

# One Bright Pearl

Ikka-no-myoju

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In this saha-world, in the great Kingdom of Sung, in Fuchou province, at Gensa-zan temple, there lived the Great Master Shu-itsu, whose Dharma name was Shibi and whose secular surname was Sha. While still a layman he loved fishing, and he would float down the Nantai River on his boat, following the other fishermen. It may have been that he was not waiting even for the fish with golden scales that lands itself without being fished. At the beginning of the Kantsu era of the Tang Dynasty, suddenly he desires to leave secular society; he leaves his boat and enters the mountains. He is already thirty years old, but he has realized the precariousness of the floating world and has recognized the nobility of the Buddha's way. At last he climbs Seppo-zan Mountain, enters the order of Great Master Shinkaku, and pursues the truth day and night. One day, in order to explore widely the surrounding districts, he leaves the mountain, carrying a traveling bag. But as he does so, he stubs his toe on a stone. Bleeding and in great pain, Master Gensa all at once seriously reflects as follows: "They say this body is not real existence. Where does the pain come from?" He thereupon returns to Seppo. Seppo asks him, "What is it, Bi of the dhuta?" Gensa says, "In the end I just cannot be deceived by others." Seppo, loving these words very much, says, "Is there anyone who does not have these words inside them? And yet is there anyone who can speak these words?" Seppo asks further, "Bi of the dhuta, why do you not go exploring?" The Master Gensa says, "Bodhidharma did not come to the Eastern Lands; the Second Patriarch did not go to the Western Heavens." Seppo praised this very much. In his usual life as a fisherman Master Gensa had never seen sutras and texts even in a dream. Nevertheless, profundity of will being foremost, his outstanding resolve made itself apparent. Seppo himself considered Gensa to be outstanding among the sangha; he praised Gensa as the pre-eminent member of the order. Gensa used vegetable cloth for his one robe, which he never replaced, but patched hundreds of times. Next to his skin he wore clothes of paper, or wore moxa. Apart from serving in Seppo's order, he never visited another good counselor. Nevertheless, he definitely realized the power to succeed to the Master's Dharma. After he had attained the truth at last, he taught people with the words that the whole Universe in ten directions is one bright pearl. One day a monk asks him, "I have heard the Master's words that the whole Universe in ten directions is one bright pearl. How should the student understand this?" The Master says, "The whole Universe in ten directions is one bright pearl. What use is understanding?" On a later day the Master asks the question back to the monk, "The whole Universe in ten directions is one bright pearl. How do you understand this?" The monk says, "The whole Universe in ten directions is one bright pearl. What use is understanding?" The Master says, "I see that you are struggling to get inside a demon's cave in a black mountain."

The present expression "The whole Universe in ten directions is one bright pearl" originates with Gensa. The point is that the whole Universe in ten directions is not vast and great, not meager and small, not square or round, not centered or straight, not in a

state of vigorous activity, and not disclosed in perfect clarity. Because it is utterly beyond living-and-dying, going-and-coming, it is living-and-dying, going-and-coming. And because it is like this, the past has gone from this place, and the present comes from this place. When we are pursuing the ultimate, who can see it utterly as separate moments? And who can hold it up for examination as a state of total stillness? "The whole of the ten directions" describes the ceaseless process of pursuing things to make them into self, and of pursuing self to make it into something. The arising of emotion and the distinctions of the intellect, which we describe as separation, are themselves as real as turning the head and changing the face, or developing things and throwing oneself into the moment. Because we pursue self to make it into something, the whole of the ten directions is in the ceaseless state. And because the whole of the ten directions is a fact before the moment, it sometimes overflows beyond our regulating ability which is the pivot of the moment. "The one pearl" is not yet famous, but it is an expression of the truth. It will be famously recognized. "The one pearl" goes directly through ten thousand years: the eternal past has not ended, but the eternal present has arrived. The body exists now, and the mind exists now. Even so, the whole Universe is a bright pearl. It is not grass and trees there and here, it is not mountains and rivers at all points of the compass; it is a bright pearl. "How should the student understand it?" Even though it seems that the monk is playing with his conditioned intellect in speaking these words they are the clear manifestation of the Great Activity, which is just the Great Standard itself. Progressing further, we should make it strikingly obvious that a foot of water is a one foot wave: in other words, a yard of the pearl is a yard of brightness. To voice this expression of the truth, Gensa says, "The whole Universe in ten directions is one bright pearl. What is the use of understanding?" This expression is the expression of truth to which buddha succeeds buddha, patriarch succeeds patriarch, and Gensa succeeds Gensa. If he wants to avoid this succession – while it is not true that no opportunity for avoidance exists – just when he is ardently trying to avoid it, the moment in which he speaks and lives is the total moment, conspicuously manifest before him. Gensa, on a subsequent day asks the monk, "The whole Universe in ten directions is one bright pearl. How do you understand this?" This says that yesterday Master Gensa was preaching the established rule, but his exhalations today rely upon the second phase: today he is preaching an exception to the established rule. Having pushed yesterday aside, he is nodding and laughing. The monk says, "The whole Universe in ten directions is one bright pearl. What use is understanding?" We might tell him: you are riding your adversary's horse to chase your adversary. When the eternal Buddha preaches for you, he is going among alien beings. We should turn back and light and reflect for a while: How many cases and examples of "What use is understanding?" are there? We can tentatively say that while teaching and practice are seven dairy cakes and five vegetable cakes, they are also "south of the River Sho" and "north of the River Tan."

Gensa says, "I see that you are struggling to get inside a demon's cave in a black mountain." Remember, the face of the sun and the face of the moon have never changed places since the eternal past. The sun's face appears together with the sun's face, the moon's face appears together with the moon's face. For this reason, Master Yakusan Igen said, "Even if I say that the sixth moon is a very nice time of year, I should not say that my surname is Hot." Thus, this bright pearl's possession of reality and lack of beginning

are limitless, and the whole Universe in ten directions is one bright pearl. Without being discussed as two pearls or three pearls, the Whole Body is one right-Dharma-eye, the Whole Body is real substance, the Whole Body is one phrase, the Whole Body is brightness, and the Whole Body is the Whole Body itself. When it is the Whole Body it is free of the hindrance of the Whole Body; it is perfect roundness, and roundly it rolls along. Because the virtue of the bright pearl exists in the realization like this, there are Avalokitesvaras and Maitreyas in the present, seeing sights and hearing sounds; and there are old buddhas and new buddhas manifesting their bodies and preaching the Dharma. Just at the moment of the present, whether suspended in space or hanging inside a garment, whether kept under a dragon's chin or kept in a top-knot, the one bright pearl in all cases is one bright pearl throughout the whole Universe in ten directions. To hang inside a garment is its situation, so do not say that it will be hanging on the surface. To hang inside a top-knot or under a chin is its situation, so do not expect to play with it on the surface of the top-knot or on the surface of the chin. When we are intoxicated, there are close friends who give us a pearl; and we should always give a pearl to a close friend. When the pearl is hung upon us we are always intoxicated. That which already is like this is the one bright pearl which is the Universe in ten directions. So even though it seems to be continually changing the outward appearance of its turning and not turning, it is just the bright pearl. The very recognition that the pearl has been existing like this is just the bright pearl itself. The bright pearl has sounds and forms that can be heard like this. Already having got the state like this, those who surmise that "I cannot be the bright pearl," should not doubt that they are the pearl. Artificial and non-artificial states of surmising and doubting, attaching and rejecting, are just the small view. They are nothing more than trying to make the bright pearl match the narrow intellect. How could we not love the bright pearl? Its colors and light, as they are, are endless. Each color and every ray of light at each moment and in every situation is the virtue of the whole Universe in ten directions; who would want to plunder it? No-one would throw a tile into a street market. Do not worry about falling or not falling into the six states of cause and effect. They are the original state of being from head to tail, which is never unclear, and the bright pearl is its features and the bright pearl is its eyes. Still, neither I nor you know what the bright pearl is or what the bright pearl is not. Hundreds of thoughts and hundreds of negations of thought have combined to form a very clear idea. At the same time, by virtue of Gensa's words of Dharma, we have heard, recognized, and clarified the situation of a body-and-mind which has already become the bright pearl. Thereafter, the mind is not personal; why should we be worried by attachment to whether it is a bright pearl or is not a bright pearl, as if what arises and passes were some person. Even surmising and worry is not different from the bright pearl. No action nor any thought has ever been caused by anything other than the bright pearl. Therefore forward steps and backward steps in a demon's black-mountain cave are just one bright pearl itself.