According to its colophon, “Genjôkôan”, now a part of Dôgen’s major work Shôbôgenzô (Eye-Store-house of the Right Dharma), was completed on the eighth month of 1233 for a lay disciple named Yô-kôshû. According to another colophon, it was completed twenty years later. In the original, “Genjôkôan” is very difficult to read or understand, yet students of Zen are greatly attracted to Dôgen and his work. They are drawn into his world as they are fascinated by the profundity and artistic form of the work. In order to get across his message effectively and efficiently, Dôgen used a number of metaphors such as moon and water, boat and shore, firewood and ashes, fish and birds, water and sky, and so on. He also created new words, basically writing in classical Japanese but inventing many new expressions--often combining Chinese and Japanese words. This essay discusses some problems of interpreting “Genjôkôan,” focusing on its opening message (first four key sentences). A translation of the whole work is appended.

( I )

In his article, “Rôshidôtokukyô no eiyaku to sono mondai” (“Lao-tzu’s Tao-tê-ching and Its Problems”), Shigemasa Fukui discusses the problems of the English translations of the Tao-tê-ching or the Lao-tzu, a classical text of philosophical Taoism. He quotes a passage by Holmes Welch in Taoism--Parting of the Way, who says that “no other book except the Bible has been translated into English as often as Lao-Tzu’s.” According to Fukui, the first English version of the Tao-tê-ching was made by the Briton John Chalmers in 1868. Since then, this text has been translated into forty-five English versions. Fukui thus shows the great interest of Westerners

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Hoyu Ishida

“Genjôkôan”:
Some Literary and Interpretative problems of Its Translation
in the philosophy of Lao-tzu and Taoism. If we were able to get an account of the more recent translations up to today, including all the private and unpublished works, there would be an extraordinary number of English versions.

Although there are so many translations available, each one is characteristically different. This is because of the difficult and complex nature of the work itself and because each translator reads the text through his or her own understanding and perspective, and translation in this respect is after all the interpretation of the original text.

In translating “Genjôkôan,” I have discovered that to translate it is to interpret it. (I am speaking here about not only the translation from the original of classical Japanese into English, but also the translation from the original into modern Japanese.) There are many different ways of interpreting the text. Therefore, if one tries to understand this text only through one translation (either in English or in modern Japanese), one understands only the interpretation of the one translator, which, given the difficulty of the work, is insufficient.²

The problems in interpreting this text are countless. Dôgen uses words in his peculiar way, stretching them to their limits in order to get the most meaning from them in accord with his own understanding. Unlike the other Buddhist Masters of his time, Dôgen does not write the text in Chinese; however, his use of classical Japanese is his own and not the common usage. His expression is very poetic and rhetorical. He freely twists the words, yet these twists contain his message. Some of his sentences are not clear at all in subject of object. Sometimes, Dôgen seems to be playing with words as he is juggling them. For instance, when he is talking about fish swimming in the water and birds flying in the sky, he says that “one can see that because of the water fish have life, and that because of the sky birds have life.” He then continues to say that “because of birds the sky has life. Because of fish the water has life. Because of life birds should have birds. Because of life fish should have fish....”³ The original version of this passage can be translated differently from my translation above;⁴ however, one can

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² I am here neither necessarily insisting that the original author in a general sense is superior to the translator, nor arguing which--the author or the interpreter--is better.
⁴ Here are five different translations:
see that Dōgen freely juggles the words, a fact which makes his profound work very puzzling. In order to give some hints of the problems that this text has, I would now like to introduce and analyze five different English translations of the first four sentences of the text, which represent the framework of the whole work.5 First, Dōgen’s original text:

5. 諸法の佛法なる時節、
   SHO - HÔ (BÔ) NO BUP - PÔ NARU JI - SETSU,
   many Dharma sb. Buddha dharma become time season

すなわち 迷悟あり修行あり、
   SUNAWACHI MEI - GO ARI SHU - GYÔ ARI,
   accordingly delusion satori exist action - - -

(Abe/Waddell)
We can realize that water means life (for the fish) and the sky means life (for the bird). It must be that the bird means life (for the sky), and the fish means life (for the water); that life is the bird and life is the fish.

(Reiho Masanaga)
You must realize that fish live by water and birds by sky. And it can be said that the sky lives by birds and the water by fish, and that birds are life and fish are life.

(Kennet)
For the life of fish is the ocean and the life of birds is the sky. It is equally true that the life of the sky is the birds and the life of the ocean is the fish; birds are life and fish are life.

(Tanahashi/Aitken)
Water makes life and air makes life. The bird makes life and the fish makes life. Life makes the bird and life makes the fish.

(Maezumi)
Know, then, that water is life.
Know that air is life.
The bird is life and the fish is life.
Life is the bird and life is the fish.

Translations are from a text used at a Sôtô Zen center in the United States, named SHÔBÔGENZÔ GENJÔKÔAN: AN ANALYTIC STUDY. This text is used for their private study of “Genjôkôan,” so it is not published.

5 Translations are from the above text.
then

生 あり 死 あり、諸 佛 あり 衆 生 あり。
SHÔ ARI SHI ARI, SHO-BUTSU ARI, SHU -- JÔ ARI.

birth --- death --- Buddha --- group birth --- 
living gathering life

2. 万 法 とも に われ に あらざる 時 節、まどひ
MAN - PÔ TOMO NI WARE NI ARAZARU JI-SETSU, MADOI

myriad --- together self not ARI --- delusion

10,000 with I not exist
also are not

なく さとり なく、 諸 佛 なく 衆 生
NAKU SATORI NAKU, SHO-BUTSU NAKU SHU-JÔ

not exist enlightenment --- --- --- --- --
are not

なく、 生 なく 滅 なし。
NAKU, SHÔ NAKU METSU NASHI.

--- --- --- destruction not exist extinction

3. 佛 道 もとより 豊 倹 より 跳 出
BUTSU-- DÔ MOTOYORI HÔ- KEN YORI CHÔ- SHUTSU

--- way originally rich lack from leap above
path abundant thrift jump get out

せる ゆゑに、生 滅 あり、迷 悟 あり、生 佛 あり。
SERU YUENI, SHÔ-METSU ARI, MEI-GO ARI, SHÔ- BUTSU ARI.
do therefore --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- beings --- --- --- birth

4. しかも かく の ごとく なり と いへども、
SHIKA-MO KAKU NO GOTOKU NARI TO IEDOMO,

nevertheless thus --- like become --- although
such are

華 は 愛 惜 に ちり、 草 は
HANA WA AI - JAKU(SEKI) NI CHIRI, SÔ WA

flower ab. love desire grudgingly scatter weed
loath to part

When all dharmas are the Buddha Dharma, there is illusion and enlightenment, practice, birth, death, buddhas, and sentient beings. When myriad dharmas are without self, there is no illusion or enlightenment, no buddhas or sentient beings, no generation or extinction. The Buddha Way is originally beyond fulness and lack, and for this reason there is generation and extinction, illusion and enlightenment, sentient beings and buddhas. In spite of this, flowers fall always amid our grudging, and weeds flourish in our chagrin.

In their introduction to this translation, Abe and Waddell say that the first sentence contains the basis of “Genjôkôan,” and that Dôgen’s idea is that Buddhism denies all dualistic and discriminative views and proclaims the attainment of equality beyond discrimination and duality. This equality is “nondualistic in the sense it is beyond the duality even of sameness and .

6 They elaborate Dôgen’s use of the word genjôkôan: “Genjô, literally something like “becoming manifest” or “immediately manifesting,” does not denote the manifesting of something previously unmanifested, rather the presence of things as they are in themselves untouched by man’s conscious strivings, the manifesting of ultimate reality according to man’s religious practice. Dôgen uses the term kôan differently from the traditional Rinzai Zen meaning of a “problem” given by a Zen master to a practicer to lead him to self-awakening. According to the earliest existing commentary on Shôbôgenzô, by Kyôgô, the kô of kôan means “sameness” or “ultimate equality that is beyond equality and inequality,” and an refers to “keeping to one’s sphere [in the universe].” Kôan thus indicates the individuality of things and their absolute equality, the sameness of things’ differences, the difference of things’ sameness. Accordingly, the term genjôkôan points to ultimate reality in which all things are distinctively individual, and yet equal in the presence of their suchness.” See The Eastern Buddhist. “Shôbôgenzô Genjôkôan,” vol. V, No. 2, Oct., 1972, p. 130.
difference and includes and affirms things’ differentiation as the ultimate reality, emphasizing each thing as it is on the basis of complete liberation from all man’s illusory, dualistic views.”

They call this equality the “ultimate reality” or “Buddha Dharma.” Hence, we are able to see that the “Buddha Dharma,” their translation for buppô in the first sentence, can take the place of the “ultimate reality” as well. But I wonder what they can mean by saying that all dhammas are the ultimate reality. It is still vague and metaphysical, although this vagueness cannot be helped, given the original. The second sentence is the negation which indicates that “the affirmation of both illusion and enlightenment, etc., of the first sentence is not mere dualism but includes the negation of dichotomous views.”

They say that the third sentence is the restatement of the first sentence, and that hô “fulness” refers to the affirmation of the distinctions of things and ken “lack” is its negation. The fourth sentence expresses the “absolute reality” of all phenomena: “not only of the flower’s (enlightenment) falling and the weed’s (illusion) flourishing but also of man’s own feelings of yearning and dislike toward them.”

I find that their translation as a whole is fairly faithful to the original text, that it is philosophically oriented, and that its use of words is influenced by Western thought. We can see this tendency in such words as “absolute reality” and “Manifest Absolute Reality” for the title “Genjôkôan.”

ii) Reiho Masanaga translation:

When all things are Buddhism, delusion and enlightenment exist, training exists, life and death exist, Buddhas exist, all-beings exist. When all things belong to the not-self, there are no delusion, no enlightenment, no all beings, no birth and no decay. Because the Buddha’s way transcends the relative and absolute, birth and decay exist, delusion and enlightenment exist, all-beings and Buddhas exist. And despite this, flowers fall while we treasure their bloom, weeds flourish while we wish them dead.

As we can also see from his translation of the title--“The Koan
Expresses in Daily Life,” Masanaga tries to apply the message of Dôgen generally to daily life; this is an application which differs from Abe/Waddell’s. He puts “the relative and absolute” for hôken in the third sentence. I wonder, however, if Dôgen brings in the idea of relative and absolute by hôken, though one can see the intention of the translator, who renders “the Buddha’s Way transcends the relative and absolute....”

iii) Kennet translation:

Delusion, enlightenment, training, life, death, Buddhas and all living things are in existence when there is Buddhism;
none of these exist when all is within the Truth;
since the Way of the Buddhas transcends unity and duality, all these things exist;
whilst we adore flowers they wither;
weeds grow strong whilst we long for their destruction.

Her version is poetic and totally free, as her translation of the title—“The Problem of Everyday Life”—also suggests. The free translation is easy on the readers, but it cannot carry the dynamics of the original and may provide only the interpretation of the translation. I find the translation of “within the Truth” in the second sentence very interesting. The original phrase (generally translated as “without self”) is very difficult to put into English. Although her free translation of “within the Truth” seems to carry an opposite notion of self since “Truth” in the West tends to be an affirmation of self, if one takes the original affirmatively, then it is possible that one will come up with the affirmative notion of self. The negative or static notion of self (“without self”) and the affirmative or dynamic notion of self (“with Self”) are just two different or opposite phases of the same reality in Buddhist philosophy—reality is spontaneously “contradictory” and “true and real.”

iv) Tanahashi/Aitken translation:

When all things are Buddhist phenomena, we have enlightenment and ignorance, studies, life and death, buddhas and people.
When all things are without self, we have no ignorance, no enlightenment, no buddhas, no people, no life and no death.
The Buddhist way is beyond being and non-being, therefore we have
life and death, ignorance and enlightenment, people and buddhas. However, flowers fall with our attachment, and weeds grow with our detachment.

Their translation of the title is “GENJO KOAN, REALIZATION OF TRUTH,” which indicates a different standpoint from the previous two free translations; they also translate it freely but in a different context. The previous ones are translated more for practical purposes. “Being and non-being” for hôken in the third sentence is a new interpretation here. As for Japanese commentators, Zen Bunka-gakuin (Sôichi Nakamura as a chairman) has this view: wu (being) and mu (non-being) for hôken The interpretation of the fourth sentence seems to be their own. Commentators generally interpret the flowers falling, in the first half, as something lamented by people, and the weeds growing, in the second part, as something disliked. Tanahashi and Aitken see flowers as attachment (un-enlightenment) and weeds as detachment (enlightenment), which is contrary to the view of Abe and Waddell, who see flowers as enlightenment and weeds as illusion.

v) Maezumi translation:

When all dharmas are Buddha-dharma, there are enlightenment and delusion, practice, life and death, Buddhas and creatures.
When the ten thousand dharmas are without self, there are no delusion, no enlightenment, no Buddha’s, no creatures, no life and no death.
The Buddha way transcends being and non-being; therefore there are life and death, delusion and enlightenment, creatures and Buddhas.
However, flowers fall just giving rise to attachment, and weeds spring up, arousing antipathy.

His translation is fairly faithful to the original text and easy to read, and it looks as if he translates as he reads the text without twisting the message too much. The translation for the title is “The Realization of the Koan.” He adopts the theory of being and non-being for hôken. While mei, as opposed to go (“enlightenment”), is translated as “illusion” and “ignorance” by the other two translators, Maezumi here uses “delusion” for it, which I believe is a good choice of word, since the word mei is usually used in terms of one’s being deluded: mei or un-enlightenment is not something which does not exist like illusion but is a false view of things.
After seeing the five different translations, though the selection may be too short to be examined fully, we are able to note the differences among their interpretations. In their translations, they have to deal with two languages: classical Japanese (actually Dôgen’s own language) and English, both of which have different structures in style, and in which the translators have to overcome the cultural and time differences of symbols that those languages carry respectively in order to transmit the authentic message of Dôgen. Furthermore, Dôgen is, from the start, hard not only to translate but also to interpret because of his peculiar style and the profound context of his work.

I would like to present my translation and interpretation of those four sentences:

On the occasion when all things are Buddha-Dharma, there are then delusion-enlightenment, practice, birth, death, buddhas, and sentient beings.
On the occasion when myriad things are without self—empty, there is no delusion or enlightenment, no buddhas or sentient beings, no birth or extinction.
Since the Buddha Way originally transcends the idea of many or few, there are birth-extinction, delusion-enlightenment, and sentient beings-buddhas.
Though this is so, flowers yet fall as people lament, and weeds only grow while people loathe them.

Since Dôgen generally has the tendency of presenting the main message in the very beginning of each essay, the opening of “Genjôkôan” is very important to understand the whole work and thus we have to examine it very carefully. We now, therefore, want to direct our attention to the meaning of the term buppó (Buddha-dharma), which appears over four hundred times throughout the Shôbôgenzô (four times in “Genjôkôan”). Pô or hô (Dharma or dharma in Sanskrit) can mean “Truth,” “Law,” “Principle,” “Teaching,” “phenomena,” “things,” and so on. In many cases throughout the whole work of Shôbôgenzô, the word buppo in this combination of two characters is used by Dôgen as the Buddha-teaching, although there are many other occasions on which the use of the word is not clear. Buppô that we are dealing with now in the first sentence of “Genjôkôan” is an ambiguous one.

I would like to propose that Dôgen here uses pô (dharma) as “things”
First, the word buppô follows right after shohô: hō, which is the same character as pó of buppô in Japanese, means “phenomena” or “things”—shohô as “all things.” It is, therefore, reasonable to interpret that Dôgen here uses pó and hō in the same context, since they are paralleled next to each other. The pó of buppô yet needs to be carefully examined. By adding “Buddha” or “Buddhist” to pó and making buppô or “Buddha-dharma,” Dôgen implies a specific way things are. He is suggesting that buppô means “things as they are” in terms of genjô—the present, since according to the style of Dôgen, the first sentence carries the impact of the title as well as the whole work. By buppô, he especially refers to the dynamic, active or existential aspect of things (dharma)—being or phenomenon. As the title of this essay, “Genjôkôan” (my translation, “Things as they are, manifested in the present”), again suggests, Dôgen must convey this message in the first sentence.

Dôgen begins it by giving the idea of genjôkôan, then suggests the non-discrimination of existence. If one sees things as they are in a dynamic (active or existential) sense (the term “dynamic” is used to show the comparison with the second sentence to which I refer as static, referring to the essence itself), things appear as one sees; there are both delusion and enlightenment depending on realization, practice, birth, death, Buddhas, sentient beings, etc. Jisetsu is usually understood or translated as “when” seen in the other five translations; however, more attention should be paid to this word. If Dôgen wanted to use it in terms of “when” or “at the time of,” then he could say toki (the same Chinese character for ji of jisetsu) instead. Ji means time or moment and setsu means joint, season or occasion. By using setsu Dôgen brings up only the idea of a general time or moment but also the idea of the specific occasion of an occurrence.

In the second sentence, Dôgen introduces the static aspect of things—emptiness/nothingness (śûnyatâ) or the essence, which one realizes when one attains wareniarazaru (literally meaning “without self”). When one becomes “self-less,” one just authenticates the truth of nothingness or emptiness. Thus, if one sees myriad things from non-self or śûnyatâ, then there is not even non-discrimination: “there is no delusion or enlightenment, no Buddhas or sentient beings, no birth or extinction.” In this manner, Dôgen brings readers from a dynamic aspect of the way things are to a static one in comparison.

In the third sentence, Dôgen comes back to the dynamic world halfway by affirming things but in terms of transcendence—being beyond the idea of many or few, or discrimination. Hence, in the fourth sentence after
going through steps one, two, three, he totally comes back to this very moment of the human or mundane world in which there are love, hate, attachment, joy, sorrow, etc. We lament when flowers fall and we do not want weeds to spring up. Yet Dōgen is suggesting that there is no enlightenment apart from this world, and that this very moment is the place where one practices in daily life. The first four sentences, thus, interrelatedly work out as a whole to express the core message of “Genjōkōan.”

This sentence structure is reminiscent of a well-known phrase of the Prajñāpāramitā-hṛdaya-sūtra (the Heart sutra)—“Form is emptiness, emptiness is form.” The first sentence of “Genjōkōan” can be interpreted as representing form (ṛūpa) or being; the second, emptiness (śūnyatā); the third, emptiness in terms of transcendence; and the fourth, form again.

I would now like to discuss what I think is a central message of Dōgen expressed in this text. In reading Dōgen’s “Genjōkōan,” one might think that one does not have to do anything for the attainment of enlightenment, since enlightenment is always here and now. Dōgen, for example, says, “Delusion is one’s practicing and authenticating myriad things while carrying one’s self to them. Enlightenment is myriad things’ naturally practicing and authenticating the self.” Hence, one can attain enlightenment just being as one is. Enlightenment comes by itself without one’s striving at all. Although Dōgen here means that enlightenment takes place when man acts naturally or unpurposively, nevertheless, one may still make the interpretation that one does not have to make any effort in order to be enlightened. What then is the meaning of practice?

In reading “Genjōkōan” carefully, however, one realizes that Dōgen is not ignoring practice. He is rather saying that practice and enlightenment cannot be separated. We call this message of Dōgen shushōittō (“Practice and authentication are one”). According to him practice certainly plays the central role in enlightenment, but the moment of authentication or enlightenment does not come sequentially after one’s finishing practice. One is enlightened just while he is practicing. Practice simultaneously leads to enlightenment, and practice is the manifestation of enlightenment itself in a purely experienced sense. Therefore, without practice, there is no authentication on that occasion. The very moment of practicing is the time and occasion of authenticating oneself as if one is continually casting off or

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10 Yadrūpamsāśūnyatāyāśūnyatāadrūpam. “That which is form (or matter) is empty (without substance). That which is empty is form.”
11 DZZ, 1, p. 7.
molting (datsuraku) one’s body-mind (shinjin).\textsuperscript{12}

In order to explain the role of practice, Dōgen concludes the text with the story of Zen master Pao-ch'ê of Ma-ku shan:

When Zen master Pao-ch'ê of Ma-ku shan was fanning himself, a monk approached and asked,
“The nature of wind is permanent and reaches everywhere. Why do you still use a fan?”
The Zen master answered,
“Although you only know the fact that the nature of wind is permanent, you do not understand the fact that there is no place where it does not go.”
The monk said,
“What is the fact of ‘there is no place where it does not go’?”
The master only fanned himself.
The monk reverently bowed.\textsuperscript{13}

The nature of wind refers to original enlightenment and fanning is practice. Without actually using a fan there is no wind, although the nature of wind is permanent and reaches everywhere. Without practice there is no authentication of enlightenment although enlightenment is everywhere and anywhere. Through this metaphor and with the message of \textit{genjôkôan} (“things as they are, manifested in the present”), Dōgen tries to expound the importance and meaning of practice and enlightenment.

\begin{center}
( II )
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{12} On the occasion of one’s realization, daily life can become practice, and one becomes aware of this through realizing things as they are, manifested in the present--\textit{genjôkôan}.

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{DZZ}, 1, p. 10.
On the occasion when all things are Buddha-Dharma, there are then delusion-enlightenment, practice, birth, death, buddhas, and sentient beings.

On the occasion when myriad things are without self—empty, there is no delusion or enlightenment, no buddhas or sentient beings, no birth or extinction.

Since the Buddha Way originally transcends the idea of many or few, there are birth-extinction, delusion-enlightenment, and sentient beings-buddhas.

Though this is so, flowers yet fall as people lament, and weeds only grow while people loathe them.

Delusion is one’s practicing and authenticating myriad things while carrying one’s self to them. Enlightenment is myriad things’ naturally practicing and authenticating the self. Those who greatly enlighten delusion are Buddhas. Those who are greatly lost in enlightenment are sentient beings. Moreover, there are persons who attain enlightenment upon enlightenment and there are also persons who are deluded in their delusion. When Buddhas are truly Buddhas, they do not need to be conscious that they themselves are Buddhas. Yet, they are authenticating Buddhas: they continually authenticate Buddhahood.

When one concretely sees forms with body-mind as one and hears sounds with body-mind as one, one intimately comprehends them. However, it is not like a reflection of an image in a mirror—it is not like the relationship of the water and the moon. While one side is authenticated, the other is in darkness.

To model oneself after (or learn) the Buddha’s Path is to model oneself after oneself. To model oneself after oneself is to forget oneself. To forget oneself is to be authenticated by myriad things. To be authenticated by myriad things is to cause one’s body-mind and other’s body-mind to be cast off continually. The traces of enlightenment disappear, and these traces of enlightenment disappeared are caused to continue on.

When one begins to seek the Dharma, one has been far from it. On the other hand, when the Dharma is correctly transmitted to one, one is at once a primordial person.

If one looks around at the shore when he is traveling in a boat, he
mistakenly sees that the shore is moving. But if one closely keeps one’s eyes
on the boat, one comes to know that the boat is going forward. Likewise, if
one tries to know myriad things in confusedly conceiving one’s body-mind,
he comes to misjudge that one’s mind and nature are eternal. If one comes
into intimate contact with one’s ordinary activities and returns to one’s self,
the fact that myriad things have no self will become clear.

Once firewood turns into ashes, they cannot become firewood again.
But one should not see the ashes as after, firewood as before. One should
know that although firewood is at its own dharma stage of firewood and
there is before, after, and the idea of before-ness and after-ness, it has been
cut off from the stage of before and after. The ashes are at their own dharma
stage of ashes and possess after and before. After turning into ashes, that
firewood never becomes firewood again. Likewise, after death, a man does
not return to life. Thus, it is an established rule of the Buddha-teaching not to
say that life becomes death. That is why we call it not-life. It is the Buddhist
teaching established by the Dharma-wheel to see that death does not become
life—that is, we call it non-extinction. Life is a stage of a time, while death is
also a stage of a time. For example, it is like winter and spring. We do not
think that winter comes spring or say that spring becomes summer.

Man’s attaining enlightenment is like the moon’s dwelling in the
water. The moon does not get wet, and the water does not get broken.
Although the moon emits a wide and large light, it dwells in a small portion
of water. The whole moon as well as the whole sky also dwell even in a
dewdrop on a weed and in a mere drop of water. Enlightenment’s not
breaking man is like the moon’s not perforating the water. Man’s
enlightenment’s not being disturbed is like the dewdrop’s not being disturbed
when the sky and moon dwell in it. The depth of water should be the
measure of the height of the moon. As far as the duration of occasion of
enlightenment is concerned, one should examine the amount of water--
whether there is much or little--and consider the width of the moon in the
sky--whether it is wide or narrow.

While one does not fully put the Dharma into practice in one’s body-
mind, he thinks that the Dharma is already enough. But when the Dharma
gets full in one’s body-mind, he wonders if something is lacking. For example,
when one boards a boat, sailing in the wide open sea, and looks around, he
sees the ocean only as round. He does not see any other aspect of it.
However, this great ocean is neither round nor square. Its potential
possibility and forms of ocean cannot be exhausted. It is like a palace. It is
like a bead ornament. Only to one’s eyes, one sees it as round for the time
being. Likewise, it is true with myriad things. Although, secularly and from a basis of Buddhism, they are endowed with many phases, one only sees and comprehends them just within the limit of one’s practice of zazen and following the way, and one’s insight. In order to comprehend the way myriad things are, one must know that besides the fact that one sees the ocean as round or square the potential possibility and forms of ocean and mountain cannot be exhausted, and that there are many ways of living in the world. One must know that it is not only so with one’s surroundings, but that it is so with one’s ground that he is standing on and a drop of water.

Fish swim in the water, and no matter how far they swim there is no end of the water. Birds fly in the sky, and no matter how far they fly, there is no end of the sky. However, fish and birds have never left the water and sky from time immemorial. When the need is great, the use is great; when the need is small, the use is small. Thus, each and every one never fails to exhaust one’s force within the bounds, nor fails to glide and turn in each and every place. However, if birds get out of the sky they immediately die; if fish get out of the water they immediately die. One can see that because of the water fish have life, and that because of the sky birds have life. Because of birds the sky has life. Because of fish the water has life. Because of life birds should have birds. Because of life fish should have fish. Moreover there can be still further things to be said. It is like this with practice and authentication and with the span of life. But if there are birds and fish which try to go into the water or the sky after going into the boundary of it, they cannot, in the water or the sky, attain the path nor gain the place. If one can gain this place, depending on these daily activities one can actualize the presence of things. If one can attain this path, these daily activities are the actualization of the presence of things. Since this path or this place, is neither large nor small, neither self nor other, does not exist from before, and does not actualize now, it is just as it is.

Similarly, if a person practices and authenticates the Buddha’s Path, one permeates with one dharma as attaining that one dharma and one practices one practice as encountering that one practice. Here is a place for enlightenment. In penetrating the way, one does not know the knowable limit, because one’s knowledge lives and practices with the ultimate of the Buddha’s teaching. One must not understand that the place of attainment necessarily will become the perception of one’s self and can be known by one’s thought and senses. Although the horizon of authentication is immediately present, the wondrous being is not necessarily present. Its visibility cannot be understood as such.
When Zen master Pao-ch'ê of Ma-ku shan was fanning himself, a monk approached and asked, “The nature of wind is permanent and reaches everywhere. Why do you still use a fan?” The Zen master answered, “Although you only know the fact that the nature of wind is permanent, you do not understand the fact that there is no place where it does not go.” The monk said, “What is the fact of ‘there is no place where it does not go’?” The master only fanned himself. The monk reverently bowed.

The conclusive evidence of Buddha’s teaching, the living way of correct transmission, is like this. Those who say that since the wind is permanent one should not use a fan and there should be the wind even when one does not use a fan, know neither the permanency nor the nature of wind. Since the nature of wind is permanent, the wind of Buddha’s house makes the great earth golden and ripens the long river into milk.

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