

(Doshi to Altar-Incense)

TITLE (Kokyo Solo):

SHUSHOGI-I-I ○

The Meaning of Practice and Verification

(Doshi to Mat-3 Prostration Bows)

I. General Introduction

1. The most important issue of all for Buddhists
is the thorough clarification of the meaning of birth and death
If the buddha is within birth and death there is no birth and death
Simply understand that birth and death are in themselves nirvana
there is no birth and death to be hated nor nirvana to be desired
Then for the first time we will be freed from birth and death
To master this problem is of supreme importance

○ (Doshi Kneels)

2. It is difficult to be born as a human being
it is rare to encounter the buddha-dharma

Now thanks to our good deeds in the past not only have we been born as humans
we have also encountered the buddha-dharma
Within the realm of birth and death this good birth is the best
let us not waste our precious human lives
irresponsibly abandoning them to the winds of impermanence

3. Impermanence is unreliable

we know not on what roadside grasses the dew of our transient life will fall
Our bodies are not our own our lives shift with the passing days
and cannot be stopped for even an instant
Once rosy-cheeked youth has gone we cannot find even its traces
Careful reflection shows that most things once gone by
will never be encountered again
In the face of impermanence there is no help from kings
statesmen relatives servants spouses children or wealth
We must enter the realm of death alone
accompanied only by our good and bad karma

4. Avoid associating with deluded people in this world
who are ignorant of the truth of causality and karmic retribution
who are heedless of past present and future and cannot distinguish good from evil

The principle of causality is obvious and impersonal
for inevitably those who do evil fall and those who do good rise
If there were no causality the buddhas would not have appeared in this world
nor would Bodhidharma have come from the west

5. The karmic consequences of good and evil occur at three different times

The first is retribution experienced in our present life
the second is retribution experienced in the life following this one
and the third is retribution experienced in subsequent lives

In practicing the way of the buddhas and ancestors
from the start we should study and clarify
the principle of karmic retribution in these three times

○ (Doshi to Altar-Incense)

Otherwise we will often make mistakes and fall into false views
Not only will we fall into false views we will fall into evil births
and undergo long periods of suffering

○ (Doshi to Mat-Stands in Shassu)

6. Understand that in this birth we have only one life not two or three

How regrettable it is if falling into false views
we are subject to the consequences of evil deeds
Because we think that it is not evil even as we do evil

(Doshi in Gassho)

- and falsely imagine that there will be no consequences of evil
- there is no way for us to avoid those consequences