

龍吟  
Song of the Dragon  
(Ryūgin)

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES

1. **“Dried trees and dead ashes”** (*koboku shikai* 枯木死灰): A term appearing in several places in Dōgen’s corpus, typically in perjorative reference to contemplative trance. This use is common in Chan texts, as seen, e.g., in a passage from the *Linjian lu* 林間錄, by Juefan Huihong 覺範慧洪 (1071-1128), quoted in Dōgen’s *Shōbōgenzō butsudō* 佛道 (DZZ.1:472):

石門林間錄云、菩提達磨、初自梁之魏。經行於嵩山之下、倚仗於少林、面壁燕坐而已、非習禪也。久之人莫測其故。因以達磨爲習禪。夫禪那、諸行之一耳。何足以盡聖人。而當時之人、以之爲史者、又從而傳於習禪之列、使與枯木死灰之徒爲伍。雖然聖人非止於禪那、而亦不違禪那。如易出于陰陽、而亦不違陰陽。

In Shimen’s *Linjian lu*, it is said,

When Bodhidharma first went to Wei from Liang, he proceeded to the foot of Mt. Song, where he stopped at Shaolin. There he just sat facing a wall. This was not the practice of *dhyāna*, but after a while others, unable to fathom what he was doing, held that Dharma practiced *dhyāna*. This *dhyāna* is but one among various practices; how could it suffice to exhaust [the practice of] the holy ones? Nevertheless, people of the time took it in this way; the historians followed this and recorded him with those that practiced *dhyāna*, thus making him a confederate of the partisans of “dried trees and dead ashes.” Be that as it may, the holy ones do not stop at *dhyāna*, and yet they do not oppose *dhyāna*. It is like “change,” which is beyond *yin* and *yang* and yet does not oppose *yin* and *yang*.

The use of the terms “dried trees” (*kumu* 枯木 or *gaomu* 槁木) and “dead ashes” (*sihui* 死灰) in reference to contemplation has a long history in Chinese literature. It is perhaps best known from the second book of the *Zhuang zi* 莊子. The book opens with Jiqi of Nanguo leaning on his armrest and gazing at the heavens. His companion Yancheng Ziyou exclaims,

何居乎、形固可使如槁木、而心固可使如死灰乎。

“What’s this? Can you actually make the body like a dried tree and the mind like dead ashes?”

2. **“The ocean drying up”** (*kaiko* 海枯): Allusion to a saying, drawn from a verse by the poet Du Xunhe 杜荀鶴 (846-907), that occurs often in Chan literature (See, e.g., *Zongjing lu* 宗鏡錄, T.48:564b12):

海枯終見底、人死不知心。

When the ocean dries up, you finally see the bottom;  
When a person dies, you do not know his mind.”

Dōgen seems to have enjoyed such play with this saying. In his *Shōbōgenzō hensan* 偏參 (DZZ.2:116), we find “when the ocean dries up, you cannot see the bottom” (*kai ko fuken tei* 海枯不見底); “when a person dies, he does not leave his mind behind” (*nin shi furyū shin* 人死不留心). In *Shōbōgenzō kokyō* 古鏡 (DZZ.1:226), he has “though the ocean dries up, it does not

reveal the bottom” (*kai ko futō ro tei* 海枯不到露底). The *Shōbōgenzō hotsu bodai shin* 發菩提心 (DZZ.2:167), has “when the ocean dries up, the bottom remains; though a person dies, the mind remains” (*kai karete naho soko nokori hito ha shisu tomo shin nokoru beki* 海かれてなほ底のこり人は死すとも心のこるべき).

**3. “The mark, nature, substance, and power of dried”** (*ko no sō shō tai riki* 枯の相性體力): Likely reflecting the famous line in the *Lotus Sūtra* (T.9:5c11-13), from which the Tiantai tradition derives its characteristic teaching of the “tenfold suchness” (*jū nyoze* 十如是):

唯佛與佛乃能究盡諸法實相。所謂諸法如是相、如是性、如是體、如是力、如是作、如是因、如是緣、如是果、如是報、如是本末究竟等。

Only buddhas with buddhas can exhaust the real marks of the dharmas: that the dharmas are of such a mark, such a nature, such a substance, such a power, such an action, such a cause, such a condition, such an effect, such a recompense, such an ultimate equality from beginning to end.

**4. “A dried post”** (*koshō* 枯椿); **“not a dried post”** (*hi koshō* 非枯椿): Likely a reference to a saying by Sushan Guangren 疎山光仁 (or Kuangren 匡仁, 837-909) included in Dōgen’s *shinji* 真字 *Shōbōgenzō* (DZZ.5:270, case 285):

疎山示衆云、病僧咸通年已前、會法身邊事。咸通年已後、會法身向上事。雲門出問云、如何是法身邊事。師曰、枯椿。曰、如何是法身向上事。師曰、非枯椿。

Sushan addressed the assembly, saying, “Before the Xiantong years [860-873], I understood things in the vicinity of the dharma body; after the Xiantong years, I understood things beyond the dharma body.”

Yunmen asked, “What are things in the vicinity of the dharma body?”

The master said, “A dried post.”

[Yunmen] asked, “What are things beyond the dharma body?”

The master said, “Not a dried post.”

**5. “Never ceasing to subdue oneself and promote others”** (*kukko suinin ya mikyū* 屈己推人也未休): “To subdue (or humble) oneself and promote others” is a fixed phrase seen in another saying of Touzi (*Jingde chuan deng lu*, T.51:320a21-22):

問、七佛是文殊弟子。文殊還有師也無。師曰、適來恁麼道也、大似屈己推人。

[Someone] asked, “The Seven Buddhas are the disciples of Mañjuśrī. Does Mañjuśrī have a master?”

The master said, “To talk this way just now is just like subduing yourself and promoting another.”

**6. “The croaking of frogs”** (*gama tei* 蝦蟆啼); **“the murmuring of worms”** (*kyūin mei* 蚯蚓鳴): In his *Shōbōgenzō ganzei* 眼睛 (DZZ.2:??), Dōgen quotes his teacher Rujing:

先師古佛上堂云、霖霖大雨、豁達大晴。蝦蟆啼、蚯蚓鳴。古佛不曾過去、發揮金剛眼睛。咄。葛藤葛藤。

My former master, the old buddha, ascended the hall and said,

Heavy rain for days on end,  
Opening up to great clear skies.  
Frogs croak and worms murmur.  
The old buddhas have never past away;  
They show their diamond eyes.  
Drat!  
Entanglements, entanglements.