

DOGEN DISCUSSION GROUP
11.3.2017

CHAPTER 3

KEY TERMS

Jijuyu zammai: the samadhi of self-fulfilling activity.

Ippo gujin: Authenticity:

Ippo gujin: total exertion of a single thing. Whole-hearted action.
Being one with what you do.

Ju-hoj: Dharma position

Kanno doko: Cosmic Resonance

Hongaku: Original Enlightenment

Shikaku: Acquired Enlightenment

Engi: Pratitya Samutpada (Sanskrit): Co-dependent origination, co-creation. Interaction.

Shinjin: BodyMind, consciousness

Shinjin Datsuraku: BodyMind Dropped Away

Shingakudo: BodyMind Penetrating Study of the Way

The Rightly Transmitted Buddha-Dharma

Buddha-dharma that was rightly transmitted was neither the body of creeds, the content of certain experiences, any Absolute, nor a return to the letter of Buddha's teaching; it was a symbolic expression of the spirit of Shakyamuni the Buddha, which opened up the mysteries and horizons of Buddha nature, and that was the rationale for sectarian differences. (52)

In short, both Koan-introspection Zen and Silent Illumination Zen were criticized by Dogen on the basis of his criterion, the rightly transmitted Buddha-dharma, which will be discussed shortly. (54)

The question that then arises is "What is the criterion of the rightly transmitted Buddha-dharma?" Dogen stated:

"The Buddhas and Tathagatas have an excellent way – unequalled and natural – to transmit the wondrous dharma through personal encounter and realize supreme enlightenment. As it is imparted impeccably from Buddha to Buddha, its criterion is the samadhi of self-fulfilling activity (jijuyu zammai). For playing joyfully in such a samadhi, the upright sitting position in meditation is the right gate."

(54-55) Dogen: Shobogenzo "Bendowa"

In the context of Dogen's thought, the samadhi of self-fulfilling activity signified the samadhi that at once negates and subsumes self and other....It referred to a total freedom of self-realization without any dualism of antitheses. The crucially important point to note is that in Dogen, opposites or dualities were not obliterated or even blurred; they were not so much transcended as they were realized. The total freedom in question here was that freedom which realizes itself in duality, not apart from it. (55)

The criterion of the samadhi of self-fulfilling activity was not an abstract principle, but a mode of activity itself. Thus Dogen wrote, as noted previously, "A Buddhist should neither argue superiority or inferiority of doctrines, nor settle disputes over depth or shallowness of teachings, but only know authenticity or inauthenticity of practice." (55) Dogen: Shobogenzo "Bendowa"

Dogen found the criterion of truth and authenticity in a special quality of experience, or more accurately, of activity, that was epitomized in the samadhi of self-fulfilling activity. (56) KAHN: This "special quality of experience" that is truth and authenticity is a way of being experience characterized by ippon gujin, total exertion of a single thing, or as Maezumi Roshi expressed it, whole-hearted being or being one with whatever you do. "All the Buddhas necessarily enact venerable activities (iigi)...The active Buddha alone is thoroughly familiar with the affairs of the realm of ongoing enlightenment....Unless you are the active Buddha, you will never be liberated from the bonds of Buddha and the bonds of Dharma and will be entangled with the demons of Buddha and the demons of Dharma." (72) Dogen: Shobogenzo "Gyobutsu-iigi"

The idea of the samadhi of self-fulfilling activity was inseparable from Dogen's other fundamental thoughts. His conception of the rightly transmitted Buddha-dharma linked this idea with the unity of practice and enlightenment (shusho-itto or shusho ichinyo), the casting of of body and mind (shinjin datsuraku), non-thinking (hishiryō), total exertion (gujin), abiding in a dharma-position (juhoi), and so forth. (56)

Zazen Only

Dogen's most mature thought on zazen was presented in the popular edition of the Fukuan Zazengi, "Zazengi" and "Zazenshin" of the Shobogenzo, and the Bendohō. (61)

In brief, the samadhi of self-fulfilling activity as the criterion of the rightly transmitted Buddha-dharma, meant that the matter of supreme importance in religion was not abstract doctrines and theories, but rather lived experience and activity, which was crystalized in zazen only (shikan-taza)

I. The content of zazen-only can be considered from various standpoints. **In the first place, zazen-only should be construed neither as obliterating experiences at the conscious level nor as advocating absorption in an undifferentiated realm.** (61)

“Dispersion” at the conscious level and “dark sinking” at the subconscious level were to be avoided, since common to both were chaos and confusion. In short, the confusion and chaos of differentiation and undifferentiation were redeemed, by which we became liberated from the tyranny of the two for a new mode of thinking – NONTHINKING. (61-62)

The function of nonthinking was not just to transcend thinking and not-thinking, but to realize both, in the absolutely simple and singular act of resolute sitting itself....Thus in Dogen’s conception of zazen-only, nonthinking was used not transcendently so much as realizationally; it was objectless, subjectless, formless, goalless, and purposeless. But it was not void of intellectual content as in a vacuum. What zazen-only did was not to eliminate reason and intellect, but to realize them. Furthermore, what reason and intellect did in zazen-only was to unfold, rather than circumscribe, the mysteries of existence. (62-63)

In this connection the following points must be kept in mind:

A. First nonthinking should not be identified with mystical contemplation or illumination....As Dogen untiringly emphasized, the Way is realized I and through the body. Nonthinking has its roots firmly fixed in the most concrete physical matrix.

B. Nonthinking is the essence of the samadhi of self-fulfilling activity (jijuyu zammai) – the bliss of enlightenment that Buddha himself enjoys and is often referred to as joyous play.

C. Thinking and non-thinking are said to be realized through emptiness, and nonthinking is said to be right thought. However, right thought is post logical. When, and only when, nonthinking is realized, is the authenticity of thought established.

II. The content of zazen-only can be considered in terms of the **unity of practice and enlightenment**. Zazen-only is called practice based on enlightenment in contrast to practice prior to enlightenment.

“To think that practice and enlightenment are not one is a non-Buddhist view. In the Buddha-dharma they are one. Inasmuch as practice now is based on enlightenment, the practice of a beginner is itself the whole of original enlightenment. Therefore, in giving the instruction for practice, a Zen teacher advises his/her disciples not to seek enlightenment apart from practice, for practice points directly to original enlightenment. Because it is the very enlightenment of practice, there is no end to enlightenment; because it is the very practice of enlightenment, there is no beginning to practice.” (63-64) Dogen: Shobogenzo “Bendowa.”

III. The content of zazen-only cannot be fully understood apart from consideration of **faith** – the element fundamentally important in Dogen’s thought. **For Dogen faith lay in “original enlightenment”, and enlightenment came from original faith.**

“It is imperative for those who practice the Way to believe in it. Those who have faith in the Way should know or certain that they are unflinching in the Way from the very beginning – and are thus free from confusions, delusions, and disarray, as well as from additions, subtractions, and errors. Believing in this manner and penetrating the Way thusly, practice it accordingly. Such is fundamental to learning the Way.” (65) Dogen: Shobogenzo “Gakudo yojinshu” **See note #61 on page 270.**

KAHN: Every moment of our lives, every sensate node of experience, every thread of impulse, emergence, choice we follow is The Way. We may realize this or not, but we are always manifesting it. We are interaction, not a self-contained, not a self-sustaining, unchanging, substantial identity. We are a co-creating interactive emergence actioning Buddha-nature, waves in the ocean, fluid identities particular and infinite.

But in Dogen’s thought, faith and enlightenment interpenetrated one another so that without one, the other could not be fully meaningful. The inferior status of faith was repudiated once and for all by Dogen; it now became for him the very core of enlightenment.

IV. The content of zazen-only as the samadhi of self-fulfilling activity was intimately related to the principle of “the total exertion of a single thing” (ippo-gujin), expressed in such favorite expressions of Dogen as “when one side is illuminated, the other side is darkened (ippo o shosuru toki wa ippo wa kurashi – especially “Genjo-koan”),” and “the total experience of a single thing is one with that of all things.” This principle was also inseparably associated with another cognate principle – “to abide in a dharma position (ju-hoi).” –, which became crucially important, especially in connection with Dogen’s view of time. (66)

KAHN: “Total exertion of a single thing” (ippo gujin) to be jiyuyū zammai, Enlightenment (Anutara Samuk Sambodhi), must have opened the dimensions of reality, “the total experience of a single thing (ippotsu)”:

KAHN: totality, unity, mutualiy, no-thing-at-all, the precious particular.

“The total experience of a single thing’ does not deprive a thing of its own unique particularity. It places a thing neither against others nor against none. To place a thing against none is another form of dualistic obstruction. When total experience is realized unobstructedly, the total experience of a single thing is the same as the total experience of all things. A single total experience is a single thing in totality. The total experience of a single thing is one with that of all things.” (66) Dogen Shobogenzo “Gabyo (A Painted Rice Cake).”

An action, event, thing, or being, was not chosen dualistically as an action among actions, an event among events, as so forth in a causal, hierarchical, evolutionary, or means-end model, but nondualistically as the ultimate action or the ultimate event, abiding in the dharma-position (juhai) of the realized NOW that was discrete from before and after. There was nothing but that particular event which consumed the whole universe, and ultimately even the universe was emptied.

Throughout this investigation, I (HEE-JIN KIM) shall endeavor to demonstrate how important this idea was in Dogen’s thought. Suffice it to say for now that zazen-only was prototypical of a non-dualistic choice for existence in the given moment. Choice and nondualism were not a contradiction in terms. Herein lies the crux of Dogen’s mystical realism that was neither transcendental nor immanent in the conventional fashion, but realizational. Furthermore, as the model of

zazen-only itself indicates, Dogen's solution was intellectual as well as cultic and actional. (66-67)

Creative Activities Creative Expressions

The prototype of zazen-only has two aspects: activities (gyoji) and expressions (dotoku). As will become clearer, both are interchangeably used in Dogen's thought, although we shall use, purely for convenience's sake, "activities" in connection with cultic and moral activities, and "expressions" in relation to intellectual and philosophic endeavors. Nevertheless, expressions are expressive activities, and activities are active expressions. Both are the self-activities and self-expressions (jidoshu) of Buddha-nature.