

On the Thirty-Seven Methods of Training for Realizing Enlightenment

(Sanjūshichihon Bodai Bumpō)

Translator's Introduction: These thirty-seven methods derive from early Buddhist scriptures. Although they have customarily been taken in a literal sense, Dōgen chooses to explore deeper spiritual implications of these Teachings.

Of particular notice in this discourse is Dōgen's discussion of the Noble Eightfold Path, in which he has added a lengthy and spirited commentary on Right Action. There are some who may be disturbed by the strong rhetoric that Dōgen uses in this section. There are times when a Zen Master uses strong language, as it may be the only way for a Master to help cut through their disciples' delusions so that they may reconsider what they are doing. Also, many of Dōgen's expressions would not have seemed as highly charged in his time and culture as they seem in today's Western culture. This section focuses on the relationship between those who are lay trainees and those who are monastics. Dōgen's target in this section is quite clear: that flattering and manipulating bunch who curry worldly favors, seeking to be labeled as a Zen Master by some sovereign or minister of state, simply because they go around spouting that there is really no difference between what is going on in the mind of someone involved in affairs of state and what is going on in the mind of a Shakyamuni Buddha. He then endeavors to point out what the difference is between those who have chosen to remain in home life (*J. zaïke*) and those who have chosen to leave home life behind (*J. shukke*): even the best of lay trainees cannot realize supreme, fully perfected enlightenment (Buddhahood) unless they ultimately leave home life behind because the pull of secular demands is too great and time-consuming, and anything less than a full commitment will simply not be sufficient. He then takes up the cases of various lay people, specifically including Vimalakirti (*J. Yuïma*) who had long served as a Zen Buddhist model for lay trainees, whom 'that bunch' claim had realized full Buddhahood without having to leave lay life behind. However, despite what may seem on first reading to be Dōgen's dismissal of lay trainees, with a closer reading it appears that what he is really attacking is the notion that, since there is no difference between the mind of a lay person and that of a monk, monastic life is irrelevant to the realization of Buddhahood and that, since lay people are enlightened just as they are, they therefore need not train. When this section of Dōgen's discourse is seen in relation to what he has been teaching so far, the relevance of his message for lay trainees might be summed up as, "Do not give up on your training, for training and enlightenment are synonymous, and do not do the practice in order to become a Buddha, but simply do it to fulfill your Bodhisattva vow to help all sentient beings, including yourself, realize their True Nature."

The Buddhas of old had a system of study, namely, the learning, practicing, and confirming of thirty-seven methods of training for realizing enlightenment.

These methods deal with the variations and stages in training and are also the methods used for grappling with one's spiritual question. They are the means for producing all the Buddhas and Ancestors.



The Four Abodes of Reflection

also called the Four Focal Points of Reflection

First, reflecting on the impurity of body

*Second, reflecting on how what our senses perceive leads
to suffering*

*Third, reflecting on the impermanence of our mental
functions*

*Fourth, reflecting on how all thoughts and things are
devoid of a permanent, unchanging self*

‘Reflecting on the impurity of body’ means reflecting on our present fleshly body as being the Whole Universe in all ten quarters, because that is what our true Body is. The reflection that our body is impure is what springs up again and again when we are on the Absolute Way. Were it not to spring up, reflection upon it would not be possible. It would be as if we lacked a body. It would be as if doing the practice were impossible. It would be as if giving full expression to It were impossible. It would be as if fully reflecting on anything were impossible. But since you have already had manifestations of the possibility of reflection, you should recognize that it can spring up again and again. ‘The possibility of reflection’ refers to our everyday actions, such as sweeping the ground and sweeping the floor. Because we sweep the ground in any given month, and because we sweep the ground and sweep the floor punctually during the second lunar month, the whole of the great earth is just as it is.¹

The body's reflecting refers to your reflecting on your own body. It is not using the body to reflect on anything else. And this very act of reflection means that That Which Is Superlative has appeared. When your reflecting on your body has appeared, your reflecting on your Mind may be searched for but you have not yet made contact with It, for It has not yet appeared. Thus, when you reflect on

1. That is, we do our daily actions, whether we are aware of what time it is or not. In the Japanese calendar, the second lunar month coincides with the beginning of spring.

your body, it is the manifesting of the Diamond Samadhi and the Bravely Going On Samadhi, and these are both reflections on the body's not being pure.²

Speaking more generally, we call the principle of seeing the morning star in the middle of the night as seeing that the body is not pure. It has nothing to do with the issue of being clean versus being unclean. When there is a body, it is not pure; when bodily excretions manifest, they are not pure. To explore the Matter* in this way, when demons become Buddhas, they use their demon to defeat their demon in order to become a Buddha.³ When Buddhas become Buddhas, They take up Their Buddha Nature to fathom Their Buddha Nature and become a Buddha. When ordinary humans become Buddhas, they take up their humanity to harmonize their humanity and become a Buddha. By all means, you should thoroughly explore the principle that there is a pathway to be taken up.

For instance, it is like the method of washing clothes. The water is dirtied by the clothes, whereas the clothes are washed clean. Whether we use this soiled water to do our laundry or change this water to continue washing, we are still using water and still washing our clothes. If the clothes do not appear to be clean after one or two washings, do not stop from weariness and let the laundry pile up. If your water has been all absorbed, get more water; even if your robe appears clean, give it another rinse. When it comes to water, we use various sorts of liquids which are fine for washing robes. Thoroughly explore the principle that we know that water is unclean when there are fish in it. When it comes to robes, there are various types to be washed. Making such an effort out of washing your clothes is the arising of your kōan.* However, one will get a glimpse of what cleanliness is. The underlying point here is that soaking your clothes in water is not necessarily your original goal nor is dirtying the water with your clothes your original goal. It is in washing your clothes by using the dirtied water that the original goal of washing your clothes exists. Further, there are methods of washing clothes clean by using such things as fire, wind, soil, water, or air. And there are methods of cleansing earth, water, fire, wind, and air by using earth, water, fire, wind, or air.

The main point of the present 'seeing that the body is not pure' is also like this. Accordingly, what 'body' encompasses, what 'seeing' encompasses, and what 'not pure' encompasses comprise the kesa* that your mother gave birth to. If a kesa

2. The Diamond Samadhi is the meditative state that is like the one described in the *Diamond-cutting Scripture*, whereas the Bravely Going On Samadhi is that meditative state described in the *Scripture of Bravely Going On* (J. *Shuryōgon Kyō*; S. *Shurangama Scripture*).

* See *Glossary*.

3. In Buddhism, the term 'demon' is often used to refer to defiling passions.

is not the kesa that your mother gave birth to, then the Buddhas and Ancestors do not use it—how could Shōnawashu have been the only one?⁴ You should hold this principle in mind very carefully, exploring it through your training and dealing with it exhaustively.

‘Reflecting on how what our senses perceive leads to suffering’ means that suffering is nothing other than a sense perception. It is beyond a matter of what we perceive or what others perceive, and it is beyond a matter of being attached to one’s own perceptions or not being attached to them. It is the sensations of a live body, and it is the sufferings of a live body. Say we replace a sweet, ripe melon with a bitter bottle-gourd. It is bitter, skin and flesh, bones and marrow. It is bitter to the mind of attachment and to the mind free of attachments. This type of reflecting is one step above spiritual abilities and above training to realize enlightenment. It is a spiritual ability that springs forth from the whole stem, that springs forth from the whole root. Thus, it has been said, “Sentient beings are thought to suffer, and here indeed is a sentient being who suffers.” ‘Sentient beings’ is beyond self and beyond other. We cannot deceive others, for ultimately there are sentient beings who are suffering. Sweet melons are sweet up to their calyx, whereas bitter gourds are bitter down to their very roots. Even so, what suffering is cannot easily be ferreted out. Ask yourself: precisely what is suffering?

Concerning ‘reflecting on the impermanence of our mental functions’, the Old Buddha Daikan Enō once said, “Impermanence is what Buddha Nature is.” Thus, the various ways in which impermanence is understood are all Buddha Nature. Great Master Yōka Genkaku once said, “That actions are impermanent and that all things are empty of anything unchanging is what the Tathagata’s great, fully perfected realization was.” Your present day reflecting on the impermanence of your mental functions is itself the Tathagata’s great, fully perfected realization, for the great, fully perfected realization is what a Tathagata is. Even if your mind does not intend to reflect, it pursues whatever is going by. Thus, wherever there is mind, there is reflection. To generalize, upon your reaching Supreme Wisdom, that supreme, fully enlightened state manifests simply as impermanence and the reflecting mind. The mind is not necessarily constant. Because it goes beyond the four lines of a Scriptural verse and transcends the hundreds of ways of negating, the tiles* and stones of our walls and fences along with their rocks of various sizes is our mind itself, and impermanence itself is reflection itself.

‘Reflecting on how all thoughts and things are devoid of a permanent, unchanging self’ means that whatever is long is the long Dharma body and

4. The Third Indian Ancestor, Shōnawashu, is said to have been born wearing the kesa.

whatever is short is the short Dharma body. Because they appear in a living manner, they are without an unchanging self. Buddha Nature does not exist for a dog, and a dog has Buddha Nature. All sentient beings lack having a Buddha Nature, and Buddha Nature is beyond all sentient beings. All Buddhas are beyond ordinary sentient beings, and all Buddhas are beyond ‘Buddhas’. All Buddha Nature is beyond ‘Buddha Nature’, and all sentient beings are beyond being ‘a sentient being’. Because this is the way things are, all thoughts and things are beyond being ‘all thoughts and things’, which we explore through our training as our reflecting on how all thoughts and things are devoid of a permanent, unchanging self. You need to remember to let your whole being leap free from entanglements with self.

Shakyamuni Buddha once said, “All Buddhas and bodhisattvas* reside peacefully within this Teaching, which They regard as a sacred womb.” Both Buddhas and bodhisattvas treat these four abodes of reflection as a sacred womb. You need to know that there is the sacred womb of those who have reached the stage of All-knowing Enlightenment and there is the sacred womb of those who have reached the stage of Wondrous Enlightenment.⁵ There are Buddhas and bodhisattvas who have already reached these stages, and there are Buddhas who have gone beyond Wondrous Enlightenment who likewise regard this as a sacred womb. And bodhisattvas who have leapt beyond the stages prior to All-knowing Enlightenment and Wondrous Enlightenment also regard the four abodes of reflection as a sacred womb. Truly, the Skin and Flesh, Bones and Marrow of the Buddhas and Ancestors are nothing other than the four abodes of reflection.



The Four Kinds of Cutting Off Evil
also called the Four Kinds of Right Effort

*First, endeavoring to avoid whatever gives rise to evil
deeds*

*Second, endeavoring to bring one’s evil deeds to a halt
when they arise*

Third, endeavoring to do what produces merit

Fourth, endeavoring to do what increases merit

5. ‘All-knowing Enlightenment’ is the fifty-first stage of bodhisattvahood, the one before becoming a Buddha. ‘Wondrous Enlightenment’ is the fifty-second stage of bodhisattvahood, the one of becoming Buddha.

In ‘endeavoring to avoid whatever gives rise to evil deeds’, what we call ‘evil deeds’ do not invariably have set forms or exact definitions. They simply follow the customs of a country or are those established in a given land. Even so, preventing the arising of evil deeds that have not yet arisen is what the Buddha taught. It is what has been continually Transmitted accurately. It has been said that, according to the understanding of non-Buddhists, the self that has not yet sprouted up is taken to be what is fundamental.⁶ According to the Buddha’s Teaching, it will not be like this.

Let’s look into this matter a bit. In the time before evil deeds have arisen, where are they? Were you to say that they exist in the future, you would be on the false path of the nihilists forever.⁷ Were you to say that the future becomes the present, that would not be the way that the Buddha’s Teaching put the matter, for you would have confused what the three temporal worlds are. If you are unclear about the three temporal worlds, you will become confused as to what thoughts and things are. If you are confused about what thoughts and things are, you will become confused as to what the true appearance of thoughts and things are. If you are confused about their true appearance, you will be confused about what the saying ‘each Buddha on His own, together with all Buddhas’ is pointing to. Therefore, we do not say that the future later becomes the present.

Let’s look a bit further. What should we call evil deeds that have not yet arisen? Who has known or seen them? If they were knowable and perceivable, there would be a time when they had not yet existed and a time when their not yet having arisen had not occurred. If this were so, we could not then call them ‘thoughts and things that have not yet arisen’. We would have to call them ‘thoughts and things that have already passed away’. You should set aside learning from non-Buddhists or such persons as shravakas* who follow the Lesser Course,* and just focus your practice on endeavoring to avoid whatever gives rise to evil deeds. We call the unrestrained accumulating of evil thoughts ‘evil deeds that have not yet arisen’, for that is what they are. What we call ‘their non-arising’ means ‘yesterday expressing the Dharma of Certainty and today expressing the Dharma of Uncertainty’.

What ‘endeavoring to bring one’s evil deeds to a halt when they arise’ refers to is what has already arisen being what has completely arisen, and what has completely arisen being what has half arisen, and what has half arisen being what

6. That is, the non-Buddhist view that there is a permanent, unchanging soul which exists prior to, and independent of, birth, the body being but a temporary abode for this soul.

7. That is, one would be denying the Buddhist principle of causality.

is arising here and now. What is arising here and now is a hindrance that conceals what is arising. It is an arising that springs forth from our mind. When we make this effort, we bring our evil deeds to a halt. It is like Devadatta, while alive, entering the realm of the hells and it is like Devadatta, while alive, receiving the promise of Buddhahood.⁸ It is like the living body of Shakrendra being within the womb of a donkey, and it is like his living body realizing Buddhahood.⁹ Making use of such an underlying principle, you need to explore through your training the principle of bringing about extinction of evil deeds. Extinguishing such deeds treats extinction as a leaping free and puts aside the delusion of extinguishing them.¹⁰

‘Endeavoring to do what produces merit’ is synonymous with the saying, “Being thoroughly content with one’s countenance, just as we were before the duality of ‘father’ and ‘mother’ had arisen.”¹¹ It is the time before thoughts and things have sprouted up. It is the understanding that precedes the Lords of Awe-inspiring Voices.

You need to understand that ‘endeavoring to do what increases merit’ is not the same as continuing to give rise to good that has already arisen. It is endeavoring to increase it. It is Shakyamuni Buddha Himself, once having seen the morning star, going on to help others see the morning star. It is one’s Eye creating the morning star. It is, as Baso once put it, “After an aimless life, for thirty years I have gone on, never lacking for salt or vinegar.” Because Shakyamuni was increasing merit, merit had already arisen. Thus, when the valley stream is deep, the handle of our dipper will be long. It is only because we already had It that Bodhidharma came.

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8. Due to his betrayal of Shakyamuni, Devadatta experienced hellish suffering during his lifetime, and, at the same time, Shakyamuni predicted Devadatta’s ultimately realizing Buddhahood.
 9. In Discourse 87: On Taking Refuge in the Treasures of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha (*Kie Buppōsō Hō*), Dōgen will relate the story of the deity Shakrendra, who was reborn in the womb of a donkey.
 10. The delusional aspect arises from thinking that once one has brought one’s wicked ways to a halt, one has brought them to an end for all times.
 11. ‘Being thoroughly content with one’s countenance’ refers to our complete acceptance of ourselves as being just what we are, without engaging in judgmentalism.



The Four Steps Towards the Marvelous Spiritual Abilities

First, longing to help others realize their marvelous spiritual abilities

Second, having a mind to make the necessary effort

Third, being willing to keep one's focus on this goal

Fourth, doing all these through the mind of meditation

‘Longing to help others realize their marvelous spiritual abilities’ refers to the body and mind aiming to become a Buddha, to Baso’s saying, “Having finished eating rice, I feel content, and look to taking me a nap,” and to my Master Tendō’s saying, “That is why I bow to you.” In short, longing to help others realize their spiritual abilities goes beyond the causes and conditions of our body and mind. As Master Wanshi put it:

*The water is now so clear you can see to its depths,
As fish swim by at their leisure:
The sky is now so clear it is boundless,
As birds fly off, leaving no trace.*

‘Having a mind to make the necessary effort’ refers to the tiles and stones of our walls and fences, to the great earth with its mountains and rivers. It refers to the various arisings of the three worlds of desire, form, and beyond form, as well as to the brightly polished wood of chairs and bamboo.¹² Because this mind is able to make the necessary effort, there is the mind of Buddhas and Ancestors, there is the mind of the worldly and the saintly, there is the mind of grasses and trees, there is the kaleidoscopic mind. Your whole mind is synonymous with having a mind to make the necessary effort.

‘Being willing to keep one’s focus on this goal’ is synonymous with being atop a hundred-foot pole and then stepping straight ahead. Where is the top of this hundred-foot pole? As is said, we cannot find it without stepping straight ahead, and taking one step straight ahead is not something to be denied. This place is where the What exists, whether you explain it as advancing or as retreating. At the very moment when one is advancing towards spiritual abilities, the whole universe in all ten quarters follows upon these spiritual abilities and goes with them, and, following upon these spiritual abilities, we arrive.

12. That is, the mind that is required to help is just one’s own ordinary mind, and does not require a mind that is somehow special or unique.

‘Our doing all these through the mind of meditation’ means that, due to the vastness of inherent karmic* ignorance, even all the Buddhas and Ancestors possess nothing upon which They can rely. There is meditating on our physical being, and there is meditating on our mind, and there is meditating on consciousness, and there is meditating on straw sandals, and there is meditating on one’s self as it was before there was the Kalpa* of Emptiness.

We also call these methods the four abilities of free will. As Shakyamuni Buddha once said, “When someone has not moved, yet arrives, we call that the miraculous spiritual functioning of free will.” Thus, what is sharp is like the point of a needle and what has a square edge is like the side of a chisel.



The Five Roots of Training

First, the root of faith in the Dharma

Second, the root of zealous spiritual endeavor

Third, the root of mindfulness

Fourth, the root of concentration

Fifth, the root of wise discernment

Keep in mind that the root of faith in the Dharma is beyond self, beyond other, beyond any forcing of oneself, beyond anything contrived, beyond anything others have hauled up in their minds, beyond any objective rules or standards, and therefore it was Transmitted, unseen, from West to East. What we call ‘faith’ is a faith that is forged with one’s whole being. It is invariably following where faith goes from the perspective of Buddhahood, which is following our Self where It goes. Were it not based upon the perspective of Buddhahood, there would be no manifestation of faith. This is why it is said that we can enter the great ocean of Buddha Dharma by means of our faith. In sum, the place where faith manifests is the place where Buddhas and Ancestors appear.

‘The root of zealous spiritual endeavor’ is being alert to just doing meditation. It is resting even when unable to take rest. It is taking rest when taking rest. It is being someone who is terribly unimportant. It is being One who is not unimportant. It is being both important and unimportant. It is the First Moon and the second moon.¹³ Shakyamuni Buddha once said, “I am always zealous in my spiritual endeavors. That is why I was able to realize supreme, fully perfected

13. The First Moon is Buddha Nature, whereas the second moon is the reflection of Buddha Nature in all things.

enlightenment.” What He called His continual zealous endeavors was His doing it totally—from head to tail—through the whole of past, present, and future. His saying, “I am always zealous in my spiritual endeavors” is His way of saying, “I have already realized Buddhahood.” Because it is His already having realized supreme, fully perfected enlightenment, it is His always being zealous in His spiritual endeavors. Were this not so, how could He have possibly been continually zealous in His endeavors? How could He have possibly already realized It? How can those who are academic teachers of Buddhism and those who write scholarly commentaries on Scriptures possibly encounter or hear about this principle, much less explore it through training with a Master?

‘The root of mindfulness’ is the circle of those withered trees of living flesh, for what we call the circle of those of living flesh are as withered trees.¹⁴ Withered trees are the root of mindfulness. When we ourselves are groping about trying to hit the mark, this is mindfulness. There is the mindfulness when we have a body, as well as the mindfulness when our mind is free of attachments. There is the mindfulness of an involved mind, and there is the mindfulness when we go beyond body. The root of life of all humans on this great earth is the root of mindfulness, and the root of life of all the Buddhas in the ten quarters is the root of mindfulness. There are many people in one moment of mindfulness and there are many moments of mindfulness within one person. Even so, there are those who have mindfulness and those who lack mindfulness. It is not a matter of human beings always having mindfulness, nor is it a matter of mindfulness always being associated with human beings. Even though this is so, there is inexhaustible merit in being able to observe and thoroughly investigate this topic of mindfulness.

‘The root of concentration’ is being sparing with your eyebrow, and it is your lifting up your eyebrow.¹⁵ Hence, you are not in the dark about cause and effect, and you are not free from causality, whereby one may enter into the womb of a donkey or enter the womb of a horse. You are like a jewel encased within a stone: one cannot say that it is all stone or all jewel. You are like a mountain crowning the ground: one cannot say that it is all ground or all mountain. Even so, you spring forth from the crown of your head and leap into It.

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14. ‘The circle of those withered trees of living flesh’ refers to the Sangha sitting together in meditation: they are alive, yet they are sitting as still and unaffected by what comes as a withered tree.
 15. A reference to the Venerable Pindola’s raising of one eyebrow which Dōgen recounts in Discourse 57: *On the Plum Blossom (Baika)*. The raising of one’s eyebrow was a sign of confirming someone else’s kenshō, a practice which, according to Dōgen, should be done sparingly.

‘The root of wise discernment’ is the Buddhas of the three temporal worlds not knowing They have It, and it is feral cats and white water buffaloes being certain that they do have It.¹⁶ You should not ask why it is thus, for it is beyond putting in words. There is inhalation and exhalation through the Nose, and there are fingertips within a Fist. The term ‘donkey’ maintains, and relies on, there being a donkey. The term ‘well’ is a mutual encountering with a well. In sum, a Root is the Dharma heir of a Root.



The Five Strengths

First, the strength of faith in the Dharma

Second, the strength of zealous spiritual endeavor

Third, the strength of mindfulness

Fourth, the strength of concentration

Fifth, the strength of wise discernment

‘The strength of faith’ is being deceived by oneself and having no place to escape to. It is being called to by someone and having to turn one’s head around. From birth to old age, it is simply being just This. It is stumbling seven times, then getting up and going on. It is eight times falling down and making use of it. Thus, faith is like a jewel, crystal clear as water. It is considering the Transmitting of the Dharma and the Transmitting of the robe to be acts of faith, as are the Transmitting of Buddhas and the Transmitting of Ancestors.

‘The strength of zealous spiritual endeavor’ is thoroughly expressing in words what cannot be put into practice and thoroughly putting into practice what cannot be put into words. Thus, being able to explain a little bit is nothing more than being able to explain a little bit. And being able to put into practice one line of Scripture is nothing more than being able to put into practice one line of Scripture. Getting strength from within one’s strength is the strength of zealous spiritual endeavor.

‘The strength of mindfulness’ is the great slayer pulling someone by the nose. Thus, it was the Nose pulling the person.¹⁷ The strength of mindfulness is also our relinquishing the jewel and redeeming the jewel, and it is also our

16. ‘Feral cats and white oxen’ is descriptive of certain types of trainees who are heavily deluded.

17. An allusion to Meditation Master Shakkyō Ezō yanking the nose of Master Seidō Chizō. Shakkyō was a great ‘slayer’ of the false self, who taught his fellow monk Seidō the meaning of the True Self (one’s Nose). It was Shakkyō’s True Self that did the pulling.

relinquishing a tile and redeeming a tile. Further, it also means thirty blows for not having relinquished them. No matter how much we human beings may make use of the strength of our mindfulness, it will never erode.

‘The strength of concentration’ is like a child getting its mother and like a mother getting her child. And it is like a child getting ‘child’ and a mother getting ‘mother’. Be that as it may, it is not exchanging our head for a face, nor is it buying gold with gold. It is simply our chanting from our concentration growing ever louder.

‘The strength of wise discernment’ is ever deeper and far-reaching as the years and generations pass. It is like ferrying a boat’s crossing to the Other Shore. This is why in ancient times someone said, “It is like the crossing was getting a ferry.” The heart of what this is saying is, “The crossing, beyond question, is the ferry.” A crossing that does not get in the way of a crossing we call ‘a ferry’. In spring, the ice dissolves of itself.



The Seven Branches Associated with Awakening

First, awakening to a preference for the Dharma

Second, awakening to being zealous in one’s endeavors

Third, awakening to a delight in the Truth

Fourth, awakening to eliminating one’s rough edges

Fifth, awakening to equanimity

Sixth, awakening to concentration

Seventh, awakening to mindfulness

‘Awakening to a preference for the Dharma’ is synonymous with Kanchi Sōsan’s saying, “Let but a hair’s breadth of discriminatory thought arise and you have made Heaven and Earth strangers to each other.” Thus, as he also said, “The Way to the Ultimate is not hard; simply give up being picky and choosy.”

‘Awakening to being zealous in one’s endeavors’ is synonymous with never having endorsed robbing others in the marketplace. Whether buying for one’s own sake or selling for one’s own sake, both have their fixed price, and there is recognition of one’s worth. Even if we seem to be bending over backwards in recommending others, a blow to our body does not break us. In never ceasing to offer anyone a trigger word, you will encounter the Trader who offers you, on His

part, the turning around of your heart.¹⁸ So, before you have finished doing your donkey work, go about doing horse work.¹⁹

‘Awakening to a delight in the Truth’ is synonymous with the sympathy your grandma had when your blood was dripping from a cut. Leave the thousand hands and eyes of the Great Compassionate One to do their business. Plum blossoms are beginning to peep through the wintry snow—news of the coming spring. A great Master may still be cold, but even so, he will be freely swimming about, disporting like a fish, and overflowing with gales of laughter.

‘Awakening to eliminating one’s rough edges’ means, when looking within yourself, not getting all absorbed in yourself, and, when looking outside yourself, not getting all absorbed in others. It means ‘what I have gotten, you have not yet gotten.’ It is ardently expressing It while going forth amidst all manner of beings.

‘Awakening to equanimity’ means that even though I have brought It, others may not accept It. It is just as the Chinese, when barefooted, learn to walk like Chinese, and as the Persians who go hunting for ivory tusks in the South Seas.

‘Awakening to concentration’ means before taking the initiative, preserving the Eye that exists before taking the initiative. It is our blowing our own nose. It is taking hold of our own tether and leading our own self. And, nevertheless, it is being able to let our domesticated water buffalo graze on its own.

‘Awakening to mindfulness’ means a pillar* of the temple going forth, walking the sky. Thus, even though we say that someone’s mouth resembles a mallet and someone’s Eye is like an eyebrow, still, this is a matter of burning sandalwood in a sandalwood forest or of a lion roaring in a lion’s den.



The Eight Branches of the Right Path

also called the Noble Eightfold Path

First, the branch of Right View

Second, the branch of Right Thought

Third, the branch of Right Speech

Fourth, the branch of Right Action

18. A trigger word is some remark which serves another as a trigger, or catalyst, for an awakening to the Truth.

19. Donkey work is the day-to-day plodding through one’s training. While still training, one should also do the horse work, which is one’s going forth wherever needed to help all sentient beings realize the Truth.

Fifth, the branch of Right Livelihood

Sixth, the branch of Right Effort

Seventh, the branch of Right Mindfulness

Eighth, the branch of Right Concentration

‘The branch of Right View’ is our cherishing the Eye of our True Self, which resides within. At the same time, prior to our body’s arising, we were already endowed with the Eye. Even though this view was magnificently realized in the past, it is our own spiritual question coming forth and it will be experienced intimately in the future. In short, if one does not cherish the Eye of one’s True Self, such a person is not an Ancestor of the Buddha.

‘The branch of Right Thought’ is the coming forth of all the Buddhas in the ten quarters when we cultivate this mode of thinking. As a result, the coming forth of the ten quarters and the coming forth of the Buddhas is what the time when we cultivate this mode of thinking refers to. When we cultivate this mode of thinking, we are beyond self and transcend other. Even so, at the very moment that we are completely involved in thinking about the Matter, we have directed our course towards Varanasi.²⁰ The place where this mode of thinking exists is Varanasi. The Old Buddha Yakusan once said, “What I was thinking about was based on not deliberately thinking about any particular thing.” A monk then asked, “How can what anyone is thinking about be based on not deliberately thinking about something?” The Master replied, “It is a matter of ‘what I am thinking about’ not being the point.” This is a matter of right thinking and right thought. Breaking your meditation pillow is what right thought is about.²¹

‘The branch of Right Speech’ is our Mute Self not being a mute. Those who are mutes among humans are not yet able to speak. Those in the realm of the Mute are not mutes. They do not admire themselves as saints, nor do they pile something spiritual upon themselves. It is their thoroughly exploring the Matter by hanging their mouths up on the wall. It is all the mouths being hung up on all the walls.

‘The branch of Right Action’ is our leaving home life behind and entering the Meditation Hall. It is our entering a mountain monastery to procure a realization. As Shakyamuni Buddha once said, “The thirty-seven methods of training are the actions of a monk.” The actions of a monk go beyond the Greater* and Lesser Courses. There are various types of monks, such as Buddha monks,

20. Varanasi, nowadays called Benares, was the place where the Buddha first gave voice to the Dharma after His awakening.

21. ‘Breaking one’s meditation pillow’ is a metaphor for working hard at one’s meditation practice.

bodhisattva monks, and shravaka monks. Those who have not yet left home life behind do not succeed to the inheritance of the Right Action of the Buddha's Dharma. They have not received the authentic Transmission of the Great Course of the Buddha's Dharma. Even though those who have remained in home life may have done some study of the Way as lay men and women, they have not left behind any traces of having become expert in the Way. Whenever anyone has become expert in the Way, that person has invariably left home life behind. How can those folks who are not up to leaving home life behind possibly devote themselves to attaining the rank of Buddha?

At the same time, for the past two or three hundred years, there have been many in Great Sung China who call themselves monks of the Zen tradition, saying, "Those who have remained in home life to study the Way and those who have left home life behind to study the Way are just the same." That bunch have turned themselves into dogs just for the sake of making the excrement and urine of lay people their food and drink.²² Sometimes they say to rulers of countries and their ministers, "Your mind when conducting the affairs of state is exactly the same as the mind of Ancestors and Buddhas, for there is no other mind." Rulers and ministers, still ignorant of what real Teaching and genuine Dharma are, take great delight in bestowing such titles as Master upon them. Monks who talk like this are veritable Devadattas. They come out with such wild and childish drivel just so they can feed off the chirping and spitting of such lay folk—better to call it a child's whimpering. They are not of the family of the Seven Buddhas,* but are a band of devils and beasts. They do not know what 'body and mind' refers to, nor do they explore the Matter through training with a Master, nor do they understand what it means to leave home life behind both in body and in mind. They are in the dark about the politics of rulers and ministers, and it is as if they had never encountered the Great Way of the Buddhas and Ancestors even in their dreams.

The lay practitioner Vimalakirti* resembled the Buddha when He was in the world, yet there were many ways in which what he taught was not yet complete, and there were a number of points which he had not yet fully mastered. The lay practitioner Hōon had a history of training under several Ancestors, but he was not permitted entrance into Yakusan's inner chambers, and he was never the equal of Baso, his ultimate teacher. His name is said to be linked with the term 'exploring through training', but his exploring through training was not real. With others, such

22. In this context, 'excrement and urine' is a derogatory metaphor for 'words and opinions', that is, for what the judgmental mind excretes. In Japanese, this terminology does not carry the vulgar sense that it has in English.

as Ri Fuba and Yō Bunkō, each thought he was tranquilly residing within his spiritual awakening, but neither had yet partaken of sugar dumplings, much less of a painted rice cake, or even less, of the rice gruel of the Buddhas and Ancestors, for they still did not possess a monk's alms bowl. Sad to say, their whole life as a skin bag* was in vain.

What I am universally recommending to sentient beings in lofty positions, to ordinary beings, to erudite scholarly beings, and to all other types of sentient beings in all ten quarters is that they follow the Tathagata's ways from the distant past by quickly leaving home life behind and training in the Way, so that they may attain the rank of Buddha and the rank of Ancestor. Do not listen to the incompetent words of those so-called 'Zen Masters' and their ilk. Because they do not understand what body is or what mind is, they speak such words. As likely as not, they are utterly lacking in compassion for sentient beings and have no thought of adhering to the Buddha Dharma. Only desiring to devote themselves to feeding off the urine and excrement of those who remain in home life, they are like vicious dogs—dogs with human faces, dogs in human hides. Thus they speak as they do. Do not sit down with them, do not converse with them, do not stop to train under them. While their human bodies are still alive, they have fallen into the world of the animals. If someone who has left home life behind had urine and excrement in abundance, these dogs would say that such a monk was preeminent. But they talk as they do because the urine and excrement of monks does not come up to the standards of these animals. Over more than two thousand years, there has been no trace appearing in the texts of the more than five thousand scrolls of the Canon which says that the intentions of those who remain in home life and of those who have left home life behind are exactly the same, either in theory or in practice. No Buddha or Ancestor has ever proclaimed such a thing in over fifty generations of our lineage and during the more than forty ages.²³ Even if there were a person—one who had left home behind—who broke or neglected the Precepts, or did not keep to the Teaching, or was lacking in wise discernment, such a one would surpass the discernment and the keeping to the Precepts of one who had remained in home life, because becoming a monk is Wisdom itself, realization Itself, the Way Itself, and the Dharma Itself. Even though those in home life may have good spiritual roots and are behaving quite meritoriously, they may well overlook the good spiritual roots and meritorious behavior of a monastic's body and mind. During the Buddha's whole lifetime of teaching, not one person in lay life fully

23. The fifty generations are from Makakashō through Tendō Nyojō, whereas the more than forty ages are from the first of the Seven Buddhas up through Daikan Enō and beyond.

realized the Way. This was due to their home life not being a suitable place for them to learn the Way of the Buddha and because their worldly distractions were so many.

When we explore the body and mind of that bunch who assert that a mind which is engaged in myriad affairs of state and the mind of an Ancestral Teacher are the same, it is obvious that they never encountered the mind and body of the Buddhas and Ancestors, nor was the Skin and Flesh, Bones and Marrow of the Buddhas and Ancestors ever Transmitted to those folks. Sad to say, even though they were encountering the True Teaching of the Buddha, they nevertheless became beasts.

Because this is the way things are, Enō, the Old Buddha of Sōkei, immediately took leave of his mother in order to seek a Master: this was Right Action. Before he heard the *Diamond-cutting Scripture* and gave rise to the intention to realize Buddhahood, he lived at home, working as a woodcutter. After hearing the *Diamond-cutting Scripture*, he was infused with Its lingering fragrance. So, dropping off his heavy burden of wood, he left home life behind. Keep in mind that once body and mind become so infused with the Buddha Dharma, it is said that remaining in home life is no longer possible. It has been the same for all the Buddhas and Ancestors. That bunch who say that one does not need to leave home life behind are committing an offense even more serious than those of the five treacherous deeds* and they are even more savage than Devadatta. Know that what they are doing is even worse than what the six male monastics, the six female monastics, as well as the eighteen monastics did during the Buddha's time, so do not converse with them.²⁴ A whole lifetime is not that long. You do not have the time to converse with such devils and beasts. And what is more, you received these human bodies and minds of yours as a result of seeds from encountering and hearing the Buddha Dharma in past lives. They are like temple tools for public use. They are not to be turned into a band of devils, nor are they to be aligned with any band of devils. Do not forget your deep obligation to the Buddhas and Ancestors by listening to the baying of these ferocious dogs, but protect and preserve the virtue of the milk of the Dharma. And do not sit or sup with these wicked dogs.

When Our Founding Ancestor, the Old Buddha of Mount Sūzan,²⁵ left far behind the western Buddhist country of India to come east to the remote land of China, the True Teaching of the Buddhas and Ancestors was Transmitted through

24. These three groups were comprised of monks who had difficulties with their training, and therefore left the assembly of the Buddha.

25. That is, Bodhidharma.

his person. If he had not left worldly life behind in order to realize the Way, such a thing would not have been possible. Before he came from the West, human beings of all stations had never encountered or heard of the True Teaching. So, you should keep in mind that the true Transmission of the true Teaching was made possible due to the spiritually beneficial action of his having left home life behind.

Our Great Master, the revered Shakyamuni, graciously set aside the rank of his father the king and did not succeed him as his heir, but not because the king's rank was not valued. Rather, it was done that He might succeed as heir to the most precious rank of Buddha. The rank of Buddha is the rank of someone who has left home life behind. It is a rank which those in the three worlds of desire, form, and without form—both those in lofty positions and ordinary human beings—all bow to out of deepest respect. It is not a place whose seat is to be shared with a Lord Brahma or a Lord Shakra. How much less is it a rank whose seat is to be shared with earthly human rulers or scholastic lords of erudition, for it is the rank of supreme, fully perfected enlightenment. Those of this precious rank can give expression to the Dharma that carries beings to the Other Shore and can send forth their radiance which manifests auspicious signs. The actions of those who have left home life behind are the very stuff of Right Actions; they are the actions long-cherished by Buddhas, including the Seven Buddhas. It is a place that is not fully realized if it is not done by 'each Buddha on His own, together with all Buddhas'. Those who have not yet left home life behind should show their respect to those who have already left home life behind and serve them. They should bow their heads in homage to them and offer them alms, setting aside both body and life.

Shakyamuni Buddha once said, "To leave home life behind and accept the Precepts is to be the seed of a Buddha, for such a one has already become enlightened." So, keep in mind, what we call 'becoming enlightened' means leaving home life behind. Someone who has not yet left home life behind is, sad to say, one sunk in misery. In short, I cannot say how often during the Buddha's lifetime He praised the merits of leaving home life behind. Our honored Shakyamuni sincerely voiced this, and all Buddhas have certified it. Those who have left home life behind and who are breaking Precepts and failing to explore the Matter with their Master have realized the Way, whereas those who have remained in home life have not yet realized the Way. When royalty respectfully bow to male or female monastics, these monastics do not return the bow; when those in lofty positions bow to the ones who have left home behind, both the male and the female monastics never return the bow. This is because the merit of leaving home life behind is unsurpassed. It is like this because, if they were to receive bows from male and female monastics—that is, those who have left home life behind—the

mansions and palaces of those in lofty positions would instantly fall into ruin and decay, along with all their resplendence and good fortune.

In sum, as the Buddha Dharma gradually progressed eastward, there were those who realized the Way by leaving home life behind; they have been as common as rice and flax plants, bamboo and reeds. But there was not even one of them who realized the Way whilst remaining in home life. Once the Buddha Dharma reached their eyes and ears, they immediately engaged themselves in leaving home life behind. I have come to realize clearly that remaining in home life is not a place for the Buddha Dharma to reside. At the same time, that bunch who say that the body and mind of those who are engaged in conducting affairs of state is exactly the same as the body and mind of the Buddhas and Ancestors have never encountered or heard the Teaching of the Buddha. They are criminals in the darkest of hells. They are foolish people who have not even seen or heard what they themselves are saying. They are traitors to their land. Their attempt to equate a mind that is engaged in worldly affairs with the mind of the Buddhas and Ancestors is done just for the delight of rulers; it is an attempt undertaken because of the preeminence of the Buddha Dharma. You need to remember that the Buddha Dharma is what is preeminent. Now, it may happen that the mind engaged with worldly affairs is temporarily in the same state as the mind of the Buddhas and Ancestor—and quite naturally—but whenever the body and mind of the Buddhas and Ancestors spontaneously resembles the body and mind of someone engaged with worldly affairs, theirs will not be the body and mind of one engaged with worldly affairs. ‘Zen Masters’ and their like who say that the mind of someone engaged in worldly affairs is completely equivalent to the mind of Buddhas and Ancestors do not have a clue as to how the human mind works. And as to the working of the mind of Buddhas and Ancestors, well, they haven’t seen that even in their dreams!

Speaking more broadly, Lord Brahma, Lord Shakrendra, human rulers, erudite lords of scholarship, demon lords, and the like—each and every one of them—need to give up their obsession with good fortune within the three worlds of desire, form, and beyond form, leave their home life behind, accept the Precepts, and then put into practice the Way of the Buddhas and the Ancestors, for this will be a cause for Buddhahood to be realized over vast eons. Do you not see? If old Vimalakirti had left home life behind, he would have encountered a monastic Vimalakirti who was even superior to the lay Vimalakirti. Today, it would be hard to encounter a Subhuti, or a Shariputra, or a Manjushri,* or a Maitreya,* let alone

half a Vimalakirti, much less three, four, or five Vimalakirtis!²⁶ Should it be the case that you are not encountering or coming to know three, four, or five Vimalakirtis, well, we are not encountering, or knowing, or supporting, or relying upon even one Vimalakirti. If we are not yet supporting or relying upon one Vimalakirti, then we are not encountering Vimalakirti as a Buddha. When we do not encounter Vimalakirti as a Buddha, Vimalakirti does not yet exist as a Manjushri, or as a Maitreya, or as a Subhuti, or as a Shariputra, to say nothing of a Vimalakirti being the great earth with its mountains and rivers, or his being grasses and trees, tiles and stones, or wind and rain, water and fire, or his being, past, present, and future! The reason that Vimalakirti's luminosity and meritorious virtues are not apparent is because he had not left home life behind. Had Vimalakirti left home life behind, he would have shown those meritorious virtues. The so-called 'Zen Masters' of the T'ang and Sung Dynasties and their like had never arrived at this point, so they vainly considered Vimalakirti as being right in whatever he did. These folks, sad to say, did not know the spoken Teaching and were in the dark about the Buddha Dharma.

Furthermore, many of that bunch went so far as to say that the words and ways of Vimalakirti and the Venerable Shakyamuni were equal. These too have never considered, much less known, the Buddha Dharma or the Way of the Ancestors, nor did they even know Vimalakirti himself. They say that what Vimalakirti's silence was pointing out to bodhisattvas by his not using words was comparable to the Tathagata's not using words for some person's sake. I would say that they are greatly ignorant of the Buddha Dharma and have little ability for studying the Way. The Tathagata's use of words was already different from that of others, and his not using words must also not be likened to that of others. Thus, the Tathagata's moment of utter silence and Vimalakirti's moment of silence should not even be considered analogous. When we explore the abilities of that bunch who imagine that the words Vimalakirti spoke to convey the Dharma were different from those of the Tathagata, but the silences of the two were undoubtedly the same, we see that they have not even come close to where the Buddha is. Sad to say, these people have not yet seen His form or heard His voice, much less have they experienced the glorious light that leaps forth from His form and voice. And even less do they know that they must learn what the Silence within silence means, to say nothing of their even hearing It! Generally speaking, people's understanding of movement and silence differ, so how can they say that the Venerable Shakyamuni is like any of these types or even different from them? That bunch who have not

26. Subhuti and Shariputra were two of the Buddha's most preeminent disciples.

explored the Matter within the inner quarters of the Buddhas and Ancestors talk like this.

Again, many wrong-headed people fancy that spoken teachings and physical expressions are what is provisionally true, whereas silence and physical quietude are the real truth. This kind of talk is also not the Buddha Dharma. It is what those who pass on what they have heard about of the Scriptures and of the teachings of Brahma or Ishvara or their like speculate about. How could the Buddha's Teaching ever be mixed up with 'movement versus stillness'? Through your training you need to explore that there is movement and stillness within the Buddha's Way, and there is no movement and stillness therein! And that there is our encountering movement and silence, and there is movement and silence encountering us! You veteran trainees of this very moment, do not slacken!

When we look at Great Sung China today, those folks who are exploring the Great Way of the Buddhas and Ancestors through their training are all but extinct; there may not even be two or three left. There are just those who believe that Vimalakirti was right and as a result, he had total silence, whereas we today are lacking in total silence and therefore are far inferior to Vimalakirti. Moreover, such folks lack the vital, absolute Way. Likewise, there are those who hold to the opinion that Vimalakirti's total silence is in no way different from the Venerable Shakyamuni's utter silence. They completely lack the light of illuminating discernment. We must admit that none of the folks who say things like this have ever encountered, heard, or explored the Buddha Dharma through their training. Do not think that since they are people of Great Sung China, what they assert must be the Teaching of the Buddha. The reason for this can be easily clarified: Right Action means the actions of a monk, which is something that is beyond the ken of those who write scholarly commentaries on Scriptures and those who teach academic Buddhism. What we call 'the actions of a monk' is our doing our utmost whilst in the Meditation Hall, it is our bowing in deepest gratitude whilst in the Buddha Hall, and it is our washing our face in the wash-up shed. Furthermore, bowing with hands in *gasshō*,* burning incense, and heating water are all Right Action. Not only is it exchanging your tail for your head, it is exchanging your head with your Head, exchanging your mind with your Mind, exchanging 'the Buddha' with Buddha, exchanging 'the truth' with Truth, for these are all branchings of the Path of Right Action. If you mistakenly engage in just talking about Buddha Dharma, His eyebrows will droop down and His countenance will sadden.

'The branch of Right Livelihood' is early morning gruel and midday rice. It is staying in the monastery grounds and delighting in single-minded pursuit of the Way. It is the Master sitting on the wooden Dharma seat and directly pointing to

the Truth. The fewer than twenty trainees in the assembly of old Jōshū is a manifestation of Right Livelihood. And Yakusan's assembly of less than ten was the lifeblood of Right Livelihood. And Fun'yō's assembly of seven or eight was also a place where Right Livelihood was anchored, because everyone there had kept clear of false livelihood.

Shakyamuni Buddha once remarked that shravakas—those who hear the Dharma and do not heed it, but seek a rigid code—have not yet attained Right Livelihood. Thus, the teachings, practice, and realizations of shravakas are still not Right Livelihood. At the same time, there are commonplace people of recent days who say, “We should not separate shravakas from bodhisattvas, but should adopt both their behavior and their precepts and monastic regulations.” Using the standards of the shravakas of the Lesser Course, they pass judgment on the everyday behavior and practices of the bodhisattvas of the Greater Course. As Shakyamuni Buddha once said, “A shravaka's keeping of a precept is a bodhisattva's acting contrary to a precept.” Thus, what shravakas consider to be their keeping of the precepts, when viewed from the perspective of the Bodhisattva Precepts, are all preceptual breakages of the shravaka precepts. The other everyday practices of maintaining one's concentration and applying one's wise discernment are just the same. For instance, even though a Precept like ‘cease from killing whatever lives’ naturally appears to be the same for a shravaka and a bodhisattva, there is certainly a difference between them, one which surpasses the separation of the heavens and the earth.²⁷ And how much less could the principles genuinely Transmitted from Buddha to Buddha and Ancestor to Ancestor possibly be the same as those of the shravakas! Not only is there Right Livelihood, there is also Pure Life. So, by exploring the Matter through training with an Ancestor of the Buddha, yours will become Right Livelihood. Do not adopt the opinions and explanations of such people as scholarly commentators. Because theirs is not yet Right Livelihood, they do not live an enlightened life.

‘The branch of Right Effort’ is the daily conduct of dredging out your whole being. And through dredging out your whole being, you fashion a truly human countenance. It is your entering the Buddha Hall, riding upside down on a water buffalo, doing one lap around the hall, two laps, three, four, five laps, so that nine nines comes out to eighty-two.²⁸ It is your repaying your indebtedness to others

27. The difference lies in the shravaka's practice of limiting understanding of the Precepts to the literal, whereas the bodhisattva understanding goes far beyond just the literal, taking the Precepts on the broadest and deepest levels possible.

28. That is, being willing to undertake what seems impossible or inconceivable.

thousands of myriad times over. It is your turning your head left and right, up and down. It is your changing your countenance as it goes left and right, up and down. It is your entering your Master's private quarters and your going to the Dharma Hall.²⁹ It is your mutually encountering your true Master in Bōshū Pavilion, and your mutually encountering your true Master on Useki Peak.³⁰ It is your mutually encountering your true Master within the Buddha Hall. It is just like saying, "When seeing one person reflected in two facing mirrors, there are three figures."

'The branch of Right Mindfulness' is our being aware that eighty or ninety percent of the time we are deluding ourselves. Learning to give rise to wise discernment within mindfulness is to abandon our father and run away from home. To study that wise discernment arises effortlessly within mindfulness is to tie oneself up in knots. To say that Right Mindfulness means being blank-minded is non-Buddhist. Also, you should not regard the spirits of earth, water, fire, and wind as forms of mindfulness, nor should you consider the turning upside down of the mental functions of consciousness, thought, and perception to be mindfulness. Remember, "You have gotten what my Skin and Flesh, Bones and Marrow are" is Right Mindfulness.

'The branch of Right Concentration' is the dropping off of 'Buddha' and 'Ancestor'. It is the dropping off of 'Right Concentration'. It is what others can rejoice in. It is your making a Nose by cutting open the crown of your head. It is the raising aloft the udumbara blossom within the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching. Within the udumbara blossom are Makakashōs, their faces broken wide with smiles, on hundreds of thousands of petals. Having been made continual use of throughout His life for ever so long, Shakyamuni's wooden paddle finally broke. That is why He spent six years, dropping off whatever sprouted up, until that one night when His flower blossomed. When the conflagration at kalpa's ending is blazing up and the three-thousand great-thousandfold world is being totally consumed, we just follow upon what arises and go forth.

29. Entering the Master's private quarters to hear a Dharma talk and to do private interviews with the Master is a privilege for Transmitted monks, whereas all trainees, including Transmitted monks, are expected to go to the Dharma Hall to hear the Master's Dharma talks for the community.

30. Bōshū Pavilion and Useki Peak are two scenic places on Mount Seppō used as meditation sites.



These thirty-seven methods of training to realize enlightenment are the very Eyes and Nose of the Buddhas and Ancestors, Their Skin and Flesh, Bones and Marrow, Their Hands, Feet, and Countenances. The Buddhas and Ancestors continually explored through Their training these thirty-seven methods of training to realize enlightenment, one by one. At the same time, they are the one thousand and sixty ways our spiritual question manifests: they are our methods of training to realize enlightenment. We should sit until we break through them, and then let them drop off.

Given to the assembly at Kippō-ji Temple in Echizen Province on the twenty-fourth day of the second lunar month in the second year of the Kangen era (April 3, 1244).

Copied by me in the office of the Abbot's assistant in the same temple on the ninth day of the third lunar month in the same year (April 17, 1244).

Ejō