

## On That Which Comes Like This

(*Immo*)

**Translator’s Introduction:** *Immo* is a word that comes from colloquial Sung dynasty Chinese. English equivalents would include ‘this’, ‘that’, ‘thus’, ‘in this way or manner’, ‘like this’, and ‘in such a way as this’. It was used by the Chinese Zen Masters to designate ‘That Which Is’, the Ultimate Reality which goes beyond any words we can employ to describe It. The word was also used when describing someone who knows through direct experience what the term ‘That Which Is’ is pointing to, namely, ‘such a person’ or ‘such a one’.

Dōyō of Mount Ungo was a Dharma heir of Tōzan. He was a Dharma descendant of the thirty-ninth generation from Shakyamuni Buddha, and he is the rightful ancestral heir of Tōzan’s tradition. One day, Dōyō gave Teaching to his assembly, saying: “If you wish to experience That Which Is, you need to be ‘such a person’.\* If you are already ‘such a person’, why be worried about experiencing That Which Is?” In other words, any who wish to realize the Great Matter\* of That Which Is must themselves be ‘such a person’. Since they are already ‘such a person’, why would they be worried about experiencing That Which Is? The point of this is that the supreme enlightenment we are heading for is what, for the present, I am calling *immo*. This condition of supreme enlightenment is such that even the whole universe in all the ten quarters is but a trifling bit of supreme enlightenment, and that enlightenment is far beyond the whole universe. Even we are all merely accessories within this whole universe in all the ten quarters. And by what means are we to know that That Which Is exists? In a word, we know that it is so because both our body and mind together make their appearance within the whole universe, yet neither is ours to possess.

This body is already not ‘me’ and each life flows on through time; it is beyond our ability to halt it for even a moment. Where has the ruddy face of our youth gone? Were we to seek it out, it has left not a trace. When we look deeply, we see that the myriad things of the past will not come back again. A heart that is sincere, likewise, does not remain fixed, but comes and goes, moment by moment. We may say that there is truth in this sincere heart, but it is not something that

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\* See *Glossary*.

lingers behind within the vicinity of a personal self. Even so, there is something that unboundedly gives rise to the intention to realize enlightenment. After this intention has arisen, we abandon those things that we used to play around with, desiring to hear what we have not yet heard and seeking to realize what we have not yet realized—and this is not solely something of our own doing. Keep in mind that, because you are ‘such a person’, this is so. How do we know that we are ‘such a person’? Just by our wishing to gain the experiencing of That Which Is do we know that we are ‘such a person’. You already have the countenance of ‘such a person’, so you must not worry yourself now over experiencing That Which Is. Even though you may be worried, this is also an experiencing of That Which Is, and It is beyond being something to worry about. Further, you should not be surprised that the experience of That Which Is is present in such a state. Even though you are in such a state of surprise and doubt, this too is That Which Is. And That Which Is is also described as being beyond surprise. This state cannot be measured by the reckoning of a Buddha, or by the reckoning of the mind, or by the reckoning of the Dharma Realm, or by the reckoning of the whole universe. It will simply be “Since you are already ‘such a person’, why are you worried about experiencing That Which Is?”

So, the True Nature of sound, color, and form is That Which Is, the True Nature of body and mind is That Which Is, and the True Nature of Buddhas is That Which Is. For example, we understand that when we fall, we rely on the ground being there, as it is, existing just as it is, and that when we get up, we rely on the ground being there, existing just as it is, so we should not be surprised that our falling down has also relied on the ground being there.<sup>1</sup>

There is a Teaching that has been voiced from ancient times, one that has been voiced in India and from the heavens above. It says in effect, “If, because of the ground, you fall down, you will get up, also because of the ground: should you try to get up independent of the ground, ultimately, that is impossible.” In other words, those who fall down on the ground will invariably get up on the ground. Were they to attempt to get up apart from the ground, they will not succeed.

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1. In this section of the discourse, references to ‘the ground’ have more than one meaning. When we fall (that is, act contrary to a Precept), we rely on ‘hitting the ground’ somewhere along the line, and we depend on this ‘grounding’ to help us get up and go on, trying to keep to the Precepts. At the same time, what we are ultimately relying on is That Which is Our Spiritual Ground. Further on in the discourse, Dōgen will use the phrase ‘by relying on the ground’ in the sense of relying on what is concrete in our life, which cannot be relied on except in relation to That Which Is Like Empty Space. When we fall while relying on this Empty Space, we can arise by admitting to the things that we have done.

Following through on what has just been described, we take it as an expression of the beauty of a great awakening and have made it into a path for freeing ourselves from body and mind. Therefore, should someone ask us what the principle underlying ‘realizing the Way of all Buddhas’ is, we would say that it is like someone who has fallen to the ground relying on the Ground for arising. When you explore this through your training with a Master, you need to penetrate into and rise above the past, the future, and this very moment of the present. Whether we are really awake or unawakened, whether we return to our delusions or lose our delusions, whether we are hindered by ‘awakening’ or hindered by delusion—all of these illustrate the principle of someone who has fallen on the ground relying on the Ground to get up. This is an expression of the Way of those in the heavens above and the earth below: it is an expression of the Way in both India and the lands to the east. It is an expression of the Way from the past to the present and into the future: it is an expression of the Way of Old Buddhas and of New Buddhas. And further, this expression of the Way is never incomplete in its expression, nor does its Truth ever wane.

Be that as it may, to understand the expression only in this way and to fail to understand it in any other way is as if one had not explored this statement thoroughly with one’s Master. Even though the expression of an Old Buddha has been passed on to us in such a manner, yet, when as an Old Buddha ourselves, we hear the expression of an Old Buddha, we will be hearing That which transcends Buddhahood.

Although it was not stated in India or in lofty circles, there is another principle being asserted here. Namely, if someone who has fallen on the ground should seek to arise by relying on the ground, though he spends immeasurable eons at the task, he will never be able to get up. He can get up by means of the one single, absolute Path. That is, someone who has fallen on the ground arises by relying on Empty Space, and someone who has fallen in empty space can arise by relying on the Ground. If there were no ‘That Which Is’, one could not rise. All the Buddhas and all the Ancestors were no different from this.

Were someone to ask such a question as, “How far apart are Empty Space and the Ground?” you should reply, “Empty Space and the Ground are a hundred and eight thousand miles apart. If you should fall upon the ground, by all means get up by relying on Empty Space, for ultimately there is no such principle as arising apart from Empty Space. If you should fall while relying upon empty space, you will unquestionably arise by relying on the Ground, for ultimately there is no such principle as arising apart from the Ground.” If someone has never asserted the

Matter like this, that person has never known or seen the dimensions of Ground and Empty Space.



Our Seventeenth Ancestral Master, the Venerable Sōgyanandai, declared Kayashata to be his Dharma heir. One time, upon hearing a temple bell that was hanging in a hall being rung by the wind, he asked Kayashata, “Is it the wind we hear or is it the bell we hear?”

Kayashata replied, “It is beyond the sounding of the wind and beyond the sounding of the bell: it is the sounding of my own Mind.”

The Venerable Sōgyanandai asked, “And, say, just what is your own Mind?”

Kayashata replied, “It is equivalent to saying that everything is altogether tranquil in its stillness.”

The Venerable Sōgyanandai said, “Well done! Excellently done! Who other than you, my disciple, could succeed to our Way!” Thereupon, he Transmitted to Kayashata the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching.

Here, in a state beyond the sounding of the wind, we learn what the sound of our Mind is. When we are beyond what the sounding of the bell is, we learn what the sound of our Mind is. Even though the sound of our Mind is like this, everything is, nonetheless, altogether tranquil in its stillness.

This story was Transmitted from India to the eastern lands, and from ancient times to the present day. It has been considered a standard for learning the Way, but many have misunderstood it, saying, “Kayashata’s assertion that it is neither the sounding of the wind nor the sounding of the bell but the sounding of our mind means that, at the very moment of when a sound occurs, there is an arising of discriminative thought, and this arising of discriminative thought is what we call ‘mind’. If this mental awareness did not exist, how could we possibly be conscious of a ringing sound? Since hearing results from this awareness, we can certainly call it the foundation of hearing, which is why he said that it is the sounding of his mind.” This is a false understanding. Such people say things like this because they lack the assistance of a genuine teacher. For instance, it is comparable to the interpretations of scholars who write commentaries on topics like subjectivism and proximate conceptualization. Commentaries like these are not profound explorations of the words of a Buddha.

On the other hand, those who have explored the Matter with a genuine heir of the Buddha’s Way speak of the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching

on supreme enlightenment in terms of ‘stillness’ and ‘not acting willfully’ and ‘meditative states’ and ‘invocations’. The underlying principle is, if one thought or thing is truly still, all the myriad thoughts and things are also still along with it. If the wind’s blowing is still, then the bell’s ringing will be still: hence, Kayashata spoke of everything being altogether tranquil in its stillness. He was saying that the sounding of Mind is beyond the sounds of the wind, and the sounding of Mind is beyond the sounds of the bell, and the sounding of Mind is beyond the sounds of the mind. Having diligently explored his realization of what is intimately connected with That Which Is, he was able to simply state it, and he could also have said that it is the sound of wind, the sound of bell, the sound of blowing, and the sound of sounding. It is not a matter of “Why be worried about experiencing That Which Is?” but rather of “Why get stuck on experiencing That Which Is?”



Before our Thirty-third Ancestor, Meditation Master Daikan Enō, had shaved his head, he was residing at Hosshō-ji Temple in Kuangchou Province, when he overheard two monks arguing. One was asserting that the banner was moving. The other was asserting that the wind was moving. The argument went on like this, back and forth without letup, until the Sixth Ancestor said, “It is not the wind that is moving, nor the banner that is moving: it is your minds, dear sirs, which are moving.”<sup>2</sup> Upon hearing this, the two monks forthwith accepted what he said.

These two monks were from India. What the Sixth Ancestor was asserting by speaking these words for their sake was that the wind, the banner, and the movement all exist within Mind. Though people today may hear the Sixth Ancestor’s words, they do not understand the Sixth Ancestor’s meaning. How much less can they put into words what the Sixth Ancestor is expressing! Why do I say this? Because hearing the words “You, dear sirs, are Mind moving,” people today take it as literally asserting, “It is your minds, dear sirs, which are moving,” and thus fail to encounter the Sixth Ancestor, or comprehend the Sixth Ancestor, or be a Dharma offspring of the Sixth Ancestor. Now, as descendants of the Sixth Ancestor, we can also say what the Sixth Ancestor said, and we can say it because we have obtained the Body, Hair, and Skin of the Sixth Ancestor. And we can state it this way, “Of course, your mind may move, but what is more, you yourselves,

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2. The Sixth Ancestor’s remark is ambiguous. Later in the text, Dōgen will interpret it as, “The matter is beyond the wind moving and beyond the banner moving: you are the Mind moving.”

dear sirs, Move.” Why do we say it in this way? Because That which is moving is ‘Moving’, and because ‘you, dear sirs,’ means you, dear sirs. And we have put it this way because all of you are already ‘such a one’.

In his former days, the Sixth Ancestor sold firewood in Hsinchou Province. He was thoroughly familiar with the mountains and the water, and, having put forth his efforts beneath the pine trees, he severed the roots. But how could he have known of the ancient Teachings that illumine the Mind when someone is seated at ease by the Bright Window, and from whom could he have learned about cleansing and removing stains?<sup>3</sup> He was in the marketplace when he heard someone reciting a Scripture. It was not something that he himself had expected, nor was it something that someone else had encouraged him to do. While still a child, he was bereft of his father, and, when he was grown, he took care of his mother. Little did he know that concealed beneath those clothes of his was a Jewel that would light up the heavens and the earth. Having suddenly been illumined by hearing the Scripture, he departed from his elderly mother and went searching for a good spiritual friend—all of which is uncommon behavior among human beings, for who can treat lightly the bonds of affection for one’s parents? But in attaching greater weight to the Dharma, he treated as lighter his debt of filial gratitude and renounced his worldly obligations. This is the principle expressed by the verse:

*When those who have spiritual wisdom hear It  
voiced,  
They are able to trust and understand It at once.*

What we call ‘spiritual wisdom’ cannot be learned from someone else, nor is it something that we ourselves give rise to. Since wisdom can Transmit wisdom, wisdom will seek out wisdom. The five hundred bats naturally had wisdom within themselves; moreover, they clung to neither their body nor their mind.<sup>4</sup> And when

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3. Although this sentence and the previous one have their literal meanings, there is also the metaphorical meaning of his having learned the Dharma as It is expressed by things in nature, and, through his devotion to his physical labor, he also learned how to sever the roots of his delusions. However, he was poor and illiterate, so he could not study Scriptures at his leisure, and he did not know of anyone under whose guidance he could do the spiritual practice of cleansing his karma.
  4. An allusion to a story of five hundred bats who were living in a tree. A traveler, passing by, stopped to build a fire to keep warm while he read a Scripture aloud. When the fire set the tree ablaze, the bats stayed where they were, preferring to be burned alive rather than miss hearing a single word of Scripture, and this they could do because they were not attached to body or mind.

the ten thousand swimming fish heard the Dharma, they were immediately able to understand It, not because of any conditions or causes, but simply because they had wisdom ever present within themselves.<sup>5</sup> It is not something that comes to us, nor is it something that enters us. For instance, it is like the Lord of the East meeting the spring.<sup>6</sup> Wisdom is beyond discriminative thought and beyond an absence of discriminative thinking, as well as beyond intentions and beyond an absence of intentions. Even less would it be related to something's being large or small, and even less still could we discuss it in terms of delusion and enlightenment! The point is that the Sixth Ancestor had no clue as to what the Buddha's Dharma was, never having heard It before, and therefore he was neither attached to It nor desirous of It. But once he heard the Dharma, he held his filial bonds to be less binding and put his false sense of self out of his mind. This happened because the body and mind of someone who has wisdom is already something that does not belong to any personal self. This is what is called 'being able to immediately trust and understand It'.

We do not know how many rounds of birth and death we have already spent returning again and again to various useless delusions, even while possessing this wisdom. It is like rocks covering up a jewel: the jewel is unaware that it is covered up by rocks and the rocks are unaware that they are covering up a jewel. When human beings recognize this jewel, they seize upon it. This is not something that the jewel expectantly awaits nor is it something that the rocks have been waiting for, and it does not depend on a spiritual awakening on the part of the rocks nor is it something that the jewel thinks about. That is to say, even though a human being and wisdom are unaware of each other, the Way is invariably overheard by the person's wisdom.

There is a saying in the *Lotus Scripture*:

*Those in whom wisdom is absent doubt that it exists  
And, by acting thus, they miss their chances for ever so long.*

Wisdom is not necessarily 'something that is present' and it is not necessarily 'something that is absent', but rather, at a certain moment, there is the presence of the pine trees of spring and the chrysanthemums of autumn are not to be found. At

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5. An allusion to ten thousand fish who were dying because the water in which they lived began to dry up. Upon hearing someone reading a Scripture aloud, they escaped from their suffering and were reborn as celestial beings in the Tushita Heaven.
  6. The Lord of the East is the spirit of springtime who shows up the moment that spring arrives.

the time of this absence of wisdom, the whole of the highest supreme enlightenment becomes something doubtful, and every thought and thing also becomes doubtful. At this time, one misses one's chances for ever so long by acting from this doubt. Words that should be heard and Dharma that should be awakened to both become something doubtful. In the whole universe—which we do not possess—there is nowhere that is hidden to us, for the whole universe is a single iron rod thousands of miles long, and no one possesses it. Even though twigs bud in accord with this, as the Lotus Scripture says:

*Within the Buddha lands in the ten quarters,  
There is only the Teaching of the One Vehicle.*

And even though leaves fall in accord with this, as the Lotus Scripture also says:

*The Dharma abides in Its place in the Dharma,  
And the forms of the world are ever recurring.*

Because this is already the way things are, wisdom's being present and wisdom's not being present is what the face of the sun is to the face of the moon.<sup>7</sup>



Because the Sixth Ancestor was 'such a person', he could clearly discern the Truth. Ultimately, he paid a visit to Mount Ōbai, prostrating himself before Meditation Master Daiman Kōnin, who allowed him to lodge in the servants' hall. Day and night, he pounded rice.

A bare eight months had passed when, late in the night, Kōnin himself came unseen to the rice-pounding shed and asked the Sixth Ancestor, "Is the rice white yet?"

The Sixth Ancestor said, "It is white, but it has not yet been winnowed."

Kōnin struck the mortar three times, whereupon the Sixth Ancestor tossed the rice three times in the winnowing-basket.

It is said that at this moment Master and disciple became mutually in accord with the Truth. They may not have known it themselves, and it is something others may not understand, but the Transmission of the Dharma and the Transmission of the Robe must certainly have occurred at that very moment.

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7. That is, wisdom is inherent in the Cosmic Buddha (the sun) and is reflected in our Buddha Nature (the moon).





Sekitō Kisen of Mount Nangaku was once asked by his disciple Yakusan, “I have a rough understanding of the Three Vehicles\* and the twelve divisions of the Scriptures, but I have heard that here in the south, there is a direct pointing to the human heart whereby one sees his True Nature and becomes Buddha. With deepest respect, I pray that you, Venerable Monk, out of compassion, will instruct me.”

This was Yakusan’s request. Yakusan, since early on, had been a lecturer and had thoroughly penetrated the meaning of the Three Vehicles and the twelve divisions of the Scriptures. So it seems that he was not in the dark about the Buddha Dharma. In those former times, separate traditions had not yet arisen, so just clarifying the meaning of the Three Vehicles and the twelve divisions of the Scriptures was considered the customary way to study what the Scriptures taught. Nowadays there are many who, from thickheadedness, have set up their own standards with which to evaluate the Buddha Dharma, but this is not customary in the Buddha’s Way.

The Great Master said, “Being ‘such a person’ is unattainable, not being ‘such a person’ is unattainable, and both being ‘such a person’ and not being ‘such a person’ are together unattainable.<sup>8</sup> How about you? What do you think?”

This is what the Great Master said for the benefit of Yakusan. Truly, because being ‘such a person’ and not being ‘such a person’ are altogether unattainable, being ‘such a person’ is unattainable and not being ‘such a person’ is unattainable. Being ‘such a person’ is what we mean by *immo*. It is not a matter of the usefulness of words having limits or not having limits. You need to explore through your training that being ‘such a person’ is unattainable and that what is unattainable is being ‘such a person’. It is not that being ‘such a person’ and being unattainable are of concern only to the evaluations of a Buddha. To understand them intellectually is unattainable; to understand them through direct experience is unattainable.

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8. That is, seeing what one’s True Nature is and thereby becoming Buddha is not something to be obtained, since enlightenment already is.



Meditation Master Daikan Enō of Mount Sōkei once gave instruction to Nangaku saying, “What has come about like this?”<sup>9</sup> These words show that Nangaku’s being ‘such a person’ is beyond doubt because he is beyond intellectual understanding. And because “What has come about like this” is the What, you should thoroughly explore through your training that all the myriad things that comprise the universe are, beyond any doubt, the What. And you should thoroughly explore through your training that each and every single thing is, beyond any doubt, the What. The What is not subject to doubt, for It is That Which Comes Like This.

*Given to the assembly at Kannondōri in Kōshōhōrin-ji Temple on the twenty-sixth day of the third lunar month in the third year of the Ninji era (April 27, 1242).*

*Copied by me in the quarters of the Abbot’s assistant on the fourth day of the fourth month in the first year of the Kangen era (April 24, 1243).*

*Ejō*

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9. There is a play on words in this remark. Though it appears to be a question, it is actually a direct statement meaning, as Dōgen will indicate, “The What has come about like this.”