

Transcript of talk on Shobogenzo

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1st December 2000

Chapter 11 – Uji. No. 1

So let's start on Uji which is on page 109. The titles of lots of Master Dogen's essays or talks on the Shobogenzo are not always phrases that he made up, but phrases which came through Chinese and Japanese Buddhism which have been given a certain meaning, then he comments on and gives his own interpretation of the term. The term *Uji*, is two Chinese kanji, and the first kanji actually means *is*, they use it as a verb. So if you want to say, you know, "the chair is black", in medieval Chinese, that's the character you use for *is*, it means *is* or *exists*, or anything around that, *is in existence*, or *exists*, it's a very wide interpretation. And the next one is the character for "time", *ji*.

Colin: *That's Chinese is it, that symbol?*

Yes they're both Chinese, but they're also of course the same in Japanese. Modern Chinese has been simplified. The Chinese in Taiwan will still use these characters. Some of the characters have already gone out of use even in Japanese; they're too complicated and have been simplified. So these characters are normal characters. So the first one means, *existing*, *existence*, *exist*, *is*, and the next one means *time*, in the normal sense of time.

C: *Sometimes it's translated as "being time" isn't it?*

Yes, well you can see why. But the character itself doesn't mean a physical being, it just means ...it's a verb, a verb form. So we've translated it as *existence time*. If you translate it as *being time* it seems to mean something human, but it's a bit wider than that. So in Nishijima Roshi's introduction to the chapter:

U means "existence" and ji means "time", so uji means "existent time", or "existence time". In this chapter Master Dogen teaches us the meaning of time in Buddhism. As Master Dogen explains in other chapters, Buddhism is realism. Therefore, the view of time in Buddhism is always very realistic. Specifically, time is always related with existence and existence is always related with momentary time. So in reality, the past and the future are not existent time; the present moment is the only existent time – the point at which existence and time come together. Also time is always related with action here and now. Action can only be realised in time, and time can only be realised in action. Thus, the view of time in Buddhism reminds us of existentialism in modern philosophy. It is very important to understand the Buddhist view of time in order to grasp the true meaning of Buddhism.

So that's a general overview of the chapter. In the chapter Master Dogen doesn't deny the process view of time.

Chris: *The one that we all live in.*

"Got to go early, we started at ten"; you know, we can't deny time, it's stupid to say that that's not real. But at the same time he points to something more fundamental, which is time at the present moment. So he starts off with a poem written by Master Yakusen Igen, who was one of the Chinese masters. What Master Yakusen Igen is doing in this poem is trying to say that *time* and *what is*, are the same. He does it by making a series of pictures. The "sometimes" is using the word, *uji*, so in the Chinese poem, "sometimes" is *uji*. We could translate it in a different way, we could say, "existence time is, standing on top of the highest peak". But we've translated it as "sometimes". Or we could've translated it as, "at one time", all of these are possible. Our translation says:

Sometimes standing on top of the highest peak,

***Sometimes moving along the bottom of the deepest ocean.
Sometimes three heads and eight arms,
Sometimes the sixteen-foot or eight foot [golden body].
Sometimes a staff or a whisk,
Sometimes an outdoor pillar or a stone lantern.
Sometimes the third son of Chang or the fourth son of Lee,
Sometimes the Earth and space.***

So what he's doing in that poem is giving, trying to give immediate pictures of now, now, now. So we have lots of "nows" and he's taking a few different examples. "Three heads and eight arms", is just a way of conjuring up an image of some of the Buddhist deities, or the older deities which came through into Buddhism.

C: It reminds me of that article that I read that I told you about, about, whether "nows" are discontinuous or continuous, whether there's a discontinuity between now and another "now" or a continuity.

This is our problem, when we think about a problem like this we can only conceive of one solution or another, but what Master Dogen says in this chapter is both. So time is continuous to us in our process view of the world, and we could say that's maybe due to the fact that we have a memory. So in the present we have a trace of past events, or past being times. And we also create future being times in our mind and in our consciousness they seem to flow, so we have a process. At the same time fundamentally, and fundamentally means in the same mode as atomic physics looks at sub-atomic particles, at the simplest basic level, time is only now. So time is only now. So time is only now.

C: So continuity and duration of time is a kind of human overlay?

Yes.

C: So it's not necessarily a real perspective?

It's a real perspective of a human being. So the human condition is to remember past existent time and to imagine future existent time, and then to create some kind of flow from past to present to future. And we actually do that linearly, and I guess that's the result of our education, we draw graphs with time and we imagine time kind of going like this so, past, present, future. But actually we don't have to imagine it like that, we could imagine past, present, future overlaying each other. But we don't, we have some kind of stretching out process in our consciousness. We can say that it would seem, and I don't know that it would be possible to prove this, but it would seem that animals don't have that, generally don't have that perspective of time, they move from this moment, to this moment, in a ... they let go. And we could say that possibly young babies have the same mode. I read in the paper the other day, that they did some experiments on very young babies under six months, it was actually their conceiving of patterns, and that reminded me that little children seem to have no past or future to hold them, so they're in the moment. They look at that, then when they lose interest in it, they look at that, and that's gone, you say, "look, look back, you missed it" but they, you know... and it's suggested that round about seven or eight months old is the time when babies, presumably their neural pathways form some kind of pattern recognition which they can then refer the present to. So when we refer the present to some kind of pattern in our brain, then we have a past. Because there's nothing else to refer the present to, except something in our bodymind.

Andrew: You say that the linear view of time is a particularly human perspective, are there other human perspectives?

Not if we think about it, although in Mathematics for example you can have curved space-time and so on. But however it's quite difficult for us, normal people to grasp the images of what curved space-time and so on are. And mathematicians find the same problem, but I guess if you work in that field for a long time you can get some kind of feeling of time in a different way. But it's still some kind of process.

A: *I've heard that different cultures have a non-linear view of time.*

Ah yes, when I say linear I don't necessarily mean equal, linear in the mathematical sense, but simply that we have a line, from past to present to future, or we have something in our consciousness which puts the past somewhere behind. We say the past is behind, and we say the future's in front. We don't ever say that the past is in front and the future's behind, because it feels wrong. So this is our conditioning, our education. But if we go back to what you were saying Colin, in another part of the Shobogenzo, Master Dogen, I can't remember the exact place at the moment, but he creates an image of time being like very thin sheets with infinite thinness, floating down on top of each other. So the past is there and the present is here, right? So the present keeps on floating down on top of the past, but because the sheets are infinitely thin, nothing piles up. So what we've got is a present that contains all of the sheets the past. So that's another view which is not linear, but stretching our mind round this is quite difficult. But if we make a poem up, you know and say, "autumn leaves, floating down, past leaves over present leaves" or something, you can get an image that the present is always coming, into the place of the past. Whereas in order to think about it what we do is we shift it, so the present doesn't come on top; it comes there, and the next present comes there, so we build up a line. I don't really know why we do that, but that's the way we view reality in our brains. So if we have a very strong memory, we tend to be able to order past experience, "was it last week or the year before last....?" But as we get older our long term memory gets weaker and maybe the memories become not so linear somehow. So older people can remember events long ago as if they were yesterday, so they have memories of past times, but those memories don't exist over there, but just there next to them. So we can say that when something is past, we can't locate it in reality any more, we can only locate it in our memory.

Anyway, in Master Yakusen Igen's poem, he's creating this picture, now, now, now, in different places. "Three heads and eight arms" is a Hindu or Buddhist deity, which were very common. "Sixteen or eight foot golden body" is an image of Gautama Buddha's perfect form; they believed that Gautama Buddha had some perfect form with some special symbols on his body. The staff and the whisk are the symbols of the Buddhist master giving a lecture, you know the Buddhist master with his staff or with his fly-whisk, which is called a *hossu*. "Outdoor pillar or a stone lantern", these are familiar things in the temple grounds, for monks. "Third son of Chang or the fourth son of Lee", individuals that we might meet at random. "The Earth and space", we could well say that may be when we are sitting in Zazen, or when we feel in an expansive mood, when we're not focussed on anything in particular. So he's giving eight examples of "now". And he doesn't say that existence time is a time, he says it's a thing or a situation. So if you remember that "sometimes" is *uji*, so *uji* is a situation.

Ch: *An activity.*

An activity, we can say an action, but something at that moment.

In this word "sometimes"

Uji.

Time is already just Existence, and all Existence is Time.

Ch: *Einstein got it then, with $E = Mc^2$.*

Ah that was energy equals mass wasn't it? But he hasn't got that equation, ah sorry not energy equals mass but energy and mass are interchangeable. We can say that existence and time are interchangeable. That is, without any thing, we can't have any time. And without time, we can't have any thing. So what Master Dogen is saying is that this is our concept of time, and this is our concept of things, in reality there's only that, (brings hands together). So this is an equality, time *is* existence and existence *is* time; he's identifying the two as one. But we normally think, time (points to watch). And although our watch is just an object which takes different positions, those positions, we abstract and form something we call "time". But time

doesn't exist in the watch, we can't find any time in the watch, we can just find positions, facts. So this is what he says here.

The sixteen-foot golden body is Time itself.

So not that it's *in* time, or that it takes place *at one* time, but that it *is* time.

Because it is Time, it has the resplendent brightness of Time.

So something appears in front of us, in the real world, it has a clarity, a real nature.

Ch: *Is the "sixteen foot golden body" referring, you said earlier that it refers to buddhanature or...?*

No it refers to a concrete image, the idealised image of the standing Buddha. So we can think of it as an actual statue which would have been familiar to people, or an abstraction, an image of that statue which people might have; if they think of the Buddha in the 13th century, they think of this particular form. And don't forget there's not a lot of media around, they can't see lots of different pictures of Buddhas. But they have maybe the form which they saw in a statue or which they put together from reading the sutras, which say that Gautama Buddha had, you know, some halo round him, and a little pearl here and big ears. So everybody forms a stylised image, so that's what that is referring to. But it means the body of Gautama Buddha.

Because it is Time, it has the resplendent brightness of Time. We should learn it as the twelve hours of today.

Twelve hours in China and medieval Japan, they had twelve hours in a day. So although we say time is existence itself, he's also saying that time is a process, in the same sentence. So in other words in two adjacent sentences, we actually have a logical conflict.

A: *Two of the four views.*

Yes, so time is existence, but time is part of the twelve hours of today. And again he's commenting on the poem.

The three heads and eight arms are Time itself. Because they are Time, they are completely the same as the twelve hours of today.

So a statue *is* time, and because the statue is time, we can create what we call process time if you like. So he never denies process time, he has these two conflicting views and he insists on both, not one or the other, but both.

We can never measure how long and distant or how short and pressing twelve hours is; at the same time, we call it "twelve hours".

Well in that sentence we can catch something that we often feel, you know "Zazen went like a flash today", but it was 30 minutes. "Today seemed to drag on and on", but it was 24 hours. So we can't actually, certainly in Master Dogen's time, they didn't have any way of measuring. But we still call it twelve hours. So we have a peculiar situation which is a contradiction in reality itself when we look at it, which is, now, now, now, falling on top of each other creates something which we can only think about as a process, which we call "time".

A: *How did they measure the Zazen periods?*

A candle probably, I don't actually know. I think in ... Master Dogen wrote a work about rules for temples, in Eihei Genzenji Shingi. I have a translation of it upstairs, and somewhere in there he says about sounding the time in Zazen, by beating the drum, but he doesn't say how they keep time. I guess the normal way was a candle, or you could have water running into something.

The leaving and coming of the directions and traces [of Time] are clear, and so people do not doubt it.

This is the normal view, we feel we know where time comes from and where it's going to; we're coming from the past and we're going to the future, so we don't doubt it.

They do not doubt it, but that does not mean they know it.

Right, so we can catch ourselves sometimes, in a state where we don't feel part of a process. And these states are in Zazen, and in the middle of some kind of physical activity—on the climbing wall on Tuesday morning—where there is no time separate from the activity. And we don't usually notice the passing of time.

C: Is the origin of this chapter derived from Zazen practice? Is that where this comes from in the sense he's had a kind of a perceptual experience?

Yes, a real experience of time yes. So all of these chapters are derived from Zazen. So when Nishijima Roshi explains to new people about Zazen, he always says, "from this simple practice, the whole of Buddhist philosophy emerged". Which sounds a strange statement to make, but it's true. So Master Dogen is always saying, "this is a phrase which has come into Buddhism", you know, *mindfulness, enlightenment, compassion, existence-time, ascending buddhas, right behaviour, buddhanature* – these are all terms which have been discussed over thousands of years, and I'm going to reinterpret them based on *now*. And what do I have in the now to reinterpret them on? My real experience in Zazen". So that's what he does through the whole of the Shobogenzo. It sounds peculiar because we've got all these concepts and where are they in Zazen? You know some people might start to look for them.

C: But having these concepts as we have, we have this concept of time and this particular concept of time, well we're talking about time in the way that Dogen understood it. Would that conceptual understanding, would that enable us to experience time, in Zazen?

Well we do it, we do experience time.

C: We do experience it but, have an awareness of it if you like?

Not necessarily, because what Master Dogen does is he locates reality right in this present moment, just where we can't see it; it's in our blind spot. It's now, and unfortunately *now* is a blind spot. We can look at the past and the future but when we look at *now* it's already gone. So it's like that spot in your mirror where the car behind is...right up close. So Master Dogen says several times in different chapters that it's not necessary that we notice ourselves, in the balanced state. And we try to, because we want some kind of confirmation; we want to know that we're OK and doing things right.

C: So how did Dogen pull it off then?

Pull what off?

C: The writing of this chapter, if the now is always oblique, then how is it not oblique for him?

Well it was in a way, because he had to keep writing all his life to try and explain one thing.

C: So how do we verify this chapter?

By sitting in Zazen. And when we sit in Zazen if we think about this chapter we don't get anywhere, but if we sit in Zazen again and again day after day, we get a kind of taste. And we can say that if we practice Zazen regularly, and also study the writings of somebody who we believe knows where reality is, then something forms in us after a while. And there are many different names for what forms in us, but Master Dogen calls it in some places, the *Buddha's mind seal*, as if there's a kind of stamp. Or we can call it confidence, or we can call it "something." I don't know where it comes from, but it comes to us, in the moment.

Ch: *Grace.*

Grace, we can call it whatever we like. It doesn't come from anywhere, it appears. And we open our mouth and the words come out, or we pick up our pens and we write. And this is what Master Dogen does. So he has an experience of reality, then he writes, or speaks. And because reality is contradictory, he write this way then that way, not worrying that one sentence is opposite to the other, because he's writing about something in front of him and around him and in him. But to.. certainly to us westerners, the fact that sentences contradict each other is a big problem. So what western people try and do is interpret it in a smooth way, but they miss the point when they do that; they get lovely English or French or German sentences, but that's not what he's saying. What he's saying is that it's hot *and* cold. And in the article you gave me, on some of the quotes from the Shobogenzo, I feel that they cover up what Master Dogen is saying. What he's saying is very radical and what he's saying matches exactly with our real experience which underlies the overlays that we put on it. And so practising Zazen, we get a smell or a taste of it. And when we get the smell or taste of it, then we express it; Nancy expressed it her way, you express it your way and I express it in my way. And all these expressions may be different but they are expressions of the one. But we're not expressing intellectual knowledge, we're expressing something else.

Ch: *It's... I think one of the important things about it is that it's more than an expression, it's actually an effort to communicate with those who are present at that moment, or an audience, it depends. My feeling that one of the reasons why people who try to express this are contradictory is because, well as you said you can't put things into words, but also it depends on who's there present, the language that's used depends on who's there.*

Yes so we can say expressing Buddhism is the audience, and the audience is expressing Buddhism. So Master Dogen's always making equalities, identities. So Master Dogen made his effort to express it and although he made his effort throughout his life, he didn't manage to express it completely, because it's impossible. But he managed to express it maybe more completely than anybody else that I've read. So I rely on what he says, although it takes effort to ferret it out.

A: *It's slightly off the point, but wasn't Master Nagarjuna saying the same thing?*

Yes, so Master Nagarjuna, the titles of all his chapters are titles of the Buddhist concepts that were floating around at the time, or the Buddhist areas of discussion. So he writes a chapter on the four noble truths, he writes a chapter on "fire and fuel", which was a much discussed thing. He writes a chapter on "action and agent".

A: *Gives his take on it?*

Yes, but his take is not the same as Master Dogen's but it's not different. And this is why we're so interested in translating the MMK, based on Master Dogen, because we find that Master Nagarjuna is doing the same thing, he's expressing something real, through himself, and redefining concepts which everybody takes out of reality and lines up like this (gestures with a line with hands), and he's claiming them back, for reality. And unfortunately, the way that he does it, using the word *sunyata*, has created its own problems through the centuries, because people say that sunyata is nothingness or emptiness or non-existence, but it's not, it's the same thing that we're talking about now. So emptiness is time and existence together. So maybe the word *emptiness* is wrong, maybe we should talk about "the state of zero superfluosity" or something. We're wrestling with words all of the time, and even though we mean to get beyond the words, we create more, we're always doing it.

The leaving and coming of the directions and traces [of Time] are clear, and so people do not doubt it. They do not doubt it, but that does not mean they know it. The doubts which living beings, by our nature, have about every thing and every fact that we do not know, are not consistent; therefore our past history of doubt does not always exactly match our doubt now.

Now that's interesting because Master Dogen is putting doubt into time, and saying that although we think that doubt is part of a process of doubt, past doubt and present doubt may be completely different. So he's saying that doubt is a fact at the present moment. And a fact at the present moment is time, in the ultimate sense. We can say, well he says it in the next sentence:

We can say for the present. However, that doubt is nothing other than Time.

So in this chapter, Master Dogen says that everything is time. Everything here is the other face of time.

We put ourself in order, and see [the resulting state] as the whole Universe. Each individual and each object in this whole Universe should be glimpsed as individual moments of Time.

This is now, and he's saying that we've got separate...now, now, now, so we're back in the discrete mode. And in the discrete mode:

Object does not hinder object in the same way that moment of Time does not hinder moment of Time.

Ch: *So when you say "discrete mode" it's the same as the process view?*

It's the separate discrete, reality is here, reality is here, reality is here. The problem we have is that if we make a picture of what I call the "discrete mode" other than analogue mode, we're back in process again. So in our mind we have this linear view of time, then we say no time is not like that, it's moment by moment by moment, we're back in the linear view, because this is the way our brains work. So it would be better if whenever we think of the discrete view, moment by moment, we think of it like this (gestures with hands) moment by moment by moment by moment, not building up anywhere; wafer thin. The present floats down on to the last moment, but doesn't increase the height of the stack if you like. So the present is always floating down on to the present, and that creates the present. But our consciousness has a trace, and that trace is what we call the past.

Now this view creates problems when we think about it; what about cause and effect? If there's only the present, the present, the present, then things in the past you know..."did that really happen?" So we have to be careful not to take Master Dogen's explanation to mean that the past was never real. But then if we think that the past was real, then we can only see that in a process view; it's the only way we can explain it and the whole of Science in fact explains past and present in process mode; that's what Science is. And Master Dogen never ever denies that. But he gives us another view, and this other view is a very peculiar view which is discrete, discrete but not lots of discrete things, the same discrete thing if you like. Difficult to grasp, unless we're on the climbing wall, or on the cushion, it is incredibly complicated.

A: *When I think of two certain times in the past, what those two ideas mean, those two ideas juxtaposed, what does that mean in terms of time? It's very complicated.*

Yes, well this is Science, this is the very basis of Science which is to find the connection between what happens in one moment and what happens in the next moment.

Ch: *My Ph.D. was on reasoning about causality...logical reasoning about causality.*

Really? Oh great, well shout loud if you disagree with anything.

Ch: *Oh no it's just a different view.*

The thing is we can't read Uji and say, "yes I've got it". We need to read Uji, then we need to read the chapter about causality, then we read another chapter to see that Master Dogen can't put everything in, just the same as I can't explain everything in one talk. We can't put

everything here, it's like I explain this and that bit there has moved, I bring that bit back and another bit moves. So it's like juggling reality; it's impossible, but he's very, very skillful at it. But still we need to keep looking at his different views, not only of time, but of causality, cause and effect and everything else. So this is why I say that to me, the whole of the Shobogenzo is like a huge tapestry, like it's covered with dust and I keep rubbing bits off it here and there, then I need to look back at all the bits to get the big picture. So he says doubt is nothing other than time, and "objects do not hinder objects in the same way that a moment of Time does not hinder a moment of Time." So that means that this moment is discrete, this moment is discrete.

For this reason, there are minds which are made up in the same moment of Time, and there are moments of Time in which the same mind is made up.

Well that sentence is the same statement reversed. He's saying that things are independent and dependent at the same time.

Ch: *So is he kind of saying cause and effect?*

Not always, he's expressing in the moment, trying to find a word, to indicate the co-appearance of things which is kind of dependence, but not a process kind of dependence.

C: *I think of Nishijima when he talks about cause and effect talks about being bound by cause and effect and yet free of cause and effect.*

Yes, so both. So "there are minds which are made up in the same moment of Time" we can think in practical terms of several people finding the will to the truth at the same moment. And "there are moments of Time in which the same mind is made up" means that we can re-establish our will to the truth at this time, and it will appear at another time. Things appear in the present, independent times, or on the other hand we can say that lots of different independent things happen at the same time. So it's kind of series-parallel.

Ch: *So is this trying to explain in some way how we experience the two views; the time process view and the time as moment together?*

Yes, and it's an explanation of his sentence before which says that objects don't hinder objects, and time doesn't hinder time. So he's trying to say although time is the actual situation, many situations can happen at the same time and at many different times, a situation can happen. So he's trying to say that everything's dependent and independent all at the same time. His explanation is not logical in a linear sense, but it gives some kind of taste or image.

Practice and realisation of the truth, are also like this.

So our practice is just in this moment, we all practice just in this moment, I practice just in this moment, then I practice just in this moment. So I can take one thing and say it's appearing in this moment, appearing in this moment, appearing in this moment, or I can take the whole Universe and say all the things in the whole Universe appear together in this moment. So singular versus collective if you like. And our practice is like that, and our realisation of the truth is like that. And he often asserts that realising the truth is not something we attain and keep, it's something that comes in the moment. And it doesn't come from anywhere or disappear to anywhere, it's just here; here and now.

Putting the self in order, we see what it is. The truth that self is Time is like this.

He's talking about practice and realisation of the truth. We feel that it's *me* who's realising the truth, or it's *me* that's practicing, but in this sentence, Master Dogen is saying that *I* and *time* are the same thing, which takes the subjective view away and says that there's something called time, so there's practice and this moment. And practice and this moment, are one. So self is time. If we say that it arises then perishes, then we create a process. Master Nagarjuna explained this...

C: *If it arises and perishes, then isn't there a dualism there?*

If we think of it as a process view we can say it arises, and then perishes. But actually, this moment has no moment other than this moment in which to arise, to be here and to perish. So we can say that ultimately, arising, being here and perishing are the same, in this moment. Which means that there's no arising, there's no being here and there's no perishing, there's just existence at this moment. But we can't conceive of that, so we spread it out a bit and say that it arises then stays then perishes. And this is what the Buddhist philosophers in India did, they discussed these three terms (*utpadastitibanganam*) which is arising, staying and perishing. Master Nagarjuna slices through it all.

A: *It has to arise from somewhere.*

Yes, that's what he says. So if it arises from somewhere where does it arise from? And if it arises from something, that something must be here already. And if it's here already, how did that arise and perish? So you can go on and on, and what he's trying to say is that when we think about reality, we have to introduce some kind of process, that's the way our brain works, but it's not that. So we can say that yes, it arises and perishes, no it doesn't arise and perish, arising equals perishing, perishing is the same as arising. This is difficult for us, because to identify concepts seems to be against the rules of analysis. When we analyse things, we usually analyse them into, you know "this is A, and this is B", then we work out how they all interact. But to come along and say that $A = B = C = D$ is a kind of non-analytical position which shocks people; disturbs them, upsets them somehow. Somebody said to me in Scotland this weekend, I was talking about reality being here, so this guy Ian, a very sincere man said, "so you think that samsara is nirvana do you?" So I said yes they're exactly the same, and that really upset him, because I was taking two very important Buddhist concepts, which people have a lot invested in, and putting them together, and that's very shocking to some people. But this is what Master Dogen does all of the time. So the self is time is where we got to, and so practising is time, again, identifying two things, when we identify two things we're left with no thing, and that *no thing* is what Master Nagarjuna calls *emptiness* – *sunyata*. So no thing, *sunyata* is the same as the balanced state which we can call *nirvana* and the state in Zazen, and the state where we can't see ourselves, right here, when we're acting - the only place where we can't see ourselves; how disappointing.

We should learn in practice that because of this truth, the whole earth includes myriad phenomena, and hundreds of things, and each phenomenon and each thing exists in the whole Earth.

Again a reversed sentence; $A = B$, $B = A$. And he's saying there is something called reality which is oneness. He's kept identifying things all the way through with time and the objective world, all through the poem, "time *is* this, this *is* time" – identify, identify. Then at the end here he says that all the things in the world are identified with the whole Earth; all the separate things and the whole Earth are the same, and all those are time. Then he says:

Such toing-and-froing is a first step [on the way] of practice.

So "toing-and-froing" means switching things around our point of view. We can say "I practice Zazen" and we can say, "Zazen practices me". And to anybody who's practiced Zazen, both of those describe what happens. And we could say "time is money" and we could say, "money is time". We can to and fro between two views which are in conflict, or in contradiction. By toing and froing we can catch something which is beyond both views. This is what we do in Zazen; we to and fro between mental and physical: so we have a thought, then we wobble into perception, then we hear a noise or we feel our pain, then we wobble back into some kind of conscious state – thinking, then we wobble into the physical area. So in our toing and froing between those states, we transcend them both, and taste, without being able to grasp, a state which is neither.

When we arrive in the field of the ineffable,

“The field of the ineffable” is just that state between the two, just that view between the two conflicting views, just that state in Zazen between mental and physical – ineffable. The word used for ineffable is *inmo*, and *inmo* also means “who”, or “what”, both as a question and as a statement. So I am *who*, and *who* am I? They’re both equal in Buddhism. So when we ask a question, we’re also making a statement. And when I ask a question I’m stating the ineffable nature of reality. So we arrive in the field of the who? We arrive in the field of the what? We arrive in the field that we cannot grasp, we arrive in the state of action, we arrive in the present where we just can’t get a glimpse of ourselves.

there is just one [concrete] thing and one [concrete] phenomenon, here and now, [beyond] understanding of phenomena and non-understanding of phenomena, and [beyond] understanding of things and non-understanding of things.

So again it’s in the middle between phenomena and no phenomena, understanding and no understanding, it’s the middle way, the state of balance, it’s subtle and ungraspable. And it’s just one, so it’s one thing and one phenomenon, in other words it’s unbroken; it’s what David Bohm calls “the implicate order”.

C: *So is it dialectical ?*

Yes, yes, exactly. However, it’s also non sentences, because when we use a dialectic in our minds, we synthesise two ideas to make another idea, but when we use a dialectic in reality, we combine two things to throw them both away. So a real dialectic is both synthesis and rejection of the two; negation.

C: *So even that’s a dialectic?*

Yes, so dialectic upon dialectic upon dialectic, in our minds.

C: *So is that a kind of infinite regress? Does it stop anywhere?*

No, and again this is David Bohm, I don’t know whether you’ve read any David Bohm, some of it’s excellent. He has this...

C: *Holotropic?*

Well, he was a very well known physicist, atomic physicist, who came up with a model to explain synchronicity, which is when two sub-atomic particles influence each other through time and space, without any time delay, in other words, *knowing* each other. And he said well, actually that’s only because the two particles are not all that is there, there is something unbroken beneath that, so you can think of the two particles as being tips of a land mass under the sea if you like. He calls this the “implicate order”. Then he talks about the implicate order is infinite regression of implicate orders, which you can read in that book. (Wholeness and the Implicate Order). So yes an infinite regression of dialectics, but reality is just here, but to grasp it in our mind it’s an infinite regression so we can’t. But we can try, so the whole of the Shobogenzo is Master Dogen’s infinite regression.

Because [real existence] is only this exact moment, all moments of Existence-Time are the whole of Time, and all Existent things and all Existent phenomena are Time.

Again a reversal, “real existence is only this exact moment”, oh too late, it’s gone. “All moments of Existence-Time are the whole of time”, now if you think of that very simple and misleading idea of the infinitely thin sheets floating on top of each other, then what we’ve got in front of us is all of it. So if we spread it out, we’re back in process, so we can’t get all of it, you know, the future is an infinite line out that way, and the past an infinite line that way; we can’t get all of it. But if we think the future and the past are all contained in the present, the present covers the past, it doesn’t add to the line of time...

C: *Because it’s falling away.*

Yes, and I contain the past, and I have the implicate form, I'm creating the future at every moment. So we can say in another way that the past and the future are all contained in the present.

Ch: *What about, "this moment is complete"?*

That's the same.

Ch: *It feels slightly different to me, I don't know why.*

Right; if we say this moment is complete, maybe it gives us an image of an action; we do something in this moment without anything...it doesn't leave any superfluous feeling or any inadequate feeling. So when we act fully in the present moment, when we've acted, we leave the moment freely; this is what children do. But what we tend to do is act partially, then we feel we didn't do enough and we judge ourselves, and we did too much, or we feel a little bit... a physical feeling. But then sometimes we hit the nail on the head, and the moment is complete. Maybe that...?

Ch: *Yes that wasn't quite what I had in mind. It's more an experience in practice, I'm trying to put it into words, it's an experience that's through practice you taste, at this very moment, there is nothing outside that moment. So that moment is everything. That's what I was trying to explain.*

Yes, that's the same then. "Because [real existence] is only this exact moment, all moments of Existence-Time are the whole of Time, and all Existent things and all Existent phenomena are Time." So we can say this moment is complete yes.

The whole of existence, the whole Universe, exists in individual moments of Time.

Wordsworth?

A: *Blake.*

All eternity in a grain of sand... yes, same thing. Then he gets a little bit humorous:

Let us pause to reflect whether or not any of the whole of Existence or any of the whole Universe has leaked away from the present moment of Time.

A: I thought the Japanese didn't have irony.

Well they do, yes. Well it's not irony, he's suggesting we actually do it. But in another way he's saying, "can you find anything that's not here". And of course we can...

Ch: *Yes, as soon as you look, I think that's why I was having difficulty with the previous sentence is because when you say this moment is complete, you're not saying that, you say that you experience at that moment a feeling of everything, so there's no time outside of this moment, it's complete in its own right. But then if someone comes along and tries to analyse it, then they say, "oh but that moment didn't have... the Simpsons on TV", you know.*

Right, it's true, and in a way we have to re-educate ourselves in the use of language, because, as Master Dogen does, in Buddhism, we're constantly redefining language on the basis of real experience. So we say "this moment is complete", means that the word "complete" describes the total experience in this moment. So the sentence "this moment is complete", means "complete = this moment" or "this moment is the same thing as the meaning of the word *complete*." If we don't do that, then we take it as an analytical statement. So Master Dogen moves us out of that analytical mode with his reversals: This moment is complete, complete = this moment. And doing that shakes us out of the, "this moment is complete, is it? I wonder..." We shoot off the end of the sentence with our own commentary.

Ch: *Have you come across a guy called Ken Wilbur? Because he used the expressions “rational thinking” and “post rational thinking”. In that post rational thinking doesn’t reject rational thinking, but it kind of goes beyond it in exactly the way you’re describing, it steps outside it, and Dogen is an example he uses in the post rational.*

Yes, I bought a book of his because I heard his name and he is quite well known. I bought a book called “The Marriage of Sense and Soul”. And I started reading it then I lost interest, I wonder if I should try again.

Ch: *He’s very intellectual.*

Ah, well I might make another effort, I’ve got it upstairs. I love Blake, because you know way back in the 18th century he was already saying, you know, that good and bad are not separate. He wrote this book called The Marriage of Heaven and Hell which is a really excellent title, and...why was I talking about Blake? What’s it to do with Ken Wilbur?

Ch: *Marriage of Sense and Soul?*

Ah yes, so when I saw the title of Ken Wilbur’s book, I thought this sounds interesting, but then I read it and I was a bit disappointed. So language is central to Master Dogen, the way he uses it, and some of the stuff is very difficult to catch in English, from the Japanese. In Japanese you can reverse things much more easily, you’ve got two kanji next to each other, body, mind, we can’t write bodymind in English, and he just switches the kanji around so it says mindbody.

A: *In Japanese the contradictions would not be so strong?*

They’re strong, however, contradictions don’t disturb Japanese people as much as they disturb us, because the language is less logically detailed, the structure is more poetic. Whereas if we see a sentence that doesn’t exactly make sense we want to say “wait a minute, that doesn’t make sense”. Generally speaking, Japanese people don’t have that sense of “oh wait a minute”. They’ll be able to catch something in general, they’ll be able to taste it, but if you ask them, they’re less able to explain it, because we’re more analytical, and explanation is analytical. So Nishijima Roshi says that one of his hopes is that the Shobogenzo can be understood from the English or German versions, and that this understanding will come back into Japan, because it’s very difficult to understand it in Japanese as clearly as it is in English. Not impossible, because he has many Japanese students who study the Shobogenzo, but there’s something which is more difficult in Japanese, because of the structure of the language. Then we have the opposite in English, it’s more difficult to understand Master Dogen’s word play, it’s more difficult to catch sometimes, which is why it took 20 years for Mike Cross and Nishijima Roshi to produce this text. And, where’s a good place to stop, this paragraph goes on and on.

Let us pause to reflect whether or not any of the whole of Existence or any of the whole Universe has leaked away from the present moment of Time.

Let’s pause to reflect then, thank you.