

TRANSLATIONS

Dōgen's *Fukanzazengi* and *Shōbōgenzō zazenji*

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Introduction

IN 1227, Dōgen returned to Japan from China burdened with a feeling of deep responsibility. The task he saw before him was to make known to his fellow countrymen the true Dharma he had acquired during his five years on the continent. It would occupy him constantly during the twenty-five remaining years of his life. His first utterance to this end was *Fukanzazengi* (The Universal Promotion of the Principles of Zazen), a short composition in Chinese which he finished at the age of twenty-eight, the very same year he arrived back in Kyoto. As he tells us toward the close of *Bendōwa*, which he wrote some four years later, "The manner and principle of this zazen should be based on the *Fukanzazengi*, which I compiled during the preceding Karoku period."¹

It is doubtful whether any of Dōgen's writings has exercised a more pervasive or deeper influence upon his followers in the Sōtō sect, which is of course just as he intended it. Working largely within the genre of existing *Zazenji*,² drawing from other Zen literature as well, and employing a highly rhetorical and declamatory prose style, we may be sure Dōgen was fully conscious of the essential role such a work would play in the promotion of zazen. It is a measure of its success that this brief but difficult work has long been the

¹ *Eastern Buddhist*, Vol. IV, No. 1, p. 156.

² *Zazenji*; short, easily memorized texts devoted to the method and significance of zazen practice.

Sōtō sect's single most cherished writing, being recited at the regular night sitting in Sōtō Zen temples and at other appropriate occasions.

Manuals of zazen practice (*Zazengi*) similar in nature to Dōgen's had of course already existed. At least ten, and perhaps more, had been current in China, and some were included in Zen "histories" such as the *Cbing-te ch'uan-teng lu* (*Keitoku dentō roku*). Dōgen's contemporary Lan-ch'i 蘭溪 (Rankei, 1203-1268), a Sung Rinzai priest who came to Japan in 1246 and became the first chief abbot of the Kenchō-ji in Kamakura, authored a *Zazen-ron* 坐禪論, another short zazen treatise. One of the most widely read in former years was that included in the *Po-chang ch'ing-kuei* 百丈清規 (*Hyakujō shingi*), the first collection of regulations for monks, which was concerned with life and practice in Zen monasteries. It was compiled and edited by the celebrated T'ang priest Po-chang (Hyakujō, 720-814). It marked a great milestone in the history of Chinese Zen, and for many years after it was used in almost all Zen monasteries and temples, playing a central role in the establishment of an independent Zen sect. By Sung times, however, the text of the original regulations is said to have been lost, and this had resulted in a considerable alteration in the rules governing Zen monastic life. In an attempt to re-establish the original intent of Po-chang's work, in 1103 a monk of the Yün-men line, Chang-lu Tsung-i 長蘆宗頤 (Chōro Sōi), compiled a new set of regulations, the *Ch'an-yüan ch'ing-kuei* 禪苑清規 (*Zen'en shingi*).

Dōgen based his *Fukanzazengi* on the *Zazengi* included in Tsung-i's work, but modified it somewhat and added at beginning and end his own view of zazen. We know from the *Fukanzazengi senjutsu yurai* 普勸坐禪儀撰述由來 (Reasons for Composing *Fukanzazengi*), a short note in Dōgen's own handwriting which still exists in the Eihei-ji, that Dōgen felt Tsung-i's *Zazengi* failed to convey the true significance of Po-chang's zazen. We shall quote this document in full:

In Japan, it has never been possible to learn of the "special transmission outside the scriptures," the "treasure of the right Dharma eye," not to speak of the principles of zazen; they are thus not transmitted here at the present time. As soon as I returned home from the land of the Sung during the Karoku era, students began coming to me for instruction, so I compiled this *Zazengi*. I was obliged for their sakes to do this. Long ago, the Zen master Po-chang constructed a

monastery with a hall especially for zazen, and effectively transmitted the style of Bodhidharma. This style was distinct from the “briars and brambles” of word-attachment and old erroneous views which preceded him. Students must know this and not be confused about it. The *Cb’an-yüan cb’ing-kuei* includes a *Zazengi*, and although it does [for the most part] follow Po-chang’s original intent, it contains some new additions by Tsung-i. Tsung-i has made a good many errors, has an overall tendency to ambiguity, and is unaware of the understanding beyond the words themselves. Who could fail to see this? Therefore, I gather now the true secrets that I have seen and heard. I am putting these words down in place of what is imparted in the mind-transmission.³

Dōgen’s criticism of Tsung-i’s *Zazengi* may be related to the fact Tsung-i was affiliated to the Yün-men branch of Zen, which during his time preached the unity of Zen and Pure Land Buddhism.⁴ The “errors” and “ambiguity” Dōgen refers to are thought to allude to Tsung-i’s emphasis of samadhi and zazen as *means* for strengthening mental concentration.

Dōgen considered his master Ju-ching the only person since Po-chang to have truly understood zazen. The following passage from *Shōbōgenzō sammai-ō-zammai* 正法眼藏三昧王三昧 shows clearly his esteem for his master and for his master’s teaching that “sitting is the Buddha Dharma and the Buddha Dharma is sitting.”

In the past four or five hundred years it is my late master alone who decisively plucked out the eye of the buddhas and patriarchs and sat within its core. There have been few in China who could compare to him. Rare is he, this man who made clear that sitting is the Buddha Dharma and the Buddha Dharma is sitting. Even though some may

³ Because of the deterioration of the paper this text had by the 17th century become indecipherable in places, a total of 6 characters out of some 150. Tentative readings for them were supplied by the Sōtō priest Menzan in his *Fukanzazengi monge*, first published in 1757. We have translated the text found in Ōkubo Dōshū, *Dōgen zenji zenbū*, vol. 2 (Tokyo 1970), p. 6, supplying the lacunae (underlined in translated text above) in accordance with Menzan’s emendations.

⁴ Kagamishima Genryū, *Dōgen zenji no inyō kyāten: goroku no kenkyū* (Tokyo: 1965), p. 184.

have understood experientially that sitting is the Buddha Dharma, no one has known sitting as sitting. [This being so,] how could there have been anyone to protect and uphold the Buddha Dharma as the Buddha Dharma?⁵

In Sung China Zen developed into various branches, usually referred to as the "Five Houses and Seven Sects," each having a different character and emphasis. Although formally Ju-ching belonged to one of these branches, the Ts'ao-tung (Sōtō), he vehemently rejected such distinctions, as well as the theory of the unity of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism which was then current in Sung Zen. He taught that the Buddha Dharma was a complete whole, and that its basis was the authentic practice of zazen. It was on his basic understanding of Ju-ching's teaching that Dōgen composed *Fukanzazengi*. He believed he was linked in a direct transmission through Ju-ching with Po-chang, Bodhidharma, and Shakyamuni. As a legitimate link in this chain himself, his work *Fukanzazengi* may be said to represent his desire to continue this Dharma transmission in Japan. This came to have a special significance in view of the fact that Ju-ching died soon after Dōgen returned home, and his teaching line disappeared in China not long after.⁶

There are two different texts of *Fukanzazengi*. One is a copy which exists in Dōgen's holograph, and bears a colophon date of 1233. Now designated a Japanese National Treasure, this scroll is one of the finest surviving specimens of Dōgen's calligraphy. It is probably a fair copy he made of the *Fukanzazengi* he had composed in 1227. The other is the "popular" text, which has been in constant use through the centuries and the one on which almost all commentaries are based. There is no holograph. It first appeared in a printed edition of the *Eihei gen zenji goroku* in 1358, and was later reprinted frequently during the Tokugawa period.

Comparison of the two texts shows that the holographic version consists of 881 characters, and the later, popular text 757. On examination, it is found that in the later version the idea of dhyana or samadhi as a means to

⁵ *Dōgen zenji zenshū*, vol. 1, pp. 539-40.

⁶ Akishige Yoshiharu, "Fukanzazengi kō," *Kyūshū daigaku tetsugaku nempō*, No. 14, 1953, p. 472.

enlightenment has totally disappeared, and in its place there is a corresponding accentuation of the oneness of practice and realization. The popular text of *Fukanzazengi* may perhaps be said to reveal Dōgen's fully matured teaching, and in fact it is thought to have reached its present form in 1242 or 1243 when Dōgen was 43 or 44 years old and at the peak of his teaching and writing activity. During the same period he wrote no less than forty fascicles of *Shōbōgenzō* as well.⁷

The present translation follows the popular text. A German translation of the holograph text by Heinrich Dumoulin appeared in *Monumenta Nipponica*, XIV, 1958.

Following the translation of *Fukanzazengi* is a rendering of *Shōbōgenzō zazengi*, sometimes referred to as the "Japanese *zazengi*" since it is written in Japanese. It is shorter than *Fukanzazengi*, and no holograph exists, but according to a colophon included in later manuscript and printed editions, Dōgen wrote it in the winter of 1243 while residing at Yoshimine-dera, at about the same time he is thought to have revised the *Fukanzazengi* into the present popular edition. In fact, *Shōbōgenzō zazengi* is a rewriting into Japanese of the popular edition, with some additions, that omits the beginning and final sections.⁸



In the first paragraph of *Fukanzazengi* Dōgen sets forth the absoluteness, universality, freedom, and purity of the Buddha Way, which is originally and constantly manifested everywhere, untouched by man's mental or physical strivings, beyond both his illusion and his enlightenment. This done, he portrays man's alienation from the Way in the second paragraph, mentioning some of the "illusions" that arise with even the slightest divergence or dualistic view. He then clarifies "enlightenment" and states that attachment to the Dharma divorces man from the perfect and untrammelled Way described above.

The lack of total emancipation (that is free from all attachments including

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 478.

⁸ The text used for *Shōbōgenzō zazengi* is found in *Dōgen zenji zenshū*, vol. 1, pp. 88-9.

Dharma-attachment) stressed in paragraph two underscores the need for authentic zazen, exemplified by two figures (the Buddha and Bodhidharma) who constitute highly important links in the direct transmission of the right Dharma. Dōgen traces back to Shakyamuni.

This leads into three paragraphs (beg. "For *sanzen*" and ending "...the essential art of zazen.") addressed to the actual mental and physical requisites of zazen. They are substantially the same as found in *Sbōbōgenzō zazenji*, pp. 127-8.

Finally, Dōgen clarifies that this zazen is not meditational training but "undefiled practice-realization," and stresses the importance of practicing it without delay.

I. *Fukanzazengi*

(text¹)

THE Way is basically perfect and all-pervading.² How could it be contingent upon practice and realization? The Dharma-vehicle is free and untrammelled. What need is there for man's concentrated effort? Indeed, the Whole Body³ is far beyond the world's dust.⁴ Who could believe in a means to brush it clean? It is never apart from one right where one is. What is the use of going off here and there to practice?

And yet, if there is the slightest discrepancy, the Way is as distant as heaven from earth. If the least like or dislike arises, the Mind is lost in confusion.⁵ Suppose one gains pride of understanding and inflates one's own

¹ The work begins with two characters (原夫) which in Chinese composition are sometimes used to open a formal statement, without, perhaps, a translatable value. In the Sōtō sect, however, this particular occurrence is often interpreted as "Seeking [the source of the Buddha Dharma]", *sazamuru ni sore*. We have left it untranslated.

² The *Way*: *bodhi*, original awakening, enlightenment, reality.

³ The *Whole Body* (of reality), *zentai* 全体: the totality of things in their suchness (*satbatā*); the Buddha-nature. Basically synonymous with the previous *Way* and *Dharma-vehicle*.

⁴ The *world's dust* (*ji'ei* 塵埃): all worldly things which give rise to the illusions that defile the purity of the Buddha-nature. *Means to brush it clean*: allusion to verse contest by which Hui-neng (Enō 慧能) is said to have received the 5th Patriarch Hung-jen's (Gunin 弘忍) Dharma transmission and become 6th Patriarch. Shen-hsiu (Jinshū 神秀), Hung-jen's chief disciple, wrote: "This body is the *bodhi* tree, The mind like a bright mirror standing. Constantly strive to brush it clean, And do not allow dust to collect." Hui-neng countered with: "Basically, *bodhi* is no tree, Neither does the mirror have a stand. From the first there is not a single thing, So where can the dust collect?" *Cbing-te ch'uan-teng lu* 3 (*Keitoku dentō roku*: hereafter abbrev. CCL).

⁵ From the 3rd Patriarch Seng-ts'an's (Sōsan 僧璨) *Hsinhsinming* 信心銘 (*Sbinjinmei*): "If there is the slightest discrepancy, the Way is as distant as heaven from earth. To realize its manifestation, Be neither for nor against. The conflict of likes and dislikes is in itself the disease of the mind. . . . Do not dwell in dualities, And scrupulously avoid pursuing the Way. If there is the least like or dislike, The mind is lost in confusion."

enlightenment, glimpsing the wisdom that runs through all things, attaining the Way and clarifying the Mind, raising an aspiration to escalate the very sky. One is making the initial, partial excursions about the frontiers but is still somewhat deficient in the vital Way of total emancipation.

Need I mention the Buddha, who was possessed of inborn knowledge?—the influence of his six years of upright sitting is noticeable still. Or Bodhidharma's transmission of the mind-seal?—the fame of his nine years of wall-sitting is celebrated to this day.⁶ Since this was the case with the saints of old, how can men of today dispense with negotiation of the Way?

You should therefore cease from practice based on intellectual understanding, pursuing words and following after speech, and learn the backward step that turns your light inwardly to illuminate your self. Body and mind of themselves will drop away, and your original face will be manifest. If you want to attain suchness, you should practice suchness without delay.

For *sanzen*, a quiet room is suitable.⁷ Eat and drink moderately. Cast aside all involvements and cease all affairs. Do not think good or bad. Do not administer pros and cons. Cease all the movements of the conscious mind, the gauging of all thoughts and views.⁸ Have no designs on becoming a buddha. [*Sanzen*] has nothing whatever to do with sitting or lying down.⁹

At the site of your regular sitting, spread out thick matting and place a cushion above it. Sit either in the full-lotus or half-lotus position. In the

⁶ *Buddha*: the text has Gion 鷲園 (Jetavana), a surname given to the Buddha. Jetavana is the monastery at Śrāvastī where the Buddha preached many of his sermons. Likewise, for *Bodhidharma* the text has Shōrin 少林, Shao-lin ssu, the temple where Bodhidharma is said to have sat meditating for nine years.

⁷ *Sanzen* 參禪 is here used synonymously with *zazen*. Cf. *SBGZ zazengi*: "Sanzen is zazen."

⁸ "Movements of the conscious mind" translates *shin-i-shiki* 心意識, which describes the whole machinery of meditation: mind, thought, and perception. "All thoughts and views" renders *nen-sō-kan* 念想觀, mental functions related to the above three.

⁹ Since realization, in authentic *zazen*, is inseparable from practice, no room exists for man's "designs" on Buddhahood. Dōgen's "sitting only" (*shikan taza* 只管打坐) does not indicate sitting among the Four Bodily Attitudes (*shi-igi* 四威儀) of moving, standing, sitting, and lying down. "Walking is Zen, sitting is Zen; talking or silent, moving, unmoving—the essence itself is at ease" (*Cheng-tao-ke* 證道歌 *Shōdōka*). The essential substance of the Buddha Way's practice is beyond any particular form of sitting, lying, etc.

full-lotus position, you first place your right foot on your left thigh and your left foot on your right thigh. In the half-lotus, you simply press your left foot against your right thigh. You should have your robes and belt loosely bound and arranged in order. Then place your right hand on your left leg and your left palm [facing upwards] on your right palm, thumb-tips touching. Thus sit upright in correct bodily posture, neither inclining to the left nor to the right, neither leaning forward nor backward. Be sure your ears are on a plane with your shoulders and your nose in line with your navel. Place your tongue against the front roof of your mouth, with teeth and lips both shut. Your eyes should always remain open, and you should breathe gently through your nose.

Once you have adjusted your posture, take a deep breath, inhale and exhale, rock your body right and left and settle into a steady, immobile sitting position. Think of not-thinking. How do you think of not-thinking? Non-thinking.¹⁰ This in itself is the essential art of zazen.

The zazen I speak of is not learning meditation. It is simply the Dharmagate of repose and bliss, the practice-realization of totally culminated enlightenment.¹¹ It is the manifestation of ultimate reality.¹² Traps and snares can never reach it. Once its heart is grasped, you are like the dragon when he gains the water, like the tiger when he enters the mountain. For you must know that just there [in zazen] the right Dharma is manifesting itself and that from the first dullness and distraction are struck aside.¹³

¹⁰ These words derive from the following dialogue, which is the central subject of *SBGZ zazenbin* 坐禪邊: A monk asked Yüeh-shan, "What does one think of when sitting immobilely in zazen?" Yüeh-shan replied, "One thinks of not-thinking." "How do you think of not-thinking?" asked the monk. "Non-thinking," answered Yüeh-shan.

¹¹ *Practicing meditation . . . culminated enlightenment*: For Dōgen, zazen is not *dhyaṇa* as one of the Three Learnings (*san-gaku* 三學: *śīla*, *śamādhi*, *prajñā*) or one of the Six Paramita (charity, *śīla*, patience, vigor, *prajñā*, *dhyaṇa*), even though Buddhism in general regards all of them in combination as the means of attaining enlightenment. Cf. *Bendōwa, Eastern Buddhist*, Vol. IV, No. 1, pp. 142-3.

¹² *The manifestation of ultimate reality* (*kōan genjō* 公案現成): Zazen is practice within realization, the affirmation of total ultimate reality beyond all the "traps and snares" produced by man's discriminative thinking. Cf. *SBGZ genjōkōan* (*Eastern Buddhist* Vol. 5, No. 2), pp. 130-35.

¹³ *Dullness* (*kon* 昏) refers to a torpid state of consciousness characterized by physical and mental fatigue. *Distraction* (*san* 散) to a vague, wandering consciousness lacking physical and mental concentration. Two common states which arise during zazen to obstruct correct practice.

When you arise from sitting, move slowly and quietly, calmly and deliberately. Do not rise suddenly or abruptly. In surveying the past, we find that transcendence of both unenlightenment and enlightenment,¹⁴ and dying while either sitting or standing,¹⁵ have all depended entirely on the strength [of zazen].

In addition, the bringing about of enlightenment by the opportunity provided by a finger, a banner, a needle, or a mallet, and the effecting of realization with the aid of a *boon*, a fist, a staff, or a shout, cannot be fully understood by man's discriminative thinking.¹⁶ Indeed, it cannot be fully known by the practicing or realizing of supernatural powers either.¹⁷ It must be deportment

¹⁴ *Unenlightenment*: the condition of those in the six unenlightened realms (hell-dwellers, hungry ghosts, animals, asura, men, and devas). *Enlightenment*: condition of those in the four "saintly" realms (hearer, pratyeka-buddha, bodhisattva, and buddha). Together they represent all beings in the universe.

¹⁵ It is written in *CCL* that Bodhidharma and the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Chinese Zen Patriarchs died sitting in zazen, while the Third Patriarch died standing under a large tree. Examples of both are common in Zen histories.

¹⁶ Allusion to the means used by Zen masters to bring their pupils to enlightenment. Zen master Chü-chih's (Gutei 俱胝) "One-finger Zen" is the subject of Case 3 of the *Wu-men-kuan* 無門關 (*Mumonkan*), where it is used to bring about an acolyte's sudden enlightenment. See R. H. Blyth, trans., *Mumonkan* (Tokyo, Hokuseido, 1966), pp. 56-62.

Ananda went to Kaśyapa and asked if the Buddha had transmitted anything to him in addition to the surplice of golden cloth. Kaśyapa called out to him, and when he responded, told him to take down the banner at the gate, whereupon Ananda attained enlightenment. *CCL*, 1.

When the fifteenth Indian Zen patriarch Kanadeva visited Nagarjuna, the latter, without saying a word, instructed an attendant to place a bowl brimming with water before his guest. Kanadeva took up a needle and dropped it into the bowl, an act said to have resulted in his becoming Nagarjuna's disciple. *CCL*, 2.

One day, the World-honored One ascended to the teaching-seat. Mañjuśrī rapped the White Gavel to signify the opening of the sermon, saying, "Clearly understood is the Dharma, the Royal Dharma. The Dharma, the Royal Dharma, is thus," words usually uttered at the close of the sermon. Without having said a word, Śākyamuni descended the seat and left. *T'ung-jung lu*, 從容錄 (*Sbōyō-roku*), Case 3.

¹⁷ *Supernatural powers* (*jinzū* 神通): powers possessed by beings of spiritual attainment, enabling them free activity and unrestricted freedom; eyes capable of seeing everywhere, ears of hearing all things, etc. Dōgen is saying that the way in which a master brings his pupils to enlightenment is not only incapable of being grasped by human thought,*

beyond man's hearing and seeing—is it not a principle that is prior to his knowledge and perceptions?

This being the case, intelligence or lack of it does not matter; between the dull and the sharp-witted there is no distinction.¹⁸ If you concentrate your effort singlemindedly, that in itself is negotiating the Way. Practice-realization is naturally undefiled.¹⁹ Going forward [in practice] is a matter of everydayness.²⁰

In general, this world and other worlds as well,²¹ both in India and China, equally hold the Buddha-seal, and over all prevails the character of this school, which is simply devotion to sitting, total engagement in immobile sitting. Although it is said that there are as many minds as there are men, still they (all) negotiate the Way solely in zazen. Why leave behind the seat that exists in your home and go aimlessly off to the dusty realms of other lands?²² If you make one misstep you go astray from (the Way) directly before you.

*but is also beyond the ken of supernatural powers; in fact, is beyond all objective knowledge, and yet is not mysterious or supernatural, but the reality of normal, everyday activity.

¹⁸ That is, the life of Zen is open to all people regardless of their mental or physical abilities.

¹⁹ Since negotiating the Way (practice-realization) in zazen is in itself the practice-realization of ultimate reality, it is beyond all the defiling distinctions and dualities arising from man's conscious strivings.

²⁰ Allusion to a dialogue between Chao-chou (Jōshū 趙州) and his master Nan-ch'üan (Nansen 南泉): Chao-chou asked his master, "What is the Way?" Nan-ch'üan said, "Your everyday mind, that is the Way." "Still, does one proceed along it, or not?" asked Chao-chou. "Once you intend to go forward you go wrong," replied Nan-ch'üan. *CCL*, 8. In negotiating the Way one's practice is within realization and beyond all defilements of the mind; the moment an idea to seek something arises, one goes wrong. "Everydayness" indicates the fundamental, immediate nature of the everyday way of life that has become freed from all duality.

²¹ *This world* is the world of illusion, *other worlds*, the various Buddha lands, the dwelling places of enlightened beings. Together, they represent all realms of existence.

²² Allusion to the Parable of the Lost Son in the *Lotus Sutra*: An only son parted from his father and went to live far away, growing in poverty unaware of his father's increasing wealth. After years had passed, the son returned to his home and subsequently inherited the treasures that were his original birthright. See *Sources of Indian Tradition* (New York, 1960), pp. 165–69.

You have gained the pivotal opportunity of human form. Do not use your time in vain. You are maintaining the essential working of the Buddha Way. Who would take wasteful delight in the spark from the flintstone?²³ Besides, form and substance are like the dew on the grass, destiny like the dart of lightning—emptied in an instant, vanished in a flash.

Please, honored followers of Zen. Long accustomed to groping for the elephant, do not be suspicious of the true dragon.²⁴ Devote your energies to a way that directly indicates the absolute. Revere the man of complete attainment who is beyond all human agency.²⁵ Gain accord with the enlightenment of the buddhas; succeed to the legitimate lineage of the patriarchs' samadhi.²⁶ Constantly perform in such a manner and you are assured of being a person such as they. Your treasure-store will open of itself,²⁷ and you will use it at will.

²³ *Spark from a flintstone*: a metaphor for human life and the extreme swiftness with which it comes and goes.

²⁴ *Groping for the elephant*: Allusion to the well-known story of the King who brought an elephant before a group of blind men and let them touch different parts of it. He then asked them to describe the beast and got greatly diverse answers because of the limited manner of their experiences. Found in the *Dīgha Nikāya*, 19, and also in the *Nirvana Sutra*.

... *true dragon*: from a story in the *Sben-tzu lüch* 申子略 (*Sbinsbi ryaku*), also in the *Latter Han History*, about a man named Yeh Kung-tzu 葉公子 who had a passion for dragons. He had paintings and carvings of them all throughout his house. One day a real dragon, hearing this, descended from the sky to see, and poked his head in through Yeh's front window, scaring him witless.

Dōgen seems to be implying that prior to his transmission of the right Dharma to Japan the Japanese were blind to the true Dharma in its totality and had acquired a passion for false dragons: their understanding was until now only partial, and had seemed real to them only because they had never encountered the real Dharma. Now, when the real Dharma has arrived, Dōgen tells them not to doubt its truth.

²⁵ Just as zazen is the practice of total reality, the one who practices it is a "man of complete attainment beyond all human agency" (*zetsugaku mui no hito* 絶学無為之人), a description, probably derived from the *Cheung tau ke*, referring to one who has achieved ultimate attainment. For Dōgen, this means every zazen practitioner.

²⁶ *Patriarchs' samadhi*: that is, the *jijuyū* samadhi 自受用三昧. For particulars see *Bendōwa*, op. cit. pp. 128-9.

²⁷ *Treasure-store*: metaphor for the Buddha-nature; Buddha wisdom.

2. *Shōbōgenzō zazengi*

(text)

Sanzēn is *zazen*. For *zazen* a quiet place is suitable. Matting should be thick. Do not allow drafts of air to enter or rain and frost to intrude. The precincts of the sitter must be kept protected. There are instances in the past of [men] sitting upon a Diamond [Seat],¹ and upon large and stable rocks. They all used thick grass to sit upon. The place of sitting should be lighted, and kept from becoming dark at any time day or night. It is essential to keep it warm in winter and cool in summer.

[In *zazen*,] all involvements must be cast aside, and all affairs put to rest. It is not thinking *good*, and not thinking *bad*. It is not consciousness and it is not contemplation. Have no intention to become a buddha. You must drop [distinctions of] sitting and lying down, be moderate with drink and food, frugal with your time, and go to *zazen* as unhesitatingly as you would brush a fire from the top of your head. Precisely in this way Wu-tsu of Huang-mei-shan exerted himself solely in the practice of *zazen*.²

When you do *zazen* you should wear your surplice, and use a round, rush-filled cushion. The cushion should not extend completely under your legs but only back from the midpoint of their crossing, so that your legs cross above the matting and your spine rests above the cushion. This is the method all buddhas and all patriarchs employ when doing *zazen*.

Sit either in the half-lotus or full-lotus position. In the full-lotus position

¹ The Vajra (Diamond) Treasure Seat, according to Zen history, is where Śākyamuni sat in meditation and attained enlightenment. There are many examples of rock-sitting *zazen*; for example, Shih-t'ou Hsi-ch'ien 石頭希遷 (Sekitō Kisen, 700-90).

² Hung-jen 弘忍 (Gunin, 602-675), the fifth Chinese Zen patriarch, who succeeded to the Dharma of the Fourth Patriarch Tao-hsin (Dōshin, 580-651) and resided at Huang-mei-shan 黃梅山 (Ōbaizan), Yellow Plum Mountain, in modern Hupeh.

you place your right foot on your left thigh and your left foot on your right thigh. The upper surface of your toes should be resting upon your thighs. There should be no deviation from this. In the half-lotus position you simply place your left foot on your right thigh.

You should have your garments loosely bound and arranged in order. Place your right hand on your left leg and your left hand on your right hand, with your thumb-tips resting against each other. Place both hands in this manner close to the body, with the joined tips of the thumbs opposite the navel.

You should sit upright in correct bodily posture, inclining neither to the left nor to the right, leaning neither forward nor backward. Be sure that your ears are on a plane with your shoulders and your nose is in line with your navel. Place your tongue against the roof of your mouth and breathe through your nose.³ Lips and teeth should be closed and eyes should be open, not too widely nor too narrowly.⁴ Ready your body and mind in this way, and exhale deeply.

Sitting in meditation silently and immobile, think of not thinking. What is thinking of not thinking? Non-thinking. This in itself is the art of zazen. Zazen is not learning Zen. It is the Dharma-gate of great repose and bliss, undefiled practice-realization.

Delivered the eleventh month, the first year of Kangen (1243)

At Yoshimine-dera, Yoshida, Esasu⁵

³ Cf. "The chief priest [Ju-ching, Dōgen's master] taught Dōgen: 'When you do zazen you should rest your tongue on the front upper roof of your mouth. Or you may also place it against the back of your upper front teeth.'" From the *Hōkyō-ki* 宝慶記, the diary Dōgen made while studying under Ju-ching in China. Number 41 in the Iwanami edition edited by Ui Hakuju.

⁴ Eyes are kept open to avoid dozing off. "When zazen has been one's common practice for over forty or fifty years and one never drops his head in a doze, he is not hampered when he does zazen with his eyes shut. Newcomers, who are not yet fully accustomed in this way, should sit with eyes open." *Hōkyō-ki*, *ibid.*

⁵ In 1243 Dōgen quit the Kōshō-ji at Uji for Esasu, i.e. Echizen. He was 45 years old.