UNDERSTANDING THE SHOBOGENZO

Gudo Wafu Nishijima

Why The Shobogenzo is Difficult to Understand

Most people's reaction on first reading the Shobogenzo is that is seems very difficult to see clearly what the writings mean. This is a natural reaction because when we read a sentence, we usually expect to be able to understand the meaning of what we read immediately. The first time that I picked up a copy of the Shobogenzo, I found that I could not understand any of it, although I was reading a book written in my own native language. Of course, reading the Shobogenzo in translation introduces a new set of problems related to the skill and knowledge of the translator, and to the similarities of the languages.

Attempts to elucidate the problems that the Shobogenzo presents to the reader bring me to four main reasons:

1. The Shobogenzo is written with a unique logical structure, which I have called "Four Views" or "Three Philosophies & One Reality." I explain this system of logic in a later section.

2. Master Dogen wrote using many phrases and quotations from Chinese Buddhism which are relatively unknown to the layman, and difficult to render into other languages. These phrases appear in the Shobogenzo in their original Chinese form, making some parts of the book a commentary in 13th century Japanese on Chinese phrases from even older sources. In the translated version, we have the additional problems of representing these phrases in a very different target language.

3. The concepts that Master Dogen wanted to express were profound and subtle. Even in his own language it was necessary for him to invent many new words and phrases to put over what he wanted to say. These new words were largely not adopted into the Japanese language, and so are unfamiliar to us today.

4. Master Dogen wrote the Shobogenzo in order to explain his experience of reality gained from practicing Zazen. His words are based on this experience. It is normal these days to think that anything philosophical can be understood intellectually, as an intellectual exercise. We do not have much experience of philosophies which are pointing to physical practice. We think that just reading the book should be enough to understand what is written in it.

The Problem of Contradictions

Although these four groups of problems are serious obstacles, they are not insurmountable. If the problem is known we can move towards a solution, however slowly. But in the Shobogenzo we can find an additional problem of a completely different order—the book appears to be, and in fact is, full of contradictions!

We generally feel that a book in which the writer contradicts him/herself is of little value. This is largely because our modern civilization has grown to be vast and powerful from the thousands of years over which human beings have developed logical and exact ways to process and control their environment. The intellect has become king. Human beings have used their powers of reasoning to develop a whole field of intellectual and moral studies to guide our progress through history. And in recent times, we have applied our reasoning powers to exact scientific study of our world, based on

belief in causal laws. So in today's world, in both philosophy and science, anyone who puts foreword contradictory propositions is soon passed over. Writings which are not logically consistent are disregarded by scholars and serious students. They are unacceptable to our finely-tuned intellects.

It seems only fair that this criterion should be applied even to the Shobogenzo; the existence of contradictions in it should diminish its value. But the Shobogenzo is literally full of contradictions. By this measure, we must conclude that the book has no value to the serious scholar. But is our conclusion acceptable?

I would like in the following sections to look in more detail at the nature of and reason for this dearth of contradictions in a book which has been described as a major philosophical work.

Examples of Contradictions in The Shobogenzo

To illustrate the problem I intend to pick out contradictions at various levels within the Shobogenzo. I will use the 95-chapter edition, because it is the first edition to be printed with wood-block. Chapter numbers quoted refer to chapters in the 95-chapter edition.

1. Contradiction between Chapters

I will compare the two chapters (89) Shinjin Inga and (76) Dai Shugyo.

Shin means deep or profound, and *jin* (from *shin*) means to believe in. So *Shinjin Inga* means deep belief in cause and effect. *Dai* means great and *shugyo* means practice. So *Dai shugyo* means the great Buddhist practice; that is the practice of Zazen.

In both of these chapters, Master Dogen quotes the same story. It is a famous Chinese story about Master Hyakujo Ekai and a wild fox; the story concerns the relation between Buddhist practice and the law of cause and effect. This relation is explained in two ways, each totally at odds with the other.

> "Usually when Master Daichi of Mt. Hyakujo in Koshu district (who succeeded Master Baso and was called Master Ekai in his lifetime) gave his informal preachings, there was an old man in the audience, who would always listen to the preaching following the rest of the audience. If the audience retired, the old man would also retire. But one day he did not leave straight away. Eventually, the Master asked, *'What person is this, standing before me?'*
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> The old man answered: *'I am not a person. Long ago, in the time of Kasyapa Buddha, I used to live [as master] on this mountain. One day, a Buddhist student asked me whether even a person of the great Buddhist practice falls into [the restrictions of] cause and effect. In reply, I said to him, "He does not fall into cause and effect." Since then I have fallen into the body of a wild fox for five hundred lives. So I beg you, Master, to say some words that will change me. I would like to get rid of the wild fox's body.'* Then he asked, *'Does someone of the great Buddhist practice also fall into cause and effect?'*
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> The Master said, *'Do not be unclear about cause and effect.'*
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> At these words the old man realized the great truth, and after making a prostration, he said, *'I am already free of the body of a wild fox. Now I would like to remain on the mountain behind this temple. Dare I ask you, Master, to perform a Buddhist monk's funeral ceremony for me.'*[1]

In both chapters, the same story is quoted almost word for word. In the story there are two expressions used to talk about cause and effect; the first one, the old man's reply to his student, is *Fu raku inga* which translates as "He does not fall into cause and effect".[2] The second, Master Ekai's reply to the old man, is *Fu mai inga* which translates as "Do not be unclear about cause and effect."[3]

In each of the two chapters, Master Dogen draws contradictory conclusions from these two expressions in the story. In (89) Shinjin Inga he says:

> "[The expression of] not falling into cause and effect is just a negation of cause and effect, as a result of which people fall into bad states. [The expression of] not being unclear about cause and effect shows deep belief in cause and effect, and those who hear it can get rid of bad states. We should not wonder at this, and we should not doubt it."

These comments suggest that Master Dogen interprets the two expressions *fu raku inga* and *fu mai inga* as having diametrically opposite meanings. He is clearly insisting on the difference between the two phrases "not falling into cause and effect" and "not being unclear about cause and effect."

But if we look at his commentary on the story in chapter (76) Dai Shugyo, we find that he says this:

> "By groping for what great Buddhist practice is, [we can find that] it is just great causes and effects themselves. And because these causes and effects are inevitably perfect causes and complete effects, they could never be discussed as falling or not falling, or as unclear or not unclear. If the idea of not falling into cause and effect is mistaken, the idea of not being unclear about cause and effect must also be mistaken."

Here, Master Dogen is clearly insisting that *fu raku inga* and *fu mai inga* mean exactly the same thing. He denies any distinction between "not falling into cause and effect" and "not being unclear about cause and effect."

So from these two chapters we can see that Master Dogen reaches opposite and contradictory conclusions from the same facts. He seems to be logically inconsistent and this is certainly true if we view the situation from an abstract viewpoint only.

2. Contradictions between Paragraphs

If we look at another chapter, (22) Bussho, we can find contradictions between two paragraphs in the same chapter. He quotes National Master Sai-an:

> 'National Master Sai-an from Enkan in the Koshu district was a veteran master in Baso's order. He once preached to the assembly, *"All living beings have Buddhanature!"*
>
> So minds are all just living beings, and living beings all have Buddhanature as existence. Grass, trees, and national lands are one with mind: because they are mind, they are living beings, and because they are living beings they have Buddhanature as existence. The sun, the moon and the stars are one with mind: because they are mind, they are living beings, and because they are living beings they have Buddhanature as existence.'

Here Master Dogen is clearly agreeing with Master Sai-an's insistence that all living beings have Buddhanature.

But in the very next paragraph he quotes Master Isan Reiyu:

> 'Master Dai-en of Dai-I-san mountain once preached to the assembly, *"All living beings do not have Buddhanature."*
>
> ...We should continue to grope for its meaning: How could all living beings be Buddhanature? How could they have Buddhanature? If any have Buddhanature they might be a band of demons. Bringing a demon's sheet, they would like to cover all living beings. But Buddhanature is just Buddhanature, and so living beings are just living beings. Living beings are not originally endowed with Buddhanature.'

Master Dogen affirms that all living beings have Buddhanature in the first paragraph and denies it in the second!

3. Contradictions between Sentences

Even within a single paragraph, contradictions abound. Take for example chapter (3) Genjo Koan. In the first paragraph of the chapter we can find the following sentences:

> "When all things and phenomena exist as Buddhist teachings, then there are delusion and realization, practice and experience, life and death, buddhas and ordinary people. When millions of things and phenomena are all separate from ourselves, there are no delusion and no enlightenment, no buddhas and no ordinary people, no life and no death."

In this short quotation we can find two statements; in the first, Master Dogen affirms the existence of delusion and realization, practice and experience, life and death, buddhas and ordinary people from one point of view. But in the next sentence he says that seen from another viewpoint, delusion and enlightenment, buddhas and ordinary people, life and death do not exist. He is logically inconsistent within a single paragraph because he changes his viewpoint.

4. Contradictions within a Sentence

In (14) Sansui Gyo, we find the following sentence:

> 'An eternal Buddha said, *"Mountains are mountains. Rivers are rivers."* These words do not mean that mountains are 'mountains;' they mean that mountains are mountains.'

Taken as it stands, the sentence makes no sense. Mountains are not mountains; they are mountains! The form of the sentence seems to contradict the rules of logic. It is an unacceptable statement to make according to the normal rules of reasoning. However, there are many similar sentences to be found in the Shobogenzo. How are we to understand them?

Can We Accept Contradiction?

Since the time of the Greeks, human beings have developed and refined a set of logical rules which we use when thinking about or discussing the problems of the world. This has been the basis of our ability to analyze and understand the world, and hence to develop our great sciences and philosophies. Without the exact system of logic which governs all analytical activities, it is inconceivable that European-American civilization could have developed.

It is, therefore, best to be somewhat prudent when discussing to what extent we can permit logical contradiction within a certain intellectual pursuit. In recent years, some have said that Buddhist thought can easily accommodate the illogical; in fact some have stated that Buddhist thought is beyond logic! The view put forward by these people seems to be that religion must be beyond reason, and negation of logic thus has a central role to play. One example of this tendency is in the modern interpretation of Chinese koan stories. Many of these stories appear illogical when we read them superficially. And so some people insist that one aim of Buddhist study is to develop a strange way of thinking which is beyond western logic.

Should we believe such strange insistences? Master Dogen himself had strong views on this recurring problem. In (14) Sansui Gyo he says:

> 'Nowadays in great Sung China there is a certain group of unreliable fellows who have now formed such a crowd that they cannot be defeated by a small group of real people. They say that this talk of the East Mountain moving over the water, and such stories as Master Nansen's Sickle, are stories which cannot be understood rationally. Their idea is as follows: "A story that is dependent on any kind of thoughtful consideration cannot be a Zen story of the Buddhist patriarchs. But stories that cannot be understood rationally are indeed the Buddhist patriarchs' stories. This is why such things as Master Obaku's use of the staff and Master Rinzai's cry of katsu, which are beyond rational understanding and unrelated to intellectual consideration, represent the great enlightenment [that existed] even before the sprouting of creation. The reason that many of the teaching methods of past masters employed words that cut through confusion was that [their teachings] were beyond rational understanding." Those who say such things have never met a true master and they have no

> eyes of real Buddhist study; they are just little pups who do not deserve to be discussed. For the last two or three hundred years in China there have been many such demons, many such shavelings like the band of six. It is so pitiful that the great truth of the Buddhist Patriarch has gone to ruin. Their understanding cannot even match that of the sravaka in Hinayana Buddhism; they are even more stupid than non-Buddhists. They are not laymen, they are not monks, they are not human beings, and they are not gods in heaven; they are more stupid than animals that study Buddhism. What these shavelings call incomprehensible stories are incomprehensible only to them; the Buddhist patriarchs were not like that. We should not fail to study the concrete path by which the Buddhist patriarchs understand, just because [the path] is not understandable to those [shavelings]. If [the stories] were ultimately beyond rational understanding, their own reasoning now must also be wide of the mark.'

Master Dogen obviously doesn't think that koan stories are illogical; he is highly critical of Chinese masters who say that a koan is a sort of illogical riddle. He clearly does not accept illogicalities easily, and neither should we. We should continue to search for the reason behind the apparent wealth of contradictions in the Shobogenzo.

Here I would offer some advice. In order to study Master Dogen's Buddhism, I think that it is very important to rely on his teachings completely. We must be very exact in our study. If we only immerse ourselves half-way, accepting some of his teachings, and criticizing others, it will become impossible to gain a full understanding of the complete philosophical system which he expounds.

Existence of the Area of Reality

How do we then explain these contradictions in Master Dogen's teachings? In the philosophical area, we should not accept things easily without an explanation.

After reading the Shobogenzo repeatedly, I began to think that Master Dogen was looking at things from an area or viewpoint which was different from our accepted intellectual viewpoint. From our common intellectual viewpoint, logical contradiction can never be permitted. But Master Dogen seemed to have two viewpoints: the normal intellectual viewpoint of the philosopher, and another viewpoint; one that looked at problems based on something outside the intellectual area. Now whether philosophical thought should admit the existence of an area other than the intellectual area as a basis for debate is perhaps the crux of the problem with Buddhist philosophy and the Shobogenzo.

After I had read the Shobogenzo many many times, I began to see that with his use of contradictions, Master Dogen was pointing to an area which was outside the area of intellectual debate; he was pointing to existence outside the rational and intellectual area. When I was young it was difficult for me to believe in a world that was different both from the world of my thoughts and also from the world of my perceptions. Master Dogen talks about the ideal world of theory and the world of matter as we perceive it. But he uses these two viewpoints to point to or describe the real world, the reality in which we exist. And after reading the Shobogenzo I too began to see that the world in which I existed was neither the world of ideas nor the world of objects and perceptions, but something different from both.

This was a surprise to me. Since the beginning of my life I had been living in reality, but I had not clearly noticed that fact before. And I think that this rather simple fact is very important in understanding what Buddhism teaches. It is said that when Gautama Buddha was practicing Zazen one morning, he experienced that mountains, rivers, grass and trees were all buddhas. This is usually called the Buddha's enlightenment. We tend to think that after years of intense effort, his state changed. But after my own experience, I began to see that in fact the story of Gautama Buddha's enlightenment didn't mean that he entered some special state, but just that he saw clearly for the first time the reality in which he was living.

With this experience, I began to interpret the Shobogenzo as a book describing or pointing to that reality. I found that if we take the Shobogenzo as a handbook to reality, it makes complete sense, contradictions and all. If we take the Shobogenzo as a description of an intellectual system, we can

never make sense of it. We can say that the object of Master Dogen's writings was a description of reality. But reality cannot be captured in words. From Gautama Buddha's time onwards Buddhists have made their efforts to capture reality in words, and this I feel is the basic reason for the tremendous volume and variety of Buddhist sutras that have come down to us. Master Dogen was no exception. He too tried the impossible. This is the reason why the Shobogenzo appears so difficult to explain; this is the reason for the contradictions contained therein. Master Dogen is not trying to construct a self-contained intellectual theory—he is trying to use all the tools of philosophy and logic to point to something else; something beyond them all. In the area of reason and logic alone, we cannot embrace systems of though containing gross contradiction. But reality itself contains contradiction. We experience those contradictions for ourselves at every moment. So an intellectual description of reality must find room for those contradictions, however unacceptable that may feel to our intellectual powers.

At this point I want to make a very fundamental point about the nature of contradiction itself. We feel in the intellectual area that something called contradiction exists; that something can be illogical. But in reality, there is no such thing as a contradiction. It is just a characteristic of the real state of things. It is only with our intellect that we can detect the existence of something called contradiction.

A Bridge Between the Intellect and Reality

After studying the Shobogenzo for more than 50 years, my confidence is complete: the aim of Buddhism is to realize reality. Gautama Buddha urged us to find reality by practicing Zazen. The traditional interpretation of the sanskrit word *dharma* is rather vague, referring to some form of teachings. But I think that dharma means not only teachings but points to three areas—principles or teachings, situation or external circumstances, and morals or behavior. These are the components of a philosophy of reality.

Can we, then, have a philosophy of reality, if reality is outside the area which philosophy deals with? Logically we must say the answer is no. Reality and intelligence are completely separate. What kind of system can we construct which will allow us to pursue a description of reality?

It was in just this state that Buddhists developed their unique method of explaining reality. The method is called *catvary arya satyani*, or the four noble truths, and it explains the relationship between intellectual activities and reality using four viewpoints. The first two viewpoints are the traditional philosophical standpoints, the third is a philosophy of reality and the fourth is experiential reality.

This is the hypothesis that I developed forty years ago from studying the Shobogenzo, and although it did not have the backing even of Buddhist society in Japan I can find no no inadequacies in my idea, no matter how hard I try.

Catvary arya satyani, the four noble truths comprise *duhkha-satya, samudaya-satya, nirodha-satya* and *marga-satya*. The traditional interpretation goes as follows:

> *Duhkha-satya,* or the truth of suffering says that all things and phenomena in this world are suffering.
>
> *Samudaya-satya* or the truth of aggregates says that the cause of suffering is desire.
>
> *Nirodha-satya*, or the truth of denial says that we should rid ourselves of desire.
>
> *Marga-satya,* or the truth of the right way says that when we rid ourselves of all desire we will realize the truth.

When I read this traditional interpretation of the four noble truths, I found it so dogmatic and illogical I could not accept it. To say that all the world is suffering seems to me the height of dogmatism. Of course the world often seems to be full of sadness, but the assertion that all is suffering in the world is pessimistic beyond words. And to say that the cause of all this suffering is desire is too dogmatic. I think that fundamentally desire is at the root of our life force. It is impossible for us to get rid of desire

and continue living. If Buddhism were to insist that we should destroy all desire in ourselves, then it is urging us to do the impossible. And the last of the truths is not clear. What is the nature of the truth that will be realized? It is said that we should follow the eightfold right path, but no clear explanation of these eight paths existed in Gautama Buddha's time. What is meant by right? The four noble truths is supposedly at the center of the Buddhist teachings, but it seemed to me impossible to believe in such a dogmatic and biassed set of ideas.

After I had read the Shobogenzo and become familiar with Master Dogen's thought, I found a new interpretation of the four noble truths. It is an interpretation which allows us to combine our intellectual explanations and reality. I found the unique method that Master Dogen uses to connect philosophical thought and reality. I have called that method the theory of three philosophies and one reality.

To illustrate this method I will use chapter (3) Genjo Koan, which is the third chapter in the 95-chapter edition of the Shobogenzo, but was the first chapter in the earlier 75-chapter edition. It thus has special significance in that I think here Master Dogen lays out his philosophical viewpoint for the reader. The first paragraph of Genjo Koan is:

> "When all things and phenomena exist as Buddhist teachings, then there are delusion and realization, practice and experience, life and death, buddhas and ordinary people. When millions of things and phenomena are all separate from ourselves, there are no delusion and no enlightenment, no buddhas and no ordinary people, no life and no death. Buddhism is originally transcendent over abundance and scarcity, and so [in reality] there is life and death, there is delusion and realization, there are people and buddhas. Though all this may be true, flowers fall even if we love them, and weeds grow even if we hate them, and that is all."

This paragraph is composed of four sentences. The first is: "When all things and phenomena exist as Buddhist teachings, then there are delusion and realization, practice and experience, life and death, buddhas and ordinary people." What does the sentence mean? This sentence describes the situation when we think about the world on the basis of an idealistic philosophical system—a set of teachings. From this basis we can find differences between many categories; delusion and realization, practice and experience, life and death, buddhas and ordinary people. This contrasts with the second sentence which says that there are no differences if we view the world "when millions of things and phenomena are all separate from ourselves." This second sentence tells us that if we view the world separate from our own subjective viewpoint, that is objectively, we can find no difference in value between delusion and enlightenment, buddhas and ordinary people, life and death. They are all concrete facts and have equal value as such. This is the scientific or materialistic viewpoint. Master Dogen clearly distinguishes here between the philosophical standpoints of the idealist and the materialist.

At the same time, in the third sentence he separates the Buddhist viewpoint from these first two: he says that Buddhism is originally transcendent over abundance and scarcity, and so in reality there are people and buddhas. Master Dogen is saying that Buddhism is different from relative comparisons in terms of large or small, heavy or light. Of course the meaning of the phrase "originally transcendent over abundance and scarcity" is not exact, but he seems to be saying that Buddhism does not belong to the area where we compare; where we say this is more valuable than that, this is not as important as that, and neither does it belong to the area of physical comparisons.

Here, we should pause for careful thought. Is it possible to have a "philosophy" which does not belong to the discriminating intellectual area? Is there a philosophical area in which we can transcend both subjective and objective criteria? The only tool we have to think about philosophical problems is the intellect. What does it mean to transcend philosophy in the area of philosophy?

At times our thoughts are of the nature "I think this", or "I believe in this." We use our own internal ideas and beliefs to construct a picture of the world. Our attitude is subjective. Philosophy which is constructed on the basis of our subjective thoughts is called subjectivism.

At other times we base our thoughts on our sense perceptions. We perceive the material world through the senses and make sense of what we perceive with our intellect. This is objectivism.

Subjectivism and objectivism, idealism and materialism, form the two fundamental types of philosophy. Both are pursuits of the intellect. We can also find the existence of philosophies which are mixtures of the two basic types. But can we find a philosophical system which does not fit into any of these three groups? The answer is of course no. It is impossible to construct a philosophy which is not somehow based on either idealism, materialism, or a mix of the two; this is the nature of philosophy. Philosophy is without question restricted to the area of the intellect.

But in the third sentence of Genjo Koan, we see Master Dogen insisting that Buddhism is originally transcendent over abundance and scarcity, over all kinds of relativistic analyses. The word "Buddhism" in the sentence is *butsu-do* in Japanese. *Butsu* means Buddha or Buddhist, and *do* means way, principle, or moral criterion. So the word translated as "Buddhism" also refers to Buddhist behavior, conduct or action. I think that in this sentence Master Dogen is saying that Buddhism is not in the same area as philosophical analysis, whether idealistic or materialistic. I think that the transcendent area that Master Dogen is referring to is the area of our behavior or conduct; that is our actions themselves.

This is a very important point in understanding Buddhist teachings. Philosophers are prone to believe that the intellect is absolute; that there is nothing that we cannot analyze with the tools of logic, nothing that we cannot describe or discuss in words. Master Dogen gives an example in (10) Shoaku Makusa of this tendency of ours to cling to the intellect as the all-powerful. He quotes a discussion between a famous Chinese poet, and Buddhist Master Choka Dorin:

> 'Haku Kyo-i of the Tang Dynasty was a lay disciple of Master Bukko Nyoman, and a second-generation disciple of Master Baso Do-itsu. When he was the governor of the Koshu district he studied under Master Choka Dorin. One day Kyo-i asked, *"Just what is the great intention of the Buddha's teaching?"*
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> Master Dorin said, *"Not doing wrong. Doing right."*
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> Kyo-i said, *"If that is so, even a child of three could speak such words!"*
>
> Master Dorin said, *"Even though a child of three can speak this truth, an old man of eighty cannot practice it."*
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> At these words, Kyo-i immediately prostrated himself in thanks, and then he left.'

The story emphasizes the absolute difference between saying "don't do wrong" and actually not doing wrong. In our day to day lives we are prone to forget this difference, the difference between the idea of right conduct and right conduct itself. This is one of the most important tenets of Buddhist philosophy; the fundamental and absolute difference between thought and action. Buddhists found that the area of our actions, our conduct, our behavior in this world is completely different from the areas of intellectual analysis or sense perception. This is the meaning of Master Dogen's statement in Genjo Koan:

> "Buddhism is originally transcendent over abundance and scarcity, and so [in reality] there is life and death, there is delusion and realization, there are people and buddhas."

Although the sentence is a statement of Master Dogen's philosophical framework, it does not lay out an intellectual concept; it refers to our real actions. And it says that our real actions are outside the philosophical area; they transcend it.

We now have a problem. Can we permit Buddhist philosophy to contain statements which are not statements of philosophy as such, but which talk about something beyond philosophy? Can we affirm such a philosophical system as valid and rational? In the tradition of western thought, this is not acceptable. But unless we accept it and move forward we will not be able to understand Master Dogen's philosophy at all. We will have to reject it as a philosophical system.

In western philosophy there is one method which reminds me of this problem. It is the method of dialectic, much valued by the German philosopher Hegel (thesis, antithesis and synthesis) and used by

Karl Marx in developing the doctrine of dialectic materialism. Master Dogen uses a tool similar to dialectic in explaining the triangular relationship between subjectivism, objectivism and Buddhism.

It is clear that Master Dogen thinks that Buddhism belongs to an area outside the intellectual area; that is, it is not intellectual analysis per se. But at the same time, he puts forward Buddhism as a realistic philosophy. What does a 'realistic philosophy' mean?

The Philosophy of Action

I think that the third sentence of Genjo Koan is Master Dogen's definition of a philosophy of reality. The story about Master Choka Dorin quoted earlier reminds us that we usually miss the difference between intellectual ability and action itself. But I think that this difference is crucial: Gautama Buddha himself found the clear difference between what we think reality is and what real action is. Buddhist philosophy is a philosophy which is based on this difference. It expounds this difference, and as such is a completely new philosophy. I call it the philosophy of action.

At the level of day-to-day life we see clearly that thinking about eating is completely different from the actual experience of eating. And the taste of the food is separate and different from the action of eating. This much is clear, but we often fail to recognize such simple facts. This is of fundamental importance to a clear understanding of Buddhist philosophy.

Action is described in Buddhist theory as the contact between subject and object. It is the meeting of inside and outside. This is seen in the Buddhist insistence that mind and body are one. Action always takes place in the present moment. Time here and now is the subject of the chapter in the Shobogenzo titled Uji. In this chapter Master Dogen explains that the present moment is the stage for all action.

So action is different from thinking. Action is different from perceiving with the senses. Action does not exist without a denial of thinking. Action does not exist without a denial of sense perception—because action is outside of the area of thought and perception At the same time, it is not possible to construct a philosophy which does not have an intellectual base. So the philosophy of action is by its very nature an anomaly. It is based on the denial of intellect and sense perception, but it relies on both. This is a true dialectic. This is also a true contradiction. It is the contradiction between intellect and reality. In the area of the intellect, we should never accept logical inconsistency, and we should never give way to the view held by some that Buddhist theory is beyond logic. As far as intellectual explanation can go, we should retain strict logical rules to developing any theoretical structure. But the philosophy of action points to something beyond an intellectual image. This is why it is so difficult to give it a place in the philosophical systems of the west. But its time has come: to move beyond the intellectual bounds of the existing philosophies of our civilization, we need the third philosophy.

Reality

Having mapped out the basis for our new philosophical viewpoint, we are prone to forget that this new philosophy is still just that. The philosophy of action can never catch the ineffable nature of reality itself—it can only point the way. And the reality which we all experience is completely different from any philosophies we may construct. It can never be fully described in words. This is why many writers attempt to catch reality with symbolic expression and poetry.

Master Dogen says in the last sentence in the paragraph in Genjo Koan, "Thought all this may be true, flowers fall even if we love them and weeds grow even if we hate them, and that is all." In this sentence he tries to express the ineffable nature of reality.

The use of symbolic expressions to capture the nature of reality itself is a step that we cannot find in the same way in western philosophical thought. It is a step beyond the three-phased thesis, antithesis and synthesis. It is a step beyond philosophy itself. Explanations of reality can never be reality. This is why I call my four-phased philosophical system three philosophies and one reality.

Three Philosophies and One Reality

There have been two main philosophical systems in the history of western thought: idealism and materialism. It is easy to find the basis for these two systems in the human thought process itself. At first, when we think about a philosophical problem, our train of thought steps forward from logical premise to logical premise. We construct a rational framework in our minds and it is this entity which becomes the object of our thoughts or beliefs. Out thoughts are based on the intellect itself. This was the way that Plato proceeded and is normally referred to as idealism; that is, a philosophy centered on ideas themselves. The effect that idealistic thought has had on the history of western philosophy can never be underestimated.

But in the history of thought we can find another distinct stream; one in which the rational framework we construct is based on perception of the external world through the senses. What we perceive through our senses gives us a mental picture of the external world. We base our thoughts and beliefs on this information from outside the mind. That substance which is outside the mind we call matter. And a rational framework based on matter is referred to as materialism.

These two basic philosophies arise from different sources and are fundamentally opposed to each other. The fact is that there are no grounds for us to decide which of these two world views is true. For thousands of years idealistic philosophers have insisted that idealism is the truth, that ideas are the true perfection, and materialistic philosophers have disagreed, insisting that the physical world is the true reality. This conflict, although when looked at from afar seems almost comical, has occupied the minds of many sincere thinkers for as long as we can find records.

Gautama Buddha noticed this conflict, as it arose in his own searchings, and was greatly concerned to find a solution. After a long and sincere search he found one day that he was living in reality, not in the area of human intelligence which is the home of both materialism and idealism. In the intellectual area there are two viewpoints only; idealism, based on a subjective view of reality, and materialism which is based on an objective view. Subject and object can be differentiated absolutely in our minds. This is in fact what Master Dogen is saying in the first paragraph of Genjo Koan. Both idealism and materialism have equal claims to be the right description of reality; we can never decide which is the better of the two.

Gautama Buddha found that the solution to the conflict between the two fundamental philosophical systems was to view things from a third area, which he called *nirodha satya*, or the philosophy of denial. By denial, we mean denial of both intellectual thinking and of sense perception. At the same time, this denial suggests a backdrop of action—which does not belong to the area of the mind or the senses. But does life include areas which are out of the area of our intellect and senses? It seems as strange insistence. My answer is yes. For example, concepts and names of objects are intellectual tags, but the entities themselves are nameless; they exist as they are—nameless—in an area with no name. This is a very important fact, but one which is prone to be overlooked in this world of ingrained intellectual habit in which we live. We tend to think that real things and phenomena surrounding us are identical to the concepts we have of them, and therefore we do not distinguish between things as we see them with the intellect or senses and things in nameless reality. This is the delusion which Gautama Buddha uncovered in the human condition.

To recap, then, there have been three basic streams of philosophical thought in history; idealism, materialism, and philosophical systems which are a mixture of the two. These mirror the two basic modes of thinking; thought based on the mind and thought based on perception. Besides these three streams, we can find no other philosophical systems which will stand up to scrutiny. Recently, however, particularly in the area of Buddhist philosophy, we have seen the emergence of a "philosophy" which is based on the concept of *sunyata* or emptiness.[4] These thinkers propose a philosophical system which is different from idealism, materialism and their combinations, but still in the intellectual area. To me as a Buddhist monk, their standpoint is completely without foundation.

It sometimes seems, in the first paragraph of Genjo Koan, that Master Dogen may be suggesting the existence of a strange area of the intellect which is not idealistic or materialistic or a combination of the two. But I think this is a misunderstanding of what he means by transcendence of abundance and scarcity. To transcend abundance and scarcity means to get out of the areas of intellect and sense perception, it does not mean to get rid of these two areas within the intellect—it is not an intellectual denial of the intellect resulting in "Emptiness." It is impossible for us to rid ourselves of the difference between abundance and scarcity within the areas of mind and sense perception. But Gautama Buddha and Master Dogen alike discovered that area which is not within the mind or perception—the area of action. The discovery of this area and the clarification of its nature in philosophical terms solves the problem of the conflict between idealism and materialism. This is Buddhism's true contribution to world philosophy.

Both Hegel and Marx seemed to have noticed the need for a resolution to this conflict, and they both attempted to find a philosophy that rose above this difference. Neither was successful, because their philosophies did not in the end point to a reality beyond the areas of the intellect or sense perception. Although Hegel's interest in world history suggests his interest in the real world outside the world of ideas, he became trapped in his concept of "world spirit" which pulled him back to intellectual conclusions. Marx's interest in material solutions trapped him in his belief in the ultimate reality of matter, and in the end he too, failed in his attempts to transcend the conflict.

Buddhist dialectic, however, differs in important ways from Hegelian or Marxist dialectic in that Buddhist dialectic has four phases—thesis, antithesis, synthesis and reality. The Buddhist dialectic says that there are three kinds of ways to view reality, but in the end the object of our explanations does not exist in our intelligence; it exists as it is in nameless reality. So in this sense, Buddhist philosophy serves as a bridge between philosophy and reality. This is why Buddhist theory seems so difficult to grasp.

Finally, reality cannot be put into words. Buddhists use the simile of a finger pointing at the moon. The moon is a symbol for reality and the finger is symbolic of philosophical explanation. Ironically, the Hegelian and Marxist dialectics remain trapped by the excellence of their intellectual explanations. But Buddhism points to the real world in an essentially practical way.

It is a sad and yet amusing fact that we human beings have for thousands of years mistaken the picture of the world that we have constructed with our excellent intellectual abilities for the real world in which we exist. We have failed to recognize the existence of reality. Even though we are living in reality, we are largely unable to recognize the fact.

But Gautama Buddha recognized that fact after his practical efforts in pursuing the truth, and I feel that the world is now entering a new phase—a phase in which we are finding out the nature of the reality in which we live; not a world only of the mind, nor a world of material substance alone, but a real world. This, I believe, is the reason why many people are now showing an interest in Buddhist belief.

But the real world is ineffable, beyond description. and this is the reason that both Gautama Buddha and Master Dogen urged us to practice Zazen. Zazen teaches us the true nature of reality.

In the ultimate phase, then, we have to think about what is impossible to think about. This is the fundamental reason why Master Dogen's Shobogenzo appears so difficult. But if we do study the Shobogenzo we can find a philosophical system which is based on realism—a philosophy for today.

The Structure of The Shobogenzo

The Shobogenzo exists in several versions, the three most established being the 12-chapter edition, the 75-chapter edition and the 95-chapter edition. The first two are very old editions which were never printed, but went through many hand copyings of unknown accuracy. The 95-chapter edition includes all chapters in both the other two editions with one exception: the chapter entitled Ippyaku Hachi Homyo Mon. This edition, being the most inclusive, was edited in the Genroku era (1688 – 1703) and

was printed in wood-block in 1816. This had the effect of fixing its contents at that stage, and it was this edition that became the established version in Japan from that time up until the second world war.

After the war, some young scholars of the time reasoned that the 75-chapter edition was the more genuine because it had been edited by Master Dogen himself. They found an old copy which was numbered in 75 chapters, and which they claimed to have been copied out by Master Dogen himself. Subsequent analysis of the brushwork threw doubt on this claim and it has yet to be substantiated.

A second reason for the emerging preference of the 75-chapter edition was the opinion of Dr. Kunihiko Hashida, a psychologist in pre-war Japan and a scholar of the Shobogenzo. Dr. Hashida was of the opinion that the chronological arrangement of the chapters in the 95-chapter edition made it difficult to follow the whole philosophical system, whereas the 75-chapter edition presented no such problems. When I heard this, I too read the 75-chapter edition to see if I could agree with him. Unfortunately, I found both editions equally difficult to understand. In addition, I found that in contrast to the 95-chapter edition, the chapters in the first half of the 75-chapter edition were not in chronological order, but those in the last half were. This inconsistency leads me to question any claim that the 75-chapter edition is easier to understand..

My own preference for the 95-chapter edition rests on the followings facts:

1. The 95-chapter edition was the first edition to go into print, at which time the contents became fixed.

2. The 95-chapter edition is the most inclusive collection of Master Dogen's lectures, with the exception of the chapter Ippyaku Hachi Homyo Mon.

3. The question of whether Master Dogen himself edited the 75-chapter edition is still open.

4. The chapters in the 95-chapter edition are arranged in chronological order according to the date on which each lecture was given, and this is a consistent and historically useful basis for arrangement.

Chapter Titles

The chapter titles of the 95-chapter edition are given here. My own works in Japanese—which contain the original text, translation into modern Japanese, and commentary—group the chapters into twelve volumes. These volumes numbers are used to group the chapters here too.

VOLUME ONE

1. BENDOWA: A Talk about Pursuing the Truth

2. MAKA HANNYA HARAMITSU: Maha Prajna Paramita

3. GENJO KOAN: The Realized Law of the Universe

4. IKKA NO MYOJU: One Bright Pearl

5. JU-UN-DO SHIKI: Rules for the Cloud Hall

6. SOKUSHIN ZE BUTSU: Mind Here and Now is Buddha

7. SENJO: Washing

8. RAIHAI TOKUZUI: Prostration to [Whatever] Has Got the Marrow

9. KEISEI SANSHIKI: The Sound of the Valley and the Form of the Mountains

VOLUME TWO

10. SHOAKU MAKUSA: Not Doing Wrong
11. U-JI: Existence-Time
12. KESA KUDOKU: The Merit of the Kasaya
13. DEN-E: The Transmission of the Robe
14. SAN SUI GYO: Mountains and Rivers as Sutras
15. BUSSO: The Buddhist Patriarchs

VOLUME THREE

16. SHISHO: The Certificate of Transmission
17. HOKKE TEN HOKKE: The Lotus Universe Turns the Lotus Universe
18. SHIN FU-KATOKU: Mind Cannot Be Grasped (I)
19. SHIN FU-KATOKU: Mind Cannot Be Grasped (II)
20. KOKYO: The Eternal Mirror
21. KANKIN: Reading Sutras

VOLUME FOUR

22. BUSSHO: Buddhanature
23. GYOBUTSU IGI: The Dignified Behavior of an Acting Buddha
24. BUKKYO: Buddhist Teaching
25. JINZU: Mystical Powers
26. DAIGO: Great Realization

VOLUME FIVE

27. ZAZEN SHIN: A Maxim of Zazen
28. BUTSU KOJO NO JI: The Fact of Ascending Buddha
29. INMO: The Ineffable
30. GYOJI: Moral Action and Observance (I)
30. GYOJI: Moral Action and Observance (II)

VOLUME SIX

31. KAI-IN ZANMAI: Sagara Mudra Samadhi, State Like the Sea
32. JUKI: Affirmation
33. KAN-NON: Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara

34. ARAKAN: Arhat
35. HAKUJUSHI: Cedar Trees
36. KOMYO: Brightness
37. SHINJIN GAKUDO: Pursuing the State of Truth through Body and Mind
38. MUCHU SETSUMU: Preaching a Dream in a Dream
39. DOTOKU: Expressing the State of Truth
40. GABYO: Painted Rice Cakes
41. ZENKI: All Functions

VOLUME SEVEN

42. TSUKI: The Moon
43. KUGE: Flowers in the Sky
44. KOBUSSHIN: The Mind of Eternal Buddhas
45. BODAISATTA SHI-SHO-BO: The Four Ways of the Bodhisattva in Human Relations
46. KATTO: The Complicated
47. SANGAI YUISHIN: The Triple-World is Just Mind
48. SESSHIN SESSHO: Preaching Mind, Preaching the Nature of Things
49. BUTSUDO: Buddhism
50. SHOHO JISSO: All Things and Phenomena are Real Form

VOLUME EIGHT

51. MITSU GO: Mystical Whispers
52. BUKKYO: Buddhist Sutras
53. MUJO SEPPO: The State without Emotion preaches Dharma
54. HOSSHO: Dharmanature
55. DHARANI: Darani
56. SENMEN: Washing the Face
57. MENJU: The Face-to-Face Transmission
58. ZAZEN GI: The Standard Method of Zazen
59. BAIKE: Plum Blossoms

VOLUME NINE

60. JUPPO: The Ten Directions
61. KENBUTSU: Meeting Buddha

62. HENSAN: Completing Buddhist Study
63. GANZEI: Eyeballs
64. KAJO: Daily Life
65. RYUGIN: Whispers of Dragons
66. SHUNJU: Spring and Autumn
67. SOSHI SAIRAI NO I: The First Patriarch's Intention in Coming from the West
68. UDONGE: The Udumbara Flower
69. HOTSU MUJOSHIN: The Establishment of the Supreme Mind
70. HOTSU BODAISHIN: The Establishment of the Bodhi Mind
71. NYORAI ZENSHIN: The Tathagata's Whole Body.
72. ZANMAI O ZANMAI: The Samadhi which is King of Samadhis

VOLUME TEN

73. SANJU-SHICHI-BON BODAI BUNBO: The Thirty-Seven Classes of Ways to Practice the Truth
74. TENBORIN: Turning the Dharma Wheel
75. JISHO ZANMAI: Samadhi, State of Experiencing Self
76. DAI SHUGYO: The Great Practice
77. KOKU: Space
78. HATSU-U: The Patra
79. ANGO: The Retreat
80. TASHINTSU: Knowing Others' Minds
81. O SAKU SENDABA: The King's Request of Saindhava

VOLUME ELEVEN

82. JI KU-IN MON: Rules for the Kitchen
83. SHUKKE: Transcending Family Life
84. SANJI NO GO: Karmic Action in the Three Times
85. SHIME: The Four Horses
86. SHUKKE KUDOKU: The Merit of Transcending Family Life
87. KUYO SHOBUTSU: Serving Offerings to Buddhas
88. KI-E SANBO: Devotion to the Three Treasures

VOLUME TWELVE

89. SHINJIN INGA: Deep Belief in Cause and Effect

90. SHIZEN BIKU: The Bhiksu [who Mistook] the Fourth Dhyana

91. YUI-BUTSU YO-BUTSU: Only Buddhas-and-Buddhas

92. SHOJI: Life and Death

93. DOSHIN: Bodhi-Mind

94. JUKAI: Receiving the Precepts

95. HACHI DAI NINGAKU: Eight Great Human Truths

APPENDIX

My works contain the following additional chapters:

BUTSUKOJO NO JI: The Fact of a Buddha's Progress (from the Restricted Version of the Shobogenzo)

IPPYAKU HACHI HO MYO MON: The One Hundred and Eight Gates that Clarify Dharma (from the 12-chapter edition)

Grouping the Chapters

As I have already indicated, I believe that Master Dogen constructed his philosophical system based on Three Philosophies and One Reality. This means that we can put the chapters of the Shobogenzo into four corresponding groups.

I have divided the chapters into these four groups according to the following four criteria:

1. Idealistic or subjective viewpoint

2. Materialistic or objective viewpoint

3. Realistic or actual viewpoint

4. Reality itself

The first group contains chapters which relate to mind, spirit, theory, thought, meaning, religious value. The second group contains chapters which relate to things, matter, nature, the external world, space. The third group contains chapters which relate to oneness of body and mind, oneness of mind and matter, the present moment, action. The last group contains chapters related to the ineffable, the complicated, reality, symbolic expression of reality.

The first group contains 23 chapters, the second 26 chapters, the third 27 chapters and the last 19 chapters.

Categorizing Chapters

I then further subdivided each group according to the following categories:

G (S). Subjective view—Mind, Buddhism, Theory, Intuition, Buddha

G (O). Objective view—The Universe, Revelation of the Universe, Nature, Revelation of Nature, Cause and Effect, Tradition

G (A). Actual view—Establishment of Belief, Precepts, Day-to-day Life, Action, Buddhist Practice, Time

G (R). Reality itself—Aims, the Buddhist State, What Exists, Zazen, the State in Zazen

Arranging the chapters into these four categories gives me the following list:

G (S)

Mind

(S) HOTSU MUJO SHIN: The Establishment of the Supreme Mind (69)

HOTSU BODAI SHIN: The Establishment of the Bodhi Mind (70)

DOSHIN: Bodhi Mind (93)

(O) SESSHIN SESSHO: Preaching Mind, Preaching the Nature of Things (48)

(A) KOBUSSHIN: The Mind of Eternal Buddhas (44)

(R) SHIN FU-KATOKU: Mind Cannot Be Grasped (18)

SHIN FU-KATOKU: Mind Cannot Be Grasped (19)

Buddhism

(S) BUKKYO: Buddhist Teaching (24)

(O) KANKIN: Reading Sutras (21)

(A) TENBORIN: Turning the Dharma Wheel (74)

(R) KI-E SANBO: Devotion to the Three Treasures (88)

Theory

(S) GABYO: Painted Rice Cakes (40)

(O) KUGE: Flowers in the Sky (43)

(A) MUCHU SETSUMU: Preaching a Dream in a Dream (38)

(R) DOTOKU: Expressing the State of Truth (39)

Buddha

(S) YUIBUTSU YOBUTSU: Only Buddhas-and-Buddhas (91)

(O) SOKUSHIN ZE BUTSU: Mind Here and Now is Buddha (6)

(A) BUSSHO: Buddhanature (22)

(R) BUSSO: The Buddhist Patriarchs (15)

G (O)

The Universe

(S) GENJO KOAN: The Realized Law of the Universe (3)

(O) JUPPO: The Ten Directions (60)

(A) NYORAI ZENSHIN: The Tathagata's Whole Body (71)

(R) IKKA NO MYOJU: One Bright Pearl (4)

Revelation of the Universe

(S) BUKKYO: Buddhist Sutras (52)

(O) MUJO SEPPO: The State without Emotion Preaches Dharma (53)

(A) SHOHO JISSO: All Things and Phenomena are Real Form (50)

(R) HOKKE TEN HOKKE: The Lotus Universe Turns the Lotus Universe (17)

Nature

(S) KEISEI SANSHIKI: The Sounds of the Valley and the Form of the Mountains (9)

(O) SAN SUI GYO: Mountains and Rivers as Sutras (14)

(A) TSUKI: The Moon (42)

(R) BAIKE: Plum Blossoms (59)

Revelation of Nature

(S) SANGAI YUISHIN: The Triple-World is Just Mind (47)

(O) KOKU: Space (77)

(A) GANZEI: Eyeballs (63)

(R) RYUGIN: Whispers of Dragons (65)

Cause and Effect

(S) SHINJIN INGA: Deep Belief in Cause and Effect (89)

(O) SHIZEN BIKU: The Bhiksu [who Mistook] the Fourth Dhyana (90)

(A) SANJI NO GO: Karmic Action in the Three Times (84)

(R) DAI SHUGYO: The Great Practice (76)

Tradition

(S) SHIME: The Four Horses (85)

(O) HAKUJUSHI: Cedar Trees (35)

(A) KESA KUDOKU: The Merit of the Kasaya (12)

DEN-E:The Transmission of the Robe (13)

HATSU-U: Patra (78)

(R) SHISHO: The Certificate of Transmission (16)

G (A)

Establishment of Belief

(S) SHUKKE: Transcending Family Life (83)

SHUKKE KUDOKU: The Merit of Transcending Family Life (86)

JUKAI: Receiving the Precepts (94)

(O) JU-UN-DO SHIKI: Rules for the Cloud Hall (5)

(A) KAJO: Daily Life (64)

(R) RAIHAI TOKUZUI: Prostration to [Whatever] Has Got the Marrow (8)

Precepts

(S) SANJU-SHICHI-BON BODAI BUNBO: The Thirty-Seven Methods to the Truth (73)

(O) JI KU-IN MON: Rules for the Kitchen (82)

(A) BODAISATTA SHI-SHO-BO: The Four Ways of the Bodhisattva (45)

(R) HACHI DAI NINGAKU: Eight Great Human Truth (95)

Day-to-Day Life

(S) KUYO SHOBUTSU: Serving Offerings to Buddha (87)

(O) SENJO: Washing (7)

SENMEN: Washing the Face (56)

(A) JINZU: Mystical Abilities (25)

(R) DARANI: Dharani (55)

Action

(S) SHOAKU MAKUSA: Not Doing Wrong (10)

(O) GYOBUTSU IGI: The Dignified Behavior of an Acting Buddha (23)

(A) SHIJIN GAKUDO: Pursuing the State of Truth through Body and Mind (37)

(R) GYOJI (I,II): Moral Action and Observance (30)

Buddhist Practice

(S) HENSAN: Completing Buddhist Study (62)

(O) SOSHI SAIRAI NO I: The First Patriarch's Intention in Coming from the West (67)

(A) MENJU: The Face-to-Face Transmission (57)

(R) KENBUTSU: Meeting Buddha (61)

Time

(S) SHUNJU: Spring and Autumn (66)

(O) ANGO: The Retreat (79)

(A) UJI: Existence-Time (11)

(R) SHOJI: Life-and-Death (92)

G (R)

Aim

(S) DAIGO: Great Realization (26)

(O) JUKI: Affirmation (32)

(A) BUTSUDO: Buddhism (49)

(R) BUTSU KOJO NO JI: The Fact of a Buddha's Progress (28)

The Buddhist State

(S) MITSU GO: Mystical Whispers (51)

(O) UDONGE: The Udumbara Flower (68)

(A) KATTO: Arrowroot and Wisteria (46)

(R) KOMYO: Brightness (36)

What Exists

(S) ARAKAN: Arhat (34)

(O) IPPIAKU HACHI HOMYO MON: One Hundred-and-Eight Gates that Clarify Dharma (Appendix)

(A) ZENKI: All Functions (41)

(R) O SAKU SENDABA: The King's Request of Saindhava (81)

Zazen

(S) BENDOWA: A Talk about Pursuing the Truth (1)

(O) ZAZEN GI: The Standard Method of Zazen (58)

(A) ZAZEN SHIN: A Maxim of Zazen (27)

(R) ZANMAI O ZANMAI: The Samadhi which is King of Samadhis (72)

The State in Zazen

(S) JISHO ZANMAI: Samadhi, State of Experiencing Self (75)

(O) HOSSHO: Dharmanature (54)

(A) KAI-IN ZANMAI: Sagara Mudra Samadhi, State Like the Sea (31)

(R) INMO: The Ineffable (29)

I am not claiming that this is the only way of categorizing the chapters in the Shobogenzo, but it does give us a way of positioning each chapter in the total structure of the work.

Construction of Individual Chapters

Within chapters we can find a similar structure at paragraph level. I would like to illustrate this in concrete terms by looking at the chapter Genjo Koan from which I quoted earlier. This chapter serves as a good overall introduction to the Shobogenzo, and I quote it here in full.

(3) Genjo Koan

The Realized Law of the Universe

> ***Genjo** means "realized." And **koan** is an abbreviation of **ko-fu no an-toku,** which was a notice board on which a new law was announced to the public in ancient China. So **koan** expresses a law, or a universal principle. In the Shobogenzo, **genjo koan** means the realized law of the Universe, that is Dharma, or the real Universe itself. In this chapter, Master Dogen preaches to us the realized Dharma, or the real Universe itself. Buddhism is intrinsically a belief in the real Universe. So this chapter relates the fundamental basis of Buddhism. And this is why, when the seventy-five chapter edition of the Shobogenzo was compiled, this chapter was placed first. From this fact, we can recognize the importance of this chapter.*

[83] **When all things and phenomena**[5] exist as Buddhist teachings,[6] then there are delusion and realization, practice and experience, life and death, buddhas and ordinary people. When millions of things and phenomena[7] are all separate from ourselves, there are no delusion and no enlightenment, no buddhas and no ordinary people, no life and no death. Buddhism is originally transcendent over abundance and scarcity, and so [in reality] there is life and death, there is delusion and realization, there are people and buddhas. Though all this may be true, flowers fall even if we love them, and weeds grow even if we hate them, and that is all.

[84] Driving ourselves to practice and experience millions of things and phenomena is delusion. When millions of things and phenomena actively practice and experience ourselves, that is realization. Those who totally realize delusion are buddhas. Those who are totally deluded about realization are ordinary people. There are people who attain further realization on the basis of realization. There are people who increase their delusion in the midst of delusion. When buddhas are really buddhas, they do not need to recognize themselves as buddhas. Nevertheless, they experience the state of buddha, and they go on experiencing the state of buddha.

[85] Even if we use our whole body and mind to look at forms, and even if we use our whole body and mind to listen to sounds, perceiving them directly, [our human perception] can never be like the reflection of an image in a mirror, or like the water and the moon. When we affirm one side, we are blind to the other side.

[86] To learn Buddhism is to learn ourselves. To learn ourselves is to forget ourselves. To forget ourselves is to be experienced by millions of things and phenomena. To be experienced by millions of things and phenomena is to let our own body and mind, and the body and mind of the external world, fall away. [Then] we can forget the [mental] trace of realization, and show the [real] signs of forgotten realization continually, moment by moment.[8]

[87] When a person first seeks the Dharma, he is far removed from the borders of Dharma. But as soon as the Dharma is authentically transmitted to the person himself, he is a human being in his own true place. When a man is sailing along in a boat and he moves his eyes to the shore, he misapprehends that the shore is moving. But if he keeps his eyes on the boat, he can recognize that it is the boat that is moving forward. [Similarly,] when we observe millions of things and phenomena with a disturbed body and mind, we mistakenly think that our own mind or our own spirit may be permanent. But if we familiarize ourselves with our actual conduct and come back to this concrete place, it becomes clear that the millions of things and phenomena are different from ourselves. Firewood becomes ash; it can never go back to being firewood. Nevertheless, we should not take the view that ash is its future and

firewood is its past. We should recognize that firewood occupies its place in the Universe as firewood, and it has its past moment and its future moment. And although we can say that it has its past and its future, the past moment and the future moment are cut off. Ash exists in its place in the Universe as ash, and it has its past moment and its future moment. Just as firewood can never again be firewood after becoming ash, human beings cannot live again after their death. So it is a rule in Buddhism not to say that life turns into death. This is why we speak of "no appearance."[9] And it is Buddhist teaching as established in the preaching of Gautama Buddha that death does not turn into life. This is why we speak of "no disappearance."[5] Life is an instantaneous situation, and death is also an instantaneous situation. It is the same, for example, with winter and spring. We do not think that winter becomes spring, and we do not say that spring becomes summer.

[89] A person getting realization is like the moon reflected[10] in water: the moon does not get wet, and the water is not broken. Though the light [of the moon] is wide and great, it can be reflected in a foot or an inch of water. The whole moon and the whole sky can be reflected in a dew-drop on a blade of grass or in a single drop of rain. Realization does not reshape[11] a man, just as the moon does not pierce the water. A man does not hinder realization,[12] just as a dew-drop does not hinder the sky and moon. The depth [of realization] may be the same as the concrete height [of the moon]. [To understand] its duration, we should examine large and small bodies of water, and notice the different widths of the sky and moon [when reflected in water].[13]

[90] When the Dharma has not completely filled our body and mind, we feel that the Dharma is abundantly present in us. When the Dharma fills our body and mind, we feel as if something[14] is missing. For example, sailing out into the ocean, beyond sight of the mountains, when we look around in the four directions, [the ocean] appears only to be round; it does not appear to have any other form at all. Nevertheless, the great ocean is not round and it is not square, and there are so many other characteristics of the ocean that they could never be counted. [To fishes] it is like a palace and [to gods in heaven] it is like a necklace of pearls.[15] But as far as our human eyes can see, it only appears to be round. The same applies to everything in the world.[16] The secular world and the Buddhist world[17] include a great many situations, but we can view them and understand them only as far as our eyes of Buddhist study allow. So if we want to know the way things naturally are,[18] we should remember that the oceans and mountains have innumerably many characteristics besides the appearance of squareness or roundness, and we should remember that there are [other] worlds in [all] four directions. This applies not only to the periphery; we should remember that the same applies to this place here and now, and to a single drop of water.

[91] When fish swim in water, though they keep swimming, there is no end to the water. When birds fly in the sky, though they keep flying, there is no end to the sky. At the same time, fish and birds have never left the water or the sky. The more [water or sky] they use, the more useful it is; the less [water or sky] they need, the less useful it is. Acting like this, each one realizes its limitations at every moment and each one somersaults [in complete freedom] at every place;[19] but if a bird leaves the sky it will die at once, and if a fish leaves the water it will die at once. So we can conclude that water is life and the sky is life; at the same time, birds are life, and fish are life; it may be that life is birds and life is fish. There may be other expressions that go even further. The existence of practice and experience, the existence of their age itself and life itself can also be [explained] like this. However, a bird or fish that tried to understand the water or the sky completely, before swimming or flying, could never find[20] its way or find its place in the water or the sky. But when we find this place here and now, it naturally follows that our actual behavior realizes the Universe. And when we find a concrete way here and now, it naturally follows that our actual behavior realizes the Universe. This way and this place exist as reality because they are not great or small, because they are not related to ourselves or to the external world, and because they do not exist already and they do appear in the present. Similarly, if someone is practicing and experiencing Buddhism, when he receives one teaching, he just realizes that one teaching, and when he meets one [opportunity to] act, he just performs that one action. This is the state in which the place exists and the way is realized, and this is why we cannot clearly recognize where [the place and the way] are—because such recognition and the perfect realization of Buddhism appear together and are experienced together. Do not think that what you have attained will inevitably enter your own consciousness and be recognized by your intellect. The experience of the ultimate state

is realized at once, but a mystical something does not always manifest itself. Realization is not always definite.[21]

[94] Master Ho-tetsu[22] of Mt. Mayoku was using a fan. At that time, a monk came in and asked him, "[It is said that] the nature of air is to be ever-present, and there is no place that air cannot reach. Why then does the Master use a fan?"

The Master said, *"You only know [the abstract idea] that the nature of air is to be ever-present, but you have not understood the fact*[23] *that there is no place the air cannot reach."*

The monk said, *"What is the meaning of the principle*[23] *'There is no place the air cannot reach'?"*

At this, the Master just [carried on] using the fan. The monk prostrated himself.[24] The real experience of Buddhism, the vivid behavior[25] of the Buddhist tradition,[26] is like this. Someone who says that because [the air] is ever-present we need not use a fan, or that even when we do not use [a fan] we can still feel the air, does not know ever-presence, and does not know the nature of air. Because the nature of air is to be ever-present, the behavior of Buddhists makes the Earth manifest itself as gold, and ripens the Milky Way into delicious cheese.[27]

Shobogenzo Genjo Koan

This chapter was written around August 15th[28] [in the lunar calendar] in the first year of the Tenpuku era [1233], and was presented to the lay disciple Yo Koshu of the Kyushu district. It was edited in the fourth year of the Kencho era [1252].

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The chapter is divided into nine paragraphs, and the eighth paragraph is more consistent if divided into two sub-paragraphs. This gives ten paragraphs to the chapter, and these ten paragraphs can be divided into four groups as before.

I will refer to each paragraph using the number in square brackets which refers to the corresponding page in my work “The Shobogenzo in Modern Japanese.” Paragraph [83] is the first paragraph in which Master Dogen lays out the fundamental principles which govern the whole structure of the Shobogenzo. This first paragraph lays out the theoretical framework and as such belongs to the subjective viewpoint.

Paragraphs [84], [85], [86] and [87] are descriptions of concrete situations relevant to someone who is pursuing the Buddhist truth. These descriptions thus belong to the second group; the objective viewpoint.

But within this second objective grouping, we can further subdivide. Paragraph [84] relates to personal intention or volition, and is therefore subjective in nature within the larger objective group.

Paragraph [85] relates to sense perception and the external world, and is thus in the second phase or objective sub-group.

Paragraph [86] relates to concrete personal practice and belongs to the third phase.

Paragraph [87] relates to concrete reality because it explains the mutual relationship between subject and object, and the basic Buddhist idea of instantaneous time in the present.

So within the second group containing paragraphs [84], [85], [86], and [87] we find the (S), (O), (A), (R) structure, although the four paragraphs belong to Group (O).

Paragraphs [89], [90], the first part of [91], and the second part of [91], are descriptions of actual Buddhist efforts, Buddhist facts or Buddhist behavior.

Paragraph [89] is an explanation of getting enlightenment, and enlightenment is the mental side of realizing the truth. So this paragraph belongs to the first phase of Buddhist practice: paragraph [89] is an (S) paragraph in Group (A).

Paragraph [90] describes the concrete situation of a person who has got enlightenment So it belongs to the objective phase, and paragraph [90] is an (O) paragraph in Group (A).

I think that it is consistent to divide paragraph [91] into two paragraphs, because from the beginning of the paragraph to the sentence on the ninth and tenth lines: "it may be that life is birds and life is fish," Master Dogen represents the idea of oneness between a doer and the action. But from the sentence "there may be other expression that go even further" to the end of the paragraph relates to concrete matter, that is practice, experience, age. So it seems natural for the paragraph to be divided into two.

Paragraph ([94] is the last paragraph in the chapter, and it belongs to Group (R). Master Dogen quotes a Chinese Buddhist story about Master Mayoku Ho-tetsu and his disciple. Fundamentally, the Buddhist truth, that is reality, cannot be described with words. When Master Dogen wants to talk about reality, he sometimes quotes a Buddhist story or Koan. This paragraph is one such example where he uses the Chinese story to symbolize reality.

Now we can summarize the overall structure of the chapter:

1. [83] — Expression of principle. Para (S) including (S), (O), (A), and (R).
2. [84] — Theoretical side of objective Buddhist facts. Para (S) in Group (O).
3. [85] — Perceptive side of objective Buddhist facts. Para (O) in Group (O).
4. [86] — Actual concrete Buddhist facts. Para (A) in Group (O).
5. [87] — Realization of Dharma in concrete Buddhist facts. Para (R) in Group (O).
6. [89] — Subjective description of actual Buddhist efforts. Para (S) in Group (A).
7. [90] — Objective description of actual Buddhist efforts. Para (O) in Group (A).
8. [91]i — Description of action with simile. Para (A) in Group (A).
9. [91]ii— Description of action in the ultimate. Para (R) in Group (A).
10. [94] — Symbolic expression of Dharma or reality using Koan. Para (R) in Group (R).

The SOAR Structure

I have outlined how the Shobogenzo follows the unique SOAR structure, based on the principle of Three Philosophies and One Reality. The SOAR structure leads us from (S)ubjective to (O)bjective, and on to (A)ction and (R)eality.

SOAR Structure at the Paragraph Level

Within each paragraph in Genjo Koan we can still trace the SOAR structure. I have analyzed the structure of the first paragraph earlier in this paper.

The first sentence of the second paragraph describes delusion arising from subjective intention. It says “Driving ourselves to practice and experience millions of things and phenomena is delusion.” This is a subjective expression of the difference between realization and delusion and so this sentence belongs to the subjective phase.

Then the next sentence says “When millions of things and phenomena actively practice and experience ourselves, that is realization.” This sentence describes objective circumstances which influence a person who acts, and so belongs to the objective phase.

From the third sentence the paragraph says “Those who totally realize delusion are Buddhas. Those who are totally deluded about realization are ordinary people. There are people who attain further realization on the basis of realization. There are people who increase their delusion in the midst of delusion.” These sentences describe the actual situations of people who attain realization and who are deluded by realization. So these sentences belong to the action phase.

The next sentences say “When buddhas are really buddhas, they do not need to recognize themselves as buddhas. Nevertheless, they experience the state of buddha, and they go on experiencing the state of buddha.” These two sentences express the state of realized buddha, and so belong to the ultimate phase.

Thus in the second paragraph [84], the first sentence belongs to (S), the second sentence to (O), the next four sentences to (A), and the last two sentences to (R).

Another example appears in the next paragraph [85]. This paragraph relates to direct perception, and so the whole paragraph belongs to (O). But at the same time the first sentence, “to use our mind to look at forms and to use our mind to listen to sounds” relates to the subject, and so this part of the sentence belongs to (S).

Further, “to use our body to look at forms and to use our body to listen to sounds” is related with perception of the external world or objects through the senses, and so this part of the sentence belongs to (O).

The last part of the sentence, “[our human perception] can never be like the reflection of an image in a mirror, or like the water and the moon” describes the actual situation of human sense perception and so belongs to (A).

And the next sentence is “When we affirm one side, we are blind to the other side.” This sentence expresses the reality of our ability to perceive with the senses and so belongs to (R).

In a similar way, we can trace the SOAR structure at paragraph level through almost all the paragraphs in the Shobogenzo.

SOAR Structure at the Sentence Level

At the beginning of Genjo Koan we can find the following sentence: “When all things and phenomena exist as Buddhist teachings, then there are delusion and realization, practice and experience, life and death, buddhas and ordinary people.” The sentence comprises four pairs of words: delusion and realization, practice and experience, life and death, and buddhas and ordinary people. The first pair of words, delusion and realization, are distinctions of state of mind and are (S) type. The second pair, practice and experience, are concrete and factual and are thus (O) type. Life and death are directly related to existence and so are (A) type, and buddhas and ordinary people are distinctions we make in real life and are (R) type. So even within a single sentence we can find the SOAR structure in operation. This is a clear indication that Master Dogen used this four-phased structure all through his philosophical writings.

SOAR Structure at the Compound-Word Level

Because all Master Dogen’s thoughts were four-phased, we can find the SOAR structure even at the compound-word level. For example, there are four particular compounds which are used frequently throughout the Shobogenzo. They are *chonei, ganzei, kento* and *biku*. The compound *chonei* means a head. It is often used as a symbol for intellectual thought. *Ganzei* means eyeballs and is often used to indicate the objective or material viewpoint. *Kento* means a fist and is often used as a symbol for

action. And *biku* means nostrils, used as a symbol for life itself, from the ancient Indian symbolism of the air we breathe in being the basis of life.

So these four compounds carry the SOAR structure. *Chonei* or intellect is (S), *ganzei* or sense perception is (O), *kento* or action is (A) and *biku* or life itself is (R). Without understanding the symbolism carried by these four important compounds in the Shobogenzo, it is extremely difficult to fathom the real meaning.

Another example is shown by the four compounds *hoshin, shugyo, bodai*, and *nehan*. *Hoshin* is an abbreviation of *hotsu bodaishin*, establishment of the will to the truth. *Shugyo* means concrete efforts in pursuing Buddhism. *Bodai* means arrive at the truth, and *nehan* is the serene and peaceful state itself.

Hosshin is will and thus (S), *shugyo* is concrete effort and thus (O), *bodai* is action (A) and *nehan* is truth (R). Only by recognizing the SOAR structure can we meaningfully interpret these groups of compounds in the Shobogenzo.

SOAR Structure at the Character-Word Level

If we postulate that the SOAR structure runs through the whole of Master Dogen's thoughts and writings, then we should be able to trace it even at the character-word level. And we can in fact!

The central Buddhist concept of *dharma* is translated into Japanese as *ho*. As I began to grasp the overall organization of thought in the Shobogenzo, I began to recognize *ho* used in several different ways according to context. These several ways were easily classifiable into four groups.

The first meaning of *ho* is as Gautama Buddha's teachings. Gautama Buddha taught us the ultimate philosophical truth which we call *dharma*. So here *ho* can be translated as teaching, philosophy, theory, principle. The first sentence of Genjo Koan contains the compound *buppo*, a combination of *butsu* and *ho*. Here *butsu* means buddha and in this context *ho* means teachings, so *buppo* means Buddhist teachings which is group (S).

But in the same sentence we can find the compound *shoho*, a combination of *sho* and *ho*, which translates to all things and phenomena. Here *sho* means multiple and *ho* means external world, material substance, environment. So *ho* also has this concrete interpretation (O).

In paragraph [91] in Genjo Koan we can find this sentence: "But when we find this place here and now, it naturally follows that our actual behavior realizes the Universe." The Japanese translated as "here and now" is *ippo*, a combination of *ichi*, one and *ho*, dharma. In this context, *ho* suggests our conduct at the moment of the present (A).

And in the last paragraph [94] the words "The real experience of Buddhism" is *buppo* in Japanese. In this context the *ho* of *buppo* suggests *dharma* or the ultimate ineffable reality (R).

So even at character-word level, the SOAR grouping can be can be seen to be an integral part of the structure of the Shobogenzo.

The SOAR Structure and its Relevance in the History of World Thought

To conclude, I will position the SOAR structure firmly in the stream of world thought.

One of the most important differences between human beings and apes is found in the difference in their brain weights. This fact allows us to believe that humans are much more intelligent than apes. Indeed no-one can seriously deny that the intellect is the one central characteristic that sets humans apart from the other species.

Greco-Roman civilization represents perhaps one of the highlights in the development of our world, and it is here that we can first see the division of thought into two distinct streams. We can see why

this happened in the very nature of thought itself: we look inwards and become subjective, or outwards and become objective. We have no other choice at the intellectual level.

Plato was clearly an inward-looker: an idealist, who based his philosophy around the truth of ideas. But this same civilization produced Demokritos, who insisted that the world is an accumulation of molecules. He was a materialist. These two philosophical standpoints are always in conflict; the beliefs of one contradict those of the other. Idealists believe in human freedom; materialists are deterministic. The two concepts are mutually exclusive.

In the closing days of the Roman Empire, platonic philosophy, basically idealistic, met the growing religion of Christianity. Platonic philosophy, the power of ideas and the supremacy of the spirit gave Christianity a strong philosophical base from which to explain its beliefs, and it was this that enabled Christianity to spread and gain in power as it moved into mediaeval Europe.

The mediaeval ages in Europe were ruled by Christian beliefs; mind, spirit and faith were revered whereas the physical body, matter and the secular world were cast aside. From this standpoint, mediaeval Europe was at the age of idealism (S).

During the Renaissance, people rediscovered their physicality and sense perceptions. Belief slowly centered on what could be perceived with the senses, and doubt arose in those areas which could not. This marked the beginning of the age of science. Sometime in the period from 1500 to 1700, that is, at the beginning of the scientific revolution, an irreversible move towards science and away from religion took place. Subsequently, as science became stronger, so the strength of idealistic religion decreased until reaching a culmination sometime in the middle of the 19th century. Marx's materialistic philosophy marked, perhaps, the high point of materialist thought, leading Nietzsche to proclaim that our gods had died. The period from the Renaissance to the end of the 19th century, then, mark a strongly materialistic phase (O) in the development of our civilization.

When it became apparent that the scientific view of the world left no room for gods, religion, spirit, this in itself gave rise to a feeling of unease, of anxiety. And this anxiety was the driving force in the search for a new philosophy to transcend materialism. Existentialism, pragmatism, phenomenology are all philosophies of life which aim to recover the value of human conduct, ethics and the notion of being. In this sense they are concerned with our actions (A) in this world.

From this rather bold and sweeping sketch of the flow of western civilization, we can see the origins of idealism (S) in ancient Greece, the rediscovery of matter and the external world (O) in the Renaissance, the culmination of the materialistic view in the mid 19th century, and the move to search for some philosophy which transcends the two (A) in modern times. But if we limit ourselves in our search to the area of the intellect, that is, the area where we analyze and understand the world only rationally, the area where the mind rains supreme, it is impossible to find a new philosophy which allows us to regain human value in the midst of our materialistic societies.

To guide our civilization into a new age, an age where our real conduct has value, as well as our thoughts about our conduct, then we have to realize the meaning and limitations of human intelligence. This is because our actual conduct on this earth is not an intellectual activity. In the area of intellectual activity, we can find two fundamental approaches or philosophies; the philosophy of the subject, and the philosophy of the object. But our conduct, our actions, do not belong to the same area as philosophy. This is a very simple but very important fact to realize. The body of knowledge which describes this fact is also just a philosophy—I have called it the Philosophy of Action.

Using the SOAR structure which I have outlined here, we can put idealistic philosophy and materialistic philosophy into their rightful places. And we can move on to see that the philosophy of action, although a body of knowledge, is not limited to discussion in the intellectual area—it is pointing to a way to enter the area of action itself. That way is the ageless practice of Zazen. In the state in Zazen we are sitting in reality and can realize that fact clearly. And the experience of being in reality rather than living in the world of the intellect needs its own new philosophy. So the SOAR structure becomes a bridge between traditional philosophy and reality—a bridge from the materialist

world of modern society to a new age of human civilization based on conduct or action itself. This is the value in the Shobogenzo and this is Master Dogen's message.

I sincerely hope that the many scholars of religion throughout the world will be drawn to the message that the Shobogenzo carries. I hope that the SOAR structure I have outlined here will help Master Dogen's works to find their rightful place in the history of world thought.

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Notes

[1]. This and all subsequent quotations from the Shobogenzo in this paper are from the translation by G.W. Nishijima and Mike Cross.

[2]. *Fu* is a negating word, *raku* means to fall, *in* means cause and *ka* means effect. So the literal translation is "[does] not fall [into] cause and effect."

[3]. *Fu* is a negating word, *mai* means unclear or ignorant, and *inga* means cause and effect. So the literal translation is "[do] not [be] unclear [about] cause and effect."

[4]. I have addressed this problem in detail in my article "A Buddhist Monk's View of the Theological Encounter III" submitted for publication in *The Journal of Buddhist-Christian Studies*.

[5]. "All things and phenomena" is originally *sho-ho (*all *dharmas*). The Sanskrit word *dharma* has many meanings, for example, law, teachings, substance, entity, thing, practice, etc.

[6]. "Buddhist teachings" is originally *buppo* (Buddhist *dharma*).

[7]. "Millions of things and phenomena" is originally *banpo* (tens of thousands of *dharmas*).

[8]. "Trace" and "signs" are originally the same word—*seki.* "Continually, moment by moment" is originally *cho-cho* (long-long).

[9] "No appearance" is *fu-sho*. *Fu* expresses negation. *Sho* means "to appear" or "appearance," and also "to live" or "life." According to the Buddhist theory of instantaneousness, the Universe appears and disappears at every moment. That is, the Universe exists momentarily. And because it exists momentarily, it is not possible to say that it appears or disappears from one moment to the next. So "no appearance" expresses the instantaneousness of the Universe, and "no disappearance" also expresses the instantaneousness of the Universe.

[10]. Throughout this paragraph, "to be reflected in" is originally *yadoru,* to dwell.

[11]. Lit. "does not break." In other words, realization does not change the man himself.

[12]. In other words, a man does not change the state of realization.

[13]. Lit. "As for the length and shortness of time, we should examine big water and small water, and we should discern the width and narrowness of the sky and moon."

[14]. Lit. "one side."

[15]. "Necklace of pearls" is originally *yo-raku,* from the Sanskrit *muktahara*. This sentence is a reference to an idea quoted in the commentary called *Sho Dai Jo Ron Shaku Ryaku Jo.* The idea is that different subjects see the same ocean in different ways. To fish it is a palace, to gods it is like a necklace of pearls, to humans it is water, and to demons it is blood or pus.

[16]. *Banpo*. See note 7.

[17]. Lit. "Inside dust" (the secular world) and "beyond the framework" (the transcendent Buddhist world).

[18]. *Banpo no kafu.* Lit. "the usual style of tens of thousands of things and phenomena." *Ka* means home, daily life or usual life. *Fu* means wind, atmosphere, or style.

[19]. The original sentence is in the style of a double negative: "There is no case of not realizing limitations at every head, and there is no case of not somersaulting at every place."

[20]. Lit. "get" or "attain."

[21]. "Not always definite" is originally two characters, *ka* and *hitsu.* These characters were used in Chinese to express the questions "How is it necessary to...?" or "How can it be decided that...?"

[22]. A successor of Master Baso Do-itsu.

[23]. "Fact" and "principle" are originally the same word *dori*.

[24]. Shinji Shobogenzo pt.2, no.23. According to the story in Shinji Shobogenzo, after the monk's prostration, the Master says, *"Useless master of monks! If you got a thousand students, what gain would there be?"*

[25]. "Behavior" is originally "air" *(fu)*. *Fu* means "wind," "air" or "atmosphere," and therefore "style", "customs," "ways" or "behavior." It is used very frequently in Shobogenzo in the latter meaning, for example, para.[90] of this chapter in the phrase *banpo no ka-fu,* "the way things naturally are."

[26]. Lit. "the authentically-transmitted vigorous road."

[27]. Master Goso Ho-en said in his formal preaching, *"To change the Earth into gold, and to churn the Milky Way into cheese."* Cheese is *so-raku,* which was a milk product like yoghurt or cheese. The metaphor is even more suitable in English than it is in its original form, because the galaxy that we call "the Milky Way" is called "the Long River" in Chinese.

[28] Lit. "around the middle of autumn." In the lunar calendar, autumn is July, August, and September. August 15th would always be a full moon. As the autumn sky is usually very clear, this was said to be the best day to view the moon. Master Dogen liked looking at the moon, so August 15th was a favorite day for him.