

Tsuki

The Moon

Translator's Note: Tsuki means "moon"; in this chapter Master Dōgen uses the moon as a symbol to explain the relationship between an abstract concept and a concrete entity. The moon existed yesterday, it exists today, and it will exist tomorrow. We can say that at one moment in time the moon is a unique and independent entity. At the same time, there is the abstract concept "moon." The concept "moon" is an abstraction of the concrete moon which exists at one moment; that is the moon yesterday, the moon today, the moon tomorrow. Although the unique, concrete moon is the origin of the abstract concept "the moon," we are prone to discuss philosophical problems only in terms of abstract concepts, forgetting concrete facts, and creating a division between thinking and perception. Buddhist philosophy synthesizes the two factors, and here Master Dōgen explains the mutual relationship between thinking and sensory perception, comparing the abstract concept "moon" with the concrete moon. Secondly, Master Dōgen uses the relationship between moon and cloud to explain the relationship between subject and object. Buddhist theory says that reality is oneness between subject and object here and now. Master Dōgen explains this using the example of the moon and a cloud that surrounds the moon.

[3] The round realization of moons is not only three and three before and not only three and three after.² The state in which moons are round realization is not only three and three before and not only three and three after.³ Therefore.

Sakyamuni Buddha says,

The Buddha's true Dharma body⁴
Is just like space.
Manifesting its form according to things,
It is like the moon in water.⁵

The "reality as it is"⁶ in this "is like the moon in water" may be the (oneness of] water-and-moon," or it may be "the water's reality,"⁷ or "the moon's reality"⁸ or being in reality⁹ or "the reality of being in."¹⁰ "Being like" does not express resemblance; being like is concrete existence.¹¹ "The Buddha's true Dharma body" is "the reality itself"¹² of "space." This space" is the "Buddha's true Dharma body" of "reality itself" Because [space] is the Buddha's true Dharma body, the whole earth, the whole world, the whole Dharma, and the whole of "manifestation," are themselves naturally space. The "reality itself" of the manifest hundred things and myriad phenomena is totally the true Dharma body of Buddha, and it "is like the moon in water" The time of the moon is not always night, and night is not always dark. Do not limit yourself to narrow human consideration. There may be day and night even where there is no sun or moon. The sun and the moon are not for day and night. The sun and the moon each are reality as it is, therefore [the moon] is not one moon or two moons and not a thousand moons or ten thousand moons. Even if the moon maintains and relies upon a view of itself as one moon or two moons, that is the view of the moon, but it is not necessarily

an expression of the Buddha's truth or the wisdom of the Buddha's truth. So although the moon was there last night, tonight's moon is not yesterday's moon. We should master in practice that the moon tonight, at the beginning, middle, and end, is the moon tonight. Because the moon succeeds the moon, the moon exists and yet is not new or old.¹³

[6] Zen Master Banzan Hōshaku says:¹⁴

Mind-moon, alone and round.

Light swallows myriad phenomena.

Light does not illuminate objects,

Neither do objects exist.

Light and objects both vanish,

This is what?

What has now been expressed is that the Buddhist patriarchs and the Buddha's disciples always have the state of "mind-moon." Because we see the moon as the mind, it is not the mind unless it is the moon, and there is no moon which is not the mind. "Alone and round" means lacking nothing. That which is beyond two and three is called "myriad phenomena." "Myriad phenomena," being moonlight itself, are beyond 'myriad phenomena'; therefore "light swallows myriad phenomena." Myriad phenomena have naturally swallowed moonlight, and so he expresses light swallowing light as light swallows myriad phenomena." It may be, for another example, that the moon swallows the moon, or that light swallows the moon. This being so, he says, "Light does not illuminate objects,/Neither do objects exist." Because [buddhas]¹⁵ have got the state like this, when people must be saved through the body of a buddha, they manifest at once the body of a buddha and preach for them the Dharma.¹⁶ When people must be saved through a common¹⁷ physical body, they manifest at once a common physical body and preach for them the Dharma. There is no such instance which is not the turning of the Dharma wheel in the moon. Even though the illumination of phenomena by yin energy and by yang energy¹⁸ is produced by the fire pearl and the water pearl,¹⁹ at the same time it is just the direct manifestation of reality. This mind is the moon itself, and this moon is naturally the mind. The Buddhist patriarchs and the Buddha's disciples master the principles of the mind and master the facts of the mind like this.

[8] An eternal buddha says, "One mind is the whole Dharma, and the whole Dharma is one mind."²⁰ So the mind is the whole Dharma, and the whole Dharma is the mind. And, because the mind is the moon, it may be that the moon is the moon. Because the whole Dharma as the mind is totally the moon, the whole world is the whole moon, and the "thoroughly realized body"²¹ is in its entirety the thoroughly realized moon. Even among the three and three before and after" which belong directly to eternity is any not the moon? The sun-faced buddhas and moon-faced buddhas which are the present body-mind or object-subject may all be in the moon. Living-and-dying, coming-and-going, are both "in the moon." The whole universe in ten directions may be the top, bottom, left, and right of in the moon.²² Daily functions²³ now are the hundred things being utterly clear "in the moon," and are the mind of the ancestral masters being utterly clear in the moon.²⁴

[10] Great Master Jisai²⁵ of Tōsuzan in Jōshū district, the story goes, is asked by a monk, "How is the moon when not yet round?"
The master says, "Swallowing three or four [concrete moons]."
The monk says, "And after it has been round?"
The master says, "Vomiting seven or eight."²⁶

The states under investigation now are "not yet being round and "having been round." Both are moments of the moon. Among three or four [concrete moons] in the moon, there is one [conceptual moon] which is not yet round.²⁷ Among seven or eight [concrete moons] in the moon, there is one [conceptual moon] which has been round. Swallowing is [a concrete matter of] three or four; this moment is the realization of "the time when the moon is not yet round." Vomiting is [a concrete matter of] seven or eight; this moment is the realization of "having been round." When the moon swallows the moon,²⁸ it is [a concrete matter of] three or four. In the act of swallowing, the moon exists and is realized. The moon is the realization of swallowing. When the moon vomits the moon, it is [a concrete matter of] seven or eight. In the act of vomiting, the moon exists and is realized. The moon is the realization of vomiting. Therefore it is swallowing wholly and it is vomiting wholly. The whole earth and the whole heavens are the act of vomiting, and the entire heavens and the entire earth are the act of swallowing. We should swallow the self and should swallow the external world. We should vomit the self and should vomit the external world.

[12] Śākyamuni Buddha addresses Bodhisattva Diamond Treasury:²⁹
"Just as, for example, moving eyes are able to stir calm waters and still eyes make fire seem to swirl, so too it is that [when] a cloud flies the moon moves and [when] a boat sails the shore drifts."³⁰

We must clarify and master in practice the present preaching of the Buddha that "[when] a cloud flies the moon moves and [when] a boat sails the shore drifts." We must not understand it hastily and must not compare it with the sentiments of the common person. Still, those who see and hear this preaching of the Buddha in accordance with the preaching of the Buddha are few. When we are able to learn in accordance with the preaching of the Buddha, round realization³¹ is not always "the body-mind" and not always "bodhi" or "nirvana." Bodhi and nirvana are not always "round realization" and not always "the body-mind." The words now spoken by the Tathāgata that "[when] a cloud flies the moon moves and [when] a boat sails the shore drifts" mean that at the time of the cloud's flying the moon is moving, and at the time of the boat's sailing the shore is drifting. The point is that the moving together of the cloud and the moon, in the same step, at the same time, in the same way, is beyond beginning and end and is beyond before and after. The moving together of the boat and the shore, in the same step, at the same time, in the same way, is beyond starting and stopping and is not a cycle. Similarly, when we learn human action, a person's action is beyond starting and stopping, and the action of stopping and starting is beyond the person. Do not think of human action in the relative terms of starting and stopping. The flying of a cloud, the moving of the moon, the sailing of a boat, and the drifting of a shore, are all like this. Do not stupidly think limited thoughts according to the small view. Do not forget the principle that the flying of a cloud is beyond east, west, north, and south, and the moving of the moon is ceaseless day and night, past and present. The sailing of a boat

and the drifting of a shore, both being beyond the three times, are able to utilize the three times. For this reason, "Having arrived directly at the present, we are full up and not hungry."³²

[15] Still, stupid people have understood that the unmoving moon appears to move because of the flying of a cloud, and that the motionless shore seems to drift because of the sailing of a boat. If it were as stupid people say, how could it be the teaching of the Tathāgata? The fundamental principle of the Buddha-Dharma is never the small thoughts of human beings and gods: although it is unthinkable, it is that there is only practice at every opportunity. Who could fail to sift through the boat and the shore over and over again? Who could fail to put on their eyes at once and look at the cloud and the moon?

[16] Remember, the teaching of the Tathāgata does not liken a cloud to something else, does not liken the moon to something else, does not liken a boat to something else, and does not liken a shore to something else. We should consider this truth quietly and master it in practice. A step of the moon is the round realization of the Tathāgata, and the round realization of the Tathāgata is the action of the moon, which is beyond movement and stillness and beyond progress and retreat. Because the moon's moving is never a metaphor, its essence and form are "alone and round." Remember, the gait of the moon --- even if it is a gallop --- is beyond beginning, middle, and end. For this reason, the first moon and the second moon exist.³³ The first and the second are both the moon itself. What is "truly lovely for practice" is the moon; what is truly lovely for serving offerings" is the moon; and what "swings the sleeves and goes at once" is the moon.³⁴ Its roundness and sharpness are beyond waxing and waning. Using and not using the cycle of waxing and waning, letting go and holding back, it gives free play to the elegant ways,³⁵ and so it exists like this in many moons.

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Śramana Dōgen

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