

On the Mind's Search for Truth

(*Dōshin*)

Translator's Introduction: Some copies of this short, undated text bear the title of "On the Buddha's Way" (*Butsudō*), but it is not a reworking of Discourse 51.

In our pursuit of the Buddha's Way, first off, we should consider our mind's search for Truth to be foremost. Those who know what the mind's search for Truth really is are rare indeed, so we need to inquire what it is from people who clearly know.

Even though people in general are said to have a mind that is searching for the Truth, there are those people who truly do not have a searching mind. And there are some people who truly have a searching mind, though it is unrecognized by others. Thus, it is difficult to know who has or does not have such a mind. For the most part, we do not listen to what foolish or wicked people say, much less do we trust them. And we should not treat our own mind as foremost, but consider only what the Buddha expressed to be foremost. Constantly, day and night, we should hold in our mind our search for Truth, desiring and praying to realize what True Wisdom is in this world of ours.

In these degenerate days of the Dharma, those who genuinely have a mind that searches for the Truth are not many. Even so, please keep impermanence in mind, and do not forget that the world is transient and human life is uncertain. And we need not consciously keep in mind the notion that, "I am thinking about the transiency of the world." Just give emphasis to the Dharma and do not take 'my body' or 'my life' too seriously. And, for the sake of the Dharma, do not be resentful towards your body or your life.

Next, you should deeply revere the Three Treasures of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Be desirous of making alms offerings to the Three Treasures, even if it means changing your life or reforming your very self. Whether asleep or awake, we should respectfully keep in mind the great spiritual benefits of the Three Treasures, and, whether asleep or awake, we should respectfully call upon the Three Treasures. For instance, during the interval between abandoning this life and not yet taking up the next life, there is what we call 'the intermediate existence'. That existence lasts for seven days, during which we should keep in mind to

respectfully call upon the Three Treasures, without our voice ever ceasing. When the seven days have passed, we are said to die within that intermediate world and then receive another body for seven days within that same world. However long this next existence may be, it does not surpass another seven days. At this time, one sees and hears absolutely everything perfectly, without restrictions, just as it is with our spiritual Eye. At such a time, we should diligently apply our mind and respectfully call upon the Three Treasures, mindfully and ceaselessly reciting:

*I take refuge in the Buddha,
I take refuge in the Dharma,
I take refuge in the Sangha.*

When we have passed beyond the intermediate world, we draw near to a father and mother, readying ourselves bit-by-bit through Right Knowledge to entrust ourselves to a womb. Even when we are within the Treasure House of the Womb,¹ we should reverently call upon the Three Treasures. Even while we are being born, we should not neglect to reverently call upon Them. It should be our most profound wish that, through our six senses, we may reverently make alms offerings to the Three Treasures, call upon Them, and take refuge in Them.

Also, when this life of ours is coming to an end, our two eyes may suddenly become dark. At such a time, knowing that the end of our life has come, we should strive to recite the Refuges: “I take refuge in the Buddha...” and so forth. At this time, all the Buddhas in the ten quarters will have pity on us so that, due to contributing causes, even wrongdoings for which we should face being reborn in one of the three lower worlds of existence² are reversed, and we are instead reborn in some celestial world or reborn before the presence of the Buddha, where we may reverently pay homage to Him and hear Him give voice to the Dharma.

After darkness has come before our eyes, we should, right off, strive to recite the Three Refuges, not shirking from this even during our entering the intermediate world or our next birth. In this way, we should thoroughly expend life after life and, in age after age, reverently recite Them. We should not let up even upon arriving at the Wisdom that is the fruition of Buddhahood. This is the Path that all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas* pursue. We call this ‘the profound awakening to the

1. The ‘Treasure House of the Womb’ is a translation of the Japanese term *Nyoraizō*, (S. *Tathāgata-garbha*), which points to the inherent Buddha Nature in all living beings and, consequently, to their potential to realize Buddhahood.

2. That is, the worlds of hellish beings, hungry ghosts, and beasts.

* See *Glossary*.

Law' and 'the Buddha's Truth inherent in every being'. Further, you must pray that you do not dilute this with opinions held by others.

Also, within your lifetime you should engage yourself in making yourself into a Buddha, and, in cultivating Buddhahood, you should offer the Buddha three sorts of alms. These three are a meditation cushion, a vessel for holding sweet water, and a light whereby to illumine one's Original Nature. These are what you should make as your alms offering.

Also, during your lifetime you should make a copy of the *Lotus Scripture*. You should reverently write It down and make a copy of It for you to retain. You should continually make It as if a crown upon your head and bow in reverence to It, worshipfully making offerings of flowers, incense, candles, food, and robes. With the crown of our head always cleansed, we should offer these alms upon the crown of our head.³

Also, continually put on your kesa* and sit in meditation. There are examples from the past of someone realizing the Truth in a third lifetime as the result of putting on a kesa.⁴ It is already the garb of all Buddhas in the three temporal worlds. Its meritorious virtue is unfathomable. Doing seated meditation is not the method of those in the three worlds of desire, form, and beyond form; it is the method of the Buddhas and Ancestors.

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3. This is done by holding the offering with both hands and raising it above the crown of the head, not by literally placing it atop the head.
 4. Dōgen gives an example of this in Discourse 84: On the Spiritual Merits of the Kesa (*Kesa Kudoku*), concerning a prostitute who once put on a kesa as a joke and, as a result, in a later life became a female monastic.