

Each and every moment, all of the myriad things, and everything coming and going in our minds are co-arising with our life. Other than time and things coming and going within and without us, there is nothing we can call the life of “the self.”

¹ *How to Cook Yourlife: From Zen Kitchen to Enlightenment* (Dogen and Uchiyama, Weatherhill, New York, 1983), p. 39.

² Ibid.,

³ Ibid.,

⁴ Quotes from Yuibutsuyobutsu are from Okumura’s unpublished translation. Another translation can be found in Gudo Nishijima’s *Master Dogen’s Shobogenzo Book 4*, (Windbell Publications, London, 1999) p.217

⁵ This is Okumura’s translation from *Realizing Genjokoan* (Wisdom Publications, Boston, 2010) p.3

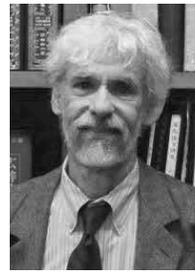
⁶ This translation is by Carl Bielfeldt from http://scbs.stanford.edu/sztp3/translations/shobogenzo/sbgz_contents.html.

⁷ Translation by Beata Grant in *Mount Lu Revisited: Buddhism in the Life and Writings of Su Shih* (University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1994) p.127

⁸ *Mountains and Rivers Without End* (Gary Snyder, Counterpoint, Washington, D.C., 1996)

⁹ *Dogen’s Genjokoan: Three Commentaries* (Counterpoint, Berkeley, 2011).

Treasury of the True Dharma Eye Book 10



Great Awakening *Daigo*

Translated by
Carl Bielefeldt

INTRODUCTION

This relatively short essay represents book 10 of the traditional 60- and 75-fascicle redactions of the *Shōbōgenzō*; it occurs as book 26 in the modern vulgate edition. It was composed in the early spring of 1242, when its author was living at Kōshōji, just south of the capital of Heian-kyō (present-day Kyoto). The months surrounding its composition were a very productive period for Dōgen, during which he wrote some of his most important works.

The title, *daigo*, is a word found throughout Buddhist literature for deep insight into, or profound understanding of, the Buddhist teachings. Often the word is associated with a transformative spiritual experience that overcomes delusion and reveals a truth; thus, many Zen stories end with the student experiencing a “great awakening” to the point of the master’s teaching. But, as is so often the case, Dōgen has his own sense of the word — a sense in which, as he says in his opening lines, great awakening “springs beyond the buddhas and ancestors.”

For Dōgen here, “great awakening” is not merely a state of knowledge that overcomes delusion, let alone a momentary leap of insight; it seems rather to be a basic condition, or funda-

mental way of being, that is shared, not only by buddhas and deluded beings, but by all things — by “earth, water, fire, wind, and space,” by “columns and lanterns,” by the “Snowy Mountains,” by “the trees and rocks.” Such great awakening, he says, “is without origin”; it “fills the ditches and clogs the gullies” of our world.

This translation is based on the edition of the text in Kawamura Kōdō, ed., *Dōgen zenji zenshū*, vol. 1 (1991), pp. 92-99. A fully annotated version will appear in the forthcoming Soto Zen Text Project's translation of the *Shōbōgenzō*. Other English renderings of this essay can be found in Kōsen Nishiyama and John Stevens, *Shōbōgenzō*, volume 1 (1975), pp. 34-39; Yuho Yokoi, *The Shobo-genzo* (1986), pp. 121-128; Thomas Cook, *Sounds of Valley Streams* (1989), pp. 117-123; Thomas Cleary, *Rational Zen: The Mind of Dōgen Zenji* (1992), pp. 108-115; Gudo Nishijima and Chodo Cross, *Master Dogen's Shobogenzo*, Book 2 (1996), pp. 83-90; Hubert Nearman, *The Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching* (2007), pp. 327-334; and Kazuaki Tanahashi, *Treasury of the True Dharma Eye: Zen Master Dogen's Shobo Genzo*, vol. 1 (2010), pp. 296-302.

TRANSLATION

The great way of the buddhas is handed down meticulously; the meritorious deeds of the ancestors are manifested openly. Therefore, realizing great awakening, arriving at the way without awakening, observing awakening and playing with awakening, losing awakening and letting it go — these are everyday matters of the buddhas and ancestors. They have [as Zhaozhou

would say] the “making use of the twelve times” that they take up; they have the “being used by the twelve times” that they throw away. And, going further, they also have [what the Zen masters call] “playing with the mud ball,” they have “playing with the spirit,” which spring off from this pivot. From great awakening, the buddhas and ancestors always perfect the study that appears in this way; however, it is not the case that the full awakening of the great awakening represents the buddhas and ancestors; nor is it the case that the full buddhas and ancestors of the buddhas and ancestors represent the full great awakening: the buddhas and ancestors spring off from the boundaries of great awakening; great awakening is a face that springs beyond the buddhas and ancestors.

Still, human faculties are of many types. There are [what Confucius calls] “those who know at birth.” These, being born, are liberated from birth; that is, theirs is the physical investigation of the beginning, middle, and end of birth. There are [what Confucius calls] “those who know from study.” These study and exhaustively investigate themselves; that is, they physically investigate “the skin, flesh, bones, and marrow” of study. There are those with buddha knowledge. This is not knowledge at birth or knowledge from learning. Transcending the boundaries of self and other, it is here without reason; it is unconcerned with the knowledge of self and other. There are those who know without a teacher. Without relying on a good friend, without relying on the rolls of scripture, without relying on the nature, without relying on the characteristics, though they do not turn themselves about or interact with the other, they are exposed and imposing. It is not that, of these several sorts,

one is recognized as sharp and another is recognized as dull: the many sorts all manifest many sorts of meritorious deeds.

Therefore, we should study which sentient or insentient being is not one of “those who know at birth.” If they have knowledge at birth, they have awakening at birth; they have verification at birth; they have practice at birth. Therefore, since the buddhas and ancestors are [known as] “tamers of persons,” they have been called “awakened at birth.” This is so because theirs is a birth that has taken up awakening; it is an “awakening at birth” that studies its fill and greatly awakens. This is so because it is a study that takes up awakening.

Therefore, they take up the three realms and greatly awaken; they take up the hundred grasses and greatly awaken; they take up the four primary elements and greatly awaken; they take up the buddhas and ancestors and greatly awaken; they take up a kōan and greatly awaken. The very time that they do so is the present.

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The Great Master Huizhao of the Linji cloister [i.e., Linji Yixuan] said, “In the Land of the Great Tang, it’s hard to find a single person who isn’t awakened.”

What the Great Master Huizhao says here is “the skin, flesh, bones, and marrow” passed down through the main artery [of the Zen lineage]; it could not be false. “In the Land of the Great Tang” means “in one’s own eye”: it is not concerned with all the realms; it is not confined to lands numerous as dust motes. Here, it

is hard to find a single person who is not awakened. Yesterday’s self of one’s own is not one “who is not awakened”; today’s self of another is not one “who is not awakened.” Searching through the past and present of the people of the mountains and the people of the waters, the unawakened cannot be found. Students who study Linji’s saying in this way will not [as Shitou’s *Can tong qi* says] “pass their days and nights in vain.”

While this may be so, we should nevertheless go on to study the inner deeds of the ancestral lineage. That is, we should question Linji for a bit. To know only that “it’s hard to find someone who isn’t awakened,” without knowing that it is hard to find someone who is awakened, is not enough to be right. It is hard to say that you have fully investigated even [your own statement that] “it’s hard to find someone who isn’t awakened.” Although it may be hard to find a single person who is not awakened, there is half a person who is not awakened, his countenance calm, his bearing majestic — have you ever seen him? Do not think that your difficulty in finding a single person who is not awakened in “the Land of the Great Tang” is the final word. You should try to find two or three Lands of the Great Tang within a single person or half a person. Are they hard to find or not hard to find? When you are equipped with this eye, I will accept you as a buddha and ancestor who has studied his fill.

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The Great Master Baozhi of the Huayan monastery in Jingzhao (descended from Dongshan, called Xiujing) [i.e., Huayan

Xiujing] was once asked by a monk, “What about when the person of great awakening reverts to delusion?”

The master said,

“The broken mirror doesn’t reflect again; the fallen flower can’t climb the tree.”

This question may be a question, but it is like instruction to the assembly. It could only be expounded in the assembly of Huayen; it could only be bestowed by a legitimate heir of Dongshan. Truly this must be the proper seat of a buddha and ancestor who has studied his fill.

“The person of great awakening” does not mean someone with great awakening from the beginning; it is not someone who stores up a great awakening from somewhere else. Great awakening is not something that, though present in the public realm, one only encounters at last in old age. It is not something one forcibly pulls out of oneself. Nevertheless, [the person of great awakening] invariably greatly awakens. It is not that great awakening is not being deluded: we need not suppose that, in order to be the seedling for great awakening, we ought first become deluded. The person of great awakening goes on greatly to awaken; the person of great delusion goes on greatly to awaken. Just as there is the person of great awakening, there is the buddha of great awakening; there are the earth, water, fire, wind, and space of great awakening, there are the columns and lanterns of great awakening. Here they are being questioned as “the person of great awakening.” The question “What about when the person of great awakening reverts to delusion?” is truly asking what should be asked. Huayen does not reject it: he “emulates the ancients” in

the monastic seat. His is the meritorious deed of a buddha and ancestor.

We should work at this a bit. Is the “reversion to delusion” of “the person of great awakening” the equivalent of a person without awakening? When the person of great awakening reverts to delusion, does he take up his great awakening and construct delusion? Does she revert to delusion by taking up delusion from somewhere else and covering over her great awakening? Again, does the person of great awakening, although remaining himself without destroying his great awakening, go on to study “reverting to delusion”? Or does the “reverting to delusion” of the person of great awakening refer to taking up a further great awakening as “reverting to delusion”? We should study it in these various ways. Again, is great awakening one hand and reverting to delusion the other hand? However we take them, we should recognize that hearing that the person of great awakening reverts to delusion is the complete mastery of our study. We should recognize that there is a great awakening that makes reverting to delusion a personal experience.

Therefore, “seeing a thief as your child” [as the sutra says] does not represent “reverting to delusion”; “seeing your child as a thief” does not represent “reverting to delusion.” Great awakening is to see the thief as a thief; reverting to delusion is to see the child as your child. “Adding a bit where there is a lot” [as the Zen masters say] is great awakening; “reducing a bit where there is little” is reverting to delusion. Therefore, when you grope for the one who reverts to delusion and have got him firmly in your clutches, you will encounter “the person

of great awakening.” Is the self at this time reverting to delusion? Is it undeluded? You should examine this and bring it forward. This is to meet with a buddha and ancestor.

The master said, “The broken mirror doesn’t reflect again; the fallen flower can’t climb the tree.” This instruction to the assembly speaks of precisely the moment of “the broken mirror.” Thus, to study the words “broken mirror” while having in mind the time when the mirror was not yet broken is not right. The meaning of this saying by Huayan — “the broken mirror doesn’t reflect again; the fallen flower can’t climb the tree” — has likely been understood as saying, “the person of great awakening doesn’t reflect again,” saying “the person of great awakening can’t climb the tree,” saying that the person of great awakening does not once again revert to delusion. However, it is not such a study. If it were as people have thought, he would be asking something like, “How about the everyday life of the person of great awakening?” And in answering, one would say something like, “There are times when he reverts to delusion.” The present case is not like this. Since he asks, “What about when the person of great awakening reverts to delusion?” he is “still uncertain” about precisely the moment of “reverting to delusion.” The saying that appears at such a time is, “the broken mirror doesn’t reflect again”; “the fallen flower can’t climb the tree.” When the fallen flower is truly a fallen flower, even if [as the Zen masters say] it climbs beyond “a hundred-foot pole,” it is still “the fallen flower.” Since a broken mirror is precisely a broken mirror, however many ways of life it expresses, they will all be reflections that “don’t reflect again.”

Taking up the meaning of his saying “broken mirror” and saying “fallen flower,” we should inquire into the time “when the person of great awakening reverts to delusion.”

It is not that we should study this as if “great awakening” were like becoming a buddha, “reverting to delusion” were like living beings, and it is saying [as it is sometimes put] “again becoming a living being,” or saying something like [the formula] “leaving traces [in the phenomenal world] from the original [ground].” That talks as if he destroys his great enlightenment to become a living being; this is not saying that he destroys great awakening, is not saying that he loses great awakening, is not saying that delusion has come. We should not identify it with those. Truly, great awakening is without origin; reverting to delusion is without origin. There is no delusion that obstructs great awakening; taking up three pieces of great awakening, we make a half piece of slight delusion. With this, there are Snowy Mountains [in which the Buddha is said to have practiced] having the great awakening because of the Snowy Mountains; the trees and rocks have the great awakening by dint of trees and rocks. The great awakening of the buddhas has the great awakening because of living beings; the great awakening of living beings has the great awakening to the great awakening of the buddhas. This has nothing to do with before or after. The present great awakening is not self, is not other. It has not come; yet [as they say] “it fills the ditches and clogs the gullies.” It has not gone; yet [Dongshan says] “seeking it from another is strictly prohibited.” Why is this so? As it is said [by Suishan Fazhen], “It goes along with it [when the universe is destroyed].”

The Reverend Mihi of Jingzhao had a monk ask Yangshan [Huiji],

“People of the present time, do they still avail themselves of awakening?”

Yangshan said,

“It’s not that they don’t have awakening, but they can’t help falling into the second rate.”

The monk returned and presented this to Mihi. Mihi deeply assented to it.

The “present time” spoken of here is every person’s present moment. The pasts, futures, and presents that “you remind me of” [as Ananda said to the Buddha] may be thousands, myriads, but they are “the present time,” the present moment. A person’s status is invariably “the present time.” Or we could take their eyeballs as “the present time”; or we could take their nose as “the present time.”

“Do they still avail themselves of awakening?” Quietly studying these words, you should switch them for your breast; you should switch them for the crown of your head. Recently, shavelings in the Land of the Great Song say, “Awakening to the way is the basic expectation.” So saying, they vainly await awakening. Nevertheless, they seem not to be illumined by the radiance of the buddhas and ancestors. Given over to laziness, they miss the fact that they should just study with a true good friend. Even during the advent of the old buddhas, they would probably not have been liberated.

The words “do they still avail themselves of awakening?” do not say that they do not have awakening; they do not say that they have awakening; they do not say that awakening

comes: they say “do they avail themselves of it?” It is like asking, “How has the awakening of people nowadays been awakened?” For example, if we say that they “get awakening,” we wonder whether for some time they did not have it. If we say that “awakening has come,” we wonder where it was until now. If we say they have “become awakening,” we imagine that awakening was already there. He does not say it like this; he is not like this. Yet, when he speaks of how awakening is, he says, “do they avail themselves of it?”

Nevertheless, we can speak of awakening. However, since he has said, “what about their falling into the second rate?” he is saying that the second rate is also awakening. “The second rate” is like saying, “became awakening,” or “get awakening,” or “awakening has come.” He is saying that “became” or “has come” are also awakening. Therefore, while lamenting the fall into the second rate, it seems he eliminates the second rate. One may also think that the second rate that awakening becomes is the real second rate. Therefore, though it be second rate, though it be a hundred or a thousand rate, it should still be awakening. It is not that, since there is a second rate, it exists where some prior first rate is left behind. This would be, for example, like saying that, while we take ourselves yesterday to be ourselves, yesterday’s [self] takes today’s as a second-rate person. The present awakening, we do not say is not yesterday’s; it has not begun now. This is how we study it. Therefore, [to borrow from Mazu] “great awakening’s head is black; great awakening’s head is white.”