

Roshi Sama 09

You may be sitting so totally that you do not even know what day it is, so I will tell you today is the fifth day of this sesshin - "Five", "GO". What a wonderful ring - "five", "GO", in Japanese. This is also the sound of awakening – profound awakening. Today is the day of awakening – the fifth. This is also the memorial day of Bodhidharma. Five. Awakening.

Someone asked why we haven't had *dokusan* in the mornings. It is because there are some many of you here ready and waiting for the sound of the bell to storm into *dokusan*. So many practitioners – we need time. If we have it in the morning, the breakfast bell has to be delayed. Many of you have many questions and many involvements, that take time to go through, so *dokusan* has become very long.

We become so involved in theories and thoughts that we aren't able to immerse ourselves wholly in practice. You have read and studied, and you are caught up in concepts. There is somewhere a sense of, "I know". Dōgen Zenji, the founder of *Eiheiji*, was himself in his youth quite a scholar. It is said that he read and studied the entire Buddhist canon three times. His intellectual understanding was astute. It is often said that knowledge is delusion. "I know" – that is conceptual, intellectual understanding. As long as you are discriminating, as long as you are judging with your head, no matter how far you take it, you will not know the genuine. If you are skilful you can create great feasts, or you can sculpt great Buddha statues, but you cannot create even so much as a single finger of yourself. The finger cannot create itself. The Self is not created. But when there is awakening, there is understanding. Hah! – A finger, you, here – I see! I see! This is finally to know yourself. There are many, many great brains in the world busily comparing, and calculating and analysing. It is very easy to think or feel that you have understood something. But that thinking or feeling is still mere fancy. You must let go. There must be awakening – clear awakening. Because Dōgen understood this, he wasn't deceiving himself with mere thought and feeling. He understood the necessity for awakening. If there is to be true satisfaction, there must be awakening. So he decided to go to China. He was driven to understand - to find the genuine. He had already sought out teachers and he had found very learned ones, but they were not able to lead him to the understanding he sought.

You yourself must have a driving problem – your own driving problem. You must be firmly convinced that awakening to Self is the only way. It is truly the only way that you can possibly be satisfied. Easy.

Dōgen's time came for him. He became ripe for awakening. He was ripe to receive the great compassionate blessings. At this time a follower of the way advised him to go back to and call upon Nyogo Zenji on Mount Tendo. Upon meeting Nyogo Zenji, Dōgen's restlessness dropped away. Then he was able to pour heart and soul into Just_Sitting, ... carrying through. Thanks to his unflinching determination to do *zazen*, Dōgen's practice matured, bloomed. He was ready to receive Self_realization. This will not come to you if you are indolent - if you lazily lay back asking to become mature. You must give your life, lay it on the line with This_One_Doing.

Laying your life on the line is not something in the future, it is something done .. This_One_Doing. Give everything to This_One_Doing .. not looking off .. One_Doing .. no distraction. Concentrate your all, begrudging nothing. Hold nothing back in This_One_Doing. This time everything becomes peeled away for you. For Dōgen it happened when a fellow practitioner next to him fell asleep in *zazen*. So you see, anything can be the immediate stimulus. This is the compassion, the boundless compassion of the Buddhas. The merits of the dharma teachings, all the Buddhas and ancient teachers, fill the unbounded universe. May the Buddhas and ancestors extend their compassion to me. This compassion is all encompassing. The long held habit of looking away from True_Self is sliced away for you at the root. Body and Mind .. dropped.

Dōgen followed Nyogo to his room. "Why have you followed me?" You know, I often think that I could ask you, "Why haven't you followed me?" It is very mysterious for me why you don't see it, why you haven't followed me.

His teacher asked, "Why have you followed me? Why have you come?" Of course, Nyogo already knows the answer to his question. Dōgen has walked in so briskly... tat.. tat.. tat .. ta. Nyogo knows Self. Dōgen knows Self. One. Life is One. All existence – One. Nyogo and disciple Dōgen are One. One_Root. One_Body. When we attain enlightenment we are One with Buddhas and ancestors. This One_Truth is all embracing. There is no holding, no grasping. What need for the right hand to grasp itself? Why falter and grasp?

"Why have you come here?" "I have come here – body and mind dropped". His [Dōgen] response was direct and straight forward – just as it is – body and

mind dropped. There is only THIS. But Dōgen, everything cleanly dropped, still begged his teacher not to easily confirm his understanding. He wanted to meet with Truth at its depths. He would not be satisfied with only a glimpse. But Dōgen's understanding was not a mere glimpse. Endlessly, endlessly .. completely cast off. Nothing grasped. The Genuine_Self, the petal of the cherry blossom, petal by petal, one and the same. Dōgen Zenji saw this Truth. The One in the All – All in the One. All the Universe in this cherry blossom petal. Nothing was ever separate, cut off, in pieces. If there is still the perception of distinction, let go. Let it go. It is only discriminating mind..chop..chop..chop..chopping, the world into pieces.

In reality, there is only This_One.

There is nothing to let go of. Release...let go of that stingy, grasping tendency... your habit. Body and mind dropped ... forgotten. Let go. Everything is let go, set free. Nothing lingers.

To think of dropping of everything may be an uncomfortable thought. That's just a thought. Please, for once, let everything drop away, the hand, the foot, the eye, the ear, the head. Be empty. As you are ... empty. Body and mind ... dropped, forgotten. When you drop body and mind, forget about them, and throw yourself into the house of Buddha, then all is done by Buddha. You are in accord with Buddha and you are free from birth and death and you become a Buddha without effort or calculation. The petals of the cherry blossoms scatter in the breeze. Heaven and Earth – one root. All beings... One. It is so close, so close, so intimate. So you hesitate to see it. Instead you look for it far, far, away. It appears to be elsewhere. What is the farthest place of all?

The eye cannot see itself. The genuine cannot be taken away, cannot be harmed no matter what. Vast like the skies. Universal. Complete. Nothing too little, nothing too much. Vast like space. Now. Here. Truth is right here. Buddhas and ancestors of old were just as we are now. We in the future shall be Buddhas and ancestors. Revering Buddhas and ancestors – we are One. One with Buddha. One with the ancient teachers. Awakening Bodhi mind, we are One Bodhi mind. The Buddhas extend their compassion freely – without limit – freely, and we are able to attain Buddhahood and to let go of that attainment. Listen. Compassion is this thorough, this complete, this immediate. Nothing, Here and Now, nothing is held back. Nothing is hidden. The treasure of all treasures, is Now, from the first, yours. Only, you must not look away. So Shakyamuni – the world honoured one – had to exclaim,

“Wonder of wonders, wonder of wonders, all beings are Buddha, endowed with Buddha virtue, Buddha wisdom”.

You yourself must come alive to this truth – universal and utterly intimate. It is unconstructed, uncreated. It IS – simply IS. Heaven and earth – one root. All the myriad things – One. We are all masters of working our heads. This is it.. that is it. We are masters of “this is it.. that is it” mentality. We want to entertain distinctions, and we are jerked about by our habits of discriminating thought. So, for once, open up, let go of everything, earnestly do this One_Doing. Earnestly and kindly, so kindly, do this One_Doing. *Shikantaza*. Mu. Count this one breath. This one breath – I am pleased to be you – This_One.

Up till now you have been caught up in something, in “this” or “that”, “this” and “that”. Getting caught up makes you so small and mean, ever calculating, thinking. Calculating. Grasping. And you are enchained by that which you grasp. You forfeit your freedom. Those in past lives who were not enlightened must now become enlightened. In this life, save the body which is the fruit of many lives. Before Buddhas were enlightened they were the same as we are now. Before Buddhas were enlightened they were the same as we are now. Enlightened people of today are exactly as those of old. Who is it who is most intimate with the genuine? Who is the most genuine? Genuine ... this Now_Here. There is no distance. So, do what you are here to do - briskly, clearly, with courage. The roots of great belief, great doubt, great determination. Determination. Stay with it until the time that you can satisfy yourself as to who you are. Follow through until you know beyond a shadow of a doubt that all is good. One. All the world is One. Everything is my life. All beings are my lovely children. All, all, all beings ... my life. Absolute all. Not chopped up into pieces “this” and “that”. Absolute all.

Please, more, still more. Give it more. Be all that you are. It is so close, so intimate. Steadily, steadily, open your palms wide and release. Grasp nothing. Hold nothing. Do not linger. Do not judge. Do not be hasty. Do not be lazy. Be One with THIS. Be One with THIS. Be One with THIS. Allow no cracks. Become your practice – THIS_One_Doing. The genuine is always right Here_Now. The genuine always is Now_Here. So all is well.

Together with all beings we attain the Buddha way.