

Master Dogen's dharma discourse number 441.

“Having questions and answers, we smear everything with shit and piss. Not having questions and answers, thunder and lightning crash. The great Earth in ten directions is leveled and all of space is torn open, not allowed to enter from outside, not allowed to leave from inside.

A gavel strikes the sounding block and the ten thousand affairs are completed.

At such a time how is it?

(After a pause, Dogen said) time and again everything exists within a painting. Even allowing for what falls apart snow falls at midnight.”

This discourse, delivered in the last part of his life, in all its vigour and iconoclasm seems quintessentially Dogen, but in fact, prior to the pause, Dogen is directly quoting the words of his Master, Tendo Nyojo.

By this time his master had been dead for more than a decade and he had not seen him for more than 15 years.

Are the words Nyojo's or Dogen's, both, or neither?

It is the responsibility of the teacher to teach with great vigour, and to do so for the rest of their days.

Yet the personal vigour of a teacher - even a great teacher like Dogen - is puny. Yet it is as if sometimes the entire lineage - not just the visible lineage, but the lineage of all times - and the entire universe seen and unseen is all congregated around this person, and given voice.

Whether you believe it or not, you are like this, I am like this and, to live without doubt, it is necessary only once.