

# Eihei Dogen Zenji on Taking Refuge in the Three Treasures

## • *Dogen's Shobogenzo Kiebupposoho (Refuge in Buddha, Dharma, Sangha Treasures)* 歸依佛法僧寶

### **Taking Refuge (Returning to and Relying on; Sharana in Sanskrit)** 歸依

The buddhas and ancestors' authentic transmission through India and China is reverent devotion 恭敬 to Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Without taking refuge there is no devotion, without devotion there is no taking refuge. The merit and virtue of taking refuge is realized through sympathetic resonance (responsive communion between sentient beings and buddhas: kanno doko 感應道交)... "Returning to" 歸 is like children throwing themselves into their parents' arms, "relying on" 依 is like citizens relying on a righteous king.

#### **Buddha** 佛

honored among humans  
great teacher  
awake, aware, knowing 覺

#### **Dharma** 法

honored freedom from desire  
good medicine  
law, truth, reality

#### **Sangha** 僧

honored among assemblies  
excellent friends  
assembly, community, gathering

### **Abiding-and-Maintaining Triple Treasure (Suzuki Roshi: Cultural Three Treasures)** 住持三寶

buddha images and stupas  
(statues and paintings)

sutras written on yellow paper

shaving the head,  
wearing a dyed robe,  
following precepts and  
dharma forms

### **Transforming Manners/Ceremonies Triple Treasure** 化儀三寶 ("transforming" is used to translate nirmanakaya)

Shakyamuni Buddha

his turning the Dharma wheel

five monks who heard Dharma

### **Reality Body/Essence Triple Treasure** 理體三寶

five divisions (skandha) of dharmakaya:  
virtue, concentration, wisdom, liberation,  
knowledge-and-vision of liberation

unconditioned nirvana

merit of learning and realizing  
path of no-more-learning  
(buddhahood)

### **One-Body/Essence Triple Treasure** 一體三寶

verification of great awakening

purity and freedom  
from defilement (duality)

living in accord with reality,  
harmonious, free from obstruction

## • *Dogen's Kyojukaimon (Essay on Teaching and Conferring the Precepts)* 教授戒文

### **One-Body/Essence Triple Treasure** 一體三寶

unsurpassed complete perfect awakening

purity & freedom from dust

virtue of harmony

### **Manifested Triple Treasure** 現前三寶

manifesting verification of awakening

that which is realized by buddha

learning buddha-dharma

### **Abiding-and-Maintaining Triple Treasure (Suzuki Roshi: Cultural Three Treasures)** 住持三寶

transforming gods and humans,  
manifesting in empty space or in dust

turning sutras written on palm leaves,  
turning the oceanic storehouse of sutras,  
transforming the animate and inanimate

liberation from all  
suffering, dropping  
misery of 3 realms

## • *Metaphors from the Indian Sutras and Shastras*

the sun at dawn

sun-rays dispelling darkness

those whose darkness is dispelled

the full moon

cool moon-beams

those who enjoy night moonlight

a great cloud in the dry summer

rain which nourishes all

plants nourished by the rain

a lotus flower growing from the mud

the sweet fragrance of lotus

bees who make pollen into honey

a skillful doctor who makes prescription

good medicine

nurse assisting sick to take meds

## Mahanama Sutta on the Three Treasures

Anguttara Nikaya 11.12, translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu

### **Buddha**

There is the case where you recollect the Tathagata: 'Indeed, the Blessed One [bhagavan] is worthy [arhat] and rightly self-awakened [sammāsambuddho], consummate in knowledge and conduct, well-gone, an expert with regard to the world, unexcelled as a trainer for those people fit to be tamed, the teacher of divine and human beings, awakened, blessed.'...

### **Dhamma**

Furthermore, there is the case where you recollect the Dhamma: 'The Dhamma is well-expounded by the Blessed One, to be seen here and now, timeless, inviting verification, pertinent, to be realized by the wise for themselves.'...

### **Sangha**

Furthermore, there is the case where you recollect the Sangha: 'The Sangha of the Blessed One's disciples who have practiced well, who have practiced straight-forwardly, who have practiced methodically, who have practiced masterfully — in other words, the four types [of noble disciples] when taken as pairs [stream-enterer, once-returner, non-returner, arhat], the eight when taken as individual types [those approaching these fruits and those realizing them] — they are the Sangha of the Blessed One's disciples: worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of respect, the incomparable field of merit for the world.'...

## Ratnagotravibhaga Shastra on the Three Treasures

Treatise Distinguishing the Precious Lineage

by Bodhisattvas Maitreya and Asanga (fourth century), translated by Ken and Katia Holmes

### **Buddha**

I bow down to the beginningless, centerless and infinite, to perfect peace, buddha, fully self-awakened and self-blossomed which, once purified and developed, shows the fearless, unchanging path, to bring realization to those with no realization, and which, wielding the supreme sword and vajra, of knowledge and compassionate love, cuts down the seedlings of suffering and destroys the walls of doubt surrounded by the dense forests of mistaken views. Buddhahood is endowed with two-fold value (benefitting oneself and others). It is uncreated, spontaneous and not to be realized through external causes. It possesses knowledge, compassionate love and ability...

### **Dharma**

I bow down to the sun of dharma, which is neither existence nor non-existence, nor a combination of existence and non-existence, nor something other than existence or non-existence: the ungraspable, beyond all verbal definition, self-aware, peace, stainless, brilliant with the light of nondual knowing, which completely destroys craving for, aversion to or dullness towards mental objects. The dharma that is imbued with the intrinsic characteristics of the two truths: freedom from bondage and that which causes freedom from bondage. Inconceivable, nondual, and concept-free, purity, clarity and remedy...

### **Sangha**

I bow down to those whose mind is no longer obscured, the deeply-realized who have nondual knowing's perception, awareness of the total purity present in limitless beings. As the true nature of mind is lucid clarity, they see the defilements to be without essence and hence truly realize ultimate no-self – peace within all beings. Thus they know the all-pervading presence of perfect buddhahood in each and every one of them. The sangha of the wise, who never regress, possesses unsurpassable qualities through pure perception: thusness, all-encompassing (perceiving that all beings have buddha nature) and the inner (self-aware nondual knowing)...