Chapter 1

A Shattered Mirror, a Fallen Flower

1

It is axiomatic in Zen Buddhism that delusion and enlightenment constitute a nondual unity (*meigo ichinyo*). For the sake of argument, let me formulate this dictum: Enlightenment is construed as seeing things as they really are rather than as they appear; it is a direct insight into, and discernment of, the nature of reality that is apprehended only by wisdom, which transcends and is prior to the activity of discriminative thought. In this view, delusion is defined as all that is opposed to enlightenment.

The problem with this reading is manifold: (1) There is an inherent tendency to bifurcate between "things as they really are" and "things as they appear to be"; (2) its corollary is that there is an unbridgeable chasm between insight/discernment and discrimination; (3) "seeing" is conceived predominantly in epistemological, intuitive, and mystical terms; (4) the pre- or extradiscriminative state of mind is privileged in such a way that creative tensions between delusion and enlightenment are all but lost; (5) nonduality in the unity is virtually the neutralization of all discriminations and thus has little or nothing to encourage and nurture duality as such—that is, discriminative thinking, intellect, language, and reason—in the scheme of Zen's soteriological realization; and (6) the implications for Zen discourse and practice, especially ethics, are seriously damaging. What we see here is a formulaic understanding—and misunderstanding at that—of the nonduality of delusion and enlightenment.

On the other hand, the ultimate paradox of Zen liberation is said to lie in the fact that one attains enlightenment only in and through delusion itself, never apart from it. Strange as that may sound, enlightenment has no exit from delusion any more than delusion has an exit from enlightenment. The two notions need, are bound by, and interact with one another. That said, the *interface* of delusion and enlightenment in their dynamic, nondual

unity is extremely complex, elusive, and ambiguous. Since they are the two foci[1] of realization, we might ask how they interplay with one another. Should and can enlightenment overcome delusion? What does "overcoming" mean? In this chapter, I would like to examine aspects of how Dōgen treats delusion and enlightenment in their nonduality, with the foregoing pointers and issues in mind. In my view, Dōgen deeply delved into this profound mystery.

2

Consider the kōan Dōgen cites in his exposition on great enlightenment (*daigo*):

> A monastic once asked Great Teacher Pao-chih of the Hua-yen monastery in Ching-chao (a successor to Tung-shan; also known as Hsiu-ching): "What is it like when a greatly enlightened person is nevertheless deluded?" The teacher replied: "A shattered mirror never reflects again; a fallen flower never returns to the tree."[2]

Dōgen's praise and enthusiasm for this revelatory occasion is immediate and unreserved: "[This teaching] would never have been presented outside Hua-yen's assembly, nor could [Hua-yen] have provided such spiritual assistance had he not been Tung-shan's rightful [dharma] child. Indeed this [Hua-yen's assembly] was the dharma-seat of a fully realized buddha-ancestor!"

Traditionally, commentators by and large have taken Hua-yen's original kōan as representing the nonattached, self-emptying, traceless state of realization on the part of an enlightened one, who is thoroughly immersed in delusion and yet completely free of it. This conventional interpretation does not sufficiently address issues involved in the *dynamic interplay* of delusion and enlightenment, in their duality and nonduality. Why are delusion and enlightenment qualified as "great"? What is the meaning of being "nevertheless deluded" (*kyakumei*)? Why is it that a shattered mirror "never reflects again" and a fallen flower "never returns to the tree"? As I shall attempt to highlight in a moment, Dōgen's analysis of the kōan deeply penetrates the soteric dynamics of not only the nonduality, but also the duality of delusion and enlightenment.

Dōgen continues to comment:

> The greatly enlightened person in question is not someone who is greatly enlightened from the beginning, nor is the person someone who gets and appropriates it from somewhere else. Great enlightenment is not something

> that, despite being accessible to everyone in the public domain, you happen to encounter in your declining years. Nor can it be forcibly extracted through one's own contrivances; even so, one realizes great enlightenment without fail. You should not construe nondelusion as great enlightenment; nor should you consider becoming a deluded person initially to sow the seeds of great enlightenment. A greatly enlightened person is further greatly enlightened, and a greatly deluded person is still greatly enlightened as well. Just as there are greatly enlightened persons, there are also greatly enlightened buddhas, greatly enlightened earth, water, fire, wind and space, and greatly enlightened pillars and lanterns. For now, the [monastic's] question is concerned about a greatly enlightened person. . . .
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> Consider this further. Is a greatly enlightened person who is nevertheless deluded the same as an unenlightened person? When being nevertheless deluded, does a greatly enlightened person create delusion by exerting that enlightenment? Or by way of bringing delusion from somewhere else, does the person assume it as though still deluded while concealing his/her own enlightenment? While an enlightened person remains the same in not transgressing his/her great enlightenment, does he/she, in any case, partake in being nevertheless deluded? Regarding "a greatly enlightened person is nevertheless deluded," you should also investigate whether the "nevertheless deluded" means fetching another "piece" of great enlightenment. And is the "great enlightenment" one hand and the "nevertheless deluded" the other? In any event, you should know that to understand "a greatly enlightened person is nevertheless deluded" is the quintessence of practice. Note that great enlightenment is ever intimate with the "nevertheless deluded."[3]

Earlier in his *Shōbōgenzō*, "Genjō kōan" (1233), Dōgen set out a broad outline of delusion and enlightenment: "For the self to carry itself forward and practice/verify the myriad things is delusion; for the myriad things to advance and practice/verify the self is enlightenment. Those who greatly enlighten delusion are buddhas; those who are greatly deluded about enlightenment are sentient beings. There are those who are further enlightened beyond enlightenment; there are those who are yet further deluded amid delusion."

Reflecting still further on these matters in the foregoing passages, Dōgen repudiates views of enlightenment as something one is innately endowed with, or as something to be acquired like things or objects, or as a fluke due to chance, luck, or fortune. The relationship between delusion and enlightenment is such that one is not the simple negation or absence of the other, nor does one precede or succeed the other. Enlightenment must neither descend to, nor incarnate as, delusion. It is, in Dōgen's favorite phrase, "ever intimate" (*shinzō*) with and transparent to delusion.[4] This

intimacy (*mitsu*; *shimmitsu*) suggests the nonduality of delusion and enlightenment that, inasmuch as it always intimates lively tensions between the two, and precisely for that reason, makes enlightenment "*great* enlightenment" and delusion "*great* delusion" (*daimei*).

Delusion and enlightenment differ from one another perspectivally, are never metaphysical opposites (such as good and evil, or the one and the many, as ordinarily understood), and are both temporal, coextensive, and coeternal as ongoing salvific processes. In this respect, I would call them "foci" rather than "antitheses" or "polarities." They are orientational and perspectival foci within the structure and dynamics of realization (*genjō*). As such, their boundaries, though provisional, always remain and are never erased. Yet they are "permeable," so to speak, instead of "incommensurable." In light of such an intimate, dynamic relationship, enlightenment consists not so much in replacing as in dealing with or "negotiating" delusion in the manner consistent with its principles. By the same token, delusion is not ordinary by any means; it is constantly illumined and clarified by enlightenment in the ongoing salvific process, ad infinitum.

Parenthetically speaking, within the Zen soteric economy, any two foci are simply methodological designations and, as such, are nonsubstantial in having no independent self-nature. This also connotes that they are dependent on each other, along with all other terms and meanings involved in the whole context. In this empty, interdependent, and open context, foci are neither bifurcatory like metaphysical opposites in eternal struggle, nor do they collapse in the mystical coincidence of opposites (*coincidentia oppositorum*), nor are they polar principles that posit a preordained universal order or harmony above and beyond them. In short, foci are no more than the soteriological tools to guide practitioners in the dynamic workings of realization.

What is then the meaning of the "nevertheless deluded"? As I have observed before, there is no separation whatsoever of delusion and enlightenment. They are not strange bedfellows; on the contrary, they are working companions and need one another, with the shared purpose of actualizing salvific liberation. At this point, I suggest readers view enlightenment as radiant light that illumines delusion far and wide, just as moonlight illumines the earth at night. The radiant light penetrates and unfolds the depths and dimensions of delusion—in brief, human nature and the human condition—that have hitherto been unnoticed, unknown, or unfathomed by practitioners, who in turn become aware of their own emotional, existential, and moral anguishes, doubts and ambiguities. The illuminative

and penetrating power of the radiant light can also be explained from the perspective of Dōgen's favorite statement: "Nothing in the whole world is ever concealed" (*henkai fuzōzō*). This is not to say that light eradicates darkness, and as a result, all things hitherto hidden become plainly visible. The reason is that *originally* nothing is hidden, and accordingly, light does not need to remove darkness. What light does then is to perpetually illumine and penetrate darkness's abysmal depths in the open-ended process of dialogue between light and darkness. This is the intimacy of light and darkness.

With this in mind, perhaps we can better understand Dōgen's following statement: "When the Dharma does not yet completely fill your body-mind, you think that it is already sufficient. When the Dharma fills your body-mind, you think that something is missing."[5] Paradoxically, the more deeply one grows in enlightenment, the more clearly one discerns one's own frailties and limitations. Expand your horizons from the personal to the social to the cosmic, and you will find yourself inextricably intertwined with all beings—all propelled by "the vast and giddy karmic consciousness" (*gosshiki bōbō*; *bōbō gosshiki*). We do not become deluded any more than we become enlightened, for we are *originally* deluded. This insistence is unequivocally stated in the key passage: "Great enlightenment is ever intimate with the 'nevertheless deluded.'" In light of the logic of the "ever intimate" we are now familiar with, "nevertheless deluded" may now be conceived as "*ever* deluded."

The intimacy in "ever intimate" never obliterates the dynamic, dialectical relationship of delusion and enlightenment in which they inform, challenge, negotiate, and transform one another. If Dōgen is mystical, his is the mysticism of intimacy, that is, in the sense of interplay, not adhesion or union. Enlightenment after all is to overcome delusion, by way of sensitizing practitioners to complexities and problems of the human situation. It is never free of values and meanings, and frustrations and disappointments any more than delusion is. Thus this caveat rings true:

> Therefore, the "nevertheless deluded" is not the same as mistaking a thief for one's son or one's son for a thief. Great enlightenment is recognizing a thief as a thief; to be "nevertheless deluded" is to recognize a son as a son. To add a little to a large amount is great enlightenment; to take a little from a small amount is the "nevertheless deluded." Accordingly, seek out and restrain someone who is "nevertheless deluded," and you will eventually encounter a greatly enlightened person. You should examine and act upon whether this present self is "nevertheless deluded" or not. This is the way you meet with the buddha-ancestors.[6]

Small "additions" and "subtractions"—those differences generated through practitioners' religious and moral efforts in changing circumstances—are due to the dynamic interaction of delusion and enlightenment. This is so because, according to the logic of intimacy, the differences between them are never erased, yet the hiatus between them is absent. Moral principles, values, and judgments are absolutely imperative in one's transformative life. This is why we should recognize "a thief as a thief" and "a son as a son," and never mistake one for the other. The differences matter; intimacy without them loses its identity as well as its efficacy. Dōgen warns us here against the slightest hint of antinomianism, relativism, and fatalism that might enter practitioners' thoughts upon hearing the ever deludedness of the enlightened one. It is for this reason that Dōgen insists: "'A greatly enlightened person is nevertheless deluded' is the quintessence of *practice*." A proper understanding of the insidiousness of delusion and the ambiguity of enlightenment thus constitutes the pivot of practice.

3

As is clear from the foregoing observations, "a shattered mirror" (*hakyō*) and "a fallen flower" (*rakka*) are the metaphors neither for a spiritually bankrupt person in despair and hopelessness, nor for an utterly incorrigible person beyond all possibilities of redemption. To the contrary, these metaphors purport to be the truth of realization vis-à-vis the existential predicament of the self and the world that are alike in a "shattered" and "fallen" state—not only figuratively but literally. For Dōgen, a figure of speech in the Buddha-dharma is itself ultimate reality.[7]

Nevertheless, why is it that "a shattered mirror *never reflects again*; a fallen flower *never returns to the tree*"? Dōgen has this to say:

> This teaching speaks of *right this moment* at which the mirror is shattered. It is not correct to imagine the time when the mirror is not yet shattered and thereby understand the words "a shattered mirror." The import of Hua-yen's present saying, "A shattered mirror never reflects again; a fallen flower never returns to the tree," might be interpreted in this way: Because a greatly enlightened person "never reflects again" or "never returns to the tree," he/she is no longer subject to any delusion. This, however, is not a proper understanding. If some think this, you might ask them: "What is the everyday life of a greatly enlightened person like?" In response, they will admit such a person is nevertheless deluded. The present teaching differs from all this: The question is "What is it like when a greatly enlightened person is

> nevertheless deluded?" [The monastic] is inquiring about *right this moment of being nevertheless deluded*.
>
> Such a moment is uttered as the realization of "a shattered mirror never reflects again" and "a fallen flower never returns to the tree." When a fallen flower is truly a fallen flower, even though it climbs beyond the top of a hundred-foot pole, it is still the fallen flower. Because a shattered mirror is truly a shattered mirror, even if it attains a certain degree of enlightenment in its daily living, its reflected light "never reflects again."[8]

The crux of Dōgen's interpretation consists in "right this moment" (*shōtō immoji*). It refuses to yearn for a paradisiacal state of enlightenment as a way of making sense of the "shattered" and "fallen" state. It does not atemporalize enlightenment so as to make it immune to delusion. Dōgen flatly rejects any manner of privileging enlightenment as opposed to, or as independent of, delusion, in causal, teleological, or metaphysical terms. Delusion has nothing to do with being prior to, posterior to, outside, or peripheral to, enlightenment. It always *co*exists with enlightenment, here and now. Note that the metaphoric vision of being "shattered" or "fallen" signifies the deeply unsettling human predicament that calls for practice right this moment—beyond any explanation, interpretation, or rationalization of it. Thus the urgency to live such a shattered and fallen state thoroughly and penetratingly in a given historical situation is critical.

"Right this moment" underscores the fact that enlightenment is as time bound and time free as delusion. In Dōgen's Zen, the realization of such thoroughgoing temporality and existentiality in which delusion and enlightenment are rooted is the foundation of its salvific project. In this context, "never reflects again" means there was no mirror in the first place that reflected and was then broken. By the same token, "never returns to the tree" is so because there was no tree of any kind from which a flower was fallen and to which it can presumably return. In this soteric economy, there remains only the reality/truth of a vision of the human condition at this very moment as "shattered" and "fallen." Hence, instead of offering the why, Dōgen simply takes the vision to be "the quintessence of practice."

Let me make a few further observations regarding the matter just discussed in the last paragraph. (1) The "never reflects again" and "never returns to the tree" should not be construed in the context of the Buddhist theory of the three ages of the right dharma, imitative dharma, and degenerate dharma (*shō-zō-matsu no sanji*), which was all too often tainted with a deeply fatalistic historical consciousness of romantic pessimism. Those expressions in question imply no nadir or stage in a devolutionary, let alone an evolutionary, scheme of things. Unlike other Kamakura Buddhist

leaders such as Shinran (1173–1262) and Nichiren (1222–1282) to whom the doctrine was foundational to their religions, Dōgen dismissed it as irrelevant and ineffectual.[9] (2) Similarly, the "never reflects again" and "never returns to the tree," as I have briefly mentioned a moment ago, do not represent the state of total depravity in the sense of humanity entirely corrupted and incapacitated beyond redemption. Nor do they show a fall from an idealized or reified state of the "mirror" or "flower" (just as in the Fall of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden). Not that one falls from grace and is saved by grace in a theistic framework, but that, as Dōgen writes, "the one who falls because of the ground rises always because of the very ground" (*chi ni yorite taoruru mono wa kanarazu chi ni yorite oku*).[10] For better or for worse, both gravity and countergravity are firmly embedded in the ground itself. "Grace" is found within and around one's self, not outside it. And (3) the "never reflects again" and "never returns to the tree" do not refer to the situation to which some humans are predestined or doomed, as some Buddhists maintain in the doctrine of *icchantika* (*issendai*). Some humans may no doubt be enslaved and fettered by delusional conditions. But in Dōgen's salvific project that rigorously adheres to the doctrine of karma (*gō*), there is no agent or law that predestines a certain class of people to eternal damnation, nor are there sentient beings who are doomed to such condemnation.

Perhaps most noteworthy in Dōgen's analysis is this: The human condition is such that even if we overcome delusion, we cannot eradicate it. Thus Dōgen underlines the fundamental limitations and ambiguities of our moral and religious *overcoming*, namely, enlightenment. This is also the ultimate limitation of Zen as a religion.

Dōgen thus writes:

> This is not to say that being "greatly enlightened" is like becoming a buddha or that being "nevertheless deluded" is likened to the state of an unenlightened person. Nor should you think, as some people do, that [a greatly enlightened person] becomes like an unenlightened person again [as told in the bodhisattva doctrine] or that the original Buddha assumes manifested forms [in the world so as to save sentient beings]. Those people speak as though one overstepped [the bounds of] great awakening and then became a sentient being. For our part, however, we do not say that great awakening is overstepped or it is gone, or that delusion appears. Our view is not like theirs.
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> Indeed, great enlightenment is elusive; being nevertheless deluded is elusive as well. There is no delusion that obstructs great enlightenment: You create "a half piece" of small delusion by exerting "three pieces" of great enlightenment. Thus the Himalayas are greatly enlightened by virtue of the

> Himalayas; trees and rocks are greatly enlightened by virtue of the trees and rocks. The great enlightenment of the buddhas is such that they are greatly enlightened because of sentient beings; the great enlightenment of sentient beings is greatly enlightened through the great enlightenment of the buddhas. [Delusion and enlightenment, the buddhas and sentient beings] have nothing to do with before and after.
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> The great enlightenment now under consideration belongs to neither oneself nor others. It does not come [from anywhere], and yet it fills the watercourses and ravines. Although it does not go [anywhere, while its being nevertheless deluded], we should absolutely avoid seeking it elsewhere by acting with others. Why is this? Remember [the saying] "It will go along with the other."[11]

Delusion and enlightenment are both said to be "elusive" (*mutan*), which also means "bottomless." They are indeed bottomlessly elusive and elusively bottomless. As such, enlightenment never functions without delusion whereas delusion is never meant to be without enlightenment. Such nondual unity applies to the relationship between buddhas (and bodhisattvas) on the one hand and sentient beings (ordinary, unenlightened beings) on the other. In their nondual unity, the buddhas (and bodhisattvas) and sentient beings have "nothing to do with before and after" and, by extension, above and below, inside and outside, real and apparent. The buddhas (and bodhisattvas) do not descend, nor do sentient beings ascend; the former do not assume or put on the forms of the latter. In other words, only when the causal, hierarchical, and teleological pretensions collapse, do delusion and enlightenment as well as the buddhas and sentient beings, at last, function wholesomely as foci within the soteriological milieu.

All things considered, the distinction, differences, and tensions between delusion and enlightenment—and between the buddhas and sentient beings—exist without violating nonduality. What I have endeavored to present in the foregoing few sections is Dōgen's analysis of such differences and tensions—that is, duality, which reveals his realistic vision of human nature as thoroughly delusion ridden (as much as it is enlightenment laden). In this light, the notion of realization, often exalted and even ecstatic, should be informed and tempered by such an existential assessment of the human predicament.

4

Before I move on to another closely related aspect of the subject matter under investigation, let me state, as a reminder, that what I have been

concerned with in this chapter is the nature and dynamics of realization (*genjō*) in Dōgen's Zen, with special emphasis on delusion in the nonduality of delusion and enlightenment. It is fair to say that, in Zen religion and scholarship, enlightenment has more often than not overshadowed delusion despite Zen's insistence on their nonduality. This lopsided view has unwittingly led to the aggrandizement and indulgence of enlightenment in one way or another. One of the most significant contributions made by recent Zen scholarship, in my view, is its stripping enlightenment of all traditional pretensions. In particular, the critique of the immediacy, purity, and universality of the enlightenment experience is at once devastating and salutary. After the Socratic aphorism, we might say that an unexamined Zen is not worth living—but then, in the same breath, add that an unlived Zen is not worth examining.[12] In this context, Dōgen's analysis of delusion is extremely instructive for understanding the nature and dynamics of practice that have been grossly overlooked by practitioners of Dōgen's Zen, as well as by scholars of Dōgen studies.

Having said this, let me turn to Dōgen's following thirty-one-syllable poem (*waka*) on impermanence:

Yo no naka wa	To what shall
Nani ni tatoen	I liken the world?
Mizutori no	Moonlight, reflected
Hashi furu tsuyu ni	In dewdrops,
Yadoru tsukikage.	Shaken from a crane's bill.[13]

This poem teaches a familiar Buddhist truth that the moon (Buddha-nature) is completely reflected in each and every one of the countless dewdrops (all things), without discrimination, namely one in all, all in one. The poem, as I see it, however, goes further than such a formulaic understanding exercised in the context of nature and impermanence. The complete reflection of the moon is "shaken"—each dewdrop has a full yet shaken reflection of the moon. In using the words *yo no naka* for "the world," Dōgen does not talk about just life in general but shows his own situatedness in the particular historical and cultural world of tumultuous Kamakura Japan (1192–1333) in which he lived and died. Especially significant is the fact that while critically rejecting the ideology of the age of the degenerate dharma (*mappō*), Dōgen nevertheless lived through the *reality* of *mappō*'s crisis situation, coupled with innumerable natural and social calamities and ruinous chaos and despair. In that milieu, he probed the vicissitudes of existence with a precise, minute eye. That is, Dōgen's sense of impermanence was inseparably interwoven with the *mappō*'s perilous actuality, as seen through

a tremendous range of thoughts and emotions. His sense of impermanence was indeed thoroughly enmeshed in the realities of medieval Japan.

Impermanence for the Japanese in the medieval period was primarily steeped in religio-aesthetic feelings toward nature with its ever changing, shifting phenomena and objects such as the four seasons, mountains and rivers, flowers and birds. Human affairs and the gods and buddhas of the spiritual world were subsumed under such an affective view of nature. It is well known that the medieval Japanese found solace and inspiration in emotively identifying with the ephemerality of nature rather than in intellectually and morally understanding and coping with it.

Dōgen, on the other hand, although he could hardly resist the predilection to poeticize the beauty of nature, was concerned with impermanence as the conduit of soteric realization from his religio-philosophical perspective. He presented a starkly realistic assessment of existence and its ultimate reason (*dōri*), by addressing the issues of birth-and-death (*shōji*), existence-time (*uji*), the Buddha-nature of impermanence/the impermanence of Buddha-nature (*mujō-busshō*), and so forth. The world, natural and human alike, envisioned as karma laden, was at once temporalized and sacralized. As a result, Dōgen's view of impermanence, as fused with a crisis consciousness and its concomitant sense of urgency, was preeminently religious, moral, and existential, as compared with the general aesthetic view tinged with quiet, melancholic resignation.[14]

In light of the foregoing observations, Dōgen's poem may be paraphrased as such: "To what can I liken the human condition in which I live in the here and now? I say: 'The moon's *shaken* reflections in dewdrops.'" Consider this in the context of what we have observed in the previous sections on the nonduality of delusion and enlightenment. We now know that the moon's reflection in a dewdrop is not an ordinary reflection but is the moon itself, however shaken it is, and that the moon and the dewdrop are embodied as nondually one—temporalized and localized—in that shaken reflection. There is nothing but the shaken reflection in which shakenness and reflection are never statically/reductively fused, but dialectically/dialogically interactive. This is so neither by the moon's "descending" to the level of a dewdrop in order to be able to reflect, nor by the moon's "simulating" the form of reflection to identify itself with the dewdrop, but simply by the moon's being *intimate* with the dewdrop without violating either their duality or nonduality. This was precisely the meaning of *mujō-busshō* that meant not only "the impermanent are Buddha-nature" but also "Buddha-nature is impermanent." In this light, only when the moon is thoroughly temporalized and localized in a *particular* dewdrop, is

the dewdrop genuinely sacralized as that shaken reflection. In this manner, Dōgen's poetic vision of impermanence in the image of the moon's shaken reflection in/as a dewdrop seems to unmistakably intimate elusive delusional undertones.

5

Dōgen delivered his talk on the radiant light (*kōmyō*) to his disciples at the Kannon-dōri Kōshō-hōrinji temple in the middle of a rainy night, one day in the sixth month, 1242. Utterly dark and quiet outside, it provided him with an opportune occasion to reflect on this important subject. This presentation now constitutes the *Shōbōgenzō*, "Kōmyō" (1242).

In this fascicle, commenting on Ch'ang-sha Chao-hsien's (n.d.) statement, "The entire world of the ten directions is one's own radiant light," Dōgen enunciates that one's own radiant light (*jiko kōmyō*) is not only the entire world of the ten directions (*jin jippōkai*) but also the buddha-ancestors' radiant light (*busso kōmyō*). In both instances, light is construed less as an attribute than as a function. That is, self/buddha-ancestor and light are coterminous and coeternal. The radiant light thus illumines the self and the world illimitably, leaving nothing hidden. As noted before, Dōgen's favorite expression "Nothing in the whole world is ever concealed" states exactly this situation. And as Dōgen writes, "There is no escape from this fact."[15]

Keeping these points in mind, let us examine Dōgen's comments on the saying by Yün-men Wen-yen (864–949):

> One day [Great Teacher Yün-men] addressed the assembly in the hall, saying: "Every person has the radiant light without exception. Yet when you look at it, you don't see it: Profound darkness. What is everybody's radiant light?" No response came from the audience. So he himself spoke for them: "The monastics' hall, the buddha hall, the kitchen pantry, the main gate."
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> This Great Teacher's saying "Every person has the radiant light without exception" does not mean that the radiant light will appear in the future, or was in the past, or can be observed in the present. You should clearly hear what it says: "Every person *originally* has the radiant light." It is, as it were, assembling hundreds of thousands of Yün-mens in the hall and letting them recite the saying in unison. Yün-men's saying is not just his personal fabrication; it is what everybody's radiant light utters by exerting itself, in concert with and for the sake of others. "Every person has the radiant light without exception" thus means: *A whole person* originally has the radiant light; the radiant light *is* each and every person; everyone *exerts* the radiant

> light in [his/her] personal and environing circumstances. [For this reason] the radiant light shines within everyone without exception; each [individuated] light originally shines within every person; everybody is authentically what he/she is; each [individuated] light is authentically what it is; every being is just as it is, through and through; and every wholeness is just as it is, through and through.
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> Therefore, you should know that the radiant light everyone has without exception pertains to each and every *actual* human being—that individual person within whom an individuated light wholly shines. Just ask Yün-men, "What do you mean by 'every person' and by 'the radiant light'?" Yün-men himself asked [in this vein]: "What is everybody's radiant light?" This question is none other than the radiant light itself, because it challenges its subject matter to the hilt. Accordingly, when anyone asks in such a manner, he/she has his/her own light.[16]

Why did Yün-men say, "Yet when you look at it, you don't see it: Profound darkness"? The key to the whole kōan seems to lie in a proper understanding of this puzzling statement. The metaphors of light and darkness are familiar in Zen as representing enlightenment and delusion, respectively. For one thing, if you try to see the radiant light as an object of perception, you will never be able to see it properly because it cannot be objectified in a dualistic manner. We must go further. In the *Pi-yen lu* (The Blue Cliff Record), Case 86, where the same kōan case appears, Yüan-wu K'o-ch'in (1063–1135) in his commentary offers a few pointers for exploring some subtle nuances. For instance, he cites the following verse by Shih-t'ou Hsi-ch'ien (700–790) in his *Ts'an-t'ung-ch'i* (Merging Difference and Identity):

> Right within light there is darkness,
> But don't see it as darkness:
> Right within darkness there's light,
> But don't meet it as light.[17]

In the same vein, Yüan-wu challenges by asking: "If you cut off light and darkness, tell me, what is it?" Or, he quotes a saying of P'an-shan Pao-chi (n.d.): "Light isn't shining on objects, nor do the objects exist. Light and objects both forgotten, then what is this?"[18] These pointers are correct in principle, suggesting the right direction to pursue; yet, they fail to point out, or to sufficiently explicate, the *dynamic relationship* of light and darkness.

Dōgen takes up the last-mentioned point explicitly in his foregoing commentarial passage. As noted before, there are some cues in his writings

that amply suggest his dynamic praxis orientation with respect to this subject. Such notions as the "ever intimate" (*shinzō*) and "Nothing in the whole world is ever concealed" (*henkai fuzōzō*) should be recalled. I might add another of Dōgen's favorites: "As one side is illumined, the other is darkened" (*ippō o shōsuru toki wa ippō wa kurashi*). Additionally, let me quote the following in this connection that comments on a verse of Hung-chih Cheng-chüeh (1091–1157) in his *Tso-ch'an chen*:

> "[The essential activity of all the buddhas and the active essence of all the ancestors] illumines without facing objects." This "illumination" means neither illumining the outer world nor illumining the inner world; "without facing objects" is, as such, "illumination." Illumination is not transformed into objects, because the objects *are* the illumination. "Without facing" means: "Nothing in the whole world is ever concealed," or "Nothing issues forth when you uncover the world." Its meaning is subtle and mysterious, at once interrelated and not interrelated.[19]

Dōgen's logic here is clear: From the very beginning there is nothing hidden (or read substantial) throughout the world; therefore, there is nothing to be uncovered in the first place. In this sense, all things are clear as crystal (*rodōdō*). Inasmuch as light is always mediated by darkness, the function of light's illumination is to penetrate and see through darkness, not remove it. Accordingly, that perfect clarity of things—a vision, if you will—differs from that reality/truth which has hitherto been hidden and is now uncovered. Rather, the vision as a focus is only the beginning, not the end, of the soteric process. Yün-men's "profound darkness" is the reminder of this fact.

For this reason, it is to be clarified ceaselessly through practice. How can you do this? First of all, the metaphysical opposites such as reality and appearance must go by way of the deconstruction of emptiness; they are simply ineffectual and inefficacious for soteriological purposes. In like manner, the notions of light and darkness must be first deconstructed by emptiness; only then can they function effectively, now reconstituted (or reconstructed) as salvific foci, through emptiness. As I shall explicate more in subsequent chapters, Dōgen's contributions primarily lie in the latter aspect of this dual role of emptiness, or in the treatment of duality in the pair of duality and nonduality.

Realization invariably consists of the ongoing interplay ("at once interrelated and not interrelated") of light and darkness, clarity and opacity, amid the nitty-gritty of the human situation. From this perspective, Dōgen suggests that light's illuminative power does not neutralize darkness to

overcome it, but penetrates it so as to bring its hitherto unknown and unrecognized dimensions to daylight. In this way, light and darkness inform and transform one another in the salvific enterprise; the more light illumines, the more darkness is clarified. Enter Dōgen's view of delusion at this point, and you will see a rich amplification on Yün-men's "profound darkness." His words "bottomlessly elusive" (*mutan*) is also highly suggestive in this regard.

Against the background of these observations, Dōgen's analysis of Yün-men's statements becomes more comprehensible to us. As is clear from his commentary, Dōgen underlines the *individuated* forms of the radiant light, in their respective, unadulterated existentialities. Earlier in the fascicle he illustrates: "roots, stalks, branches, and leaves," "flowers, fruits, luster, and colors," "grasses and trees, walls and partitions," "mist and fog, streams and stones," "the bird's [traceless] path and the mysterious path [of enlightenment]," and so on. The radiant light has shapes, colors, sounds, and other myriad qualities and activities—not least important, human emotions, afflictions, passions, and suchlike—all are real in Dōgen's salvific world. Note that light does not become an individual being; each and every individual is light, a unique light at that. In other words, each being is *originally* an individuated light.

As I have observed elsewhere,[20] the radiant light for Dōgen is not a diffuse, universalized light so much as it is a confocal (with respect to light and darkness as binary foci), differentiated light, invariably local and temporal as a specific thing, being or phenomenon. In the former case, an individual forfeits its genuine identity and is absorbed into the universal light. In the latter, by contrast, an individual at once illumines and is illumined, reflexively, in its particularity, alive with its karmic conditions clearly discerned, in relation to all the other conditions. In short, the infinitely illuminative and penetrative power of the radiant light, be it at the macrocosmic or microcosmic level, becomes potent and efficacious only when localized and temporalized in concrete beings and situations. Only in that context can light not only break darkness but, more importantly for our purpose, penetrate darkness with the heightened awareness of its abysmal depths.

In this respect, the picture Dōgen offers here is neither that of light's conquest of darkness nor that of light's eternal struggle against darkness. Just as when enlightenment breaks through delusion, it is never outside that delusion, so light, however brilliant and dazzling, works always in and through darkness. It cannot be otherwise. This is why Dōgen writes: "Even though it is said, 'One is further deluded *amid* delusion,' you should

construe it as saying, 'One is further deluded *beyond* delusion.' In such an understanding lies the path of progress in realization."[21] Replace "delusion" with "darkness," and you will have the same insight, now modulated from a different angle but still relevant to this section. This is the dynamic, dialectical notion of darkness. The upshot of this analysis then states: "*A whole person* originally has the radiant light; the radiant light *is* each and every person; everyone *exerts* the radiant light in [his/her] personal and environing circumstances." Dōgen's sole concern is after all soteriological and praxis oriented.

6

Dōgen's sensibilities to the peripheral, the obscure, the phantasmal, and even the seemingly irrational derive from his twofold concern: On the one hand, he was acutely aware of the immeasurable bounds and depths of the self and the world, the inner and the outer world, as contrasted to the fundamental limitations of human knowledge, even of "the measure of the buddhas" (*butsuryō*) and of "the measure of the dharma world" (*hokkairyō*). Despite or because of their epistemological limitations, humans have also the haunting awareness of their ultimate ignorance in the final analysis. This humility, however, never deterred Dōgen from opening himself up and exploring soteric possibilities with respect to the furthest reaches of the world and the innermost recesses of the self. In view of such humility and boldness in his methodology and hermeneutics, nothing is to be excluded from the purview of his soteriology.

On the other hand, Dōgen's sensibilities also stem from his cultural immersion in the Kamakura ethos of impermanence, inextricably intertwined with *mappō* (the degenerate dharma) culture and *hongaku* (original enlightenment) thought, full of chaos, despair, uncertainty, and unreason. In a world where madness and anarchy reign, the line between reason and unreason becomes extremely thin and blurred, and, as a result, one is naturally drawn to that ephemeral line's true colors. What is reason? What is unreason? How do we draw the line between them? Does the line still have any significance amid an anarchic world? I believe that Dōgen's sympathy with the deviant, displaced, and forgotten in the phenomenology of Buddhist experience, as observed in a different context elsewhere,[22] should be understood against the backdrop of Kamakura Japan.

Let me illustrate just one such case in point: In the *Shōbōgenzō*, "Kūge" (1243), Dōgen deconstructs a familiar Buddhist notion *kūge*, "flowers in the sky"—taken to be "illusory flowers" due to one's "dim-sightedness"

(*ei*; *eigen*; *gen'ei*)—to read as "the flowers of emptiness." Dōgen is here adroitly making the most of another meaning of the Sino-Buddhist character *kū*, "emptiness," in place of its usual meaning, "the sky." While some Buddhists believe that dim-sightedness—the cataractous vision of the ordinary, unenlightened people—creates illusory flowers in the empty sky, and that only upon removing such dim-sightedness will those people be enlightened, Dōgen holds such a view is shortsighted. The truth, Dōgen argues, is that illusion and reality are nondually one. We are all familiar with this logic. And yet, in his characteristically original fashion, Dōgen now deeply probes the subtle workings of emptiness itself with respect to illusion and reality, delusion and enlightenment. For example:

> Never foolishly misconstrue dim-sightedness as falsehood and thereby look for truth outside it. That is a shortsighted view. If the flowers of dim-sightedness were false [on the assumption that truth is outside falsehood/dim-sightedness], the subject that misinterprets them as false and the objects that are misinterpreted as such would all be false. If all were after all false, truth could not be established. Without truth established, it cannot be the case that the flowers of dim-sightedness are false. Because enlightenment is rooted in dim-sightedness, all things that constitute enlightenment are invariably the ones adorned with the dim-sightedness. Because delusion is also rooted in dim-sightedness, all things that constitute delusion are invariably the ones adorned with the dim-sightedness, as well.[23]

Dōgen in this passage gives an incisive, effective refutation of what we today call the representational view of knowledge in which the mind is presumed to represent the reality existing independently of it, through perception, thinking, and language. Truth in this view is established in terms of a correspondence between mind and reality. Those who are familiar with Dōgen's Zen may not be surprised to see his foregoing commentarial statements, but what distinguishes him here is this: Without frontally taking on the doctrinal issue of the ultimate truth and worldly truth of Mādhyamika thought, and even by bypassing the doctrine as such, Dōgen elucidates the interior workings of emptiness itself. By minutely observing simple expressions such as *kūge* and *eigen*, he boldly declares that emptiness, along with delusion and enlightenment, is rooted in dim-sightedness.

Dim-sightedness highlights fundamental ambiguity and opacity—never neutrality or freedom from value-ladenness—as intrinsic to human knowledge and understanding, and even to what we legitimately claim to be reality and truth. If I may borrow the locution of Blaise Pascal (1623–1662)

at this point who wrote, "Men are so necessarily mad, that not to be mad would amount to another form of madness,"[24] Dōgen's view runs like this: "Humans are so necessarily dim-sighted, that not to be dim-sighted would amount to another form of dim-sightedness." Such being the case, what the opponents of this view fail to realize is that their opposing assertion is itself none other than the product of dim-sightedness. Thus, their thesis is disastrously undiscerning and ill-considered; they are never able to establish any reality or truth outside the purview of dim-sightedness.

By contrast, according to Dōgen, this *original* dim-sightedness serves as the methodological and hermeneutic base of operation for his Zen soteriology; yet he avoids falling into positivist, reductionist, and relativist pitfalls. Dōgen, for instance, never minimizes nor erases the tensions between truth and falsehood. In this way, dim-sightedness is the life force of emptiness and, doctrinally speaking, is the linchpin of ultimate truth and worldly truth. "*Seeing* things as they are"—or "seeing things clearly"—will never be the same after one hears Dōgen's dim-sightedness.

Given all this, the illuminative, penetrative power of the radiant light now brings dim-sightedness into sharp relief, with equal force and eloquence as in "Nothing in the whole world is ever concealed." Dim-sightedness is no longer a physiological defect or a medical problem of faulty eyesight. It is not something to be cured or eliminated, but rather something to live out authentically. It is a salvific focus in the human condition, as original as enlightenment. "[Some unenlightened scholars] only think that the flowers seen in the sky (*kūge*) are due to faulty eyesight (*gen'ei*)," writes Dōgen. "But they do not understand that dim-sightedness (*gen'ei*) is what it is by virtue of the flowers of emptiness (*kūge*)."[25] "[All the buddhas] let their visions (*gen*) realize through dim-sightedness (*ei*). They realize the flowers of emptiness in their visions, and their visions in the flowers of emptiness."[26] With this deconstructive/reconstructive metamorphosis in the meanings of *kūge* and *gen'ei*/*eigen* at Dōgen's hand, dim-sightedness is at once liberated and radicalized in his soteric scheme.

Dōgen further writes:

> For these reasons we now say as follows: Just as dim-sightedness is equal, the flowers of emptiness are equal. Just as dim-sightedness is birthless, the flowers of emptiness are birthless. Just as all things are themselves ultimate reality, the flowers of dim-sightedness are ultimate reality. [The flowers of dim-sightedness/the flowers of emptiness] are not concerned with the past, present and future, nor with the beginning, middle and end. Because they

> are not obstructed by arising and perishing, they freely cause arising and perishing to arise and perish. They arise and perish in *emptiness*; they arise and perish in *dim-sightedness*; and they arise and perish amid *flowers*. They are like this at all times and in all places.[27]

Considering the tumultuous world of his times and the incredible follies and madness of human beings, did Dōgen discern deeply perplexing, perhaps insoluble contradictions, in the inner dynamics of the duality and nonduality of delusion and enlightenment? My sense is that he went as far as he could in his exploration of those obscure, elusive dimensions of opacity and ambiguity in practitioners' realization that were nonetheless part and parcel of the Buddha-dharma. However advanced in realization, practitioners cannot escape this dim-sightedness, and yet, it is at the same time deemed to be an occasion for liberation, by virtue of emptiness. Thus equating dim-sightedness to emptiness, which I think is one of his most seminal insights into the temporality and existentiality of human nature, Dōgen envisions its flowers blooming as all things of the self and the world—rootless, birthless, purposeless. Dim-sightedness/emptiness does not lend itself to explanations, interpretations, and purposes. It only prompts practice in realization.

7

In this chapter, I have endeavored to elucidate Dōgen's understanding of the inner workings of delusion and enlightenment, light and darkness, illusion and reality, in their duality and nonduality. In his Zen, these binary foci were thoroughly temporalized from the perspective of impermanence, intensified by the consciousness of crisis and exigency, and radicalized by *hongaku* thought. As a result, the hitherto obscured dimensions of delusion and enlightenment, especially of the former, were accentuated as never before. Skillfully delving into those traditional notions, Dōgen argued (1) that humans had no exit from the "shattered" and "fallen" state of their delusory conditions; (2) that the illuminative power of the radiant light intensified, rather than neutralized, the heightened awareness of (individual and collective) delusional darkness; and (3) that dim-sightedness was the primordial condition of human knowledge and understanding, of thoughts and imagination, and of reality and truth. Delusion and enlightenment alike were ineluctably embedded in this condition. Such insistence was a far cry from acceding to nihilism, relativism, or cynicism, but a call for moral and spiritual endeavors with renewed vigor.

And yet, popular views persist, such as: (1) The enlightened one is *in*, but not *of*, the world of delusion; (2) inasmuch as the enlightened one is liberated, he/she is no longer affected by delusion; (3) enlightenment is sufficiently powerful so as to "burn off" karmic effects; and (4) only when enlightenment frees itself of delusion, does it attain its total purity. All sound fine and are admirable. What we have thus far seen in the present chapter—and will see in what follows—clearly disputes such smug views. After all is said and done, the enlightened one is a profoundly ambiguous, complex person, and Dōgen would not have excepted himself in this respect.

It should be noted further that while undoubtedly indebted to the *hongaku* thought of medieval Japan, Dōgen's religion perhaps reflects certain sentiments—on the dark side of the human psyche—akin to consciousness-only thought (*yuishiki shisō*; *Vijñāna-vāda*/*Vijñapti-mātratā*), which was transmitted in the Hossō sect in Japan.[28] We here glimpse his eclecticim.