

Body-and-Mind Study of the Way

正法眼藏身心學道

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1

The buddha way cannot be attained unless you practice, and without study it remains remote. Zen Master Dahui of Nanyue said, "It is not that there is no practice and no realization, it is just that they cannot be defiled." Not to study the buddha way is to fall into the realm of shameless and erroneous ways. All preceding and succeeding buddhas always practice the buddha way.

2

For the time being let us say there are two approaches to studying the buddha way: to study with mind and to study with body.

To study with mind means to study with the various aspects of mind, such as consciousness, emotion, and intellect. After resonating with the way and arousing the thought of enlightenment, take refuge in the great way of the buddha ancestors and devote yourself to the practice of way-seeking mind. Even if you have not yet aroused way-seeking mind, follow the examples of the buddha ancestors who did arouse way-seeking mind in former times.

There is the thought of enlightenment, bits and pieces of straightforward mind, the mind of the ancient buddhas, everyday mind, the triple world which is one mind. Sometimes you study the way by casting off the mind. Sometimes you study the way by taking up the mind. Either way, study the way with thinking, and study the way not-thinking.

To correctly transmit and inherit the brocade robe, to say, "You have attained my marrow," to make three bows and return to the original place, and to pound rice and receive the robe—this is studying mind with mind. Shaving the head and wearing the robe is itself turning the mind and illuminating the mind. Leaving the castle and entering the mountains is leaving one mind and entering one mind. To directly enter the mountains is to think not-thinking. To leave the world behind is nonthinking. Those who have rolled up this matter into wide-open eyeballs are two or three bushels. Those who have tampered with it by karma-consciousness are thousands and millions of pieces.

When you study the way in this manner—having merit, the result comes of itself; having the result, merit does not arrive—you will secretly borrow the nostrils of the buddha ancestors and have them exhale; and taking up the hoof of a donkey you will have it imprint the seal of enlightenment. These are authentic examples of the ancient tradition.

3

Now mountains, rivers, earth, the sun, the moon, and stars are mind. At just this moment, what is it that appears directly in front of you? When we say "mountains, rivers, and earth" we do not merely mean the mountains, rivers, and earth where you are standing. There are various kinds of mountains such as Great Sumeru and Small Sumeru; some mountains extend widely, some rise up steeply. A billion worlds and innumerable lands can be found in a mountain. There are mountains suspended in form; there are mountains suspended in emptiness.

There are also many kinds of waters: heavenly rivers, earthly rivers, the four great rivers. There are lakes without heat; in the Great Northern Continent the heatless lake Anavatapta is the source of the four great rivers. There are oceans and there are pools. Earth is not necessarily ground and ground is not necessarily earth. There is earth-ground, there is mind-ground, there is treasure-ground. Although the varieties are innumerable, it is not that there is no earth, but invariably there is a world where emptiness is earth.

The sun, moon, and stars as seen by humans and by devas are not the same, and the views of various beings differ widely. Views about one mind differ as well. Yet these views are nothing but mind. Is it inside or outside? Does it come or go? Is there more of it at birth or not? Is there less of it at death or not? How do we understand this birth and death, and views of birth and death?

All this is merely a moment or two of mind. A moment or two of mind is a moment of mountains, rivers, and earth, or two moments of mountains, rivers, and earth. Because mountains, rivers, earth, and so forth neither exist nor do not exist, they are not large or small, not attainable or unattainable, not knowable or unknowable, not penetrable or impenetrable. They neither change with realization, nor change without realization. Just wholeheartedly accept and trust that to study the way with mind is this mountains-rivers-and-earth mind itself thoroughly engaged in studying the way.

This trust and acceptance is neither large nor small, neither existent nor nonexistent. To study in this manner—understanding that home is no-home, abandoning home, and entering the homeless life—this is not measurable as large or small, near or far. It is beyond beginning or end, beyond ascending or descending. Broaching the subject, it is seven or eight feet. Responding immediately, it benefits the self and others. All this is nothing but the study of the way.

4

Because the study of the way is like this, walls, tiles, and pebbles are mind. Other than this there is no triple-world-mind-only, and no phenomenal universe-mind-only. Mind is walls, tiles, and pebbles, put together before the Xiantong Era and taken apart after the Xiantong Era, splattered with mud and soaking wet. Binding the self with no-rope, mind has the power to attract a pearl, and the ability to be a pearl in water. Some days the pearl is melted. Sometimes it is crushed. There are times when this pearl is reduced to extremely fine powder. Mind does not converse with bare pillars or rub shoulders with hanging lanterns. In this manner the mind studies the way running barefoot—who can get a glimpse of it? The mind studies the way turning somersaults—all things tumble over with it. At this time a wall crumbling away allows you to study the ten directions, and the gateless gate allows you to study the four quarters.

5

The thought of enlightenment can occur within birth-and-death, within nirvana. It can also occur without concern for birth-and-death and nirvana. It does not depend upon the place where it occurs, nor is it hindered by the place where it occurs. Conditions do not arouse it, and knowledge does not arouse it. The thought of enlightenment arouses itself. This arousing is the thought of enlightenment. The thought of enlightenment is neither existent nor nonexistent, neither good nor bad nor neutral. It is not the result of past suffering. Even beings in the blissful realms can arouse it. The thought of enlightenment arises just at the time of arising; it is not limited by conditions.

Just now the thought of enlightenment is aroused; the entire universe arouses the thought of enlightenment. Although the thought of enlightenment seems to create conditions, it actually does not encounter conditions. The thought of enlightenment and conditions together hold out a single hand—a single hand held out freely, a single hand held out in the midst of all being. Thus the thought of enlightenment is aroused even in the realm of hell, hungry ghosts, animals, and malevolent spirits.

6

"Bits and pieces of straightforward mind" means all the bits and pieces moment after moment are straightforward mind. Not only one or two pieces, but all bits and pieces.

The lotus leaf is perfectly round, round as a mirror.

The tip of the water chestnut is extremely sharp, sharp as a gimlet.

Although straightforward mind resembles a mirror, it is bits and pieces. Though it resembles a gimlet, it is bits and pieces.

7

As for the mind of the ancient buddhas, a monk once asked National Teacher Dazheng, "What is the mind of the ancient buddhas?" The master said, "Walls, tiles, pebbles." This being so, you should know that the mind of the ancient buddhas is not walls, tiles, and pebbles, and that walls, tiles, and pebbles are not called the mind of the ancient buddhas. The mind of the ancient buddhas is studied in this way.

8

"Everyday mind" means to maintain an everyday mind in this world or in any world. Yesterday goes forth from this moment, and today comes forth from this place. With going the boundless sky goes, with coming the entire earth comes. This is everyday mind.

Everyday mind opens the gate of the inner chamber. Because thousands of gates and myriads of doors open and close all at once, it is everyday mind. Now this boundless sky and entire earth are like unrecognized words, a voice from the deep. Words are all-inclusive, mind is all-inclusive, things are all inclusive.

Although there is birth and death in each moment of this life of birth and death, the body after the final body is never known. Even though you do not know it, if you arouse the thought of enlightenment, you will move forward on the way of enlightenment. The moment is already here. Do not doubt it in the least. Even if you should doubt it, this is nothing but everyday mind.

9

To study the way with the body means to study the way with your own body. It is the study of the way using this lump of red flesh. The body comes forth from the study of the way. Everything which comes forth from the study of the way is the true human body. The entire world of the ten directions is nothing but the true human body. The coming and going of birth and death is the true human body.

To turn this body around, abandoning the ten unwholesome actions, keeping the eight precepts, taking refuge in the three treasures, and leaving home and entering the homeless life, is the true study of the way. For this reason it is called the true human body. Those who follow this must not be like outsiders who hold the view of spontaneous enlightenment.

10

Zen Master Dazhi of Baizhang said, "If you attach to the view that original purity and original emancipation are buddha, or Zen practice, you are a follower of the outsiders' way of spontaneous enlightenment." This teaching is not the broken furniture of an abandoned house, but the collected efforts and accumulated virtue of studying the way. The body suddenly leaps up, transparently clear in eight directions. It drops away, entwined around a tree like wisteria.

Baizhang's words are nothing but manifesting this body, awakening beings, and expounding the dharma; manifesting another's body, awakening beings, and expounding the dharma; not manifesting this body, awakening beings, and expounding the dharma; not manifesting another's body, awakening beings, and expounding the dharma. Then again, his words are not expounding the dharma.

Thus, at the moment of dropping away of the body, there is a voice that stops all sound. At the moment of renouncing worldly life, the arm is cut off and the marrow is attained. Even if you begin to study the way before the eon of the King of Emptiness, still your practice as a descendant of yourself is endless.

11

"The entire world of the ten directions" means the ten directions are the entire world. East, west, south, north, the four mid-points, up, and down are the ten directions. Consider the moment when front and back, vertical and horizontal are thoroughly mastered. To consider means to understand and to resolve that this human body, undivided by self and others, is the entire world of the ten directions. This is to hear what has never been heard, because directions are all-inclusive and all worlds are alike.

"The human body" means the four great elements and the five skandhas. However, none of these elements and skandhas is fully understood by ordinary people; only sages thoroughly master them. Now, penetrate the ten directions within one particle of dust, but do not confine them to one particle of dust. Construct a monks' hall and a buddha hall within a single particle of dust, and construct the entire world in the monks' hall and the buddha hall. In this way the human body is constructed, and such construction comes from the human body. This is the meaning of "The entire world of the ten directions is the true human body." Do not follow the mistaken views of spontaneous or natural enlightenment.

Because it is not in the realm of the measurable, the true human body is not broad or narrow. The entire world of the ten directions is eighty-four thousand dharma-expounding skandhas, eighty-four thousand samadhis, and eighty-four thousand dharanis. Because the eighty-four thousand dharma-expounding skandhas are turning the dharma wheel, the moment the dharma wheel is turned, the true human body covers the whole universe and extends throughout all time. It is not that the true human body is unlimited; the true human body is just the true human body. At this moment it is you, at this moment it is I, who is the true human body, the entire world of the ten directions. Without missing these points we must study the way.

Even if you were to renounce the body or accept the body for three great eons, for thirteen great eons or for innumerable eons, invariably this is the moment to study the way, to study the way backwards and forwards. To bow to the floor and to bow standing is dignified bearing in motion and stillness. Painting a decayed tree and polishing a brick of dead ash continues without stopping. Even though calendar days are short and urgent, study of the way in this manner is profound and deep.

Although the life of those who have abandoned home and entered the homeless realm may appear bleak and lonely, it should not be confused with that of woodcutters. Even if they are continually active, their life is not the same as that of farmers. Do not get caught up in discussions of delusion or enlightenment, good or bad. Do not stay in the realm of wrong or right, true or false.

12

"Coming and going of birth and death is the true human body" means that even though birth-and-death is where ordinary people drift about, it is where great sages are liberated. Merely going beyond the ordinary and surpassing the sage is not the true human body. Although there are two or seven kinds of birth and death, when they are thoroughly mastered they are not to be feared, as each one of them is nothing but birth and death. How is this so? Not abandoning birth, you see death. Not abandoning death, you see birth. Birth does not hinder death. Death does not hinder birth.

Neither birth nor death is known by ordinary people. Birth is like a cypress tree. Death is like an iron man. Even if a cypress tree were to hinder a cypress tree, birth is never hindered by death. Accordingly, birth and death are the study of the way. Birth is not like one sheet of cloth; death is not like two rolls of cloth. Death is not the opposite of birth; birth is not the opposite of death.

13

Zen Master Yuanwu said, "Birth is undivided activity. Death is undivided activity. Filling up the great empty sky, straightforward mind is always bits and pieces." You should quietly pursue and examine these words. Although Zen Master Yuanwu once said this, he did not understand that birth-and-death further overflows undivided activity.

When you study coming and going, in coming there is birth-and-death, in going there is birth-and-death. In birth there is coming and going, in death there is coming and going. Coming and going is to fly in and fly out with the entire world of the ten directions as two or three wings, and to walk forward and backward with the entire world of the ten directions as three or five feet.

With birth and death as its head and tail, the entire world of the ten directions, the true human body, freely turns the body and flaps the brain. When turning the body and flapping the brain, it is the size of a penny, it is inside a particle of dust. It is the vast flat earth, it is a sheer eight-thousand-foot cliff. Where there is a sheer eight-thousand-foot cliff, there is the vast flat earth. In this way the true human body is manifested as the Southern and Northern continents. To examine this is the study of the way. The true human body is the bones and marrow of the realm beyond consciousness and unconsciousness. just raising this up is the study of the way.

On the ninth day, ninth month, third year of Ninji [1242], this was taught to the assembly at Horin Monastery.