

On the Buddhas and the Ancestors

(*Busso*)

Translator's Introduction: In this short discourse, Dōgen presents the traditional Sōtō Zen Ancestral line up through Dōgen's Master, Tendō Nyojō. The Sanskrit forms for the names of the Indian Ancestors are, in a few cases, the translator's choice among several different possible reconstructions that have been offered by Asian and Western scholars.

With deepest respect.

The Buddhas and Ancestors manifest before our very eyes whenever we respectfully serve the Buddhas and Ancestors by bringing Them up through our presenting of Their story. They are not limited simply to some past, present, or future time, for They have undoubtedly gone beyond even 'going beyond Buddha'. Once we have taken up what we truly know of the reputation of a Buddha or an Ancestor, we bow in respect as we meet That One face-to-face. Having made evident the spiritual virtues of a Buddha or an Ancestor and held them aloft, we take our abode in them and uphold them, embodying them that we may realize the Truth in them.

The Seven Buddhas:

The Great Monk Bibashi Buddha, called herein 'the One
Who Universally Proclaims the Dharma'

The Great Monk Shiki Buddha, called herein 'the Fire'

The Great Monk Bishafu Buddha, called herein 'the All
Compassionate One'

The Great Monk Kuruson Buddha, called herein 'the Hermit
of Gold'

The Great Monk Kunagonmuni Buddha, called herein 'the
Golden Sage'

The Great Monk Kashō Buddha, called herein 'the All-
absorbing Light'

The Great Monk Shakyamuni Buddha, called herein 'the
Thoroughly Patient and Still One'

The Indian Ancestors:

1. The Great Monk Makakashō
2. The Great Monk Ananda
3. The Great Monk Shōnawashu
4. The Great Monk Ubakikuta
5. The Great Monk Daitaka
6. The Great Monk Mishaka
7. The Great Monk Bashumitsu
8. The Great Monk Butsudanandai
9. The Great Monk Fudamitta
10. The Great Monk Barishiba
11. The Great Monk Funayasha
12. The Great Monk Ashvaghōṣa
13. The Great Monk Kabimora
14. The Great Monk Nāgārjuna also called Lung-shu,
Lung-sheng, or Lung-meng
15. The Great Monk Kanadaiba
16. The Great Monk Ragorata
17. The Great Monk Sōgyanandai
18. The Great Monk Kayashata
19. The Great Monk Kumorata
20. The Great Monk Shayata
21. The Great Monk Vasubandhu
22. The Great Monk Manura
23. The Great Monk Kakurokuna
24. The Great Monk Shishibodai
25. The Great Monk Bashashita
26. The Great Monk Funyomitta
27. The Great Monk Hannyatara
28. The Great Monk Bodhidharma

(The Chinese Ancestors:)

- The Great Monk Eka
The Great Monk Kanchi Sōsan
The Great Monk Daii Dōshin
The Great Monk Daiman Kōnin
The Great Monk Daikan Enō
The Great Monk Seigen Gyōshi

The Great Monk Sekitō Kisen
The Great Monk Yakusan Igen
The Great Monk Ungan Donjō
The Great Monk Tōzan Ryōkai
The Great Monk Ungo Dōyō
The Great Monk Dōan Dōhi
The Great Monk Dōan Kanshi
The Great Monk Ryōzan Enkan
The Great Monk Daiyō Kyōgen
The Great Monk Tōsu Gisei
The Great Monk Fuyō Dōkai
The Great Monk Tanka Shijun
The Great Monk Chōro Seiryō
The Great Monk Tendō Sōkaku
The Great Monk Setchō Chikan
The Great Monk Tendō Nyojō of the twenty-third
generation in China



During the summer retreat in the first year of the Chinese Pao-ch'ing era (1225) in Great Sung China, whilst I, Dōgen, was training and serving under my late Master, the venerable Buddha, Great Monk Tendō Nyojō, I came to know, through and through, the significance of making a full venerative bow to these Buddhas and Ancestors and of receiving Them upon my head. It was what each Buddha realized on His own, just as all Buddhas have done.

Delivered to the assembly from a manuscript on the third day of the first month in the second year of the Ninji era (February 15, 1241) at Kannondōri in Kōshōhōrin-ji Temple, Uji Province, Yamashiro Prefecture, Japan.

I copied this whilst in the chaplain's quarters at Kippō-ji Temple, Echizen Province, on the fourteenth day of the fifth month of the second year of the Kangen era (May 20, 1244).

Ejō