

² This mountain is different from Mt. Furong in Shantong Province where the famous Caodong Zen Master Furong Daokai later lived during the Song Dynasty.

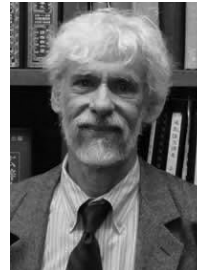
³ Shobogenzo Keiteki, jōkan (Bokusan Nishiari, Daihorinkaku, Tokyo, 1965), p.350.

⁴ Sodo-shu Monogatari: Zoku Junzen no Jidai. (Zen Bunka Kenkyusho, Kyoto, 1985)p.215.

⁵ Chugoku Zenshu-shi wa: Shinji Shobogenzo ni manabu (Zen Bunka Kenkyusho, Kyoto, 1988), p. 488.

⁶ Gotama Buddha: A Biography Based on the Most Reliable Texts, Volume 2, by Hajime Nakamura (translated by Gauynor Sekimori, Kosei Publishing CO., Tokyo, 2005), p.151.

⁷ Dogen and Uchiyama; From the Zen Kitchen to Enlightenment: Refining Your Life, pp. 79-81.



Treasury of the True Dharma Eye
Book 69

The Samādhi of Self Verification
Jishō zanmai

Translated by
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Introduction

This fascicle was composed in the spring of 1244, at Kippōji in Echizen. It represents number 69 of the 75-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō* and number 75 of the vulgate edition. Likely because of its politically sensitive content, it does not appear in the “expurgated” 60-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō* redaction and is found, rather, as book 17 in the “secret” 28-fascicle collection.

The title of the fascicle, *jishō zanmai*, is not a common expression: while it occurs occasionally in the East Asian tantric literature, it is not favored in Chan texts and is not used by Dōgen elsewhere. Like the English “self verification,” the term *jishō* is ambiguous and could be understood as indicating a validating experience “of oneself,” “by oneself” or “for oneself.” Dōgen emphasizes here that the Buddhist study of the self is not done on one’s own but always guided by scripture and the instruction of teachers. Moreover, it is not done solely for one’s own edification but also in order to share that study with others.

These remarks occupy the first half of his essay. For the remainder of the piece, Dōgen engages in an *ad hominem* attack on the influential twelfth-century Chan figure Dahui Zonggao, who liked to use the expression “self verifi-

cation and self awakening.” Dōgen dismisses him as an ambitious lightweight, never certified by his teachers. Dahui was the teacher of Zhuoan Deguang (1121-1203), whose Japanese dharma descendants made up the leadership of Dōgen’s community; and this section is often read as a contribution to their re-education. Dahui was in the Linji lineage; and Dōgen ends his essay with the claim that only his own Caodong lineage represents the line of direct descent of the buddhas and ancestors.

The Samādhi of Self Verification

From the buddhas, from the Seven Buddhas, what buddha after buddha and ancestor after ancestor has correctly transmitted is the samādhi of practice and verification. It is what is called “whether from a friend, whether from a scripture”; this is the eye of the buddhas and ancestors.¹

Therefore,

The Old Buddha of Caoqi [I.e., the Sixth Ancestor, Huineng (638-713)] asked the monk [Nanyue Huairang (677-744)], “Is it [i.e., “what comes like this”] contingent on practice and verification?”

The monk answered, “It’s not that it lacks practice and verification, but they can’t defile it.”

Thus, we know that undefiled practice and verification are the buddhas and ancestors, are the thunder and lightening of the samādhi of the buddha and ancestors.

At the very moment of “whether from a friend,” we may see half his face; we may see half his body; we may see his whole face; we

may see his whole body. There is seeing half oneself; there is seeing half the other. We verify that the spirit’s head is “clad in fur”; we practice that the demon’s face is “crowned by horns.”² There is the “coming along with it” of the “moving of alien types”; there is the going on transforming of those “born together.” In such circumstances, we do not know how many thousand of myriads of times we “discard the body for the sake of the dharma”; we do not know how many millions of hundreds of kalpas we seek the dharma for the sake of our bodies. This is the way of life of “whether from a friend,” the circumstances of “attending the self and following the self.” Upon seeing him [i.e., Śākyamuni] blink, he [Mahākāśyapa] “broke into a smile”; he [i.e., the Second Ancestor, Huike] paid obeisance to getting the marrow [of Bodhidharma] and “cut off his arm.”

More generally, before and after the Seven Buddhas, to the left and right of the Sixth Ancestor, the friends in excess who have seen themselves are not one, are not two; the friends who have seen the other are not past, are not present.

At the time of “whether from a role of scripture,” when we investigate our own “skin, flesh, bones, and marrow” and slough off our own “skin, flesh, bones, and marrow,” the peach blossoms and the eye themselves are seen to come popping out; the bamboo sound and the ear themselves are heard to thunder.³ In general, when we study from a scripture, the scripture truly emerges. This “scripture” means the entire world in the ten directions; “the mountains, rivers, and the whole earth”; grass and trees, self and other; it is taking food and wearing robes, hasty acts and demeanor. In studying

the way from each one of these scriptures, so many thousands of myriads of previously non-existent scriptures appear before us. They have passages in positive terms, exactly so; they have verses in negative terms, distinctly so. Having been able to encounter them, when we take up body and mind and study them, though we may exhaust long kalpas and take up long kalpas, there will invariably be an unobstructed destination. When we cast aside body and mind and study them, though we may gouge out the portents and jump free from the portents, the merit of receiving and upholding them will invariably be attained.

At present, the translations of the Sanskrit texts of the Western Heavens [i.e., India] into the dharma books of the Eastern Land [i.e., China] do not amount to half a myriad spindles [i.e., 5000 scrolls]. There are the [texts of] three vehicles, the five vehicles, the nine sections, the twelve sections. They are all scriptures we should follow and study; even if we try to avoid following them, we cannot. Hence, they have become the eye, or become “my marrow”; they are right at the horns and right at the tail. Though we may receive them from another or confer them on another, it is just the vital emergence of the eye, sloughing off self and other; it is just the bequest of “my marrow,” liberated from self and other. Because the eye and “my marrow” are not self and are not other, the buddhas and ancestors have directly transmitted them from the past to the present, and bequeath them from the present to the present. There are staff scriptures; preaching horizontally and preaching vertically, they themselves break up emptiness and break up being. There are whisk scriptures; they clean off

the snow and clean off the frost.⁴ There are one or two assemblies of seated meditation scriptures; there is one roll or ten spindles of *kāṣāya* scriptures. These are what the buddhas and ancestors protect and maintain. Following such scriptures, they practice and verify and attain the way. Causing a deva face or a human face, or a sun face or moon face, the work of following scripture is realized.

Nevertheless, whether one follows a friend or follows scripture, they are both following oneself. Scriptures are themselves scriptures of oneself; friends are themselves friends of oneself. Therefore, to study widely with a friend is to study widely with oneself; to take up the hundred grasses is to take up oneself; to take up the myriad trees is to take up oneself. We study that one’s self is always such concentrated effort. In this study, we slough off our selves, we accord with and verify our selves.

Based on this, in the great way of the buddhas and ancestors, there is a tool for self verification and self awakening that is not directly transmitted by those who are not buddhas and ancestors of direct succession; there is a tool inherited by successor after successor that is not directly transmitted to those who are not the bones and marrow of the buddhas and ancestors. Because we study in this way, when we transmit it to someone, there is a bequest of [Bodhidharma’s saying to Huike,] “you’ve got my marrow”; it is [Śākyamuni’s saying,] “I have a Treasury of the True Dharma Eye, which I bequeath to Mahākāśyapa.” Preaching for someone’s sake does not necessarily have to do with self or other: preaching for the sake of the other is preaching for one’s own sake; it is a

hearing and preaching in which self and self study together. One ear hears, and one ear preaches; one tongue preaches and one tongue hears; and so on in the same way for eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind, and organ, consciousness, and object. Further, they each have a body and mind, which verifies and which practices. The ear itself hears and preaches; the tongue itself hears and preaches. Yesterday, we may preach an indeterminate dharma for another's sake; but today, a determinate dharma is preached for our sake. Such sun faces are lined up and moon faces are lined up. To preach the dharma, to practice the dharma, for the sake of another is to hear the dharma, to clarify the dharma, to verify the dharma, in lifetime after lifetime. In this life as well, we are preaching for the sake of others; yet, when we do it with a sincere mind, we ourselves easily attain the dharma. Or, when we help and encourage others to hear the dharma, our own study of the dharma gains good advantage; it gains an advantage in our bodies, and it gains an advantage in our minds. Those who obstruct [others from] hearing the dharma are themselves obstructed from hearing the dharma. To preach the dharma, to hear the dharma, in body after body of life after life is to hear the dharma in generation after generation: the dharma that we directly transmitted previously, we now hear again in this generation. Since we are born in the dharma and expire in the dharma, when we have directly transmitted the dharma in the entire world in the ten directions, we hear it in life after life, we practice it in body after body. Since we manifest life after life in the dharma and make body after body into the dharma, we take up both one mote of dust and the dharma

realm and let the dharma be verified.

Thus, hearing a phrase in the east, we should come to the west and teach it to someone. This is by a single self, working equally at hearing and preaching, practicing and verifying equally our eastern self and western self. Whatever we do, we should rejoice in, hope for, and aspire to bringing near to our bodies and minds, and living by, the dharma of the buddhas and the way of the ancestors. We should live by them from one hour to one day, from one year to one lifetime. We should play with the buddha dharma as the spirit. This is what it means not to pass life after life in vain.

However, do not think that we should not teach others when we have not yet got clear ourselves. If we wait to be clear, we will not be able to do it for countless kalpas. Even should we clarify human buddhas, we must still clarify deva buddhas. Even should we clarify the mind of mountains, we must still clarify the mind of waters. Even should we clarify dharmas arising from causing and conditions, we must still clarify dharmas not arising from causes and conditions. Even should we clarify the vicinity of the buddhas and ancestors, we must still clarify [what is] “beyond the buddhas and ancestors.” To imagine that we will clarify these in one lifetime and then teach them to others is not making concentrated effort, is not being resolute, is not studying.

In general, in studying the way of the buddhas and ancestors, once we have studied a single dharma or a single behavior, we let our determination to help others “assault the heavens.” Through this, we slough off self and other. Going further, when we study and master our-

selves, it is our previous study and mastery of the other; when we study and master the other, it is study and mastery of ourselves. This Buddhist behavior, even those of innate knowledge cannot personally realize if it is not received from a teacher. Those of innate knowledge, if they have not encountered a teacher, do not know non-innate knowledge, they do not know non-innate non-knowledge. They may have innate knowledge, but they cannot know the great way of the buddhas and ancestors; they must study it to know it. Personally to realize oneself and personally to realize the other, is the great way of the buddhas and ancestors. Reflecting on our own study as beginners, we should study together the study of others' study as beginners. When self and other go on studying together from their time as beginners, they reach an ultimate study together. Like our own concentrated effort, we should encourage the concentrated effort of others.

However, upon hearing the words "self verification," "self awakening," and the like, crude people think that one should not receive transmission from a teacher but should study on one's own. This is a big mistake. To be without instruction from a teacher, reckoning mistakenly with the discriminations of the thinking of one's own understanding, is the alien way of spontaneity of Sindh in the west.⁵ How could those types who do not discern this be people of the way of the buddhas? Not to mention that, upon hearing the term "self verification," if we reckon it to be the accumulated five aggregates, it will be the same as the self control of the lesser vehicle. There are many of the types unable to distinguish between the greater vehicle and the lesser vehicle who call them-

selves descendants of the buddhas and ancestors. However, among those with clear eyes, who would be deceived by them?

* * * * *

In the land of the Great Song, during the Shaoxing [era, 1131-1162], there was a certain Zonggao, the Chan master Dahui of Mount Jing [i.e., Dahui Zonggao (1089-1163)]. Originally a student of the sūtras and treatises, during his wanderings, he became a follower of the Chan master Chen of Xuanzhou [i.e., Mingjiao Shaochen (dates unknown)], under whom he studied the comments on old cases by Yunmen [Yunmen Wenyan (864-949)], as well as the verses and comments on old cases by Xuedou [Xuedou Chongxian (980-1052)]; this was the beginning of his study. Failing to understand the style of Yunmen, he eventually studied with the venerable Wei of Dongshan [Dongshan Daowei (dates unknown)]; but, in the end, Wei did not admit him into the interior of the hall. Venerable Wei was a dharma child of the venerable [Caodong master] Furong [Furong Daokai (1043-1118)]; he should not be compared to some insignificant person in the last seat. Though the Chan master Gao may have studied with him for quite some time, he was unable to get a feel for Wei's "skin, flesh, bones, and marrow," much less know that the eye in the dust even exists.

Once, upon hearing that, in the way of the buddhas and ancestors, there is the [dharma transmission] procedure of [burning] incense on the forearm and [receiving] a succession document, he repeatedly begged a succession

document of Venerable Wei.

Venerable Wei, however, did not approve, finally saying,

“If you want succession to the dharma, do not be hasty. You should make effort and pursue your study. The conferral of the bud-dhas and ancestors is not transferred indiscriminately. I do not begrudge conferring it; it is just that you still do not possess the eye.”

At this point, Zonggao replied, “The true eye originally possessed is self verified and self awakened. How could it be conferred indiscriminately?”

Venerable Wei laughed and retired.

Thereafter, [Zonggao] studied with the Venerable Zhantang Zhun [Zhantang Wenzhun (1061-1115)].

One day, Zhantang asked Zonggao, “Why is your nose half missing today?”

Gao said, “In the tradition of Baofeng.” Zhantang said, “Illiterate Chan monk.”⁶

Once when Gao was looking at a sūtra, Zhantang asked him, “What sūtra are you looking at?”

Gao said, “The *Diamond Sūtra*.”

Zhantang said, “This dharma is equal, without high or low. Why is Mount Yunju high and Mount Baofeng low?”

Gao said, “This dharma is equal, without high or low.”

Zhantang said, “You’ve become quite the chief seat,” and sent him away.⁷

Again, one day, Zhantang, looking at depictions of the ten kings [of the underworld], asked the upper seat Zonggao, “What’s this official’s name?”

Gao said, “His name is Liang.”

Zhantang felt his own head and said,

“Why is the one named Liang missing the headdress?”

Gao said, “He may not have the headdress, but the nose looks just the same.”

Zhantang said, “Illiterate Chan monk.”⁸

One day, Zhantang asked Zonggao, “Upper seat Gao, you understood my Chan here at once. I have you teach it, and you can teach it. I have you study it, and you can study it. I have you do verses on the old cases, comments on the old cases, small convocations, public sermons, requests for instruction, and you can do them. There’s just one thing still missing. Do you know what it is?”

Gao said, “What thing is missing?”

Zhantang said, “You just lack this one understanding: Ha! So long as you don’t get this one understanding, when I’m talking with you in the abbot’s quarters, you have Chan, but, as soon as you leave the abbot’s quarters, you don’t; when you’re wide awake and thinking, you have Chan, but, as soon as you go to sleep, you don’t. If you’re like this, how can you confront life and death?”

Gao said, “This is exactly what I have doubts about.”

Some years later, Zhantang became ill. Zonggao asked him, “After the Reverend’s hundredth year, on whom should Zonggao rely to comprehend this great matter?”

Zhantang advised him, “There is a certain Qin Bazi [i.e., the famed Linji master Yuanwu Keqin (1063-1135)]. I don’t know him, but if you happen to meet him, you will definitely be able to complete this matter. Once you’ve met him, don’t wander off to others. Study Chan when you come back in the next life.”

When we examine this case, Zhangtang did not accept Zonggao. While he sought repeatedly to discover it, he still lacked the “one thing.” He did not fill in the “one thing”; he did not slough off the “one thing.” Previously, the Venerable Wei denied him a document of succession, urging him on by saying, “You’re not ready.” We should trust the clarity of the Venerable Wei’s insight into his abilities. “This is exactly what I have doubts about”: he did not investigate this; he did not slough it off; he did not break through it; he did not have “the great doubt” about it; he was not obstructed by the doubt. Previously, his recklessly begging a document of succession was precipitate, was an extreme case of one lacking the mind of the way, was a flagrant case of lacking “learning from the ancients.” We have to say he was thoughtless; we have to say he was not fit for the way; he was an extreme case of neglect of study. From his “lust for fame and love of profit,” he would violate the interior of the hall of the buddhas and ancestors. How pitiful that he did not know the words of the buddhas and ancestors. Because he did not understand that learning from the ancients is self verification, and had not heard, had not studied, that perusing the myriad generations is self awakening, he had this kind of error, he had this kind of “self mistake.” Because he was like this, among the followers of the Chan master Zonggao, there is not one or one half with a real “nose grip”; most of them are fakes and inferiors. Failure to understand the buddha dharma, and failure not to understand the buddha dharma, are like this. Monks of the present should study in detail; do not be neglectful.

On Zhangtang’s advice, following Zhangtang’s quiescence, Zonggao studied with the Chan master Yuanwu at Tianning [monastery] in the capital [at Bianjing]. One day, when Yuanwu ascended the [dharma] hall [for a formal convocation], Zonggao had a spiritual awakening. He reported his awakening to Yuanwu.

Wu said, “Not yet. You may be like this, but the great dharma is not yet clarified.”

Again, one day, when Yuanwu ascended the hall, he took up the words of Venerable Yan of Wuzu [i.e., Yuanwu’s teacher, Wuzu Fayan (d. 1104)] on affirmation and denial. Upon hearing it, Zonggao attained the dharma of great bliss. Again he expressed his understanding to Yuanwu.

Yuanwu laughed and said, “I didn’t trick you?”

This is the story of the Chan master Zonggao’s later studying with Yuanwu. He served as secretary in Yuanwu’s congregation. Nevertheless, we do not see that he had any new attainments before or after; and, in his own public sermons and formal convocations, he does not bring up any attainments. We should recognize that, while his biographer [Zhang Jun] wrote that he had a “spiritual awakening” and “attained the dharma of great bliss,” we need not make anything of this. Do not take it seriously: he was just an ordinary student.

The Chan master Yuanwu was an old buddha, most honored in the ten directions. After Huangbo [i.e., the famous ninth-century figure Huangbo Xiyun], there is no venerable like Yuanwu; he was an old buddha who must be rare even in the other world. Nevertheless,

there are few humans or gods who recognize this; ours is a sad Sahā land. If we examine the upper seat Zonggao by holding up the teachings of the old buddha Yuanwu, it is as if he lacked wisdom approaching his master's, lacked wisdom equaling his master's; how much less did he ever see, even in his dreams, wisdom exceeding his master's.

Thus, we should realize that the talents of the Chan master Zonggao did not amount to “reducing the teacher's merits by half.” He just memorized and conveyed a few passages of the *Huayan*, the *Laṅkāvatāra* [sutras], and the like; he still lacked the bones and marrow of the buddhas and ancestors. Zonggao thought that the view maintained by major and minor hermits simply taken by the spirits that “adhere to the grasses and attach to the trees” — that this was the buddha dharma. Given that he accepted this as the buddha dharma, it is clear that he never investigated the great way of the buddhas and ancestors. After Yuanwu, he did not travel to others or consult friends; he brazenly headed up the monks as the master of great monasteries. The words he has left us do not reach the vicinity of the great dharma. Those who do not know, however, think that the Chan master Zonggao owes no apologies even to the ancients; those who see and know are certain that he did not understand. In the end, he did not understand the great dharma but just meaninglessly ran his mouth, blah, blah.

Thus, we know that the Reverend Wei of Dongshan was truly a clear mirror on the future and was not mistaken. The resentment of and hostility toward Reverend Wei among those, to the last, who studied with the Chan master Zonggao remains unabated even now.

Reverend Wei simply failed to acknowledge him; the Reverend Zhang's failure to acknowledge him was even more severe than Wei's: at every encounter, he did nothing but point out his mistakes. Yet, they do not resent the Reverend Zhang. How shameful are those in present and past who resent [Reverend Wei].

Generally speaking, although there are many in the land of the Great Song who call themselves descendants of the buddhas and ancestors, since there are few who have studied the real thing, there are few who teach the real thing. That point can be clearly seen in this case as well. It was like this even in the Shaoxing period; now things are even worse than then, beyond compare. Nowadays, those who do not even know what the great way of the buddhas and ancestors is supposed to be have become the leaders of the monks.

We should understand that, with regard to the direct transmission of the documents of succession of buddha after buddha and ancestor after ancestor in the Western Heavens and the Eastern Land, that under Mount Qingyuan is the direct transmission. After the line of Mount Qingyuan, naturally it was directly transmitted by Dongshan.⁹ This is something unknown to others in the ten directions; those who know it are all descendants of Dongshan, who spread his name among the monks. The Chan master Zonggao throughout his life did not understand the words “self verification” and “self awakening,” much less did he master any other kōan. How much less, then, among the latecomers after the Chan elder Zonggao could anyone understand the words “self verification.”⁷

Thus, speaking of the self and speaking of the other in the way of the buddhas and ances-

tors always has the body and mind of the buddhas and ancestors, the eye of the buddhas and ancestors. Since it is the bones and marrow of the buddhas and ancestors, it is not the skin got by the mediocre.

Treasury of the True Dharma Eye
The Samādhi of Self Verification
Number 69

Presented to the assembly at Kippō Monastery,
in the domain of Etsu,
twenty-ninth day, second month of kinoe-
tatsu, the second year of Kangen [8 April 1244]

Notes

1. **“The samādhi of practice and verification”** (*shushō zanmai*): Some manuscripts read here *jishō zanmai* (“the samādhi of self verification”). **“Whether from a friend, whether from scripture”** (*waku jū chishiki waku jū kyōkan*): I.e., whether [one’s understanding of Buddhism derives] from a teacher or from a text.

2. **“The spirit’s head is clad in fur”** (*jinzū no himō seru*); **“the demon’s face is crowned by horns”** (*kimen no taikaku seru*): Combining two self-deprecating references to monks: “spirit heads and demon faces” (*jinzū kimen*; i.e., “weird things”), and “clad in fur and crowned by horns” (*himō taikaku* 披毛戴角; i.e., “beastly”).

“There is the ‘coming along with it’ of the ‘moving of alien types’; there is the going on transforming of those ‘born together’” (*irui gyō no zui ta rai ari dōjō shō no hen’i ko ari*): Perhaps meaning something like, “[practice and

verification involve] ‘coming back’ to help others and ‘going on’ transforming oneself.”

3. **“The peach blossoms and the eye”** (*tōka ganzei*); **“The bamboo sound and the ear”** (*chikusei nikon*): Allusion to famous stories of awakening upon seeing peach blossoms and hearing the sound of bamboo.

4. **“Staff scriptures”** (*jujō kyō*); **“whisk scriptures”** (*hossu kyō*): I.e., the master’s ceremonial staff and fly whisk as a scriptures.

5. **“The alien way of spontaneity of Sindh in the west”** (*Saiten no tennen gedō*): I.e., the non-Buddhist religious teaching of India that denies the laws of cause and effect.

6. **“In the tradition of Baofeng”** (*Hōhō monka*): A reference to Zhantang’s monastery, the Baofengsi, in modern Jiangxi prefecture.

7. **“Chief seat”** (*zasu*): A head monk, a lecturer; likely used here sarcastically, in the sense “know it all” or “smart ass.”

8. **“The one named Liang”** (*Shō Ryō tei*): Zhangtang’s lay surname was Liang.

9. **“That under Mount Qingyuan is the direct transmission”** (*Seigenzanka kore shōden nari*): I.e., the lineage of the Sixth Ancestor’s disciple Qingyuan Xingsi (660-740) is the main line of descent.

“Dongshan” (*Tōzan*): I.e., Dongshan Liangjie (807-869), in the fourth generation after Qingyuan; founder of Dōgen’s Caodong (Sōtō) lineage.