

On the Buddha's Way

(*Butsudō*)

Translator's Introduction: In this discourse, Dōgen takes to task the common view that there are five Chinese Zen sects—namely, Sōtō, Rinzai, Hōgen, Igyō, and Ummon—which are different and have unique ways of training and teaching. Dōgen argues that there is only one way, the Buddha's Way, and that this Way is the same for all authentic expressions of Buddhism and is encapsulated in the phrase, 'the Transmission of the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching, which is the Wondrous Heart of Nirvana'. He does, however, recognize that there are various lineages within Buddhism, but states that they all share the same underlying Truth of the Buddha's Way and do not constitute unrelated or unique ways of training.

The Old Buddha Enō once addressed his assembly, saying, "From me back to the Seven Buddhas,* there have been forty Ancestors." When we thoroughly explore this statement, we see that he means there are forty Buddhas coming down from the Seven Buddhas to Daikan Enō. When we count Buddha after Buddha and Ancestor after Ancestor, this is how we count Them. When we count Them like this, the Seven Buddhas are seven Ancestors and the thirty-three Ancestors are thirty-three Buddhas. This is the thrust of what Daikan Enō is saying. This is the Buddha's instruction for genuine Dharma heirs; only the inheritors of the genuine Transmission have had passed on to them the genuine method of counting.

From Shakyamuni Buddha down to Daikan Enō, there have been thirty-four Ancestors. This Transmission from Buddha to Ancestor—Buddha after Buddha and Ancestor after Ancestor—has been just like Makakashō's having a mutual encounter with the Tathagata and the Tathagata bringing out a smile from Makakashō.¹

Just as Shakyamuni Buddha explored the Matter* through His training with Kāshyapa Buddha,² so it is with Master and disciple today. As a result, the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching has been personally Transmitted

* See *Glossary*.

1. Makakashō was Shakyamuni Buddha's Dharma heir.
2. During a previous life.

from Dharma heir to Dharma heir. The true life of the Buddha Dharma is nothing other than this authentic Transmission. Because the Buddha Dharma has been authentically Transmitted in this manner, it has been passed along by Dharma heir after Dharma heir.

Hence, the meritorious behavior and the essential operation of the Way of the Buddhas have been inherent within each of them, without exception. The Way of the Buddhas has been passed on from India in the west to China in the east, a distance of some hundred and eight thousand miles, and It has been passed on from the time when the Buddha was in the world down to this very day, a span of some two thousand years. Those folks who have not explored this fundamental principle through training with a Master arbitrarily say such wild and mistaken things as calling the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching, which is the Wondrous Heart of Nirvana, 'the Zen sect,' or they call our Ancestral Masters 'Zen Patriarchs', or they declare academic teachers to be Zen Masters, or call them 'Zen monks', or call themselves 'devotees of Zen'. These are all branches and leaves who take warped views to be the root. In India and China from ancient times down to the present day, no one has ever spoken of 'the Zen sect', which is the term by which these people arbitrarily refer to themselves. Such people are demons out to destroy the Buddha's Way. They are a malicious group who are enemies to the Ancestors of the Buddha.



It says in the *Forest Records*:³

Bodhidharma first went from the kingdom of Liang to the kingdom of Wei. He traveled to the foot of Mount Sūzan and rested his traveling staff at Shōrin-ji Temple. He simply sat in stillness, facing a wall: he was not engaged in learning how to meditate. For a long time no one could figure out why he was doing that and, consequently, interpreted it as his learning how to meditate.

Now, meditation in its narrow sense is simply one among various practices, so how could it suffice to say that this was all there was to the Saintly One? Yet, people of his time did just that. Those engaged in making chronicles followed suit and reported him as being among the ranks of those learning how to meditate and grouped him

3. *Sekimon*, a twelfth-century work by Kakuhan Ekō, a Rinzai monk, which he compiled while he was staying at Sekimon Temple.

with people who are as dead trees or cold ashes.⁴ Even so, the Saintly One's practice did not simply stop at doing meditation; he also did not act contrary to meditation. And even with the yin and yang described in the *Book of Changes*, he did not act contrary to yin and yang.

Bodhidharma's being called the Twenty-eighth Ancestor is based on the virtuous monk Makakashō's being called the First Ancestor. He is the Thirty-fifth Ancestor when counting from Bibashi Buddha.⁵ And not all of the Seven Buddhas and those of the twenty-eight generations who followed Them were able to awaken to the Truth just by means of formal meditation practice. This is why the old Master of Sekimon said, "Meditation in its narrow sense is simply one among various practices, so how could it suffice to say that this was all there was to the Saintly One?"

This old Master had come to see a bit of what people are really like and had entered the inner meaning of the doctrines of our Ancestral tradition. This was why he spoke as he did. In recent times throughout Great Sung China, it would be difficult to find such a one as he, and we should be thankful to meet such a one. And even if formal meditation were the central practice, we should not name it 'the Zen sect'.⁶ And what is more, formal meditation practice is not the whole essence of what the Buddha taught.⁷

Even so, folks who willfully call the great Way that has been genuinely Transmitted from Buddha to Buddha 'the Zen sect' have not yet encountered the Way of the Buddhas even in their dreams, nor heard of It in their dreams, nor had It Transmitted to them in their dreams. Do not even suggest that the Buddha Dharma may exist among that bunch who identify themselves as belonging to 'the Zen sect'. Who was it that invented the name 'the Zen sect'? Surely it was not called the Zen sect by any of the Buddhas, Ancestors, and Masters in our lineage. Keep in mind that the name 'the Zen sect' is one used by Mara, the lord of demons, and it is

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4. 'Dead trees and cold ashes' is a common Zen Buddhist figure of speech for someone who has dropped off self. In the present context, it implies that Bodhidharma had gone just so far in his practice, but no further.
 5. Bibashi Buddha is the first of the Seven Buddhas, the last of whom is Shakyamuni Buddha.
 6. Dōgen's term *zenshū* can be rendered not only as the Zen sect but also as the Zen school, the Zen Church, the Meditation School, etc.
 7. That is, there is also living in accord with the Precepts and, for monastics, the monastic rules and procedures, as well as the Bodhisattva Vows.

his band of devils that customarily use Mara's term: it is not the descendants of the Buddhas and Ancestors.



Once when the World-honored One held up an udumbara blossom before an assembly of millions on Vulture Peak, His eyes atwinkle, the whole assembly fell silent. Only the face of the honorable Makakashō broke into a smile. Thereupon, the World-honored One said, "I confer upon Makakashō my Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching, which is the Wondrous Heart of Nirvana, along with my sanghati robe."⁸

What the World-honored One conferred upon the virtuous monk Makakashō was His Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching, which is the Wondrous Heart of Nirvana. He did not add, "I confer upon Makakashō my Zen sect." He said, "along with my sanghati robe." He did not say, "along with the Zen sect." Accordingly, the name 'Zen sect' was never heard whilst the World-honored One was in the world.



Our First Chinese Ancestor, Bodhidharma, in pointing out the matter to our Second Ancestor, Eka, said, "The unsurpassed and wondrous Way of the Buddhas requires difficult and painful training, as well as the ability to bear what is difficult to bear, and all this over innumerable periods of time. Why would anyone desire the True Vehicle whilst having only little virtue and less wise discernment, or whilst having a belittling mind and a slothful attitude?" He also said, "The Dharma seal* of the Buddhas is not something to be obtained from worldly folk." And he also said, "The Tathagata conferred the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching upon the virtuous monk Makakashō by means of the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching."

What is now being pointed to is the unsurpassed and wondrous Way of the Buddhas, along with the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching and the Buddha seal of the Buddhas. At that time there was no mention whatsoever of a 'Zen sect', nor was there any cause or condition for calling anything 'the Zen sect'.

8. The sanghati robe is one of the three types of robe that were allowed to Buddhist monks at that time. Dōgen gives a detailed explanation of each type of robe in Discourse 84: On the Spiritual Merits of the Kesa (*Kesa Kudoku*).

Now, the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching had come to be Transmitted face-to-face by the raising of eyebrows and the twinkling of eyes. It has come to be bestowed with body and mind, bones and marrow. It has come to be accepted with body and mind, bones and marrow. It has been Transmitted and accepted from a previous Self to a later Self; it has been Transmitted and accepted above and beyond the ordinary mind. Within the assembly of the World-honored One and Makakashō the term 'Zen sect' was not heard; within the assemblies of our First and Second Chinese Ancestors, the term 'Zen sect' was not heard; within the assembly of our Fifth and Sixth Ancestors, the term 'Zen sect' was not heard; within the assembly of Seigen and Nangaku, the term 'Zen sect' was not heard. There is no indication of who it was that came to use the term or when it came about. Perhaps those scholars who should not be counted as real scholars, those whose ulterior motive was to destroy the Dharma or to plagiarize It, may have come to use the term. If present-day students of the Way carelessly use a term that the Buddhas and Ancestors had not permitted, they may well miss the gateway to our tradition.

Further, it makes it seem as if there is another method of training called 'the Zen sect', a method that is different from the one used by Buddha after Buddha and Ancestor after Ancestor. If there is a method that is different from the Way of the Buddhas and Ancestors, it will be a method of non-Buddhists. Since you are already the offspring of the Buddhas and Ancestors, you should explore through your training the Bones and Marrow, as well as the appearance, of the Buddhas and Ancestors. You have already embarked on the Way of the Buddhas and Ancestors, so do not depart from It and explore non-Buddhist ways. It is rare for us to have the opportunity to obtain and preserve the body and mind of a human being, and this present opportunity is due to the supporting merit from our doing our utmost to practice the Way in the past. Should you mistakenly support non-Buddhist ways after having received this benevolent gift, you will not be repaying your indebtedness to the Buddhas and Ancestors.

During recent generations in Great Sung China, there have been many common folk throughout the land who have heard this erroneous name of 'the Zen sect' and therefore speak of 'the Zen sect', or speak of 'the Bodhidharma sect', or speak of 'the Buddha Mind sect'. These wrong names are bruited about, competing with each other and corrupting the Buddha's Way. These names are the wild rantings of people who do not know the Great Way of the Buddhas and Ancestors and who have never encountered, or even heard about, the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching. Much less do they believe that It exists! How could anyone who knows the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching call the Buddha's Way by a wrong name?



This is why Sekitō Kisen, in ascending to the Dharma seat, addressed his great assembly saying, “The Dharma Gate that I have accepted has been Transmitted to me by a previous Buddha. It has been done without getting involved in discussions of contemplative meditation or of diligence in practice. It was given solely that I might master the wise perception of a Buddha.”

You need to know that Ancestors of the Buddha who have received the authentic Transmission from the Seven Buddhas, as well as from all other Buddhas, express Themselves like this. The only words they speak are “The Dharma Gate that I have accepted has been Transmitted to me by a previous Buddha.” Sekitō did not say, “The Zen sect that I have accepted has been Transmitted to me by a previous Buddha.” He did not get into arguments about such topics as contemplative meditation or diligence in practice. What was given to him was given solely for the purpose that he might master the wise perception of a Buddha. It was solely the wise perception of a Buddha which he was to master—and without being averse to contemplative meditation and diligence in practice. This is equivalent to the statement, “I confer my Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching.” ‘My’ means ‘what I possess’. ‘The Dharma Gate’ means ‘the True Teaching’. ‘My’, ‘what I possess’, and ‘my Marrow’ are what you receive through Transmission.

Great Master Sekitō Kisen was the sole Dharma heir of the Founding Ancestor Seigen Gyōshi and was the only one permitted to enter his Master’s private quarters. And Seigen was a Dharma offspring of the Old Buddha Daikan Enō, who shaved his head.⁹ Thus, the Old Buddha Daikan Enō was Seigen’s Ancestor, as well as his monastic father, and the Founding Ancestor Seigen was Sekitō’s elder brother in the Sangha, as well as his Master. As a hero in the Buddha’s Way and in the stream of the Ancestors, Great Master Sekitō Kisen stands alone. Only Sekitō, and he alone, mastered the authentic Transmission in the Way of the Buddhas. All the instances of his bringing the Teaching to fruition which he manifested through words were the timeless acts of an Old Buddha manifesting His eternal presence. We should regard Sekitō as possessing the Eye of the Treasure House of the True Teaching; he is not to be compared with self or other. Ignorant people are wrong to compare him with Baso.¹⁰

9. That is, he ordained Seigen as a monk.

10. Better known as Baso Dōitsu, a contemporaneous monk in Rinzai’s lineage.

So, you need to keep in mind that the Buddha's Way, which was Transmitted and received from a previous Buddha, was not called 'contemplative meditation', much less was it ever called, or discussed as, 'the Zen sect'! Clearly, you need to realize that calling It 'the Zen sect' is a mistake of enormous proportions. By thinking that religious practice must be part of either a concrete sect or an abstract sect, the inexperienced defame the Way, as if It were something not worth exploring if It were not called 'a sect'. The Buddha's Way cannot be like that, so be certain that It has never been called 'the Zen sect'.

At the same time, the mainstream of people in recent generations are befuddled and do not know the old customs. That bunch who have not received Transmission from a past Buddha mistakenly say, "Within the Buddha Dharma, there are the methods and customs of the five sects." This is the natural progression of a decline in the Teaching. There has not yet been one person, or even half a person, who is able to halt It.¹¹ My late Master Tendō, an Old Buddha, was the first to show concern for this situation, due to his mastery of the Dharma, and to our good fortune.



My late Master, an Old Buddha, once ascended the Dharma seat and addressed his assembly, saying, "People nowadays just talk of there being separate traditions and customs, such as those of Ummon, Hōgen, Igyō, Rinzai, and Sōtō, but this is not the Buddha's Teaching, nor is it what Ancestors and Masters say." The opportunity to hear someone addressing the assembly in this way has been difficult to encounter even in a thousand years. My late Master alone expressed it like this. It is hard to hear such Teaching anywhere throughout the ten quarters, and only those in his assembly were able to hear it. Even so, among a thousand monks, many are those whose ears do not truly hear and whose eyes do not truly see. Even less do they hear with their hearts, and less still do they hear with their whole being! Even if someone had listened with the whole of his own body and mind for millions of myriad eons, he could never have made use of my late Master's awakened body and mind to listen to it, or awaken to it, or develop faith in it, or to drop body and mind off. Sad to say, everyone within the ten directions of Great Sung China considered the old veteran monks of other monasteries to be on a par with my late Master. Should we consider folks who thought like this to be

11. 'Person', here, refers to one who is fully enlightened, whereas 'half a person' is someone who is partially enlightened.

equipped with eyes, or should we consider that they were not yet equipped with the Eye?

Further, there were some who viewed my late Master as standing shoulder-to-shoulder with Rinzai and Tokusan. We can surely say that these folks had likewise never encountered my late Master nor had they ever met up with Rinzai. Before I had done my respectful bows to my late Master,¹² an Old Buddha, I had already aimed at thoroughly exploring the so-called ‘deeper principles of the five sects’. After I had done my respectful bows to my late Master, the Old Buddha, I clearly understood that ‘the five sects’ was just an arbitrary name.

Because this is so, there was no such term as ‘the five sects’ at the time when the Buddha’s Teaching was flourishing in Great Sung China, nor did anyone of even more ancient times put forth the term ‘the five sects’. Now that the Buddha’s Teaching is beginning to decay, the term ‘the five sects’ emerges from time to time. This is because people are confused in their explorations of the Matter and are not committed to their pursuit of the Way. To all of you trainees who are sincerely seeking to thoroughly explore the Matter through your training, I loathe having to warn you that you must not hold onto these arbitrary terms for five sects. Do not take such terms to be representative of the traditions and customs of five separate families. How much less should you hold onto terms such as ‘the three profundities and the three necessities’ and ‘the four perspectives and the four modes of reflection and action’ associated with Rinzai’s lineage, to say nothing of ‘the three phrases’ attributed to Rinzai, ‘the five levels’ of Tōzan and Sōzan, and ‘the ten types of Truth, which are the same for all Masters’ that is associated with Fun’yō!

What our Master Shakyamuni Buddha said was not as narrow in perspective as all this, and He did not value this type of thinking highly. This was not the sort of thing that was taught at Shōrin-ji Monastery or upon Mount Sōkei.¹³ Sad to say, it is what the shaven-headed trainees of these degenerate days of the Dharma say, those who do not really hear the Teaching and whose body, mind, and eyes are still in the dark.

We who are the living children and potential heirs of the Buddhas and Ancestors must not speak in this manner. Among Masters who abide in, and keep to, the Teaching of the Buddhas and Ancestors, wild words such as these are never to be heard. Second-rate teachers of recent times, who have never heard the whole

12. That is, before Dōgen had committed himself to being Nyojō’s disciple.

13. Shōrin-ji Monastery is associated with Bodhidharma and Mount Sōkei is associated with Daikan Enō.

of what the Buddha Dharma is expressing, who are not totally devoted to what the Ancestors have said, and who are in the dark about their own Original Nature, have given rise to sectarian names like those mentioned earlier out of pride in their small bits of learning. Once these sectarian names became established, those who were young in their training did not learn the proper way to search for the Source and, as a consequence, vainly pursued superficialities. They did not have the spirit that venerates the old ways, but rather engaged in conduct that was mixed with secular customs. However, even the worldly-minded warn people that following worldly ways is ignoble.



Emperor Wen of the Chou dynasty asked his wise minister Taikung, “Why is it that our society is in ever-increasing turmoil, putting the nation in peril? Even though, as a ruler, I endeavor to employ wise counselors, I am not gaining any benefit from them.”

Taikung responded, “You may hire the wise, but you will not benefit from them because you have only appeared to have received their sage advice, and therefore you gain nothing from getting their wise counsel.”

Emperor Wen then asked, “Wherein does such a fault lie?”

Taikung replied, “The fault lies in being fond of those who are praised by the worldly instead of finding those who are truly sagacious.”

Emperor Wen then asked, “What do you mean by having a fondness for those who are praised by the worldly?”

Taikung said, “When people are fond of listening to what the worldly praise, some may take the unwise to be wise; some may take the slow-witted to be intelligent; some may take the disloyal to be loyal; some may take the untrustworthy to be trustworthy. If, on the basis of what the worldly praise, your lordship were to consider someone to be wise and intelligent, or consider someone to be incompetent, then the one who has many henchmen will be advanced, but the one who has few supporters will not. Thus, when a crowd of wicked ones band together and try to conceal the one who is wise, loyal retainers may be put to death on false charges, while false counselors skirmish for prestige and court rank. Thereby, society is in ever-increasing turmoil, and, as a consequence, the nation cannot avoid being put in peril.”

Even the worldly grieve when their nation and their customs are in peril. When the Buddha Dharma and the Way of the Buddha are in peril, the disciples of the Buddha will inevitably feel grief. The reason for this peril is the irresponsible following of worldly ways. When people hearken to what is praised by the worldly, they do not find those who are genuinely wise. If you wish to find one who is genuinely wise, you will need to have the resourcefulness that illumines the past and looks forward to what lies ahead. What the worldly praise is not invariably wise, nor is it invariably saintly, and what the worldly slander is likewise not invariably wise, nor is it invariably saintly. Even so, by considering the matter three times over, you may avoid confusing the times when someone who is wise has invited censure with times when someone who is a fraud is being praised. If rulers should fail to make use of the truly wise, it will be a loss for their country, and if they should employ the slow-witted, it will be a source of national regret.



Now, the arising of the term ‘the five sects’ is an aberration of the secular world. Those who follow these worldly ways are many, but those who can recognize them as being worldly are few. You should regard those who mistake worldly ways for saintly ways, as well as those who follow them, to have reached the height of folly. How could those folks who follow worldly ways possibly recognize the Buddha’s True Teaching? How could they possibly become Buddhas and Ancestors? The Dharma has been Transmitted to heir after heir of the Seven Buddhas. Those folks whose understanding is based merely on words and who speak of ‘the five sects’ do not realize that five different versions of the *Vinaya* were never established in India.¹⁴

So, you should recognize that our Ancestral Masters turned the true life of the Buddha’s Teaching into their own true life. None of them ever said that there were five sects, each with their own traditions and practices. To learn that there are five Zen sects within the Buddha’s Way is not the true inheritance from the Seven Buddhas.



My late Master once addressed his assembly, saying, “In recent years, the Way of our Ancestral Masters has degenerated. Bands of demons and beasts are many. They often go on about ‘the traditions and practices of the five sects’. How

14. The *Vinaya* is a section of the Buddhist canon that contains rules of monastic discipline.

distressing! How truly distressing!” Hence, we know all too well that none of the twenty-eight generations in India or the twenty-two Ancestors in China ever taught about any traditions or customs of five Zen sects. Our Ancestral Masters, who were all worthy of the title of Ancestral Master, have all been the same in this. Those who go about proclaiming that there are five Zen sects, each with its own unique tenets, are folks who are deceiving the public. They are a bunch who have heard little and whose understanding is shallow. If everyone in the Buddha's Way set up his own unique way, how could the Buddha's Way possibly have come down to us today? Makakashō would have set up his own way and Ananda would have set up his. If the principle of setting up one's own way was the authentic Way, the Buddha Dharma would have disappeared in India long ago. Who would honor principles that individual people had set up on their own? If each person sets up his own principles, who could determine which were true and which were false? What was true and what was false could never be determined. If the true and the false cannot be determined, who could recognize what was actually the Buddha Dharma? If its principles cannot be clarified, it would be difficult to call anything ‘the Way of the Buddha’. The names of the so-called ‘five Zen sects’ did not arise during the lifetime of any of the five Ancestral Masters. After those who were called ‘the Ancestral Masters of the five Zen sects’ had entered nirvana, mediocre trainees within their families, those whose Eye had not yet become clear and whose feet did not know how to step forth, established these names without asking their Master's permission and contrary to the Teaching of the Ancestors. This is so evident that anyone can recognize it.



Meditation Master Isan Reiyū was a Dharma heir of Hyakujō Daichi. He lived as Abbot on Mount Isan while Hyakujō was still alive. He never said that the Buddha Dharma should be called the Igyō sect.¹⁵ And Hyakujō never said, “From your time onwards, you should dwell on Mount Isan and call your sect the Igyō sect.” Neither Master Isan nor his Ancestor Hyakujō ever used such a name, so you need to keep in mind that it is a fraudulent name. And even though people use his name as part of their name for a sect, we should not single out Kyōzan in this way.¹⁶ If it were appropriate for Isan and Kyōzan to have used their own names, they would have used them, but because it is not appropriate to use one's own

15. The name Igyō derives from the first syllable of Isan's name and the first syllable of Kyōzan Ejaku's name. Kyōzan was one of Isan's Dharma heirs.

16. Since Isan had four other Dharma heirs.

name, they did not use their personal names in the past and we should not use them in the present. People do not speak of an Enō sect, or of a Nangaku sect, or of a Baso sect, or of a Hyakujō sect. It is impossible that the Dharma of Isan could differ from that of Enō, or could surpass It, or could ever be a rival to It.

The words that Isan and Kyōzan spoke were undoubtedly not like one pole being carried by two men. If people wanted to establish a name for a sect, they should have called it the Isan sect or the Daii sect, since there is no reason for calling it the Igyō sect. If 'the Igyō sect' were an appropriate name, it would have been called this when the two venerable elders were still alive. What was there to prevent them from using a name that they could have used while they were still alive? To go counter to what their parental Ancestors said and use the name 'the Igyō sect', which neither used while they were alive, is to be children who are devoid of filial piety. This name does not represent the basic intention of Meditation Master Isan or the original purpose of our esteemed teacher Kyōzan. It has not been genuinely Transmitted by an authentic Master. It is clear that it is a fraudulent name used by fraudulent people. Do not let it be spread abroad anywhere in the whole universe.



After abandoning his position as an academic lecturer on Buddhist Scriptures, Rinzai became a disciple of Ōbaku. On three occasions he tasted Ōbaku's staff, for a total of sixty strokes, and he awoke to his Original Nature whilst exploring the Matter with Daigu.¹⁷ Even though he had not yet fully penetrated Ōbakū's Mind, he took up residence at Rinzai-in Monastery in Chenchou Province. Nevertheless, he never spoke a single sentence to the effect that the Buddha Dharma that had been Transmitted to him should be called the Rinzai sect, nor did he even speak one phrase to that effect, nor did he ever express such a thing by raising a fist or by picking up a ceremonial hossu.* Even so, mediocre trainees within his monastic family failed to preserve their monastic parent's conduct, as well as the Buddha Dharma, and, soon afterwards, mistakenly gave rise to the name 'the Rinzai sect'. If this name had been contrived whilst Great Master Rinzai was still alive, he certainly would have had something to say about the matter, since it is counter to the Teachings of our First Chinese Ancestor.

17. His awakening was aided by Daigu's helping him to realize why Ōbaku had beaten him.



As Rinzai was dying and was about to pass on the Dharma to Meditation Master Sanshō Enen, he said, “After my departure, do not let my Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching perish.”

Enen replied, “My Venerable Monk, how would I dare to let your Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching perish?”

Rinzai then said, “If there were someone who questioned you about It in a peremptory manner, how would you respond?”

Enen immediately gave out with a loud yell that sounded like a donkey’s braying.

Rinzai said, “Who would not believe that my Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching, which I am passing on to this blind jackass, would perish?”

The words spoken by Master and disciple were just like this.¹⁸

Rinzai never said, “Do not let my Zen sect perish,” nor did he say, “Do not let my Rinzaï sect perish,” nor did he say, “Do not let my sect perish.” What he did say, quite simply, was, “Do not let my Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching perish.” Be very clear about this, for you should not call the Great Way that is authentically Transmitted by the Ancestors of the Buddha ‘the Zen sect’ or call it ‘the Rinzaï sect’. Indeed, you should not even dream of calling It ‘the Zen sect’. Even though his term ‘letting It perish’ refers to that thread which runs through the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching, as well as to the way in which It manifests, It is Transmitted in just the way that Rinzaï did it. His ‘letting It perish’ by passing It on to this blind donkey is truly the ‘Who knows’ of Transmission.¹⁹ In Rinzaï’s lineage, it was only Enen who received the Transmission in this way. You should not compare him to or equate him with any of his younger or older brothers in the Dharma.²⁰ Naturally, he was placed near a

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18. Rinzaï’s response is intended ironically and has the effect of adding some light-hearted humor to what was actually a very serious moment. This display of humor is demonstrative of the deep trust that existed between Master and disciple.
 19. The phrase ‘Who knows’ has a double meaning in Zen texts. It can be taken as a question, meaning, “Who can possibly see what is passed on at Transmission?” and it can also be taken as an assertion, meaning “It is ‘the Who’—that is, the Buddha Nature—that knows what is Transmitted.”
 20. Enen was one of Rinzaï’s seven Dharma heirs. The Rinzaï lineage, however, passed on through another of Rinzaï’s heirs.

bright window.²¹ The story of Rinzai and Enen is that of Buddha and Ancestor. Today, a Rinzai Transmission is just as the Vulture Peak Transmission of ancient times. So, the principle is clear that one should not speak of a Rinzai sect.



Great Master Ummon Bun'en first trained under the venerable elder Chin and may have been one of Ōbakū's offspring. He later became a Dharma heir of Seppō. This Master never said that one should refer to the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching as 'the Ummon sect'. But later, some members of his monastic family, not realizing that the false names 'the Igyō sect' and 'the Rinzai sect' were inappropriate titles, set up the new name of 'the Ummon sect'. If it had been Great Master Ummon's underlying intention to give his name to a sect, it would be difficult to affirm that he possessed the Body and Mind of the Buddha Dharma. When people nowadays give his name to the name of a sect, it is as if they were calling an emperor the lowliest of commoners.



Meditation Master Hōgen of Seiryō-in Monastery was the authentic Dharma heir of Great Master Jizō Keichin. He was the Dharma grandchild of Gensha Shibi. He grasped the fundamental meaning without any error. Daihōgen was the Master's title bestowed upon him by the emperor and the name that he used for his signature. There is not a single word among his thousands of words, not one sentence among his thousands of sentences, by which he established the title of 'the Hōgen sect' by using his title as a name for the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching.²² Even so, those in his lineage have given rise to the name 'the Hōgen sect'. If Hōgen were alive today to spiritually lead others, he would not lead them down the path of using the term 'the Hōgen sect'. Since Meditation Master Hōgen has already passed away, there is no one to save us from this sickness. Even after thousands of myriad years, people who would be loyal to Meditation Master Hōgen must not take 'the Hōgen sect' for their name if they wish to remain faithful to his Teaching.

21. This is said of someone whose spiritual ripeness is so apparent upon his arrival at a monastery that he is given a place in the Trainees' Hall—traditionally described as 'a well-lit place'—where the Master can keep an eye on him.

22. The Hōgen sect is better known by its Chinese name of the Fayen sect.

In summary, both Ummon and Hōgen were distant offspring of our Great Ancestor Seigen. The Bones of the Way were passed on to each of them, along with the Marrow of the Dharma.



Our Founding Ancestor, Great Master Tōzan Ryōkai, inherited the Dharma from Ungan. Ungan was the direct heir of Great Master Yakusan. Yakusan was the direct heir of Great Master Sekitō. Great Master Sekitō was the sole disciple of our Founding Ancestor Seigen. There were no others who stood head-and-shoulders with Seigen, so the conduct of the Way was authentically Transmitted to him and to him alone. That the true life of the Buddha's Way has still survived in China is due to Great Master Sekitō's having been authentically Transmitted in full.

Our Founding Ancestor Seigen lived at the same time as the Old Buddha Daikan Enō and he trained his disciples on Mount Seigen in the same way as Daikan Enō trained his. In that Master Enō helped Seigen to emerge as an enlightened Abbot within the world and that both of them served as Abbots during the same period of time, Seigen must have been a genuine Dharma heir above other genuine Dharma heirs, a Founding Ancestor among Founding Ancestors. It is not the case that exploring the Matter with one's Master is preferable to functioning as an Abbot. As students of the Way, you should know that a monk who stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Daikan Enō during that time would be preeminent today.

On the occasion when the Old Buddha Daikan Enō was giving instruction on how one should enter parinirvana, Sekitō, who was seated in the back row, came forward and asked the Master whom he should depend on once the Master had passed on.²³ The Old Buddha Enō told him to pay a visit to Seigen Gyōshi; he did not tell him to pay a visit to Nangaku Ejō. Thus it is clear that the Old Buddha's Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching was authentically Transmitted to our Founding Ancestor Seigen and to him alone.²⁴ Even though we acknowledge that both Seigen and Nangaku were leading disciples who had realized the Way, only our Founding Ancestor Seigen walked on genuinely spiritual footsteps. The Old Buddha Daikan Enō had thus made his own offspring the offspring of Seigen, who, as the spiritual parent of the great-grandparent of Tōzan, was clearly someone

23. Sekitō was a teenager at the time. His sitting in the back row implies that he was a relatively new novice.

24. Daikan Enō had two preeminent disciples, Seigen and Nangaku. Dōgen's Sōtō lineage comes via Seigen, whereas all other extant lineages come via Nangaku.

who had realized Daikan Enō's Marrow and who was a genuine heir in the Ancestor's lineage.²⁵

Great Master Tōzan, as the fourth generation Dharma heir of Seigen, received the genuine Transmission of the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching, which opened his Eye to the Wondrous Heart of Nirvana. There is no separate Transmission, no separate sect, in addition to this. Our Great Master never showed his Fist or his twinkling Eye to his assembly, calling either 'the Sōtō sect'. Further, since there were no mediocre trainees mixed in with his family, how could there possibly be any in his family who spoke of a 'Sōtō sect'!

The name 'Sōtō sect' may have derived from someone adding Sōzan's name to Tōzan's. If this is so, then Ungo and Dōan should also have been included.²⁶ Ungo was a guiding Master among ordinary people, as well as among those in loftier positions, and was even more revered than Sōzan. When it comes to this name 'Sōtō', clearly some stinking skin bag* in an offshoot lineage who fancied himself the equal of Tōzan devised the name 'Sōtō sect'. Truly, even though the situation is as clear as the sun in broad daylight, it is as if the sun were being obscured by floating clouds.



My late Master once said, "Nowadays there are many who have ascended a Lion's Seat* and who act as though they were teachers of ordinary people and those in lofty positions. Even so, none of them has an understanding of the underlying principles of the Buddha Dharma." From this perspective, those who are striving to uphold one of the so-called 'five sects' and make the mistake of getting stuck on the words in some Master's saying are truly enemies of the Buddhas and Ancestors. And some, regarding themselves as belonging to a branch of followers of Meditation Master Ōryū Enan, are in the habit of calling themselves 'the Ōryū sect'. Perhaps their branch will not go on very far before they recognize their error. Speaking generally, while the World-honored One was in the world, he never spoke of 'the Buddha sect' or of 'the Vulture Peak sect'. He did not speak of 'the Jetavana sect', or of a 'My Mind sect', or of a 'Buddha Mind sect', so

25. That is, Sekitō was originally one of Daikan Enō's disciples. Because he was not yet named as a Dharma heir, he became Seigen's disciple and, subsequently, his Dharma heir. In turn, Sekitō became the spiritual parent to Yakusan, who became the spiritual parent of Ungō, who became the spiritual parent of Tōzan.

26. Ungo and Sōzan were both Dharma heirs of Tōzan. Sōzan's line ultimately died out, whereas Ungo's continued on with Dōan as his Dharma heir.

from what words of the Buddha did the name 'Buddha Mind sect' come? Why do people today speak of a 'Buddha Mind sect'? Why would the World-honored One feel the need to call His mind a sect? And why should a sect ever be connected to a mind? If there is to be a Buddha Mind sect, then there ought to be a Buddha Body sect. And we should have a Buddha Eye sect, and a Buddha Ear sect, or even a Buddha Nose and Tongue sect. There would have to be such things as a Buddha's Marrow Sect, a Buddha's Bones sect, a Buddha's Legs sect, or a Buddha Nation sect. No such sects exist at present. Keep in mind that the name 'the Buddha Mind sect' is a phony name.

When Shakyamuni Buddha gave expression to the True Form of all thoughts and things throughout all Buddha lands and when He gave voice to all the Buddha lands throughout the universe, He did not speak of having set up some sect within any of these Buddha lands. If it were the practice of Buddhas and Ancestors to name sects, it would have been done in one of the Buddha lands, and if these names existed in one of the Buddha lands, it would have been something that a Buddha would have spoken of. The Buddha did not speak of it, so you should know for certain that it did not exist in the Buddha lands. It is not practiced in the Way of the Ancestors, so you should know for certain that it is not something that the Ancestors found useful. It is not only something that other people would laugh at, but it is also something that would be held in check by Buddhas. Therefore, it is something that you yourselves should laugh at. So, I beg you, do not create sectarian names, and do not say that there are five sects within the Buddha Dharma.



In more recent times, there was a childlike person named Chisō who collected a small spattering of sayings of Ancestral Masters along with what he called 'the sectarian lineages of the five families'. He named his work the *Eyes of Human and Celestial Beings*. People have not understood what this work really is. Bunches of novices and present-day trainees have fancied that it is accurate, and some of them even go about carrying a copy of it tucked within their robes. This work is not the eyes of human and celestial beings, but rather something that blinds the eyes of human and celestial beings. How could anyone possibly accrue any merit by disregarding the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching?

This *Eyes of Human and Celestial Beings* was compiled and edited by a senior monk named Chisō in Mannen Temple on Mount Tendai around the twelfth lunar month in the sixth year of the Shunhsi era (1188). Even though it was compiled in more recent times, if its statements were accurate we could approve of it. But this work of his is utter madness and blind folly, for he lacked the Eye for

exploring the Matter, nor did he have the Eye of one who has journeyed far in search of a Master, to say nothing of having the Eye for recognizing Buddhas and Ancestors! We should not use this work. He shouldn't have been called Chisō, which means 'He Who is Wise and Knowing', but Gumō, which means 'He Who is Blinded by Ignorance'. He is someone who does not know what 'such a person'* means and who has never met 'such a person', and, because of this, he has arbitrarily compiled sayings without picking out just the sayings of those who are 'such a person'. It is obvious that he does not know what 'such a person' is.



The reason why those folks who study Scriptures in China assign sectarian names to them is because they wish to compare the opinions of the various teachers of this and that. Now, the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching of the Buddhas and Ancestors has been Transmitted from Dharma heir to Dharma heir. These heirs are incomparable, for they have no 'this or that' which can confuse others. Be that as it may, there are some trainees of long standing who are inaccurate and who employ sectarian names to no purpose. Because they are engaged in the hot pursuit of personal gain, they do not stand in proper awe of the Buddha's Way.

The Buddha's Way is not someone's personal 'Buddha's Way'. It is the Buddha's Way of the Buddhas and Ancestors. It is the Buddha's Way of the Buddha's Way. As Minister Taikung once said when talking with Emperor Wen, "The whole nation is not the nation of one person. It is the whole nation's whole nation." Thus, even an ordinary layman had wisely discerned this and had put it this way.

As children of the Buddhas and Ancestors, you must not permit those within the Great Way of the Buddhas and Ancestors to recklessly follow along with the foolish and the blind by setting up sects and giving them personal names. That is a great impropriety, and one who acts like this is not a person of the Buddha's Way. If it was right for us to go around naming sects, the World-honored One would have done so Himself. In that the World-honored One had not already given His name to a sect, why should His children use such names after His parinirvana? Who could be more spiritually skillful than the World-honored One? If someone lacks skill, no good can come of it. Again, if the Buddhas and the Ancestors have not acted contrary to the Way in the past by setting up sects in Their own names, who of His children would name a sect after themselves?

You need to explore the Matter through your training by studying the past and examining the present, and do not be arbitrary about it. When Shakyamuni

Buddha was in the world, His disciples were apprehensive lest they should differ from Him by even a hair, or lest they should miss even one jot within the hundreds of thousands of myriad points of His Teaching, for they wished to experience the joy of realizing the Truth which they had chosen as their inheritance, and they would not go against It. Thus, we should vow to seek and serve the Buddha and hear His Dharma over the course of many lives. Those who would deliberately go against the transforming Teaching that the World-honored One gave while He was in the world and give rise to sectarian names are not disciples of the Tathagata nor are they offspring of the Ancestral Masters. Their breaking of Precepts is more serious than the transgressions of others. They have rashly disregarded the importance of the unsurpassed wisdom of the Tathagata, and, by selfishly fostering their own sect, they have made light of or disregarded those who preceded them to such an extent that we can say they do not even know who their predecessors were. They did not trust in the meritorious behavior of the World-honored One during His time. The Buddha Dharma cannot exist within the dwelling places of such people.

So, if you wish to receive the authentic Transmission of the conduct of the Way, you must not look for or hearken to sectarian names. That which Buddha after Buddha and Ancestor after Ancestor has received and authentically Transmitted is the unsurpassed wisdom of the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching. The Dharma that is possessed by the Buddhas and Ancestors has been wholly Transmitted by the Buddhas and Ancestors, and there is nothing new to be added to the Dharma. This principle is the very Bones of the Dharma and the very Marrow of the Way.

Given to the assembly at Kippō-ji Temple in the Yoshida district of Fukui Prefecture on the sixteenth day of the ninth lunar month in the first year of the Kangen era (October 30, 1243).

Copied by me during the third watch of the night on the twenty-third day of the tenth lunar month in the same year (November 6, 1243).

Ejō