei Monastery in 1246. It was written in Chinese and was later included in Fascicle 2 of *The Extensive Record of Eihei.* Translated by Alan Senauke and the Editor.

Guidelines for Officers of the Eihei Monastery (p. 210)
The original title for this text is "Nihon-koku Echizen (Echizen Province, Japan) Eihei-ji Chiji Shingi." The text is in Chinese, as are the texts of most of his *shingi*, or monastic guidelines. Dōgen wrote this in 1246. It was included in *Eihei Shingi*, or *Monastic Guidelines of Eihei*, after Dōgen's death and was first published in 1667. Translated by Mel Weitsman and the Editor.

Auspicious Beginning of Spring (p. 254)
This short piece, written in Chinese in 1247, was first published in *Teiho Kenzeiki*, or *The Revised and Illustrated Version of Kenzei's Biography of Dōgen.* This text is known in Japan as "Risshun Daikichi-mon." Translated by Gil Fronsdal and the Editor.

Original Face (p. 256)
This waka poem was given to the wife of the Zen Person of the Saimyō Temple, a Buddhist title for Regent Tokiyori Hōjō, who ruled Japan as head of the warrior government in Kamakura. Dōgen presented it along with eleven other poems to Lady Hōjō in 1247 during his stay in Kamakura. Waka is an ancient Japanese

poetic form consisting of thirty-one syllables. Later it was published as part of *Sanshō Doei-shū*, or *Anthology of Enlightenment Poems by the Ancestor of Sanshō* in 1747. "Sanshō," meaning umbrella-like pine, is another name for the Eihei Monastery. Translated by Brian Unger and the Editor.

Transmission Outside Scripture (p. 257)
Along with the previous poem, this is among the waka poems given to Lady Hōjō. Translated by Jane Hirshfield and the Editor.

Formal Talk upon Returning from Kamakura (p. 258)
This talk, written in Chinese and dated 1248, is found in Fascicle 3 of *The Extensive Record of Eihei.* Translated by Alan Senauke and the Editor.

Omens of the Sixteen Arhats (p. 260)
This text was written in the third year of the Hōji Era (1249) in Chinese. A copy has survived at the Kinryū Temple, Ibaragi Prefecture. Translated by Gil Fronsdal and the Editor.

On a Portrait of Myself (p. 261)
Dōgen wrote this Chinese-style poem on a portrait of himself, on the harvest moon of the fifteenth day, the eighth month of the first year of the Kenchō Era (1249). The painting, called "Dōgen Viewing the Moon," owned by the Hōkyō Temple, Fukui Prefecture, is the most famous among his portraits. The poem is also included in *The Extensive Record of Eihei.* Translated by Tensho David Schneider and the Editor.

Three Auspicious Signs at the Eihei Monastery (p. 262)
A copy of this short writing in Japanese is now owned by the Tōkyō National Museum. Dōgen says these three events took place within eight years of the time he started living in the Daibutsu Monastery in 1244. (In East Asia a portion of the year is counted as a full year.) So it is assumed that this text was written in 1251. Translated by Gil Fronsdal and the Editor.

Identifying with Cause and Effect (p. 264)
Titled "Shinjin Inga," this undated piece was written in Japanese as a fascicle of *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye.* Ejō's colophon says that he made a fair copy of the first draft of this text in the seventh year of the Kenchō Era (1255), one and a half years after Dōgen's death. Ejō indicates that Dōgen did not have an opportunity to make a final edited version of this text. It is presumed, therefore, that Dōgen wrote this text in the last part of his life. The maturity of his thinking on the theme seems to support this conjecture. Translated by Katherine Thanas and the Editor.

Eight Awakenings of Great Beings (p. 271)
Titled "Hachi Dainingaku" in Japanese, this essay was the last piece Dōgen wrote for *The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye.* According to Ejō's colophon, Dōgen

wrote this essay while sick, in the first month of the fifth year of the Kenchō Era (1253), the year of his death. Translated by Tenshin Reb Anderson and the Editor.

Final Instructions (p. 276)

This is an excerpt of Gikai's writing in Chinese, known in Japan as *Eihei Shitchū Kikigaki*, or *Record of Things Heard in the Abbot's Room at the Eihei Monastery.* It is also known as *Goyuigon Kiroku*, or *Record of the Master's Will.* The text includes Dōgen's instructions to Gikai in 1253 and words by Ejō, who was Gikai's next teacher, in 1254–1255. After Dōgen and Ejō, Gikai became the third abbot of the Eihei Monastery in 1267. A version copied in 1326 is owned by the Eihei Monastery, Fukui Prefecture. Translated by Gil Fronsdal and the Editor.

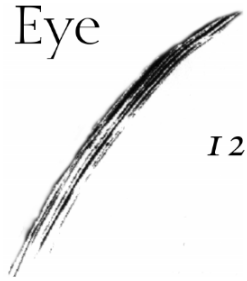
Poem (p. 279)

Dōgen wrote this Chinese-style poem upon leaving the Eihei Monastery for Kyōto on the fifth day, eighth month of 1253. It was published in *Kenzei's Biography of the Founder Dōgen of Eihei.* Translated by Jane Hirshfield and the Editor.

Death Poem (p. 280)

This death poem by Dōgen was written in Chinese style. Included in *Kenzei's Biography of the Founder Dōgen of Eihei.* Translated by Philip Whalen and the Editor.

Emergence of the True Dharma Eye



1223–1235

1226, Zhejiang, China

Journal of My Study in China

I WROTE TO MASTER RUJING shortly before I met him: "When I was young I aroused the aspiration* for enlightenment and visited various monasteries in my country. I had some understanding of the principle of cause and effect; however I was not able to clarify the real source of buddha, dharma, and sangha. I was only seeing the outer forms, the marks and names. Later I entered the chamber of Eisai, Zen Master Senkō, and for the first time heard the teaching of the Linji School. Now I have accompanied Monk Myōzen to the flourishing kingdom of Song China. After a voyage of many miles, during which I entrusted my phantom body to the billowing waves, I have finally arrived and have entered your dharma assembly. This is the fortunate result of my wholesome roots from the past.

"Great Compassionate Teacher, even though I am only a humble person from a remote country, I am asking permission to be a room-entering student, able to come to ask questions freely and informally. Impermanent and swift, birth-and-death is the issue of utmost urgency. Time does not wait for us. Once a moment is gone it will never come back again, and we're bound to be full of regret.

"Great compassionate reverend abbot,* grant me permission to ask you about the way, about the dharma. Please, I bow to you one hundred times with my forehead humbly touching the floor."

Rujing wrote back, "Yes, you can come informally to ask ques-

tions any time, day or night, from now on. Do not worry about formality; we can be like father and son." And he signed it, "Old man at Mt. Taibo."

ON THE SECOND DAY of the seventh month of the first year of the Baoqing Era [1225] I entered the abbot's room and asked, "Nowadays in many places they talk about transmission outside the teaching. They call this 'the essence of Bodhidharma's coming from India.' How do you understand it?"

Rujing said, "The great road of buddha* ancestors is not concerned with inside or outside. The reason they call it transmission outside the teaching is this: although Kashyapa Matanga and others had transmitted the teaching to China previously, in coming here from India Bodhidharma brought the teaching to life and showed the craft of the way. This is why they call it transmission outside the teaching. But there aren't two buddha-dharmas. Before Bodhidharma arrived in China there were practices but no master to enliven them. After Bodhidharma came to China it was as if an aimless people acquired a strong king who brought the land, people, and property of the kingdom into order."

I asked, "Nowadays elders of different monasteries say that only direct experience without discrimination—hearing the unhearable and seeing the unseeable—is the way of buddha ancestors. So they hold up a fist or a whisk, shout, or beat people with sticks. This kind of teaching doesn't do anything to awaken students.

"Furthermore, these teachers don't allow students to inquire about the essentials of the Buddha's* guidance and they discourage practices that aim to bear fruit in a future birth. Are these teachers really teaching the way of buddha ancestors?"

Rujing said, "To deny that there are future births is nihilism; buddha ancestors do not hold to the nihilistic views of those who are outside the way. If there is no rebirth there is no present birth. We know this present birth exists. How could it be that the next birth doesn't also exist?

"We have been followers of the Buddha for a long time. How can we hold views that are outside the way of the Buddha? To teach

students the power of the present moment as the only moment is a skillful teaching of buddha ancestors. But this doesn't mean that there is no future result from practice.

"If you believe there is no future result of practice, then you won't study with teachers and buddhas won't emerge in the world. Just listen to what I'm saying here and realize it for yourself.

"If we do not have trust in future results and so do not practice the way of enlightenment, we would be like the people from the world of Uttarakuru. In that world no one can ever receive the Buddha's guidance and no one is ever awakened."

I asked, "Teachers in the past and present talk about inherent knowledge; they liken it to a fish drinking water and immediately knowing whether it's warm or cold. Awakening is this kind of knowledge, they say, and this is itself enlightenment. I don't understand this. If inherent knowledge is correct awakening, then all sentient beings will automatically become completely enlightened *tathāgatas*,* because all sentient beings already do have this kind of knowledge. Some people say this is how it is, that all sentient beings really are beginningless original tathāgatas. Others say that sentient beings are not necessarily tathāgatas. They say that only those sentient beings who become aware of their inherent wisdom are tathāgatas, and those who are not aware of it are not. Are any of these theories correct buddha-dharma or not?"

Rujing said, "Those who say that sentient beings are already buddhas are really professing a belief in spontaneous enlightenment. This view is not at all in accord with the way. To equate 'I' with buddha is to mistake unattainment for attainment and unenlightenment for enlightenment."

I ASKED, "When we students practice the way, how should we cultivate the mind in the midst of ordinary activity, while walking, sitting, standing, and lying down?"

Rujing said, "When Bodhidharma came from India, the body and mind of buddha-dharma truly entered China. Here are some things to pay attention to when you first undertake dharma study: don't spend a long time sick in bed; don't travel far away; don't read

or chant too much; don't argue too much; don't overwork; don't eat leeks and onions; don't eat meat; don't drink too much milk or honey; don't drink alcohol; don't eat impure food; don't listen to singing or music; don't watch dancing women; don't look at mutilated bodies; don't look at pornography or talk about sex; don't be intimate with kings or ministers; don't eat raw or unripe foods; don't wear filthy clothes; don't visit slaughterhouses; don't drink aged tea or take medicines for mental disease like those they sell at Mt. Tiantai; don't eat fungi; don't pay any attention to matters of fame and fortune; don't eat too much cream; don't be associated with eunuchs or hermaphrodites; don't eat too many dried plums or chestnuts; don't eat too many longans, lichi nuts, or olives; don't have too much sugar or candy; don't wear quilted clothes but wear only plain cotton clothes; don't eat dry food for soldiers; don't pay attention to shouting and loud noises, or watch herds of pigs and sheep; don't stare at big fish, the ocean, bad pictures, hunchbacks, or puppets; instead look at mountains and streams.

"Illuminate the mind with ancient teachings and read sutras that contain complete meanings. Monks who practice zazen should always have clean feet. When the body and mind are confused, chant the beginning of the text called 'the bodhisattva precepts'."

Then I asked, "What text is that?"

Rujing said, "It's what the Japanese monk Ryūzen has been chanting. Don't associate with small-minded people."

I asked, "Who are small-minded people?"

Rujing said, "Those who are full of greed."

RUJING SAID, "Don't keep tigers, elephants, pigs, dogs, cats, or badgers. Nowadays elders in many monasteries keep cats; this is really unacceptable; only stupid people do this. The sixteen nasty habits are prohibited by buddha ancestors. Do not get accustomed to them."

I ASKED RUJING, "Lay people read *The Śūraṃgama Sūtra* and *The Complete Enlightenment Sūtra* and say that these are the ancestral teachings transmitted from India. When I opened up these sūtras

and observed their structure and style, I felt they were not as skillful as other Mahāyāna* sūtras. This seemed strange to me. More than this, the teachings of these sūtras seemed to me to be far less than what we find in Mahāyāna sūtras. They seemed quite similar to the teachings of the six outsider teachers [who lived during the Buddha's time]. How do we determine whether or not these texts are authentic?"

Rujing said, "The authenticity of *The Śūraṃgama Sūtra* has been doubted by some people since ancient times. Some suspect that this sūtra was written by people of a later period, as the early ancestors were definitely not aware of it. But ignorant people in recent times read it and love it. *The Complete Enlightenment Sūtra* is also like this. Its style is similar to *The Śūraṃgama Sūtra*."

I ASKED, "Can the negative results that come from delusion, external conditions, and karma* really be the path of buddha ancestors [as Nāgārjuna's teachings say]?"

Rujing said, "You should always trust teachings by ancestors like Nāgārjuna; their views are never mistaken. As far as the negative effect of karma goes, one should practice wholeheartedly, and it will certainly be turned around."

I asked, "So should we always be aware of cause and effect?"

Rujing answered, "You should never ignore cause and effect. Yongjia said, 'Superficial understanding of emptiness* ignores cause and effect and invites calamity.' Those who ignore cause and effect cut off good roots in buddha-dharma. How can you regard them as descendants of buddha ancestors?"

I ASKED, "Why is it that nowadays elders everywhere keep long hair and long nails? They call themselves monks but look like lay people. Maybe we should call them lay people. Actually, they're nothing but bald-headed idiots! In the past, during the Ages of True Dharma and Imitation Dharma, disciples of buddha ancestors in India and China were never like this. What do you make of it?"

Rujing said, "They are indeed ignoramuses, corpses in the pure ocean of buddha-dharma."

Rujing continued, "Although you're still young, there is already a look of deep accomplishment in your face. It will be good for you to live in a deep mountain or quiet valley so that you can slowly gestate in the womb of the buddha ancestors. Then you will certainly arrive at the place of enlightenment of the ancient sages."

Then I stood up and made a prostration at his feet. Rujing chanted a verse:

Both the bower and the bowed-to
are empty and serene by nature
and the way flows freely between them.
How wondrous!

Then he spoke to me extensively about the practices of buddha ancestors in India and China. I was so moved that I cried until the lapel of my robe became soaked with tears.

I ENTERED THE ABBOT'S ROOM in the Great Light Storehouse Hall and Rujing said, "When you practice with the assembly, you should tie all the belts for your robes and undergarments quite firmly. Whenever you wear your belts like this, you will be able to make strong effort without too much exertion."

RUJING SAID, "One of the most essential practices for the training in the monks' hall is the practice of slow walking. There are many elders here and there nowadays who do not know about this practice. In fact, only a few people know how to do it. To do the slow walking practice you coordinate the steps with the breathing. You walk without looking at the feet, without bending over or looking up. You go so slowly it looks like you're not moving at all. Do not sway when you walk."

Then he walked back and forth several times in the Great Light Storehouse Hall to show me how to do it and said to me, "Nowadays I am the only one who knows this slow walking practice. If you ask elders in different monasteries about it, I'm sure you'll find they don't know it."

* * *

I ASKED, "The nature of all things is either good, bad, or neutral. Which of these is the buddha-dharma?"

Rujing said, "The buddha-dharma goes beyond these three."

I asked, "The wide road of the buddhas and ancestors* cannot be confined to a small space. How can we limit it to something as small as 'the Zen School'?"

Rujing replied, "To call the wide road of the buddhas and ancestors 'the Zen School' is thoughtless talk. 'The Zen School' is a false name used by bald-headed idiots, and all sages from ancient times are aware of this. Haven't you read *Record of Monasteries* by Shaman?"

I said, "I haven't."

Rujing went on: "It would be good for you to study it. What this book says is true. Briefly, the great dharma of the World-honored One* was transmitted to Mahākāshyapa alone and was passed on heir to heir for twenty-eight generations, and then for five generations in China to Huineng, the Sixth Ancestor. Today I, Rujing, hold the center of buddha-dharma. In a billion *sahā** worlds there can be no one comparable.

"Yet it is true that those who lecture on sūtras or treatises and carry on the various schools' teachings are also family members of buddha ancestors. Among them some are more important than others, depending on how close they are in the family."

I asked, "Then those who have become buddha ancestors' family members must still arouse the aspiration for enlightenment and visit true masters. But why would they throw away years of study in another school to join an assembly of buddha ancestors like yours here and practice day and night?"

Rujing said, "In India and China people often had to go beyond what they learned in the course of their advancement. It's this way when someone stops being a councilor and advances to prime minister. Though he's no longer a councilor, he can still teach his successors how to perform as a councilor. It's the same way in studying the way of buddha ancestors. Although someone becomes a prime minister because of his good work as a councilor, once he becomes

a prime minister he no longer acts like a councilor but acts like a prime minister. Yet while he was a councilor he acted like a councilor, not like a prime minister. No matter what the role, all the activity is devoted to governing the nation and comforting the people. The mind of true dedication is one, not two."

I asked further, "None of the statements of elders in different places has been able to illuminate the way of buddha ancestors for me. But now I clearly see it. Buddha ancestors are indeed heirs of the World-honored One, the dharma king of this eon. Buddha ancestors preside over everything in the billion worlds, over all conditions in the dharma realm. There cannot be two kingdoms."

Rujing said, "What you say is right. As far back as India there have never been two legacies of the dharma storehouse. In China from the First Ancestor to the Sixth Ancestor there was no dual transmission of the robe. Therefore the single root of the buddha-dharma of the billion worlds is the way of buddha ancestors."

RUJING SAID, "Studying Zen is dropping off body and mind. Without depending on the burning of incense, bowing, chanting Buddha's names, repentance, or sūtra reading, devote yourself to just sitting."

I asked, "What is dropping off body and mind?"

Rujing said, "Dropping off body and mind is zazen. When you just sit, you are free from the five sense desires* and the five hindrances."*

I asked, "Is this freedom from the five sense desires and the five hindrances the same as what the sūtra schools are talking about? Does it mean we are to be practitioners of both the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna?"*

Rujing said, "Descendants of ancestors should not exclude the teachings of either vehicle. If students ignore the Tathāgata's sacred teachings, how can they become the descendants of buddha ancestors?"

I ASKED, "Recent critics say that the three poisons* are themselves buddha-dharma and the five sense desires are nothing but the an-

cestral way. They say that trying to become free of them is dualistic discrimination, no different from the Hīnayāna way. What do you think about this?"

Rujing said, "If we don't try to free ourselves from the three poisons and the five sense desires, we would be practicing like people outside the way in the lands of King Bimbisāra and his son, King Ajātashatru. If buddha ancestors' descendants become free from even one moment of hindrance or desire, it will be a great benefit. To do this is to encounter buddha ancestors."

I ASKED, "Priest Changsha and Secretary Haoyue discussed the original emptiness of karma. It would seem that if karma is empty, the other two negative effects—those resulting from external conditions and those resulting from delusion—will also be empty. It seems wrong to discuss the emptiness of karma without discussing the other two.

"However when Haoyue asked, 'What is the original emptiness?' Changsha said, 'Karma.' And when Haoyue said, 'What is karma?' Changsha said, 'Original emptiness.' Is what Changsha said here correct or not? If the buddha-dharma is as Changsha stated, how could buddhas emerge in the world and Bodhidharma come from India?"

Rujing said, "What Changsha said is not at all correct. He did not clarify the karma in the three times from now."*

I ASKED, "Teachers in the past and present all say we should study the sūtras that contain complete meaning and not the sūtras that contain incomplete meaning. What are the sūtras that contain complete meaning?"

Rujing said, "Sūtras that contain complete meaning include descriptions of the events in the past lives of the Tathāgata. Sūtras that explain only events in this world and have a limited perspective, not a universal perspective, and sūtras that discuss temporal things but do not discuss timeless things are not sūtras of complete meaning. The sūtras that discuss the rise and fall of eons and the rise and fall of nations from limited and universal perspectives, as well as

sūtras that deal with timeless realms, the world of relatives, businesses, and workers without leaving anything out are called the sūtras of complete meaning."

I asked, "Isn't it also true that just half a phrase can explain the essential meaning? Can't we also call this kind of brief sūtra a sūtra with complete meaning? How can we say that only sūtras that extensively expound the essential meaning should be called sūtras of complete meaning? Furthermore, there are some sūtras that teach eloquently and extensively but fail to clarify the essential meaning; these should not be regarded as sūtras with complete meaning."

Rujing said, "No, what you say is wrong. Whatever was spoken by the Tathāgata always exhausts the essential meaning regardless of the length of the teaching. An extensive sūtra always extensively exhausts the essential meaning. A brief sūtra always briefly exhausts the essential meaning.

"There is no way any of the sūtras are incomplete. Furthermore, sacred silence and sacred expounding are both buddha activities. The light of consciousness is the buddha activity; having a meal is the buddha activity; being born in heaven, coming down from heaven, becoming a monk, practicing asceticism, encountering demons, attaining the way, practicing begging, and entering nirvāna are all buddha activities. Sentient beings who see and hear this all attain benefit.

"Therefore you should be clear that all of these things are sūtras with complete meaning. To expound dharma through buddha activities is called expounding a sūtra of complete meaning. These sūtras are the dharma of buddha ancestors."

I said, "I respectfully accept your instruction as the buddha-dharma and the ancestral path. Now I see that statements I've heard by elders of monasteries here and there in China, as well as statements by dilettantes of dharma in Japan, have no ground to stand on.

"Up to now my understanding of complete meaning was incomplete. Today for the first time I understand clearly with your guidance that sūtras of complete meaning go beyond sūtras of com-

plete meaning. This understanding is rarely met with even in millions and billions of eons."

I ASKED AT MIDNIGHT, "In your dharma talk you said, 'The bower and the bowed-to are empty by nature. The mind-to-mind communication is wondrous and inconceivable; its heart is profound, and it cannot be known. There is no way to reach it superficially. Doubt cannot touch it.' Teachers in the scriptural school also talk about mind-to-mind communication. Is it the same as what is taught in the ancestral path?"

Rujing replied, "You should know very well the ultimate importance of mind-to-mind communication. Without it buddhas would not have appeared, and Bodhidharma would not have come to China. It is a mistake to regard the scriptural teachings as outside of the ancestral path. Regarding the scriptural buddha-dharma as incorrect is like using a round robe and a square bowl. You can't do that, can you? Please don't try to use a round robe and a square bowl. You should know that there is always mind-to-mind communication."

I SAID, "The other day I visited elder Daguang of Mt. Ayuwang and asked some questions. He said the buddha ancestors' way and the scriptural school are like water and fire, that they are as far apart as heaven and earth. He said that to agree with the scriptural school is to be far removed from the teachings of the ancestors. Can this statement by Daguang be true?"

Rujing answered, "It is not only Daguang who makes such mistaken statements. Elders of monasteries here and there are also like this. If they don't understand the teaching of the scriptural schools, how can they enter the ancestors' inner room? They are elders, but they speak nonsense."

I SAID, "The Buddha's teachings were originally compiled in two streams: the Mahāyāna scriptures were compiled by Manjushrī, the Bodhisattva of Perfect Wisdom, and the Hīnayāna scriptures were compiled by Ānanda, the Buddha's disciple.

"This being so, it is hard to see why Mahākāshyapa, another disciple of the Hīnayāna, became the First Ancestor entrusted with the dharma treasury. Why not the Bodhisattva Manjushrī? Manjushrī's perfect wisdom is after all the source of all buddhas including Shākyamuni Buddha, so it would seem that he should be regarded as the First Ancestor entrusted with the dharma treasury. Can it be that the Tathāgata's treasury of the true dharma eye, the wondrous heart of nirvāna, is actually the dharma of the Hīnayāna? What do you think of this?"

Rujing replied, "You are right in saying that Manjushrī's perfect wisdom is the source of all buddhas. So he is the teacher of all the buddhas, not their heir. Had he been a disciple of the Buddha, he would certainly have received the entrustment of dharma. Another point to consider is this: The tradition that Manjushrī compiled the Mahāyāna sūtras is only one of the traditions and is not commonly accepted. Even if he did compile them, it would appear that he did not know the Hīnayāna teachings, for his name doesn't appear there.

"Most accept that Ānanda compiled both the Mahāyāna and the Hīnayāna teachings because he was a person with exceptional listening and remembering abilities. This is why Ānanda assembled the discourses that the Tathāgata gave throughout his lifetime. As for Mahākāshyapa, he was a senior monk while the Buddha was alive and was recognized as the most senior and most skillful of teachers. This is why the dharma treasury was entrusted to him.

"If the dharma treasury had been entrusted to Manjushrī, who was not a disciple of the Buddha and did not study the Hīnayāna teachings, there would have been doubts about the wholeness of the dharma. You should trust the wholeness of the dharma of all buddhas. Do not doubt it."

RUJING SAID as we met informally one evening, "Dōgen, do you know about putting on socks while you are seated in the teaching chair?"

I made a small bow and said, "Will you show me?"

He said, "When you are seated in the teaching chair to give a

talk in the monks' hall during zazen, you should wear ceremonial socks. As you put them on you cover your feet with your right sleeve. This is to avoid being rude to Manjushrī Bodhisattva, the Sacred Monk, whose image is on the altar facing you."

RUJING SAID, "During the time you are in training, practicing zazen intensively, do not eat wild rice. It may give you a fever. Also, do not do zazen in a drafty place."

RUJING SAID, "When you get up from zazen to walk, you should practice the method of slow walking meditation. Do not go more than half a step with each breath."

RUJING SAID, "Zen practitioners of ancient times all wore the simple robe,* but sometimes they wore the combined robe.* Now everyone wears the combined robe all the time; this is a degenerate custom. If you want to follow the ancient style, you should wear a simple robe, even when you visit the palace. Also, at the time of dharma transmission* or when receiving the dharma robe or the bodhisattva precepts, you should wear a simple robe.

"Monks who practice Zen nowadays say that the simple robe is the uniform of the Precepts School monasteries. They are wrong. They do not know the ancient custom."

RUJING SAID, "Since I became abbot of this monastery, I have never worn a decorated robe. Nowadays there are elders in name only who follow the crowds and wear decorated robes; to me this makes them appear that they have no true realization. I never wear robes like that. The World-honored One himself wore only robes made of coarse cloth throughout his lifetime; he never wore beautiful robes.

"On the other hand, it is also incorrect to make a point of wearing robes of inferior material and workmanship. If you make a point of wearing such a robe you'll be like Ajita Keshakambala [who wore robes made of his own hair] and others outside the way.

"Therefore descendants of buddha ancestors should simply

wear whatever plain robes come to hand. It's no good to be extreme one way or the other. Extremism doesn't work. It's like trying to carry a long board by holding it at one end. You can't hold it; it won't balance.

"Those who are concerned that their robes appear impressive are small-minded people. Don't forget that a robe made of excrement-cleaning cloth is an ancient model."

I offered incense to Rujing and asked, "But the World-honored One transmitted a brocade robe to Mahākāshyapa. Can you tell me about this?"

He said, "What a wonderful question! Most people don't ask this question because they don't know enough to ask it. This is where teachers struggle. When I was studying with late teacher Xuedou and asked this question he was very pleased. When the World-honored One first saw Mahākāshyapa coming to take refuge he immediately entrusted the buddha-dharma and brocade robe to him and made him the First Ancestor. Mahākāshyapa received this brocade robe and the dharma, yet he continued to follow ascetic practice day and night for the rest of his life without stint. He never lay down to sleep, and he always treated the *kashāya** with respect and full ceremony. Every day he did zazen, concentrating on the image of the Buddha or the Buddha's *stūpa*.* Mahākāshyapa is an ancient buddha, ancient bodhisattva; whenever they were together the World-honored One always shared his seat with him.

"Of the thirty-two marks of the Buddha, Venerable Mahākāshyapa had thirty marks; he was lacking only a white tuft between his eyebrows and the knobby protuberance at the top of the head. He was very impressive, sitting side by side with the Buddha; it is said that humans and devas enjoyed looking at them together. He had miraculous understanding and a wonderful ability to communicate the entire buddha-dharma, and he received the full entrustment of the Buddha without any lack. Since Mahākāshyapa had these special qualities, the Buddha entrusted him with the brocade robe and the dharma the first time they met."

* * *

I WROTE A LETTER to Rujing, "Dear Abbot Master, in China there are four types of monasteries: Zen monasteries, monasteries of the Doctrinal School, monasteries of the Precepts School, and monasteries without lineage.

"As I understand it, the source experience of the Zen monasteries is that of the true descendants of buddha ancestors who transmit the dharma person to person and practice facing the wall as Bodhidharma did at Mt. Song. This experience is the treasury of the true dharma eye, the wondrous heart of nirvāna. It is indeed the heart of the Tathāgata, the center of buddha-dharma; all others are peripheral. This is incomparable and unarguable.

"In the monasteries of the Doctrinal School, the Tiantai way is practiced. This lineage was established by Zhiyi, Great Master Zhizhe, who was the heir of Nanyue, Meditation Master Huisi. Zhiyi received and refined the practice of the three stoppings* and three insights* of the one mind; he also attained the lotus flower *samādhi** and the revolving *dhāranī.** According to the Tiantai, studying with a teacher and scriptural study are equally important.

"When I was a Tiantai student extensively studying scriptures and commentaries, I found Meditation Master Zhiyi to be most outstanding in his understanding of the sūtras, precepts, and commentaries. His understanding is unprecedented and unmatchable. His teacher, the Great Priest Huisi of Nanyue, had received the dharma from Huiwen of the northern kingdom of Qi. Huisi aroused his mind and touched the fundamental root of meditation.

"Huiwen, his teacher, began by looking around blindly in the sūtras, eventually running into Nāgārjuna's *Treatise on Mādhyamika.* It was from this treatise that Huiwen established the practice of the three insights of one mind. Ever since his time the monasteries of the Doctrinal School have all been based on these teachings of the Tiantai School. But Huiwen's practice is based merely on the words of the *Treatise on Mādhyamika* without understanding the words of Nāgārjuna and without receiving an approval from Nāgārjuna. Furthermore, the rules of these monasteries are not thorough, and their buildings are not complete.

"In the present day, monasteries of the Doctrinal School have

added to their old practice the practice of the sixteen visualizations* that comes from *The Sūtra of Infinite Life*, and the authenticity of this sūtra is not established. Scholars of the past and today are doubtful about it. Tiantai's original practice of three insights of one mind cannot be the same as the sixteen visualizations from India. The latter is merely expedient teaching, while the former is true teaching, and so they are as different as heaven and earth, and they contradict each other like water and fire. I suspect that students in Great Song China have not clearly understood the teachings of the Tiantai and have mistakenly added the sixteen visualizations. It is also clear that the Doctrinal School monasteries have not transmitted the customs and traditions of monasteries from the Buddha's time. They seem to have monastic styles begun not by the Buddha but by Kāshyapa Mātanga and Zhu Falan.

"The monasteries of the Precepts School were originally founded by Nanshan Daoxuan, who, without going to India, studied scriptures brought here to the East. Even if he had heard the teaching of devas in addition to studying scriptures, it is still not as good as directly receiving the teachings of the wise sages. Because these monasteries were founded without direct teaching contact, their building layout and design are doubted by scholars and practitioners.

"In China there are many large and famous Zen monasteries. Some of them house over one thousand practitioners and consist of over one hundred buildings with various towers and shrines, and walkways running in many directions. They look like palaces. The customs and traditions of these monasteries are completely in accord with what buddha ancestors taught face to face, and everything is designed and built according to that direct teaching.

"But the magnificence of the buildings is not the most important thing. More important are such practice forms as morning tea meeting and evening instruction; these forms are directly given by Bodhidharma and cannot be compared with practices created by those who work things out only through the interpretation of texts. Only the Zen ways should be considered correct.

"I suspect that these practices of the ancient buddhas were

maintained even before the World-honored One emerged in this world. Didn't the World-honored One say once to Ānanda, 'You should follow the customs and traditions of the Seven Original Buddhas'? So it seems that the dharma of the Seven Original Buddhas is the dharma of Shākyamuni Buddha, and that Shākyamuni's dharma is also the dharma of the Seven Original Buddhas.

"From Shākyamuni Buddha through twenty-eight transmissions, this dharma reached Bodhidharma who came to China and correctly transmitted it to save deluded minds. After five transmissions this same dharma reached Huineng, and through him his two excellent students Qingyuan and Nanyue. Their descendants in turn became excellent teachers in their own right and spread this teaching of Shākyamuni.

"This is why we should consider the monasteries where these monks and their descendants abide as the true places of the buddha-dharma. These monasteries cannot be compared with monasteries of the Doctrinal School or the Precepts School any more than a country without a king can be compared to a country that has a rightful king.

"Please guide me on these points. Burning incense and making a hundred bows, I am your disciple, Dōgen."

Rujing said in reply, "Your letter is quite right and well presented. In ancient times monasteries did not carry names like the Doctrinal School, the Precepts School, or the Zen School. The use of such names is simply a bad habit of this declining age. Kings' officials who really do not know buddha-dharma mistakenly classify monks as monks of the Doctrinal School, the Precepts School, or the Zen School. Imperial tablets use these designations and their usage has spread so that now we hear of five types of monks: Precepts School monks, who are descendants of Nanshan; Doctrinal School monks, who are descendants from the Tiantai; monks of the Yoga School, who are descendants of Amoghavajra; monks of monasteries without lineages, who are not clear about who their ancestors are; and the Zen monks, who are all descended from Bodhidharma. It is truly pitiful that we have such a confusion of names and groups in this remote country, China, in this declining age.

"It is true that there were five schools* in India but these were only various styles of one buddha-dharma. In China the division into five schools is not like this. If there were a wise king in this country, such confusion would not exist. In the end, what is clear is that the design, customs, and traditions of the Zen monasteries are all direct teachings of the ancestors through direct transmission by the true heirs of the Buddha. The authentic way of the Seven Original Buddhas is only found in the Zen monasteries, although the term 'Zen' is really a mistaken name.

"Our customs and traditions are the ones transmitted by buddha ancestors, and our monasteries are central to the stream of the dharma. Precepts School and Doctrinal School monasteries are only tributaries. Buddha ancestors are the dharma kings; and when the king is installed, he is the king of the world and all people are subject to him."

Rujing said, "Descendants of buddha ancestors should first be free from the five hindrances* and then become free from the sixth hindrance. The sixth hindrance is the lack of understanding.

"When you are free from the hindrance of the lack of understanding you immediately become free of the five hindrances. But if you are not free from the hindrance of the lack of understanding, even though you are free from the five hindrances, you do not arrive at the practice-realization of buddha ancestors."

I bowed with gratitude, respectfully folding my hands across my chest, and said, "I have never heard of this teaching before. A lot of senior monks and brother monks don't seem to know or talk about it. It must be that I have good roots from the past that have enabled me today to hear for the first time this compassionate teaching. Master, please tell me further: What is the secret of being free from all these five hindrances and six hindrances*?"

Rujing smiled and replied, "Haven't you been practicing all along? What you have already been doing is exactly the way to be free from the six hindrances. Buddhas and ancestors do not wait for people to pass through various stages. They directly and personally

transmit the way to be free from the six hindrances so that we are no longer controlled by the five sense desires.

"The practice of just sitting and dropping off body and mind *is* the way to become free from the five hindrances and the five sense desires. There's no other way and there's no point in talking about any other way."

I ASKED, "You have not worn the ceremonial dharma robe since you became abbot of this monastery. Why is this?"

Rujing said, "In fact I have not worn such a robe as an abbot. I forbear this for the sake of humility. The Buddha and his disciples should wear robes made of discarded cloth and use bowls made of humble materials."

I said, "Elders in different monasteries often do wear ceremonial dharma robes; this may show a lack of humility and perhaps it is a sign of petty greed. But how do you feel about Old Buddha Hongzhi? He wore a ceremonial dharma robe but no one would deny that he was a very humble person."

Rujing said, "Yes, Old Buddha Hongzhi wore a ceremonial dharma robe, but in his case it was out of respect, and it was an act of sincerity in the practice of the way. In your country, Japan, wearing a ceremonial dharma robe is not a problem. But here in China there's a tendency for elders to be greedy and ostentatious in the robes they wear. I do not wear a ceremonial dharma robe here because I do not want to participate in this way of doing things."

RUJING ONCE SAID, "The zazen of *arhats** and *pratyeka-buddhas** is free from attachment, but it lacks all-embracing compassion. This is very different from the zazen of buddha ancestors, where all-embracing compassion and the vow to awaken all sentient beings is the highest priority.

"People outside the way in India also practiced zazen, but this zazen still has the three problems of attachment, wrong views, and pride, and so it is permanently and utterly different from the zazen of buddha ancestors. *Shrāvakas** also practice zazen, but their compassion is limited. They do not penetrate the reality of all things

with wisdom; instead they merely improve themselves and thus remove themselves from the creative seed of the buddhas. So their zazen, too, is permanently and utterly different from that of buddha ancestors.

"The very essence of buddha ancestors' zazen is the vow to accumulate all buddha qualities from the moment of arousing the aspiration for enlightenment into the endless future. Buddha ancestors never forget or abandon sentient beings, but have compassion for all creatures, even insects, and make a constant effort to rescue them all, and they turn over whatever merit is produced by all this to sentient beings. Because of this vow, buddha ancestors always practice zazen in the desire realm, in our everyday world of Jambudvīpa, which has great opportunities for influencing cause and effect. Buddha ancestors practice this way life after life, world after world, and attain great flexibility of mind and heart."

I bowed and said, "How do we attain this flexibility of mind and heart?"

Rujing said, "To actualize buddha ancestors' dropping off body and mind is the essence of this flexibility. That is why dropping off body and mind is called the mind seal* of buddha ancestors."

I bowed.

RUJING SAID, "In the dharma hall* there are lion images placed to the east and west of the steps that lead up to the dharma seat. Both of them face the steps, but are slightly angled to face south, toward the audience. These lions, from tail to mane, should be pure white. In recent times workers have produced lions that are white, but with blue manes. This variation isn't based on tradition; in fact, the lions should be all white, from mane to tail.

"Above the dharma seat there should be an eight-cornered lotus canopy, which shelters the seat, just as the lotus flower covers the earth. There should be a mirror in each of its eight facets, and a streamer with a bell affixed to it hanging down from each corner. There should be five layers of lotus petals, with a bell hung from each petal. The canopy should be exactly like the one above the dharma seat of this monastery."

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I ASKED, "I heard your verse on the windbell. The first line says, 'The entire body is a mouth hanging in emptiness.' And the third line says, 'Joining the whole universe in chiming out prajnā.'[1] What is this emptiness? Is it just the lack of form? People who doubt the way say this. And nowadays even students of the way do not understand buddha-dharma; they regard the spaciousness of the blue sky as emptiness. This is regrettable."

Rujing said, "Emptiness is no other than prajnā. It's not the lack of form. Emptiness is neither having nor not having hindrances; therefore it is not emptiness in the sense of simple lack. It is not one-sided reality. Elders in different places have not yet clarified even form; how can they clarify this emptiness? I'm afraid that here in Great Song China the decline of buddha-dharma is beyond description."

I said, "Your verse on the windbell is supreme. Even if they had numberless eons, other elders would never be able to compose a verse like this. Brother monks should venerate it. Although I have come from a remote land and am not well versed in dharma, I have read collections of Zen masters' teachings, like *Transmission of the Lamp*, *Wide Lamp*, *Successive Lamp*, and *Universal Lamp*, as well as the recorded sayings of various masters, and I have not yet seen anything like your windbell verse. It is my good fortune to have seen it. I wet my robe with tears of joy and bow day and night in appreciation of its straightforwardness and its beautiful rhythm."

Rujing was about to ride off in a sedan chair; he smiled and said, "Your words are deep and your spirit is outstanding. I composed this verse when I was at Qingliang Monastery. At the time many people praised it, but none of them spoke as you have done. I acknowledge that you have a sharp dharma eye. When you compose a verse, you should do it in the same manner."

RUJING SAID to me at night, "If sentient beings, transmigrating through birth and death, arouse the aspiration for enlightenment

1. "Windbell" by Rujing: The real body is a mouth hanging in emptiness. / Whether the wind blows from the east, west, south, or north, / it joins the whole universe in chiming out prajnā. / Ting-ting, ting-ting, ting-ting.

and seek buddhahood, they are immediately children of buddha ancestors. Yet it's also true that all other sentient beings are children of buddha ancestors as well. Understand this family lineage, but don't speculate about its origins."

RUJING INSTRUCTED ME: "When you do zazen, place your tongue on the roof of the mouth and allow it to press behind the front teeth. If after forty or fifty years of zazen practice you are accustomed to sitting without drooping or becoming drowsy, it is all right to close your eyes during zazen. Those who are not so accustomed to zazen should sit with the eyes open. If you sit long and are tired, it is all right to shift the position of your legs. This has been directly transmitted by the Buddha for fifty generations."

I ASKED, "Those in Japan and China who doubt say that the zazen widely practiced in Zen monasteries is the dharma of the Hīnayāna. How do we respond to this?"

Rujing said, "Such critics in China and Japan have not yet clarified buddha-dharma. Dōgen, you should know that the true dharma of the Tathāgata goes beyond the external appearance of so-called Great or Small Vehicles. The compassion of the ancient buddhas falls as naturally as weeds cut by the mower and produces many skillful means which we call Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna.

"You should know that Mahāyāna is seven pieces of vegetable rice cake; Hīnayāna is three pieces of sesame rice cake. Furthermore, buddha ancestors have never deceived children by pretending to have treasures in their closed fists. They open their hands and give golden leaves or pieces of gold according to the situation. They give predictions of enlightenment when called for, and skillful guidance when called for. None of their activities is ineffective, and nothing they have given is not useful."

RUJING SAID, "I see that you do zazen in your place in the monks' hall without sleep day and night. This is wonderful. You'll soon experience the exquisite fragrance that is beyond compare in this world. This is an auspicious sign. Visions of drops of oil falling on

the ground in front of you are also an auspicious sign, as are powerful and unusual bodily sensations. When you experience these things you should immediately increase your intensity of practice as if you were putting out a fire on your head."

RUJING SAID, "The World-honored One said that hearing and thinking about the way is like being outside the gate, but zazen is like coming home and sitting calmly inside. Therefore the merit of doing zazen even for one moment is immeasurable.

"I have been practicing the way for over thirty years without ever turning back, and although I am sixty-five years old I am more determined than ever. You too should practice with this intensity, as if you had received the prediction of enlightenment from the golden mouth of the Buddha himself."

RUJING SAID, "During zazen do not lean on the wall, screen, or the back of a chair. If you do, it will cause you to become ill. You should sit with a straight back, following the guidelines for zazen, never violating them."

Rujing said, "If you get up from zazen and do walking meditation, do not walk in a circle, but go in a straight line. If after twenty or thirty steps you want to turn around, always turn to the right. Always begin your steps with the right foot, then the left foot."

RUJING SAID, "The ruins of the place where the Tathāgata got up from zazen and did walking meditation still exist in Udyāna Kingdom in India. Also, Layman Vimalakīrti's house still exists today, and the foundation stones of Jeta Grove Monastery have not been buried. When people go to examine these sacred places, the results of their measurements always differ: some measure long, others measure short, some find the stones close together, and others find them farther apart. Their findings don't correspond to each other. This is the vitality of buddha ancestors.

"You should also know that the bowl and robe, as well as the fist and nostrils of the ancestors, which have been transmitted to us in China, cannot be definitively measured."

I stood up and bowed with my head down to the floor, shedding tears of joy.

RUJING SAID, "In zazen it is possible to develop samādhi by placing the mind in various locations. However, I would say, during zazen set your mind on the palm of your left hand. This is the way correctly transmitted by buddha ancestors."

RUJING SAID, "Although Kao at Yaoshan, being just a novice, did not receive monk's precepts, you should not imagine that he did not receive buddha ancestors' correctly transmitted precepts. He wore the buddha robe and used the buddha bowl; he was a true bodhisattva.

"When monks are seated in assembly, their seniority should follow the order of receiving the bodhisattva precepts, not that of receiving the novice or monk's precepts. This tradition of bodhisattva precept transmission is the correct one. Dōgen, I am very pleased with your deep aspiration for seeking dharma. Truly you are the fully entrusted vessel for the transmission of the Caodong School."

I ASKED, "The experience of the ancient and present buddha ancestors is an excellent guidepost for our own practice. In the beginning, when we first arouse our mind to understand dharma, it appears that there is a buddha way, but later when we become established in our understanding, it appears that there is no buddha way. On the other hand, when we begin to practice, it appears that we have not yet attained enlightenment. And when we really enter the dharma, it appears that there is a spirit of enlightenment that goes even beyond the ancients. My question is: where is real enlightenment? At the beginning or later on?"

Rujing replied, "Bodhisattvas and shrāvakas asked this same question of the World-honored One when he was alive. In India and China there has been correctly transmitted teaching about this.

"On the one hand it is taught that the dharma does not increase or decrease. If so, how can there be such a thing as attaining en-

lightenment? This teaching implies that only buddhas have enlightenment; bodhisattvas can never attain it, and this raises a serious question and a serious doubt for practitioners.

"It is also taught that enlightenment is the same in the beginner's mind and the experienced practitioner's mind. But how can this be possible? If this is so, then immediately upon first arousing the bodhisattva aspiration for enlightenment, you would already be a buddha. On the other hand, if there is no enlightened beginner's mind, how can we make steps toward the enlightened fulfillment of dharma? So the enlightened fulfillment of dharma must be the fruition of the beginner's enlightened experience. And the beginner's enlightened experience must be the seed of the fulfillment.

"Let me explain this more clearly with an analogy. It is like a candle with its illuminating flame. When the candle is lit there is a flame. As the candle burns there is still the same flame. So there's no difference between the beginning time and the later time of the candle burning. The candle burns straight down and it never burns backward. The flame is neither new nor old. It is neither the possession of the candle nor does it exist apart from the candle. The flame is like the light of the beginner's mind. The candle, when it is flameless, is like the lack of vision of one who has not begun the way.

"The wisdom flame of the beginner's mind is complete at the outset. The all-inclusive samādhi of buddha ancestors is the completion of that same wisdom over time, burning down the confusion of ignorance till the candle is no more. Can you see how this practice has no beginning and no end, how now and later are not really different? This is the essential teaching correctly transmitted by buddha ancestors."

On the tenth day, twelfth month, fifth year of the Kenchō Era [1253], this was copied in the abbot's room, in the Eihei Monastery in Echizen. This text was found among the late teacher's posthumous documents. It was in the form of a draft, and may not be complete. I shed many tears in my regret that the work was never completed. Ejō

1226, Zhejiang, China

Poems

Break open a single particle and all the sūtras grow clear:
the great merit-wheel of the dharma turns as a whole.
The womb of a donkey gives birth to the noble horse.
Each time you look, you'll see it new.

The name "Three Teachings"* was empty right from the
start—
miss even one word and all go wrong.
Looking inward or outward, see there is no fixed self.
Break the front door, if you want to enter your home.

1227, Kyōto

On a Portrait of Myself

Cold lake, for thousands of yards, soaks up sky color.
Evening quiet: a fish of brocade scales reaches bottom, then
goes
first this way, then that way; arrow notch splits.
Endless water surface, moonlight brilliant.