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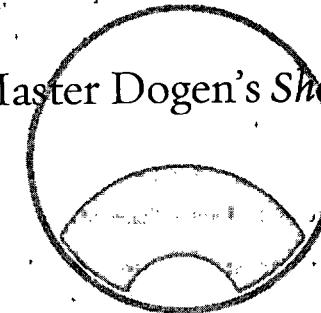
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TREASURY of the TRUE DHARMA EYE

Zen Master Dogen's *Shobo Genzo*



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Dogen Zen in North America

UNDIVIDED ACTIVITY

THE GREAT WAY of all buddhas, thoroughly practiced, is emancipation and realization.

"Emancipation" means that in birth [life] you are emancipated from birth [life], and in death you are emancipated from death. Thus, there is detachment from birth-and-death and penetration of birth-and-death. Such is the complete practice of the great way. There is letting go of birth-and-death and vitalizing birth-and-death. Such is the thorough practice of the great way.

"Realization" is birth; birth is realization. At the time of realization there is nothing but birth totally actualized, nothing but death totally actualized.

Such activity makes birth wholly birth and death wholly death. Actualized just so at this moment, this activity is neither large nor small, neither immeasurable nor measurable, neither remote nor near. Birth right now is undivided activity. Undivided activity is birth right now.

Birth neither comes nor goes. Birth neither appears nor is already existing. Thus, birth is totally manifested and death is totally manifested.

Know that there are innumerable beings in yourself, where there is birth and there is death.

Quietly think over whether birth and all things that arise together with birth are inseparable or not. There is neither a moment nor a thing that is apart from birth. There is neither an object nor a mind that is apart from birth.

Birth is just like riding in a boat. You raise the sails and you steer. Although you maneuver the sail and the pole, the boat gives you a ride, and without the boat you couldn't ride. But you ride in the boat, and your riding makes the boat what it is. Investigate a moment such as this. At just such a moment, there is nothing but the world of the boat. The sky, the water, and the shore are all the boat's world, which is not the same as a world that is not the boat's. Thus, you make birth what it is, you make birth your birth.

When you ride in a boat, your body, mind, and environs together are the undivided activity of the boat. The entire earth and the entire sky are both the undivided activity of the boat. Thus, birth is nothing but you; you are nothing but birth.

Keqin, Zen Master Yuanwu of Mount Jia, said, "Birth is undivided activity. Death is undivided activity."

Clarify and investigate these words. What you should investigate is: While the undivided activity of birth has no beginning or end, and covers the entire earth and the entire sky, it hinders neither birth's undivided activity nor death's undivided activity. At the moment of death's undivided activity, while it covers the entire earth and the entire sky, it hinders neither death's undivided activity nor birth's undivided activity. This being so, birth does not hinder death; death does not hinder birth.

Both the entire earth and the entire sky appear in birth as well as in death. However, it is not that one and the same entire earth and sky are fully manifested in birth and in death: although not one, not different; although not different, not the same; although not the same, not many.

Similarly, in birth there is the undivided activity of all things, and in death there is the undivided activity of all things. There is undivided

activity in what is not birth and not death. There is birth and there is death in undivided activity.

This being so, the undivided activity of birth and death is like a young person bending and stretching, or it is like someone asleep at night searching for the pillow. This is realization in vast, wondrous light.

At just such a moment you may suppose that because realization is manifested in undivided activity, there was no realization prior to this. However, prior to this realization, undivided activity was manifested. The undivided activity manifested previously does not hinder the present realization of undivided activity. Thus, your understanding can be manifested moment after moment.

Presented to the assembly at the residence of the former governor of Izumo Province, next to the Rokuharamitsu Temple, Kyoto, on the seventeenth day, the twelfth month, the third year of the Ninji Era [1242].

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THE MOON

FULLY ACTUALIZING MOONS is not limited to “three three before” [moons on the first nine days of a lunar-calendar month] or “three three after” [moons on the last days of a month]. Moons fully actualized are not limited to “three three before” or “three three after.”

Since this is so, Shakyamuni Buddha said, “Buddha’s true dharma body as it is, is open sky. In response to things, forms appear. Thus is the moon in water.”

The thusness of *Thus is the moon in water* is the moon in water. It is water thusness, moon thusness, thusness within, within thusness. *Thus* does not mean “like something.” *Thus* means exactly.

Buddha’s true dharma body is the *as it is* of open sky. This open sky is the *as it is* of buddha’s true dharma body. Because it is buddha’s true dharma body, the entire earth, the entire universe, all phenomena, and all appearances are open sky. Hundreds of grasses and myriad forms—each appearing *as it is*—are nothing but buddha’s true dharma body, thusness of the moon in water.

The time when the moon appears is not necessarily night. Night is not necessarily dark. Do not be limited to the narrow views held by human beings. Even where there is no sun or moon, there is day and night. Sun and moon are not day and night; each is *as it is*.

BIRTH AND DEATH

As a buddha is in birth and death, there is no birth and death." It is also said, "As a buddha is not in birth and death, a buddha is not deluded by birth and death."

These statements are the essence of the words of the two Zen masters Keqin [Jiashan] and Dingshan. Never neglect them, as they are the words of those who attained the way.

Those who want to become free from birth and death should understand the meaning of these words. If you search for a buddha outside of birth and death, it will be like trying to go to the southern country of Yue with your spear heading toward the north, or like trying to see the Big Dipper while you are facing south; you will cause yourself to remain all the more in birth and death, and miss the way of emancipation.

Just understand that birth-and-death is itself nirvana. There is nothing such as birth and death to be avoided; there is nothing such as nirvana to be sought. Only when you realize this are you free from birth and death.

It is a mistake to suppose that birth turns into death. Birth is a phase that is an entire period in itself, with its own past and future. For this reason, in buddha dharma birth is understood as beyond birth. Death is a phase that is an entire period in itself, with its own past and future. For this reason, death is understood as beyond death.

In birth there is nothing but birth, and in death there is nothing but death. Accordingly, when birth comes, face and actualize birth, and when death comes, face and actualize death. Do not avoid them or desire them.

This birth-and-death is the life of a buddha. If you try to exclude it, you will lose the life of a buddha. If you cling to it, trying to remain in it, you will also lose the life of a buddha, and what remains will be the mere form of a buddha. Only when you don't avoid birth-and-death or long for it do you enter a buddha's mind.

However, do not analyze or speak about it. Just set aside your body and mind, forget about them, and throw them into the house of the buddha; then all is done by the buddha. When you follow this, you are free from birth and death, and become a buddha without effort or scheme. Who, then, remains in the mind?

There is a simple way to become a buddha: When you refrain from unwholesome actions, are not attached to birth and death, and are compassionate toward all sentient beings, respectful to seniors and kind to juniors, not excluding or desiring anything, with no thoughts or worries, you will be called a buddha. Seek nothing else.