

GENJO KOAN

As all things are buddha-dharma there is delusion and realization
practice and birth and death and there are buddhas and sentient beings

As the myriad things are without an abiding self there is no delusion
no realization no buddha no sentient being no birth and death

The Buddha way is basically leaping clear of the many and the one
thus there are birth and death delusion and realization
sentient beings and buddhas

Yet in attachment blossoms fall and in aversion weeds spread
To carry yourself forward and experience myriad things is delusion
That myriad things come forth and experience themselves is awakening

Those who have great realization of delusion are buddhas
those who are greatly deluded about realization are sentient beings
Further there are those who continue realizing beyond realization
who are in delusion throughout delusion

When buddhas are truly buddhas they do not necessarily notice
that they are buddhas

However they are actualized buddhas who go on actualizing buddhas

When you see forms or hear sounds fully engaging body-and-mind
you grasp things directly

Unlike things and their reflections in the mirror and unlike the moon
and its reflection in the water when one side is illumined the other side is dark

To study the Buddha way is to study the self

To study the self is to forget the self

To forget the self is to be actualized by myriad things
When actualized by myriad things your body and mind
as well as the bodies and minds of others drop away

No trace of realization remains and this no-trace continues endlessly

When you first seek dharma you imagine you are far away from its environs
But dharma is already correctly transmitted you are immediately your original self

When you ride in a boat and watch the shore
you might assume that the shore is moving

But when you keep your eyes closely on the boat you can see that the boat moves

Similarly if you examine myriad things with a confused body and mind
you might suppose that your mind and nature are permanent

When you practice intimately and return to where you are
it will be clear that nothing at all has unchanging self

Firewood becomes ash and it does not become firewood again
Yet do not suppose that the ash is future and the firewood past
You should understand that firewood abides in the phenomenal expression of firewood
which fully includes past and future and is independent of past and future
Ash abides in the phenomenal expression of ash which fully includes future and past
Just as firewood does not become firewood again after it is ash
you do not return to birth after death
This being so it is an established way in buddha-dharma
to deny that birth turns into death
Accordingly birth is understood as no-birth
It is an unshakable teaching in Buddha's discourse that death does not turn into birth
Accordingly death is understood as no-death
Birth is an expression complete this moment
Death is an expression complete this moment
They are like winter and spring
You do not call winter the beginning of spring nor summer the end of spring
Enlightenment is like the moon reflected on the water
The moon does not get wet nor is the water broken
Although its light is wide and great the moon is reflected even in a puddle an inch wide
The whole moon and the entire sky are reflected in dewdrops on the grass
or even in one drop of water
Enlightenment does not divide you just as the moon does not break the water
You cannot hinder enlightenment just as a drop of water
does not hinder the moon in the sky
The depth of the drop is the height of the moon
Each reflection however long or short its duration
manifests the vastness of the dewdrop
and realizes the limitlessness of the moonlight in the sky
When dharma does not fill your whole body and mind
you think it is already sufficient
When dharma fills your body and mind you understand that something is missing
For example when you sail out in a boat to the middle of an ocean
where no land is in sight and view the four directions
the ocean looks circular and does not look any other way
But the ocean is neither round nor square its features are infinite in variety
It is like a palace It is like a jewel
It only looks circular as far as you can see at that time
All things are like this

Though there are many features in the dusty world and the world beyond conditions
you see and understand only what your eye of practice can reach
In order to learn the nature of the myriad things you must know that although
they may look round or square the other features of oceans and mountains
are infinite in variety whole worlds are there
It is so not only around you but also directly beneath your feet or in a drop of water
A fish swims in the ocean and no matter how far it swims there is no end to the water
A bird flies in the sky and no matter how far it flies there is no end to the air
However the fish and the bird have never left their elements
When their activity is large their field is large
When their need is small their field is small
Thus each of them totally covers its full range
and each of them totally experiences its realm
If the bird leaves the air it will die at once
If the fish leaves the water it will die at once
Know that the water is life and air is life
The bird is life and the fish is life
Life must be the bird and life must be the fish
It is possible to illustrate this with more analogies
Practice enlightenment and people are like this
Now if a bird or a fish tries to reach the end of its element before moving in it
this bird or this fish will not find its way or its place
When you find your place where you are practice occurs
actualizing the fundamental point
When you find your way at this moment practice occurs
actualizing the fundamental point
for the place the way is neither large nor small neither yours nor others'
The place the way has not carried over from the past and it is not merely arising now
Accordingly in the practice-enlightenment of the Buddha way
meeting one thing is mastering it doing one practice is practicing completely
Here is the place here the way unfolds
The boundary of realization is not distinct for the realization
comes forth simultaneously with the mastery of buddha-dharma
Do not suppose that what you realize becomes your knowledge
and is grasped by your consciousness
Although actualized immediately the inconceivable may not be apparent
Its appearance is beyond your knowledge

Zen master Baoche of Mt. Mayu was fanning himself
A monk approached and said
“Master the nature of wind is permanent and there is no place it does not reach
Why then do you fan yourself?”
“Although you understand that the nature of the wind is permanent” Baoche replied
“you do not understand the meaning of its reaching everywhere”
“What is the meaning of its reaching everywhere?” asked the monk again
The master just kept fanning himself
The monk bowed deeply
The actualization of the buddha-dharma
the vital path of its correct transmission is like this
If you say that you do not need to fan yourself because the nature of wind
is permanent and you can have wind without fanning
you will understand neither permanence nor the nature of wind
The nature of wind is permanent
because of that the wind of the Buddha’s house
brings forth the gold of the earth and makes fragrant the cream of the long river

Actualizing the Fundamental Point (Master Dogen 1200-1253)