

# Critiques of Tathāgatagarbha Thought and Critical Buddhism

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## I. What is “ Critical Buddhism ”?

The term “ Critical Buddhism ” may be known to some American scholars in Buddhist studies. The term, originally employed by Hakamaya Noriaki 袴谷憲昭, has been generally used to express the claims of Hakamaya and myself with regard to what Buddhism is and what it most definitely is not.

In this paper, I would like to state briefly the history of so-called “ Critical Buddhism, ” its relationship to critiques of Tathāgatagarbha thought, and lastly my critical appraisal of “ Critical Buddhism. ”

In 1989, two books concerning “ Critical Buddhism ” were published in Japanese. One was *Critiques of Original Enlightenment Thought* (『本覚思想批判』) by Hakamaya, then my colleague in the Faculty of Buddhism at Komazawa University in Tokyo, and the other was *Dependent-arising and Emptiness : Critiques of Tathāgatagarbha Thought* (『縁起と空 如来蔵思想批判』) by myself.

The following year Hakamaya published another book entitled *Critical Buddhism* (『批判仏教』 Hihan-bukkyō), in which he repeatedly used English term “ Critical Buddhism ” as the translation of the Japanese term “ Hihan-bukkyō, ” itself coined by Hakamaya to express his claim that “ criticism (hihan 批判) alone is Buddhism (bukkyō 仏教). ” After the publication of these three books, and perhaps because of the title of the last book mentioned, our critical opinions on Buddhism began to be called “ Hihan-bukkyō ” or “ Critical Buddhism. ”

As stated above, the term “ Critical Buddhism ” was originally employed by Hakamaya, while I, for my part, in no way feel that I have proposed or advocated “ Critical Buddhism ” as expressing my own position. In fact, as will be stated

(2) Critiques of Tathāgatagarbha Thought and Critical Buddhism (Matsumoto)

below, I have criticized Hakamaya's theory on many points, and I do not think that "criticism alone is Buddhism." So I am not very pleased to be called a "Critical Buddhist."

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that when I read the article "Tathāgatagarbha Thought Is Not Buddhism" (「如来蔵思想は仏教にあらず」)<sup>(1)</sup> at the annual meeting of the Japanese Association for Indian and Buddhist Studies (日本印度学仏教学会) in 1986, I fully endorsed the validity of Hakamaya's theory concerning "critique of original enlightenment (本覚) thought," and that we have cooperated in trying to prove the non-Buddhistic character of the ideas of Buddha-nature (仏性), harmony (和)<sup>(2)</sup> etc., and of San-lun (三論) philosophy<sup>(3)</sup>, Hua-yen (華嚴) philosophy, Kyoto philosophy, Zen Buddhism<sup>(4)</sup>, all based on Tathāgatagarbha thought, according to our understanding. Therefore, it is true that I am responsible for what is called "Critical Buddhism."

After the publication of the three books mentioned above, Itō Takatoshi 伊藤隆寿, a professor in the Faculty of Buddhism at our university, published a book called *Critical Studies on Chinese Buddhism* (『中国仏教の批判的研究』), in which Itō, having accepted my hypothesis that the fundamental structure of Tathāgatagarbha thought is nothing other than "dhātu-vāda" (locus theory), and the significance of Hakamaya's critique of Original Enlightenment thought, argued that Taoist "Philosophy of Tao-li" (道理の哲学), Itō's own neologism, had formed the foundations of Chinese Buddhism.

Furthermore, Ishii Shūdō 石井修道, a professor of our faculty and a specialist in Zen Buddhism, also accepted to some extent the validity of our critical studies, when he published a book on Japanese Zen master Dogen 道元 (1200-1253), entitled *Studies on the Formation of Dogen's Zen Thought* (『道元禅の成立史的研究』) in 1991.

Thus, a new movement aimed at critically understanding Buddhism arose among scholars belonging to the Faculty of Buddhism at Komazawa University. But why is the "movement" called "critical"? Roughly speaking, because these scholars have tried to demonstrate that the main stream of East Asian Buddhist philosophy, being based on Tathāgatagarbha thought, was not Buddhist at all, in

spite of the fact that they were themselves East Asian Buddhists. In this way, “Critical Buddhists” can be considered to be criticizing their own traditional understanding of what Buddhism is.

The critical arguments by Hakamaya and myself, and especially my article mentioned above, i.e. “Tathāgatagarbha Thought Is Not Buddhism” in 1986 had made some impact on Japanese Buddhist studies. We have criticized the views of many Japanese scholars. Some have answered our criticism, while others ignored it. In the meantime, so-called “Critical Buddhism” has also attracted the attentions of scholars outside Japan, especially in the United States.

At the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion in Washington D.C. in 1993, a panel on “Critical Buddhism” was held, and in 1997, an English book, discussing the problem of “Critical Buddhism” and including English translations of some articles by Hakamaya and myself, was published under the title *Pruning the Bodhi Tree : The Storm over Critical Buddhism [Pruning]* (University of Hawaii Press), the editors of which were Jamie Hubbard and Paul Swanson, both the participants in the panel mentioned above.

Moreover, scholars in East Asian countries such as Korea, Taiwan<sup>(5)</sup> and China<sup>(6)</sup>, have recently shown much interest in “Critical Buddhism.” It is especially noteworthy, and even surprising, that some Korean Buddhist scholars are interested in “Critical Buddhism.” In 1994, a Korean translation of my book *Dependent-arising and Emptiness* was published. In 1999, a series of six seminars on “Critical Buddhism,” entitled “The Critical Examination on Critical Buddhism,” was held by the Research Institute of Tripitaka Koreana in Seoul. At each of the first five seminars, two Korean scholars read papers, commenting on or criticizing “Critical Buddhism,” while at the last seminar I answered their critiques and also criticized Hakamaya’s “Critical Buddhism.”

Thus nowadays “Critical Buddhism” is often discussed by scholars in Buddhist studies<sup>(7)</sup>. When, then, did “Critical Buddhism” begin? And what was its original motive? I consider it to have begun with the publication of Hakamaya’s article “Thoughts on the Ideological Background of Social Discrimination”<sup>(8)</sup> published in 1986, because, in my view, it was the first article which critically linked Buddhist doctrine to social problems. The main theme of the article was

(4) Critiques of Tathāgatagarbha Thought and Critical Buddhism (Matsumoto)

critique of Original Enlightenment thought, which was itself Chinese, Korean and Japanese version of Tathāgatagarbha thought of Indian Buddhism.

However, it is quite important to note that Hakamaya's critique of Original Enlightenment thought was prompted by the problem of social discrimination found in the Sōtō School, to which we belonged. It cannot be denied at present that there have been socially discriminatory practices in the School, one of the biggest traditional Buddhist sects in Japan. More specifically, it is now clear that a variety of discriminatory actions have until recently been carried out by priests of the Sōtō School, exemplified by the discriminatory posthumous Buddhist names given by priests to members of discriminated groups.

Of course, this is not the problem peculiar to the Sōtō School alone. Other traditional Buddhist schools in Japan are not free of the same problem. However, this problem has weighed especially on our Sōtō School because of the so-called Machida Incident<sup>(9)</sup>.

At the Third World Conference on Religion and Peace in Princeton in 1979, Machida Muneo, then the secretary-general of the Sōtō School as well as the president of the Buddhist Federation of Japan, denied the existence of social discrimination against identifiable outcaste groups in present-day Japan. This denial provoked strong protests by the Buraku Liberation League. The Sōtō leadership soon admitted Machida's mistake and issued public apologies. But simple apologies were of no use. Machida and other Sōtō leaders were interrogated and denounced by the Buraku Liberation League at five assemblies, and finally, at the last assembly in 1983, held at the Administrative Headquarters of the Sōtō School, Machida read a statement in which he admitted his personal prejudices and pledged to eliminate all forms of social discrimination in the Sōtō School.

At any rate, I think the Sōtō leadership was then required to perform two tasks. The first was to investigate thoroughly the real state of the discriminatory practices found in the School, and the second was to seek out their ideological background in Buddhist doctrines. It seems to have been for this second purpose that in December 1984 Hakamaya, myself, and other six professors, all members of the Faculty of Buddhism at Komazawa University (originally founded by the

Sōtō School) and all belonging to the Sōtō School, were summoned to the Administrative Headquarters of the Sōtō School and were appointed members of the Second Special Subcommittee of the Committee for the Doctrinal Issues of the Sōtō School, of which the chairman was Okabe Kazuo 岡部和雄.

If my memory serves me correctly, the subject that we were then assigned was to investigate the relationship between social discrimination and the Buddhist doctrine of “karman” as explained in the *Shushōgi* 『修証義』, the most popular sacred text in the Sōtō School. However, our discussions in the Subcommittee went far beyond the topic.

I think it is not improper to state that, when we were summoned to the Administrative Headquarters for the first time in our lives, Hakamaya and I were once again made aware of the fact that we were Buddhists as well as members of the Sōtō School. As far as I was concerned, I had almost forgotten until then that I was a Buddhist and a member of the Sōtō School, so absorbed was I in my own specialty, i.e. Madhyamaka philosophy in India and Tibet. Hakamaya too was a famous scholar of Yogācāra philosophy. Under such circumstances, I felt no urgent need to reflect on what Buddhism is.

What is Buddhism (仏教 Buddhist teaching, the teaching of the Buddha)? To put such a question or to raise such an issue seemed useless or absurd to me, because it seems that such a problem could never be solved from the standpoint of *objective* scholarship. But, confronted with the problem of discrimination found in Buddhism, my view has changed.

Maybe we could have quitted being members of the Sōtō School. If we did not belong to the School, it goes without saying that we would have no responsibility for the discriminatory practices of the Sōtō priests in the past. To be a Buddhist, we thought, was to be responsible for the deeds done by Buddhists and also to be the followers of the teachings of the Buddha, as opposed to non-Buddhist teachings. For this reason, we could not but think about the fundamental differences between Buddhism and non-Buddhism. Thus, I gave up so-called objective scholarship and adopted a *subjective* standpoint. Otherwise, I think I would not have been able to state what Buddhism is.

Anyway, it seems certain that the Subcommittee mentioned above had been

(6) Critiques of Tathāgatagarbha Thought and Critical Buddhism (Matsumoto)

orientated or led by Hakamaya's theory, i.e. critique of Original Enlightenment thought (本覚思想批判). His theory was first revealed at the first meeting of the Subcommittee, and afterwards came to fruition in his article mentioned earlier, i.e. "Thoughts on the Ideological Background of Social Discrimination," which was first read at the Center for Buraku Liberation in October 1985, and later published with a preface added in *The Journal of the Faculty of Buddhism of Komazawa University* (『駒澤大学仏教学部研究紀要』44) in March 1986.

According to my understanding, Hakamaya argued in the article as follows:

1. Original Enlightenment thought is the ideological background of social discrimination.
2. Original Enlightenment thought is not Buddhist.
3. Dogen 道元 (1200-1253), the founder of the Sōtō School, criticized Original Enlightenment thought in the *Bendōwa* 『弁道話』, one of his earliest works.
4. In spite of Dogen's critique of Original Enlightenment thought, the followers of Dogen, i.e. Sōtō priests have been advocating until now Original Enlightenment thought.
5. As a result, a variety of discriminatory practices and incidents have been perpetrated by priests of the Sōtō School.

These arguments by Hakamaya, although they exonerated Dogen from being discriminatory and praised him as a rare philosopher critical of Original Enlightenment thought, provoked vehement controversy among scholars specializing in the Sōtō orthodoxy, because he argued that the central message of Dogen, i.e. his critique of Original Enlightenment thought, had been misunderstood by his followers and that the object of Dogen's critique was conversely being advocated by them. Thus, it follows that, according to Hakamaya, the object of Dogen's critique, i.e. Original Enlightenment thought, is even now being taught as Dogen's teaching by Sōtō priests. If Hakamaya is right, this is an extremely serious problem. So he soon became the central figure in serious controversies such as had been rarely experienced in the modern history of the Sōtō School.

It is also noteworthy that Hakamaya afterwards added two more points to his arguments, as follows:

6. Dogen's critique of Original Enlightenment thought was brought into completion in his *Twelve-Fascicle Shōbōgenzō* (十二卷本『正法眼藏』), written in his later years.
7. Dogen's main message in the *Twelve-Fascicle Shōbōgenzō* was "deep faith in cause and effect" (深信因果).

These points by Hakamaya have also stimulated Dogen studies. But what is the meaning of "Original Enlightenment thought" (本覚思想), considered by Hakamaya to be the ideological background of social discrimination? In the next section, I will accordingly focus on the significance of Original Enlightenment thought and Tathāgatagarbha thought (如来蔵思想).

## II. Original Enlightenment thought and Tathāgatagarbha thought

Original Enlightenment thought is generally explained as the theory that all sentient beings are originally or inherently enlightened. But, in the article mentioned above, Hakamaya explained it as follows:

The idea of "original enlightenment" refers to a fundamental enlightenment that transcends the phenomenal world. All people are by nature primordially endowed with this enlightenment, which exists eternally.

Since the doctrine implies that, at a level preceding awareness, the phenomenal transformations of samsara remain, it is of a single piece with the idea of "eternal mind and perishable phenomena." (*Pruning*, p.344)

However, this explanation is, I think, vague and logically unclear. Hakamaya himself does not seem to have been satisfied with this explanation. Hence he mentions two articles considered by him to clarify the significance of Original Enlightenment thought. One of these articles is "Tibetology and Buddhism" (チベット学と仏教)<sup>(10)</sup> by Yamaguchi Zuihō 山口瑞鳳 in 1984, and the other is "On the One-vehicle Thought of the Śrīmālāsūtra" (勝曼經の一乗思想について)<sup>(11)</sup> by myself in 1983. Accordingly I wish to explain the contents of these two

articles.

First, according to Hakamaya's view, Yamaguchi made clear, in the article mentioned above, the doctrinal difference between Tibetan Buddhism, of which the orthodox position was the doctrine of "emptiness" (sūnyatā), and Chinese Buddhism, mainly based on Tathāgatagarbha thought, and further argued that Dogen's position was rather nearer to that of Tibetan Buddhism. There can at present be no doubt that Yamaguchi's arguments had a great influence on Hakamaya.

Therefore, it seems possible to consider that the original model of Hakamaya's theory that Original Enlightenment thought was criticized by Dogen can be already found in this article by Yamaguchi, because there he made a strict distinction between the doctrine of "emptiness" and Original Enlightenment thought, and ranked Dogen as an advocate of "emptiness."

As will be further explained below, I cannot, at present, accept Hakamaya's theory that Original Enlightenment thought was criticized by Dogen in his *Bendōwa*, nor do I consider Dogen to have been an advocate of "emptiness" thought. But Yamaguchi's critical views on Original Enlightenment thought and Tathāgatagarbha thought were quite important.

Yamaguchi, the greatest authority on Tibetology in Japan, is our mentor and introduced us to the study of Tibetan Buddhism. It seems quite unique among Japanese scholars that he has been, from very early days, in possession of a critical view on Tathāgatagarbha thought. Already in 1973, he stated explicitly that the significance of the so-called Sam ye (bSam yas) debate, generally considered to be held in Tibet around the end of the eighth century A.D., lay in the critique of Tathāgatagarbha thought found in Chinese Buddhism<sup>(12)</sup>. Thus it might be possible to consider that Yamaguchi's critical view on Tathāgatagarbha thought has been inherited by Hakamaya and me.

Second, as for my article mentioned by Hakamaya, he considered my hypothesis of "dhātu-vāda" (locus theory) to be identical with his idea of "Original Enlightenment thought." In fact, I presented the hypothesis for the first time in the said article.

Tathāgatagarbha thought in Mahāyāna Buddhism has been generally

understood on the basis of the passage in the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra* that “ all sentient beings contain a tathāgata<sup>(13)</sup> (tathāgata-garbha, 如来藏 ) ” and the more famous passage in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* that “ all sentient beings possess Buddha-nature (buddha-dhātu, 仏性), ” often interpreted as expressing the Buddhist ideal of social equality<sup>(14)</sup>. However, I understand Tathāgatagarbha thought quite differently.

According to my understanding, the fundamental structure of Tathāgatagarbha thought is nothing other than “ dhātu-vāda ” (locus theory), a neologism of my own. What then is the “ dhātu-vāda ”? It is the theory that the single (eka, sama) existent “ locus ” (dhātu) or basis is the cause that produces the manifold phenomena or “ super-loci ” (dharmāḥ). This is merely my hypothesis concerning the structure of Tathāgatagarbha thought. I also admit the highly problematic character of this hypothesis. But it is to be noted that this hypothesis resulted from my studies of One Vehicle (eka-yāna) theories in the *Śrī mālā-sūtra* and the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, representative works of Tathāgatagarbha thought and Yogācāra thought respectively.

Tathāgatagarbha thought and Yogācāra thought have been considered to be opposed to each other, because it has been understood that the former teaches One Vehicle theory, while the latter admits the reality of Three Vehicles (triyāna). The difference between One Vehicle theory and Three Vehicles theory lies in that the former asserts that all sentient beings can become Buddhas, while the latter admits that some people can never become Buddhas.

However, I think I have shown that Tathāgatagarbha thought and Yogācāra thought have in common the fact that they admit the real existence of a single “ locus ” (dhātu) from which the manifold phenomena are produced. In other words, it can be stated that both Tathāgatagarbha thought and Yogācāra Vijñaptimātratā thought were in fact within the same frame of “ dhātu-vāda, ” which itself was opposed to the “ sūnyatā-vāda ” (emptiness theory) of the Mādhyamikas, who claimed that everything, including the “ locus ” (dhātu), is empty and unreal.

Takasaki Jikidō 高崎直道, the highest authority in Japanese studies of Tathāgatagarbha thought, although denying my thesis that Tathāgatagarbha

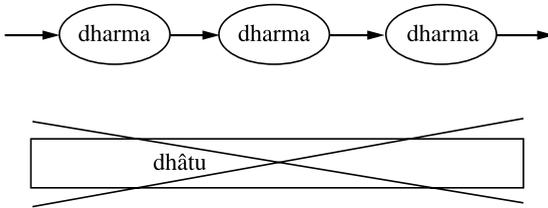
thought is not Buddhism, seems to have partly admitted the validity of my hypothesis of “ dhātu-vāda ” in stating, in his article “ Thoughts on Dhātu-vāda and Recent Trends in Buddhist Studies, ” as follows:

I would like to have a brief look at Matsumoto’s proposed neologism *dhātu-vāda* as pointing to the specific structure of the doctrine of *tathāgata-garbha*. *Tathāgata-garbha* thought and Buddhist Vijñaptimātratāvāda thought in many ways stand opposed to each other. For instance, the doctrine of *tathāgata-garbha* teaches the practice and attainment of a single vehicle (ekayāna), while the Vijñaptimātratāvāda teaches three vehicles (tri-yāna). Even so, I find the term *dhātu-vāda* a rather accurate expression of the common structure found in both. In this sense, it is a useful tool for discussing that question. (*Pruning*, p.315)

Thus it is evident that the “ dhātu-vāda ” hypothesis has played a central role in “ Critical Buddhism. ” In my article “ Tathāgatagarbha Thought Is Not Buddhism ” in 1986 mentioned above, the hypothesis was employed to deduce my thesis. In order to explain more clearly the doctrinal dimensions of “ Critical Buddhism, ” I would like here to clarify the main theme of the article. It consists of the following three sections:

- A. Explanations of what I consider to be Buddhism
- B. Explanations of what I consider to be Tathāgatagarbha thought
- C. Explanations arguing that Buddhism and Tathāgatagarbha thought are not identical but contradictory to each other

In the first section (A), I stated that I considered Buddhism to be the theory of “ dependent arising ” (pratītyasamutpāda, 緣起). However, to consider this theory to be the central doctrine of Buddhism represents a rather general understanding. My point is that I interpreted the theory not as meaning the spatial and simultaneous interdependence (相互依存) of all things (物), which was advocated by Hua-yen (華嚴) philosophers in Chinese Buddhism, but as signifying the temporal and causal sequence of properties (dharmāḥ, 法, super-loci) without any basis (dhātu, locus) supporting these properties. My interpretation of “ dependent arising ” is also shown by the following chart:



In the same section, I also argued that this kind of temporal “dependent arising” was set forth in the theory of “twelve-membered dependent arising” (十二支縁起) as explained at the beginning of the Mahāvagga in the *Vinaya*.

However, the following statement of mine seems to have been misunderstood by scholars.

I would like to *believe* that Śākyamuni had attained Enlightenment, having considered the “twelve-membered dependent arising” in regular and reverse orders, as stated in the *Vinaya*, Mahāvagga. (*Pruning*, p.165)

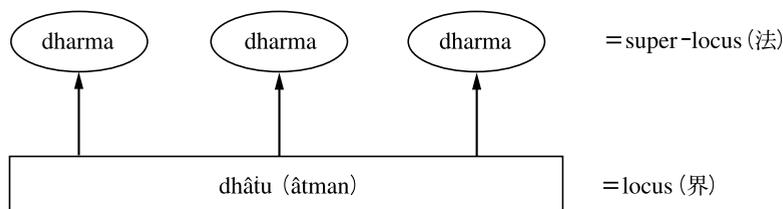
Nor do I consider the Mahāvagga’s account of the Buddha’s Enlightenment to be expressing a historical fact, as is shown by the following statement in my next article “On Dependent Arising” (『縁起について』) in 1986:

I, too, admit the theory of “twelve-membered dependent arising” was established later. Nevertheless, I assert for two reasons that Śākyamuni awakened to “twelve-membered dependent arising.” The first is to oppose to the standpoint of objective scholarship, or to the idea that scholarship must be objective, and to oppose to the idea of “suspension of final judgements.” The second is to reject explicitly the tendency to interpret Buddhist teaching not as the theory of “dependent arising” but as the theory of “existence” (有) or “ātman” (我). [DE, p.22]

Therefore, the word “believe” in the first statement quoted immediately above indicates that my interpretation was subjective and intentional.

In the second section(B) of the article in question, I explained the structure of “dhātu-vāda” by means of the following chart:

(12) Critiques of Tathāgatagarbha Thought and Critical Buddhism (Matsumoto)



Here “ dhātu, ” a derivative noun from the verbal root “ dhā ” (to place), meaning “a place or locus on which something is placed, is the locus (L), while “ dharma, ” a derivative noun from the verbal root “ dhṛ ” (to support), meaning “ what is supported by something, ” is a “ super-locus ” (S). Further I made six points concerning the structure of “ dhātu-vāda ”:

- (1) “ Locus ” (dhātu) is the basis for “ super-loci. ”
- (2) “ Locus ” the cause which gives rise to “ super-loci. ”
- (3) “ Locus ” is one, “ super-loci ” are many.
- (4) “ Locus ” is real, “ super-loci ” are not real.
- (5) “ Locus ” is the essence (ātman) of “ super-loci. ”
- (6) “ Super-loci ” are not ultimately real, but have some reality or have the ground of reality in that they have arisen from the “ locus ” and have the “ locus ” as their essence.

As for point (5), I pointed out that the “ locus ” (dhātu) was called “ ātman ” in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* and the *Śrīmālā-sūtra*. For example, in the first Chinese translation of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, there are the following passages.

- (a) The “ Buddha ” means “ ātman, ” and the “ dharma-body ” means “ eternity. ” 「彼佛者是我義、法身是常義」(Taisho, 12, 862a)
- (b) You should know that “ ātman ” is a substance (dravya), and that “ ātman ” is eternal, unchangeable and imperishable, and that “ ātman ” is a good quality (guṇa), and that “ ātman ” is a lord (īśvara).  
「当知我者是实、我者常住、非变異法、非磨滅法。我者是德、我者自在」(Taisho, 12, 863a)
- (c) You should know that the “ Tathāgata ” is eternal, unchangeable and

imperishable.

「当知如来常在、非变异法、非磨滅法」(Taisho, 12, 865a)

Thus it is evident that “dhātu-vāda,” the fundamental structure of Tathāgatagarbha thought, is nothing other than “ātman” theory of Hinduism.

On this point, Sallie King, in her article “The Doctrine of Buddha-nature Is Impeccably Buddhist,” criticized my interpretation as follows:

My first conclusion, then, is that the assertion concerning Buddha-nature thought as a form of *dhātu-vāda* is false, for Buddha-nature is a soteriological device and is ontologically neutral. (*Pruning*, p.190)

However, reflecting on the three passages quoted above, I cannot consider that Buddha-nature (the “Buddha” or the “Tathāgata”) is expressed there as something “ontologically neutral.” It seems quite optimistic to take the view that the idea of “ātman” can never be substantialist so long as it is stated in Buddhist literature. Even Takasaki admits that a common theoretical structure is found in Tathāgatagarbha thought and monistic philosophy of Hinduism, when he writes as follows:

The idea that *tathāgata-garbha* thought has much in common with the teachings of the mainstream of Indian thought as represented by the Upaniṣads and Vedānta philosophy is a point I have often made myself. (*Pruning*, p.314)

To state my understanding, Tathāgatagarbha thought was a Buddhist version of Hindu monism, formed by the influence of Hinduism gradually introduced into Buddhism, especially after the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Therefore I think it is inadequate to consider that the idea of “ātman” is not substantialist when it is stated in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, while it is substantialist when expressed in the *Bhagavadgītā*.

As for the point (6) mentioned above, it concerns with the problem of social discrimination, because it provides a theoretical foundation for supporting discrimination by entrenching the actual differences between the “super-loci.” Here we can find the logical ground for discriminatory theories such as “fixed difference between the five lineages” (五姓各別), which denies the possibility of attaining Buddhahood by all sentient beings, and even for the caste system in

Hinduism.

Thus the seemingly contradictory theses that “ all sentient beings possess Buddha-nature ” and that “ the people called icchantika can never attain Buddhahood, ” both explicitly stated in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, can be harmonized within the structure of “ dhātu-vāda, ” because, in this structure, the oneness (ekatva) or the equality (sāmya) of the “ locus ” does not serve to eradicate the plurality or the differences of the “ super-loci, ” but rather acts as the basic support for preserving that plurality. Clearly this structure is discriminatory.

It is also noteworthy that the message of “ equality ” (sāmya) is repeatedly upheld in the *Bhagavadgītā*. However, it seems doubtful that we can consider the message to be an ideal for fighting against social discrimination, because, in the *Gītā*, we have the following verses:

(d) The system of four classes (cāturvarṇya) was created by Me (Kṛṣṇa).

cāturvarṇyaṃ mayā sṛṣṭam. (IV, 13a)

(e) Sages see equally (sama-darśin) a learned and disciplined Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog and an outcaste (śvapāka).

vidyāvinayasampanne brāhmaṇe gavi hastini

śuni caiva śvapāke ca paṇḍitāḥsamadarśinaḥ. (V, 18)

In passage (e), the existence of “ outcaste ” people is admitted. The English word “ outcaste ” is Radhakrishnan’s translation<sup>(15)</sup> of “ śvapāka, ” literally meaning “ one who cooks dogs. ” Because these “ outcaste ” people are mentioned after “ a dog ” in the verse, it seems evident that “ outcaste people ” are here considered to be inferior even to dogs. By this passage it is shown that in the structure of “ dhātu-vāda, ” the message of “ equality ” does not, I think, eradicate actual discrimination, but rather supports it.

In the final section (C) of my article in question, I argued that the theory of “ dependent arising, ” considered by me to have been taught by the Buddha, can be meaningful only when it is understood as antithetical to the theory of a single locus (dhātu) of the manifold world, i.e. “ dhātu-vāda. ” Therefore, I concluded that Tathāgatagarbha thought, being a form of “ dhātu-vāda, ” is not Buddhism

(仏教).

### III. Critiques of Critical Buddhism

Lastly, my critique of “ Critical Buddhism ” has two aspects. The first is my critique of Hakamaya’s “ Critical Buddhism, ” while the second is self-critique or self-denial.

In order to state my critique of Hakamaya’s theories, I must explain my hypothesis concerning the two types of Tathāgatagarbha theory, i.e. “ Buddha-nature Immanence theory ” (仏性内在論) and “ Buddha-nature Manifestation theory ” (仏性顕在論). The former corresponds to Indian Tathāgatagarbha theory, itself Buddhist version of the “ ātman ” theory of Hinduism, according to which Buddha-nature (or “ tathāgata-garbha ” in the terminology of Buddhist texts later than the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra*) is considered to dwell within the *bodies* of sentient beings, as was stated in the first Chinese translation of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* as follows:

(f) All sentient beings possess Buddha-nature within their bodies.

「一切衆生皆有仏性、在於身中」 (Taisho, 12, 881b)

The second theory, i.e. “ Buddha-nature Manifestation theory ” is Chinese development of Indian Tathāgatagarbha thought, according to which Buddha-nature is already manifested as all phenomenal existences, including non-sentient (無情) beings such as trees and stones. In other words, phenomenal things (事), as such, are regarded as Buddha-nature itself, and are, as it were, totally absolutized. This extreme type of Tathāgatagarbha thought was produced evidently under the influence of Chinese Taoism.

It seems necessary to understand that both types of Tathāgatagarbha theory have been taught by the masters of Chinese Ch’an Buddhism. The most confident advocate of “ Buddha-nature Manifestation theory ” seems to have been Hui-chung 慧忠 (-- 776), because, according to the *Tsu-T’ang chi* 『祖堂集』<sup>(16)</sup>, he is reported to have stated as follows:

(g) Non-sentient things such as walls and tiles are all the mind of the old Buddha.

「牆壁瓦礫、無情之物、並是古仏心」

On the other hand, Indian type of Tathāgatagarbha theory, i.e. “ Buddha-nature Immanence theory ” was also taught by Ch’an masters such as Tao-hsin 道信, Hung-jen 弘忍, Shen-hsiu 神秀, Hui-neng 慧能, Shen-hui 神会, Ma-tsu 馬祖, Lin-chi 臨濟, Tsun-mi 宗密, and so on. For example, the *Hsiu-hsin yao-lun* 『修心要論』<sup>(17)</sup> and the *Kuan-hsin lun* 『觀心論』<sup>(18)</sup> have the following passage

(h) There is the diamond-like Buddha-nature in the bodies of sentient beings.

「衆生身中、有金剛仏性」

Thus, it is evident that both types of Tathāgatagarbha theory were taught in Chinese Ch’an Buddhism. Which then was the position of Dogen in his *Bendōwa*? Hakamaya argued that Dogen criticized Original Enlightenment thought in the *Bendōwa*, or that the object of Dogen’s critique there was Original Enlightenment thought. But Hakamaya never discussed Dogen’s own position in the *Bendōwa*.

In my understanding, the object of Dogen’s critique there, generally known as the theory that “ mind is permanent, body is impermanent ” (心常相滅), is “ Buddha-nature Immanence theory, ” while his own position there was but an extreme type of Tathāgatagarbha thought, i.e. “ Buddha-nature Manifestation theory. ”

I consider that the philosophical position of Dogen in his earlier period, i.e. before his stay in Kamakura (1247-1248), was “ Buddha-nature Manifestation theory, ” as is clearly shown by the famous passage in the Buddha-nature fascicle (『仏性』卷) of the *Shōbōgenzō* 『正法眼蔵』<sup>(19)</sup>

(i) Everything is Buddha-nature.

「悉有は仏性なり」

However, it is quite noteworthy that his position had changed after his return from Kamakura. Dogen began to emphasize the idea of “ deep faith in cause and effect ” (深信因果), as was pointed out by Hakamaya, and even to criticize “ Buddha-nature Manifestation theory, ” which itself had been Dogen’s former position<sup>(20)</sup>. But I think Dogen was not entirely free from Tathāgatagarbha ways of thinking even in his final days. Anyway, it seems evident that we can no longer accept Hakamaya’s claim that Dogen criticized Original Enlightenment

thought in the *Bendōwa*.

Hakamaya, at first, uncritically praised Dogen as a rare critic of Original Enlightenment thought. After my critique of his understanding of Dogen was published, Hakamaya suddenly left the Sōtō School in 1993, and the object of his praise seems to have gradually shifted from Dogen to Honen 法然 (1133-1212), the main founder of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism. In his recent book *Honen and Myōe* 『法然と明恵』 published in 1998, Hakamaya characterized the philosophical position of both Honen and Shan-tao 善導 (613-681) as “Other Power theory” (『他力主義』) and extolled the theory as “the orthodox theory of Buddhism” (『仏教の正統説』).

This interpretation of his I could not but criticize in detail<sup>(21)</sup>. It must be noted that Shan-tao never used the term “Other Power” (他力)<sup>(22)</sup>, although the term had been introduced into Chinese Pure Land Buddhism by Tañ-luan 曇鸞 (476-542), a very influential Tathāgatagarbha thinker in the history of Chinese Buddhism<sup>(23)</sup>. Thus, from my viewpoint, Hakamaya seems to have fallen into logical confusion, because he expressed, by emphasizing “Other Power theory,” his interpretation of Pure Land Buddhism in favor of Tathāgatagarbha thought.

It might be the case that Hakamaya has not fully understood the meaning of “criticism.” His thesis that “criticism alone is Buddhism” seems meaningless if the object of criticism is not clearly shown. Tsong kha pa (1357-1419), in his *Lam rim chen mo*<sup>(24)</sup>, stressed the importance of correctly recognizing the object of negation (dgag bya). He considered that we cannot negate anything so long as the object of negation is not correctly recognized. In this respect, Hakamaya’s arguments, as a whole, seem to lack a correct and logical recognition of what is being negated or criticized.

In my opinion, the essence of criticism lies in self-criticism or self-denial. According to the old Upaniṣadic literature, the “ātman” or self was considered to lie in the space (ākāśa) within one’s heart (hṛdaya). But I think even if a person denies the existence of “ātman” within one’s heart, it does not follow that he really understands Buddhist teaching of “no self” (anātman). Rather, only by ceaselessly doubting and denying one’s own thought, attitude and existence itself, can one be “no self.”

This very process of repeatedly criticizing and denying one's own self seems to represent the "religious time" (宗教的時間)<sup>(25)</sup> expressed by the theory of "dependent arising." Thus, by criticizing or denying one's self, and asserting positively "dependent arising," one can, I think, be a Buddhist.

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DE = *Dependent Arising and Emptiness* 『縁起と空』, S. Matsumoto, Daizō Shuppan, Tokyo, 1989.

CZ = *Critical Studies of Zen Thought* 『禅思想の批判的研究』, do., Daizō Shuppan, Tokyo, 1994.

TBP = *Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy* 『チベット仏教哲学』, do., Daizō Shuppan, Tokyo, 1997.

TD = *Treatises on Dogen's Thought* 『道元思想論』, do., Daizō Shuppan, Tokyo, 2000.

THS = *Treatises on the Thoughts of Honen and Shinran* 『法然親鸞思想論』, do., Daizō Shuppan, Tokyo, 2001.

(1) Cf. *Pruning*, pp. 165-173.

(2) Cf. *Pruning*, pp.360-363.

(3) Cf. CZ, Chapter V.

(4) Cf. CZ, Chapter I; *Pruning*, pp.242-250.

(5) My article "Tathāgatagarbha Thought is not Buddhism" was translated into Chinese in 1998 by Lui Kevin 呂凱文 in *Dharma Light Monthly* 法光, No. 109. Lin Chenkuo 林鎮国 not only contributed his article "Metaphysics, Suffering, and Liberation" to *Pruning* (pp.298-313) but also discussed "Critical Buddhism" in his book *Emptiness and Modernity* 『空性與現代』 (Taipei, 1999).

(6) Chinese translation of my book *Dependent-arising and Emptiness* (DE) is now in press.

(7) Cf. Joseph S. O Leary, "The Hermeneutics of Critical Buddhism," *The Eastern Buddhist*, 31-2, 1998, pp.278-294; Jacqueline Stone, "Some Reflections on Critical Buddhism," *Japanese Journal Religious Studies*, 26, 1999, pp.159-188; Steven Heine, "After the Storm: Matsumoto Shiro's Transition from "Critical Buddhism" to "Critical Theology", " *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 28,2001, pp.133-146.

(8) Cf. *Pruning*, pp.339-355.

(9) In writing the following explanation, I mainly rely on the following article.: William Bodiford, "Zen and the Art of Religious Prejudice: Efforts to Reform a Tradition of Social Discrimination," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 23, pp.1-28.

(10) *Journal of Buddhist Studies*, Komazawa University, 15, pp.30-53

- (11) Cf. DE, chapter VII.
- (12) Cf. Yamaguchi Zuihō, “Tibetan Buddhism and Kim Hva-shang of Silla” 『チベット仏教と新羅の金和尚』, *Studies of Buddhism in Silla* 『新羅仏教研究』 Sankibō Busshorin, Tokyo, 1973, p.36, n.113; CZ, chapter I.
- (13) Cf. Michael Zimmermann, “Tathāgatagarbhasūtra: Its Basic Structure and Relation to the Lotus Sutra,” Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University, 2, 1999, pp.149-150. Zimmermann criticized my interpretation of the term “tathāgata-garbha” as “containers of a tathāgata.” His criticism seems valid. But I would like to postpone my final judgement for the time being. Anyway, the publication of Zimmermann’s Ph. D. dissertation, a thorough study of the Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra, is eagerly anticipated. 【Cf. M. Zimmermann, *A Buddha Within, The Tathāgatagarbhasūtra, The Earliest Exposition of the Buddha-Nature Teaching in India*, The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology, Soka University, Tokyo, 2002】
- (14) The Sōtō priest Uchiyama Gudō 内山愚童, who was executed in 1911 for his role in the “High Treason Incident,” considered this passage to be expressing Buddhist ideal of social equality. Cf. Brian Victoria, *Zen at War*, Weatherhill, 1997, p.41.
- (15) Cf. S. Radhakrishnan, *The Bhagavadgītā*, George Allen & Unwin, p.181.
- (16) 中文出版社, 1972, p.61a.
- (17) The text by Tanaka Ryōshō 田中良昭, *Annual Report of The Zen Institute*, Komazawa University, 2, 1991, p.37.
- (18) The text by Tanaka Ryōshō, *The Journal of the Faculty of Buddhism*, Komazawa University, 44, 1986, p.49.
- (19) The edition by Ōkubo Dōshū 大久保道舟, Chikuma Shobō, 1971, p.14.
- (20) Cf. TD, pp.53-68.
- (21) Cf. THS, chapter II.
- (22) Cf. THS, pp.73-75.
- (23) Cf. TD, pp.607-608, n.18; THS, pp.203-205.
- (24) Cf. Peking ed., kha, 10a-b; TBP, pp.292-294.
- (25) Cf. DE, pp.15-36.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Mr. Rolf W. Giebel, who took the trouble to check my English.

[Public lecture at the Divinity School, the University of Chicago, May 2, 2001]