

**Genjōkōan,
and Fukanzazengi**

From the Shōbōgenzō

by

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Genjōkōan

First Chapter of the Shobogenzo

By Eihei Dogen

(1) When all dharmas are the Buddha Dharma, there is delusion and realization, practice, life and death, buddhas and living beings.

(2) When the ten thousand dharmas are without [fixed] self, there is no delusion and no realization, no buddhas and no living beings, no birth and no death.

(3) Since the Buddhaway by nature goes beyond [dichotomy of] abundance and deficiency, there is arising and perishing, delusion and realization, living beings and buddhas.

(4) Therefore flowers fall even though we love them; weeds grow even though we dislike them. Conveying oneself toward all things to carry out practice-enlightenment is delusion. All things coming and carrying out practice-enlightenment through the self is realization. Those who greatly realize delusion are buddhas. Those who are greatly deluded in realization are living beings. Furthermore, there are those who attain realization beyond realization and those who are deluded within delusion.

(5) When buddhas are truly buddhas they don't need to perceive they are buddhas; however, they are enlightened buddhas and they continue actualizing buddha. In seeing color and hearing sound with body and mind, although we perceive them intimately, [the perception] is not like reflections in a

mirror or the moon in water. When one side is illuminated, the other is dark.

(6) To study the Buddha Way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be verified by all things. To be verified by all things is to let the body and mind of the self and the body and mind of others drop off. There is a trace of realization that cannot be grasped. We endlessly express this ungraspable trace of realization.

(7) When one first seeks the Dharma, one strays far from the boundary of the Dharma. When the Dharma is correctly transmitted to the self, one is immediately an original person.

If one riding in a boat watches the coast, one mistakenly perceives the coast as moving. If one watches the boat [in relation to the surface of the water], then one notices that the boat is moving. Similarly, when we perceive the body and mind in a confused way and grasp all things with a discriminating mind, we mistakenly think that the self-nature of the mind is permanent. When we intimately practice and return right here, it is clear that all things have no [fixed] self.

(8) Firewood becomes ash. Ash cannot become firewood again. However, we should not view ash as after and firewood as before. We should know that firewood dwells in the dharma position of firewood and has its own before and after. Although before and after exist, past and future are cut off. Ash stays in the position of ash, with its own before and after. As firewood never becomes firewood again after it has burned to ash, there is no return to living after a person dies. However, in Buddha Dharma it is an unchanged tradition not

to say that life becomes death. Therefore we call it no-arising. It is the established way of buddhas' turning the Dharma wheel not to say that death becomes life. Therefore, we call it no-perishing. Life is a position in time; death is also a position in time. This is like winter and spring. We don't think that winter becomes spring, and we don't say that spring becomes summer.

(9) When a person attains realization, it is like the moon's reflection in water. The moon never becomes wet; the water is never disturbed. Although the moon is a vast and great light, it is reflected in a drop of water. The whole moon and even the whole sky are reflected in a drop of dew on a blade of grass. Realization does not destroy the person, as the moon does not make a hole in the water. The person does not obstruct realization, as a drop of dew does not obstruct the moon in the sky. The depth is the same as the height. [To investigate the significance of] the length and brevity of time, we should consider whether the water is great or small, and understand the size of the moon in the sky.

(10) When the Dharma has not yet fully penetrated body and mind, one thinks one is already filled with it. When the Dharma fills body and mind, one thinks something is [still] lacking. For example, when we sail a boat into the ocean beyond sight of land and our eyes scan [the horizon in] the four directions, it simply looks like a circle. No other shape appears. This great ocean, however, is neither round nor square. It has inexhaustible characteristics. [To a fish] it looks like a palace; [to a heavenly being] a jeweled necklace. [To us] as far

as our eyes can see, it looks like a circle. All the myriad things are like this. Within the dusty world and beyond, there are innumerable aspects and characteristics; we only see or grasp as far as the power of our eye of study and practice can see.

When we listen to the reality of myriad things, we must know that there are inexhaustible characteristics in both ocean and mountains, and there are many other worlds in the four directions. This is true not only in the external world, but also right under our feet or within a single drop of water.

(11) When a fish swims, no matter how far it swims, it doesn't reach the end of the water. When a bird flies, no matter how high it flies, it cannot reach the end of the sky. When the bird's need or the fish's need is great, the range is large. When the need is small, the range is small. In this way, each fish and each bird uses the whole of space and vigorously acts in every place. However, if a bird departs from the sky, or a fish leaves the water, it immediately dies. We should know that [for a fish] water is life, [for a bird] sky is life. A bird is life; a fish is life. Life is a bird; life is a fish. And we should go beyond this. There is practice-enlightenment—this is the way of living beings.

(12) Therefore, if there are fish that would swim or birds that would fly only after investigating the entire ocean or sky, they would find neither path nor place. When we make this very place our own, our practice becomes the actualization of reality (*genjōkōan*). When we make this path our own, our activity naturally becomes actualized reality (*genjōkōan*). This path, this place, is neither big nor small, neither self nor others. It has

not existed before this moment nor has it come into existence now. Therefore [the reality of all things] is thus. In the same way, when a person engages in practice-enlightenment in the Buddha Way, as the person realizes one dharma, the person permeates that dharma; as the person encounters one practice, the person [fully] practices that practice. [For this] there is a place and path. The boundary of the known is not clear; this is because the known [which appears limited] is born and practiced simultaneously with the complete penetration of the Buddha Dharma. We should not think that what we have attained is conceived by ourselves and known by our discriminating mind. Although complete enlightenment is immediately actualized, its intimacy is such that it does not necessarily form as a view. [In fact] viewing is not something fixed.

(13) Zen Master Baoche of Mt. Magu was waving a fan. A monk approached him and asked, “The nature of wind is ever present and permeates everywhere. Why are you waving a fan?”

The master said, “You know only that the wind’s nature is ever present—you don’t know that it permeates everywhere.”

“The monk said, “How does wind permeate everywhere?”

The master just continued waving the fan.

The monk bowed deeply.

The genuine experience of Buddha Dharma and the vital path that has been correctly transmitted are like this. To say we should not wave a fan because the nature of wind is ever

present, and that we should feel the wind even when we don't wave a fan, is to know neither ever- presence nor the wind's nature. Since the wind's nature is ever present, the wind of the Buddha's family enables us to realize the gold of the great Earth and to transform the [water of] the long river into cream.

The First Chapter of Shōbōgenzō (The True Dharma Eye Treasury), Genjōkōan (Actualization of Reality)

This was written in mid-autumn in the first year of Tenpuku era [1233] and given to my lay disciple, Yō Kōshū, who lived in Chinzei [Kyūshū]. Compiled in the fourth year of Kenchō [1252]

—Translated by Shohaku Okumura

The Fukan-Zazengi
A Universal Recommendation For Zazen
(Daigaku Rummé Translation)

Now, when you seek the Way, you find it to be universal and complete. How, then, can it be contingent upon practice and enlightenment? The Dharma vehicle is free and unrestricted. What need is there for concentrated effort? Indeed, the whole body of reality is far beyond the world's dust. Who can believe in a means to brush it clean?

The Way is complete and present right where you are. What is the use, then, of practice? And yet, if there is the slightest difference between you and the Way, the separation will be greater than that between heaven and earth. If the least like or dislike arises, the mind is lost in confusion.

Even if you are proud of your understanding and think you are richly endowed with enlightenment and have glimpsed the wisdom that pervades all things; even if you think you have attained the Way, clarified the mind, and gained the power to touch the heavens, you are still only wandering about the frontiers of enlightenment. In fact, you have almost lost the Way of total liberation.

You must take note of the fact that even Shakyamuni Buddha had to sit in zazen for six years. The influence of those six years of upright sitting is still apparent. Also, Bodhidharma's transmission of the Buddhadharma and the fame of his nine years of practicing zazen facing a wall are celebrated to this

day. The ancient sages were this diligent in their practice, so how can people today dispense with the practice of zazen?

You should therefore cease from practice based on intellectual understanding and the pursuit of words and letters.

Learn the backward step that turns the light inward to illuminate the Self. Body and mind will drop away by themselves, and the essential Self will be manifest. If you wish to attain "suchness," practice "suchness" immediately.

For zazen, a quiet room is best. Eat and drink moderately. Give up all deluding relationships and set everything aside. Do not think of good or bad, right or wrong. Do not interfere with the workings of the mind, nor try to control the movements of your thoughts. Give up the idea of becoming a buddha. Zazen has nothing whatsoever to do with whether you are sitting upright or lying down.

Usually a thick square mat is placed on the floor where you sit and a round cushion put on top of it. Sit either in the full- or half-lotus position. In the full-lotus position, first place your right foot on your left thigh and your left foot on your right thigh. In the half-lotus, you simply put your left foot on your right thigh. Your clothing should be loose, but neat.

Then place your right hand, palm up, on your leg and your left hand, palm up, on your right palm, with the tips of the thumbs lightly touching. Sit upright, leaning neither to the left nor to the right, neither forward nor backward. Be sure your ears are in line with your shoulders and your nose is in line with your navel. Your tongue should be placed against the roof of your mouth, with lips and teeth firmly closed.

Your eyes should always remain open. Breathe gently through your nose. Having adjusted your posture, take a deep breath. Sway your body to the left and right, then settle into a steady, immobile position, sitting like a mountain. Think of not thinking. How is this done! By leaving thinking as-it-is. This is the essential art of zazen.

The zazen I speak of is not "step-by-step, learning Zen." It is simply the Dharma gate of comfort and ease. It is the culmination of totally realized enlightenment. It is the manifestation of ultimate reality. Traps and snares can never interfere with it. If you attain this, you are like a dragon that has reached water or a tiger that reclines on a mountain. The true Dharma then appears of itself, and you will be free of dullness and distraction.

When you rise from sitting, stand up slowly and calmly. Do not rise abruptly.

Through the power of zazen it is possible to transcend delusion and enlightenment and attain the ability to die while sitting or standing. However, it is impossible for our discriminating mind to understand how the buddhas and enlightened ones bring about enlightenment through the opportunity provided by a finger, a pole, a needle, or a mallet. Or how they have transmitted the Way with a fly whisk, a fist, a staff, or a shout. Neither can it be fully understood through supernatural powers. These actions are beyond the dualistic realm of subjective and objective. Is it not a principle that precedes knowledge and perceptions!

Therefore, no distinction should be made between whether a person is clever or stupid, superior or inferior. When you practice single-mindedly, that in itself is truly the practice of the Way. Practice and realization are naturally undefiled. Making an effort to attain the Way is itself the manifestation of the Way in your daily life.

All people throughout the world are without doubt equally imprinted with buddha-nature. However, without the practice of zazen, the true nature and function of a person will not be manifested. You should therefore devote yourself exclusively to and be completely absorbed in the practice of zazen. Although it is said that there are as many minds as there are people, all people should practice the Way, which is nothing other than the study of the Self. There is no reason to forsake the place you sit at home and go aimlessly off to the dusty regions of other countries. If you make one false step, you stray from the Way that lies directly before you.

You have already been blessed with a human form, which is vital, so do not use your time in vain. You are endowed with the essential functioning of the Way of Buddha, so why pursue worthless pleasures, which are like sparks from a flint stone! Our bodies are like dew on the grass. Our lives are like a flash of lightning, gone in an instant, vanished in a moment.

Honored practitioners of Zen, do not be afraid of the real dragon (zazen) or spend a long time touching only one part of the elephant. Devote yourselves to the Way, which points directly to the absolute. Respect those who have gone beyond all learning and have nothing left to do. Be in accord

with the enlightenment of the buddhas and succeed to the samadhi of the enlightened ones who have transmitted the Dharma. Practice constantly in this manner and you are assured of becoming like them. The treasure house will open of itself, and you will be able to use it at will.