

On What the Buddha Taught

(Bukkyō)

Translator's Introduction: In this discourse there are allusions to a poem attributed to Bodhidharma, which may be rendered as follows:

*The separate Transmission that is outside the Teachings
Does not depend on the written word;
It directly points us to our human heart,
So that we may see our True Nature and thereby become Buddha.*

Versions of this poem have often been used to support the view that the direct one-to-one Transmission, which is characteristic of the Zen Buddhist tradition, was apart from the Buddha's Teachings that had been passed on in the form of the Scriptures. Further, since the Transmission was viewed as outside the Scriptures, the Scriptures were considered unnecessary for realizing Buddhahood and could, therefore, be ignored. Dōgen considered this view as fallacious, since Transmission is not something outside—that is, apart from—what the Buddha taught, and the Scriptural Teachings, which are also part of what the Buddha taught, are not worthless or irrelevant to training. Further, Dōgen understood the opening line of Bodhidharma's poem as saying that Transmission is 'on the outside of the Teachings'. That is, Transmission is not something divorced from what the Buddha taught, but something that exists on the outside of what He taught (Transmission as an outer, concrete event) in contrast with what exists on the inside of what He taught (Scripture as an inner, expedient explanation). Hence, the Transmission and the Scriptural Teachings do not stand against each other, but together comprise 'what the Buddha taught'.

Practicing what the Buddha taught means making the words and ways of all the Buddhas manifest. Because this is what Buddhas and Ancestors have done for the sake of Buddhas and Ancestors, the Teachings have been accurately passed on for the sake of the Teachings. This is what the turning of the Wheel of the Dharma is. From within the Eye of this Wheel, these Teachings have caused all the Buddhas and Ancestors to manifest and to be carried into nirvana. For all the Buddhas and Ancestors, without fail, there is the emergence of each mote of dust and the passing away of each mote of dust, there is the emergence of whole universes and the passing away of whole universes, and there is their emergence

for a single instant and for oceans of kalpas.* Be that as it may, the emergence of a single mote of dust for a single instant has no function that is incomplete, and the emergence of a whole universe for oceans of kalpas is beyond any effort to supply something that is otherwise lacking. This is why it has never been said that any of the Buddhas who realized the Way in the morning and then passed away in the evening ever had any shortcomings in Their meritorious behavior. If it were said that one day is insufficient for Their meritorious behavior, then eighty years of a human life would not be long enough either. When we compare the human span of eighty years with ten or twenty kalpas, it is like one day is to eighty years. The meritorious behavior of this Buddha of eighty years and that Buddha of one day may be difficult to discern clearly. Were you to compare the merit accrued over life spans of long kalpas with the merit accrued over eighty years, you would not even approach having a doubt about the matter. For this reason, what the Buddha taught is, namely, His Teaching for Buddhas, and It is the completely meritorious spiritual behavior of Buddhas and Ancestors. It is not the case that Buddhas are lofty and far-reaching, whereas Their teaching of the Dharma is narrow and petty. You need to realize that when a Buddha is large, His Teaching is large, and when a Buddha is small, His Teaching is small. You need to realize that the Buddhas and Their Teachings are beyond such measurements as ‘large or small’, and beyond such attributes as ‘good, bad, or indifferent’, and that these Teachings are not undertaken for the sake of self-instruction or for the instruction of others.



A certain monk of our tradition once said:

Our Venerable Shakyamuni, in addition to expounding the Scriptural Teachings during His lifetime, directly Transmitted to Makakashō the Dharma that the Supreme Vehicle is the One Whole Mind. This Dharma has come to be passed on from Successor to Successor.¹ Accordingly, His Teachings are judicious discussions adapted to the capacity of the listener, whereas the Mind is immutable Reality. This One Whole Mind which has been authentically Transmitted has been described as ‘the separate Transmission that is outside the Teachings’. It is beyond comparison with anything that is discussed in the Three Vehicles* and the twelve divisions of the

* See *Glossary*.

1. ‘The One Whole Mind’ (*isshin*) is an alternate term for Buddha Mind and Buddha Nature.

Scriptural Teachings.² Because the One Whole Mind is the Supreme Vehicle, it has been said that “It directly points us to our human heart, so that we may see our True Nature and thereby become Buddha.”

As far as it goes, this statement is not about the everyday functioning of Buddha Dharma, for it offers no vital path that takes us beyond self, and it is not descriptive of the everyday behavior of one’s whole being. Hundreds, even thousands, of years ago, monks like this one were proclaiming themselves to be spiritual authorities, but if any of them had such a tale to tell as this, you should know that they had neither clarified nor understood what Buddha Dharma and the Buddha’s Way are. And why so? Because they do not know Buddha or His Teachings, or what Mind is, or what is inside, or what is outside.³ The underlying cause of their not knowing is simply that they have never really heard the Buddha Dharma. Now, they do not know what the root and branchings are of that which they call ‘the Buddhas’. Never having learned what the bounds of the comings and goings of Buddhas are, they in no way resemble disciples of the Buddha.⁴ Their saying that one only Transmits the One Whole Mind and does not Transmit what the Buddha taught is due to their not knowing the Buddha Dharma. They do not know the One Whole Mind of which the Buddha taught, nor have they heeded what the Buddha taught concerning the One Whole Mind. They say that the Teachings of the Buddha are apart from the One Whole Mind, but their ‘One Whole Mind’ is not the One Whole Mind. They say that the One Whole Mind is outside the Buddha’s Teachings, but their ‘Buddha’s Teachings’ are not what the Buddha taught. Even though they have passed on the fallacious remark that the Transmission is outside the Teachings, they have not yet comprehended what is inside and what is outside.

How could the Buddhas and Ancestors who have directly Transmitted one-to-one the Buddha’s Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching have failed to directly Transmit one-to-one what the Buddha taught? And what is more, why would our venerable monk Shakyamuni have set up Teaching that has no place in

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2. The ‘twelve divisions’ refers to the twelve categories by which Scriptural writings are classified in the Mahayana tradition. A description of these categories appears later in this discourse.
 3. Dōgen’s allusion here to ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ is ambiguous. In the present context, it most likely refers to what is or is not contained within what the Buddha taught. Later, when Dōgen reinterprets the opening line of Bodhidharma’s poem, the meaning of these two terms shifts.
 4. That is to say, because they have rejected Scriptural Teachings, they have not learned about the Precepts, which supply the bounds within which Buddhas function, and therefore they do not behave as a true disciple of the Buddha does.

the everyday functioning of those in our Buddhist family? Our Venerable Shakyamuni has already endowed us with the Teachings that are directly Transmitted, so why would any Ancestor of the Buddha do away with Them? This is why what is called ‘the One Whole Mind that is the Supreme Vehicle’ is synonymous with the Three Vehicles and the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings, which comprise the Smaller Treasure House and the Larger Treasure House.⁵

You need to recognize that what is called Buddha Mind is synonymous with the Buddha’s Eye, as well as with a broken wooden ladle,* all thoughts and things, and the three worlds of desire, form, and beyond form. As a consequence, It is also synonymous with the mountains, seas, and nations of the earth, as well as with the sun, moon, and stars. ‘What the Buddha taught’ is another name for everything that arises in nature. What is called ‘being outside’ is being right here in this situation. It is what is happening, right here in this situation. The term ‘the genuine Transmission’ means that there is a self within the genuine Transmission because it involves a direct Transmission from a self to a self. It directly Transmits from One Whole Mind to One Whole Mind, for there must be the One Whole Mind in a genuine Transmission. The One Whole Mind that is the Supreme Vehicle is synonymous with soil, stones, sand, and pebbles, and soil, stones, sand, and pebbles are synonymous with the One Whole Mind. Consequently, soil, stones, sand, and pebbles are synonymous with soil, stones, sand, and pebbles. If we speak of the direct Transmission of the One Whole Mind that is the Supreme Vehicle, it needs to be done in this manner.

Be that as it may, the monk who asserted that there is a separate Transmission outside the Teachings has not yet grasped the intent behind this phrase. So, do not believe his erroneous explanation of a separate Transmission outside the Teachings and thereby misunderstand what the Buddha taught. If the matter were as such folks put it, are we to describe the Teaching as ‘a separate Transmission outside the Mind’? If we say that it is a separate Transmission outside the Mind, not even a phrase or half a line of verse could have been passed on. And if we do not speak of a separate Transmission outside the Mind, we cannot speak of a separate Transmission outside—that is, apart from—the Teaching.

5. ‘The Larger Treasure House’ refers to the Mahayana Canon, whereas ‘the Smaller Treasure House’ refers to the Pali Canon, which is included within the Mahayana Canon through translations into Chinese or Tibetan.



Makakashō, who was already the World-honored One's successor, was in possession of the Treasure House of the Dharma and, having directly received the Transmission of the Treasure House of the True Dharma, was responsible for preserving the Buddha's Way. To assert that the Buddha's Teachings may not have been directly Transmitted to him would make the training and practice of the Way a one-sided affair. You need to realize that when one line of Scripture has been genuinely Transmitted, the whole Dharma has been genuinely Transmitted, and that when one line of Scripture has been genuinely Transmitted, the Transmission of the Mountain and the Transmission of the Water has taken place. In sum, this is synonymous with our utter incapacity to separate ourselves from the here and now.

The world-honored Shakyamuni's unsurpassed Enlightened Mind, which is the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching, was directly Transmitted to Makakashō. It was not directly Transmitted to any of His other disciples. Beyond question, the Direct Transmission is Makakashō. This is why all persons—every single one of them, past or present—who have explored the Truth of the Buddha Dharma have all decided to explore the Scriptural Teachings, and in doing so they have, without fail, explored the Matter* by training under some Ancestor of the Buddha, and without seeking to train under anyone else. If they did not commit themselves to train with an Ancestor of the Buddha, theirs would not have been the right commitment. If you wish to consider whether your commitment is in accord with the Teachings, you need to determine that with an Ancestor of the Buddha. The reason for this is that the Ancestors of the Buddha possess the whole Wheel of the Dharma. To put it simply, only the Ancestors of the Buddha have clarified and have continued to correctly Transmit what the terms 'It exists' or 'It does not exist' means, and what the terms 'being empty' or 'having form' means.



Haryō Kōkan was once asked by one of his monks, "Are the intent of our Ancestor Bodhidharma and the intent of the Teachings the same or are they different?"

The Master replied, "When a hen is cold, it perches in a tree; when a duck is cold, it enters the water."

When we explore this saying of Kōkan's through our training, we will certainly come face-to-face with Bodhidharma, our founding Ancestor within the Buddha's Way, and we will certainly come to know the Teachings within the Buddha's Way. Now, the monk's asking about the intent of the Ancestor and the intent of the Teachings is equivalent to his asking whether the Ancestor's intent was within the

Way or was separate from It. The Master's saying at this time, "When a hen is cold, it perches in a tree; when a duck is cold, it enters the water" expresses a sameness and a difference. Even so, this goes beyond the sameness versus difference that people are usually concerned with. As a consequence, because his remark goes beyond a discussion of sameness and difference, he may well be saying that it is 'the same difference'. So it is as if he were saying, "Do not ask about sameness and difference."



Gensha Shibi was once asked by a monk, "Granting that the Three Vehicles and the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings are not essential, just what was the intent behind our Ancestral Master Bodhidharma's coming from the West?"

Master Shibi replied, "The Three Vehicles and the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings not being absolutely essential."

The monk's asking, "Granting that the Three Vehicles and the twelve divisions of the Scriptural teachings are not essential, just what was the intent behind the Ancestral Master's coming from the West?" is conventionally thought of as his saying, "Since each of the Three Vehicles and the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings constitutes one of the branches of a forked road, the intent behind the Ancestral Master's coming from the West must lie elsewhere." Those with this conventional view do not recognize that the Three Vehicles and the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings constitute the very intent behind the Ancestral Master's coming from the West. So how much less could they possibly comprehend that the sum total of the eighty-four thousand gates to the Dharma is nothing other than the intent behind the Ancestral Master's coming from the West?

Now let us explore why the Three Vehicles and the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings are not absolutely essential.⁶ If there were a time when they were essential, what criteria would we use to determine this? In a situation where the Three Vehicles and the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings are not essential, does our exploration of 'the intent behind the Ancestral Master's coming from the West' manifest itself in our training? It may not be in vain that this question has come forth.

6. The term 'not absolutely essential' refers to the middle way between asserting, on the one hand, that it is absolutely impossible for someone to realize the Truth without formally studying the Scriptures, and, on the other hand, asserting that because someone can realize the Truth independent of Scriptural study, the Scriptures are totally worthless and can be safely ignored by trainees.

Shibi said, “The Three Vehicles and the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings are not absolutely essential.” This statement is the Wheel of the Dharma. We need to explore through our training that wherever this Wheel of the Dharma turns, what the Buddha taught exists as the Buddha’s Teachings. The import of this is that the Three Vehicles and the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings are the Wheel of the Dharma of the Buddha’s Ancestors. It turns at times and in places where there are Ancestors of the Buddha, and It turns at times and in places where there are no Ancestors of the Buddha, and It likewise turned before there was an Ancestor and will turn after there is an Ancestor. Moreover, It has the meritorious function of setting the Buddhas and Ancestors a-turning. At the very moment when our Ancestral Master intended to come from the West, the Wheel of the Dharma became not absolutely essential. Saying that It is not absolutely essential does not mean that we do not use It or that It is broken down. It is simply that this Wheel of the Dharma is, at this time, turning the wheel of ‘not being absolutely essential’. Without denying the existence of the Three Vehicles and the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings, we should watch for the occasions when they are not absolutely essential. Because they are not absolutely essential, they are the Three Vehicles and the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings, and because they are the Three Vehicles and the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings, they are beyond being the ‘Three Vehicles and twelve divisions of Scriptural Teachings’. This is why the Master said that the Three Vehicles and the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings were not absolutely essential.

The following offers but one example of those Three Vehicles and twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings from among the number of examples that exist.

The Three Vehicles

First, there is the vehicle of the shravakas,* who realize the Truth by way of the Four Noble Truths. The Four Noble Truths are the Truth of the existence of suffering, the Truth that suffering has a cause, the Truth that suffering can cease, and the Truth of the Noble Eightfold Path which brings suffering to an end. Hearing of these and then making them their practice, shravakas free themselves from birth, aging, sickness, and death, and ultimately realize the perfection of nirvana. To make these Truths the basis of one’s training and practice, and then to assert that suffering and its cause are mundane, whereas its cessation and the path to cessation are what is paramount is an opinion that arises from the perspective of narrow-minded scholars. When the Four Noble Truths are practiced in accord with the Buddha Dharma, They are all realized by each Buddha on His own, just as all the Buddhas have done. The Four Noble Truths are all a matter of ‘the Dharma

abiding in the place of the Dharma'. The Four Noble Truths are all manifestations of Truth. The Four Noble Truths are all Buddha Nature. As a consequence, They go beyond intellectual discussions of such matters as 'non-arising' and 'non-activity', and this is tied to the Four Noble Truths not being 'absolutely essential'.

Second, there is the vehicle of the pratyekabuddhas,* who realize the perfection of nirvana by way of the Twelve Links in the Chain of Dependent Origination. The Twelve Links in the Chain of Dependent Origination are first, the darkness of spiritual ignorance; second, the deliberate actions that derive from that ignorance; third, becoming aware of things; fourth, giving name and form to things; fifth, activating the six senses; sixth, making contact through the senses with what arises; seventh, being stimulated through one's senses; eighth, craving; ninth, grasping after; tenth, causing to come into existence; eleventh, giving birth to; and twelfth, aging unto death.

In making the Twelve Links in the Chain of Dependent Origination the basis of their practice, pratyekabuddhas explore causality in the past, present, and future, and talk in terms of a subject that sees and an object that is seen. Even so, they take up causal relationships one by one and explore them thoroughly through their training, but their doing so is not something that is absolutely essential to the turning of the Dharma Wheel, for it is not absolutely essential to see every link in the causal chain. Keep in mind that, since the darkness of spiritual ignorance is inseparable from the One Whole Mind, deliberate acts, becoming aware of things, and so forth, are also inseparable from the One Whole Mind. Since the darkness of ignorance is inseparable from cessation, then deliberate acts, becoming aware of things, and so forth, are also inseparable from cessation. Since the darkness of ignorance is inseparable from nirvana, deliberate acts, becoming aware of things, and so forth, are also inseparable from nirvana. We can speak in this way because what arises is also what ceases. 'The darkness of ignorance' is a phrase we use in talking. 'Becoming aware of things', 'giving them name and form', and so forth, are no different. Keep in mind that the darkness of ignorance, deliberate actions, and so forth, are not different from Seigen Gyōshi's saying to his disciple Sekitō Kisen, "I have a certain Hatchet and would give It to you, should you choose to reside on this mountain with me." The darkness of ignorance, deliberate actions, becoming aware of things, and so forth, are not different from Sekitō's responding, "At the time when I was sent to you, I received your promise of being allowed to have your Hatchet, Reverend Monk, and so I would like to receive It."⁷

7. Originally, Sekitō, still in his teens, had gone to train at Sōkei Monastery under the aged Daikan Enō. Just before Enō's passing away, he advised Sekitō to "go train under Gyōshi" (C. *Hsing-ssu ch'ü*), but Sekitō misunderstood what Enō had told him and thought he had

Third, there is the vehicle of the bodhisattvas,* those who realize fully perfected supreme enlightenment by putting into practice the Teachings concerning the Six Paramitas. This ‘realizing’ of which they speak is beyond anything they do deliberately, beyond their doing nothing, beyond their initiating something, beyond their newly accomplishing something, beyond their having realized It in some remote past life, beyond what they originally intended to do, beyond anything they are attached to: it is simply their full realization of fully perfected supreme enlightenment.

What we call the Six Paramitas—that is, the six practices that ferry all sentient beings to the Other Shore—are the practice of freely giving wealth and Dharma, the practice of observing the Precepts, the practice of patience, the practice of zealous devotion, the practice of meditation, and the practice of wise discernment. These, all together, constitute supreme enlightenment. They are beyond any discussion of ‘nothing arising’ or of ‘not deliberately doing anything’. They do not always treat the giving of wealth and Dharma as the first thing or enlightenment as the ultimate thing. It says in the Scriptures, “A keen-witted bodhisattva makes enlightenment the first thing and makes giving the ultimate thing. A slow-witted bodhisattva makes giving the first thing and enlightenment the ultimate thing.”

Even so, patience can also be first, as can meditation. And there will be their manifesting the Thirty-six Paramitas, which is their getting snares from snares.⁸

The word ‘paramita’ means reaching the Other Shore. Even though ‘the Other Shore’ is beyond any semblance or trace of coming or going, one’s arrival fully manifests, for arrival refers to one’s spiritual question. Do not think that training and practice merely lead you to the Other Shore, for there is training and practice on that Other Shore. When we do our training and practice, it is our arrival at the Other Shore, because this training and practice is invariably supplied with the capacity to make the whole universe manifest completely.

been instructed to “go ponder the Matter” (C. *Hsin-ssu ch’ü*). However, Nangaku Ejō, one of Enō’s two successors, understood what Enō had said and had Sekitō go train under Seigen Gyōshi, Enō’s other successor. Gyōshi’s Hatchet characterizes the Dharma that is passed on at Transmission as That which cuts through all delusions and severs all karmic roots. Sekitō’s remark expresses his commitment to Gyōshi as his Transmission Master.

8. The Thirty-six Paramitas derive from the manifesting of each of the Six Paramitas within the practice of each one of the Six Paramitas. The Six Paramitas are like six traps for snaring the Truth, each of which produces another six traps, that is, the Thirty-six Paramitas.

The Twelve Divisions of the Scriptural Teachings

First, the *Sūtras*: the Scriptures that are in accord with what the Buddha is reported to have said.

Second, the *Geyas*: the reiterations in verse that extol the Dharma.

Third, the *Vyākaraṇas*: the predictions of Buddhahood for all.

Fourth, the *Gāthās*: verses that are chanted.

Fifth, the *Udānas*: the Buddha's spontaneous voicings of the Dharma without His having been asked.

Sixth, the *Nidānas*: the accounts of causes and coexisting conditions.

Seventh, the *Avadānas*: the parables.

Eighth, the *Itivṛittakas*: the past lives of the Bodhisattvas.

Ninth, the *Jātakas*: the past lives of the Buddha.

Tenth, the *Vaipulyas*: writings that extensively expound the Dharma.

Eleventh, the *Adbhutadharmas*: stories of miraculous events.

Twelfth, the *Upadeshas*: the commentaries.



For the sake of others, the Tathagata gave voice directly to both the provisional Teachings and the True Dharma⁹ on such matters as our entry into the world of the five skandhas* with its eighteen realms connected with our six senses: we call this body of Teaching the *Sūtras*. Sometimes, by appending verses comprised of lines of four, five, six, seven, eight, or nine words, He extolled the Teaching on such matters as one's entry into the world of the mundane skandhas: we call these verse passages the *Geyas*. Sometimes, He gave a direct account of the future of sentient beings, even to the point of predicting such things as the realization of Buddhahood by pigeons and sparrows: we call these predictions of Buddhahood the *Vyākaraṇas*. Sometimes, by means of individual poems, He gave an account of such things as entry into the fleshly skandhas: we call these poems the *Gāthās*. Sometimes, He spontaneously talked about human concerns without anyone having asked Him a question: we call these talks the *Udānas*. Sometimes,

9. An example of this occurs in the Burning House parable in the *Lotus Scripture*, where there is the provisional Teaching that there are three vehicles, whereas with the True Dharma there is, in fact, but One Vehicle.

He summarized matters that were not spiritually good in worldly societies and tied them to the Precepts: we call these summaries the *Nidānas*. Sometimes, He talked about the ways of the world by means of parables: we call these talks the *Avadānas*. Sometimes, He talked about events in worldly realms of the past: we call these talks the *Itivṛittakas*. Sometimes, He talked about events in His own past lives: we call these talks the *Jātakas*. Sometimes, He talked about far-reaching, world-wide issues: we call these talks the *Vaipulyas*. Sometimes, He talked about wondrous, unprecedented events in the world: we call these talks the *Adbhutadharmas*. Sometimes, He asked hard questions concerning the ways of the world: we call these queries the *Upadeshas*. These divisions constitute His ways of teaching by ordinary modes of expression. He established these twelve divisions of His Teachings so that sentient beings might rejoice and take delight in them.

It is rare to hear the names of the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings. When the Buddha Dharma has spread throughout a society, one hears of them. When the Buddha Dharma has disappeared, they are not heard of, nor are they heard of when the Buddha Dharma has not yet spread abroad. Those who have put down good spiritual roots over a long time are able to meet the Buddha and hear them. Those who have already heard them will surely realize fully perfected supreme enlightenment in a short while.

Each of these twelve divisions is called a Scripture. They are also called the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings as well as the twelve parts of the Scriptures. Because each of the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings is equipped with the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings, there are one hundred forty-four divisions of the Scriptural Teachings. Because all the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings are included within each of the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings, they simply comprise the whole of the divisions of the Scriptural Teachings. And at the same time, They go beyond calculation in numbers, regardless of whether those numbers are above or below a hundred million. They are all the Eye of the Buddhas and Ancestors, the Bones and Marrow of the Buddhas and Ancestors, the daily activities of the Buddhas and Ancestors, the radiance of the Buddhas and Ancestors, the splendor of the Buddhas and Ancestors, and the meritorious behavior of the Buddhas and Ancestors. The one who encounters the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings encounters the Buddhas and Ancestors, and the one who speaks of the Buddhas and Ancestors speaks of the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings.

Thus, Seigen's letting his foot dangle is nothing other than the Three Vehicles and the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings.¹⁰ And Nangaku's expressing his understanding of his kōan* by saying, "To describe It in words does not hit the bull's-eye" is nothing other than the Three Vehicles and the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings. Now, the meaning of Shibi's expression, 'not being absolutely essential', is in no way different from this. When we understand the import of this, it simply refers to Ancestors of the Buddha, and to Them alone. Further, there is no being 'half a person' and there is no 'one absolute thing': it is 'nothing ever having arisen'. At this very moment, how is It? You should respond, "It is No-thing That Is Absolutely Essential."

Sometimes, there have been those who have spoken of nine parts, which could be called the nine divisions of the Scriptural Teachings.

The Nine Parts

First, the *Sūtras*

Second, the Independent Poems (*Gāthās*)

Third, the Past Lives of the Bodhisattvas (*Itivṛittakas*)

Fourth, the *Jātakas*

Fifth, the Wondrous Events (*Adbhutadharmas*)

Sixth, the Accounts of Causes and Coexisting Conditions
(*Nidānas*)

Seventh, the Parables (*Avadānas*)

Eighth, the Appended Passages in Verse (*Geyas*)

Ninth, the Commentaries (*Upadeshas*)

Because the nine parts are each equipped with nine parts, there are eighty-one parts. Because the nine parts are each equipped with the whole of the parts, they are the nine parts. Without the merit of each part's belonging to the whole, they could not be the nine parts. Because there is the merit of their belonging to the whole of the parts, the whole of the parts belongs to each part. This is why they are in eighty-one parts, why they are a part of This, why they are a part of me, why they are a part of the hossu,* why they are a part of the traveling staff,* and why they are a part of the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching.

10. When Sekitō Kisen requested the Hatchet that Seigen Gyōshi had promised him, Seigen is said to have dangled his foot. Dōgen states that this was Seigen's way of passing on to Sekitō the Three Vehicles and the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings, which form the Hatchet of the Dharma.

Shakyamuni Buddha once said in verse:

*This Dharma, which is in nine parts,
I have humbly offered, as It suits each sentient
being.
For entering the Great Vehicle, It is the very
source,
Which is why I have voiced these Teachings.*

You need to realize that the words ‘I’ and ‘this’ both refer to the Tathagata.¹¹ His Face and Eye, Body and Mind customarily come into view through this Dharma. This ‘I’ and ‘this’ are already the nine-part Dharma, so the nine-part Dharma must therefore be both ‘I’ and ‘this’. One phrase or one verse in the present will be the nine-part Dharma, and because this ‘I’ is synonymous with ‘this’, He has humbly given voice to It, in conformity with the needs of sentient beings. Thus, since all sentient beings live their lives from within the here and now, He has, accordingly, given voice to these Teachings, and since they die their deaths from within the here and now, He has, accordingly, given voice to these Teachings. Even for the sake of their momentary behavior and the fleeting expressions on their faces, He has, accordingly, given voice to these Teachings. And since, in His transforming each and every sentient being, He would help them all to enter the Buddha’s Way, He has, accordingly, given voice to these Teachings. These sentient beings are followers of the ‘I’ that is this nine-part Dharma. These followers follow where He goes, follow where they themselves go, follow where their life goes, follow where the ‘I’ goes, and follow where the ‘this’ goes. Because these sentient beings are, unquestionably, the ‘this’ of His ‘I’, they are every part of the nine-part Dharma.

What He called ‘the very source for entering the Great Vehicle’ is also called ‘awakening to the Great Vehicle’, ‘practicing the Great Vehicle’, ‘heeding the Great Vehicle’, and ‘giving expression to the Great Vehicle’. Thus, it goes beyond saying that a sentient being has spontaneously realized the Way, for they are a part of It. Accordingly, sentient beings have realized the Way. Entering is the source, and the source means from beginning to end. The Buddha expresses the Dharma, and the Dharma expresses the Buddha. The Dharma is expressed by the Buddha, and the Buddha is expressed by the Dharma. The Blazing Fire expresses both the Buddha and the Dharma. The Buddha and the Dharma both express the Blazing Fire.

11. That is, what the ‘I’ refers to is inseparable from the Dharma that this ‘I’ has voiced, since the epithet ‘Tathagata’ applies to one who has gone beyond any sense of a personal self.

In these Teachings, there is good reason for giving voice to the whys and wherefores. Even if the Buddha had intended not to expound these Scriptures, it would have been impossible. This is why He said that the Why expounded this Scripture.¹² What the Why expounds fills the heavens, and what fills the heavens is what the Why expounds. Both this Buddha and that Buddha, with one voice, proclaim ‘this Scripture’; both one’s own True Self and the True Self of others expound the Why as ‘this Scripture’. Thus, He expounded this Scripture, and ‘this Scripture’ is synonymous with ‘what the Buddha taught’. You need to know that the Buddha’s Teachings, which are as innumerable as the sands of the Ganges, are the awakening stick and the ceremonial hōssu, the traveling staff and the Fist.

In sum, you need to know that such things as the Three Vehicles and the twelve divisions of the Scriptural Teachings are the Eye of the Buddhas and Ancestors. How could those who have not opened their Eye to This possibly be descendants of the Buddhas and Ancestors? How could those who have not understood It and come forth with It possibly Transmit one-to-one the True Eye of the Buddhas and Ancestors? Those who have not realized the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching are not Dharma heirs of the Seven Buddhas.*

Given to the assembly on the fourteenth day of the eleventh lunar month of the second year of the Ninji era (December 17, 1241) in the Monks’ Hall in Kōshō-ji Temple, Kyōto Prefecture.

Redelivered to the assembly on the seventh day of the eleventh lunar month in the third year of the Ninji era (November 30, 1242) in the Monks’ Hall in Kōshō-ji Temple, Kyōto Prefecture.

12. Dōgen gives a twist to the meaning of the last line of the Buddha’s verse by treating the term for ‘why’ as a noun, ‘the Why’.