

All is One AND All is Different

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From Lectures on Genjō Kōan, “The Spiritual Question as It Manifests Before Your Very Eyes,” a chapter of the Shōbōgenzō by Great Master Dōgen. The translation of Dōgen (quoted in indented text) is by Rev. Master Hubert Nearman.

In that period of time when Buddhas give voice to the Teachings on existence in all its variety, there is talk of ‘delusion and enlightenment’, of ‘practice and training’, of ‘birth’, of ‘death’, of ‘Buddhas’, of ‘ordinary beings’: in that period of time when it is no longer relevant to speak of an ‘I’ along with its ‘whole universe’, there is no delusion or enlightenment, no Buddhas or ordinary beings, no being born, no extinction.

When there is Buddhism, there is diversification; all things are seen to be unique in their differences. When you find That which is True, none of these things exist. Thus the Way of the Buddha includes, and also transcends, *both* unity and individuality, which I have sometimes expressed as, “All is One *and* all is different.” Do not remain forever within dualistic individuality, for you will never know the unity. And, do not try to stay within the unity, for you will not know the fullness of Truth. Know that you must go beyond both. Too often we look down upon the differences and idealize the unity. What we are speaking of in this chapter lies beyond both of them, yet

embraces them. We may call it the Truth, we may call it Immaculacy, we may call it That which we know within ourselves, but all of these names are wrong. All *is* One, yes, and you may see It within the all is different.

Because the path to Buddhahood naturally springs forth from a feeling that there is ‘too much’ of one thing or ‘not enough’ of another, there is ‘birth and extinction’, there is ‘delusion and enlightenment’, there is ‘ordinary beings and Buddhas’. Yet, even though this is the way things are, still, we feel regret at a blossom’s falling and loathe to see the weeds envelop everything.

All things in their diversity are signs of the Truth, all are part of the Truth, and it is the diversity which brings us to religious training. But if we get caught up with liking or disliking, then we are very far away from the Truth, and ‘isms’ exist. You have to accept things as they are. That is why all-acceptance is the key to the “gateless gate” of Zen.

To undertake enlightening the whole universe through one’s training while carrying the burden of a self is a delusion: to enlighten oneself through training while urging all things onward is an awakening from delusion.

When we say, “I am doing this,” as opposed to allowing Buddha Nature, which is within, to do all, then we are deluded. I do nothing of myself, but the Buddhas and Ancestors (which taught me earlier, in the form of my own master) may act through me. Be very careful when the certainty of realization comes to you. Be very careful of becoming God in your own mind.

To have a great awakening to one’s delusion is to be

as all Buddhas are: to be greatly deluded within one's enlightenment is to be as ordinary people are.

This shows the importance of humility. To know the Truth within yourself from seeing It within all things—that is enlightenment. But to say that *you*, personally, are doing it, then you are in great trouble, because then you have become God in your own mind. Let me relate this to the first chapter of the *Denkōroku*, which poses the question of whether Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment is personal or universal. This is known as “the question of the ‘*I*’ and the ‘*with*,’” for it arises from the statement made by Shakyamuni Buddha at His enlightenment that “*I* was, am, and will be enlightened instantaneously *with* the universe.” It appears from this statement that the Buddha was saying that His enlightenment is both personal and universal. But is that really what He meant? In the *Denkōroku*, Keizan Zenji, the great grand-disciple of Dōgen, answers this by saying,

If it is said that you **were, are and will be enlightened** with *Shakyamuni* or *Shakyamuni was, is and will be enlightened with you, then it is not *Shakyamuni's* enlightenment and...cannot be the principle of enlightenment. If you want to understand the principle of enlightenment in detail, throw away *Shakyamuni* and you at the same time and know that they are “*I*.” The “*I*” and “*with*” in *Shakyamuni's* first utterance **was, is and will be** the whole world, the universe and animate things; this “*I*” is not the old Gautama. Study in detail, think fully and understand “*I*” and “*with*”. Even if you can understand “*I*” and you cannot realise “*with*,” you cannot understand fully; you see with only one eye. ¹*

Now, the “*I*” that is being spoken of in these passages is what does training and what realizes enlightenment through learning from all things. It is not the personal “*I*” of the self. In fact, this *I* is the “all is One”; the *with* is the “all is different.” It is not the “*I*” of “*I* am teaching and enlightening all things.” This new *I* is present when all things teach and enlighten us.

So, we start off in training from the place of the old *I*, which is the selfish “all is different” of duality. In the course of training with this *I*, we find the new *I* of the “all is One.” Then we must let go even of this, to find the *with*, which is the new “all is different” of “all is One *and* all is different.” If one fails to realize both the *I* and the *with*, one “sees with only one eye,” because if you cannot understand that the *with* (the new “all is different”) is also the *whole* of Buddhahood, you are not going to see the Buddha in the bum who walks through the door. If you are stuck with the old *I*, you are just going to see a bum, and what you will say is, “How can a bum be a Buddha?” If you are stuck with the new *I*, all that you can see is a Buddha and, because you refuse to discern the aspects of how he is being a bum, then you cannot help him. If you see a Buddha who happens to be a bum, then all things can teach and enlighten you.

One thing that a master finds out is that every single creature or person who walks through his or her door is a teacher. If he does it by any other means then he is in great trouble and likely to become God in his own head. This is why I have pointed out on many occasions that I lose nothing whatsoever by taking advice from other people, or by asking their help. They can teach me. If you suffer from the idea that you “know” and nothing can teach you, then the Buddhas can’t help you. The *Genjō Kōan* goes right to the heart of the *Shakyamuni* of the *Denkōroku*. One is the explanation of the other. It doesn’t mat-

ter which one you start with: it's the explanation of the other. So, when I hear that someone wants to be a monk so that they can be a parish priest or wants to do Zen training so that they can help the world, I know that this is not yet their real *I* speaking. It is the "I" of Prince Gautama; it is not the "I" of *Shakyamuni Buddha*.

Says Dōgen:

Moreover, there are those folks who realize enlightenment on top of their enlightenment: there are those folks who are deluded within their delusion.

It is perfectly true that once you have understood something you can never be as if you had not understood it. What Dōgen is saying is not a matter of, "My former enlightenment was not enlightenment." It is a matter of, "My enlightenment is deeper now than it was then, and it will be deeper still tomorrow." And, know that the "my" here, is not the "my" of self but rather the "my" of *Shakyamuni*. Some people are enlightened within enlightenment: it never stops, it deepens. Others are deluded within delusion. The fruit of delusion is compounded delusion. If you are in delusion and you act upon it, you can go deeper and deeper into delusion for it compounds itself when karmic consequence is not recognized as such. Dōgen is merely stating what is obvious: once you start to understand, you understand more and more, and you never stop understanding. Once you don't understand, you understand less and less, because you become harder and harder in your own mind. That is why it is necessary to keep in mind constantly the words, "I could be wrong; I could do harm." Those words are actually another version of the Three Pure Precepts: I will cease from all evil, I will do only good, I will do good for others.

When Buddhas are truly Buddhas, They need not perceive that They Themselves are Buddha. Even so, having awakened to Their Buddha Nature, They will carry within Themselves Their confirmation of Their Buddha Nature.

It may sound odd, but you really do not need to know when you are within enlightenment: it doesn't matter. When you are complete, when you are adequate in the real sense, knowing this doesn't matter. Nothing can detract from Buddha Nature and nothing can add to It. This is what it means in the Morning Service Scriptures when they say that "of cats there are some kinds, as also some white cows, that perfect are just as they are." Such a person does not need to be what they are not, because his or her adequacy is the fullness of Buddhahood, and that which is adequate needs nothing added and nothing taken away, including the knowledge of its own enlightenment.

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Since we are provided with both a body and a mind, we grasp on to the physical forms we see: since we are provided with both a body and a mind, we cling to the sounds we hear. As a consequence, we make ourselves inseparable from all things, yet we are not like some shadowy figure 'lodging' in a mirror or like the moon in water. Whenever we witness what is on the one side, its opposite side will be in darkness.

Having thrown us into the deep end and found that we can swim, Dōgen is now starting to give us some practical instructions on our strokes. It is said in Zen that we must not mistake the finger pointing at the Moon for the Moon itself, and not mistake the reflection of the Moon within the water for the Moon itself. These two are common mistakes in training, and they arise because of our natural tendency to grasp at things. The first mistake is to get so distracted by the finger pointing at the Moon (by the words and means of teaching) that we mistake them for the Moon itself (for the Truth). The second is to get so drunk with ourselves that, when we see the reflection of the Moon in the puddle (that is, when we have some taste of religious experience), we try to grab at the reflection and we fall flat on our face in the mud. Neither of these are to know the Moon. What we should do, when seeing the Moon pointed to or reflected, is to be content and to share the Moon. At this point there is still duality, because there is “you” with the Moon inside you, but the wise trainee is content with the Moon. And, don’t hang on to the reflection, otherwise you will never know the whole of the Moon. As soon as you interpose yourself between the Moon and its reflection, what you’ve got is just a muddy puddle. Let the reflection be there, and be contented with the Moon. Be content to *be* a reflection, and use the light. Fair enough? If you try to do anything else, then you are trying to enlighten and teach all things. Just let everything teach and enlighten you. This is a practical instruction on how to get beyond both the old I and the new I.

To learn what the path to Buddhahood is is to learn what the True Self is. To learn what the True Self is is to forget about the self. To forget about the self is to

become one with the whole universe. To become one with the whole universe is to be shed of ‘my body and mind’ and ‘their bodies and minds’. The traces from this experience of awakening to one’s enlightenment will quiet down and cease to show themselves, but it takes quite some time for all outer signs of being awake to disappear.

This is a beautiful passage and a most valuable guide to training. By and large, it speaks for itself; savor it. It is important to note, however, that Dōgen says that we must not only cast off ‘my body and mind’ but also we must shed off ‘their bodies and minds.’ It is easy enough to see that one needs to do something about oneself and shed ‘my’ body and mind, but to see that you’ve got to cast off your notions about the body and mind of others is not so quickly or easily seen. “Yes, I know so-and-so has the Buddha Nature but it’s hard for me to see it now and then.” That is quite a normal state to be in, but it occurs because you have not as yet been able to fully ‘forget about the self’; you are holding on to your evaluations and opinions about others. And, if you can only shed your own body and mind, and not the body and mind of others, then you can never be anything more than half-enlightened, for you’ll never really see past your self.

When someone first begins to search for the Dharma, he is very far from the realm of the Dharma: once he has had the Dharma passed on to him, he will quickly become one who abides in his Original State.

Now, this requires a bit of explanation, because there is something implicit here that is not stated: generally when we start searching for the Dharma we look for it outside of ourselves. That is the reason that we are far from it, not because

of the fact that we are searching or because of any inherent separation. This is one of those things that Dōgen probably didn't think needed stating because it was so obvious. It is like me never thinking, when over in England the first time after I returned from the East, to tell people to puff up their meditation cushions after each sitting period. It was obvious that people needed to do that because otherwise the cushions would become as hard as bricks. Why tell someone something which they obviously know? Then, one day after I had been quietly patting up my cushion, somebody came up to me and asked, "By the way, are we permitted to do that, too?" They'd been sitting for four days of sesshin without doing it, and I had this horrible feeling inside of realizing what it must have been like sitting on those hard bricks because they didn't know you were supposed, or permitted, to pat a cushion up. It was so obvious to my mind that it just never occurred to me to tell anybody. And the same thing is true here of Dōgen. When you first study, automatically you look outside yourself, because that is what almost everybody does. So, Dōgen does not insult his disciples' intelligence by telling them that they're looking outside.

But sometimes if you don't run the risk of the insult, maybe hardly anyone is going to know what you're talking about. And if that happens, you then run the risk that the statement that Dōgen makes here can be badly misunderstood as meaning that it is only through the intervention of others (those who "pass on the Dharma") that we can train properly. So, I am going to state what may be obvious to some of you and say that this is not what it means. It means that we have to stop looking outside of ourselves and start turning within.

He now moves on to another practical topic. One of Dōgen's sayings that has always worried people because they feel that it's hard or cold is, "If life comes, it is life; if death comes, it is death: there is no reason whatsoever for a being to be controlled by either and hope should not be put within them." Here, he gives a further explanation of how to understand this teaching which, far from being cold, can yield great comfort and equanimity. He starts by using his favorite metaphor of a boat and the shore, reminding us of the relative nature of our perceptions of reality, and how the Real transcends them:

When someone riding in a boat turns his gaze toward the shore, he misjudges the shore to be moving; when he fixes his eye firmly upon the boat, he will recognize that the boat is plowing on. Likewise, should you let your mind and body run riot, going along with what you perceive the world to be, you will make the mistake of thinking you have a permanently abiding-self-nature within your body and mind. If you commit yourself fully to traveling the Way and return to that Place within, the reason why there is no personal 'self' within the whole universe will become clear.

Just be still and note the appearances of things without being caught up in them, he is saying, and know the Reality. Know that It presents all the characteristics of Buddhahood; sometimes one sees one characteristic, sometimes one sees another. This does not matter; what matters is to know It in Its Reality. Only for a very short time does It appear as one thing, and It appears so because of our limited vision which can only apprehend a portion of the flow of space/time/existence. Even our limitations are always changing. The principle of *anicca* is infinite. If we view all things bearing this in mind, the princi-

ple of anatta,² “the reason why there is no personal ‘self’ within the whole universe” soon becomes apparent. There can be no self because there is constant change; yet we must also have the recognition that Buddhahood *is* in all things and may be seen through the constant change. Do not think that, because It looks like one thing one day and something else another, It is no longer Buddha. Do not confuse the old I for the new I.

“Seeing things as they really are” is another term for being enlightened; it does not make things as you want them to be, it makes them as they *really are*. Do you understand what I’m getting at? People say, “I want enlightenment,” but what they are really saying is, “I want things to be better than they are right now and I’m convinced that that’s what enlightenment is.” But that is not Reality. Enlightenment is seeing things as they *really are*. Reality does not have to be pleasant. Reality is Reality; don’t suffer from the idea that enlightenment is going to give you everything you want. As I have said, it will not necessarily make you happy. It might; I mean, maybe the Reality that you find is what you actually wanted to find anyway, regardless of your ideas and opinions. But you have to be prepared to accept that It is almost never as you *thought* you wanted things to be. The key to dealing with the kōan³ of everyday life, the “genjō kōan,” is the acceptance of Reality. The solving of the kōan of everyday life is the finding of all-acceptance. When you accept what is, then your ego is out of the way and you will find samsara, this world, to be a beautiful playground. And in that place, even life and death are not a problem. Dōgen now goes on to explain how this works:

A stick of firewood, once reduced to ashes, cannot once again revert to being a stick of firewood. Nevertheless, you should not hold on to the opinion that the ashes are the future of that which the stick was the past. What you need to understand is that, when firewood is persisting in the physical state of being firewood, there will be a before and there will be an after. Although there is a before and an after, there is a now which is cut off from 'before' and 'after'. While ashes persist in the physical state of being ashes, they will have their 'after' and their 'before'.

Here he is saying that we should not think that death is simply the potential state of life. Within the acceptance of the flow of the eternal now of Ūji, death is simply death, and life is simply life. Each is complete and entirely satisfactory just as it is. He speaks to this again later in the chapter when he says,

...A fish in the ocean, wherever it swims, finds the water limitless; a bird in the sky, wherever it flies, finds the air unbounded. Nevertheless, fish and birds, from the very beginning, have always been one, respectively, with the water and the sky. To put it simply, when their need is great, their use is great; when their need is small, their use is small. Acting in this manner, they never fail to make the fullest use of their environs at all times, nor do they ever reject what they may find there. Even so, if a bird is pulled out of the air, in short order it will perish; if a fish is pulled out of the water, it will quickly die. You must have realized by now that 'the water' signifies 'life', just as 'the sky' signifies 'life'. 'A bird' refers to 'a life', just as 'a fish' refers to 'a life'. 'Being alive' should be taken to mean 'the bird', as well as 'the fish'. Moreover, this should be taken one step further, since the situation is no different for spiritual practice and realization, or

with the flow of life and the life in that flow....

We all think that whatever we experience at the moment is all that there is, just like the fish views the water or the bird views the air. Therefore, some fear that death is an endless state, and some think that they are immortal when they are alive. Yet when we are “pulled out of our element,” we realize that there is change and, if we accept that change, then there is endless flow. In this way there is no less life in death than there is life in life. The element of fish is water; the element of birds is sky: when there is life there is life; when there is death there is death. One is one element, the other is another element. There is no need to get involved with things like souls or with beliefs such as “we will rise again from the dead.” Simply, there are fish in water, there are birds in sky. If a bird tries to become a fish it will die. If a fish tries to become a bird it will die. In their own element, they *are*.

If someone thinks that there is nothing but death, and there is no escape from death, or there is nothing but life, and there is no escape from life, then he or she has not learned all-acceptance. If death comes there is only death; if life comes there is only life. You need not worry about life or death; what you must do is to stay still in the Buddha Nature, which all share. Do not worry about changing elements or changing seasons; one does not become the other; they are different things, each fully adequate just as it is. And, the Unborn is not them; It is not the elements. It is not life; It is not death; It simply *IS*.

When you arrive at this Place, you will have been spiritually questioning what is before your very eyes by traveling the Way of the Buddhas and Ancestors;

when you locate the path you have been following, you will discover that it is the spiritual question that has been before your very eyes as you have traveled the Way. This path and this Place are neither large nor small, neither ‘self nor ‘other’, nor something from the past, nor something revealed in the now: It is just as It is....

This is how you put the teachings into practice: you must examine the question that is before your very eyes. It is not a technique for when you’ve got nothing better to do, it is the practice for every hour of the day and night. Really, the meditation hall is a workshop where you are learning the practice of staying with this (often unspoken) question in your very guts. When Dōgen speaks of this question as having been always before your eyes as you have traveled the Way, he is not just referring to the time of your formal Buddhist training, for your entire life has been a “traveling of the Way.” In kids this spiritual question has always existed. And, of course, kids live the question rather than asking it with their minds: that is their way of working on the kōan, for they have not yet developed their brain for reading and analyzing and all the rest of it. They don’t have the ability to read all these brilliantly clever books, so they have no other alternative but to live within their spiritual question. That is what makes children natural. It is also what often makes the kōan so intense for them. They have the blessing and the curse of not knowing either the ways of convoluted thinking or the ways of practice; you have the blessing and the curse of knowing the ways of practice and also being able to be attached to your ideas about them. And, when you look back upon both

of these times of training from the viewpoint of enlightenment, you will see that, fundamentally, all was pure training.

And what will you see about the training of the current moment, from the place of enlightenment?

To be sure, having once realized the Place, you must not analyze It in order to understand It through discriminatory thought and, thereby, reduce It to fit your own opinions. When you have bored through to certainty, It all at once manifests before your very-eyes, yet That which is the most intimate will not necessarily take some visible form: ‘manifesting before your very eyes’ may or may not have a literal meaning.

The Buddha may be enlightened, but “being enlightened” is not what He is aware of. He just does that which has to be done. Do not suffer from the idea that after enlightenment there will be trumpets blowing and people saluting you as the great and holy saint. You are going to look just as you are now. As the *Denkōroku* quite clearly points out about Shakyamuni Buddha, “Always He had the form and figure of an old monk.” Always He wore His robe and always He carried His begging bowl. In other words, a Buddha looks like a normal human being. Have you ever thought about the “the thirty-two marks of a Buddha”? Everybody has one or two of them. Somebody has long arms, somebody else has long ears, another has a mole on his chest, so it goes on. What these marks are really telling you is that *everybody* has the signs of Buddhahood. Don’t go around suffering from the idea that enlightenment makes you special.

And especially don’t go around suffering from the idea that after enlightenment you will know about it. Yes, in one



Rev. Master Jiyu, carrying her bowl and staff, leads the procession for the Ketchimyaku Ceremony during Jukai (Ten Precepts Meeting) at Shasta Abbey.

sense you *will* know, but what you “know” is not that you “are enlightened.” One thing that you will know is that there is no “karmic wake” following behind your actions. As many of you know, I was in the Navy, so I sometimes think in nautical terms. If your action leaves behind it a broad and turbulent wake of disturbance to yourself and other people, then you may be sure

that it is unenlightened action. But when a person is gliding through the water with no wake happening at all, when nothing special seems to be going on, he or she may think, “How dull my life is.” But it may well be that those are the times when you’re doing exactly the right thing, because there is no wake following an enlightened act. Thus, everything you read in the newspaper is the story of unenlightened action and its karmic wake. When we ask what’s in the news today, what we are really saying is, “Who wasn’t enlightened today?” so that we can feel better because we were less deluded than they were. That’s a lovely delusion in itself, isn’t it? It is one of the reasons why Zen monasteries generally don’t have newspapers. News is not what is really important. Enlightened action *leaves no wake*.

Dōgen concludes the chapter with the famous story of Hōtetsu and his fan:

Meditation Master Hōtetsu of Mount Mayoku (C. Makushan Pao-ch’e), one summer day, sat fanning himself when a monk came up to him and said, “It is said that the nature of the wind always abides and that there is no place where it does not circulate, so why does my reverend monk fan himself?” The Master replied, “You are merely aware that the Nature of the Wind always abides, but you have not yet grasped the principle that nowhere is It not present and active.” When the monk then asked, “What is this underlying principle of Its being universally present?” the Master simply continued to fan himself. The monk respectfully bowed to the Master.

Perfect description! How do you catch the fan, how do you catch the movement of the fan, how do you catch that which it fans, how do you hold onto your breath, how do you hold onto

life—without destroying it? Do not try to hold onto *anything*. Just look in the place we have been describing: the place of the Way, the place of training, the place of simply doing what is to be done, the place of ceasing from all evil whatsoever and of doing that which is good, the place of actions without wake. We have to train, otherwise we will not know this place. Thus it is good for the master to be using the fan. And, It is still present, It is still unborn. Ultimately, there is no way of expressing It, and we still train ourselves. And so Dōgen may conclude:

...Because the Nature of the Wind is always abiding, the winds of training for our Buddhist family bring about the manifesting before one's very eyes of That which is the True Gold of the Great Earth, and bring to maturity the nourishing waters of the Greatest River.

This article is taken from chapter two of Roar of the Tigris, Vol. II, edited by Rev. Master Daizui. It is no longer easily available in print, but the whole book can now be downloaded from www.shastaabbey.org.

Notes

1. The name “*Shakyamuni*,” which Rev. Master Jiyu uses to refer to the Buddha after His enlightenment in her translation of *The Denkōroku*, is always placed by her in italics to indicate His enlightened state. Similarly, in this translation, when the words “*I*” and “*with*” appear in italics, they refer to the non-egocentric state of at-oneness with the universe. The translations of *The Denkōroku* referred to here are found in *Zen is Eternal Life*, 224-296. There is a complete translation by Rev. Master Hubert Nearman: *The Denkōroku*, (Mt. Shasta, CA, Shasta Abbey: 1993).
2. No separate self or soul.
3. Literally: A public case. A statement or story used as a teaching device.