

## The Dharma-Treasure Rostrum Sutra of the Great Master, the Sixth Patriarch

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### Foreword

by priest Kōyō

This writing is also called in abbreviation ‘The Sixth Patriarch’s Rostrum Sutra’. It is the preaching and doings throughout forty years in the lifetime of the Great Master Enō Daikan of the T’ang Dynasty, the sixth in the line of the Dharma successors of the Great Master Bodhidharma which were collected by Hokkai and other disciples.

What he preached is as profound as Buddha’s Sutra and is therefore called ‘The Dharma-Treasure Rostrum Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch’. Divided into chapters, there are ten: personal history of doings<sup>1</sup>, primordial wisdom, questions, wisdom of mind concentration, Zazen, penitence, the gradual and the sudden (enlightenment), proclamation, the final entrustment, and also an appendix giving casual events and other records which make up the writing of the Great Master, the Sixth Patriarch.

With each chapter the expression is simple but correct. It is the most important book for you to know the crucial points of Zen, rightly transmitted from Buddha and the Patriarchs.

But concerning the truth or falsehood of this writing, since ancient times there are now and then some who raise doubts. Because of that, at the time of Emperor Dōsō of Ryō (Dynasty) in China, this writing, together with the ‘Hōrinden’ book, was given to the torch to bar the stream of transmission of this Way. However, when looking at it from the standpoint of its contents, there are a number of points which clearly seem to be the retouch of posterity. Notwithstanding this fact, there is no doubt that in general the Sixth’s Patriarch’s teaching is taken as the essential part of this compilation.

Regarding this, Gitai Zenji, the master of the hermitage Butsuzai in the Zen district, said in his work ‘Zen Seki Shi’ (Records of Zen-books):

“What is called ‘Rostrum Sutra’ here, his disciples have once recorded. Even in the beginning, not one character was written by the brush of the Great Master himself. Therefore true words and false teaching appear arbitrarily in these lines. It is just like brick and pebbles being among a lot of jewels.

So this is not a writing of perfect purity. Even the 7000 Sutra and Upadesha (= teachings and debates) can’t help to have cracks (defects).

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<sup>1</sup> Giving the personal history of his early years.

Knowing that there are retouches in the Rostrum-Sutra we should write a foreword, discuss it, and make people acquainted with it. When (Mt.) Konkō<sup>2</sup> is conflagrated, jewels and stones are burnt together. Why didn't the people of Ryō consider that?" This text was originally written in Kanbun ( i.e. Chinese style Japanese). These are really especially appropriate words. Moreover, there are very many books which are issues of this writing. In China, besides the original issued at Sōkei, there are three books – of the Sung-, Yüan- and the Ming-Dynasty. In our country (=Japan) there are the following: the first two volumes by Nakano Dōkan in the 8<sup>th</sup> year of Kanei (=1631), carved according to the Keigan book of the Sung-Dynasty; a book with headnotes<sup>3</sup> in the second year of Manji (=1659); 'Dankyō Kōkan' (= 'Empty Flesh of the Rostrum Sutra') which was edited by Rokuya O (or: Old Rokuya) in the 9<sup>th</sup> year of Genroku (=1696). Also the 'Kaisui Itteki' (= 'One Drop of Ocean Water') by Tenshū (Abbot) and by the layman Seiran a lecture book.

Besides these, there are several other kinds of books issued. From these facts one may know how widely this book was spread. But the investigation concerning the truth or falsity of those books, as by Dr. Bunzaburo Matsumoto's 'Study of Diamond-Sutra and the Sixth Patriarch's Rostrum Sutra', among others, should not be overlooked.

Regarding the biography: since the biography of the Sixth Patriarch appears in detail in the first chapter of this writing, 'Personal History and Doings', and in the appendix, it is here omitted.

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<sup>2</sup> Mt. Konkō or Konron Samyaku, Tibetan mountain, appearing in the legend.

<sup>3</sup> Headnotes are quite usual in Japanese books and are what footnotes are in the West.

## **The Dharma-Treasure Rostrum Sutra of the Great Master, the Sixth Patriarch**

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### **1. Personal History and Doings**

Once, when the Patriarch arrived at Pao Lin [=Hōrin monastery]<sup>4</sup>, magistrate Wei [Ch'u]<sup>5</sup> [= I Kyō] of Shao Chou [= Shō Shū] district and local officials travelled to the mountain to invite him to Ch'u Chiang town, where, for the benefit of the assemblage, he could expound the Dharma in the hall of Ta Fan (= Tai Bon) monastery.

After the Master had ascended to his seat, the assembly consisting of the magistrate with his thirty officials, more than thirty Confucian scholars, over a thousand Buddhist monks and nuns, Taoists and laymen – all of them bowed simultaneously before him and expressed their desire to hear about the essentials of the Dharma. The Great Master spoke to them all,

“Learned friends, our Self-Nature of essential wisdom (= Bodhi) is primordially pure and clean. By this mind only, realize directly and become Buddha.

Learned friends, now listen to the personal history and doings of Enō<sup>6</sup>, how he attained to the Dharma.

Enō's father was a civil servant of Fan Yang [= Han Yō], who was dismissed from his official post and banished to be a commoner of Hsin Chou [= Shin Shū] district in Ling Nan [= Rei Nan] (= south of the mountain range). Enō was very unlucky as his father died while he was very young, leaving behind Enō's old mother. Having moved to Nan Hai (= Nan Kai) and being in distress and poverty, (Enō) sold firewood at the market. Once, a customer, having bought some firewood, ordered it to be brought to his shop and to be delivered there.

After having received the money and having passed the gate, Enō saw outside someone reciting a Sutra. On hearing the words of the Sutra just one time, Enō's mind was immediately awakened.

Thereupon Enō asked the man to name the Sutra he was reciting. The man replied, “The Diamond Sutra.”

Upon asking again, “Where do you come from, holding this Sutra-book?” the man replied, “I have come from Tung Ch'an monastery (= Tōzen-Ji) in the Huang Mei [= Ōbai-ken] of Ch'i Chou [= Ki Shū] prefecture. In this monastery there lives the Great Master Hung [= Nin], the Fifth Patriarch, leading the work of saving people. There are more than a thousand disciples. I went there to pay homage, listened to this Sutra and received it. The Great Master used to exhort monks and laymen to hold only the Diamond Sutra, specifically, to see their

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<sup>4</sup> Japanese pronunciation of Chinese names is given in [ ] brackets.

<sup>5</sup> Additional information is given in ( ) brackets.

<sup>6</sup> It was usual not to speak of oneself as “I”, but using the name and the third person singular instead.

Self-Nature by themselves and by thorough realization become Buddha.”

Enō upon hearing this explanation knew he had a causal relationship with this from previous lives.

A person gave Enō ten silver Taels for clothing and food for his old mother and made him go to Huang Mei to prostrate to the Fifth Patriarch.

After having completed arrangements for the mother, Enō left her in peace.

In more than thirty days he reached Huang Mei, and paid homage to the Fifth Patriarch.

The Patriarch asked,

”A man from which area are you and what do you want to seek?”

Enō replied,

”The disciple is a peasant of Hsin Chou in Ling Nan (= South of the mountain range) and has come from afar to pay homage to the Master. He seeks only to become a Buddha, not seeking anything else.”

The Patriarch said,

”You are a man of south of the mountain range, that means a lowly one of a remote area, how can you be apt to become a Buddha?”

Enō said,

”Though there are men of the south and of the north, the Buddha-Nature intrinsically is without south and north. The lowly one and the Abbot are not the same, but as to our Buddha-Nature what difference is there?”

The Fifth Patriarch wanted to say more, but seeing all the disciples on his left and right, he made him join the monks and begin work.

Enō said,

”May I tell the Abbot that wisdom always rises in the disciple himself, he does not separate from his Self-Nature which nature is no other than the ‘field of happiness’. - What work does the Abbot want Enō to do?”

The Patriarch said, “This lowly man is of a very sharp basic nature. Don’t speak any more and go to the barn.”

Enō withdrew to the back premises. There was a practitioner who made him split firewood and tread the mill.

More than eight months passed.

One day the Patriarch happened to see Enō and said,

“I think your view can be used, but I am afraid bad men might do you harm. Therefore I didn’t speak with you. Did you know that, or not?” Enō said,

”The disciple also knows the intention of the Master, and I dare not go to the front of the hall, lest people should take notice of me.”

One day, the Patriarch summoned all his disciples and said,

“I must tell you this: the matter of life and death is a great one for the people of the world. All of you, all day long, look only for the ‘field of happiness’ and do not seek to get out of the bitter sea of life and death. When your own nature is deluded, happiness cannot save you. All of you, go away, grasp your own primordial mind and the nature of the essential wisdom (= prajna) and each of you compose a stanza, then come and show me.

If someone has realized the Fundamental-Principle, I shall endow him with the Dharma-robe and make him the Sixth Patriarch. At once, go quickly away, do not delay. If you think or ponder, it is of no use. An enlightened man can see it right away this instant.

If someone is like this, he can see it even on the battlefield of flourishing swords.”

The monks having received this instruction, withdrew and said to each other, “We monks should not compose a stanza by clarifying the mind and using intention. If we did present it to the Abbot, of what use is it? The monk Shen Hsiu, at present our instructor, will certainly write one. If we all write a stanza perfunctorily, this will be using our mental energy unreasonably.”

When the others heard these words, all of them set their hearts at rest and said, “Hereafter, we will rely on the instructor Hsiu. Why should we take the trouble to compose a stanza?”

Shen Hsiu, however, thought, “None of them will submit a stanza, since I am their instructor. I must write the stanza and submit it to the Abbot. If I don’t submit a stanza, how will the Abbot know, how deep or shallow my inner view is?”

My intention in presenting the stanza is good when seeking the Dharma, and bad when seeking the Patriarchate; then I would be of a mind just like an ordinary man robbing the holy rank; how could (holy from ordinary) be distinguished?

If I don’t submit a stanza, I cannot attain the Dharma. Very hard, very hard!”

In front of the Fifth Patriarch’s hall, there was a corridor, about 6 m wide, to be painted by the court artist named Lu Shen (= Ro Chin). For ceremonial veneration in perpetuity he was invited to draw the four different forms of Shakyamuni Buddha while preaching the Lankāvatāra Sutra (= Ryō Ga Kyō ) and the picture of the Fifth Patriarch receiving the Dharma-transmission.

When Shen Hsiu had finished composing a stanza, he tried again and again to present it, but each time he came to the front of the hall, his heart failed him and his body ran with sweat and he could not bring himself to submit it. Even though he tried thirteen times within four days, he still could not present it.

Hsiu then thought, “It will be better to write it at the corridor for the Abbot to see it. If he says it is good, I shall immediately go out, pay homage to him and say, ‘This is Hsiu’s composition.’ If he says, it is insufficient, I shall go into the mountains and pass the years there.

When receiving the reverence of the people<sup>7</sup>, what path shall I practice?”

That night in the third watch (around midnight), making sure no one noticed him, he took a lantern, wrote the stanza on the wall of the south corridor and presented with it the view of his mind.

The stanza runs:

‘The body is the Bodhi-tree,  
the mind is the bright mirror-stand;  
now and then wipe it as much as possible  
and let no dust alight.’

Hsiu having written the stanza, returned to his room without anybody noticing him. Again Hsiu thought, “Tomorrow, when the Fifth Patriarch sees the stanza and is delighted, then I have a karmic cause with the Dharma. If he says that

<sup>7</sup> In case, he would stay at the monastery

it is insufficient, then it is because my delusions of past lives are heavily obstructive. It is hard to weigh the holy view.”

In his room he pondered and could not sit nor lie down with ease. Quickly it was the 5<sup>th</sup> watch (around 4 o'clock a.m.).

The Patriarch knew already that Shen Hsiu had not yet entered the gate and had not experienced his Self-Nature.

At dawn, the Patriarch called Lu Chen, the Court attendant, to paint the drawing on the wall of the south corridor.

Suddenly seeing the stanza, he said, "Court attendant, don't paint the drawing now. Thank you for coming from afar. As the Sutra says 'Whatever has form, all that is delusive.' We shall keep the stanza to make people recite it. If one practices according to this stanza, one can escape falling to evil paths, and there will be great benefit."

He made the disciples burn incense and pay deep obeisance to it. "If you recite this stanza you can come to Self-realization", he said. The disciples recited the stanza and all exclaimed, "Very good!"

The Patriarch called Hsiu at the third watch (around midnight) to the hall and asked,

"Is that stanza your work or not?"

Hsiu said,

"It really is my composition. I dare not try to obtain the Patriarch's rank at random. I hope the Master with compassion will see, please, whether the disciple has a little wisdom or not."

The Patriarch said, "If you have composed this stanza, you have not yet seen your Intrinsic-Nature. You have only reached the outside of the gate, but have not yet entered the gate. If by such a view you try to grasp the unsurpassable Bodhi, it is impossible. The unsurpassable Bodhi can be grasped when you instantaneously realize your Intrinsic-Heart-Mind seeing by yourself your Intrinsic-Nature. Then you can become birthless and deathless. At all times, conscious moment by conscious moment, seeing by Itself, the ten thousand things going on without hindrance. One reality, every reality, the ten thousand circumstances are by themselves thus, thus.

The heart-mind of thus, thus, that is reality. If perceiving like this, that is no other than the Self-Nature of the unsurpassable Bodhi.

Now leave for a while and for one or two days contemplate and compose again a stanza and bring it to me. Upon seeing your stanza, if I recognize that you have entered the gate, I will bestow the Dharma-robe on you."

Shen Hsiu (Jin Shū) made obeisance and left.

Again a few days passed, but the stanza was not composed. His heart like that of a sleepwalker, his mind not at ease, he was as if in a dream, not happy, whether moving or sitting.

Two days later, a boy came towards the mill-house and in passing recited the stanza.

Hui Neng (Enō) hearing it just once, knew immediately that this stanza did did not yet see<sup>8</sup> the Intrinsic-Nature. Although he had not yet been taught, he instantly knew the main essence summarily. When asking the boy,

”What stanza is it that you are reciting?”

the boy replied,

”You country-bumpkin, don’t you know the words of the Great Master saying that for people the matter of life and death is a great one and that now he wants to have someone to bestow the Dharma-robe upon and that he has made the monks compose a stanza to bring and show him. If one realized the Great-Essence, he then would be given the Dharma-robe and would be made the Sixth Patriarch. The senior monk Shen Hsiu wrote this verse of the no-form on the wall of the south corridor, and the Patriarch made all the people recite it and said if we practiced according to this verse we would escape from falling to evil paths and there would be great benefit.”

Hui Neng (Enō) said,<sup>9</sup>

”I also want to recite it to form a karmic cause for my next life. Worthy one, I have been treading the rice mill for more than eight months and have never gone to the front of the hall.

Worthy one, I ask you to lead me before the verse and let me pay obeisance.”

The boy led him before the verse to pay obeisance and Hui Neng (Enō) said,

”Enō doesn’t know the characters, please, read them to me.”

At that time was there a sub-governor of Gōshū with the surname Chō and personal name Nichiyō, who read it aloud. After Hui Neng (Enō) had heard it all, he then said, ”I have another verse and I ask you, Sub-Governor, will you please write it for me?”

The Sub-Governor said,

”You also have composed a verse - that’s extraordinary!”

Hui Neng (Enō) said to the Sub-Governor,

”If you wanted to learn the way of the unsurpassable Bodhi, you should not depreciate a beginner. Among the lowest people there are those of highest wisdom and among the highest men there are those of no wisdom. If you depreciate people, you will commit countless limitless sins.”

The Sub-Governor said, ”Just recite the verse and I will write it for you. If you have grasped the Dharma, you should save me first. Don’t forget that.”

Hui Neng’s (Enō’s) verse runs:

,Bodhi in essence is not a tree,  
The clear mirror also is no stand.  
In essence there is not a thing,  
Where then can dust be attracted to?”

When the stanza was written, all the disciples were amazed and there was no one who did not sigh with admiration. They said to each other,

”How strange! We cannot judge a man according to his figure. How can it be: all this time we have had a Bodhisattva incarnate work for us?”

The Patriarch, seeing the people stunned with amazement and fearing people would do him harm, with his sandal wiped out the verse and said,

”This also does not yet show Self-realization,” and the people all assented.

<sup>8</sup> It is: the one who had composed the stanza, had not realized the Intrinsic-Nature yet.

<sup>9</sup> This is recorded in one edition.



do not transmit it. If you were to transmit this robe, your life would become like a thin thread.

In any case, you should quickly leave. I am afraid people might harm you.”

Hui Neng (Enō) bowed and said,

”Where should I go?”

The Patriarch said,

”When you see Huai (jap. E) stop there; when seeing Hui (jap. Kuwai), hide there.”

Hui Neng (Enō) upon receiving the robe and bowl in the third watch said,

”I am originally a man of the South and really do not know these mountain paths and how I can get to the mouth of the river.”

The Patriarch said,

”You need not worry, I myself will bring you there”.

With the Patriarch accompanying him, they came directly to the market town of Chiuchiang (jap. Kyukō), where the Patriarch made him board a boat.

The Fifth Patriarch took the oars and rowed himself. Hui Neng (Eno) said,

”Please, Master, sit down, the disciple will handle the oars.”

The Patriarch said,

”Really it is me who must ferry you across.” Hui Neng (Enō) said:

”When in the state of delusion, the teacher ferries one across, when one has become enlightened, one ferries oneself across. Though ‘ferry’ is just one word, its usage differs according to the situation in each case. I was born in a borderland, and even my pronunciation is not correct. But I have been honored by the Master’s Dharma being transmitted to me. Now I am already enlightened and my Self-Nature should self-ferry across.”

The Patriarch said,

”That’s it! That’s it! Hereafter the Buddha’s Dharma will be widely spread through you. In three years, after your departure now, I shall leave this world. Now start and make every effort to go south, as far as possible. You should not expound the Dharma too soon. Difficulties about the Buddha’s Dharma will arise.”

Hui Neng (Enō) after having bidden farewell to the Patriarch departed for the south on foot. Within two months I reached the Ta Yu (= Dai Yu) peaks.

( After the Fifth Patriarch had returned, he did not ascend the rostrum for several days. The monks were in doubt and went to ask him, ”Is the master a little ill or in affliction, or not?” The Patriarch said, ”There is no illness. The Dharma-robe is already in the south.” They asked, ”To whom did you transmit it?” He said, The one called Neng (= No) has it.” Now the monks knew.)

Behind me there were a few hundred people pursuing me wishing to rob me of the robe and bowl. Among them there was a monk with the lay family name Ch’en (= Chin) and named Hui Ming (Jap. Emyō) who had been a commander-in-chief of the 4<sup>th</sup> rank. He was of a rough nature, his mind most eagerly set on this search. He was ahead of the others and was overtaking me. I threw robe and bowl down on a rock and said,

”This robe is a token of faith. It should not be fought for by force.” In saying so, I hid myself in the brush-wood.

When Hui Ming (Emyō) reached there and tried to lift it up, it did not move. Then he shouted,

”Lay brother! Lay brother! I have come for the Dharma, not for the robe!”

After that I came out and sat on the rock. Hui Ming (Emyō) paid obeisance and said,

“Please, lay brother, expound the Dharma for me.”

I said,

”If you have really come for the Dharma, you should extinguish all the worldly connections and should not let one thought arise, I will then expound it for you.”

Hui Ming (Emyō) was silent for a while. I said,

“Don’t think good, don’t think evil. At this very moment, what is the primal face of monk Ming (Myō)?” Upon these words, Hui Ming (Emyō) experienced deep enlightenment. Again he said, “Besides the secret words, the secret sense up to now, is there any other secret yet untold, or not?”

Hui-Neng (Enō) said,

”What I have expounded to you is not secret. If you reflect (turn the light back), you will find the secret is with you.”

Hui Ming ( Emyō) said,

”Though I have been at Huang Mei (Obai), I have really not yet looked back upon the Face of my Self. Now, thanks to your guidance, it is just like a man drinking water and who knows himself whether it is hot or cold. Now the Lay brother is my teacher.”

Hui Neng (Enō) said,

”If it is like that with you, let us both together have Huang Mei (Obai) as our master. Maintain it well yourself!”

Again Hui Ming (Emyō) asked,

”From now on, where should I go?”

Hui Neng (Enō) said,

”When you come to a far and remote place, stop there; and when you meet simple folk, remain there.”

Hui Ming (Emyō) paid obeisance and bade farewell.

(Hui Ming (Emyō) returned and when he reached the foot of the mountain, he said to the pursuers, ”I have ascended the rocky steep height. There are no traces. We must look for him on another path.” All the pursuers agreed.

Hui Ming (Emyō) later changed his name to Tao Ming (Dōmyō) to avoid the upper character of Master Hui Neng).

Hui Neng (Enō) hereafter came to Ts’ao Ch’i (= Sōkei) and again was pursued by evil men. At Szu Hui (Shi-E), to avoid difficulties, he joined a band of hunters. In all 15 years passed during which he sometimes expounded the Dharma for the hunters in a manner properly adapted to them.

The hunters always made me guard the nets, but when I saw living creatures therein, I set them free. When mealtime came, I took vegetables and had them cooked beside the meat in the pan. So, when they asked, I said,

”I only eat vegetables cooked beside meat.”

One day, I thought, “It is the proper time to spread the Dharma, and I cannot

flee from it any longer.” So I came out and went to Fa Hsin monastery (=Hōshō-Ji) in Kuang Chou (=Kuōshu). The Dharma-Master Yin Tsung (= Inju) was expounding the Nirvana-Sutra. At the time, the wind was blowing and there was a movement of the flag. One monk said,

”The wind moves.”

Another monk said,

”The flag moves.”

The dispute did not end. I went forth and said,

”The wind does not move, the flag does not move; it is your mind that moves.”

All the monks were startled. Yin Tsung (Injū) invited me and made me take the high seat of honor and asked me about the most profound principle.

Seeing that my words were concise and reasonable and did not stem from the letter, Inju said,

”Lay brother, for sure you are not an ordinary man. Since long I have heard that the Dharma robe of Huang Mei (Ōbai) has come to the south. Is that you, or is it not?”

I said,

”I dare not deny.” At that, Yin Tsung (Injū) paid obeisance and asked me for the transmitted robe and bowl. After taking them, out I showed them to all the monks.

Injū further asked,

”What instructions did Ōbai give when bestowing them?”

I said,

”There was no instruction. He only spoke about Self-realization and did not speak about Zen-sitting and emancipation.

Injū said,

”How is it that he did not speak about Zen-sitting and emancipation?”

I said,

”Because these two are not Buddha’s Dharma. The Buddha’s Dharma is just the Dharma of not-two.”

Yin Tsung (Injū) asked, ”What is the Buddha’s Dharma of not-two?”

I said,

”Priest, you expound the Nirvana-Sutra and clarify Buddha-Nature; that is the Buddha-Dharma of not-two. For example, the Bodhisattva, King Kao Kuei Te Wang (= Ko Ki Toku)<sup>10</sup> said to the Buddha ‘Should transgressing the four grave prohibitions, committing the five sins of adversity and the sin of heresy cut off the good root of Buddha-Nature, or not?’ The Buddha said ‘There are two kinds of good roots: one is permanent, one is non-permanent. Buddha-Nature is neither permanent nor non-permanent. Therefore it is not cut off. This is called Not-two.’ One is good, the other is not good. Buddha-Nature is neither good nor not good. This is called not-two.

The ordinary man sees two, Skandhas (= aggregates) and Dhatus (six sense organs, their six objects of perception and six ways of perceiving). The wise man attains the Nature which is not-two. This nature of not-two is no other than Buddha-Nature.”

Yin Tsung (Injū) hearing this expounding was delighted, and putting his hands together palm to palm, he said,

<sup>10</sup> Ko = high, Ki = venerable, Toku = virtue; it is: the high and venerable virtuous King

”My expounding of the Sutra is like bits of brick and pebbles. Your discourse is like genuine gold.” At that, he made me have my head shaved and asked me to serve him as his teacher.

Then under the Bodhi-tree, I opened the Dharma-gate of Tozan (= 5<sup>th</sup> Patriarch). I received the Dharma at Tozan and suffered great hardship, my life resembled a thin hanging thread.

Today, having the opportunity of meeting you, magistrate, officials, monks, nuns, Taoists, Buddhists and laymen, is certainly due to nothing else but the causal relations of previous kalpa. Further, by our offerings to all Buddhas during our past lives and due to having equally planted good roots, for the first time we have the opportunity to listen to the above teaching of the school of instantaneous enlightenment and the attaining of the Dharma. This teaching is in accordance with the transmission of past saints, and it is not my own knowledge.

I ask you, if you want to listen to the past saints’ teaching, purify your heart-mind each of you. After you have heard it all, if each one of you clears away his doubts by himself, you will become like the past saints without any difference.“

The assembly, after having heard the Dharma, made obeisance with great pleasure and withdrew.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Wisdom II.**

#### **Prajna**

The next day, being asked by the magistrate Wei Ch’u (=Ishi) the Patriarch ascended the seat and spoke to the whole assembly,

“All of you, with purified heart-mind keep hold of the Mahaprajnaparamita.” He went on to say,

“Good learned men, the wisdom of the Bodhisattva prajna is the primordial (a priori) root source of humans of the world. Only due to the delusions of the heart-mind they cannot recognize It by themselves. So it is through the guidance of great masters that they should come to ‘kensho’<sup>11</sup>.

You really should know that as to Buddha-Nature there is no difference between the ignorant and the wise ones. Only because delusion and enlightenment are not the same with each man, there are the ignorant and the wise.

Now, good learned men, I will expound the Dharma of the Mahaprajnaparamita to you, to make each of you acquire wisdom; so listen with intensity.

Good learned men, ordinary men repeat by mouth all day long ‘wisdom’ (prajna), but they don’t know the wisdom (prajna) of their Self-Nature.

It is like talking about food and still not being filled. If one only expounds by mouth the void, one cannot, through myriads of kalpa, come to ‘kensho’ and finally there will be no result.

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<sup>11</sup> ‘kensho’ verballt: ‘seeing one’s Nature’ - but this is misleading: as if there were one to see, and one seen. That exactly is not the case: the seer and the seen are One.

Good learned men, ‘Mahaprajnaparamita’ - this is Sanskrit and here we call it ‘The Great Wisdom to Reach the Other Shore’. It should be practiced with our heart-mind, and not by repeating it by mouth. If one repeats it just by mouth and does not practice in the heart-mind, it is like a phantom, like an elusive image, like dew, like lightning.

But, if one does repeat it by mouth and the heart-mind is practicing, then heart-mind and mouth become mutually corresponding.  
The Essential (primordial) Nature - that is Buddha. There is no other Buddha separate from this Nature.

What is this that is called ‘maha’? ‘Maha’, that means ‘great’. The extent of the heart-mind is as vast and great as empty space without boundaries, without being square or round, neither being blue nor yellow, red or white, neither being above nor below, long or short. There is neither anger nor joy, neither right nor wrong, good or bad and IT has neither head nor tail.

The lands of all Buddhas are all like empty space. The mysterious Nature of people of the world is essentially empty, and not a single thing (dharma) can be attained in that. The true Emptiness of the Self-Nature is like that.

Good learned men, when you hear me expounding Emptiness, don’t adhere to Emptiness. The first thing is: not to stick to Emptiness.  
If you sit quietly with empty heart-mind, you will stick to the Emptiness of no-consciousness.

Good learned men, the Emptiness of the world can contain myriads of things of color and form, sun, moon, stars, mountains, rivers, the great earth, springs, ravines, grass, trees and woods, bad and good men, bad and good Dharma, heavens and hells, all the great oceans, all the mounts of Sumeru, all these are in the Emptiness. Again, just like that is the Empty Nature of people of the world.

Good learned men, the Self-Nature can contain myriads of things; this is called ‘great’. Since the myriads of things are all in the Nature of all men: when you see the bad or the good of all the people, you neither catch it all nor throw it away and (*this way*) you don’t adhere to it. So, the heart-mind being like empty space is thus called ‘great’ and therefore one says ‘maha’.

Good learned men, deluded people preach by mouth, the wise ones practice in their heart-mind. Also, there are deluded ones who sit quietly with blank mind, without any thought, calling themselves ‘great’. These kinds of people are not qualified to talk, because of their wrong views.

Good learned men, the heart-mind, being vast and of great extent, is great. It pervades all of the Dharma-world<sup>12</sup> and when we use it, it is very clear and distinct and it can be applied to everything clearly; that is to say it knows everything. All as such (per se) is one – one is all. It is free in coming and going. Heart-mind and body are without stagnation. This then is wisdom (prajna).

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<sup>12</sup> i.e.: all the universe, the whole phenomenal world

Good learned men, all wisdom of prajna comes forth from the Self-Nature, does not enter from outside. Don't make the mistake to use the mind intentionally. This is called to use the True-Nature by oneself. One truth is all truths. The extent of the heart-mind is a great matter, so don't practice the small way. Don't preach emptiness with your mouth all day long, while in your heart-mind you don't practice this way. This is just like an ordinary man who calls himself king, but cannot become one after all. Such a man is not my disciple.

Good learned men, what is called 'prajna' that is 'wisdom' in T'ang.<sup>13</sup> Anywhere, at any time, moment by moment of consciousness not being foolish and practicing wisdom continuously, - this then is the practice of wisdom, namely the practice of prajna. If one moment of consciousness is foolish, then prajna is extinct. If one moment of consciousness is wise, then prajna comes forth. People of the world are of foolish delusion and don't see prajna. Although they preach prajna by mouth, in their heart-mind they are always foolish. But they say of themselves: We are practicing prajna. While they preach emptiness moment by moment of consciousness, they don't know true Emptiness. Prajna is of no form or shape. The heart-mind of wisdom is just that. If we interpret it like that, then it is called the wisdom of prajna.

What does 'paramita' mean? This is just a word of the West-country (= India) and in T'ang (= China of the T'ang dynasty) it is called 'reaching the other shore'. Understanding this meaning separates from appearing and disappearing. By clinging to circumstances appearing and disappearing arise, just as water has waves and billows. This is called 'this shore'. Separate from the circumstances there are no appearing and disappearing, being like constantly flowing water. This is called 'the other shore'. Therefore it is called 'paramita'.

Good learned men, deluded people, just in that moment when they preach by mouth, have delusions and errors. If we practice moment by moment of consciousness, that is called the True Nature. When we realize this Dharma: that is the Dharma of prajna. When we practice this discipline: that is the practice of prajna. When we don't practice it, we are ordinary men, when we practice it just one moment of consciousness, we ourselves are equal to Buddha.

Good learned men, ordinary people are no other than Buddha. Evil passions are no other than Bodhi. When the prior moment of consciousness is deluded, it is an ordinary man. When the subsequent moment of consciousness is enlightened, it is a Buddha. When by the prior moment of consciousness we cling to the circumstances, there are evil passions. If by the subsequent moment of consciousness we separate from the circumstances, it is Bodhi.

Good learned men, the Mahaprajnaparamita is the most venerable, the most supreme, the foremost. It does not stay, it does not go, again it does not come either.

All the Buddhas of the three worlds (past, present, future) arise from it.

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<sup>13</sup> = China of the T'ang-dynasty

Really, by this great wisdom we destroy the five aggregates of delusive passions and defilements. When we practice like that, we for certain accomplish the Buddha-Way and the three poisons become precepts, contemplation and wisdom.

Good learned men, this Dharma-gate of mine brings forth from one prajna 84000 wisdoms. Why is that so? Because worldly men have 84000 kinds of defilements. When there is no defilement, wisdom always manifests itself and it is not separate from the Self-Nature. For those who realize this Dharma, - just no-thought, no-memories, no-falsehood and no-error arising, with the Self-Nature of true Suchness contemplating all things with wisdom, neither taking up nor throwing away, this then is the accomplishment of the Buddha -Way by Self-realization.

Good learned men, if you wish to enter the deepest Dharma-world as well as the samadhi of prajna, you must in any case practice the discipline of prajna and keep reciting the Diamond-Prajna-Sutra. Then you will be able to attain Self-realization, and you should know that the virtue of this Sutra is immeasurable and boundless. Without minute explanations, it is clearly praised and glorified in this Sutra. This Dharma-Gate is the Supreme Vehicle and is expounding to men of great wisdom, to men (people) of superior roots (high disposition by nature). When men (people) of small roots (= low disposition by nature) hear it, no-faith arises in their heart. Why is that so? For example, it is like the heavenly dragon shedding rain on Enbudai (Jambudvipa = this world). Towns and villages all drift about like floating leaves of the jujube-tree. When rain falls into the great ocean, the ocean neither increases nor decreases. When people of the Great Vehicle or people of the Supreme Vehicle hear the expounding of the Diamond-Sutra, their heart-minds open and they come to realization. Thus we know that our Essential-Nature by itself is endowed with the wisdom of prajna and by itself is always contemplating with wisdom. Therefore we do not lean on characters (= scriptures).

For example, like it is with the rain water that does not come from the sky, but basically is caused by the dragon: all living beings, all plants and trees, the sentient and the insentient, each and all receive the moisture. When a hundred rivers and streams finally enter the great ocean they become one body. The prajna-wisdom of the Essential-Nature of living beings is also just like this.

Good learned men, when men (people) of small roots hear of this teaching of sudden enlightenment, they are like plants and trees of small roots: When they are showered by rain, each and all tumble down, unable to keep on growing. Men of small roots are like these. Their intrinsically having the prajna-wisdom is no different from that of men (people) of great wisdom. Why is it though that they, when hearing the Dharma, still don't realize by themselves? It is because the obstacles of deluded views are heavy and the root of passions is deep, just like great clouds cover the sun. If the wind does not blow, the light of the sun does not appear.

Although the wisdom of prajna is neither great nor small, delusion and enlightenment of the own heart-mind of all living beings are not the same. The deluded heart-mind practices looking outward, searching for the Buddha and does not yet realize its own Self-Nature. So it is with those of small roots.

When we realize the instantaneous teaching, we won't clutch to an exterior practice. But if we always arouse right views about our Self-heart-mind, the passions and defilements can never stain it; this is 'kensho'.<sup>14</sup>

Good learned men, if we abide neither inside nor outside, we are free in coming and going and remove the clinging of the heart-mind. We can then communicate with everything without obstruction. If we practice this discipline well, it essentially does not differ from the Prajna-Sutra.

Good learned men, all the sutras, as well as the various writings, the Great and the Small Vehicle (Mahayana and Hinanyana) and the Sutra of the twelve divisions, all are set forth because men are of different ranks. According to the levels of wisdom the ranks are well established. If there were no men in the world, all the myriads of Dharmas would not by themselves have originally existed. So we know that the myriads of Dharma arise owing this to each man himself. When we teach that all the Sutras and writings exist because of man, this is so, because among the people there are fools and there are wise men. We define the fools as small men, the wise ones as great men. The fools ask the wise men, and the wise ones preach for the fools. When the fools all of a sudden come to realization and their heart-mind is opened, they are no different from the wise men.

Good learned men, when not yet realized, the Buddha is nothing but an ordinary man, yet in one moment of consciousness coming to realization, the ordinary man is a Buddha.

So we know that the myriads of Dharmas (things) are all within our own heart-mind. Why then don't we see instantaneously the Essential-Nature of the True Reality which is in our heart-mind?

In the Bodhisattva-Precept-Sutra it is said,

'Our Essential-Nature is intrinsically pure and clean.' If we knew our own heart-mind, we all would accomplish the Buddha-Way by Self-Realization.

In the Jōmyō-Sutra<sup>15</sup> it is said,

'At that moment, all at once one grasps the Essential heart-mind.'

Good learned men, when I was at Master Nin's (Fifth Patriarch) and just once heard him, upon his words I instantly came to realization and perceived immediately the Essential Nature of the True Reality. Therefore, with this Dharma-teaching (teaching-Dharma) I walk about to make practitioners of Buddhism suddenly realize Bodhi, respectively perceive their own heart-mind and by themselves see their Essential-Nature.

If one has not yet come to realization by oneself, one should search for a great master, one who understands the Supreme Dharma and directly points out the correct Path. This is because such a great Master has a great karmic relation. He causes one by excellent guidance to come to Self-Realization.

All the good Dharma is brought forth by the masters, because all the Buddhas of the Three worlds (past, present, future) and the Sutras of the twelve divisions are within the nature of man, which nature is by itself intrinsically endowed.

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<sup>14</sup> spiritueller Durchbruch

<sup>15</sup> Yuima-Sutra (Sanskrit Vimalakirti)

If one cannot come to realization by oneself one should ask for the guidance of a master and see it actually. One who comes to realization by himself, need not search for It outside. Those who are fixed on emancipation through the guidance of a master should stop acting like this. Why is that so? Because within our Self-Faith (faith in oneself) there is wisdom and it comes to realization by itself. If one arouses bad delusions, illusory thoughts, becomes topsy-turvy, thinking the master is outside, then even though the master gives instructions, it cannot save one. If the true prajna-contemplation arises, in an instant, illusive thoughts are altogether extinguished. If we grasp our Self-nature with one realization, we can reach the Buddha-land.

Good learned men, prajna-contemplation, clearing inside and outside, grasps the Self of our essential heart-mind. If we know the essential heart-mind, we are emancipated from the beginning.

The moment we come to emancipation, that is then the Prajna-samadhi, that is no-mind. What is it that is called 'no-mind'? If, while seeing all things, our heart-mind does not become dirty by clinging, that is no-mind. Its activity pervades everywhere and does not attach anywhere. If we only purify our fundamental heart-mind, then, even though we let the six kinds of consciousness come out of the six gates (= sense organs) and go into the six kinds of dust (= objects perceived by the six senses), there is no stain, no mixture. It is free in coming and going, circulating without blockage. This is the prajna-samadhi-freedom, liberation (emancipation) called the practice of no-mind. But if we try not to think of a hundred things by stopping all thoughts, that is Dharma-bondage and called distorted view.

Good learned men, he who realizes the Dharma of no-mind, intimately knows all the myriads of Dharma. He who realizes the Dharma of no-mind, perceives the world of all Buddhas. He who realizes the Dharma of no-mind, reaches the rank of Buddha.

Good learned men, in future generations, those who grasp my Dharma and through the Dharma-gate of sudden enlightenment see and accordingly practice in the same way, should vow to serve the Buddha without regressing until their body ends its days. These ones will for certain enter the holy rank. Moreover, they should transmit the teaching that was handed down to us in silence, and should not hide the right Dharma.

If people do not see and practice in the same way and are in a different Dharma, they will damage the predecessors, and that is of no advantage after all. I fear that fools who cannot understand may slander this Dharma-gate and for hundreds of kalpa (aeons), thousands of lives will cut off their Buddha-seed-nature.

Good learned men, I have a formless poem, and each of you, whether layman or monk, should recite it and practice only accordingly. If you do not practice by yourself, but only memorize my words, there will be no advantage.

Listen to my poem; it runs:

'Clear grasp of Buddha's teaching and clear grasp of mind  
is like the sun moving in the empty sky.

To transmit the Dharma of Self-realization

He<sup>16</sup> appears in the world, destroys wrong schools.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Buddha Shakyamuni

<sup>17</sup> meaning other religious teachings

In the Dharma there is neither sudden nor gradual.  
 Due to delusion or enlightenment there are slow and quick.  
 Yet, this gate of Self-realization cannot be grasped fully by a fool.  
 Though there are myriad ways of teaching,  
 according to the principle they come to one.  
 In the dark house of worldly concerns  
 always the sun of wisdom should come forth.  
 When wrong comes, worldly concerns appear;  
 when right comes, worldly concerns are removed.  
 When both, wrong and right, are not used,  
 immaculacy and purity will become eternity.<sup>18</sup>  
 Bodhi intrinsically is the Self-nature.  
 When the mind arises, IT is falsified.  
 A pure mind amidst falsehood,  
 if it is just right, there are not the three obstacles.<sup>19</sup>  
 worldly men, if they follow the Way,  
 nothing at all hinders It.  
 If we ourselves always look at our own faults,  
 we will be in accordance with the Way.  
 All colors and forms have their way,  
 and they all do not impede each other.  
 Searching for another way separate from the Way,  
 until the end of one's life one will not realize the Way.  
 Wave by wave you pass through a life,<sup>20</sup>  
 finally you will be annoyed by it.  
 If you want to see the true Way,  
 right action, that is the Way.  
 If you yourself are without the mind of the Way,  
 you are walking in the dark, not seeing the Way.  
 If you are truly a man practicing the Way,  
 you don't see the mistakes of the world.  
 If we see the faults of others,  
 it will support our own faults.  
 Our faults have their wrong cause by themselves;  
 only if we ourselves get rid of this wrong mind,  
 we beat and destroy worldly concerns.<sup>21</sup>  
 Then hate and love don't worry our heart,  
 we lie down stretching out both feet at length.  
 If you want to evolve others,  
 you yourself must have the expedient means.  
 Don't let him<sup>22</sup> have doubts,  
 and his true Self-nature will appear.  
 Buddha-Dharma is this secular world;  
 separate from this world It is not realized.  
 Searching for Bodhi separate from this world,  
 is like searching for a hare with horns.

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<sup>18</sup> i.e., there is no birth, no death

<sup>19</sup> anger, greed, folly

<sup>20</sup> moment by moment by delusion

<sup>21</sup> = delusive thoughts and feelings

<sup>22</sup> the disciple

The right view is called 'leaving the world'.  
 Wrong views are nothing but the world.  
 When wrong and right are completely discarded,  
 the Nature of Bodhi is there by itself.  
 This is the poem of the sudden teaching,  
 it is called the Great Dharma Boat.  
 Hearing this in delusion, it takes kalpas (aeons),  
 but realization happens in an instant."

The Master further said,  
 "Now at Daibon-monastery I preach this sudden teaching. Extensively I pray  
 that the sentient beings of the Dharma-world under these words may experience  
 Self-realization and become Buddha."

At the time, magistrate I (Wei), officials, monks and laymen listened to the  
 Master's teaching, and there was no one who did not experience enlightenment.  
 All sighed with happiness saying,  
 "Very good! How could we expect a Buddha to appear in Reinan!"

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Doubts and Questions**

One day, magistrate I (Wei) held a great feast for the Master. When the feast  
 was over, the magistrate asked the Master to ascend the rostrum. He, like  
 the officials, knights and commoners, paid obeisance and asked in an austere  
 posture, saying,  
 "The disciple I (= Wei) has listened to the Master's expounding of the Dharma;  
 really it is mysterious - incomprehensible. Now I have some doubts, so I ask  
 you, please, with your great compassion, to especially clarify these for me.."

The Master said,  
 "If you have any doubts, then ask and I will certainly explain it for you."  
 Sir I (= Wei) said,  
 "What the Master expounds, is that not the Buddha's Way of the Great Master  
 Bodhidharma?"  
 The Master said, "Yes, it is."  
 The Honorable (I=Wei) said,  
 "As the disciple (I=Wei) heard: when Bodhidharma at first instructed Emperor Bu  
 (Wu) of Ryo (Liang), the Emperor asked him 'Throughout my life I have built  
 monasteries, had many monks ordained, given alms and arranged meals. What  
 is the merit and virtue of all that?' Bodhidharma said 'Really no merit and virtue.'  
 The disciple (I= Wei) still cannot understand the reason for that. I beg the Master  
 to explain it for me, please."

The Master said,

“Really no merit and virtue. Don’t doubt the words of the prior Saint. Emperor Bu’s (Wu’s) mind was wrong, and he did not know the right Dharma. Building monasteries, having monks ordained, giving alms and arranging meals was what is called ‘seeking good luck’; and seeking good luck cannot become merit and virtue. Merit-virtue is within the Dharmakaya and it is not within the practice of attaining good luck.“

The Master went on to say, “Self-realization, that is merit; equality, that is virtue. Consciousness by consciousness without stagnation and constantly seeing the real, wondrous functions of the True-Nature - that is called merit-virtue. Inwardly, when the heart-mind’s being is humility, that is merit. Outwardly, acting with politeness, that is virtue.

The Self-Nature erecting the myriads of things, that is merit; separating the essence of the heart from the thinking, that is virtue. Not separating from the Self-Nature, that is merit; application of no stain - that is virtue. If you attempt to gain the merit-virtue of the Dharmakaya, then just act accordingly<sup>23</sup>, that will be real merit and virtue. A man practicing merit and virtue, in his heart-mind does not make light of others, but always acts with respect and politeness.

If the heart-mind always is in contempt of others and does not cut off the ego, then this is without its own merit. If the recognition of the Self-Nature is false and unreal, then it is without its own virtue, because the ego is aggrandized by itself and always despises everything.

Good learned men, consciousness by consciousness with nothing in between, that is merit. When the heart-mind functions are even and straight, that is virtue. To train one’s own nature, that is merit. To train one’s own person, that is virtue. Good learned men, merit and virtue should be seen within one’s Self-Nature. This is not what alms-giving and memorial services search for. Therefore, good luck-virtue and merit-virtue are different.

Emperor Bu (Wu) did not know the truth which was not the fault of my ancestral Master.“

The magistrate asked again,

“Your disciple sees that laymen and monks always pray to Amithaba Buddha, wishing to be born in the Western Region (= paradise). Please, Master will you explain whether or not they will be born there? I hereby ask you: would you please, for my sake, resolve my doubts.“

The Master replied,

“Honorable Shi, listen attentively. Enō will explain it to you. The World honored One, when in the castle of Shaii (Sanskrit = S’rāvasti) he expounded about being guided to the Western Region, as it is made clear in a Sutra ‘It is not far from here.’ When we discuss it at a superficial level, the miles amount to 108 000. That is to say, if in the body there are ten evils<sup>24</sup> and eight faults according to what he said it becomes a great distance. It is far only for those of low roots, he said, but it is near, so he expounded, for those of superior wisdom. Although there are two kinds of men, there are not two kinds of Dharma.

Since delusion and enlightenment differ, there is the view of slow and quick.

<sup>23</sup> i.e. according to what is said above about merit and virtue.

<sup>24</sup> Ten evils: killing, stealing, evil sex relations, lying, pompous speech, speaking evil of others, double-tongued speech, greed, anger, wrong views.

The deluded man prays to the Buddha, trying to be born there in the Western Region. The enlightened man purifies the heart-mind by himself, for it is as the Buddha said,

'According to the purity of the heart-mind so the Buddha-land is pure.'

Honorable Shi, even people of the Eastern Region, if only they purify their heart-mind, they are without sin. Though a man may be of the West - when his heart-mind is not purified, there is fault. A man of the East commits sins and prays to the Buddha, seeking to be born in the Western Region. A man of the West commits sins and prays to the Buddha, seeking to be born in what country? The ordinary man and the fool, not recognizing the Self-Nature and not knowing that the Pure Land is within himself, wishes the East, wishes the West; but for the enlightened man each abode is the very same. Therefore the Buddha said, 'In whichever place I live, there is always ease and happiness.'

Honorable, when you don't have no-good in your heart-ground, it is already not far to the Western Region. If you hold a heart-mind of no-good, it is very hard for you, when praying to the Buddha, to reach his abode.

Now, good learned men, I advise you, first remove the ten evils, that is to walk 100 000 miles. Thereafter you remove the eight faults, proceeding further 8 000 miles. If you realize your Self-Nature consciously moment by moment and always behave with even balance, arriving there is as in the snap of a finger, and you behold Amithaba.

Honorable, just practicing the ten good deeds, would there then be any need to wish to be born in the Buddha's abode?

But if you do not cut off the ten evils, which Buddha will you ask to appear?

If you realize the sudden Dharma of no-birth, you will behold the Western Region in just an instant. If you do not realize it, but pray to the Buddha seeking that birth, the road being so long, how can you get there?

Enō will for all of you, in an instant, shift the Western Region making you behold it in front of your eyes. Does each of you wish to behold it, or not?"

All the people paid obeisance and said, "If we could see it here, why should we wish for a rebirth in the Pure Land? We beg you, Master, by your compassion, make the Western Region appear so that all of us can behold it, please."

The Master said,

"Great assembly, the physical body of the ordinary man is a castle. Eyes, ears, nose, tongue, these are the gates. Outside there are five gates, within there is the gate of intention, the heart-mind is the ground. Nature is the king. The king dwells on the mind-ground. If there is nature, there is the king. When nature departs, there is no king. If there is nature, body and mind exist. When nature departs, body and mind perish. Awaken the Buddha within your nature and don't search for it outside. When the self-nature is deluded, that is a sentient being. When the self-nature awakens, that is a Buddha.

Compassion, this is Kanzeon (= Avalokitesvara). Joyful almsgiving is called Seishi (= Mahāsthāma). Ability of purification, that is Shakyamuni. Even balance, this is Amida (= Amithaba); the ego, that is Mt. Sumeru. Malice (ill-nature), that is the ocean water. Worldly concerns, those are the waves. A poisonous

mind, that is the evil dragon. Falsehood, that is an evil demon. Trivial worries, those are fish and turtles. Greed and anger, these are hell. Stupidity and idle complaints, these are the beasts.

Good learned men, if you always practice the ten good deeds, then the Heavenly Hall comes, and when you remove the ego, Mt. Sumeru topples over. When malice leaves, the ocean waters will dry up. If there are no worldly concerns, all waves will vanish. When you forget the poisonous mind, fish and dragons will be eradicated. On the mind-ground there is a Nyorai (= Tathagata) of enlightened nature emitting a great bright light which outwardly illumines the six gates. It is pure and is able to break all the deities of the six kinds of greed. When He shines within the Self-Nature, the three poisons will be eliminated and at once all sins of hell will be extinguished.

If inside and outside are thoroughly clear, this does not differ from the Western Region. If we do not engage in this practice, how could we go there?"

All the assembled ones listened to this and clearly realized their Self-Nature. Each and all paid obeisance and together heaved a sigh of praise, saying, "Very good!". They exclaimed, "May all sentient beings of the Dharma-world (= universe), all who hear this, at once experience enlightenment (= self-realization)."

The Master said, "Good learned men, when you wish to practice, you can do this as laymen. You need not be at a monastery as monks. If you practice well as laymen, you are like an Eastern man of a good heart-mind. When you are at a monastery and don't practice, you are like a Western man of a bad heart-mind. Only when the heart-mind is pure is it the Self-Nature of the Western Region."

The Honorable magistrate further asked, "How does a layman practice? I ask you, for our sake, please, instruct us."

The Master said,

"For the great assembly I make a formless poem. When you just practice accordingly, it is the same as always being with me. When you do not engage in this practice, but shave your head and become a monk, there will be no advantage on your Way.

The poem runs:

When the heart-mind is at peace  
 Why observe the precepts?  
 When behavior is straight,  
 Why use Zen-practice?  
 If we owe love and favor to parents,  
 We discharge our duties to them.  
 If there is loyalty of high and low,  
 There is mercy for each other.  
 If there is modesty,  
 Upper and lower classes are peaceful with each other.  
 If there is endurance,  
 A lot of evils don't make noise.  
 If we can produce fire by rubbing wood,  
 A red lotus flower for sure comes forth from the mud.

What is bitter to the mouth,  
 Is certainly good medicine,  
 What is adverse to the ear,  
 Is for sure faithful advice.  
 When we amend our faults,  
 Certainly wisdom comes forth.  
 When we hold on to our insufficiencies,  
 There is no wisdom in the heart-mind.  
 If in daily life we always act benevolently,  
 The Way is yet not gained by giving money for alms.  
 Bodhi is only sought at the heart-mind,  
 Why then trouble to search outside for the mystery?  
 If you practice according to my expounding which you hear,  
 The Heavenly Hall is just before your eyes.”

Again the Master said,

”Good learned men, all of you should practice according to this poem,  
 catch sight of the Self-Nature and accomplish the Buddha-Way directly.  
 There are no opposites in the Dharma.

The assembled ones will disperse for a while; I shall return to Sōkei. If the  
 assembled ones have any doubt, come to ask me.”

At the time, the magistrate, the local officials, good men and faithful women  
 who were present, could all and each attain Self-realization (open their heart-mind  
 in Satori). They faithfully accepted it and really practiced it.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Samadhi – Wisdom**

In instructing the people, the Master said,

“Good learned men, for my Dharma-gate the basis is samadhi-wisdom.

All of you, don’t be deluded about samadhi and wisdom, saying that they  
 are different. Samadhi-wisdom is one and not two. Samadhi, that is the body  
 of wisdom. Wisdom, that is the function of samadhi. When we are one with  
 wisdom, there is Samadhi to this wisdom. When we are one with samadhi,  
 there is wisdom to this samadhi. If you know this fact, then you realize  
 samadhi and wisdom equally.

Of the various men who apply themselves to the Way, some, first having  
 samadhi, arouse wisdom; some, first having wisdom, arouse samadhi.

But don’t say these are different! For those who hold to this view of  
 difference, there are two aspects in the Dharma: preaching good words with  
 the mouth, while the heart-mind within is not good. Therefore Samadhi and  
 wisdom are in vain, when samadhi and wisdom are not held as one. When  
 heart-mind and mouth are both good, when inside and outside are of one kind,  
 then samadhi-wisdom is one.

Concerning the practice of self-realization there is no room for debate. If one  
 discusses about priority and posteriority of Samadhi and wisdom, one is just  
 the same as a deluded man. If you do not cut off winning and losing,

ego-things will increase, and you fail to separate from the four concepts.<sup>25</sup>  
 Good learned men, how are samadhi and wisdom one? They are like lamp and light. If there is a lamp, there is a light. If there is no lamp, it is dark. Though there are two terms, there is intrinsically but one body. So, also the Dharma of Samadhi and wisdom is just like that.”

In instructing the people, the Master said,  
 “Good learned men, what is called the one-act-samadhi means always being one with the direct heart-mind everywhere, while walking, dwelling, sitting or lying. As it is said in the Jōmyō-Sutra(= Vimalakirti-Sutra)  
 ’The direct heart-mind, that is the hall of practice. The direct heart-mind, that is the Pure Land.’  
 You should not think crookedly, with the mouth speaking rightly, the mouth preaching the one-act-samadhi, while not being one with the direct heart-mind – don’t do so! If only you are one with the direct heart-mind, there is no clinging to anything.  
 The deluded man sticks to form-things and clings to the one-act-samadhi by saying ’Don’t move while sitting and don’t arouse the heart-mind unreasonably, this then is the one-act-samadhi.’ Those who understand it like this are the same as inanimate things, and this causes the Way to be hindered.

Good learned men, the Way should flow freely. How does it come to stagnation? If the heart-mind does not get stuck in things, then the Way flows freely. If the heart-mind gets stuck in things, it is called self-binding. If one says not moving while sitting is right, then it is just like Sariputra who sat painlessly in the woods and yet was scolded by Yuima Kitsu (= Vimalakirti).

Good learned men, there again are those who teach sitting and contemplating the heart-mind, observing calmness, not moving, not rising, in the belief that by doing so they heap up virtue. Deluded men, being ignorant and adhering to this, become insane. Such cases are frequent. This kind of teaching, as we know, is a great mistake.

In instructing the people, the Master said,  
 “Good learned men, in pursuing the true Way there is intrinsically neither quick nor slow. The nature of man itself, however, is sharp (bright) or dull. The deluded man responds to the gradual Way, the enlightened man practices the quick Way. But when realizing the essential heart-mind by oneself, beholding one’s own Self-Nature, there is no such difference. Therefore quick and gradual are set up as pseudonyms.

Good learned men, this Dharma-Gate of mine since ancient times makes no-mind its principle, makes no-form its substance, and the non-abiding its basis. What we call ‘no-form’ is: within form separate from form. What we call ‘no-mind’ is: within mind no mind. What is called ‘non-abiding’ is the essential Nature of man.

Good and bad, beauty and ugliness of the world, enemy or friend, when being abused or beating back, arguments and quarrel, regard one as well as the other as emptiness.

<sup>25</sup> Four concepts of men: 1) ego, 2) mankind, 3) sentient beings, 4) people of long life

Each moment of consciousness, not thinking of the present scenery, nor of the previous consciousness, the present consciousness nor the future consciousness. But moment by moment of consciousness with thoughts in succession unceasingly, that is called creating fetters. So, being above all things, non-abiding moment by moment of consciousness, that is non-binding. We make just this non-abiding the basis.

Good learned men, when we are separate from all forms, this is called making no-form. If we can separate from all forms, then the Dharma-body is clean and pure. This is to make no-form the substance (body).

Good learned men, when in the various circumstances the heart-mind is not stained, this is called no-mind. But if we ourselves are above thoughts and are always separate from the various circumstances, being above the circumstances, the heart-mind does not come forth. If we only don't think of a hundred things, we eliminate all consciousness; when even one bit of consciousness does not exist, that is death, and we shall be born in another place. This is a great error.

If those who apply themselves to the way know what has been said above, yet don't know the principle of the Dharma and are themselves mistaken, this is still tolerable. But when, beyond this, they recommend their own delusion to others making them blind to the real fact, this is slandering the Buddha's Sutra. Therefore, setting up no-mind is the principle.

Good learned men, how is setting up no-mind the principle?

Just preaching Self-realization with the mouth the deluded man has thoughts about circumstances, and when about these thoughts there arise wrong views, then all the deluded worldly concerns and illusions come forth from this.

In the Self-nature intrinsically there is nothing to be gained. If one looks at it as something to gain and vainly preaches about misfortune and luck, then that too is delusive worldly trouble and a wrong view.

Therefore this Dharma-gate sets up no-mind as the principle.

Good learned men, saying 'Mu' (Nothing), what is not there?

Saying 'thought', what do we think of? When we say 'Mu' (Nothing), it has not two forms and there is no consciousness of all the various delusive worldly troubles. When saying 'thought', we think of the essential nature of real Suchness. Real Suchness, that is the body of the thought. The thought, that is the function of real Suchness. When the essential nature of real Suchness arouses thoughts, that is not the thinking ability of eyes, ears, nose and tongue. Real Suchness has nature, therefore it arouses the thoughts. When real Suchness is nothing, then eyes, ears, colors and sounds at that time break down.

Good learned men, when the self-nature of real Suchness arouses thoughts, although the six senses (roots) can see, hear, realize and know, it is not stained by the ten thousand circumstances and still the true nature is always free. Therefore it is said in a Sutra 'Though real Suchness can well discern the forms of all things, it is immovable in the Primary Stage.'"

## Chapter 5

### Zazen

In instructing the people, the Master said,  
 "The Zazen of this gate originally (in reality) does not cling to the heart-mind, nor does it cling to purity, and also it is not no-motion. If we speak of clinging to the heart- mind, we know the heart-mind is intrinsically a delusion, it is a phantom, therefore there is no place upon which to cling. If we speak of clinging to purity: the nature of man is intrinsically pure. But due to deluded consciousness real Suchness is covered. When there is no delusive thought, the nature is clean and pure by itself. If we raise the heart-mind and cling to purity, then it arouses the illusion of purity. There is no dwelling place for delusion. Clinging, that is delusion itself. Purity has neither form nor shape. When we set up a form of purity we call that a device. Those who hold this view hinder the activity of their own intrinsic nature and rather are fettered by purity.

Good learned men, if you practice no-motion and while seeing all the people, you don't look at the right or wrong, good or evil, nor their failures and sufferings – then this is no-motion of the self-nature.

Good learned men, though the deluded man does not move his body, when he opens his mouth, he speaks about the right or wrong, good or bad, likes and dislikes of others and stands against the way. If you cling to the heart-mind, or cling to purity - then this is an obstacle to the Way.

In instructing the people, the Master said,  
 "Good learned men, what is it that is called Zazen?  
 Within the Dharma-gate there is no obstacle and no interference. When in all the outward circumstances of good or bad the heart-mind does not arise, that is called 'Za' (sitting). When inwardly seeing the self-nature the heart mind does not move, that is called Zen.

Good learned men, what is it we call Zen-absorption?  
 Outwardly to separate from forms, that is Zen. Inwardly having no confusion, that is absorption. If outwardly we cling to forms, then inwardly our heart-mind is confused. If inwardly we separate from forms, then our heart-mind is not confused. The intrinsic nature is pure by itself, is unmoved by itself. Only because of seeing circumstances, thinking of circumstances, the heart-mind is in confusion. If while seeing all the circumstances the heart-mind is not confused, that is true absorption.

Good learned men, if outwardly we are separate from forms, that is Zen. If inwardly we are not confused, that is absorption. Outwardly Zen, inwardly absorption, that then is Zen-absorption. In the Sutra of the Bodhisattva's Precepts it is said, 'The Essential Nature originally is pure and clean by itself.'

Good learned men, bit by bit of consciousness behold the purity and immaculacy of the Essential Nature itself, practice by yourself and engage in service and accomplish the Buddha-Way by yourself."

## **Chapter 6**

### **Repentance**

At that time, when the Master saw men of letters along with ordinary people from the counties of Kō and Shō and the four regions had assembled in the mountains to listen to the Dharma, he ascended the rostrum. Addressing the people he said,

“Come here, all you good learned men. This feature of nature must arise from within the Self-Nature. At all times, bit by bit of consciousness purify the heart-mind by yourself, practice by yourself, do religious service by yourself and realize your own Dharmakaya. When beholding the Buddha of your own heart-mind, save yourself, admonish yourself, and then for the first time you can come to attainment.

But it will not be necessary to reach this stage. You have come from afar to this gathering, and all have a karmic relation in common. Now all should kneel<sup>26</sup> down and I will transmit for you at first the five kinds of incense of the Dharmakaya of the Self-Nature and then I will teach you the repentance of no-form.”

The people knelt down. The Master said,

“First, the incense of the precepts, namely, when within our own heart-mind there is no wrong, nor evil, no envy nor jealousy, no greed nor anger, no everlasting harm, that is called the incense of the precepts.

Second, the incense of samadhi: when while seeing all kinds of circumstances, good or bad, one’s own heart-mind is not confused, that is called the incense of samadhi.

Third, the incense of wisdom (prajna): When our own heart-mind is without obstructions, always holding wisdom, contemplating our Self-Nature, and though not doing any evil deeds and practicing many good deeds, the heart-mind does not cling to anything, respecting superiors and being considerate of inferiors, and being compassionate and merciful with the lonely and poor, that is called the incense of wisdom.

Fourth, the incense of emancipation: when our own heart-mind is without any entanglement, neither thinking good or thinking bad, being free and unobstructed, that is called the incense of emancipation.

Fifth, the incense of emancipation and wise knowledge: When our own heart-mind is already without entanglement of good and bad, we should not sink into Emptiness and be in solitude, but rather widen our learning and multiply our hearing. Recognizing our own intrinsic heart-mind, reaching the fact of all Buddhas, softening the light, utilizing things, no ego, no men, directly attaining Bodhi and the unchangeable True-Nature, that is called the incense of emancipation and wise knowledge.

Good learned men, these kinds of incense all perfume by themselves within,

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<sup>26</sup> kneeling with only one knee touching the ground – a posture of respectful attention.

so don't search for them outside. Now I will give all of you the repentance of no-form to let you eradicate the sins of the three worlds (past, present, future) and to let you attain purification of the three karmas (body, mouth, mind). Good learned men, each of you following my words say simultaneously:

The disciples – past consciousness, present consciousness, and future consciousness, bit by bit of consciousness, not being tainted by foolish delusion – repent the sins of bad karma and foolish delusion which have been held previously all and each. I pray that at once these sins are destroyed and do not arise again for long.

The disciples – past consciousness, present consciousness, and future consciousness, bit by bit of consciousness, not being tainted by arrogant seduction – repent the sins of bad karma and arrogant seduction which have been held previously all and each. I pray that at once these sins are destroyed and do not arise again for long.

The disciples – past consciousness, present consciousness, and future consciousness, bit by bit of consciousness, not being tainted by envy and jealousy – repent the sins of bad karma and envy and jealousy which have been held previously all and each. I pray that at once these sins are destroyed and do not arise again for long.

Good learned men, the above is the repentance of no-form. Why is it called 'zan' (repentance)? Why is it called 'ge' (regret)?

Repentance (zan) is being sorry for former faults, equally for the sins of bad karma and foolish delusion, of arrogant seduction, of envy and jealousy, having been held previously, repenting all and each and so that for long they do not arise again. That is called 'zan' (repentance).

Regret (ge) is repenting the future faults, equally the sins of bad karma, foolish delusion, of arrogant seduction, of envy and jealousy from now on, and now beforehand making up one's mind to cut off all and each and not to commit them again. That is 'ge' (regret).

Therefore these are called 'zange' (repentance).

Since ordinary people, being stupid and deluded, know only to repent the former faults, but do not know the need to regret the future ones and since they do not regret them, the former faults are not destroyed and future faults arise again.

The former faults not being destroyed, future faults arise again and again. How can it be called 'zange' (repentance)?

Good learned men, 'zange', repentance being done, I will now for you, good learned men, make arise the Four Great Vows. Each of you listen carefully with your whole heart:

Though sentient beings of the own heart-mind are countless,  
 I vow to save them all.  
 Though worldly sufferings of the own heart-mind are numberless,  
 I vow to cut them all off.  
 Though the Dharma-gates of the Self-Nature are endless,  
 I vow to study them all.  
 Though the Self-Nature is unsurpassable,  
 I vow to accomplish the Buddha-Way.

Good learned men, does the Buddha not say ‘Though sentient beings are countless, I vow to save them all?’ He speaks like that. But this is not Enō’s way of saving.

Good learned men, the sentient beings within the heart-mind mean the so-called wrong deluded mind, the seductive, false mind, the not-good mind, the envious, jealous mind, the evil, poisonous mind; all these kinds of heart-mind equally are all sentient beings. Each of you should save his own nature by himself.

That is called true saving.

What is it that is called self-saving of the own nature?

It means to save by right views the sentient beings of false views, worldly sufferings, foolishness and stupidity within the own heart-mind.

When you already are of right views, you make wisdom (prajna) destroy the sentient of foolishness, stupidity, delusion and falsity. If evil comes, you save it by righteousness. If delusion comes, you save it by satori. If foolishness comes, you save it by wise knowledge. If evil comes, you save it by good. To save like this is called true saving.

Again, as to ‘Though worldly sufferings are numberless, I vow to cut them all off.’ It means: by the prajna-wisdom of the Self-Nature eradicating the mind of erroneous and false thoughts. That is it.

Again, as to ‘Though the Dharma-gates are endless, I vow to study them all’. It means: we should realize the Self-Nature by ourselves and always practice the right Dharma. That is called true study.

Again, as to ‘The Buddha-Way is unsurpassable, I vow to accomplish it.’ It means: when we are already able to subdue the heart-mind and practice the true reality, separated from delusion and separated from awakening, always wisdom arising, removing truth, removing falsehood, then we perceive the Buddha-Nature. That is accomplishing the Buddha-Way at that instant.

Always praying and practicing, that is the Dharma of the power of vowing.

Good learned men, you have now finished offering the Four Vows. Further, for your sake, good learned men, I will give you the Precepts of the Threefold Abandonment (Merging) of no-form.

Good learned men, we abandon ourselves to merge into the Awakened, two-footed<sup>27</sup> Honored One, separate from desire. We abandon ourselves to merge into the Pure One, honored among beings.

<sup>27</sup> The two feet are: righteousness and purity.

From today on, you call the Awakened One your master and will not further abandon yourself to false demons of an outside (non-Buddhist) way. Always be proving by yourself the Three-Treasures of the Self-Nature. I advise you, good learned men, to abandon yourself to merge into the Three Treasures of the Self-Nature.

Buddha is Awakening.

Dharma is Righteousness.

Sanga is Purity.

He who abandons himself to the awakening of the own heart-mind, who does not arouse false delusions, whose desires are small, and who is able to separate from property and sexual passions, he is called the two-footed Honored One. Abandoning his own heart-mind to righteousness, moment by moment of consciousness, and, because there is no false view, there being no high-level ego, no greed, no love, no clinging, this is called the Honored One separate from desire. Abandoning the own heart-mind to purity, the Self-Nature not being tainted at all by any dust or trouble nor the world of passions, this one is called the Honored One among beings.

If you perform this practice, this is abandoning to the Self. Ordinary men do not understand this and abandon themselves to the Precepts of the Threefold Abandonment all day long (day and night). If you say that you abandon yourself to merge into the Buddha, where then is the Buddha? If one does not see the Buddha, where is the place to abandon yourself to? The words then rather become a falsity.

Good learned men, each of you observe this by yourself and do not use your mind wrongly. A Sutra clearly says: 'Abandon yourself to the Self-Buddha.' It does not say: Abandon yourself to other Buddhas. If you don't abandon yourself to the Self-Buddha, there is no place to rely on.

Now having already realized the Self, each of you should abandon himself to the Threefold Treasure of his own heart- mind; within putting the mind-nature in order, outwards respecting others. This is abandoning to the Self.

Good learned men, having already abandoned yourself to the Threefold Treasure of the Self, each of you concentrate your mind. I will expound for you the 'Trikaya in one body'<sup>28</sup> of the Self-Nature-Buddha and make you see the three bodies and make you clearly realize the Self-Nature.

All of you together follow me and say:

'In our own physical bodies we abandon ourselves to the pure and clean Dharmakaya-Buddha.'<sup>29</sup>

In our own physical body we abandon ourselves to the perfect and whole Sambhogakaya-Buddha.<sup>30</sup>

In our own physical body we abandon ourselves to the myriads of Nirmanakaya-Buddhas.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Three bodies in one substance (body): The Oneness of the three bodies, Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, Nirmanakaya, of the Buddha.

<sup>29</sup> Dharmakaya: embodiment of truth and law (order) – spiritual or true body, or essential Buddhahood, essence of being, the absolute, the norm of the universe.

<sup>30</sup> Sambhogakaya: the reward-body in which the Buddha enjoys the reward of his labours. (Amithaba-Buddha)

<sup>31</sup> Nirmanakaya: manifold other appearances, the third characteristic of the power of the Trikaya. Three

Good learned men, the physical body is an abode and one cannot say one abandons to it.

The Trikaya-Buddha of which we speak is within the Self-Nature and although each man of the world has it, he does not see it within his own nature because of his deluded heart-mind.

Searching outside for the Trikaya of Nyorai (Tathagata) he does not see the Trikaya-Buddha within his own body.

All of you, listening to my expounding, I want to make you perceive the Trikaya-Buddha in your Self-Nature. This Trikaya-Buddha comes forth from the Self-Nature and there is no gaining it from outside.

What is it that is called the pure and clean Dharmakaya? The Essential Nature of all men of the world is pure and clean and the ten-thousand things come forth from the Self-Nature. When we think of all things as bad, then bad actions come forth. When we think of all things as good, then good actions come forth. Like this all things are in the Self-Nature. Though heaven is always pure and sun and moon are always clear, because of floating clouds they are covered. Above it is clear, below it is dark. It is like the wind suddenly blowing and dispersing the clouds, and above and below both become clear, and ten thousand things all clearly appear.

The nature of ordinary men is always floating and moving like clouds in the sky.

Good learned men, knowing is like the sun, wisdom is like the moon, but when we adhere to the surroundings, by the floating clouds of false thoughts the Self-Nature is covered and cannot be bright and clear. If one meets an accomplished master and listens to the Truth of his right Dharma, one clears away delusion and falsity by oneself, and in both, inside and outside, there is pervading brightness, and in the Self-Nature all the ten thousand things appear. It is just like this with self-realized people. This is called the pure and clear Dharmakaya of the Buddha.

Good learned men, abandoning one's own mind to the Self-Nature, that is abandoning oneself to the true Buddha. Abandoning oneself to the Self, that is extinguishing and clearing away within the self-nature the non-good mind, the envious-jealous mind, the flattering, crooked mind, the ego-mind, the deceiving-deluded mind, the mind belittling people, the mind neglecting others, the mind of wrong views, the haughty mind, and each at a time getting rid of non-good doings.

Always seeing by yourself your own faults and not talking about the good or bad of others, that is abandoning oneself to the self. In each situation always subduing the heart-mind, you should behave humbly and respectfully in general. That then is kensho (Self-realization), making itself known without any stagnation or obstruction. That then is abandonment to the Self.

What is called the perfect and complete Sambhogakaya?

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bodies: a Buddha's metamorphic body which has the power to assume any shape to propagate the truth. Some interpret the term as connoting Pan-Buddha, that all nature in its infinite variety is the phenomenal Buddha-body. A narrower interpretation is: his appearance in human form, expressed by the Sambhogakaya, while the Nirmanakaya is used for his manifold other forms of appearances.

For instance, like a torch that clears away the darkness of a thousand years, a flash of knowing extinguishes the ignorance of ten thousand years.

Do not think of the past which has already passed. You should never think of the future. Making moment by moment of consciousness perfectly bright, see by yourself one's own original Nature. The good and bad differ, the original Nature is non-Nature. The non-dual original Nature is called the Real-Nature. When in the Real-nature there is no taint of good or bad, that is called the perfect and complete Sambhogakaya.

If the self-nature arouses one moment of bad consciousness, it destroys the good causation of ten thousand kalpa. If the self-nature arouses one moment of good consciousness, it can extinguish the evil continued for aeons that are as many as the grains of sand of the Ganges, and you reach directly the unsurpassable Bodhi. Moment by moment of consciousness seeing by yourself the original consciousness and not losing it, that is called the Sambhogakaya.

What is called the zillions of Nirmanakaya?

If we don't think of the ten thousand phenomena then the nature is basically like the Void. When by one moment of consciousness we consider it, it is called an apparition. If we consider bad things there is change into hell. If we consider good things, there is change into heaven. Wicked harmfulness changes into dragons and snakes. Compassion changes into Bodhisattvas. Wisdom changes into the upper world; ignorance changes into the low region. Transformations of the self-nature are very numerous. Deluded men do not realize that moment by moment of consciousness, they arouse evil and always walk in evil paths.

When a thought is turned to the good, then wisdom comes forth.  
This is called the Self-nature Nirmanakaya-Buddha.

Good learned men, intrinsically we are possessed of the Dharmakaya. If moment by moment of consciousness the Self-nature sees itself, then this is the Sambhogakaya-Buddha. Considering from the Dharmakaya, that is the Nirmanakaya-Buddha. Realizing it by oneself, that is true abandoning. Skin and flesh are the color and form body. The color and form body is an abode, and it does not say that it abandons itself. If we realize the Trikaya, we will recognize the Self-Nature-Buddha.

I have a verse of no-form. If you continue to recite it, at these words, in an instant you will eliminate all delusion and sins, heaped up in countless kalpa. The verse runs:

Deluded men practice for good fortune, not the Way.  
They simply say, practicing for good fortune that is no other than the Way.  
Though good fortune through almsgiving and offerings is limitless,  
They intrinsically produce the three evils within the mind.  
Although these people want to expiate their sins through  
practicing for good fortune and do gain good luck in the after-world,  
their sins remain.  
Just within the mind eliminating the cause of sins and each  
one by true repentance in his Self-Nature suddenly  
awakening to the Mahayana: this then is true repentance.

When we eliminate evil and practice right conduct,  
then there are no sins.

Students of the Way always in their Self-nature perceiving  
are of the same one kind as all the Buddhas.

Our Patriarch transmitted just this Instantaneous Dharma  
and wished that in general by realizing the Self-nature all  
become the same one body.

If in future you want to search for the Dharmakaya,  
separate from all forms of Dharma, wash the heart-mind within you,  
exert yourself to see it by yourself and don't become slack.

When the following moment of consciousness is suddenly cut off,  
one life ceases.

When you realize the Mahayana and experience kenshō,  
humbly with veneration join your palms and with all your  
heart explore it."

The Master said,

"Good learned men, you all should keep reciting this and then practice accordingly.

If you experience kenshō at these words, then even though you are a thousand  
miles afar from me, it will always be like being in my vicinity. But when you  
cannot become enlightened at these words, there will be a thousand miles'  
distance even though we are face to face. Why did you take the trouble to come  
from afar?

Thanks, you may now go your way."

Having heard the Dharma, there was nobody in the whole assembly who did not  
come to realization. Full of joy they followed him and practiced it.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Activity of Karmic Relation**

The Master having obtained the Dharma from Ōbai, went to the village of Sōkō in  
the Zō-Prefecture where nobody knew him. There was a scholar there by name of  
Ryu Shin Rzaku and he received him reverently and politely. The scholar had an  
aunt who had become a nun and who was called Mujinzō. She always recited the  
Great Nirvana-Sutra. The Master listened for a while and then realized the subtle  
meaning and eventually he explained it to her. The nun then took the scroll and  
asked for some characters. The master said,

"I don't know the characters. Please ask me for the meaning."

The nun said,

"If you don't know the characters, how can you realize the meaning?"

The master said,

"The subtle principle of all Buddhas has no connection with the meaning of the  
words."

The nun was amazed at that. She told the virtuous ones in the village area about  
that, saying, "He is certainly a personage who has realized the Way, you should  
please invite him and give him offerings."

There was a man called Sōshukuryō, a great-grandson of Emperor Wu of Gi,<sup>32</sup> and together with the villagers he came and they paid their reverence.

At that time, the old monastery of Hōrin, having been destroyed by war and fire at the end of the Sui-Dynasty (589-616 A.D.) had fallen into ruins. Eventually, at the original site a monastery was built, and the Master was asked to live there. Soon it became a precious place. The Master stayed there for more than nine months. But one day again he was driven away by some villains and the Master fled to the nearby mountain. They lit fires and bush wood and trees were burnt. The Master hid himself by squeezing between the rocks and could escape. A rock now has an imprint of his knees and of the crest of his robe and is called 'Rock of Refuge'. The Master, remembering the 5<sup>th</sup> Patriarch's advice, went to two other villages and hid there.

The monk Hōkai, who was a man from Kyōkukō in the Zō Prefecture, came to the Patriarch-Master for the first time and asked for guidance,

“‘Just mind, just Buddha’, will you please instruct me about that?”

The Master said,

”When the preceding moment of consciousness does not come forth, that is just mind. When the following moment of consciousness does not perish, that is just Buddha. What accomplishes all forms (phenomena) is just mind. What separates from all forms (phenomena) is just Buddha. If I would try to explain it minutely, we can come to no end, even though continuing through countless kalpa.

Listen to my verse. It says:

Just mind is called wisdom.  
 Just Buddha that is just samadhi.  
 When samadhi and wisdom are one,  
 in the heart-mind there are purity and clarity.  
 The realization of this Dharma-gate depends on your habits.  
 The activity is intrinsically unborn.  
 Practicing both of them, that is right.

Upon these words, Hōkai experienced great enlightenment and by the following poem expressed his praise:

Just mind intrinsically is just Buddha.  
 If we don't experience enlightenment, we are lost.  
 I realize the cause of samadhi and wisdom.  
 Practicing both we separate from all things.

The monk Hōtatsu, a man from Kō Prefecture, who had left his home and had become a monk at the age of seven, always recited the Lotus-Sutra. When he came and paid reverence to the Patriarch-Master, his head did not touch the ground. The Master scolded him, saying,

”If while paying reverence, your head does not touch the ground, it is better not to pay reverence at all. You have certainly something in your heart-mind. What do you usually practice?”

Monk Hōtatsu said,

<sup>32</sup> In one text it says “Shin” instead of “Gi”

"I recite the Lotus-Sutra, and it already amounts to 3000 times."

The Master said: "If you had recited it 10 000 times and also had grasped the meaning of the Sutra and you still did not feel exceedingly excellent, then you might practice the Path together with me. Now you are shouldering your task and do not know all your faults. Listen to my verse. It says:

Etiquette is to break the banner of arrogance.  
 Why touches not your head to the ground?  
 If there is an ego, sins just come forth.  
 When merits are forgotten, etiquette will be incomparable."

The Master then asked,

"What is your name?"

The monk said,

"Hōtatsu."

The Master said,

"Though you are named Hōtatsu (=Dharma-attainer), you have not attained the Dharma." Again he expounded by a verse:

Now you are called Hōtatsu  
 making an effort to recite, but no rest.  
 Vainly reciting is only following the voice.  
 He who purifies the heart-mind is called a Bodhisattva.  
 Since now you have a karmic bond  
 I will expound it for you.  
 If you just believe that Buddha has no words,  
 Lotus flowers will blossom from your mouth."

When Hōtatsu had heard this verse, he said with remorse and apology,  
 "From now on I will be humble and respectful with all. Your disciple, though reciting the Lotus-Sutra, has not yet grasped the meaning and my heart-mind still has doubts. Master, your wisdom is vast and great. I beg you, will you please expound the Sutra in brief."

The Master said,

"You have touched the Dharma very much,<sup>33</sup> but you do not touch your heart-mind. The Sutra is intrinsically without doubt. Your mind itself has doubts. You invoke the Sutra, but what is the essential aspect of it?"

Hōtatsu said,

"Your student has a dark and dull basic nature. Until now, I only have invoked it according to the words. Why can I not know its essential aspect?"

The Master said,

"I don't know the characters. Take the text and read it once, then I'll expound it for you."

Thereupon Hōtatsu recited the Sutra aloud and when he came to the paragraph of the parables, the Master said,

"Stop. This Sutra establishes the principle foundation that the Buddha appeared

<sup>33</sup> 'tatsu' is: to attain, reach or touch. When the Patriarch said, "you have not yet attained the Dharma", it concerned the monk's lack of realization. Here, however, the Patriarch refers to the monk's 'touching the Dharma' by his many recitations.

by karmic causation. Even though there are many kinds of parables expounded, they cannot go beyond that. What is this karmic causation? The Sutra says 'All the Buddhas, the World-Honored-Ones, appeared in the world by just one most important karmic causation.' This vitally important matter is the Buddha's wisdom. If men of the world are deluded externally, they stick to forms<sup>34</sup>; if they are deluded internally, they stick to emptiness.

If one, while living with forms can separate from forms and while with emptiness can separate from emptiness, then there is no delusion inside and outside. If one realizes this Dharma, the heart-mind will open in one flash of consciousness and that is the opening of the Buddha's wisdom. Having grasped that Buddha is just Enlightenment, it is classified as the opening of four gates:

- 1) Opening the awakening of wisdom,
- 2) Showing the awakening of wisdom,
- 3) Realizing the awakening of wisdom,
- 4) Entering the awakening of wisdom.

If by hearing of the opening and showing we realize well and do enter, this intrinsically is the true-Nature itself, and, moreover, it can manifest itself.

Be careful that you don't understand the Sutra's meaning erroneously. Look, what the others say, 'Opening and showing, realizing and entering by oneself, that is the wisdom of the Buddha; we are not qualified to take part in it.' If you understand it like that, you defame the Sutra and slander the Buddha. He is already a Buddha and uses already his wisdom. What is the use, beyond that, of opening again?

You must now really have faith that the wisdom of the Buddha is just your own mind; other than that, there is no Buddha.

Because all sentient beings cover their clear light, being greedy for the dust-surroundings, sticking to the outside world and being in confusion inside, while easily accepting that<sup>35</sup> and running after it all like mad, the World-Honored-One was moved to take the trouble to arise from his samadhi. And with various severe words (verbatim: bitter-mouths) he admonished them to make them come to rest. Don't search outside; Buddha and you are not two!

Therefore it is said: open the Buddha's wisdom. I also recommend it to all people. Being within the own heart-mind, the Buddha's wisdom always opens.

Men of the world (ordinary men) are of perverted mind. In ignorance and delusion they commit sins. While their mouth speaks the good, their heart-minds are greedy, hateful, envious, jealous, flattering, egoistic, aggressive against people and damaging to many things. Thus by themselves they open the wisdom of the creatures (ordinary men). If one can keep one's heart-mind right, then one always arouses wisdom and when one contemplates one's own heart-mind, stopping the bad and doing the good, then Buddha's wisdom opens by itself. In any case, moment by moment of consciousness you should open the Buddha's wisdom and not open the wisdom of creatures (ordinary men). When you open the Buddha's wisdom, then this is transcending the ordinary world. When you open the wisdom of the creatures (ordinary men), then that is the ordinary world.

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<sup>34</sup> Delusion is, of course, always within the heart-mind, but externally it manifests as "sticking to forms", i.e. sticking to the objective world.

<sup>35</sup> = all the afore said

If you only stick to words with much effort and regard it as an achievement, what is the difference from a yak that loves its tail?"

Hōtatsu said,

"If so, then if only I was able to understand the meaning of the Sutra, I wouldn't need trouble to recite it?"

The Master said,

"There is no fault in the Sutra. Why would it hinder you to recite it? Only there are deluded or enlightened men, and loss or gain depend on them. If you recite with your mouth and practice with your heart-mind, then that is turning the Sutra around. If the mouth recites and the heart-mind does not practice, that is being turned around by the Sutra.<sup>36</sup> Listen to my verse, it says:

When the mind is deluded, it is being turned round by the Lotus-Dharma.  
When the mind is enlightened, it turns round the Lotus-Dharma.  
Reciting the Sutra for long without clarity, we will become the foe of the real fact.  
Consciousness of no-consciousness, that is right.  
Consciousness of having-consciousness is wrong.  
Not considering both, having or not-having, is riding forever in the white-oxen cart.<sup>37</sup>"

Hōtatsu, having heard the verse, involuntarily wept with sadness. Upon these words he experienced great-enlightenment and said to the Master,

"Hōtatsu up to now has not turned the Lotus-Dharma round, but was turned round by it."

Again bowing, he said,

"The Sutra says 'Even if the various Great Ears (=Listeners) and up to the Bodhisattvas would all apply their thinking and put their measuring together, they cannot fathom the Buddha's wisdom.' Now, making an ordinary man directly realize his own heart-mind, that is called Buddha's wisdom. If one is of superior roots (=abilities), that one cannot escape doubts and abusing. In the Sutra where three carts are explained, the goat, deer, and oxen cart - how is one to distinguish them from each other and from the white oxen cart? I ask you Master, please, will you kindly show me again?"

The Master said,

"The meaning of the Sutra is clear, but you yourself are in delusion. The various people of the three carts cannot fathom the Buddha's wisdom. The key point of the problem is that there is a measuring, and even though they exhaust their thinking and all together draw conclusions, the distance will increase more and more. Basically, the Buddha expounds for ordinary people, he does not expound for Buddhas. If people do not believe this principle, they should vacate their seat for others. Especially they do not know that they are riding the white oxen cart and, moreover, they search outside for the gate of the three carts.

The words of the Sutra, moreover, tell you clearly: There is only one Buddha-Vehicle, not many, neither two nor three. Countless expedencies and many kinds of karmic causations, parables, words and terms are this Dharma,

<sup>36</sup> being turned round: one is the object without freedom; turning round: one is the subject, using the Sutra freely.

<sup>37</sup> The "Vehicle" of the Buddha – the white-ox being the Essential Nature.

and all are for the sake of clarifying this one Buddha-Vehicle. Why then don't you realize the three carts as provisional for the people of ancient times and the one Vehicle as the real one? I speak, so that people of the present time come to realization. The Sutra only wants to make you leave the provisional and return to the real. Understand that after returning to the real, the real has no name. You really must know that all the rare treasures of which you are possessed, belong to you to use freely. You have no thought of the father, nor have you any thought of the child, and you are also without a thought of 'using'. All that is called keeping the Lotus-Sutra. From kalpa to kalpa hold the scroll (= the Sutra) in your hand and do not throw it away, and from day to night there is no time without invoking it."

Hotatsu, having received this enlightenment, was in high spirits and full of joy, and he said, praising the instruction with a verse:

Recited the Sutra three thousand times,  
but by one phrase of Sōkei forgot it.<sup>38</sup>  
Since until now I was not clear about the meaning of leaving the world,

I could not end the repeated crazy lives.  
Carts of goat, deer, oxen provisionally set up  
give well the beginning, middle and end.<sup>39</sup>  
Who knows that the one in the house at fire  
Intrinsically is the king in the Dharma?"

The Master said, "From now on, you should be called a Sutra invoking monk." Hotatsu, from then on, having realized the profound meaning, continued to recite the Sutra.

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The monk Chi Tsu, who was a man of Anbō in Jū Prefecture, at first read the Ryōga-Sutra<sup>40</sup>, and though he had read it over a thousand times, he did not, however, understand the Triple Body (Trikaya) and the four wisdoms. He paid reverence to the Master, searching for an elucidation of the meaning. The Master said,

"As to the Triple Body (Trikaya): the pure and clear Dharmakaya is your nature; the perfect Sambhogakaya is your wisdom; the hundred thousand millions of Nirmanakaya are your doings.

If we expound the Triple Body (Trikaya) separately from the intrinsic nature, then that is called 'a body without wisdom'. If you realize that the Triple Body (Trikaya) has no self-nature, the Bodhi of the four wisdoms will be clear to you. Listen to my verse. It says:

The Self-Nature is endowed with the Triple Body (Trikaya).  
If this becomes clear, the four wisdoms will be accomplished.  
Not separating from the relation of seeing and hearing,  
transcending the world you go up to the Buddha-realm.  
Now I expound it for you: keep clear faith forever and have no delusions.

<sup>38</sup> = the Patriarch

<sup>39</sup> it is good for those who are beginning, then for those who are in the middle of the way and those towards the end.

<sup>40</sup> = Lankavatara-Sutra

Those who pursue the truth should not study to expound Bodhi all day long.”

Chi Tsu again bowed and asked,

”May I hear about the meaning of the four wisdoms?”

The Master said,

”If you already have understood the Triple Body (Triakaya), the four kinds of wisdom should also be clear. Why do you ask again? If you speak of the four kinds of wisdom separated from the Triple Body (Triakaya), that is called ‘having wisdom without a body’. Then these kinds of wisdom, on the contrary, become no-wisdom.”

Again he said by a verse,

“The nature of the great round mirror wisdom is pure and clean.

By the nature of the equality wisdom the heart-mind is without illness.

By the wisdom of the mysterious clear contemplation there is no merit of seeing.

The wisdom of accomplishment is the same as the round mirror.

Though the 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> effects turn to causes<sup>41</sup>

This is only using names and words, not the real nature.

If, being at the turning place, the heart-mind does not abide there,

abundant rising will continue forever like the dragon’s absorption.<sup>42</sup>

Insert:

((The above is turning consciousness into wisdom. In the teaching it is said ‘The first five kinds of consciousness are turned into the wisdom of accomplishment. The 6<sup>th</sup> consciousness is turned into the wisdom of mysterious clear contemplation. The 7<sup>th</sup> consciousness is turned into the equality nature wisdom. The 8<sup>th</sup> consciousness is turned into the great round mirror wisdom. Though the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> turn into causes, and the first five and the 8<sup>th</sup> turn into effects, there is only a turning of the names and there is no turning of the substance.’))

Chi Tsu instantly realized the nature of all wisdom, and then said by submitting a verse,

“The Triple Body (Triakaya) intrinsically is my body.

It’s clear, the four wisdoms are my intrinsic heart-mind.

Body and wisdom merge into one without obstruction.

Concerning everything, let it be free to follow forms.

Doing practice – all this is delusive movement.

To keep staying is not the true reality

According to the instruction of the Master

the mysterious fact at last has lost its name of impurity.” (see footnote 42)

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The monk Chi Jō, a man of Kikei in Shin–Province, who left home and turned monk in his childhood, determined to search for his Self-Nature, one day came to pay his reverence.

The Master asked,

”Where do you come from and what are you searching for?”

<sup>41</sup> concerning the different kinds of consciousness. **See insert.**

<sup>42</sup> The ‘mysterious fact’ = Essential Nature. No thought is left and so no name, i.e. no impurity.

Chi Jō said,

"Recently this student (= I) stayed at the Byakuhō-zan monastery in Kō-Province and paid reverence to Master Daitsū, and although I received instruction about becoming a Buddha by perceiving the Self-nature, I still haven't solved my hesitating doubt. I have come from afar to pay reverence, and most humbly I hope that the Master by his compassion may kindly instruct me."

The Master said,

"What words did that Master give you? Try to present them for me to see."

Chi Jō said,

"After Chi Jō (= I) had arrived at his place and though three months had passed, I still had not received any instruction. Because I was burning for the Dharma, one night, I entered alone the Master's quarters and asked 'What is my intrinsic heart-mind, my intrinsic nature?' Daitsū then said 'Do you see empty space or not?'

I answered 'Yes, I see it.'

That Master said 'When you see empty space, does it have any shape, or not?'

I answered 'Empty space is without form. What shape can it have?'

That Master said 'Your intrinsic nature is just like empty space. Finally not one thing can be seen; this is called the 'true view'. Not one thing can be known; this is called 'true knowledge'. There is no blue or yellow, no long or short, only perceiving. The principle source is pure and clear, the substance of awakening is perfect and clear, that is called becoming a Buddha by experiencing the Self-Nature, or it is also called the wisdom of perceiving Nyorai (= the Tathāgata).' Though the student (I) hears this instruction, I cannot yet resolve it. Please, Master, kindly reveal it to me."

The Master said,

"That Master's view still remains intellectual seeing. Therefore things have not yet been clarified for you. I will show you now by a verse:

If you don't see one thing, there remains consciousness of not-seeing,  
very much like drifting clouds covering the face of the sun.

If you don't know one thing, it is preserving the knowledge of emptiness,  
like the great empty sky bringing forth a flash of lightning.

This intellectual view, instantly arising, is an erroneous recognition.

How can he realize that it is an expedient?

If you knew by yourself that one moment of consciousness is a mistake,  
you should always manifest your own mysterious light."

When Chi Jō had heard this verse, his heart-mind vastly opened. Then he uttered a verse, saying,

"If there arises accidentally intellectual seeing,  
it is clinging to forms while searching for Bodhi.  
Indeed, if there remains one moment of consciousness of satori,  
it does not transcend the delusion of the past until now.  
The substance of the source of realization of the Self-Nature -  
it flows about against its nature,

if we go together with the intellectual shining.  
Had I not entered the room of the Patriarch,  
in confusion I would have gone on two ways.”

One day, Chi Jō asked the Master,

“The Buddha has expounded three vehicles of the Dharma and he also spoke of the Supreme Vehicle. The disciple (I) still does not understand; I ask you, please, to give me an instruction.”

The Master said,

“Look into your intrinsic heart-mind and do not cling to forms of the Dharma. There are not four vehicles of the Dharma; the human heart-minds by themselves are of different degrees. Seeing, hearing, reciting, these are of the small vehicle. Realizing the Dharma and understanding the meaning - that is of the middle vehicle. Practicing according to the Dharma - that is of the great vehicle. Knowing all the ten thousand Dharma, all the ten thousand Dharma embodied in the personality, not stained by anything, separated from all forms of the Dharma, nothing to be attained ever, that is called the Supreme Vehicle.

A vehicle is a means of practicing and not for oral discussion. You must by all means practice by yourself; don't ask me. At all times the Self-Nature is just as it is.”

Chi Jō prostrated and served him throughout the Master's life.

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The monk Shi Dō, a man of Nan Kai in Kō-Province, asked for guidance and said,  
”After the student (I) had left home and turned monk, I have read the Nirvana-Sutra for more than ten years, but still the principle meaning is not clear to me. I want to ask the Master whether he may please instruct me.”

The Master said,

”About which sections are you still not clear?”

Shi Do said,

”All earthly things flow and are impermanent; this is the Dharma of life and death. When life and death are extinguished, we enjoy Nirvana, it is said. It is about this point that I am in doubt.”

The master said,

”What precisely is your doubt about this?”

Shi Do said,

”All sentient beings have two bodies, namely the physical body and the Dharma body. The physical body is impermanent, there is life and death. The Dharma body is permanent, is without knowing and realizing. The Sutra says 'When life and death are extinguished, we enjoy Nirvana', so it says. I wonder which body is extinguished and which body receives happiness. If one says that it is the physical body then at the time of its extinction, the four elements scatter and this is thorough pain, and pain cannot be called happiness. If one says that the Dharmakaya is extinguished, then we are the same as grass, trees, brick and stones. Who could receive happiness then?

Moreover, the Dharma-Nature is the substance of life and extinction (appearance and disappearance). The five aggregates are the activity of life and extinction (appearance and disappearance). One substance and five activities that always appear and disappear. When being born, from the substance activities are raised. When being extinguished, the functions are taken and returned to the substance.

If rebirth is allowed, then all living beings would not be cut off nor be extinguished. If rebirth was not admitted, then all would return forever to annihilation and would be the same as inanimate things. If it were like this, all things would suffer to be suppressed by Nirvana and could not be born. What enjoyment (happiness) would be there?"

The Master said,

"You are Buddha's child. Why do you learn the outsiders' (non-Buddhists') wrong view of extinction and permanence and then discuss the Dharma of the Supreme Vehicle? According to your opinion there is a Dharma body outside of and apart from the physical body and you are searching for Nirvana by separating from life and extinction. Further, you presume of the permanent enjoyment of Nirvana that there is a receiving and using living body. That is sticking to life and death and clinging to worldly pleasures.

You really should now know this: Upon all the deluded humans who take the harmonious unity of the five aggregates for the form of their own bodies and who discriminate all the Dharma regarding them as the form of outside dust (objects), loving life, hating death, who flow with moment by moment of changing thoughts, not knowing that those are dreams, phantoms, empty unreality, and who dare to accept the Cycle of life and take the incessant enjoyment of Nirvana reversely for pain, pursuing all day long happiness, - on all these the Buddha took pity and showed them the true happiness of Nirvana. There is not an instant of any form of life, not an instant of any form of extinction; and there are no life and extinction which should be extinguished. This then is the manifestation of Nirvana. When Nirvana manifests, there is no quantity of its manifestation; that, you see, is incessant enjoyment (happiness). There is nobody to receive this enjoyment (happiness) and nobody not to receive it. How could there be a term as a body or five functions?

Still less you should speak of a Nirvana that suppresses all the Dharma so that there were no life forever. This is slandering the Buddha and defaming the Dharma.

Listen to my verse; it says:

The supreme, great Nirvana (Mahanirvana)  
 is perfect and always still and shining brightly.  
 The ignorant call it death.  
 The outsiders (non-Buddhists) take it for annihilation.  
 Various, the second vehicle (Hinayana) searching people  
 term it inactivity.  
 All these belong to what feelings do  
 and are the basis of the sixty-two views.<sup>43</sup>  
 Arbitrarily they raise names of empty unreality,  
 But what is the actual fact?  
 There are only few people  
 who transcend the ordinary common sense,  
 completely passing through without accepting and rejecting.  
 If we know the phenomena of the five aggregates  
 and the ego-I within these aggregates (phenomenal things)  
 and, moreover, color and form of all beings, and  
 each sound heard  
 equally is like a dream, a phantom,

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<sup>43</sup> = delusive thoughts

then there is no arising of ordinary or holy,  
 no realizing of Nirvana.  
 Cutting off all dualism,  
 Always corresponding to the use of all the roots (senses),  
 there, however, arises no thought of using.  
 Discriminating all the phenomena  
 with no thought of discriminating arising.  
 Even when the aeon-fire (karmic fire) burns the bottom of the ocean  
 and the wind drums the mountain making them echo each other,  
 that is the joy of real calmness,  
 and the situation of Nirvana is like that.  
 Involuntarily I now dare to explain it for you  
 so that you will throw away your wrong views.  
 Don't understand it following the words,  
 and it will be admitted that you know a little bit."

Shi Dō, having heard this verse, experienced deep enlightenment.  
 Dancing with joy, he paid reverence and withdrew.

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Zen-Master (Seigen) Gyō Shi was born of the Ritsu lineage in Anjō in the Kitsu province. When he heard that Sōkei's Dharma converting people flourished, he immediately went there and prostrated. When he asked, "What kind of doing does not fall down to classes (grades)?" the Master said, "What have you been doing so far?"  
 Gyō Shi said,  
 "I have not even searched for the Sacred Truth."  
 The Master said,  
 "Then to which classes (grades) can you fall?"  
 Gyō Shi said,  
 "When I haven't even searched for the Sacred Truth, what classes (grades) can there be?"  
 The Master deeply considered him a man (vessel) of capacity and appointed him head of the assemblage.  
 One day, the Master said,  
 "You should give guidance at another place and not let the Dharma be extinguished."

Gyō Shi, having received the Dharma, he then returned to Mt. Seigen in Kitsu province, spread the Dharma and carried on the conversion.  
 (He received the posthumous name Kōsai Zenji from the Emperor.)

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Zen-master (Nangaku) Ejō was the child of the To-lineage in the Kin province. At first he visited the National Master An of Sōzan (Mt. Sō). An made him depart for Sōkei to receive instruction. On arrival he prostrated. The Master said, "Where do you come from?"  
 Ejō said,  
 "From Suzan."  
 The Master said,  
 "What is it that has come?"

Ejō said,

”When presenting something, if I say it is this, it does not fit.”

The Master said,

”Yet, is it still necessary to practice and realize or not?”

Ejō said,

”Practice and realization are not annihilated; but if soiled, one cannot grasp it.”

The Master said,

”Only this ‘not soiled’ is what all Buddhas have guarded in their mind. You are like this, and also I am like this. The Indian Hannyatara prophesied about you: You will bring forth a colt from under your feet which will trample the people under the sky (all people) to death. Really this must be in your heart-mind, but don’t speak of that too soon.”

Ejō came to vast realization. Thereafter he was an attendant left and right (of his master) for 15 years. Day by day he reached the profound depth.

Thereafter he went to Nangaku and made the Zen school flourish in great measure. (On the order of the Emperor he received the posthumous name of Daii Zenji.)

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Gen Kaku Zenji of Yōka was the child of the Tai lineage in the On province. When young, he studied sutras and commentaries and was well versed in the Dharma-gate of ‘Shiku an’ (= Zazen) of the Tendai school.

When having read the Yuima Sutra, he discovered the essence of the heart-mind.

Once Gen Saku, a disciple of the master, came to see him, and together they had an intensive conversation. The uttered words were unintentionally in accordance with all the Patriarchs.

Gen Saku said,

”Your Reverence, from which master have you acquired the Dharma?”

Gen Kaku said,

”I have heard the Hōtō-Sutra<sup>44</sup> and commentaries and have listened to various masters’ sayings about them. When later I came upon the Yuima-Sutra, I realized the Buddha-mind. But until now, there is nobody to confirm it.”

Gen Saku said,

”Before the King of the Powerful Sound (=Buddha) appeared, one did not attain that. After the King of the Powerful Sound appeared, those who come to self-realization without a master confirming it are all native outsiders (= non-Buddhists).

Gen Kaku said,

”Your Reverence, please, for my sake, testify it.”

Gen Saku said,

”My words are not weighty enough. At Sōkei there is the Sixth Patriarch. From the four directions like clouds people gather there and also become the recipients of the Dharma. If you go there, then let us go together.”

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<sup>44</sup> Hoto-Sutra = a collection of the following Sutras:  
Yuima-, Shieki-, Ryoga-, Ryogon-, Konhomyo-, Shoman-Gyo-Sutra

Thereupon (Gen) Kaku went with (Gen) Saku and paid his reverence. He circumambulated the Master three times, shook his staff and stood there. The Master said,  
 "A priest is endowed with 3000 dignified manners and 80 000 fine conducts (doings). Great Virtuous One, where do you come from, bringing forth the haughtiness of the great ego?"

(Gen) Kaku said,  
 "Life and death are a great matter. Impermanence is quick."<sup>45</sup>  
 The Master said,  
 "Why don't you grasp the Unborn and clearly perceive the non-quick?"  
 (Gen) Kaku said,  
 "The body is unborn; realization intrinsically is not quick."  
 The Master said,  
 "Just so! Just so!"

Gen Kaku ceremonially paid his reverence and immediately bade farewell.

The Master said,  
 "You are leaving very quickly."  
 Gen Kaku said,  
 "Basically there is no moving. How can there be quickness?"  
 The Master said,  
 "Who is it that knows, there is no movement?"  
 Gen Kaku said,  
 "The Venerable One himself raises discrimination."  
 The Master said,  
 "You have really very well grasped the meaning of the Unborn."  
 Gen Kaku said,  
 "How can the Unborn have any meaning?"  
 The Master said,  
 "If there is no meaning, who can discriminate?"  
 Gen Kaku said,  
 "Discrimination also has no meaning."  
 The Master said,  
 "Very good! Very good! Stay for a while, just for one night."

At that time, the people called him the 'One-night-realized-One'. Later he issued the 'Shōdōka' (= Song of Enlightenment ") which was widely spread in the world. After his death, he was named Musō Daishi by the Emperor and contemporary people called him also Shinkaku (= the Truly Realized One).

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The Zen-man Chi Kō at first had gone to the Fifth Patriarch for guidance, and he thought that he himself had already attained the right perception. For a long time he sat in a small hermitage, and it amounted to twenty years. Gen Saku, a disciple of the Master, when wandering around, reached the northern side of the river.<sup>46</sup> On hearing the name of (Chi ) Kō, he went to the hermitage

<sup>45</sup> See 'time flies like an arrow' (Yamada Roshi)

<sup>46</sup> = Yellow River

and asked,

"What are you doing here?"

(Chi) Kō said,

"I am in samadhi."

Gen Saku said,

"You say that you are in samadhi. Are you in it with heart-mind or with no heart-mind? If you are in it with no heart-mind, all sentient beings like grass, trees, tiles and stones should be in samadhi as well. If you are in it with heart-mind, all sentient beings who have consciousness should also gain samadhi."

(Chi) Kō said,

"When I am really in samadhi, I don't perceive whether with or without heart-mind."

(Gen) Saku said,

"When you don't perceive whether with or without heart-mind, - this is eternal samadhi. How can there be any getting out of or entering it?"

(Chi) Kō had no answer.

After a while he asked,

"To which Master's Dharma do you succeed?"

(Gen) Saku said,

"My Master is the Sixth Patriarch of Sōkei."

(Chi) Kō said,

"What is the Zen-samadhi according to the Sixth Patriarch?"

(Gen) Saku said,

"According to my Master's view it is this. In subtle no-form, perfect calmness the activities of the body are just this, just this. The five aggregates are intrinsically void. The six kinds of dust (= six senses) are non-being. No going out, no going in, no samadhi, no confusion.

The Zen-nature is non-abiding. Cut off from an abode it is Zen-calmness. The Zen-nature is no-life. Separate from life it is Zen thinking. The heart-mind is like empty space and also without any quality of empty space."

(Chi) Kō, when having heard these words, immediately went to meet the Master.

The Master asked,

"Venerable One, where do you come from?"

(Chi) Kō told the precious karma in detail (i.e. the words of Gen Saku).

The Master said,

"It is really as he said. If your heart-mind only becomes like empty space and does not cling to the view of Emptiness, in application there is no obstruction, in movement and stillness there is no-mind, in ordinary and holy the heart is forgotten, subject and object are extinguished, the form of nature is just as it is, and there is no time of not-being in samadhi."

At that, (Chi) Kō experienced great enlightenment.

Of all of the heart-mind which he had accumulated for twenty years there was no effect any more.

That night, north of the river the nobility and the people heard a voice in the air which said, "Today Kō Zenji has accomplished the Way."

Later (Chi) Kō left with prostration and returned to the northern side of the river and instructed the four kinds of people (monks, nuns, men, women) and made them open their eyes.

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A monk asked the Master, saying,  
 "Who acquires Ōbai's instruction?"  
 The Master said,  
 "Those people acquire it who understand the Buddha-Dharma."  
 The monk said,  
 "Has the Master acquired it or not?"  
 The Master said,  
 "I don't understand the Buddha-Dharma."

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One day, the Master wanted to wash the robe which he had been given, but there was no beautiful, clear spring. Therefore he went for five 'ri' at the back of the monastery to a luxuriant mountain grove and seeing where it was densely surrounded by an auspicious atmosphere, the Master brandished his ringed staff, thrusting it into the ground and in response to his hand a spring gushed forth and the water, being plenty, became a pond. Then he knelt down and washed the robe on a rock.

Suddenly there was a monk, who had come and paid reverence and said,  
 "This is Hōben, a man of Sei Shoku. In the past, I was in South India and saw the Great Master Bodhidharma. He requested Hōben (me), 'Quickly go to China where I have transmitted Mahakasyapa's Eye-Treasury of the True Dharma and the ceremonial monk's robe and which actually have been handed down to the sixth generation at Sōkei of Zō province. So go and pay your reverence.' Hōben, having come from afar asks you, please, to show him the robe and bowl which were transmitted to you by my Master."

The Master brought them forth and showed them and asked,  
 "Noble One, what kind of work do you practice?"

Hōben said,

"I can make clay images."

The Master with a solemn air said,

"Try to make an image and let me see it."

Hōben didn't know what to do. After several days, he made a true image of the Master, the height measuring seven inches, extremely wonderfully done.

The Master said laughing,

"You only realize the nature of an image, but you don't realize the Buddha-nature."

The Master stretching out his hand caressed Hōben's head and said,

"Forever become a field of bliss for men and heavenly beings."

The Master also took a robe and gave it to him as a reward. Hōben took the robe and divided it into three parts. With one he dressed the image, one he kept for himself, and one he wrapped in evergreen leaves and buried it in the ground. Promising solemnly he said,

"If later someone here will gain this robe, I shall appear in the world as head of this monastery."

Then he went on to build another hall.

(In the 8<sup>th</sup> year of Kayu in the Sung-dynasty, there was a monk called Isen who repaired the monastery. He dug into the ground and retrieved the robe which

was like a new one. And there was an image at Kosen-Ji which when prayed to would respond.)

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There was a monk who recited a verse of Garin Zenji, which says:

Garin has skillful abilities,  
 he can cut off hundreds of thought.  
 Facing circumstances, the heart-mind does not arise.  
 Bodhi day by day increases.

The Master, on hearing this, said,

”This verse shows that the ground of the heart-mind has not yet been realized. If practicing according to this, it will add to one’s fetters.”

So he showed him a verse which says:

‘Enō is without skillful abilities,  
 he doesn’t cut off hundreds of thoughts.  
 Facing circumstances the heart-mind often arises.  
 How can Bodhi increase?’

## **Chapter 8**

### **Sudden and Gradual**

At the time, the Patriarch stayed at the Hōrin-monastery of Sōkei while Jinshu Daishi was at the Gyokuzen-monastery of Keinan. At that time both both schools flourished and so the people called them the Southern Enō- and the Northern Jinshu-school. Therefore there was the division of the two schools, the southern and the northern, the ‘sudden’ and the ‘gradual’. However, the scholars did not know the key characteristic gist of each school.

The Master spoke to the assembly saying,

“The Dharma is intrinsically one. As to men, there are the southern and the northern. The Dharma is of one kind, but as to the vantage there are slow and quick. What is it that is termed ‘sudden’ or ‘gradual’? In the Dharma there is no sudden or gradual. With men there are sharp or dull abilities, therefore the term ‘sudden and gradual’.”

However, the followers of Jinshu sometimes slandered the Patriarch of the Southern school,

”He does not know a single character, what good can he have?”

Jinshu said,

”The other one has attained the wisdom of no-master and has deeply realized the Supreme Vehicle. I can’t compare with him. Moreover, my Master, the Fifth Patriarch, has directly transmitted to him the Dharma-robe; how can that be without good cause? I regret that I left him by going so far away and cannot be familiar with him. In vain I have received his great favour. You disciples, all of you, don’t stay here. You should go to Sōkei and come to realization under his guidance.”

One day, Jinshu ordered the disciple Shisei, saying, "You are wise and of knowledge. For my sake you should go to Sōkei and listen to his Dharma expounding. If there is something to hear, memorize it all in your mind and relate it to me upon your return."

Shisei, having received the order, went to Sōkei. Joining the assembly he went for instruction, but did not tell a soul where he had come from.

At that time, in addressing the assembly, the Master said,

"At present there is a Dharma-thief here in secret at this gathering."

Then Shisei came forth, prostrated and related the matter in detail.

The Master said,

"If you have come forth from Gyokusen, you really must be a spy."

Shisei said, "I am not."

The Master said,

"Why can you not be one?"

Shisei answered,

"Had I not explained it, then it would be so, but having explained it, it is not so."

The Master said,

"How does your Master instruct your assembly?"

Shisei answered,

"The heart-mind motionless perceiving calmness he makes us sit for long and not lie down."

The Master said,

"The heart-mind motionless perceiving calmness', this is a sickness and not Zen. If by long sitting the body is strained, reasonably, what advantage is there?

Listen to my verse, it says:

Coming to life, one sits, does not lie down.

Departing in death one lies down, does not sit.

One set of stinking bone heads,

How can that produce resulting benefit?"

Shisei prostrated again and said,

"The disciple (I) has been at Great Master Jinshu's place studying the Way for nine years, but did not experience satori. Now that I hear the Master's expounding just once, I am in accord with the essential heart-mind. For the disciple (me) life-death is a great matter. May the Master in his great compassion, please, instruct me further."

The Master said,

"I hear that your Master instructs his disciples in the Dharma of precepts, absorption and wisdom. I wonder, how your Master expounds the form of doings of precepts, absorption and wisdom. Please explain it to me, I'll have a look."

Shisei said,

"The Great Master, Jinshu, instructs us this way: avoid all evil, that is called the precepts. Practice all good, that is called wisdom. The self-purifying of consciousness is called absorption. That is what his instruction is like. I wonder, in what kind of Dharma the Master instructs the people?"

The Master said,

"If I would say 'I have a Dharma to give to people', that would betray you. For the time being, I am only untying the bindings following the Way. Provisionally it is

called ‘samadhi’. Your Master’s expounding of precepts absorption and wisdom is truly inconceivable. But my view of precepts, absorption and wisdom is different again.”

Shisei said, ”There is only one kind of precepts, absorption and wisdom; how can there be a different one?”

The Master said,

”Precepts, absorption and wisdom of your Master are to instruct people of the Great Vehicle (Mahayana).

My precepts, absorption and wisdom instruct people of the Supreme Vehicle (Saijōjō). Realization and understanding are not the same. Regarding insight (realization) there are slow and quick.

Listen to my expounding. Is it the same as his or not? My expounding of the Dharma does not separate from the Self-nature. Expounding the Dharma separate from the substance, that is called an expounding of form and figure. So the Self-nature is always in doubt. You must know that the ten thousand things (phenomena) are all functions arising from the Self-nature. This is the true Dharma of precepts, absorption and wisdom. Listen to my verse, it says:

In the heart-ground there is no wrong; this is the  
precept of the Self-Nature.

In the heart-ground there is no folly; this is the  
wisdom of the Self-Nature.

In the heart-ground there is no confusion; this is the  
absorption of the Self-Nature.

Not increasing, not diminishing, that by itself is the  
diamond.

The body leaves, the body comes, this is the intrinsic  
samadhi.”

(Shi)sei having heard this verse, repented, asked for forgiveness and then submitted a verse which says:

The phantom body of the five aggregates –  
how can the phantom be the final?

If one regards the revolving as truth,  
then it is an impure Dharma.

The Master approved this and said to (Shi)sei,

”Your Master’s precepts, absorption and wisdom apply to wise men of small roots. My precepts, absorption and wisdom apply to wise men of great roots. If we realize the Self-nature we do not set up Bodhi and Nirvana, nor do we set up emancipation and intellectual view. When one cannot grasp a single Dharma (thing), really, myriads of Dharma (things) can be established.

If one realizes this meaning, that is called emancipation or wise view. A self-realized man can set up Bodhi, Nirvana, emancipation, etc., or cannot set them up.



