

On Conduct Appropriate for the Auxiliary Cloud Hall

(Jūundō-shiki)

Translator’s Introduction: In this discourse, Dōgen presents an outline of how trainees should behave in the auxiliary Meditation Hall, which was annexed to the main Monks’ Hall. This newly built hall would have been used primarily by novice monks. The tone of the original is somewhat informal, for the text was written not in Chinese, which was the customary language used for setting down monastic regulations, but in colloquial Japanese. In the discourse, Dōgen is not putting forth a series of impersonal, formalized rules and regulations so much as giving helpful instructions to those new to the etiquette of Buddhist monastic life, particularly as it would have been carried out in the Chinese monastery where Dōgen had trained. Some points which may strike a present-day reader as obvious were apparently not so obvious for Zen trainees in Dōgen’s day.

Those who earnestly desire to seek the Way and to cast off fame and gain may enter: those who are aimless and lack sincerity should not. Should you have entered for the wrong reasons, once you have determined that you have made a mistake, you should depart. Understand that when the desire to seek the Way arises in your heart, you are someone who has, then and there, discarded fame and gain. In the billions of worlds that comprise the universe, it is quite rare to be affiliated with the rightful heirs of the Buddha. Even though our country, from ancient times until now, has treated this connection with Buddhism as something fundamental to it and has been keenly concerned for what the future may hold, what is right now before you should be what you focus on.

The community in the Hall should be in accord with one another, like milk mixing with water, and should encourage each other in practicing the Way. Though we are now, for a short while, as guest and host,¹ later we will forever be Ancestors of the Buddha. Because this is so, do not lose sight of your sincere belief that each and every one of you has encountered something which is hard to encounter, and practices something which is difficult to practice. This is called the true heart of the Buddha’s Teachings: without doubt you will become a Buddha; you will become

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1. ‘Guest’ refers to a Meditation Hall trainee and ‘host’ to the monk responsible for overseeing his or her training.

an Ancestor. You have already left your home and departed from your native village. You have asked to be as clouds: you have asked to be as water.² In aiding yourself, you aid the Way. And, as a consequence, the gratitude this community has for you surpasses even that which we have for our parents. Father and mother are your intimates for only a short while within the passage of birth and death: this community will be together with you on the Buddha's Path at all times.

You should not become fond of going outside the monastery. Once a month, for instance, is tolerable for something essential. Those of old lived on remote mountains and trained in isolated forests; not only was their involvement with worldly affairs rare, they also severed all their other worldly ties. You should train yourself in an attitude which conceals Its light and covers Its traces, for now is the time to train as though your hair were on fire. Were you to waste this time by surrounding yourself with worldly entanglements, how lamentable that would be! Alas, the impermanent cannot be relied on, for who knows on what blade of roadside grass our dew-like life will fall?

Whilst in the Hall, you should not read books, even though it may be a book on meditation, nor should you bring in personal correspondence. Since it is a Meditation Hall, you should pursue the Truth through diligently practicing the Way and relegate to the well-lit Monks' Common Room the illumining of your mind through study of the ancient writings on the Teachings. Do not waste even a moment, for you should devote yourself exclusively to your training.

You should keep the monk in charge of the Meditation Hall informed of what you are up to, day and night. Do not indulge in diversions as it pleases you to do, for this will take its toll on the monastic discipline of the community. Though we know not when this life will end, it will end. Doubtless, it will later be regretted, should you end your life amidst idle amusements.

You should not lend support to the misconduct of others, nor should you look upon the human errors of others with a hateful heart. There is an old saying, "Not to see the faults of others is what is natural for me." Also, you should not make comparisons of the faults of one trainee with those of another, but should just put into practice your own virtues. Even though the Buddha had brought His own faults under control, He had no feeling of loathing for those who had not.

You should, by all means, let the monk in charge of the Meditation Hall know what you are going to do before doing it, no matter whether it is an important or a small undertaking. Someone who is given to doing things without mentioning

2. A common Japanese term for one who has entered monastic life is *unsui*, 'clouds and water', a metaphor for one who asks for no fixed abode and desires to live free of preconceptions and entanglements.

them to the Meditation Hall Monk should depart. When the courtesies between guest and host become confused, it is difficult for the trainee to distinguish what is true from what is merely superficial.

When in the Hall or in its vicinity, you should not speak in a loud voice or loiter about, conversing. And the monk in charge of the Meditation Hall will see to this.

You should not do *kinhin*³ in the Hall to keep yourself awake.

You should not hold onto your rosary whilst in the Hall, nor should you recite the names of the Buddhas or chant Scriptures aloud in the Hall on your own. But it is all right to do so were a donor to request a Scriptural recitation for a ceremony.

You should not blow your nose noisily or loudly cough up phlegm whilst in the Hall. You should not laugh aloud. You should grieve that the proper ways have not yet fully permeated your training. You should regret that time, in unseen ways, is depriving you of your life of training in the Way. Thereby, you may naturally have a feeling of being a fish in a small puddle.⁴

When together in the Hall with the community, you should not wear richly brocaded robes, but just a simple one made from waste cloth. From ancient times, those who awakened to the Way all dressed like this.

You should not enter the Hall in a drunken state. Should you make such a mistake out of a lack of mindfulness, you should bow down and do *sange*.⁵ Also, you should not bring rice wine in with you, nor should you enter the Hall reeking of strong pickles.

If two monks start quarreling, both should retire to the Common Room because they are not only hindering their own practice, they are also disturbing the practice of others. Someone who sees a quarrel breaking out and does not stop it is just as much at fault.

All who refuse to involve themselves in keeping these instructions will be expelled from the Hall.⁶ Those who are amused by, or are in sympathy with, such behavior by trainees are also at fault.

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3. A form of walking meditation which all monks do together between periods of seated meditation, but which is not to be done individually during general meditation periods or when other monks are sleeping.
 4. That is, be aware of how limited one's life really is.
 5. 'To do *sange*' is to recognize that what one has done is counter to the Precepts and to ensure that it is accompanied by true remorse and repentance.
 6. Having been deprived of a place to sleep and eat within the monastery, the monk may then

You should not invite visiting monks or laity into the Hall and thereby disturb those trainees already assembled there. When conversing with a privileged guest within even the vicinity of the Hall, you should not speak in a loud voice, to say nothing of bragging about yourself as a trainee out of greed for the patron's offerings.

Those with a long-standing determination to train and, obviously, those who are sincerely on a pilgrimage may enter, but even at such a time, you should not fail to let the monk in charge of the Meditation Hall know of their presence.

Seated meditation should be done as it is done in the Monks' Hall. Never neglect to attend morning meditation and services, or evening instruction periods.

In accordance with monastic etiquette, someone who spills the contents of his alms bowl onto the floor during the morning or noon meal should 'see to the oil'.⁷

Beyond question, you should adhere to the Precepts as set down by the Buddhas and Ancestors. You should impress the monastery's regulations into your bones and engrave them onto your heart.

You should pray that you may live your life tranquilly and do your training in the Way free of attachment to any preconceptions.

The preceding items are the body and mind of former Buddhas: follow them with reverence.

The twenty-fifth day of the fourth lunar month in the first year of the En'ō era (May 29, 1239).

choose either to leave the monastery or to turn his heart around (that is, do 'sange') by giving up his intransigence and asking to be reinstated.

7. A standard practice for someone committing a light breach of monastic etiquette through carelessness, in which the monk is personally and/or financially responsible for seeing that the oil lamp in front of the Hall's main statue is provided with sufficient fuel, so that it may keep burning over the next twenty-four hours.