

# Dogen Zenji's *Fukanzazengi*

- Universal recommendation of zazen for all people -

## A comparison of two versions (1233, 1244) both as translated by Shohaku Okumura

### Introduction

Having lost both his parents when young, Dogen was brought up by a relative before taking ordination as a Tendai monk at the age of 13. At 17, he moved to Kennin-ji in Kyoto where he trained in Rinzaï Zen under Myozen, receiving dharma transmission in 1221. In 1223, he sailed with Myozen to South China, both of them wanting to deepen their practice. Searching for a true master, in 1225 he eventually found Tendo Nyôjô, abbot of Tiantong monastery, staying there for two years and "opening his wisdom eye".

After returning to Japan in 1227, Dogen re-entered Kennin-ji but left after quite a short time, disappointed. He said he didn't specifically intend to found a new Zen school. Rather he wanted to spread the true teaching (*zazen*) - whereas scholarly study was more typical of Japanese Buddhist practice. Buddhist politics meant that he decided to become a wandering monk for some time before founding Koshô-ji near Uji, which he led for ten years (1233-43). The building of Eihei-ji began ten years before his death in 1253.

### The *Fukanzazengi*

The first version of the *Fukanzazengi* dates from Dogen's 'wandering' period (1227-31). In fact, several of his pivotal works including *Bendôwa* - (1231), *Maka Hannya Haramitsu*, *Genjôkoan* (both 1233) were written in this period when he either had no temple, or was just beginning to establish his monastic community. *Tenzo Kyôkun* - 'Instructions for the Chief Cook', *Ikka Myôjû* - 'One Bright Pearl', and *Sokushin Zebutsu* - 'The Mind itself is Buddha' all followed a few years later (1237-9).

Dogen wrote the first version of his *Fukanzazengi* (Universal Recommendation for Zazen) for a lay disciple, possibly as early as 1227 immediately after his return from China. This version did not survive, so we don't know exactly what it contained. The first version we have is the **Tenpuku-bon** (or **Shinpitsu**) version, dated and signed 1233. He continued to rework his text for another ten years. A number of variants exist and it informs several chapters of the *Shôbogenzô: Zazengi, Zazenshin*, and so on. In many ways, this work underpins all his later writing. Scholars believe the **Rufu-bon** (popular version) was finished around 1244.

Tendai Buddhism, in which Dogen originally trained, greatly revered the *Lotus Sutra* and its teaching that all beings are intrinsically enlightened. Dogen's personal *koan* - which we all perhaps share to some degree - could be construed as: 'If I'm already enlightened, why do we have to train to become enlightened?' Or more simply perhaps, 'Why doesn't it feel like it?' The *Fukanzazengi* might be regarded as his explanation of the anomaly.

Significant differences are highlighted below to make them more immediately apparent. Minor grammatical changes and adjustments simply to make the text read consistently are ignored.

**Shinpitsu-bon:** autograph version (1233)

Originally, the Way is complete and universal. How can we distinguish practice from verification? The vehicle of Reality is in the Self. Why should we make effort to attain it? Still more, the whole body is free from dust. Who should believe in a means to clean it away.

On the whole, the Way is never separated from where we are now. Why should we wander here and there to practice? Yet, if there is the slightest deviation, you will be as far from the Way as heaven is from earth. If adverse or favorable conditions arise to even a small degree, you will lose your mind in confusion.

We should know that the aeons of transmigration in samsara is caused by the discrimination of one moment. The path of delusion in the dusty world is also caused by ceaseless evaluation. If you want to thoroughly transcend even enlightenment, you should simply understand how to settle down right here.

Even if you are proud of your understanding, are enlightened in abundance, and obtain the power of wisdom to glimpse the ground of buddhahood; even if you gain the Way, clarify the mind, resolve to pierce heaven, that is only strolling on the border of the buddha way. You are still lacking the vivid path of emancipation.

Moreover, consider the old master Shakyamuni, who was enlightened from birth, left the trace of his sitting in upright posture for six years. Also the great master Bodhidharma, who transmitted the mind-seal, left the example of facing the wall for nine years.

**Rufo-bon:** popular version (1244)

The Way is originally perfect and all-pervading; how could it be contingent on practice and enlightenment? The vehicle of Reality is in the Self. Indeed, the whole body is free from dust; who could believe in a means to brush it clean?

It is never apart from this very place; what is the use of travelling around to practise? And yet if there is a hairs-breadth deviation, it is like the gap between heaven and earth; if the least like or dislike arises, the mind is lost in confusion

Suppose you are confident in your understanding and rich in enlightenment, gaining the wisdom that glimpses the ground [of buddhahood], attaining the way and clarifying the mind, arousing an aspiration to reach for the heavens. You are playing in the entranceway, but you are still short of the vital path of emancipation.

Consider Shakyamuni at Jetavana; although he was wise at birth, the traces of his six years of upright sitting can still be seen. As for [Bodhidharma at] Shorin-ji, although he transmitted the mind-seal, his nine years of facing a wall is celebrated still.

These ancient sages practised in that way. Why can we, people of today, refrain from practice? Therefore, turn from the study of only words and letters, and withdraw, turn the light inwards, and illuminate the Self. (Doing so), your body and mind will drop off naturally, and the original-self will manifest itself. If you wish to attain **such**, practise **zazen** immediately.

Now, for **sanzen(zazen)**, a quiet room is best. Eat and drink moderately. Let go of all associations, and put all affairs aside. Do not think of either good or evil. Do not be concerned with either right or wrong. Put aside the operation of your intellect, volition and consciousness. Stop considering things with you memory, imagination and contemplation.

When we sit, a thick [square] mat is put on the floor where you sit, and a round cushion is placed on it. Then sit in either full lotus position or half lotus position. In full lotus position, first put your right foot on your left thigh, and then your left foot on your right thigh. In half lotus position, only put your left foot on your right thigh. Your clothing should be loose but neat. Put your right hand palm up on your left foot, and your left hand palm up on your right palm. The tips of your thumbs should be lightly touching. And sit upright, leaning neither to the left nor right, neither forward nor backward. A line connecting your ears should be parallel with a line connecting your shoulders. Your nose should be in line with your navel. Place your tongue against the roof of your mouth. Close your lips and jaw. Always keep your eyes open.

Having regulated your posture, harmonise your breath.

If even the ancient sages were like this, how can we today dispense with wholehearted practice? Therefore, put aside the intellectual practice of investigating words and chasing phrases, and learn to take the backward step that turns the light and shines it inward. Body and mind of themselves will drop away, and your original face will manifest. If you wish to attain **suchness**, practise **suchness** immediately.

For practising Zen, a quiet room is suitable. Eat and drink moderately. Put aside all involvements and suspend all affairs. Do not think in terms of good or bad. Do not judge true or false. Give up the operations of mind, intellect and consciousness; stop measuring with thoughts, ideas and views.

**Have no designs on becoming a buddha. How could that be limited to sitting or lying down?**

At your sitting place, spread out a thick mat and put a cushion on it. Sit either in the full lotus or half lotus position. In the full lotus position, first place your right foot on your left thigh, then your left foot on your right thigh. In half-lotus, simply place your left foot on your right thigh. Tie your robes loosely and arrange them neatly. Then place your right hand on your left leg and your left hand on your right palm, thumb-tips lightly touching. Straighten your body and sit upright, leaning neither left nor right, neither forward nor backward. Align your ears with your shoulders and your nose with your navel. Rest the tip of your tongue against the front of the roof of your mouth, with teeth and lips together. Always keep your eyes open, and breathe softly through your nose.

**Once you have adjusted your posture, take a breath and exhale fully, rock your body right and left, and settle into steady, immovable sitting.**

When thought arises, be aware of it. When you are aware of it, it will disappear. Put aside everything outside continuously, and make yourself into one piece. This is the essential art of zazen.

Zazen, which I am talking about, is the dharma-gate of great peace and joy (nirvana).

If you attain its significance, the four great elements [of your body] will naturally become light and peaceful. Your mind will be fresh and sharp, your mindfulness will become clear. The taste of Dharma will support your mind and make it tranquil, pure and joyful. Then your everyday activities will become in accord with the true nature.

When you clearly see the truth, you will be like a dragon that gets water, or a tiger in the mountain. You must know that true dharma is manifest itself in zazen, and that dullness and distraction cannot reach you.

When you rise from sitting, move your body slowly and stand up calmly. Do not move abruptly.

At all times, you should protect and maintain the power of samadhi. You should study it thoroughly and transcend the upper barrier. Do not rely upon anything. Do not be attached even to the enlightenment, but just be yourself. Therefore, you should never stagnate anywhere. This is the completion of the Way. Truly, the single practice of meditation is the highest and most superior. First understand the Way completely and then actualize it in your practice even a little bit. You can do it only in this practice.

When Shakyamuni picked a flower up, Mahakashapa smiled at it. Huiko silently made prostration and obtained the marrow of Bodhidharma's Way. They attained the great liberation being assisted by the blessing power [of samadhi]. Why don't you, the bodhisattvas who are studying prajna, follow the way?

Think of not thinking. How do you think of not thinking? Beyond-thinking.

This is the essential art of zazen.

The zazen I speak of is not meditation practice. It is simply the Dharma gate of peace and bliss, the totally culminated awakening. It is the koan realised; traps and snares can never reach it.

If you grasp the point, you are like the dragon gaining the water, like a tiger taking to the mountains. For you must know that true Dharma appears of itself in zazen, so that from the start dullness and distraction are struck aside.

When you arise from sitting, move slowly and quietly, calmly and deliberately. Do not move abruptly.

See that to transcend both ordinary people and sages always depends on quiet sitting. To die sitting or standing depends on the power of samadhi.

Moreover, your discriminating mind cannot understand how buddhas and ancestors taught their students with a finger, a pole, a needle or a mallet; or how they transmitted the Way with a hossu (fly-chasing stick), a fist, a staff, or shouting. And also it cannot be understood with the practice and verification of supernatural power. These are dignified conducts that are outside sound and form; these are nothing other than the standard which is prior to knowing and seeing.

Therefore, do not consider whether you are clever or stupid, and do not think of whether you are superior or inferior. Put aside the six sense organs and look at the Way as a whole. Without raising any single thought, sit completely in the midst of the ten-direction world.

On the whole, in this world and in the other worlds, there are no different teachings in Buddha dharma. But in India and in China, five gates were opened in the Way of the ancestors. Each of them equally holds the Buddha-seal and vigorously generated the wind of truth. They wholeheartedly practised the Way that is singularly transmitted from ancestor to ancestor, and pointed to the reality directly. They all wholeheartedly practise to turn around the body and the head. Although their characters were diverse, each of them encouraged to go back to and meet their Self.

In surveying the past, we find that transcendence of both mundane and sacred, and dying while either sitting or standing, have all depended entirely on the power of zazen.

in addition, using the opportunity provided by a finger, a banner, a needle or a mallet, and meeting realisation with a whisk, a fist, a staff, or a shout - these cannot be understood by discriminative thinking, much less can they be known through the practice of superhuman power. They must represent dignified conduct beyond seeing and hearing. Are they not the standard prior to knowledge and views?

This being the case, intelligence or lack of it is not an issue; make no distinction between the dull and sharp witted. If you concentrate your effort single-mindedly, that in itself is wholeheartedly engaging the way.

Practice/realisation is naturally undefiled. Going forward is, after all, an everyday affair.

In general, in our world and others, in both Indian and China, all equally hold the Buddha-seal. While each lineage expresses its own style, they are all simply devoted to sitting, fully blocked in the resolute stability of zazen. Although they say that there are ten thousand distinctions and a thousand variations, they just wholeheartedly engage the way in zazen.

There is no reason to leave your own seat at home and take a meaningless trip to the dusty places of other countries. If you make a false step, then you will miss the Way, even if it is before your eyes.

You have already been given a human body, so do not spend your time wastefully. Always keep the practice of the Buddha way in your mind. Do not pursue worthless pleasures which are like sparks from flint. Furthermore, your body is like a drop of dew on a blade of grass; your life is like a flash of lightning. Your life will disappear soon; your life will be lost in an instant.

You, honoured practitioner, after learning in a partial way like the blind people who touched various parts of the elephant [to figure out what it was like], please do not be scared by the real dragon. **Follow the regulations which were established by Zen master Hyakujo (Baizhang). Embody the Way of Bodhi- dharma thoroughly.**

**Do not worry about the wind blowing against your ears. Do not be surprised by the echo made by tongues. If you practise suchness continuously, you will be suchness.** You should open your own treasure-house and use it at will.

Why leave behind the seat of your own home to wander in vain through the dusty realms of other lands? If you make one misstep, you stumble past what is directly in front of you.

You have gained the pivotal opportunity of human form. Do not pass your days and nights in vain. You are taking care of the essential workings of the Buddha way. Who would take wasteful delight in the spark from a flintstone? Besides, form and substance are like the dew on the grass, the fortunes of life like a dart of lightning, emptied in an instant, vanished in a flash.

Please, honoured followers of Zen, long accustomed to groping for the elephant, do not be suspicious of the true dragon. **Devote your energies to the way that points directly to the real thing. Revere the one who has gone beyond learning and is free from effort.**

**Accord with the enlightenment of all the buddhas; succeed to the samadhi of all the ancestors.** Continue in such a way for a long time, and you will be such a person. The treasure store will open of itself, and you may use it freely.

# Appendix

## 1. Kanji Versions

Tenpuku-bon

真筆本 (Shinpitsu-bon)

入宋傳法沙門道元 撰

原夫道本圓通。爭假修證。宗乘自在。何費功夫。況乎全體迥出塵埃。孰信拂拭之手段。大都不離當處。豈用修行之脚頭。然而毫釐有差天地懸隔。違順纔起紛然失心。須知歷劫輪迴還因擬議之一念。塵世迷道復由商量之無休。欲超向上之徹底。唯解直下之承當。直饒誇會豐悟。獲瞥地之智通。得道明心。舉衝天之志氣。雖有入頭之量。尚缺出身之路。矧彼釋迦老子之爲生知。已在六年端坐之跡。達磨大師之傳心印。更貽九歲面壁之蹤。古聖既然。今人盍辨。所以二翻尋言逐語之鮮行。須迴光返照之退步。自然身心脫落。本來面目現前。欲得恁麼。急務坐禪。

夫參禪者。靜室宜焉。飮食節矣。乃放捨諸緣休息萬事。不思善惡。莫管是非。停心意識之運轉。止念想觀之測量。正坐之時。厚敷坐物。上用蒲團。然後結跏趺坐。或半跏趺坐。謂結跏趺坐。先以右足安左上。左足安右上。半跏趺坐。但以左足壓右矣。寬繫衣帶可令齊整。次右手安左足上。左掌安右掌上。以兩大拇指面相拄。乃正身端坐。不得左側右傾前躬後仰。要令耳與肩對鼻與臍對。舌掛上腭唇齒相著。目須常開。身相既定氣息亦調。念起即覺。覺之即失。久久忘緣自成一片。此坐禪之要術也。謂坐禪則大安樂法門也。若得此意。自然四大輕安。精神爽利。正念分明。法味資神。寂然清樂。日用天真也。已能發明。可謂。如龍得水。似虎靠山。當知。正念現前。昏散曷到。若從坐起。徐徐動身。安祥而起。不應卒暴。於一切時護持定力。參究之超上關無本可據證。放之被自礙。所以未留乃道之十成也。

誠禪定一門最爲高勝。先以十分之會舉。次轉一半之證來。只在此法。拈花破顏禮拜得髓。皆承他之恩力而獲大自在者也。學般若菩薩。詎不隨順者乎。嘗觀。超凡越聖必假靜緣。坐脫立亡能任定力。況復指竿針錘之轉機。拂拳棒喝之證契。未是思量分別之所能解也。豈爲神通修證之所能知也。可爲聲色之外威儀。那非知見之前軌則者歟。然則不論上知下愚。莫簡利人鈍者。放下六根。見轉全道。不生一念坐斷十方。凡其自界他方佛法本無異法。西天東地祖門遂開五門。等持佛印。各擅宗風。唯務單傳。直指專事。翻身迴頭雖謂千差萬別。但喜歸程祥參。何忘却自家之坐床謾去來他國之塵境。若錯一步。當面蹉過。既得人身之應會。莫虛度光陰。必憶佛道之當行。誰浪樂石火。加以形質如草露。運命似電光。倏忽便空。須臾即失。冀其參學高流久習摸象勿怪真龍。早向直指端的之正道。速成絕學無爲之真人。方遵百丈之規繩。遍通少林之消息。莫勞

拂耳之風。更驚擊舌之響耶。但能正開自寶藏受用使如意。

天福元年中元日書于觀音導利院

Rufu-bon version

## Popular Version

流布本 (Rufu-bon)

觀音導利興聖寶林寺沙門道元 撰

原 夫道本圓通、爭假修證。宗乘自在、何費功夫。況乎全體迥出塵埃兮、孰信拂拭之手段。大都不離當處兮、豈用修行之脚頭者乎。然而毫釐有差天地懸隔、違順纒起 紛然失心。直饒誇會豐悟兮、獲瞥地之智通、得道明心兮、舉衝天之志氣、雖逍遙於入頭之邊量、幾虧闕於出身之活路。矧彼祇園之爲生知兮、端坐六年之蹤跡可 見。少林之傳心印兮、面壁九歲之聲名尚聞。古聖既然、今人盍辦。所以須休尋言逐語之解行、須學回光返照之退步。身心自然脫落、本來面目現前。欲得恁麼事、急務恁麼事。夫參禪者、靜室宜焉、飮食節矣。放捨諸緣、休息萬事。不思善惡、莫管是非。停心意識之運轉、止念想觀之測量。莫圖作佛、豈拘坐臥乎。尋常坐 處、厚敷坐物、上用蒲團。或結跏趺坐、或半跏趺坐。謂、結跏趺坐、先以右足安左腿上、左足安右腿上。半跏趺坐、但以左足壓右矣。寬繫衣帶、可令齊整。次右 手安左足上、左掌安右掌上。兩大拇指、面相拄矣。乃正身端坐、不得左側右傾、前躬後仰。要令耳與肩對、鼻與臍對。舌掛上腭、唇齒相著。目須常開。鼻息微 通。身相既調、欠氣一息、左右搖振。兀兀坐定、思量箇不思量底。不思量底、如何思量、非思量、此乃坐禪之要術也。所謂、坐禪非習禪也、唯是安樂之法門也、究盡菩提之修證也。公案現成、籬籠未到。若得此意、如龍得水、似虎靠山。當知、正法自現前、昏散先撲落。若從坐起、徐徐動身、安詳而起、不應卒暴。嘗觀、超凡越聖、坐脫立亡、一任此力矣。況復拈指拏針錘之轉機、舉拂拳棒喝之證契、未是思量分別之所能解也、豈爲神通修證之所能知也。可爲聲色之外威儀、那非知 見前軌則者歟。然則不論上智下愚、莫簡利人鈍者。專一功夫、正是辦道。修證自不染汙、趣向更是平常者也。凡夫自界他方、西天東地、等持佛印、一擅宗風。唯 務打坐、被礙兀地。雖謂萬別千差、祇管參禪辦道。何拋卻自家之坐牀。謾去來他國之塵境。若錯一步、當面蹉過。既得人身之機要、莫虛度光陰。保任佛道之要 機、誰浪樂石火。加以、形質如草露、運命似電光。倏忽便空、須臾即失。冀其參學高流、久習摸象勿怪真龍。精進直指端的之道、尊貴絕學無爲之人。合沓佛佛之 菩提、嫡嗣祖祖之三昧。久爲恁麼、須是恁麼、寶藏自開、受用如意。

普勸坐禪儀 終



## Appendix 2 - *Tso-chan-i* (坐禪儀) - Principles of Zazen (1103) Ch'an Master Ch'ang-lu Tsung-tse

The *Tso-chan-i* was later revised and expanded in 1202 by Yu Hsiang and this version was published together with Ch'ang-lu Tsung-tse's monastic code *Chanyuan Qinggui* ("Pure Regulations of the Zen Preserve"), the earliest extant Zen monastic code, which was widely circulated.

Translator: Shohaku Okumura

The bodhisattvas who wish to thoroughly study prajna (wisdom), should first arouse the mind of great compassion, and take the [our] boundless vows. You should diligently practice samadhi, and vow to save all living beings. You should not seek emancipation only for the sake of yourself.

Then, you should let go of all associations, and put all affairs aside. Your body and mind should be one, and your movement and stillness should be seamless. You should consider the amount of food and drink; neither too much nor too little.

Regulate your sleep; neither insufficient nor too more than enough.

When you do zazen, put a thick mat in a quiet place. Your clothing should be loose, but your appearance must be neat.

Then sit in full-lotus position. First, put your right foot on your left thigh, and then your left foot on your right thigh.

Or you may sit in half-lotus position. Just put your left foot on your right thigh. Next, put your right hand palm up on your left foot, and your left hand palm up on your right palm.

The tips of your thumbs should be lightly touching. Straighten your body slowly and stretch it forward. Sway your body, left to right.

Sit upright, leaning neither to the left nor right, neither forward nor backward.

Your hips and back, head and neck, all bones and joints should support each other and make your posture like a stupa (a tower that enshrine the Buddha's relics). But do not push your body up too much, or your qi (energy of life) will not be at ease.

A line connecting your ears should be parallel with a line connecting your shoulders. Your nose should be in line with your navel. Place your tongue against the roof of the mouth. Close your lips and jaw.

Keep your eyes slightly open to prevent you from falling asleep.

When you attain samadhi (deep meditation), its power is superior to everything. Eminent monks in ancient times who were known as practitioners of meditation always kept their eyes open when they sat. Zen master Fayun Yuantong (Houn Entsu) also admonished his students who sat zazen with their eyes closed, saying, "You are sitting in the cave of demons in the Black Mountain." There must be deep meaning in his words. Proficient practitioners must understand it.

After having regulated your posture and arranged your breath, release your abdomen. Do not think of anything, either good or evil.

When thought arises, be aware of it. When you are aware of it, it will disappear. Put aside everything outside continuously, and make yourself into one piece.

This is the essential art of zazen.

It is said that zazen is the Dharma-gate of peace and joy (nirvana). However, many people get sick, because their ways of using their minds is not correct.

When you attain its significance, the four great elements [of your body] will naturally become light and peaceful. Your mind will be refreshed and sharp, your mindfulness will become clear.

The taste of Dharma will support your mind and make it tranquil, pure and joyful.

When you clearly see the truth, you are like a dragon that gets the water, or a tiger in the mountain. If you have not attained it, you are blowing on the fire with wind. Do not make a struggle to attain it. If you only practice confirming the true mind, you will not be coaxed. However, as you get higher in the Way, there will be a lot of demons that may bother you. You may go through many kinds of situation, both favorable and adverse. But when your right mindfulness appears, nothing can disturb your sitting. In *Ryogonkyo* (Surangama- samadhi Sutra), Tendai's *Shikan Maho Chih-kuan*, (writing on samatha and vipassana written by Chiyi, the third ancestor of Chinese Tientai School), *Keiho Shushogi* (writing on practice and enlightenment, written by Tsung-mi, the fifth ancestor of Chinese Kegon School), diabolic phenomena (*maji* or *makyō*) is clearly explained. If you wish to prepare for them, you should read them. You cannot practice [zazen] without knowing them.

When you wish to exit from samadhi, move your body slowly and stand up calmly. Do not move abruptly.

After exiting from samadhi, always protect and maintain your power of Samadhi using any skillful means, as if you were taking care of your baby. Then you will be able to attain the power of Samadhi without difficulties.

This single practice of meditation is the most important so that you should practice immediately.

If you do not settle down in dhyana and practice quiet meditation, you will be upset even when you reach this place. This is because when you look for the pearl, the waves should be calm. When the water is moving, it must be difficult to get [the pearl].

When the water of Samadhi is clear and clean, the mind- pearl appears of itself. Therefore, it is said in *Engakukyo* (Complete Enlightenment Sutra), "The pure wisdom without any obstacle arises completely depending on dhyana." It is also said in the *Lotus Sutra*, "Abide in a quiet place. Cultivate and control your mind. Be firmly fixed and immovable like Mt. Shumeru."

You must know that to transcend both ordinary people and sages, you must depend upon the power of quiet meditation. Dying sitting or standing will surely depend on the power of samadhi.

Even if you continue to practice your entire life, you might still be afraid of making mistakes. Moreover, if you postpone starting practice, with what can you fight against your karma? Therefore, an ancient worthy said, "If you lack the power of samadhi, you will fall down at the gate of death, come back in vain covering your eyes, and you will continue to be a wanderer [within samsara]."

Please, all friends of Zen, read this [Zazengi] repeatedly and benefit both yourself and others. I wish both you and others together accomplish the true awakening.