

THE NATURE OF NATURE



The Jewel Net of Indra

TU-SHUN

QUESTION: Things being thus, what about knowledge?

ANSWER: Knowledge accords with things, being in one and the same realm, made by conditions, tacitly conjoining, without rejecting anything, suddenly appearing, yet not without before and after. Therefore the sutra says, “The sphere of the universal eye, the pure body, I now will expound; let people listen carefully.” By way of explanation, the “universal eye” is the union of knowledge and reality, all at once revealing many things. This makes it clear that reality is known to the knowledge of the universal eye only and is not the sphere of any other knowledge. The “sphere” means things. This illustrates how the many things interpenetrate like the realm of Indra’s net of jewels—multiplied and remultiplied ad infinitum. The pure body illustrates how all things, as mentioned before, simultaneously enter each other. Ends and beginnings, being collectively formed by conditional origination, are impossible to trace to a basis—the seeing mind has nothing to rest on.

Now the celestial jewel net of Kanishka, or Indra, Emperor of Gods, is called the net of Indra. This imperial net is made all of jewels: because the jewels are clear, they reflect each other’s images, appearing in each

other’s reflections upon reflections, ad infinitum, all appearing at once in one jewel, and in each one it is so—ultimately there is no going or coming.

Now for the moment let us turn to the southwest direction and pick a jewel and check it. This jewel can show the reflections of all the jewels all at once—and just as this is so of this jewel, so it is of every other jewel: the reflection is multiplied and remultiplied over and over endlessly. These infinitely multiplying jewel reflections are all in one jewel and show clearly—the others do not hinder this. If you sit in one jewel, then you are sitting in all the jewels in every direction, multiplied over and over. Why? Because in one jewel there are all the jewels. If there is one jewel in all the jewels, then you are sitting in all the jewels too. And the reverse applies to the totality if you follow the same reasoning. Since in one jewel you go into all the jewels without leaving this one jewel, so in all jewels you enter one jewel without leaving this one jewel.

QUESTION: If you say that one enters all the jewels in one jewel without ever leaving this one jewel, how is it possible to enter all the jewels?

ANSWER: It is precisely by not leaving this one jewel that you can enter all the jewels. If you left this one jewel to enter all the jewels, you couldn’t enter all the jewels. Why? Because outside this jewel there are no separate jewels.

QUESTION: If there are no jewels outside this one jewel, then this net is made of one jewel. How can you say then that it’s made of many jewels tied together?

ANSWER: It is precisely because there is only one jewel that many can be joined to form a net. Why? Because this one jewel alone forms the net—that is, if you take away this jewel there will be no net.

QUESTION: If there is only one jewel, how can you speak of tying it into a net?

ANSWER: Tying many jewels to form a net is itself just one jewel. Why? “One” is the aspect of totality, containing the many in its formation. Since all would not exist if there were not one, this net is therefore made

Tu-shun (557–640), a specialist in the *Hua-yen Sutra*, became the first patriarch of the Hua-yen school of Chinese Buddhism. He is remembered as a monk with exceptional healing abilities who lived close to the peasants. Translation by Thomas Cleary.

by one jewel. The all entering the one can be known by thinking about it in this way.

QUESTION: Although the jewel in the southwest contains all the jewels in the ten directions completely, without remainder, there are jewels in every direction. How can you say then that the net is made of just one jewel?

ANSWER: All the jewels in the ten directions are in totality the one jewel of the southwest. Why? The jewel in the southwest *is* all the jewels of the ten directions. If you don't believe that one jewel in the southwest is all the jewels in the ten directions, just put a dot on the jewel in the southwest. When one jewel is dotted, there are dots on all the jewels in all directions. Since there are dots on all the jewels in the ten directions, we know that all the jewels are one jewel. If anyone says that all the jewels in the ten directions are not one jewel in the southwest, could it be that one person simultaneously put dots on all the jewels in the ten directions? Even allowing the universal dotting of all the jewels in the ten directions, they are just one jewel. Since it is thus, using this one as beginning, the same is so when taking others first—multiplied over and over boundlessly, each dot is the same. It is obscure and hard to fathom: when one is complete, all is done. Such a subtle metaphor is applied to things to help us think about them, but things are not so; a simile is the same as not a simile—they resemble each other in a way, so we use it to speak of. What does this mean? These jewels only have their reflected images containing and entering each other—their substances are separate. Things are not like this, because their whole substance merges completely. The book on natural origination in the *Hua-yen Sutra* says, "In order to benefit sentient beings and make them all understand, nonsimiles are used to illustrate real truth. Such a subtle teaching as this is hard to hear even in immeasurable eons; only those with perseverance and wisdom can hear of the matrix of the issue of thusness." The sutra says, "Nonsimiles are used as similes. Those who practice should think of this in accord with the similes."

Vairocana Buddha's past practices
Made oceans of Buddha-fields all pure.

Immeasurable, innumerable, boundless,
He freely permeates all places.
The reality-body of the Buddha is inconceivable;
Formless, signless, without comparison,
It manifests material forms for the sake of beings.
In the ten directions they receive its teaching,
Nowhere not manifest.
In the atoms of all Buddha-fields
Vairocana manifests self-subsistent power,
Promising the thundering sound of the ocean of Buddhahood
To tame all the species of sentient beings.

The Coincidence of Opposites

SHIH-T'OU

The mind of the great sage of India
was intimately conveyed from west to east.
Though people may be sharp-witted or dull.
there's no north and south in the Way.
The deep spring sparkles in the pure light,
its branches streaming through the darkness.
Grasping at phenomena is the source of delusion;
uniting with the absolute falls short of awakening.
All of the senses, all the things sensed—
they interact without interaction.
Interacting, they permeate one another.
yet each remains in its own place.

Shih-t'ou (700–790) is one of the great figures of early Chinese Zen (Ch'an). According to tradition, he built himself a small hut on a large flat rock, and thereby acquired the nickname Stone-head (Shih-t'ou). Translation by Nelson Foster.

By nature, forms differ in shape and appearance.

By nature, sounds bring pleasure or pain.

In darkness, the fine and mediocre accord;
brightness makes clear and murky distinct.

Each element comes back to its own nature
just as a child finds its own mother.

Fire is hot, the wind blows,

water is wet and earth solid,

eyes see forms, ears hear sounds,

noses smell, tongues tell salty from sour—

so it is with everything everywhere.

The root puts forth each separate shoot.

Both root and shoot go back to the fundamental fact.

Exalted and lowly is just a matter of words.

In the very midst of light, there's darkness;

don't meet another in the darkness.

In the very midst of darkness, there's light;

don't observe another in the light.

Light and darkness complement each other,

like stepping forward and stepping back.

Each of the myriad things has its particular virtue

inevitably expressed in its use and station.

Phenomena accord with the fundamental as a lid fits its box;

the fundamental meets phenomena like arrows in midair.

Hearing these words, understand the fundamental;

don't cook up principles from your own ideas.

If you overlook the Way right before your eyes,

how will you know the path beneath your feet?

Advancing has nothing to do with near and far,

yet delusion creates obstacles high and wide.

Students of the mystery, I humbly urge you,

don't waste a moment, night or day!

Letter to the Island

MYOE

DEAR MR. ISLAND:

How have you been since the last time I saw you? After I returned from visiting you, I have neither received any message from you, nor have I sent any greetings to you.

I think about your physical form as something tied to the world of desire, a kind of concrete manifestation, an object visible to the eye, a condition perceivable by the faculty of sight, and a substance composed of earth, air, fire, and water that can be experienced as color, smell, taste, and touch. Since the nature of physical form is identical to wisdom, there is nothing that is not enlightened. Since the nature of wisdom is identical to the underlying principle of the universe, there is no place it does not reach. The underlying principle of the universe is identical to the absolute truth, and the absolute truth is identical to the ultimate body of the Buddha. According to the rule by which no distinctions can be made between things, the underlying principle of the universe is identical to the world of ordinary beings and thus cannot be distinguished from it. Therefore, even though we speak of inanimate objects, we must not think of them as being separated from living beings.

It is certainly true that the physical substance of a country is but one of the ten bodies of the Buddha. There is nothing apart from the marvelous body of the radiant Buddha. To speak of the teaching of nondifferentiation and perfect interfusion of the six characteristics of all things—their general conditions, specific details, differences, similarities, formation, and disintegration—is to say that your physical form as an island consists of the land of this nation, which is one part of the body of the Buddha. In terms of the characteristic that things differ, we can speak of you also as the other nine bodies of the Buddha: the bodies of living beings, the

Myoe (1173–1232), a monk of the Japanese Shingon sect, spent most of his life at Kozanji temple in the mountains outside Kyoto. He endorsed Hua-yen (Kegon) teachings and advocated a return to strict observance of the precepts. Translation by George J. Tanabe, Jr.

body of karmic retribution, the bodies of those who listen to the teachings, the bodies of those who are self-enlightened, the bodies of bodhisattvas, the bodies of buddhas, the body of the truth, the body of wisdom, and the body of emptiness. Your own substance as an island is the substance of these ten bodies of the Buddha, and since these ten bodies are all fused together, they exist in a state of perfect union. This is the epitome of Indra's net, and goes beyond explanation because it far transcends the boundaries of conscious knowledge.

Therefore, in the context of the enlightenment of the ten buddhas in the Kegon sect, the underlying principles of you as an island can be thought of as the nondifferentiation between the karmic determinations of who we are and where we live, the identical existence of the one and the many, Indra's net that intertwines all things, the inexhaustibility of everything, the universality of the world of truth, the perfect interfusion that cannot be explained, and the complete endowment of the ten bodies of the Buddha in all things. Why do we need to seek anything other than your physical form as an island since it is the body of the radiant Buddha?

Even as I speak to you in this way, tears fill my eyes. Though so much time has passed since I saw you so long ago, I can never forget the memory of how much fun I had playing on your island shores. I am filled with a great longing for you in my heart, and I take no delight in passing time without having the time to see you.

And then there is the large cherry tree that I remember so fondly. There are times when I so want to send a letter to the tree to ask how it is doing, but I am afraid that people will say that I am crazy to send a letter to a tree that cannot speak. Though I think of doing it, I refrain in deference to the custom of this irrational world. But really, those who think that a letter to a tree is crazy are not our friends. We will keep company with the Sovereign Master of the Sea, who searched for Treasure Island, and will live on the great ocean, making crossings to islands. Our friend will be the Ocean Cloud Monk with whom we will play to our heart's delight. What more could we want?

Having visited you and carried out my religious practice as I wanted to, I am firmly convinced that you, more than some wonderful person, are truly an interesting and enjoyable friend. Having observed the ways of the world for some time now, I think it suitable that there were those

in the past who followed the custom of digging a hole in the ground and speaking into it.

These are all ancient matters. These days no one does anything like this, but when we speak of it there is a certain yearning that we have for it. However, I now practice the precepts of a community of monks who are living in the realm of the one truth. We do not serve the interests of friends living on the outside; neither do we have a mind for embracing all living beings. All in all, however, I do not think that this sin is a sin at all.

At any rate, I should like to write to you again at a later time.

With deepest respect,
Koben

After this letter was written, the messenger asked, "To whom shall I deliver this letter?" Myoe replied, "Simply stand in the middle of Karma Island; shout in a loud voice, 'This is a letter from Myoe of Toganoo!' Leave the letter, and return."

Mountains and Waters Sutra

DOGEN

I

Mountains and waters right now are the actualization of the ancient buddha way. Each, abiding in its phenomenal expression, realizes completeness. Because mountains and waters have been active since before the Empty Eon, they are alive at this moment. Because they have been the self since before form arose they are emancipation-realization.

Dogen (1200–1253) founded the Soto sect of Japanese Zen. This treatise is from his principal work, *Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma*, considered a crowning expression of Zen thought. Translation by Arnold Kotler and Kazuaki Tanahashi.

2

Because mountains are high and broad, the way of riding the clouds is always reached in the mountains; the inconceivable power of soaring in the wind comes freely from the mountains.

3

Priest Daokai of Mt. Furong said to the assembly, "The green mountains are always walking; a stone woman gives birth to a child at night."

Mountains do not lack the qualities of mountains. Therefore they always abide in ease and always walk. You should examine in detail this quality of the mountains' walking.

Mountains' walking is just like human walking. Accordingly, do not doubt mountains' walking even though it does not look the same as human walking. The buddha ancestors' words point to walking. This is fundamental understanding. You should penetrate these words.

4

Because green mountains walk, they are permanent. Although they walk more swiftly than the wind, someone in the mountains does not realize or understand it. "In the mountains" means the blossoming of the entire world. People outside the mountains do not realize or understand the mountains walking. Those without eyes to see mountains cannot realize, understand, see, or hear this as it is.

If you doubt mountains' walking, you do not know your own walking; it is not that you do not walk, but that you do not know or understand your own walking. Since you do know your own walking, you should fully know the green mountains' walking.

Green mountains are neither sentient nor insentient. You are neither sentient nor insentient. At this moment, you cannot doubt the green mountains' walking.

5

You should study the green mountains, using numerous worlds as your standards. You should clearly examine the green mountains' walking and

your own walking. You should also examine walking backward and backward walking and investigate the fact that walking forward and backward has never stopped since the very moment before form arose, since the time of the King of the Empty Eon.

If walking stops, buddha ancestors do not appear. If walking ends, the buddha-dharma cannot reach the present. Walking forward does not cease; walking backward does not cease. Walking forward does not obstruct walking backward. Walking backward does not obstruct walking forward. This is called the mountains' flow and the flowing mountains.

6

Green mountains master walking and eastern mountains master traveling on water. Accordingly, these activities are a mountain's practice. Keeping its own form, without changing body and mind, a mountain always practices in every place.

Don't slander by saying that a green mountain cannot walk and an eastern mountain cannot travel on water. When your understanding is shallow, you doubt the phrase, "Green mountains are walking." When your learning is immature, you are shocked by the words "flowing mountains." Without fully understanding even the words "flowing water," you drown in small views and narrow understanding.

Yet the characteristics of mountains manifest their form and life-force. There is walking, there is flowing, and there is a moment when a mountain gives birth to a mountain child. Because mountains are buddha ancestors, buddha ancestors appear in this way.

Even if you see mountains as grass, trees, earth, rocks, or walls, do not take this seriously or worry about it; it is not complete realization. Even if there is a moment when you view mountains as the seven treasures shining, this is not returning to the source. Even if you understand mountains as the realm where all buddhas practice, this understanding is not something to be attached to. Even if you have the highest understanding of mountains as all buddhas' inconceivable qualities, the truth is not only this. These are conditioned views. This is not the understanding of buddha ancestors, but just looking through a bamboo tube at a corner of the sky.

Turning an object and turning the mind is rejected by the great sage. Explaining the mind and explaining true nature is not agreeable to buddha ancestors. Seeing into mind and seeing into true nature is the activity of people outside the way. Set words and phrases are not the words of liberation. There is something free from all of these understandings: "Green mountains are always walking," and "Eastern mountains travel on water." You should study this in detail.

7

"A stone woman gives birth to a child at night" means that the moment when a barren woman gives birth to a child is called "night."

There are male stones, female stones, and nonmale nonfemale stones. They are placed in the sky and in the earth and are called heavenly stones and earthly stones. These are explained in the ordinary world, but not many people actually know about it.

You should understand the meaning of giving birth to a child. At the moment of giving birth to a child, is the mother separate from the child? You should study not only that you become a mother when your child is born, but also that you become a child. This is the actualization of giving birth in practice-realization. You should study and investigate this thoroughly.

8

Great Master Kuangzhen of Yumen said, "Eastern mountains travel on water."

The reason these words were brought forth is that all mountains are eastern mountains, and all eastern mountains travel on water. Because of this, Nine Mountains, Mt. Sumeru, and other mountains appear and have practice-realization. These are called "eastern mountains." But could Yun-men penetrate the skin, flesh, bones, and marrow of the eastern mountains and their vital practice-realization?

9

Now in Great Song China there are careless fellows who form groups; they cannot be set straight by the few true masters. They say that the

statement, "The eastern mountains travel on water," or Nanquan's story of a sickle, is illogical; what they mean is that any words having to do with logical thought are not buddha ancestors' Zen stories, and that only illogical stories are buddha ancestors' expressions. In this way they consider Huangbo's staff and Linji's shout as beyond logic and unconcerned with thought; they regard these as great enlightenments that precede the arising of form.

"Ancient masters used expedient phrases, which are beyond understanding, to slash entangled vines." People who say this have never seen a true master and they have no eye of understanding. They are immature, foolish fellows not even worth discussing. In China these last two or three hundred years, there have been many groups of bald-headed rascals. What a pity! The great road of buddha ancestors is crumbling. People who hold this view are not even as good as listeners of the Small Vehicles and are more foolish than those outside the way. They are neither lay people nor monks, neither human nor heavenly beings. They are more stupid than animals who learn the buddha way.

The illogical stories mentioned by you bald-headed fellows are only illogical for you, not for buddha ancestors. Even though you do not understand, you should not neglect studying the buddha ancestors' path of understanding. Even if it is beyond understanding in the end, your present understanding is off the mark.

I have personally seen and heard many people like this in Song China. How sad that they do not know about the phrases of logical thought, or penetrating logical thought in the phrases and stories! When I laughed at them in China, they had no response and remained silent. Their idea about illogical words is only a distorted view. Even if there is no teacher to show you the original truth, your belief in spontaneous enlightenment is heretical.

10

You should know that "eastern mountains traveling on water" is the bones and marrow of the buddha ancestors. All waters appear at the foot of the eastern mountains. Accordingly, all mountains ride on clouds and walk in the sky. Above all waters are all mountains. Walking beyond and

walking within are both done on water. All mountains walk with their toes on all waters and splash there. Thus in walking there are seven paths vertical and eight paths horizontal. This is practice-realization.

11

Water is neither strong nor weak, neither wet nor dry, neither moving nor still, neither cold nor hot, neither existent nor nonexistent, neither deluded nor enlightened. When water solidifies, it is harder than a diamond. Who can crack it? When water melts, it is gentler than milk. Who can destroy it? Do not doubt that these are the characteristics water manifests. You should reflect on the moment when you see the water of the ten directions as the water of the ten directions. This is not just studying the moment when human and heavenly beings see water; this is studying the moment when water sees water. Because water has practice-realization of water, water speaks of water. This is a complete understanding. You should go forward and backward and leap beyond the vital path where other fathoms other.

12

All beings do not see mountains and waters in the same way. Some beings see water as a jeweled ornament, but they do not regard jeweled ornaments as water. What in the human realm corresponds to their water? We only see their jeweled ornaments as water.

Some beings see water as wondrous blossoms, but they do not use blossoms as water. Hungry ghosts see water as raging fire or pus and blood. Dragons see water as a palace or a pavilion. Some beings see water as the seven treasures or a wish-granting jewel. Some beings see water as a forest or a wall. Some see it as the dharma nature of pure liberation, the true human body, or as the form of body and essence of mind. Human beings see water as water. Water is seen as dead or alive depending on causes and conditions.

Thus the views of all beings are not the same. You should question this matter now. Are there many ways to see one thing, or is it a mistake to see many forms as one thing? You should pursue this beyond the limit

of pursuit. Accordingly, endeavors in practice-realization of the way are not limited to one or two kinds. The ultimate realm has one thousand kinds and ten thousand ways.

When we think about the meaning of this, it seems that there is water for various beings but there is no original water—there is no water common to all types of beings. But water for these various kinds of beings does not depend on mind or body, does not arise from actions, does not depend on self or other. Water's freedom depends only on water.

Therefore, water is not just earth, water, fire, wind, space, or consciousness. Water is not blue, yellow, red, white, or black. Water is not forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touchables, or mind-objects. But water as earth, water, fire, wind, and space realizes itself.

For this reason, it is difficult to say who is creating this land and palace right now or how such things are being created. To say that the world is resting on the wheel of space or on the wheel of wind is not the truth of the self or the truth of others. Such a statement is based only on a small view. People speak this way because they think that it must be impossible to exist without having a place on which to rest.

13

Buddha said, "All things are ultimately liberated. There is nowhere that they abide."

You should know that even though all things are liberated and not tied to anything, they abide in their own phenomenal expression. However, when most human beings see water they only see that it flows unceasingly. This is a limited human view; there are actually many kinds of flowing. Water flows on the earth, in the sky, upward, and downward. It can flow around a single curve or into many bottomless abysses. When it rises it becomes clouds. When it descends it forms abysses.

14

Wenzi said, "The path of water is such that when it rises to the sky, it becomes raindrops; when it falls to the ground, it becomes rivers."

Even a secular person can speak this way. You who call yourselves

descendants of buddha ancestors should feel ashamed of being more ignorant than an ordinary person. The path of water is not noticed by water, but is realized by water. It is not unnoticed by water, but is realized by water.

“When it rises to the sky, it becomes raindrops” means that water rises to the heavens and skies everywhere and forms raindrops. Raindrops vary according to the different worlds. To say that there are places water does not reach is the teaching of the listeners of the Small Vehicles or the mistaken teaching of people outside the way. Water exists inside fire and inside mind, thought, and ideas. Water also exists within the wisdom of realizing buddha nature.

“When it falls to the ground, it becomes rivers” means that when water reaches the ground it turns into rivers. The essence of the rivers becomes wise people.

Now ordinary fools and mediocre people think that water is always in rivers or oceans, but this is not so. Rivers and oceans exist in water. Accordingly, even where there is not a river or an ocean, there is water. It is just that when water falls down to the ground, it manifests the characteristics of rivers and oceans.

Also do not think that where water forms rivers or oceans there is no world and there is no buddha land. Even in a drop of water innumerable buddha lands appear. Therefore it is not a question of whether there is only water in the buddha land or a buddha land in water.

The existence of water is not concerned with past, future, present, or the phenomenal water. Yet water is actualization of the fundamental point. Where buddha ancestors reach, water never fails to appear. Because of this, buddha ancestors always take up water and make it their body and mind, make it their thought.

15

In this way, the words “Water does not rise” are not found in scriptures inside or outside of Buddhism. The path of water runs upward and downward and in all directions.

However, one Buddhist sutra does say, “Fire and air go upward, earth and water go downward.” This “upward” and “downward” require

examination. You should examine them from the Buddhist point of view. Although you use the word “downward” to describe the direction earth and water go, earth and water do not actually go downward. In the same way, the direction fire and air go is called “upward.”

The phenomenal world does not actually exist in terms of up, down, or the cardinal directions. It is tentatively designated according to the directions in which the four great elements, five great elements, or six great elements go. The Heaven of No Thought should not be regarded as upward nor the Avichi Hell as downward. The Avichi Hell is the entire phenomenal world; the Heaven of No Thought is the entire phenomenal world.

16

Now when dragons and fish see water as a palace, it is just like human beings seeing a palace. They do not think it flows. If an outsider tells them, “What you see as a palace is running water,” the dragons and fish will be astonished, just as we are when we hear the words, “Mountains flow.” Nevertheless, there may be some dragons and fish who understand that the columns and pillars of palaces and pavilions are flowing water.

You should reflect and consider the meaning of this. If you do not learn to be free from your superficial views, you will not be free from the body and mind of an ordinary person. Then you will not understand the land of buddha ancestors, or even the land or the palace of ordinary people.

Now human beings well know as water what is in the ocean and what is in the river, but they do not know what dragons and fish see as water and use as water. Do not foolishly suppose that what we see as water is used as water by all other beings. You who study with buddhas should not be limited to human views when you are studying water. You should study how you view the water used by buddha ancestors. You should study whether there is water or no water in the house of buddha ancestors.

17

Mountains have been the abode of great sages from the limitless past to the limitless present. Wise people and sages all have mountains as their

inner chamber, as their body and mind. Because of wise people and sages, mountains appear.

You may think that in mountains many wise people and great sages are assembled. But after entering the mountains, not a single person meets another. There is just the activity of the mountains. There is no trace of anyone having entered the mountains.

When you see mountains from the ordinary world, and when you meet mountains while in mountains, the mountains' head and eye are viewed quite differently. Your idea or view of mountains not flowing is not the same as the view of dragons and fish. Human and heavenly beings have attained a position concerning their own worlds which other beings either doubt or do not doubt.

You should not just remain bewildered and skeptical when you hear the words, "Mountains flow"; but together with buddha ancestors you should study these words. When you take one view you see mountains flowing, and when you take another view, mountains are not flowing. One time mountains are flowing, another time they are not flowing. If you do not fully understand this, you do not understand the true dharma wheel of the Tathagata.

An ancient buddha said, "If you do not wish to incur the cause for Unceasing Hell, do not slander the true dharma wheel of the Tathagata." You should carve these words on your skin, flesh, bones, and marrow; on your body, mind, and environs; on emptiness and on form. They are already carved on trees and rocks, on fields and villages.

18

Although mountains belong to the nation, mountains belong to people who love them. When mountains love their master, such a virtuous sage or wise person enters the mountains. Since mountains belong to the sages and wise people living there, trees and rocks become abundant and birds and animals are inspired. This is so because the sages and wise people extend their virtue.

You should know it as a fact that mountains are fond of wise people and sages. Many rulers have visited mountains to pay homage to wise people or to ask for instructions from great sages. These have been im-

portant events in the past and present. At such times these rulers treat the sages as teachers, disregarding the protocol of the usual world. The imperial power has no authority over the wise people in the mountains. Mountains are apart from the human world. At the time the Yellow Emperor visited Mt. Kongdong to pay homage to Guangcheng, he walked on his knees, touched his forehead to the ground, and asked for instruction.

When Shakyamuni Buddha left his father's palace and entered the mountains, his father the king did not resent the mountains, nor was he suspicious of those who taught the prince in the mountains. The twelve years of Shakyamuni Buddha's practice of the way were mostly spent in the mountains, and his attainment of the way occurred in the mountains. Thus even his father, a wheel-turning king, did not wield authority in the mountains.

You should know that mountains are not the realm of human beings nor the realm of heavenly beings. Do not view mountains from the scale of human thought. If you do not judge mountains' flowing by the human understanding of flowing, you will not doubt mountains' flowing and not-flowing.

19

On the other hand, from ancient times wise people and sages have often lived near water. When they live near water they catch fish, catch human beings, and catch the way. For long these have been genuine activities in water. Furthermore there is catching the self, catching catching, being caught by catching, and being caught by the way.

Priest Decheng abruptly left Mt. Yao and lived on the river. There he produced a successor, the wise sage of the Huating. Is this not catching a fish, catching a person, catching water, or catching the self? The disciple seeing Decheng is Decheng. Decheng guiding his disciple is his disciple.

20

It is not only that there is water in the world, but there is a world in water. It is not just in water. There is also a world of sentient beings in

clouds. There is a world of sentient beings in the air. There is a world of sentient beings in fire. There is a world of sentient beings on earth. There is a world of sentient beings in the phenomenal world. There is a world of sentient beings in a blade of grass. There is a world of sentient beings in one staff.

Wherever there is a world of sentient beings, there is a world of buddha ancestors. You should thoroughly examine the meaning of this.

21

Therefore water is the true dragon's palace. It is not flowing downward. To consider water as only flowing is to slander water with the word "flowing." This would be the same as insisting that water does not flow.

Water is only the true thusness of water. Water is water's complete virtue; it is not flowing. When you investigate the flowing of a handful of water and the not-flowing of it, full mastery of all things is immediately present.

22

There are mountains hidden in treasures. There are mountains hidden in swamps. There are mountains hidden in the sky. There are mountains hidden in mountains. There are mountains hidden in hiddenness. This is complete understanding.

An ancient buddha said, "Mountains are mountains, waters are waters." These words do not mean mountains are mountains; they mean mountains are mountains.

Therefore investigate mountains thoroughly. When you investigate mountains thoroughly, this is the work of the mountains.

Such mountains and waters of themselves become wise persons and sages.

At the hour of the Rat, eighteenth day, tenth month, first year of Ninji [1240], this was taught to the assembly at Kannondori Kosho Horin Monastery.

Poetry of Daito

DAITO

No Dharmas

P'an-shan instructed, "There are no dharmas in the three realms; where can mind be sought?"

Rain clears from distant peaks, dew glistens frostily.
Moonlight glazes the front of my ivied hut among the pines.
How can I tell you how I am, right now?
A swollen brook gushes in the valley darkened by clouds.

Buddhas

Nan-ch'uan said, "I don't know anything about buddhas in the three worlds."

If he had known buddhas exist
in the three worlds,
suddenly no spring flowers,
no full moon in the fall.

Shakyamuni's Great Awakening

One glance at the morning star, and the snow got even whiter.
The look in his eye chills hair and bones.
If earth itself hadn't experienced this instant,
Old Shakyamuni never would have appeared.

Daito (1282–1337), a Japanese Zen master of the Rinzai sect, cofounded a lineage that remains influential today. With the support of two emperors, he established Daitokuji monastery in Kyoto. Translation by Kenneth Kraft.

Here I Am

No form, no sound—
here I am;
white clouds fringing the peaks,
river cutting through the valley.

Rain

No umbrella, getting soaked,
I'll just use the rain as my raincoat.