Yokoi - Zen Master Dogen (reading 1)

ONE

Introduction

ZEN BUDDHISM IS STILL, I think, relatively little understood in the West. It is also true, however, that recently many Westerners have shown an increasing interest in Zen, an interest that has been greatly stimulated by the late Daisetz T. Suzuki, who published numerous works on Zen Buddhism during his lifetime. Thanks largely to his prodigious efforts, Zen Buddhism is no longer a monopoly of the East. At the same time, it cannot be denied that Zen, which originated in India and came to Japan by way of China, has a unique Oriental character composed of such qualities as simplicity, straightforwardness, and paradoxical expression.

Although Zen is a religion centering on the practice of zazen,[1] it is not limited to this practice alone. Rather, it is to be expressed in all our daily actions—coming, going, sitting, and lying down. Zen emphasizes that "Mind itself is the Buddha."[2] In other words, our mind is originally one with the Buddha's. However, our Buddha-mind will not reveal itself until strenuous efforts have been made in the practice of the Way. Without such devout and wholehearted practice, we cannot realize our Buddha-mind. In this sense it may be said that Zen is a religion that must be expressed in our daily lives.

The essence of Zen is, of course, to realize this mind of the Buddha. This realization is known as *satori,* or enlightenment, in Japanese Zen. But such enlightenment is not the goal of our training. For in essence there is no difference between practice and enlightenment. Practice is, as it is, enlightenment, and vice versa. According to Dōgen, a little training is already shallow enlightenment, just as thorough training is deep enlightenment.

Though the practice of zazen was an important form of Buddhist discipline in India, Zen first became established as an independent school in China. Similarly, although this same practice had been introduced to Japan as early as the Nara period (A.D. 646–794), it was not until the twelfth century, when the Sung tradition of Zen was imported from China, that this form of Buddhism established an independent existence in Japan. Initially Zen was used to train samurai (feudal warriors), as it provided them with a standard for their daily actions. Later, Zen also had a strong influence on

many other aspects of Japanese culture, such as architecture, sculpture, garden design, and the tea ceremony.

In Japan, Zen became divided into three major sects, these being further divided into a total of twenty-four subsects. The three major sects are the Sōtō, Rinzai,[3] and Ōbaku. Eisai-*zenji*[4] (1141–1215), the founder of the Rinzai sect in Japan, went to China to study Zen at the age of twenty-eight but was unsuccessful in his efforts to realize enlightenment. At the age of forty-nine he went there once again; this time he was successful, with the result that he was able to transmit the essence of the Lin-chi (Rinzai) sect to Japan. He was persecuted tenaciously by the older, established Buddhist sects, however, and in order to propagate this new form of Buddhism throughout the country he was often forced to seek the protection of the feudal government.

The Zen that Eisai introduced is somewhat mixed with the teachings of other sects, for he taught that strict adherence to the rules of discipline (*vinaya*) that the historical Buddha set forth for monks and nuns was of the first importance, ascribing the practice of zazen to a secondary though still important role. He further taught that the Buddhist teachings, or Law (*Dharma*),[5] were identical with the Buddha-mind, not with the *sūtras,* the latter being but the temporary expression of the Buddha's own enlightened mind. For him the Buddha-mind came first and the *sūtras* second. However fine and profound the *sūtras* might be, they were of no value unless one had directly realized the Buddha-mind. In short, Eisai taught that the Buddha-mind is directly transmitted from Buddha to Buddha apart from the *sūtras.*

Monks of Eisai's sect are said to realize enlightenment step by step through thinking, during zazen, of the essence of each progressively more difficult *kōan*[6] that is assigned to them by their Zen masters. Their efforts are made solely for the purpose of realizing enlightenment through the use of *kōan.* They are quite unaware of the fact that, from the Sōtō Zen point of view, the practice of zazen itself is the manifestation of the *kōan* and of enlightenment.

Finally, in regard to the relationship between Zen and the state, Eisai wrote in his famous treatise on the subject, *Kōzen Gokoku-ron* (Protecting the Nation through the Establishment of Zen), that both have the common objective of ensuring peace and happiness for the people. Eisai stressed, however, that it was only by the state's support of Zen that this common objective could be realized. He actively sought the support of, and was willing to align himself with, the secular powers of his day.

Contrary to Eisai, Dōgen-*zenji* ascribed first importance to the practice of zazen, which, he taught, was identical with adherence to the rules of discipline. He also stressed the importance of those *sūtras* that were at one with the Truth, believing them to be identical with the Buddhist Law. Opposing the use of *kōan* as objects of meditation, as well as the concept of step-by-step enlightenment, Dōgen taught that Buddhist training itself was the only true *kōan,* the manifestation of enlightenment.

Dōgen, like Eisai, believed that the peace and prosperity of the people could be ensured through the state's support of Zen. Later, however, when

he discovered that the state did not share his ideals, he refused to give it his support, criticizing its leaders for their lack of virtue. Although Dōgen was also subjected to persecution by other sects, he did not ask the feudal government for protection. Refusing to be dependent on the state authorities, he devoted himself completely to the propagation of Buddhism through the spoken and written word.

The Ōbaku (Hwang-po) sect, the smallest of the three Zen sects of Japan, was introduced by the Chinese monk Yin-yüan (J., Ingen; 1592–1673), who went to Japan in 1654 and subsequently founded Mampuku-ji monastery at Uji, near Kyoto. His teachings were very much like those of the Rinzai sect, except that he emphasized that zazen is one with the Jōdo sect's practice of *nembutsu,* the repeated invocation of the Buddha Amitābha in order to be reborn in the Pure Land.[7]

TWO

Japanese Buddhism before Dōgen

ALTHOUGH BUDDHISM IS RECORDED as having been introduced to Japan from China and Korea as early as A.D. 522, it was the prince-regent Shōtoku, who ruled Japan from 593 to 622, to whom credit goes for having made the greatest contribution to the establishment of Buddhism in Japan. He is one of the many political rulers in ancient Buddhist Asia who actively tried to incorporate Buddhist teachings into the political and social life of his country.

One of Prince Shōtoku's first acts upon assuming power was to proclaim Buddhism the state religion. He called for the foundation of a grand Buddhist institution composed of a temple, an asylum, a hospital, and a dispensary. In 604 he promulgated what is known as the first Japanese constitution (the content of which consisted of moral instructions), in which he stated that the rulership of a single monarch implied the equality of all people, just as faith in the unique personality of the Buddha as savior of all mankind presupposed the intrinsic value and destiny of every individual who was in communion with him. The high aims of the prince can be seen in the opening statements of his constitution's first article: "Harmony is to be valued, and discord is to be deprecated. . . . All men are influenced by partisanship, and there are few who have wide vision."

In the second article, the prince enunciated his vision of spiritual harmony based on Buddhism: "Simply revere the Three Treasures. The Three Treasures are the Buddha, the Law, and the Buddhist community [*Saṃgha*],[1] the final resort of all beings and the supreme object of faith for all peoples. Should any age or any people fail to revere this truth? There are few men who are utterly vicious. Everyone will realize it [this truth] if duly instructed. Can any wickedness be corrected without having resort to the Three Treasures?"

Prince Shōtoku employed Buddhism as an instrument to bring about national unity. Buddhism was effective in this enterprise because it was a universal religion, transcending the native Japanese religion of Shintō, whose deities were identified with clans. But it should be noted here that the ideal principles enumerated by Prince Shōtoku were not realized during his lifetime.

The founding of a permanent capital in the new city of Nara in 710 not only marked an important step in the establishment of national unity but also represented the culmination of two centuries of growth in Buddhist influence in nearly every branch of social life. Numerous temples and monasteries had been built, and in addition to their religious functions, these institutions served to develop the national resources of the nation and to establish communications. These circumstances led to a steady accumulation of wealth in such ecclesiastical establishments, and while in the beginning this wealth was freely spent on social and educational work, by the latter half of the eighth century it had become a cause of corruption of the monkhood.

Before discussing this problem in detail, however, we must take note of what is often referred to as the most brilliant event in Japanese history, the dedication in 752 of the Central Cathedral, later known as Tōdai-ji, in Nara. The erection of this magnificent temple dedicated to the Buddha Vairocana (Dainichi), a symbolic representation of the eternal Law, marked a still closer relationship between Buddhism and the central government. Emperor Shōmu (r. 724–49) had conceived the foundation of a central cathedral as a symbolic display of the Buddhist ideal of universal spiritual communion centered on the person of the Buddha, parallel to the political unity of national life centered on the monarch.

It was also during the Nara period that another significant event occurred that was to have a lasting effect on Japanese Buddhism. This was the merging of the three dominant schools of spiritual teachings then existing in Japan, Shintō, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Although Shintō was the indigenous religion of the Japanese people, it was primarily a tribal cult combining local rituals with belief in clan-protecting deities.

Since Buddhism with its universal message, which justified a centralized government, was the dominant force of the eighth century, Shintō decided to raise its prestige by identifying itself closely with Buddhism and thereby with the central government. To this end it proclaimed that the sun goddess of Shintō, Amaterasu Ōmikami, was identical with the Buddha Vairocana enshrined in Tōdai-ji, and that the Shintō god Hachiman, the "God of Eight Banners," was the symbol of the Eightfold Noble Path of Buddhist morality. Through an oracle the god Hachiman even made known his desire to act as a guardian for the Central Cathedral.

The relationship between Confucianism and Buddhism was a more natural one. Confucianism was able to supply Japanese Buddhism with its practical ethical teachings, especially its emphasis on "virtue." Furthermore, the Hindu-influenced Buddhist exercise of religious veneration of the dead was easily combined with the practice of ancestor worship and filial piety as taught by Confucianism. The populace came to regard Confucianism as the teaching for the present life and Buddhism as the way to spiritual bliss in the future life.

However, it was not long after the grand dedication ceremonies of the Central Cathedral that signs of corruption began to appear. The accumulation of wealth and power, both in the government and in the Buddhist

hierarchy, led to degeneracy in every phase of aristocratic life. Land newly opened to cultivation was granted to the cultivators as their private property, with much of it falling into the hands of Buddhist temples and monasteries through donation, or by virtue of their own enterprise, or even as mortgage forfeits. The resultant accumulation of wealth in Buddhist institutions tempted the clergy to strive for worldly power, one high monk reportedly even aiming at the throne. Shintō priests became servile followers and servants of the Buddhist clergy, who by this time had divided themselves along Chinese lines into six competing scholastically oriented schools or "sects."[2] The need for both political and religious reform was great.

The impetus for this reformation occurred with the transfer of the capital from Nara to Heian (present-day Kyoto) in 794. Through this change of capital, political regeneration became possible as a result of the freedom gained from the interference of the ecclesiastic dignitaries entrenched in the former capital. Two little-known but brilliant monks, Saichō (767–822) and Kūkai (774–835), were also to develop two new centers of the Buddhist hierarchy, which were to dominate the religious and social life of the coming centuries. Although a strong rivalry developed between the two schools of Buddhism that they founded, both men shared the aims of establishing a new unified center of Japanese Buddhism with the support of the state, deriving new materials from Chinese Buddhism, and emphasizing symbolic practices to represent doctrinal content. While neither monk was successful in establishing such a center of Buddhism, due in no small degree to their rivalry, this goal proved to be the strongest force in social and religious control during the four centuries of the Heian period (794–1185).

It is to Saichō, better known by his posthumous title of Dengyō-*daishi*, that Japanese Buddhism owes the foundation and development of its greatest seat of learning, Mount Hiei, located not far from Kyoto. Here, in the forerunner of the modern university, Saichō introduced the scriptures and treatises of the Tendai (T'ien-t'ai) school of Chinese Buddhism. This emphasized the universality of salvation or attainment of Buddhahood, embracing even the lowest of beings, such as beasts and infernal beings.

Saichō's stress on universality won him wide support among the general populace, and the performance of special Tendai-inspired grand and mystical ceremonies on Mount Hiei gained him governmental support as well, with the whole institution officially declared to be the "Chief Seat of the Buddhist Religion for Ensuring the Security of the Country" (*Chingo-kokka no Dōjō*). Before its decay in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Mount Hiei had become the most powerful center of the Buddhist hierarchy, and had even come to control state affairs.

Kūkai, also better known by his posthumous title, Kōbō-*daishi*, like Saichō had visited China and brought back a new Chinese form of Buddhism known as Shingon (Chên-yen), a combination of mysticism and occultism. The headquarters of the sect was on Mount Kōya, about fifty miles from Kyoto, and it was here that Kūkai repeated deeply mystic formulas, which on a

popular level were thought to evoke divine powers able to fulfill any desire, religious or otherwise. Herein lay the secret of its ability to attract all kinds of people, influencing ambitious nobles and simple folk alike. Eventually Shingon succeeded in overshadowing all other forms of Buddhism; even Saichō's followers found it expedient to emphasize more and more the esoteric aspects of their master's teachings.

After Kūkai's death the superstitious and ritualistic elements in Shingon Buddhism came to play an ever more central role, setting the stage for degeneration and corruption. The temples and their rich properties fell prey to avaricious monks, and the relaxation of the official registration of the clergy from the last part of the ninth century onward aggravated the evil. The corruption of the Buddhist hierarchy vied with the irregularities of the monkhood in the provinces. The great Buddhist centers increased their influence in proportion to their exercise of occult ceremonies, and the power thus acquired became the weapon of ambitious prelates and degenerate monks. The increase in their lands and other property gradually induced such monks to organized armed defense. The monk-soldiers (*sōhei*) proceeded from defensive to offensive acts in asserting their rights and claims, attacking their rivals and even intimidating the national government.

The power and outrages of the monk-soldiers grew so alarming in the course of the eleventh century that the powerful Fujiwara clan, which had been the creator of this force, finding itself unable to control the monks, had to resort to the help of military men from the provinces to suppress their riots. This was of great significance because when the provincial warriors were called to the capital to combat the monk-soldiers, they began to realize their potential power. From this time on their self-assertion grew until they controlled the seat of power, supplanting the Fujiwara oligarchy and finally establishing a military government (*bakufu*) in Kamakura, near present-day Tokyo, in 1185.

The establishment of an austere military government under the dictatorship of the Minamoto clan, far removed from the luxurious life and lax administration of the court nobles in Kyoto, signaled an epochal change for Japan in almost all areas of life, not least the religious. The Buddhist hierarchies lost much of their prestige, together with their political supporters at court; ceremonies and mysteries were discredited, while various new combinations of ideas and practices began to appear in religious belief and moral teaching. Confucianism, while still providing the basis for morality in daily life, was altered in that the object of one's fidelity now became the chief of the clan, engendering an acute sense of honor coupled with adherence to family tradition and obedience to the will of one's superior.

Buddhism, on the other hand, furnished the fighters with training in self-control and fortitude. The three new forms of Buddhism (Jōdo and its later branch Jōdo Shin, Zen, and Nichiren) that were established in the thirteenth century were characterized not by ceremony and mystery but by simple piety and spiritual exercises. Dogma gave way to personal experience, ritual

and sacerdotalism to piety and intuition. Moreover, these new sects exerted their influence across class bounds, exhibiting a growing concern for the common people.

Two of the new Buddhist schools—Jōdo, founded by Hōnen, and Nichiren, founded by a monk of the same name—although different in many respects were basically alike in their emphasis on simple faith and piety, particularly faith in the continual recitation of short formulas as the basis for salvation.[3] This development represented a drastic change from the scholastic type of Buddhism that had originally entered Japan, as well as from its later ritualized, mystical forms. Especially as taught by Shinran, founder of the Jōdo Shin sect, who advocated a family life even for monks, this meant that Buddhist salvation was no longer the prerogative of monks or those "men of leisure" who had ample time to devote to religious pursuits. Its attainment was now possible for anyone, layman or monk, man or woman, young or old, who followed the greatly simplified tenets and practices of the various sects' founders. Buddhism for the common man had been born.

THREE

Dōgen's Life and Thought

DŌGEN WAS BORN into an aristocratic family in Kyoto in 1200, his father, Kuga Michichika, being a high-ranking government minister. Even as a child Dōgen's brilliant mind was apparent; it is said that by the age of four he was able to read Chinese poetry and by the age of nine a Chinese translation of a treatise on the *Abhidharma*.[1] His childhood, however, was not a happy one; for at the age of two he lost his father, and his mother died when he was seven. The loss of both his parents deeply impressed Dōgen's sensitive mind with the transient nature of life, so much so that he became determined to enter the Buddhist monkhood to seek the answer to life's ultimate question—the meaning of life and death.

Concerning the transient nature of life and the merit of becoming a monk, Dōgen was later to write in the first part of the "Merit of Becoming a Monk" (*Shukke Kudoku*) section of the *Shōbō-genzō*, "Life is as transient as a dewdrop, and so, having been fortunate enough to be born as a human being, we should not waste our lives. If we lead the life of a monk in our successive existences, much merit will be accumulated." In the latter part of the same section he says, "When death suddenly comes, neither the king nor his ministers, relatives, servants, wife or children, or rare jewels can save us. We are obliged to enter the realm of the dead alone, accompanied only by our good and bad karma.[2] How desperately we cling to our body at death's door! Therefore while we still retain our human body we should quickly enter the monkhood. This is indeed the true teaching of the various Buddhas in the three stages of time [the past, present, and future]."

At the age of thirteen Dōgen was formally initiated into the monkhood on Mount Hiei, the center of Tendai Buddhist learning in Japan. For the next several years he studied the Mahāyāna, or "Great Vehicle," and Hīnayāna, or "Lesser Vehicle,"[3] versions of Buddhism under the guidance of his master, Abbot Kōen. By the time he was fourteen, however, he had become troubled by a deep doubt concerning one aspect of the Buddhist teaching: if, as the *sūtras* say, all human beings are endowed with the Buddha-nature, why is it that one must train oneself so strenuously to realize that Buddha-nature, that is, to attain enlightenment? Dōgen hoped that Abbot Kōen would be able to

help rid him of his doubt, but when he put this problem before Kōen, the abbot was unable to give him an answer. Deeply disappointed, Dōgen decided to leave Mount Hiei in search of someone who could set his mind at rest. One of those he visited was Abbot Kōin, the chief monk of Mii-dera monastery in present-day Shiga Prefecture; but he too was unable to give Dōgen a clear answer. He only suggested that Dōgen seek the answer to his question from Eisai-*zenji*, who was then residing at Kennin-ji temple in Kyoto.

Following the abbot's advice, Dōgen journeyed to Kennin-ji; and when he asked Eisai the same question, the Zen master replied, "All the Buddhas in the three stages of time are unaware that they are endowed with the Buddha-nature, but cats and oxen are well aware of it indeed!" In other words, the Buddhas, precisely because they are Buddhas themselves, no longer think of having or not having the Buddha-nature; only the animallike (that is, the grossly deluded) think in such terms. Upon hearing this reply, Dōgen experienced an inner realization that partially dissolved his deep-seated doubt and, believing deeply in Eisai's understanding of Buddhism, decided to study the teachings of the Rinzai Zen sect under Eisai's guidance. Unfortunately, however, Eisai died the following year.

How different Eisai was from the other masters of his day can be seen in the collection of Dōgen's sayings entitled the *Shōbō-genzō Zuimonki*. Speaking of the masters he had visited before meeting Eisai, he says, "The masters I had seen all advised me to study until I was as learned as those who had preceded me. I was told to make myself known to the state and gain fame in the world."

Eisai transmitted the Law to seven of his disciples. It was under one of this number, Myōzen (1184–1225), that Dōgen continued his study of Zen for nine more years. The "Practice of the Way" (*Bendō-wa*) section of the *Shōbō-genzō* contains the following reference to Myōzen: "Ever since I awakened to the Bodhi-mind[4] and sought the supreme Truth I made many visits to Buddhist masters throughout the country. It was thus that I happened to meet the Venerable Myōzen at Kennin-ji. Nine years quickly passed as I studied the Way under him. During that period I had the opportunity to learn from him, to some extent, the training methods of the Rinzai Zen sect. To the Venerable Myōzen, leading disciple of my late master Eisai, was rightly transmitted the highest supreme Law and he was unparalleled among his fellow disciples in learning and virtue."

Another episode concerning Myōzen, which describes how earnest he was in the pursuit of the Buddhist Truth, is contained in the *Shōbō-genzō Zuimonki*. This passage concerns a criticism of Myōzen that was raised by his fellow monks because of his determination to leave the dying Myōyu, his original master, to go to China to continue his training in spite of the latter's request that Myōzen remain by his side. In answer to their criticism Myōzen is quoted as saying, "You have all advised me to stay, but I cannot agree. Even if I stay here in Japan now, I cannot protect him [Myōyu] from death if he is to die. Even if I stay here and nurse him, I cannot relieve him of his pain.

Even though I treat his body with due ceremony at his death, I cannot detach him from the transmigration of birth and death. To stay here is merely to obey his orders. It may be of great solace to him, but it is all useless in realizing enlightenment. If he should mistakenly hinder my earnest desire for the supreme Truth, he will have committed a sin."

In spite of his long years of training under Myōzen, Dōgen still felt spiritually unfulfilled. Thus, at the age of twenty-three, he decided to make the hazardous journey to China with Myōzen in order to study Zen Buddhism further. Leaving Japan at the end of March in 1223, they arrived at the Chinese port of Mingchou in the first part of April. To feel out the actual circumstances of Zen Buddhist temples in China, Dōgen stayed on board ship for some time after its arrival in port. In his *Tenzo Kyōkun* (Instructions to the Kitchen Supervisor), Dōgen records an interesting meeting he had with an elderly *tenzo*-monk (the senior monk in charge of cooking) from Ayuwan-shan monastery, who happened to visit his ship one day to buy some Japanese mushrooms.

"I said to him [the *tenzo*-monk], 'When did you leave Ayuwan-shan monastery?'

" 'After lunch.'

" 'How far is it from here?'

" 'About thirty-five *li*.'[5]

" 'When are you going back?'

" 'As soon as I've purchased some mushrooms.'

" 'I am very glad to have this unexpected chance to meet and chat with you for a while here on board ship. Please allow me to serve you, Zen Master *tenzo*.'

" 'I'm sorry, but without my supervision tomorrow's meals will not go well.'

" 'In such a large monastery as Ayuwan-shan there must be enough other cooking monks to prepare the meals. They can surely get along without a single *tenzo*-monk.'

" 'Old as I am, I hold the office of *tenzo*. This is my training during my old age. How can I leave this duty to others? Moreover, I didn't get permission to stay out overnight when I left.'

" 'Venerable sir! Why don't you do zazen or study the *kōan* of ancient masters? What is the use of working so hard as a *tenzo*-monk?'

"On hearing my remarks, he broke into laughter and said, 'Good foreigner! You seem to be ignorant of the true training and meaning of Buddhism.' In a moment, ashamed and surprised at his remark, I said to him, 'What are they?'

" 'If you understand the true meaning of your question, you will have already realized the true meaning of Buddhism,' he answered. At that time, however, I was unable to understand what he meant."

The preceding episode clearly shows that at that time Dōgen was still unable to understand the essence of Zen. He had not yet realized that Zen is and must be expressed through our daily actions, be they cooking, cleaning,

or whatever. His belief that the practice of zazen or the study of *kōan* were the most important aspects of Zen training showed that he was still deeply attached to the doctrine of the Rinzai Zen sect.

After leaving the ship Dōgen first went to T'ien-t'ung monastery, where he trained under Abbot Wu-chi. It was here that he first encountered discrimination based on the fact that he was a foreign monk. The *Kenzei-ki*, a biography of Dōgen by Kenzei, relates that Dōgen was assigned a low rank because he was not Chinese. Dōgen protested this discrimination, saying that monks should be ranked by the length of time that had elapsed since their entrance into the monkhood, regardless of their nationality. At first, however, his protests went unheard. It is said that it was not until he made a final appeal to the emperor that his rank was determined on the same basis as that of the Chinese monks.

In spite of this experience, Dōgen significantly deepened his understanding of Zen during his training at T'ien-t'ung. The importance of the office of *tenzo* finally struck home to him as a result of an incident there, which is also recorded in the *Tenzo Kyōkun*. It happened one day when Dōgen was going to the abbot's living quarters, located along the eastern corridor of the monastery. On the way he came across an old, bare-headed *tenzo*-monk with a bamboo stick in his hand, earnestly drying some mushrooms in front of the Buddha hall. The sun's rays beat down upon him, causing him to perspire profusely. Still he continued to move here and there, drying the mushrooms. Moved by this sight, Dōgen drew near him and asked, "What is your Buddhist age?"

"Sixty-eight," the *tenzo*-monk answered.

"Why don't you make the other cooking monks under your supervision do it?"

"They are not me."

"You are really one with Buddhism, but I wonder why you work so hard in the burning sun."

"When else can I do it but now?"

Dōgen said nothing. As he continued to walk along the corridor, he thought to himself how important the office of *tenzo* was.

A second significant event during Dōgen's training at T'ien-t'ung took place one day at the conclusion of the zazen period. At that time the monk seated beside him put a folded *kaśāya*[6] on top of his head and reverently recited a *sūtra* passage concerning its wearing. Deeply moved by this practice, Dōgen states in the "Merit of a *Kaśāya*" (*Kesa Kudoku*) section of the *Shōbō-genzō*:

"At that time I was filled with the deepest emotion and joy that I had ever experienced. Unknowingly I shed so many tears of gratitude that my collar became wet. Why? Although I had opened the *Āgama-sūtras* before and read the verse concerning the placing of the *kaśāya* on one's head, I did not know the details of the manner in which it was to be done. Seeing it at that time before my very eyes filled me with great joy. I said to myself, 'Alas! When I was in Japan, no teacher told me about this, nor were there any fine friends

to recommend this practice to me. How much time, sorry to say, I uselessly idled away! How fortunate it is that, owing to my good deeds in the past, I have now been able to see this! If I had remained in Japan, how could I have ever seen the monk next to me wearing the Buddha's *kaśāya?*' Filled with these mixed feelings of happiness and sorrow, I cried copiously. Then I vowed to myself, 'With compassion for my fellow countrymen I will, unworthy though I am, become an heir to Buddhism, a right receiver of the true Way, and teach them the Law that was correctly transmitted by the Buddhas and patriarchs together with the *kaśāya.*' "

In spite of the deeper understanding of Zen that Dōgen realized during his training at T'ien-t'ung, he still felt spiritually incomplete. Hence he decided to leave that monastery in search of a master under whose guidance he might realize total liberation. For the next several months he visited numerous monasteries, but to no avail. Just as he was about to give up his search and return to Japan, he happened to hear that the former abbot of T'ien-t'ung had died and that his successor, Ju-ching (1163–1228), was said to be one of China's finest Zen masters. Upon returning to that monastery, Dōgen found that Ju-ching was indeed a Zen master in whom he could place his full confidence. In the "Ceaseless Training" (*Gyōji*) section of the *Shōbō-genzō* Dōgen writes:

"My late master, Abbot Ju-ching, was from Yüeh. At the age of nineteen he quit scholastic Buddhism to train himself in the Way. Even in his sixties he continued to practice strenuously. Though given a purple robe and the title of Zen Master [*Ch'an-shih*] by Emperor Ning-tsung in the Chia-ting era [1208–25], he would not accept them and sent a letter of refusal to the emperor. This excellent deed of his was respected by monks everywhere and admired by knowledgeable men far and near. The emperor, too, was deeply impressed, and honored him with tea. Those who heard about his action praised it as being unprecedented."

With respect to Ju-ching's severe training, Dōgen continues in the same section: "My late master used to say, 'Ever since I was nineteen years old I made numerous visits to monasteries in search of Buddhism, but without finding a true teacher. During this period, not a day or a night passed without my doing zazen seated on a meditation cushion. Even before I became head monk of this temple [T'ien-t'ung] I did not talk with those in my home village for fear that I would waste a single moment. I always lived in the meditation hall of the temple in which I resided, never entering anyone else's hermitage or dormitory, not to mention going on pleasure trips to the mountains, lakes, and so on. Not only did I practice zazen at the appointed times in the meditation hall, but wherever and whenever it was possible to practice it I did so—in the upper stories of temple buildings, beneath cliffs, or in other solitary places, always carrying a cushion concealed in the sleeve of my robe. It was my intention to sit so hard as to make this cushion fall into tatters. This was my only wish. As a result, my buttocks sometimes became inflamed, causing hemorrhoids; but I liked zazen so much the better.' "

Following the example of his master, Dōgen devoted himself to the practice

of zazen day and night. Early one morning, as he was making his usual round of inspection at the beginning of the formal zazen period, Ju-ching discovered one of the monks dozing. Scolding the monk, he said, "The practice of zazen is the dropping away of body and mind. What do you expect to accomplish by dozing?" Upon hearing these words, Dōgen suddenly realized enlightenment, his Mind's eye opening fully. Going to Ju-ching's room to have his enlightenment confirmed as genuine, Dōgen burned some incense and prostrated himself before his master.

"What do you mean by this?" Ju-ching asked.

"I have experienced the dropping away of body and mind," Dōgen replied.

Ju-ching, realizing that Dōgen's enlightenment was genuine, then said, "You have indeed dropped body and mind!"

Dōgen, however, remonstrated, "I have only just realized enlightenment. Don't sanction me so easily."

"I'm not sanctioning you easily."

Dōgen, still unsatisfied, persisted: "What is the basis for your saying that you haven't sanctioned me easily?"

Ju-ching replied, "Body and mind dropped away!"

Hearing this, Dōgen prostrated himself before his master in deep respect and gratitude, showing that he had indeed transcended his discriminating mind.

Even after his enlightenment Dōgen continued his training at T'ien-t'ung under Ju-ching's guidance for approximately two years, for as has been previously mentioned, there is in Zen Buddhism no gap between practice and enlightenment. Thus, practice after having realized enlightenment is just as important as that preceding it. Just how important a role Dōgen felt a true master like Ju-ching plays in the enlightenment process can be seen in his "Points to Watch in Buddhist Training" (*Gakudō Yōjin-shū*). He writes: "The Buddhist trainee can be compared to a fine piece of timber, and a true master to a good carpenter. Even quality wood will not show its fine grain unless it is worked on by a good carpenter. Even a warped piece of wood will, if handled by a good carpenter, soon show the results of good craftsmanship. The truth or falsity of enlightenment depends upon whether or not one has a true master. This should be well understood."

In 1227 Dōgen decided to return to Japan to propagate his teaching among the many people in his homeland who were ignorant of true Buddhism. When he asked for Ju-ching's permission to return, the latter readily granted it, for he highly evaluated the necessity and importance of Dōgen's coming work. As a symbol of the transference of the Law to Dōgen, Ju-ching presented him with a *kaśāya* that had originally belonged to Fu-jung Tao-ch'üeh (1043–1118). He also presented Dōgen with copies of the famous Ts'ao-tung (Sōtō) Zen texts *Pao-ching San-mei* (*Hōkyō Zammai*) and *Wu-wei Hsien-chüeh* (*Goi Kenketsu*) by Liang-chieh of Mount Tung (807–69), as well as a portrait of himself. In parting he said, "With all sincerity I gave these to you, a foreign monk. I hope you will propagate true Buddhism throughout

your country, thereby saving deluded people. You should not live in cities or other places of human habitation. Rather, staying clear of kings and ministers, make your home in deep mountains and remote valleys, transmitting the essence of Zen Buddhism forever, if even only to a single true Bodhi-seeker."

After his return to Japan, Dōgen once more took up residence at Kenninji. He stayed there for three years, but to his great disappointment he found that the quality of the training at this temple had deteriorated considerably from what it had been in the past. In the *Shōbō-genzō Zuimonki* Dōgen is recorded as saying, "It is an obvious fact that Buddhism is now on the decline. I witnessed the gradual changes that had taken place between the first time I resided at Kennin-ji and the time I returned there seven or eight years later. At that time every room of the temple was furnished with a lacquered case, and every monk had his own furniture, liked fine clothes, and stored away treasures. Not only that, but they loved to utter licentious words, neglecting the correct manner of salutation and worship."

As a result of his disappointment in life at Kennin-ji, Dōgen decided to move to An'yō-in temple, though not before he had written his first treatise on Zen Buddhism, "A Universal Recommendation for Zazen" (*Fukan Zazen-gi*). This work not only contained a detailed description of the correct method of doing zazen but also expressed the essence of Zen Buddhism. At An'yō-in, Dōgen continued his writing; and it was here that he wrote "The Practice of the Way," which was to form the first section of his great masterwork, the *Shōbō-genzō*, in the Eihei-ji edition.

It was not until Dōgen moved to Kōshō-ji temple, where he had a *sōdō* (meditation hall) built, that he began in earnest to give practical guidance in zazen to monks as well as devout laymen. Although he approved of the construction of a simple and suitable meditation hall in order that Buddhist trainees might pursue their practice single-mindedly, Dōgen stringently warned against the building of magnificent temples or the making of Buddha images for their own sake. In the *Shōbō-genzō Zuimonki* he says:

"Nowadays most people think that making Buddha images or constructing temples is an index of the spread of Buddhism. This is quite wrong. No magnificent temple, though commanding a fine view and decorated with jewels or gold leaf, can be a medium of our enlightenment. It is true that laymen receive a sense of happiness when they have committed beneficial deeds by introducing their riches into the Buddha world, but such actions are not those of monks. Such actions by monks have nothing to do with the spread of Buddhism. We should think of the Buddha's words and practice zazen for even a short time in a humble cottage or under a tree; then Buddhism will really flourish. In order to build a meditation hall I am now exerting my utmost efforts to find benefactors willing to make contributions. However, I do not necessarily think this will contribute to the spread of Buddhism. Not having many trainees and having much to do, I am now forced to waste much time. Therefore, I sincerely hope to have the hall built in order that it may help deluded people to come into contact with Bud-

dhism, and present Buddhist trainees to practice zazen. Even if my plan is not realized, I shall not be disappointed. If only I can set up even a single pillar, it will remind my descendants of my unattained hope. But what happens later on is no concern of mine."

At the opening ceremony of the meditation hall, Dōgen talked about what he had "gained" as a result of his training in China. He said, "I realized clearly that my eyes are set horizontally and my nose vertically. I returned to Japan without carrying a single *sūtra*. So I have no Buddhism [I am completely at one with Buddhism]."

As Dōgen became known for his virtuous character and severe training, an ever increasing number of people gathered around him until finally the hall he had built was unable to hold them all. Obliged to build a new hall, Dōgen decided to codify the regulations to be followed therein in a work entitled the *Jū Undō-shiki* (Rules of the Newly Built Meditation Hall). Concrete and minutely detailed, yet profoundly spiritual, these regulations give concrete expression to Dōgen's belief that Zen is a religion to be practiced in one's daily life. They are included here in their entirety in order that this unique aspect of Dōgen's teaching may be better understood.

"1. No monk shall be admitted to this meditation hall unless he has an earnest desire for the Way and a strong determination not to seek fame and profit. Neither should anyone enter here merely expecting to gain enlightenment. If you come to realize that your entrance was a mistake, you should leave. Once aspiration for the Way arises, your deep-rooted desire for fame and profit will disappear in a moment. In the whole world there are, I dare say, very few true transmitters of the Buddhist Law. With the building of this meditation hall at Kōshō-ji, I intend to lay the foundation for a Zen training institute in our country because I feel compassion for people in this age of degenerate Buddhism and attach more importance to what happens in the present than to what occurred in the past.

"2. All monks in this hall should try to live in harmony with one another, just as milk blends well with water, and should try to open their eyes to the supreme Wisdom together with others. Then your present position of 'guest' will afterward become that of 'master,' that is, of the Buddhas and patriarchs. For this reason we may say that here you are able to meet a friend ordinarily hard to meet and do things ordinarily hard to do. Always try to be of single purpose; then you will be identical with the Buddhas and patriarchs—nay, with their body and mind. Already separated from your homes and other human habitations, resting as with the floating clouds or running water, take good care of yourselves and pursue the Way to enlightenment—in all this you owe a great deal to the benefaction of other monks, above even that which you owe to your parents. Parents are those in the transient world, while other monks will long be your fellow trainees in the Way.

"3. You should not walk about in the outside world; but if unavoidable, it is permissible to do so once a month. In times past, some, I hear, lived in distant mountains or woods, aloof from worldly relations as well as from

troublesome human affairs. You should realize they followed the Way without being attached to it. Now is the best time to save your head from a burning fire. How deplorable it is that even in this time of urgency you should be concerned with worldly troubles! Everything is too transient to be relied upon, and it is impossible to foretell when this transient life will come to an end. You should not read books here—not even books on Zen—but pursue the truth of Buddhism through strict training. Facing the wall, reflect on yourselves using the teachings of the ancient Buddhas and patriarchs as if looking into an old mirror, studying the Way wholeheartedly without wasting a single moment.

"4. Keep the supervisor of this hall informed of your whereabouts at all times. Do not idle away your time uselessly. Follow the rules for all monks here. Who can assert that your present body is not the last you will ever have? How sorry you would feel in the future if you should have lived to no purpose!

"5. Never speak ill of others, nor find fault with them. As the old saying goes, 'If you neither find fault with others nor take pride in your own merits, you will naturally be respectful to your seniors and harmonious with your juniors.' Never imitate others' faults but try to cultivate your own moral character. Śākyamuni did not teach [us] to hate others for their faults, but rather warned us to guard against our own faults.

"6. Never fail to do what is required of you, whether it be large or small, always taking care to keep the hall supervisor informed of your actions. If you fail to do so, you will be made to leave the hall. If the signs of courtesy between those of 'high' and 'low' position are not observed, it is impossible to tell right from wrong.

"7. In or about the hall, never speak loudly or in a group. If this occurs, it is the hall supervisor's responsibility to warn you.

"8. Never loiter in the hall.

"9. Never carry a rosary here, nor go in or out with your hands hanging down.

"10. Never invoke or read any *sūtra* here unless you have been earnestly requested to do so by a lay supporter.

"11. Never blow your nose, nor spit loudly in the hall. Realizing that time is too short for your lifelong training—just as a fish cannot live long in a pool where the water is insufficient—be regretful that you have not yet realized final enlightenment.

"12. Wear only robes made of plain material. Those who have hitherto sought Buddhism have always done so.

"13. Never enter the hall drunk with wine, but if by mistake you do so, bow to the Mañjuśrī image[7] and make repentance. Never bring wine into the hall, nor enter here emitting its smell.

"14. Never quarrel with one another here. If you do, both of you will be ordered to leave, because it will prevent others, as well as the parties concerned, from practicing the Way. Also to be censured is he who sees them quarreling without warning them.

"15. He who does not abide by the rules of this hall must be expelled by all the monks here; so must he who remains indifferent to such a monk.

"16. Never disturb the training of other monks by inviting outsiders, lay or clerical, into the hall. Never be desirous of offerings from lay supporters, thinking yourselves worthy of such gifts because of your long training. It should be noted, however, that this hall is open to any earnest and long-time seeker of the Way, though the hall supervisor's permission is necessary.

"17. Do zazen here as befits a meditation hall, and listen attentively to the head monk's lectures on Buddhism.

"18. Should you drop one of your bowls on the floor during breakfast or lunch, you must keep the oil lamp in front of the Mañjuśrī image burning for twenty-four hours running as a penalty.

"19. Observe these regulations of the Buddhas and patriarchs, keeping them in your mind and heart.

"20. During your lifelong pursuit of the Way, seek calmness and freedom.

"The articles mentioned above are all the body and mind of the ancient Zen masters. This is why you should observe them."

During his residence at Kōshō-ji, Dōgen acquired numerous dedicated disciples, among whom Ejō, Sōkai, Sen'e, Ekan, Gikai, Giin, Gien, Gijun, Gizen, and Giun were the most notable. Ejō (1198–1280) in particular was very close to Dōgen, even though he was two years older than his master. It was he who was responsible for compiling the collection of Dōgen's sayings known as the *Shōbō-genzō Zuimonki*. Later he was also to assist his master in founding the monastery of Eihei-ji on the Japan Sea coast, and still later would become its second head monk.

Dōgen, for his part, was busily engaged at Kōshō-ji in continuing his written introduction to Zen, completing not only forty more sections of the *Shōbō-genzō* but also several other works. Yet the now middle-aged Dōgen was encountering more and more problems. Not only did his growing fame attract an increasing number of visitors, who tended to disturb his training and study, but also he became the target of persecution by the older, more established Buddhist sects. The clerical leaders of Mount Hiei, affiliated with the then almighty and increasingly degenerate Tendai sect, were especially vociferous in their condemnation of Dōgen, jealous of his widening influence. There is even a tradition to the effect that they ordered Kōshō-ji to be destroyed, forcing Dōgen to move once again.

Dōgen, accompanied by a small number of his closest disciples, did at any rate leave Kōshō-ji, first finding temporary haven at a small temple, Yoshimine-dera, located on the Japan Sea coast in what was then known as Echizen province (present-day Fukui Prefecture). Here, with the support and protection of Hatano Yoshishige, a powerful district clan leader and devout Buddhist, Dōgen wrote twenty-four more sections of the *Shōbō-genzō* before moving on to Yamashibu-dera temple for three months, where he completed five more sections. At least Dōgen found a permanent home at Daibutsu-ji, a temple that had been built for him by Yoshishige, who requested that he become its founder. Two years later the name of this temple was changed to Eihei-ji (Temple of Eternal Peace), the name that it has kept to the present, when it is one of the two head temples of the Sōtō Zen sect[8] and the largest Zen monastery in Japan.

According to the traditional history of the Japanese Sōtō Zen sect, the primary motivation for Dōgen's having gone to such an extremely remote area as Echizen was his desire to act in accordance with the instructions of his Chinese master Ju-ching to stay "clear of kings and ministers" and "make your home in deep mountains and remote valleys, transmitting the essence of Zen Buddhism forever, if even only to a single true Bodhi-seeker." Although these instructions did no doubt play an important part in Dōgen's decision to move, not to mention persecution by the other sects, the traditional historical view does not adequately explain why Dōgen chose to live for nearly sixteen years in the vicinity of Kyoto, the home of the emperor, upon his return from China. Nor does it explain why, during his residence near Kyoto, he presented the cloistered emperor Gosaga with a treatise entitled *Gokoku Shōbō-gi* (The Method of Pacifying the State by the True Law).

The actual content of the treatise is now unknown, but from Dōgen's other writings it may be fairly assumed that he proposed that the state should be governed by the spirit of Zen Buddhism, that is, the spirit of the equality and identity of all things and all people: a view that was not likely to please the leadership of the older established sects, denying as it must have their privileged position. In the first section of the *Shōbō-genzō,* "The Practice of the Way," Dōgen describes the relationship of Buddhism to the state as follows: "When the true Way is widely practiced in the nation, the various Buddhas and heavenly deities will continuously protect it and the virtue of the emperor will exert a good influence on the people, thereby bringing peace. When the nation is thus pacified by such a wise and virtuous emperor, then the Way, being strengthened by these circumstances, can be truly practiced."

It was this view, no doubt, that led Dōgen in 1247 to accept the invitation of Hōjō Tokiyori, head of the feudal military government in the new capital of Kamakura near present-day Tokyo, to give him instruction in the Buddhist precepts. After making the long trip from Eihei-ji, Dōgen eventually conferred the Bodhisattva precepts[9] on Tokiyori; but, perhaps being disappointed in the ruler, he refused the latter's request to remain in the capital for a longer period of time.

From these various attempts by Dōgen to influence national policy, it is clear that while he exerted his greatest efforts in giving practical instruction and guidance to individual seekers of the Way, he was also interested in establishing an entire society based on Zen Buddhist thought and practice. Underlying all his efforts was his fundamental belief that in essence there is no difference between so-called worldly affairs and the Way. In another passage from "The Practice of the Way" he states, "He who regards worldly affairs as an obstacle to his training only knows there is no Way in worldly affairs, not knowing that there is nothing such as worldly affairs to be distinguished from the Way."

In line with his statement that there is no Way in worldly affairs, Dōgen severely warned Buddhist initiates against the pursuit of fame and profit, regarding them as great obstacles to the realization of the Way. His thought in this regard is clearly shown in the first article of the *Jū Undō-shiki,* in which one of the conditions placed on those entering the meditation hall was that they have "a strong determination not to seek fame and profit." Dōgen himself refused to accept an honorary purple *kaśāya* sent to him at Eihei-ji by the cloistered emperor Gosaga. The cloistered emperor, however, continued to beseech Dōgen to accept his gift; and after having twice refused it, he finally accepted it the third time. Vowing never to wear it during his lifetime, however, Dōgen composed the following poem:

> Shallow is the valley of Eihei-ji temple,
> But grave is the edict of the emperor.
> If an old monk here wore a purple *kaśāya*
> He would be laughed at by monkeys and cranes.

At the comparatively early age of fifty-two, Dōgen became seriously ill. Realizing that his illness was beyond medical treatment, he presented his disciples with his last treatise on Buddhism, "The Eight Aspects of Enlightenment" (*Hachi Dainin-gaku*). This treatise was later incorporated as the last section of the *Shōbō-genzō*. At the urging of his disciples, Dōgen returned to Kyoto to receive medical treatment; but this was of no avail and he died soon after his arrival, on August 28, 1253, at Seido-in temple in Takatsuji, Kyoto.

Dōgen delivered a great many discourses on Buddhism during his lifetime of fifty-three years. Those that have been preserved were copied down either directly by him or by his disciples, and form a total of eight separate works with more than 120 sections in all. Broadly speaking, they can be divided into the following five categories: (1) the essence of Zen, (2) instructions, (3) regulations for a Zen monastery, (4) precepts, and (5) poetry. His principal works are "A Universal Recommendation for Zazen," "Points to Watch in Buddhist Training," *Eihei Genzenji Shingi,* a collection of Ju-ching's sayings known as the *Hōkyō-ki,* a collection of Dōgen's teachings and verse called the *Eihei Kōroku,* the *Shōbō-genzō,* and the *Shōbō-genzō Zuimonki.*

Dōgen's numerous writings make it clear that the teachings of Sōtō Zen Buddhism are quite different from those of the Rinzai sect. As has been mentioned, Japanese Zen is divided into three main sects. Of these the Ōbaku is the smallest. The Rinzai sect is much larger, though still lacking in wide support among the general populace. Due to the numerous English works on Zen Buddhism by Daisetz Suzuki, however, it is undoubtedly the best known of the Zen sects outside Japan. By comparison, although still relatively unknown abroad, the Sōtō sect is spread throughout the Japanese countryside, having approximately one hundred thousand affiliated monks and nuns and five million lay devotees. This means that the Sōtō sect is

equal in size to Japan's other most popular Buddhist sect, the Jōdo Shin or True Pure Land sect.

There are many different ways of extracting the essence of Dōgen's thought. Perhaps the most useful and readily understood method is that in which the essential characteristics of his thought are expressed as identities of what are ordinarily considered to be mutually opposing or exclusive concepts. In Dōgen's case there are eleven such identities, which form the basis of his thought.

1. *Identity of self and others.* The original spirit of Dōgen's Zen is, of course, to do zazen. Zazen is the complete realization of self—self identified with others. Self identified with others is the universal or true Self. To realize this it is necessary to realize non-ego through the practice of zazen—thinking beyond conceptual thought. By way of explanation, Dōgen says in the "Manifestation of the *Kōan*" (*Genjō Kōan*) section of the *Shōbō-genzō:* "To study the Way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be enlightened by all things. To be enlightened by all things is to remove the barriers between one's self and others."

2. *Identity of practice and enlightenment.* As mentioned earlier, Dōgen emphasized that there is no gap between practice and enlightenment. Ordinarily, man works in order to obtain something he desires. Therefore, once he has obtained that object he often becomes satisfied and makes no further effort. On the other hand, if he fails to obtain his object he tends to become too discouraged to continue his task. As long as one is attached in this manner to the results achieved, it is impossible to make constant effort. It is necessary to understand that, originally, there is no difference between first and last, cause and effect.

3. *Identity of the precepts and Zen Buddhism.* Novice monks must not enter the monkhood without having received the sixteen Bodhisattva precepts. In this sense, these precepts are the first gate through which monks must pass in their search for Zen. In the eyes of Dōgen, however, there is no difference between the precepts and Zen itself. The precepts are simply the function of the inner Buddha-mind. In other words, when one has realized his Buddha-mind, he is already endowed with the precepts.

4. *Identity of life and death.* The most important problem for Buddhist trainees is to realize the meaning of life and death. Ordinary people love life and hate death. But however hard they may try to avoid this hateful death, they find it impossible to do so. However, once one faces death courageously, one finds that there is no gap between life and death. In other words, life is life itself and death is death itself. Life is no other than life; death is no other than death. There is no death opposed to life, no life opposed to death. Thus, Dōgen says in the "Birth and Death" (*Shōji*) section of the *Shōbō-genzō,* "There is no life or death to love or hate." Both, in fact, are the life of the Buddha.

5. *Identity of* kōan *and enlightenment.* The 1,700 *kōan* are an important aid to the realization of enlightenment. Monks of the Rinzai sect are said to be

unable to realize enlightenment unless they are able to find a "solution" to their *kōan* during zazen. Dōgen, however, stresses that the *kōan* themselves are enlightenment, and vice versa. As already mentioned, enlightenment is practice. Therefore single-hearted practice of zazen is already the undisguised manifestation of the *kōan* themselves. The "solution" to the *kōan,* as well as enlightenment itself, should not be sought intentionally but should be realized naturally through strenuous practice of the Way.

6. *Identity of time and being.* Dōgen writes in the "Being-Time" (*Uji*) section of the *Shōbō-genzō,* "Time is being and vice versa," and "Each thing is one time." Time is not the object of our cognition, for it can be understood only when it is experienced directly. When time is time itself, being can be being itself. In this sense Dōgen's viewpoint is similar to that expressed by the German philosopher Martin Heidegger in *Sein und Zeit* (Being and Time). Spring becomes summer. But spring is spring, and summer is summer, each including the other. "Now" is "now," including the past, present, and future. Without "now" there is none of the others. "Now" is absolute and eternal. "Now" once lost never returns. So there is every need to apply oneself to the present practice of the Way.

7. *Identity of being and nonbeing.* In Dōgen's Zen, nonbeing is far from "nothing," for nonbeing is being, and vice versa. Both are absolutes beyond the dualistic viewpoint. From the absolute viewpoint, Dōgen taught, it is equally correct to say "We have the Buddha-nature" and "We do not have the Buddha-nature." This may sound like a paradoxical statement, opposed to common sense, but it can be verified through Buddhist practice. In this sense, nonbeing in Zen is never the "nothing" of nihilism but is a lively and creative function of the Way.

8. *Identity of Zen Buddhism and the state.* Dogen believed that ideally, the state should be based on the spirit of Zen Buddhism. The fact that he presented the cloistered emperor Gosaga with the treatise *Gokoku Shōbō-gi* shows how eagerly he tried to teach the national authorities the universality of Zen. As previously stated, his viewpoint of the state was that the citizens thereof should be governed by the spirit of Zen, that is, the equality and identity of all things and all people.

9. *Identity of men and women.* Śākyamuni, the historical Buddha, said, "All creatures have the Buddha-nature." Therefore they are all originally equal. With regard to the ability to realize Buddhahood, there is no difference between clever and foolish, high and low social status, or men and women. Dōgen states in the "Realization of the Way through Venerating the Buddhas" (*Raihai Tokuzui*) section of the *Shōbō-genzō,* "There is no gap between right and wrong, or between men and women." One is not respected as a true Buddhist by others because of one's sex but according to whether or not one has realized the Way. Although women may appear weaker than men, this has nothing to do with their realization of the Way. The Way is open to men and women equally.

10. *Identity of monks and lay people.* Monks can apply themselves to Buddhist practice, freed from worldly affairs. However, lay people are often too occupied with securing their livelihood to pursue the Way. Is there no gap in the realization of the Way between the two? About this Dōgen says in the "Practice of the Way" section of the *Shōbō-genzō,* "It depends upon the intensity of their Bodhi-seeking mind whether they [laymen] can realize the Way." It should be noted, however, that although Dōgen admits that it is theoretically possible for laymen to realize the Way, he states in the "Merit of Becoming a Monk" section of the *Shōbō-genzō,* "Laymen should definitely enter the monkhood and follow the precepts for monks." Contradictory? Yes, but it is necessary to remember that, in Dōgen's Zen, practice takes precedence over theory.

11. *Identity of the* sūtras *and Zen Buddhism.* In Zen, the Way of the Buddha-mind is often said to be beyond letters and *sūtras.* This is because attachment to letters can easily become a hindrance to realizing the Buddha-mind. But this does not mean that letters and *sūtras* are less valuable than the Buddha-mind. From the viewpoint of enlightenment there is no gap between the two. Letters are the Way itself, and vice versa; *sūtras* are the Buddha-mind, and vice versa. About this Dōgen states in the "Buddhist Teachings" (*Bukkyō*) section of the *Shōbō-genzō:* "If you say that the Buddha-mind is transmitted beyond the *sūtras,* it follows that the *sūtras* are transmitted beyond the Buddha-mind. If this were true, not a syllable of the *sūtras* could have been transmitted." It is the attachment to letters, not letters themselves, that must be cast away.

The preceding "identities" show that Dōgen regarded the essence of the Way as equality. But equality is closely connected with the state of absolute freedom that exists beyond such dualistic ideas as right and wrong, life and death, time and being, men and women, and so on. The equality of self and others, in particular, promotes altruistic love for all things and people. Dōgen's words in the "Four Practices of Bodhisattvas" (*Bodaisatta Shi-shōbō*) section of the *Shōbō-genzō*—"Save others before you realize your own enlightenment"—express the essence of his Zen, sustained as it was by his single-hearted practice of zazen. This feature of Dōgen's Zen is based on the identity (equality) of all things, which includes absolute freedom and altruistic love for all beings.

As already mentioned, Dōgen negated the use of *kōan* as objects of meditation to be used in the course of realizing enlightenment and stressed, instead, practice identified with enlightenment and the precepts, based on the firm belief that one is already united with the Buddha. Because the basic premise of Buddhism regarding sentient beings is that they are inherently in possession of the Buddha-nature, having the innate quality of enlightenment, Dōgen's Zen may be said to have a common standpoint with the other new sects of the Kamakura period, such as Jōdo, Jōdo Shin, Rinzai, and Nichiren. However, in his teaching that the practice of zazen embodies both practice and enlightenment he may be said to have made a unique contribution to Japanese Buddhism. Through the emphasis he placed on the Bodhisattva precepts and the ceaseless practice of zazen, he developed Zen Buddhism to new heights, making it a truly universal religion.