

OCEAN MUDRA SAMADHI

BUDDHAS AND ANCESTORS continuously maintain ocean mudra [form] samadhi. While swimming in this samadhi, they expound, realize, and practice. Traveling through water includes journeying along the ocean bottom. This is called “coursing along the bottom of the deepest ocean.”

This ocean differs from the sea of birth and death where buddhas vow to guide beings drifting in birth and death to the shore of liberation. Each buddha ancestor breaks through the bamboo node [intellectual thinking] and passes the barrier individually; this is done only through the power of the ocean mudra samadhi.

The Buddha said:

Elements come together and form this body. At the time of appearing, elements appear. At the time of disappearing, elements disappear. When elements appear, I do not say “I” appear. When elements disappear, I do not say “I” disappear. Past moments and future moments do not arise sequentially. Past elements and future elements do not arise in alignment. This is the meaning of ocean mudra samadhi.

Closely investigate these words by the Buddha. Attaining the way and entering realization do not necessarily require extensive learning or explanation. Anyone can attain the way through a simple verse of four lines. Even scholars with extensive knowledge can enter realization through a one-line verse. But these words by the Buddha are not about searching for original enlightenment or gaining initial enlightenment. Although buddhas and ancestors manifest original or

initial enlightenment, original or initial enlightenment is not buddha ancestors.

At the very moment of ocean mudra samadhi, elements come together and the Buddha's words elements come together are manifested. This is the moment of form this body.

This body is a coming together of elements. It is not merely a coming together; it is elements coming together. A body formed in this way is described as this body.

The Buddha said, At the time of appearing, elements appear. This appearing does not leave any mark of appearing; therefore, appearing does not enter one's perception or knowledge. Thus, the Buddha said, I do not say "I" appear. It is not that there is someone else who perceives or thinks that the person appears; it is just that you see beyond, and you drop away your initial understanding.

As the time [of ocean mudra samadhi] is not other than appearing, appearing is the arrival of time. What is it that appears? Appearing appears. Because appearing is time, appearing does not fail to fully manifest skin, flesh, bones, and marrow. As appearing is a coming together, appearing is this body, appearing is "I" appear, appearing is all elements coming together. What appears is not merely sound and form. All elements appear as "I" appear and as I do not say "I" appear.

Not say is not "not expressing," because expressing is not saying. The time of appearing [in ocean mudra samadhi] is when elements appear, which is not the same as the twelve hours of the day [ordinary time]. All elements are the time of appearing, not the time when the three realms appear.

An ancient buddha said, "Fire appears all of a sudden."
Fire here means elements appear together but are not sequential.

An ancient buddha said, "What about the moment when appearing and disappearing continue endlessly?"

Appearing and disappearing continue endlessly while self appears and disappears. Reflect on the words continue endlessly and let them continue endlessly. Allow the moments of appearing and disappearing to continue and discontinue as the life stream of buddha ancestors.

The moment when appearing and disappearing continue endlessly is “What appears and disappears?” This means “With this body I awaken beings,” “Now I manifest this body,” “I expound dharma,” “Past mind is unattainable,” “You have attained my marrow,” “You have attained my bones.” This is “What appears and disappears?”

[The Buddha said,] When elements disappear, I do not say “I” disappear. The moment when I do not say “I” disappear is the moment when elements disappear. What disappears are elements disappearing. Although disappearing, they are elements. Because they are elements, they are not affected by delusion. Because they are not affected by delusion, they are not divided. This undividedness is all buddhas and ancestors. In the words [spoken by Huineng], “You are like this,” what is not *you*? All past moments and all future moments are *you*. When he said, “I am like this,” what is not *I*? Past moments and future moments are all *I*.

Disappearing has been magnificently expressed as countless hands and eyes [of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva]. It is unsurpassable nirvana. It is called death. It is called freedom from attachment. It is called the abiding place.

Hands and eyes are expressions of disappearing. Not saying I at the moment of appearing and not saying I at the moment of disappearing appear together, but do not disappear at the same time. There are past elements that disappear and future elements that disappear. There are elements that are moments in the past and elements that are moments in the future. Being is past and future elements. Being is past and future moments. Things that are not sequential are being. Things that are not aligned are being.

Talking about things that are not sequential and not aligned explains eight or nine out of ten. To regard the four great elements and five

skandhas as the hands and eyes of disappearing is to take them up and pursue understanding. To see four great elements and five skandhas as the path of disappearing is going beyond, encountering reality. The entire body is hands and eyes, not lacking anything. The full range of the body is hands and eyes, not lacking anything. Disappearing is the activity of buddha ancestors.

While the Buddha says not sequential and not aligned, nevertheless appearing arises in the beginning, middle, and end. This may be seen as officially not allowing a needle, but unofficially permitting carriages and horses to pass.

In the beginning, middle, and end, disappearing is neither sequential nor aligned. Although elements appear all of a sudden where past elements disappeared, it is not that disappearing turns into appearing, but that elements appear. Because elements appear completely, they are neither sequential nor aligned. It does not mean that disappearings succeed disappearings or are aligned with disappearings. Disappearing is complete disappearing in the beginning, middle, and end. Disappearing meets disappearing, with nothing taken away; the entire mind knows there is disappearing.

Although elements disappear all of a sudden where past elements appeared, it is not that appearing turns into disappearing, but that elements disappear. Because elements disappear completely, they are neither sequential nor aligned.

Whether it is just appearing or just disappearing, in ocean mudra samadhi, all elements are as they are. It is not that there is no practice and realization, it is just that they are not divided. This is called ocean mudra samadhi.

Samadhi is actualization; it is expression. It is the time of night when a hand is reaching back, groping for a pillow. When the hand reaches back for a pillow at night, this groping is not limited to thousands and millions of eons, but is [as the Buddha says in the Lotus Sutra] "I am always in the ocean expounding the wondrous Lotus Sutra."

The Buddha said, I do not say “I” appear. This means, I am always in the ocean. From his front side the Buddha always teaches, “When one wave moves, thousands of waves follow.” From his back he teaches the Lotus Sutra, expounding “When thousands of waves move, one wave follows.” Even if you cast a one-thousand-foot or a ten-thousand-foot fishing line, regrettably it only goes straight down. Both front and back spoken of here are I am in the ocean. They are just like the front and back of the head. The front and back of the head means placing one head on top of another.

It is not that there is a person in the ocean. The ocean of “I am in the ocean” is not an abode of people in the world. It is not where sages love to be. It is just “I am alone in the ocean.” Thus, the Buddha said, I am always in the ocean expounding.

This ocean does not belong to inside, outside, or in-between. It is just I am always expounding the Lotus Sutra. The Buddha does not abide in the east, west, south, or north. The whole boat is empty; it returns full of moonlight. This return is a true place of settling. Who could call it stagnant water? It is actualized in the ultimate dimensions of the buddha dharma. This is called the mudra of water mudra.

Let me speak further. It is the mudra of emptiness. It is the mudra of mud. The water mudra of water is not necessarily the mudra of ocean. Going beyond is the mudra of ocean mudra. This is called ocean mudra, water mudra, mud mudra, and mind mudra. By transmitting the mind mudra, you mudra [form] water, you mudra mud, you mudra emptiness.

Caoshan, Great Master Yuanzheng, was asked by a monk, “From the scriptures we learn that an ocean does not retain corpses. What is the ocean?”

Caoshan said, “That which contains myriad things.”

The monk said, “The ocean does not keep corpses. Why?”

Caoshan said, “Those who have stopped breathing do not remain as they are.”

The monk said, “The ocean contains myriad things, but those who have stopped breathing do not remain as they are. Why?”

Caoshan said, “Myriad things stop breathing when they don’t function anymore.”

Caoshan, a dharma brother of Yunju, was right on the mark of Dongshan’s teaching. From the scriptures we learn refers to the correct teaching of buddha ancestors. It is not the teaching of ordinary sages, nor is it a lesser teaching of the buddha dharma.

The ocean that *does not retain corpses* is not the open water, an enclosed sea, or even one of the Eight Seas. This is not what the monk asked Caoshan. The monk understands what is not the ocean as the ocean, but also understands the ocean as the ocean.

A sea is not the ocean. The ocean is not necessarily an abyss of water with eight powers or nine trenches of salt water; the ocean is where all elements come together. It is not limited to deep water. This being so, the monk’s question *What is the ocean?* refers to an ocean that is not known by humans and devas. The one who asked this question wanted to shake up fixed views.

Not retaining corpses is [as Puhua said], “When brightness arises, meet it with brightness; when darkness arises, meet it with darkness.” A corpse is as indestructible as ash, meaning [as Fachang said], “through countless springs, there is no change of mind.” A corpse such as this has not been seen before; therefore it is unknown.

Caoshan’s words *That which contains myriad things* indicates the deep ocean. The point of his words is not about one thing that contains myriad things but about just containing myriad things. He did not merely mean that the deep ocean contains myriad things, but that what contains myriad things is nothing other than the deep ocean.

Recognized or not, myriad things are just myriad things. Encountering the buddha face and the ancestor face is nothing other than fully recognizing myriad things as myriad things. Because myriad things are all-inclusive, you do not merely stand atop the highest peak or travel along the bottom of the deepest ocean. Being all-inclusive is just like this; letting go is just like that. What is called the ocean of buddha nature or Vairochana's ocean storehouse is just myriad things. Although the ocean surface is invisible, there is no doubt about the practice of swimming in it.

Duofu described a grove of bamboo as "one or two stalks are bent and three or four stalks are leaning." Although he referred to myriad things, why did he not say, "One thousand or ten thousand stalks are bent"? Why did he not say, "one thousand or ten thousand groves"? Do not forget that a grove of bamboo is like that. This is what is meant by Caoshan's words *That which contains myriad things*.

The monk's statement, *Those who have stopped breathing do not remain as they are. Why?* appears to be a question, but it is actually an understanding of what it is. When doubt arises, just encounter doubt. In investigating thusness, the monk said, *Those who have stopped breathing do not remain as they are. Why?* and *The ocean does not retain corpses. Why?* This is the meaning of his words: *The ocean contains myriad things, but those who have stopped breathing do not remain as they are. Why?* Know that containing does not allow things to remain as they are. Containing is not-retaining. Even if myriad things were nothing but corpses, for ten thousand years the ocean would never retain them unchanged. The old monk, who does not remain the same, makes his move.

Caoshan's words, *Myriad things stop breathing when they don't function anymore* mean that even if myriad things do or do not stop breathing, they do not remain as they are. Even if corpses are corpses, the practice of being one with myriad things should be able to contain them; the practice should be all-containing. In the past and future of myriad things, there is a function that goes beyond not-breathing.

This is the blind leading the blind. The meaning of the blind leading the blind is that a blind one leads a blind one [teacher and student merge]; blind ones lead blind ones. When blind ones lead blind ones, all things are contained. Containing contains all things.

In the great way of going beyond, no endeavor is complete without being one with myriad things. This is ocean mudra samadhi.

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