

TRANSLATION

Shōbōgenzō Buddha-nature

Part III

TRANSLATED BY

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National Teacher Hsi-an of Hang-chou, Yen-kuan bsien was an honored priest and disciple of Ma-tsu. He once taught his disciples: "All sentient beings have the Buddha-nature."¹

The words "all sentient beings" should be penetrated forthwith. Sentient beings are dissimilar as to personal and environmental karmas and in their modes of being.² Their ways of seeing things are also varied. There will be unenlightened and non-Buddhist, the Three Vehicles and the Five Vehicles, and so forth.³ As for "all sentient beings," in the Buddha Way all things possessed of "mind" are called sentient beings. That is because mind is, as

* This is the final part of a translation of Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō Busshō* ("Buddha-nature"); parts 1 and 2 appeared in vols. VIII, 2 & IX, 1.

¹ This quotation and the following (see page 73) are found in the *Lien-teng hui-yao* 聯燈會要 *Rentsō-eiyō*, (hereafter *LTHY*) *chūan* 7. "Ta-kuei (posthumous name of Kuei-shan Ling-yü, 771-853) used to teach his assembly of monks that 'all sentient beings have no Buddha-nature.' So when Yen-kuan told his assembly that 'all sentient beings have the Buddha-nature,' there were two monks among the brotherhood who made up their minds to make a special trip to Ta-kuei and sound the matter out. They arrived and listened to Ta-kuei but they could not comprehend his true measure. This seems to have given rise to a feeling of disrespect in them. One day as they were sitting in the garden of Ta-kuei's temple, they saw (Ta-kuei's disciple) Yang-shan coming. They called out to him, 'Brother! We must all devote ourselves to the practice of the Buddha Dharma. It is not an easy thing.' Yang-shan proceeded to make a circle in the air. He held it up toward"

such, sentient being. Things not possessed of mind are equally sentient beings, because sentient beings are, as such, mind. Hence, all mind is sentient being: sentient beings all are being Buddha-nature.⁴ Grass and trees, states and lands, are mind. Because they are mind, they are sentient beings. Because they are sentient beings, they are being Buddha-nature. Heavenly bodies are mind. Because they are mind, they are sentient beings.⁵ Because they are sentient beings, they are being Buddha-nature. The "being Buddha-nature" uttered by the National Teacher is just like this. If it were not, it would not be the "being Buddha-nature" which is uttered in the Buddha

*them and then cast it behind him. Then he spread out both hands and questioned them. They were thrown completely for a loss. Yang-shan counselled them: 'We must all devote ourselves to the practice of the Buddha Dharma. It is not an easy thing. Farewell.' Then he left. The two monks set out to return to Yen-kuan. They had gone about thirty *li* when one of them had an abrupt realization. He sighed to himself and said: 'I should have known that Kuei-shan's (Ta-kuei) "All sentient beings have no Buddha-nature" was really not mistaken.' Then he returned to Kuei-shan. The other monk continued on, but after he had gone several *li* further, as he was crossing a stream, he too had a realization. He sighed to himself: 'How obvious that he should say such a thing.' He also returned to Kuei-shan."

² *personal and environmental*. Two aspects of karmic retribution: the first, *shō-bō* 正報, is the "direct" or proper retribution, i.e., human life itself gained as a result of past karma; the second, *e-bō* 依報, refers to the various dependent or ancillary circumstances related to the environment on which one's life is dependent. *modes of being* (*gōdō* 業道). Karmically determined existences in the Six Ways: hell, hungry ghost, animal, fighting demon, man, deva.

³ *Three Vehicles* (*sanjō* 三乘). Three forms of teaching peculiar to śrāvaka, pratyeka buddha, bodhisattva. *Five Vehicles* (*gojō* 五乘). Man, deva, and the above Three Vehicles.

⁴ The quotation at the head of this section, "All sentient beings have the Buddha-nature," is read by Dōgen to mean: All sentient beings are being Buddha-nature. Buddha-nature is not something they *have* but is the actuality of their being. Cf. Part I, p. 95.

⁵ Here *mind* is synonymous with Buddha-nature. All things are manifestations of this mind, and since sentient beings are "things possessed of mind," "mind," "sentient beings," and "Buddha-nature" are considered identical. Cf. Dōgen's adaptation of well-known words from the *Avatamsaka Sutra*: "Throughout the three worlds all is mind. Apart from this mind there is no dharma. Mind, buddha, sentient beings—these three are not different." *SBGZ sangai yuishin* (Ōkubo, p. 353). Since for Dōgen all being is sentient being (cf. Part I, p. 97), the term sentient beings includes things not usually considered to be possessed of mind.

Way. Here, the essential significance of the National Teacher's utterance is simply: "All sentient beings being Buddha-nature." In that case, they could not be "being Buddha-nature" unless they were sentient beings. So we should ask the National Teacher: "Are all buddhas being Buddha-nature, or not?" We should question and examine things in this way. We should probe why it is not said that "all sentient beings are, as such, Buddha-nature"; why, instead, it is said that "all sentient beings are being Buddha-nature." The "being" of being Buddha-nature must without fail fall away. This "falling away" means a single steel rod. "A single steel rod" means the way of birds in flight. Therefore, "all buddha-natures are being sentient beings." It is this truth that not only preaches away sentient beings but preaches completely away Buddha-nature as well.⁶

Even if the National Teacher did not give direct expression to his understanding just as it was, that does not mean there will not come a time when he will be able to do so. Moreover, it does not mean the words he speaks at this time are ineffectual or devoid of essential meaning. Again, although he himself does not necessarily grasp yet the truth he embodies in himself, he nonetheless is possessed of the four elements, five skandhas, and skin flesh bone and marrow body [of the Buddha-nature]. Sometimes, in this way, a real utterance may take a lifetime to make; and sometimes one may be engaged for several lifetimes in making an utterance [without knowing it].

Cb'an master Ta-yuan of Ta-kuei shan once said to the assembly of monks: "All sentient beings have no Buddha-nature."⁷

Among those who heard this in the human world and in the deva realms, some were of outstanding capacity. They rejoiced in it. Those who raised

⁶ Here Dōgen emphasizes the "falling away" of the being included in the idea of "being Buddha-nature"; this is itself awakening which is a clearly coherent reality and yet is as free and traceless as the flight of birds. *a single steel rod* (*ichijō tetsu*, 一條鐵). A metaphor here suggesting the ceaseless, coherent, and unchangeable reality working throughout the process of phenomenal change. *way of birds* (*chōdō*, 鳥道). Activity which leaves no aftertraces. Cf. *T'ung-shan lu*, 洞山錄 (*Tōzan roku*): "Addressing an assembly of monks, T'ung-shan said, 'I have three ways. The way of birds, the way of mysteriousness, the extending of my hand.'"

⁷ See footnote 1.

their eyebrows in doubt were not altogether unknown either. Sakya preaches that "all sentient beings without exception have the Buddha-nature." Ta-kuei preaches that "all sentient beings have no Buddha-nature." The words "have" and "have not" are totally different in principle. Doubts will understandably arise as to which utterance is correct. However, in the Buddha Way, "all sentient beings have no Buddha-nature" is alone preeminent.⁸ With his words "have the Buddha-nature" Yen-kuan seems to be putting out a hand in concert with the Old Buddha Sakyamuni: nonetheless, it cannot help being a case of two men holding up one staff.⁹ Now Ta-kuei is different. With him, "one staff swallows up both men."¹⁰ Of course, the National Teacher (Yen-kuan) was a child of Ma-tsu. Ta-kuei was his grandchild. Nevertheless, in the way of his Dharma grandfather, the Dharma grandson Ta-kuei proves to be an old graybeard, and in the way of his Dharma father, the Dharma son Yen-kuan is still a callow youth.¹¹

The truth of Ta-kuei's words is the truth of "all sentient beings have no Buddha-nature." That is not to say that Ta-kuei's no Buddha-nature is boundless and uncertain. Right in the sutras he embodies in himself this truth is received and maintained.¹² You should probe further: How could all sentient beings be Buddha-nature? How could they have a Buddha-nature? If a sentient

⁸ There is no Buddha-nature apart from the fact that sentient beings are in and of themselves just sentient beings. It is thus more appropriate to say "all sentient beings have no Buddha-nature" than "all sentient beings have Buddha-nature." Hence Dōgen's "If a sentient being were to have a Buddha-nature, he would belong with the devil-heretics . . ." below (p. 75, l. 1).

⁹ *I.e.*, there is little difference between Yen-kuan's "have the Buddha-nature" and Sakyamuni's.

¹⁰ *I.e.*, his utterance of "no Buddha-nature" swallows up the utterances of Sakyamuni and Yen-kuan. Cf. *Pi-yen lu*, case 60: "Yün-men spoke to his assembled disciples: 'This staff I hold in my hand has transformed itself into a dragon and swallowed the universe.'"

¹¹ Yen-kuan Ch'i-an 監官齊安 (Enkan Saian, 750-842) was the direct disciple of Ma-tsu Tao-i 馬祖道一 (Baso Dōitsu, 709-788); Kuei-shan Ling-yü 漏山靈祐 (Isan Reiyū, 771-853) was the heir of Ma-tsu's disciple Po-chang Huai-hai 百丈懷海 (Hyakujō Ekai, 720-814).

¹² Dōgen interprets the true meaning of Ta-kuei's words to mean: "all sentient beings are no Buddha-nature," and stresses that this, far from being a negative or incoherent idea devoid of any certain criterion, is the actual living truth that Ta-kuei has made his whole existence.

being were to have a Buddha-nature, he would belong with the devil-heretics. It would be bringing in a devil, trying to set him on top of a sentient being. Since Buddha-nature is just Buddha-nature, sentient beings are just sentient beings. It is not that sentient beings are from the first endowed with the Buddha-nature.¹³ Here, the essential point is: even though you seek the Buddha-nature hoping to endue yourself with it, Buddha-nature is not something to appear now for the first time. Do not imagine it is a matter of “Chang drinking and Li getting drunk.” If sentient beings had the Buddha-nature originally, they would not be sentient beings. Since they are sentient beings, they are, after all, not Buddha-nature.

That is why Po-chang said: “*To preach that sentient beings have Buddha-nature, is to disparage Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. To preach that sentient beings have no Buddha-nature, is also to disparage Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.*”¹⁴ Therefore, whether it is “have Buddha-nature” or “have no Buddha-nature,” both end up disparaging the Three Treasures (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha). Despite such

¹³ Here Dōgen rejects the idea of Buddha-nature as something originally endowed in sentient beings, without need for practice. The following sentence refutes the idea of Buddha-nature gained by means of practice. The next signifies that Buddha-nature and sentient beings are not two different entities; e.g., it is not that Chang’s Buddha-nature drinks and Li’s sentient being gets drunk. Cf. “A monk asked, ‘Will there be a Buddha Dharma in the new year?’ The master said, ‘No.’ The monk said, ‘Every day is a good day. Every year is a good year. Why do you say No?’ The master said, ‘Mr. Chang drinks. Mr. Li gets drunk.’” *LTHY, chūan 26.*

¹⁴ Po-chang Huai-hai (Hyakujō Ekai). This is from the *T’ien-seng kuang-teng lu* 天聖広燈錄 (*Tenshō kōtō raku*), *chūan 9* (hereafter *TSL*). The remainder of the passage goes: “If you speak of having the Buddha-nature, that is the disparagement of attaching to the Dharma. If you speak of not having the Buddha-nature, that is called the disparagement of unreality. If you preach the existence of the Buddha-nature, it is the disparagement of needless amplification. If you preach the non-existence of the Buddha-nature, it is the disparagement of diminution. If you say it is both existent and non-existent, you disparage it by creating a discrepancy. If you say it neither is existent or non-existent, then that is the disparagement of frivolous talk. If you endeavor from the first to say nothing, the time will never come when sentient beings gain deliverance. If from the first you endeavor to preach it, then sentient beings will follow the words and give rise to speculations about it. In either case the benefit would be small, the harm great. Therefore [Sakyamuni said] ‘I would rather not preach the Dharma at all, and enter nirvana immediately.’” In spite of these admonitions, as Dōgen says below, “We cannot go without making an utterance.”

disparagement, however, you cannot go without making an utterance. Now, listen to me, Ta-kuei and Po-chang. Let me ask you: "It may indeed be disparagement, but has the Buddha-nature been really preached or not? Even granting it has been preached, wouldn't it totally tie up the very preaching? Any preaching of it would have to occur together with the hearing of it. I must also ask Ta-kuei: "Even though you articulated that all sentient beings have no Buddha-nature, you did not say all Buddha-natures have no sentient being, or that all Buddha-natures have no Buddha-nature. Still less could you have seen, even in your dreams, that all buddhas have no Buddha-nature. See now if you can come up with something!"

Cb'an master Ta-chih of Po-chang shan addressed the assembly of monks: "Buddha is the biggest vehicle, the very biggest wisdom. It is the person who forms the Buddha Way. It is buddha being Buddha-nature. It is a guiding teacher. It is utilizing a totally unrestricted way. It is unimpeded wisdom.

In all this, it readily utilizes cause and effect. It is a free activity seeking enlightenment and enlightening others. It is a vehicle which carries along cause and effect. Negotiating life, it is not held back by life. Negotiating death, it is not hindered by death. Negotiating the five skandhas, it is like a gate freely opening. It is not given any restriction by the five skandhas. It goes and stops at will, leaves and enters unbindered. Inasmuch as it is thus, distinctions between high and low, intelligent and unintelligent, are immaterial. And since this is the same even with the body of the tiniest ant, all is a wondrous land of purity beyond our comprehension.¹⁵

This, then, is what Po-chang has to say. The "five skandhas" refers to this indestructible body of ours.¹⁶ Our present moment-to-moment activity is the opening of a gate. It does not suffer impediments from the five skandhas. Completely utilizing life, we cannot be held back by life. Completely utilizing death, we cannot be bothered by death. Do not vainly cherish life. Do not blindly dread death.¹⁷ They are where the Buddha-nature is. Clinging in attachment to life, shrinking in abhorrence from death, is not Buddhist.

¹⁵ Quotation from the *TSL*, *chūan* 9. Ta-chih 大智 is the posthumous title of Po-chang (Hyakujo).

¹⁶ See Part II, p. 98, fn. 27.

¹⁷ Cf. *SBGZ Shōji*, *Eastern Buddhist* v, 1, p. 79.

Realizing that both life and death are a combination of various conditions being manifested before your eyes, you utilize a way of complete and unrestricted freedom. This is "buddha" of the highest vehicle. Where this buddha is, there is the wondrous Land of Purity.

Huang-po was sitting in Nan-ch'üan's tea-room. Nan-ch'üan said: "[It is said in the Nirvana Sutra that] if one practices dhyāna and prajñā equally, he will see clearly the Buddha-nature.¹⁸ What is the essential of that teaching?" Huang-po said: "The essential is attained when you are not depending on a single thing throughout the twenty-four hours." Nan-ch'üan said: "Elder monk, that's your understanding, isn't it?" Huang-po said: "No, no, not at all." Nan-ch'üan said: "Forget for now about the cost of the food and drink you've had here. Who is going to pay for your straw sandals?" With that, Huang-po stopped short the conversation.¹⁹

The essential meaning of "dhyāna and prajñā equally practiced" is not: when the practice of dhyāna does not impinge on the practice of prajñā, clear seeing of the Buddha-nature takes place in the equal practice of them both. Rather it is: in the clear seeing of the Buddha-nature is the practice in which dhyāna and prajñā are equally balanced. Nan-ch'üan is articulating: "What is the meaning of that."²⁰ This is the same as saying, for example, "clearly seeing the Buddha-nature is the act of Who." Even the utterance, "If one practices Buddha and nature equally, he will clearly see the Buddha-nature. What is the meaning of that," is an authentic utterance of truth.

¹⁸ Here is the full quotation from the *Nirvana Sutra* (30, 獅子吼): "Bodhisattvas of the ten stages have great prajñā-power but little samadhi-power. Therefore they cannot clearly see Buddha-nature. Śrāvakas and pratyeka buddhas have great samadhi-power but little prajñā-power. Therefore they cannot see Buddha-nature. Buddhas, World-honored Ones, because their dhyāna and prajñā is in equal balance, clearly see Buddha-nature, see it clearly and unobstructedly, like a fruit in the hand."

¹⁹ This is found in the *TSL*, *cbuan* 8. Huang-po Hsi-yün (Ōbaku Kiun, d. 850) and Nan-ch'üan P'u-yüan (Nansen Fugan, 748–835) were both disciples of Po-chang. It should be noted in passing that throughout *SBGZ Buddha-nature* as Dōgen quotes different patriarchs and Zen masters at the heads of the various sections he cites them in a more or less genealogical order. The "tearoom" (*sadō*, 茶堂) is the room used by the temple master for receiving people.

²⁰ See Part I, p. 108, fn. 45.

Huang-po said: "The essential is attained when you are not depending on a single thing throughout the twenty-four hours." The essential meaning of this is: even though these twenty-four hours lie within the twenty-four hours of every day, they are non-depending. Because not depending on a single thing is within the twenty-four hours, it is the Buddha-nature clearly seeing.²¹ As for these twenty-four hours, when will not be the time of their arrival? In what land will it not occur? Are the twenty-four hours referred to here the twenty-four hours of the human world? Are they the twenty-four hours of some other place? Or, is this the temporary arrival of twenty-four hours of a Land of White Silver?²² Whether it is this world of ours or another world, it is in any case non-depending. It is actually within the twenty-four hours and it can only be non-depending.

"Elder master, that's your understanding, isn't it?" is the same as saying: "Isn't that the clear seeing of the Buddha-nature?" Even though Nan-ch'üan makes this utterance about it being his understanding, Huang-po must not turn his head as if it referred to him. Though the words may well fit him, they do not refer to Huang-po. Huang-po certainly is not only himself. That is because a master's way of understanding is utterly unconfined and all-pervading.

Huang-po said, "No, no, not at all."²³ In Sung China when a person is asked about some ability in himself, even if he wants to say he does have ability, he says "No, not at all." Therefore, the words "No, not at all" do not literally mean "No, not at all." They are not to be taken at face value. As for a master's way of understanding, even though he is a master, or even though he is a Huang-po, he has no other choice than to say "No, not at all" when he speaks. When a water buffalo appears, it can only say "Obng, Obng." This kind of utterance is an authentic one. Try to utter the essential meaning of his uttering! Give an utterance on his utterance!

²¹ When you are not depending on anything at any time Buddha-nature manifests itself. Rather this non-depending in itself is Buddha-nature. Cf. Lin-chi's (Rinzai) statement that "Buddhas are born from non-depending. Awaken to non-depending, and there is no buddha to be obtained." *The Record of Lin-chi*, trans. Ruth F. Sasaki (Kyoto, 1975), p. 14.

²² A name given to the Buddha Land of Samantabhadra.

²³ "No, not at all" (*fukan*, 不取). This signifies something like: "Well I shouldn't say so myself, but yes, it is." We have rendered it more closely to the letter, preserving the negative mode, because of the way Dogen treats this response in his commentary below.

Nan-ch'üan said: "Forget for now about the cost of the food and drink you've had here. Who is going to pay for your straw sandals?" You should commit yourself for many lifetimes to probing the meaning of this utterance. You should concentrate your mind and study deliberately why it is he does not now concern himself with the cost of the food and drink. The reason he is so concerned about sandals is because he assumes that in the years of pilgrimage, many straw sandals must have been worn out. Here, one must say: "If I couldn't pay for sandals, I wouldn't wear them to begin with." Or again, one must say: "Oh, two or three pairs." It has to be such an utterance. It has to have this essential significance.

Huang-po stopped the conversation. This means the conversation was stopped. But it stopped not because his response was unacceptable to *Nan-ch'üan*, or because he himself did not accept *Nan-ch'üan*. With priests of the true stamp this could never happen. You have to realize that the words in a silence are the same as the sword-edge on a laugh.²⁴ This is the Buddha-nature clearly seeing—rice gruel and rice in dearthfree abundance.

Kuei-shan brought this episode up with *Tang-shan*. He said: "Huang-po couldn't catch what *Nan-ch'üan*, could he?" *Tang-shan* said: "Not so. You have to realize that Huang-po has the capacity to subdue tigers." *Kuei-shan* said: "You see things in such a superlative way!"²⁵

Kuei-shan's words mean: "Huang-po couldn't trap *Nan-ch'üan* that time, could he?"

Tang-shan said: "Huang-po has the capacity to subdue tigers." After he has caught one he scratches it behind the ears.²⁶

Catching tigers, scratching them behind the ears—Going among different creatures, going among one's fellows.

²⁴ See Part II, p. 101, line 13.

²⁵ Quotation from *TSL*, *chüan* 8, where it follows immediately upon the previous quotation. *Kuei-shan* *Ling-yü* (Isan Reiyü, 771–853) was a disciple of *Huang-po*. *Yang-shan* *Hui-chi* (Kyōzan Ejaku, 807–883) was a disciple of *Kuei-shan*. See also page 73 (and footnote 1), where *Kuei-shan* is referred to by his posthumous title *Ta-kuei* 大塊.

²⁶ In his comments following *Yang-shan's* "Huang-po has the capacity to subdue tigers," *Dōgen* refers to two aspects of the Buddha-nature's activity: "catching tigers"*

Clearly seeing Buddha-nature, the Eye is opened;

Buddha-nature clearly seeing, the Eye is lost.

Hurry! Speak out! Quickly! Quickly!

Then Buddha-nature sees in a superlative way!²⁷

Hence, for a thing or even half a thing, there is never any depending. A hundred things a thousand things, are undepending. A hundred times a thousand times, are undepending. That is why it is said:

One universal wicker trap, the whole day through.

Depending, non-depending, like vines and creepers clinging to trees.

All heaven and the heavens as a whole; after that, no words remain.

*A monk asked Chao-chou Chen-chi Ta-sbib: "Does a dog have the Buddha-nature, or not?"*²⁸

The meaning of this question must be clarified. It neither asks whether a dog has the Buddha-nature or whether it does not have the Buddha-nature.

*or attaining enlightenment, and "scratching them behind the ears" or utilizing enlightenment, "going beyond enlightenment." "Clearly seeing the Buddha-nature" refers to the first aspect, hence "the Eye is opened": the aspect of utilizing enlightenment without attachment is "Buddha-nature clearly seeing, the Eye is lost." He then exhorts practitioners, if they understand this truth of the Buddha-nature, to try to express it in an "utterance" (*dōroku* 道得).

²⁷ *I.e.*, nothing throughout the universe is apart from the Buddha-nature or dependent on any other thing. Even a wicker trap (*warō*, 籬籠), standing for the binding involvements of the evil passions, is a manifestation of the universal Buddha-nature. An unenlightened one's dependence and an enlightened one's independence are both manifestations of the Buddha-nature, just as vines and creepers (*kassō*, 葛藤) clinging to trees and trees being clinged to equally manifest their own original natures. The final sentence, "All heaven . . ." alludes to Huang-po's stopping the conversation.

²⁸ "A monk asked Chao-chou (Jōshū, 778–897: a disciple of Nan-ch'üan), 'Does a dog have the Buddha-nature or not?' Chao-chou said, 'Yes' (有, 有). The monk said, 'If it does, then why does the Buddha-nature push into such a [lowly] bag of skin?' Chao-chou said, 'Because it does it knowingly, deliberately transgressing.' Then another monk asked, 'Does a dog have the Buddha-nature or not?' Chao-chou said, 'No' (無, 無). The monk said, 'All sentient beings without exception have the Buddha-nature. Why doesn't a dog have it too?' Chao-chou said, 'Because it exists in karmic consciousness.'" *Hung-chib*

It asks: "Does a man of iron still practice the Way?"²⁹ Chao-chou blunders into a poison hand, and his resentment may be intense, but it is a way of "at last getting to see a real saint, after thirty years."³⁰

Chao-chou said: "No" (Mu).³¹

Hearing this word, the course of practice to be pursued opens up. The *Mu* the Buddha-nature declares itself to be has to be like Chao-chou's *Mu*. The *Mu* the dog declares itself to be also has to be such an utterance. So does the *Mu* which a bystander calls out. This *Mu* has the power of rock-melting suns.

The monk said: "All sentient being, every one of them, have the Buddha-nature. Why doesn't a dog?"

The essential meaning of this is: were there no sentient beings there could be no Buddha-nature; there could be no dog either. This essential meaning is "What." Dog, Buddha-nature, what need have they to be called *Mu*?³²

Chao-chou said: "It is because a dog exists in karmic consciousness."

sung-ku 宏智頌古 (*Wanshi juko*) case 18. It should be pointed out that the two characters *U* 有 and *Mu* 無 which occur often throughout this section have been translated in various ways according to the varying contexts in which they appear. The original text has of course no such discrepancy. *U* appears as "It has" in Chao-chou's answer, and elsewhere as "being," "existence," and "exists." *Mu* is left as *Mu* and is also translated as "no."

²⁹ *a man of iron* (*rekkan*, 鐵漢). One who has awakened to the Buddha-nature, his practice accomplished. Not taking the monk's words at face value (does a dog have the Buddha-nature?), Dōgen sees it as a penetrating question pressing the master about the truth of the Buddha-nature: whether an enlightened one (the Buddha-nature itself) must still engage in practice.

³⁰ *a poison hand* (*dokusbu*, 毒手) refers apparently to the monk and the question he raises. Given such a penetrating question, Chao-chou was exposed to danger, but must have been pleased to find such an excellent monk. There is an allusion to the following story. "Master Shih-kung always kept his bow with an arrow in it ready to shoot. He waited thus for the approach of disciples. San-ping approached him. Shih-kung said, 'Look out for the arrow!' San-ping threw his chest before it. Shih-kung said, 'For thirty years I've had an arrow notched in this bow. Today I've finally succeeded in shooting half a saint.'" *CTL, chüan 14.*

³¹ Chao-chou's answer "No" (*Mu*) does not mean "not having" as a counterpart to "having" but is a direct, concrete, and total presentation of Buddha-nature itself which is beyond "having" and "not having." Likewise, his other answer, "It has" (*U*) to the same question is a direct, concrete, and total presentation of Buddha-nature which is both "having" and "not having" because it is beyond and thus embraces both of them.

³² The point of the monk's question is, according of Dōgen, "What" *qua* Buddha-*

The meaning of these words is: existence for the sake of others is karmic consciousness. Although his existence in karmic consciousness is existence for the sake of others, it is dog-*Mu* and Buddha-nature-*Mu*. Karmic consciousness never understands the dog. How could the dog encounter the Buddha-nature?³³ Whether we speak of existence in karmic consciousness, existence for the sake of others, or speak of dog-*Mu*, Buddha-nature-*Mu*, they are always karmic consciousness.³⁴

A monk asked Chao-chou: "Does a dog have the Buddha-nature, or not?"

This question signifies that the monk has skillfully got hold of Chao-chou. We thus see that making utterances and posing questions about the Buddha-nature are ordinary, rice-eating, tea-drinking occurrences in the lives of buddhas and patriarchs.

Chao-chou said; "It has" (U).

The mode of this "has" is not that of the commentating masters of the Doctrinal schools. It is not the "has" posited by the Sarvāstivādin teachers.³⁵ You must go beyond these and learn the Buddha-being.³⁶ Buddha-being is Chao-chou's being. Chao-chou's being is the dog's being. The dog's being is Buddha-nature being.

The monk said: "If it already has it, then what is the use of its pushing into such a bag of skin?"

Were we to question whether this monk's utterance is referring to present being, past being, or prior being, we would have to conclude that the "original

*nature (just as "What is this that thus comes?" and "What" indicate the Buddha-nature: see Part I, fn. 5 and 49). Thus there is no need for Chao-chou even to speak of it as *Mu*.

³³ Here again, going beneath the face value of Chao-chou's words, Dōgen takes "karmic consciousness" (*gosbiki*, 業識) in an affirmative sense (cf. Part I, fn. 15) to assert that there is no Buddha-nature apart from karmic consciousness. Karmic consciousness as such is the dog and the dog as such is the Buddha-nature. There can be no room to speak of one "understanding" or "encountering" the other (cf. Part I, p. 100: "... it is impossible to encounter sentient beings within whole being no matter how swift you are").

³⁴ In this sentence there is a rhetorical contrast between "existence" (*U*) and *Mu* which does not come out in the English.

³⁵ *Sarvāstivādin*. One of the twenty schools of Hinayana, which held that dharmas have real existence ("has" 有 also means "being," "existence"). It long flourished in India and its teachings were widely studied in China and Japan.

³⁶ *Buddha-being*. Being which has passed beyond conceptual, dualistic views of being.

being” in his utterance³⁷ appears to be one among various other beings; but in fact it is “original being” that shines alone. Should “original being” be something that pushes into? Should it be something that does not push into? In the conduct of pushing into this bag of skin there is erroneous striving, but it is not therefore in vain.

Chao-chou said: “It’s because it does it knowingly, and deliberately transgresses.”

As a mundane utterance, these words have long circulated in the world. But now it is Chao-chou’s utterance. What it says is: it transgresses on purpose, in full knowledge of what it does. There are probably few people who would not have doubts about this. The phrase “pushing into” is difficult to understand in this context,³⁸ but, in fact, it is not really needed here.³⁹ Not only that, “If you want to know the Undying Fellow in his hermitage, you must not leave this bag of skin of yours!”⁴⁰ The Undying Man, whoever he may be, is at no time ever separate from his bag of skin. “To transgress knowingly” is not necessarily “pushing into the bag of skin.” “Pushing into such a bag of skin” is not necessarily “knowingly and deliberately transgressing.” It has to be “deliberately transgressing” because it is “knowing.” You should be aware that this “deliberately transgressing” may, as such, contain concealed

³⁷ *original being* renders Dōgen’s interpretive reading of the characters *ki-u*, 既有, which in the previous italicized quotation are translated: “If it already has it . . .” Here again the difference between “having” and “being” (both the same 有 in the original text) is significant; see Part I, p. 95, *introduction*. “Original being” in Dōgen’s sense is Buddha-nature as a total manifestation of whole being. It is all pervading and altogether incomparable: it “shines alone” (*komei*, 孤明).

³⁸ *pushing into* (*dānyū*, 撞入) presupposes the duality of something which pushes in and someplace into which it pushes. Since, however, there is nothing apart from the Buddha-nature, it is not that Buddha-nature pushes into something; rather, pushing into in itself is Buddha-nature. Accordingly, the Undying Fellow (one who is awakened: Buddha-nature itself) is not apart from your own bag of skin or body.

³⁹ Cf. “Yang-shan asked Secretary Lu, ‘I have heard the Secretary attained enlightenment while reading a sutra. Is that so?’ Lu said, ‘Your disciple was reading the *Nirvana Sutra*, where it says, “Enter Nirvana without severing the evil passions,” and I attained that place of rest and joy.’ Yang-shan held up his *boon* and said, ‘Just like this. How could you enter in here?’ Lu said, ‘I can’t even use the word “enter.”’ Yang-shan said, ‘The word “enter in” has nothing to do with you.’ Lu thereupon rose and left.” *LTHY*, *chūan* 8.

⁴⁰ Lines from Shih-t’ou Hsi-ch’ien’s (Sekitō Kisen, 700–790) *Ti’ao-an ko* 單老歌 *Sōan-ka*. *CTL*, *chūan* 20.

within it the daily activity constituting the emancipated body of suchness.⁴¹ This is what is meant by saying “pushes into.” Right when the daily activity constituting the emancipated body of suchness is contained concealed within it, it is concealed from both you yourself and from others. While that is indeed true, do not say you have not yet got free of ignorance—You donkey-leader! Horse-follower!⁴²

That is not all. The eminent priest Yün-chü said: “You may learn all there is to know about the Buddha Dharma, but you thereby completely falsify the bearing of your mind.”⁴³ Therefore, even though your halfway study about the Buddha Dharma has been long in error, for days or even months on end, it cannot be else than the dog pushing into such a bag of skin. Though it is “knowing, it deliberately transgresses,” that in itself can be no other than being Buddha-nature.

At an assembly of the practicers under Ch'ang-sha Ch'ing-ts'en, Minister Chu said: “An earthworm is cut. It becomes two. Both of them move. In which part, I wonder, would the Buddha-nature reside?” The master said: “Hold no illusions!” Chu said: “What about the movement?” The master said: “It's just undispersed wind and fire.”⁴⁴

Should the Minister's “An earthworm is cut. It becomes two” be defined as meaning: it was one at the point prior to its being cut in two? No. It could never be thus in the house of the buddhas and patriarchs. The earthworm was not originally one. It does not become two because it is cut. You should

⁴¹ A key sentence of this paragraph. Literally, the words “knowingly and deliberately transgresses” declare from a relative point of view that the Buddha-nature dares to push into such a lowly creature as a dog. Dōgen takes the non-relative position and asserts that “deliberately transgressing” in itself is the function of the Buddha-nature. This activity thus contains concealed within it “the daily activity of the body of suchness.”

⁴² “The master (Chen Mu-chou, 陳睦州) asked a newly arrived monk, ‘Where do you come from?’ The monk just stared at him wide-eyed. The master said, ‘You donkey-heading fellow! You horse-follower!’” *CTL, chüan 12.*

⁴³ Yün-chü Tao-ying (Ungo Dōyō 雲居道膺, d. 902). Disciple of Tung-shan Liang-chieh, reputed co-founder of the Ts'ao-rung (Sōtō) school. Words by Yün-chü similar to these are found in the *LTHY, chüan 22.*

⁴⁴ This dialogue is found in *LTHY, chüan 6.* “Ch'ang-sha was once asked by Minister Chu, ‘An earthworm is cut in two. Both halves move. In which part, I wonder, would the Buddha-nature reside?’ Ch'ang-sha said, ‘Hold no illusions!’ The Minister said,

concentrate your effort directly, in practice, on the words spoken about one and two.

Does the two parts of “the two parts both move” mean that prior to the cutting there was one part? Or that one part is transcending Buddhahood? The words “two parts” have nothing to do with whether or not the Minister comprehended them. Do not overlook what “the two parts both move” has to say! Although the two parts which are cut were originally one thing, is there another “one thing” in addition to the original one? To say in speaking of their movement that “they both move” can only mean movement in the same sense that *dbyāna* which moves the passions and *prajñā* which removes them are both equally movement.⁴⁵

“In which part, I wonder, would the Buddha-nature reside?”

This could be better expressed as: the Buddha-nature is cut in two parts. In which part, I wonder, would the earthworm reside? This utterance must be penetrated carefully.

Does “the two parts move, in which part does the Buddha-nature reside?” mean: if both move, they are not fit places for the Buddha-nature to dwell? Or does it mean: they both move, so it is equally movement, but where in that is the Buddha-nature found?

The master said: “Hold no illusions!”

The essential meaning of this is “What”. Thus, it means not having illusions. Then you should penetrate through practice, whether that means: “In the two parts both moving there is no illusory thought; this movement is not ‘What about the movement?’ Ch’ang-sha said, ‘You ought to know, it is wind and fire as yet undispersed.’ The Minister made no answer. Ch’ang then called out to him. He responded. Ch’ang-sha said, ‘Isn’t that your real life?’ The Minister said, ‘There can’t be another true person apart from my responding just now.’ Ch’ang-sha said, ‘But I mustn’t make you a reigning emperor.’ The Minister said, ‘If so, I couldn’t have given you any response. Doesn’t that make me a true person?’ Ch’ang-sha said, ‘It isn’t merely a matter of answering me or not. This very thing has been the source of birth and death from infinite past kalpas.’ Then he made a verse: “Practicers of the Way fail to discern true reality / Just because they imagine it is their ordinary consciousness. / The root of birth and death for infinite past kalpas / Is called by the ignorant the body of suchness.”

⁴⁵ Allusion to an analogy in the *Nirvana Sutra*, “Lion’s Roar” chapter. “It is like pulling up an obstinate tree. First you take hold of it and work it around, then you can pull it up easily. *Prajñā* and *dbyāna* work the same way. The passions are worked loose by means of *dbyāna*, and then extracted by using *prajñā*.”

illusory thinking." Or is it just: "In the Buddha-nature there are no illusory thoughts"? Or is he simply saying, without bothering to discuss about the Buddha-nature or the two parts: "There is no illusion"?⁴⁶

Does "*What about the movement?*" mean: if they move, has another Buddha-nature then been added? Or does it try to express: if they move it is not Buddha-nature?

"*Undispersed wind and fire*"⁴⁷ brings the Buddha-nature out into manifestation. Should we say [movement] is the Buddha-nature, or should we say it is wind and fire? We cannot say the Buddha-nature and wind and fire appear together. We cannot say that one appears while the other does not. Nor can we say wind and fire are in and of themselves the Buddha-nature. Therefore, Ch'ang-sha does not say there is a Buddha-nature in the earthworm, nor that earthworms have no Buddha-nature. He says only: "*Undispersed wind and fire.*" Buddha-nature's living actuality must be construed from Ch'ang-sha's utterance. The words "undispersed wind and fire" must be quietly penetrated in intense concentration. What truth inheres in this "undispersed"? Does "undispersed" mean assembled accumulations of wind and fire which have not yet quite reached the stage where they must disintegrate and scatter? It could hardly mean that. Wind and fire undispersed is Buddha preaching the Dharma. Undispersed wind and fire is the Dharma preaching Buddha. That is to say, it is the arrival of the time when one sound preaches the Dharma. One sound preaching the Dharma is the arrival of the time. The Dharma is one sound, because it is the one-sound Dharma.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ The ordinary sense of the words "*Hold no illusions!*" (*makumōzō*, 莫妄想) (you must not have any illusions) is not free of the dualistic point of view inasmuch as it conveys the idea of one person directing another to give up illusions. Dōgen in this passage interprets the words non-relatively to indicate the authentic state of man which is, fundamentally and as such, "no illusions."

⁴⁷ *Undispersed wind and fire* (*fūka-mison*, 風火未散). This would ordinarily signify existence (represented by wind and fire, two of the Four Great Elements) which has not yet died; i.e., the elements which come together and constitute body and life have not yet dispersed. Dōgen takes this to indicate the original state of things which is prior to dispersion into particular elements.

⁴⁸ *one-sound Dharma*. The Dharma preached by the Buddha is said to have a single sound, referring to the original and fundamental state of existence prior to the time when

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Moreover, to think the Buddha-nature exists only for the duration of life and cannot exist in death, is an example of small, feeble understanding. The time of life is being Buddha-nature, no Buddha-nature. The time of death is being Buddha-nature, no Buddha-nature.

If there be any question about the “dispersal or undispersal” of wind and fire, it can only be a matter of the dispersal or non-dispersal of the Buddha-nature. Even the time of dispersal must be Buddha-nature being, Buddha-nature *Mu*. Even the time of undispersal must be being Buddha-nature, no Buddha-nature. Therefore, holding to the mistaken views that Buddha-nature exists according to whether or not there is movement, that it is a spiritual force according to whether or not there is consciousness, or that it exists according to whether or not there is perception—this is not Buddhism.

For infinite kalpas in the past, foolish people in great number have regarded man’s spiritual consciousness as the Buddha-nature, or as man’s original state of suchness⁴⁹—how laughably absurd! Going beyond that, though one should not in making utterances about Buddha-nature “enter the water and get all covered with mud,” yet Buddha-nature is a fence, a wall, a tile, a pebble.⁵⁰ When making utterances even beyond this, [you can only say]: “What about this Buddha-nature!” Do you understand it all now? Three Heads. Eight Arms.⁵¹

(Concluded)

this is “dispersed” or differentiated into elements (e.g., fire and wind). Cf. “The Buddha preaches the Dharma with a single sound, and sentient beings hear and understand it differently in their own ways.” *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, “Buddha Lands” chapter.

⁴⁹ This sentence is based on the verse Ch’ang-sha composed for Minister Chu. See footnote 44.

⁵⁰ *enter the water and get all covered with mud* (*tadei taisui*, 花泥滯水). A Zen phrase used often in a positive sense to signify the enlightened person’s entrance back into the world of defilements in order to work for the salvation of others. Here it seems rather to suggest the idea of “stooping to use such skillful means,” without this positive implication. Yet, as Dōgen adds, Buddha-nature is all being, there is nothing, not tiles, pebbles, or mud, apart from it. Cf. *SBGZ Hotrumujōshin*: “The National Teacher Ta-cheng said, ‘Fences, walls, tiles, pebbles—those are the minds of old buddhas.’” Ōkubo, p. 525.

⁵¹ *Three Heads. Eight Arms*. Allusion to the Asura or “Fighting Demon,” suggesting here perhaps the shape of the Buddha-nature inconceivable to rational thought.