

DŌGEN AND THE *LOTUS SUTRA*¹⁾

Kagamishima Genryū

The *Lotus Sutra* is the scripture most frequently cited in Dōgen's writings. Among all the sutras, the *Lotus* was the one that Dōgen can be said to have esteemed the most. A group of five waka in *Sanshō dōei* 傘松道詠 introduced by the prefatory note "Reciting the *Lotus*" and a passage in the tenth fascicle of *Eihei kōroku* 永平広録 entitled "Mountain Hermitage" that records the joys of solitude and reciting the *Lotus* suggest the depth of Dōgen's devotion to this sutra.

The five poems that appear in *Sanshō dōei* prefaced by the heading "Reciting the *Lotus*" are as follows:

Yomosugara
Hinemosu ni nasu
Nori no michi
Mina kono kyō no
koe to tokoro to

The dharma practices
Of night
And day
Are all the voice
And occasion of this sutra.

Tani no hibiki
Mine ni nakizaru
Taedae ni
Tada kono kyō wo
Toku to koso kike

The valley stream echoes,
Monkeys on the mountain cry
Faintly,
But these are heard
Only as setting forth this sutra.

Kono kyō no
Kokoro wo ereba
Yo no naka no
Urikau koe mo
Hō wo toku ka wa

Once one grasps
The essence of this sutra,
Even the haggling
Of the market place
Expounds the Dharma.

Mine no iro	Shadows on the peak
Tani no hibiki mo	And the echo of the valley
Minanagara	stream
Waga Shakamuni no	Are, in themselves,
Koe to sugata to	The voice and form
	Of Śākamuni.

Yotsu no uma	Those who ride on neither
Mitsu no kuruma ni	One of the four horses nor
Noranu hito	In one of the three vehicles,
Makoto no michi wo	How are they to attain
Ikade shiramashi	To the true path?

Again, in *Eihei kōroku*, under the heading “Mountain Hermitage,”
Dōgen reflects on the *Lotus Sutra* in the following fashion:

幾悦山居尤寂寞。因斯常誦法華經。專精樹下何憎愛。月色可看雨可聽。

How I enjoy the serenity of life in the mountains.

To this I owe my having always been able to read the *Lotus Sutra*.

As a forest ascetic concentrating on self-purification, how can thoughts of
hate and love arise?

Here I can look at the moon and listen to the rain.

As the following passages show, Dōgen spoke fervently of the
Lotus Sutra in *Shōbōgenzō* 正法眼藏 as well:

In the course of one's life, one should make a copy of the *Lotus Sutra*.
Whether this copy be hand written or a wood block print, it ought to be
preserved. It should be worshipfully venerated and offerings of flowers,
incense, votive lamps, food, drink and vestments should be made to it.
And while performing one's devotions one should ever be bowing low before
it. (*Shōbōgenzō*, Dōshin 正法眼藏、道心)

Those who, urging themselves on, receive and keep the *Lotus Sutra*, mem-
orize, practice and copy it, will thereby see Śākamuni Buddha. (*Shōbō-
genzō*, Kenbutsu 正學眼藏、見仏)

Among the various sutras taught by the Great Teacher Śākamuni, the
Lotus Sutra is king; the other sutras and sundry dharmas are but subjects
and retainers of the *Lotus*. (*Shōbōgenzō*, Kiesanbō 正法眼藏、歸依三寶)

Passages such as these leave no doubt that Dōgen highly regarded the *Lotus Sutra*. For this reason, when in the eighth month of Kenchō 5 (1253) Dōgen realized that, despite the medical treatment he was receiving at the home of his lay disciple, Kakunen 覚念, in Takatsujinishi at Tōin, his condition was hopeless, he quietly recited from “The Supernatural Powers of the Thus Come One” chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* while performing *kinhin* (walking zen). The passage he chose was:

Whether...in a garden, or in a grove, or at the foot of a tree, or in a saṃgha-cell, or the home of a white-clad layman, or in a palace, or on mountains, or in valleys, or in open fields, there, in every case, is to be erected a stūpa, to which offerings are to be made. What is the reason? Be it known that that place is a Platform of the Path..., that the Buddhas there have achieved anuttarasamyaksambodhi; that the Buddhas there have turned the Dharmawheel; that the Buddhas there have achieved parinirvāṇa.⁽²⁾

Kenzeiki 建折記 records that as he recited these lines, he inscribed them on a pillar closeby and then named the room The Hermitage of the Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma.

In *Hokke yakuwa jinsekishō* 法華訳和尋跡抄 (An Inquiry into Japanese Translations of the *Lotus Sutra*), published in 1642 by Nichiei 日叡 (1572–1642), a monk-scholar of the Nichiren Sect during the Edo period, the oldest extant Japanese translation of the *Lotus Sutra* was said to be a work referred to as *Hōin kanabon* 法印可奈梵. *Hōin* is a Japanese Buddhist term for a monk of the highest level. The *hōin* indicated in the title of this work was believed to have been Dōgen. The existence of an oral tradition of this sort outside the sect that Dōgen had himself founded underscores just how devout a follower of the *Lotus Sutra* he had been.

If, as these references indicate, Dōgen’s having felt especially close to the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra* is accepted as an undeniable fact, then two questions need to be posed. One concerns the extent to which the *Lotus Sutra* influenced Dōgen’s system of thought;

the other, Dōgen's relation to the Tendai doctrine of the dharma of original enlightenment.

As to the first problem, we have already noted that Dōgen has written;

Among the various sutras taught by the Great Teacher Śākamuni, the *Lotus Sutra* is king; the other sutras and sundry dharmas are as subjects and retainers of the *Lotus*. (*Shōbōgenzō*, Kie sanbō)

Taken by itself, this passage bears examining together with these written by Dōgen's contemporary, Nichiren 日蓮 (1222-1282).

The only king of the sutras is the *Lotus*. It (alone) is the correct teaching of Śākamuni and the true teaching of the myriad Buddhas of the three realms and ten directions. (*Kanjin honzonshō* 観心本尊鈔)

In the world at large, although society is made up of separate individuals, only one can be the king. Should there be two, the country would no longer be at peace. Were there to be two heads of a family, that family would surely break-up. And for the sutras, would it not also be the same? (*Hōonshō* 報恩鈔)

Just as Dōgen had looked upon the *Lotus Sutra* as the great king of all the sutras, so too did Nichiren; but, in addition, Nichiren implied acceptance of the Tendai sectarian view of complete reliance on the *Lotus Sutra*.

With respect to this view, Dōgen, despite having piously called the *Lotus* the Great King of the Sutras, and notwithstanding his having kept a copy of the *Lotus* at hand, firmly believed that a school of Buddhism ought not to be based on a scriptural source — a matter I have discussed elsewhere.³⁾ Dōgen clearly stated this position in the seventh fascicle of *Eihei kōroku*:

所以須知仏法之中有法華・華嚴等。非法華・華嚴等各各之中有各各之仏法也。

Therefore you should know that while the *Lotus*, *Kegon*, and so on, are included among the teachings of the Buddha, the *Lotus*, *Kegon*, etc., are not themselves separate Buddhist teachings.

What this means is that, when, in explaining the teachings of

Buddha, one makes use of the *Lotus*, one discourses in accord with it, and that, when one employs the *Avatamsaka-sutra*, one teaches in accord with that scripture. Yet the teaching of any particular scripture is not that of Buddhism in its entirety, which cannot be confined to any one sutra or commentary. Thus, for Dōgen, no matter how frequently he may have cited the *Lotus Sutra*, it was never used as an authoritative scriptural source. Never was it a matter of the *Lotus* having been singled out and the other sutras rejected. If the matter of rejection had been considered, then all the sutras, including the *Lotus*, would have been rejected; and if acceptance, then all the sutras, including those of the Hinayana and its accompanying vinaya rules, would have been accepted. Accordingly, the *Lotus Sutra* should not be seen as occupying the highest place in Dōgen's system of thought. But as I have written about this subject elsewhere, I will touch on it no further here⁴⁾.

The next problem that needs to be treated concerns the relation of Dōgen with the teaching of the dharma of original enlightenment. I would like to examine this matter here in connection with Dōgen's manner of quoting the *Lotus Sutra*.

To begin with, what can be observed about the *Lotus Sutra* quoted in Dōgen's works is that the citations of it number as many as fifty-one items⁵⁾. Naturally, the fifty-one citations of the *Lotus Sutra* that I have identified are those that are clearly recognizable as such in that they are introduced by expressions like "according to the Sutra," or "Śākamuni Buddha has said." Of these quotations, only three are clearly identified as having been taken from the *Lotus Sutra*. Those passages that, while clearly attributable to the *Lotus Sutra*, are better understood as elements of ancient Zen paradigms or have become assimilated into the substance of Dōgen's writing or are virtually indistinct from Dōgen's manner of expression have not been included. By way of example, there is this passage in *Shōbō-*

genzō, Hokketenhokke 正法眼藏、法華轉法華 :

“Within the buddhalands of the ten directions,” “there is only the Dharma of the Lotus”. For this reason, all the Buddhas of the ten directions in the past, present, and future, the assembly of Buddhas of perfect enlightenment, employ the Dharma of the Lotus and are made to serve the Dharma of the Lotus. This state is neither one of backsliding nor of being led astray; it is attained through the original practice of the bodhisattva. (what this practice signifies is) the state of **“profound and incalculable wisdom of the Buddhas, it is that serene samādhi hard to understand and hard to enter into.”** (This condition whereby the Buddha both employs the Dharma of the Lotus, and is being made to serve the Dharma of the Lotus can be seen) in the example of Mañjuśrī who, in the Ocean Buddha-land, has, **“as only a Buddha and a Buddha,” “perfected the suchness of the marks”** (of this Dharma). Or again, (it can be seen) in the case of Śākamuni Buddha, who appeared in this world because he realized that (in this age), **“only I know its marks (i. e., the marks of the subtle Dharma) as do the Buddhas (of other ages) in the ten directions.”** As the sutra says: **“I and the Buddhas of the ten directions are the only ones who can know these things.”** (Again, this state) is that occasion whereby the Buddhas **“wish to cause the beings to hear (the Buddha knowledge and insight) and to demonstrate (that knowledge and insight to the beings); (it is the occasion whereby the Buddhas cause the beings) to understand and to enter into (the path of the Buddha’s knowledge and insight).”**

The phrases and passages which appear in boldface and quotation marks in this passage represent separate citations from the “Expedient Devices” chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*. While this translation may not adequately convey his mastery of the *Lotus* idiom, it may still suggest the canorous ease with which Dōgen would cite the *Lotus Sutra*. Yet, as words and passages used in this way constitute the flesh of the *Shōbōgenzō* prose style, it would seem better to consider them as a unique element of Dōgen’s writing rather than as discreet citations. Were passages such as these to be added to the list of quotations I have identified, the number of citations from the *Lotus*

Sutra would be enormous and the trouble involved in extracting them unendurable.

As the reader may have noticed from the *Shōbōgenzō* passages cited already, those chapters from among the twenty-eight of the *Lotus Sutra* that are not cited are: "Medicinal Herbs," "Bestowal of Prophecy," "Parable of the Conjured City," "Fortitude," "Welling Up out of the Earth," "The Merits of Appropriate Joy," "The Merits of the Dharma Preacher," "The Bodhisattva Never Disparaging," "Entrustment," "The Bodhisattva Fine Sound," "The Gateway to Everywhere of the Bodhisattva He Who Observes the Sounds of the World," "Dhāraṇī"⁶⁾ —in total, twelve chapters. Still, of those chapters not cited much importance was attached to "The Gateway to Everywhere of the Bodhisattva He Who Observes the Sounds of the World." This is known because *Shōbōgenzō*, Kankin 正法眼藏、看經 mentions that along with *Vairacchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra*, and "Comfortable Conduct" chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, it was one of the texts that was read silently in the Monks' Hall. It is also known because *Chiji Shingi* 知事法規 lists "The Gateway to Everywhere of the Bodhisattva He Who Observes the Sounds of the World" and "Comfortable Conduct" chapters of the *Lotus Sutra* and *Vaira sūtra* as scriptural texts chanted to the gods of the kitchen. But while the importance or insignificance of a chapter of the *Lotus* to Dōgen can not always be said to depend on the frequency of its citation in his work, the conspicuously high number of quotations made from the "Expedient Means" chapter is rightly considered as indicating an especially great fondness for this chapter.

Although up to this point I have tried to map the salient features of the *Lotus Sutra* as it appears in Dōgen's work, I would like now to treat the question as to how the *Lotus Sutra* was quoted. To begin with, the *Lotus Sutra* as cited in Dōgen's work was almost always quoted exactly. In part this was because a great many of the

citations were short phrases. Nonetheless, among the citations of the *Lotus* that were made, there were some that altered the meaning of the original text. An example of this practice appears in *Shōbōgenzō*, Arakan 正法眼藏、阿羅漢。

It was said of old: We now are true arhants, taking the voice of the Buddha Path and causing all to hear it.

This was a quotation from the “Belief and Understanding” chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*. In the original, the passage read:

We now

Are truly voice-hearers,

Taking the voice of the Buddha Path

And causing all to hear it. (p.98)

In this passage Dōgen replaced the term “voice-hearers” with “arhants.” Actually, as the verse following this one in the original read:

We now

Are true arhants,

Since among the various worlds’

Gods, men, Māras, and Brahmās,

(Everywhere in their midst,

We are entitled to receive offerings.) (p.98)

this citation can be thought of as Dōgen’s joining of the two verses.

Then, there appears this verse in *Shōbōgenzō*, Juki 正法眼藏、授記:
(Each) in turn shall become a Buddha confirming prophecies, each on his successor.

This was probably based on the following verse found in the “Receipt of Prophecy by Five Hundred Disciples” chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*:

The five hundred bhikṣus

Shall in turn become Buddhas

Identically named Universally Lustrous.

They shall confer prophecies, each on his successor. (pp.163-4)

In citing this verse, Dōgen omitted the third line and rewrote the last with a few different characters not found in the original but which nonetheless conveyed the same meaning. Finally, in *Shōbō-*

genzō, Gyōbutsu igi 正法眼藏、行仏威儀, the Buddha was quoted as saying:

“If they preach this scripture, they shall then, on that account, see me.

(And if) they can preach it to even one person *that* is difficult.”

This quotation can be traced to two passages in “The Apparition of the Jeweled Stūpa” chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*. The first sentence originated in the following verse:

If they only preach this scripture,

They shall then, on that account, see me,

The Buddha Many Jewels,

And the magically conjured Buddhas. (pp.190-1)

And the second was derived from a passage separated from the one given above by twenty-five lines:

After my extinction,

If one can hold this scripture

And preach it to even one person,

That is difficult. (p.192)

In essence, Dōgen has joined elements of both verses. But in so doing he changed the meaning of the word “me,” which in the original referred to the Buddha Many Jewels and, by implication, the magically conjured Buddhas, to indicate Śākamuni Buddha.

The examples given represent the alterations Dōgen made in quoting the *Lotus Sutra*. Of the fifty-one citations from this scripture, changes were effected in only the two or three instances discussed above; all the other citations of the text were accurate. But while Dōgen may have quoted the *Lotus* accurately, the meaning he ascribed to a passage may not necessarily agree with that of the original. In fact, Dōgen was more likely to read, interpret and use the *Lotus Sutra* in accord with his own point of view than to do so in accord with the standpoint of the sutra itself. For this reason, the problem involved is not what the meaning of a passage cited from the *Lotus Sutra* was in the original, but rather how Dōgen interpreted

it, why he found it necessary to change the interpretation and what system of thought lay behind the interpretive changes that were made. I would like to examine these points by way of the following two examples.

The first is taken from *Shōbōgenzō*, Sangai yuishin, 正法眼藏、三界唯心 in which the following passage from “The Life-Span of the Thus Come One” chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* was quoted:

The Great Teacher Śākamuni has said, “Not in the manner of the triple sphere does he view the triple sphere.”

The passage was quoted exactly as it appeared in the original and, for that reason, can be said to be faithful to the *Lotus*. But actually, in this instance, Dōgen was only being faithful to the formal aspects of citation. This is because while he accurately quoted the passage, he read the Chinese characters in a way that yielded a meaning not supported in the original. In the *Lotus Sutra*, this passage in context reads:

The thus Come One in full accord with Reality knows and sees the marks of the triple sphere.... Not in the manner of the triple sphere does he view the triple sphere. (p.239)

Here the intention was to distinguish the Buddha’s view of the world from that of ordinary man. Dōgen, however, cited this passage in order to support a meaning exactly opposite that expressed in the original:

It is just like the triple sphere *views* the triple sphere. Any view that is something other than the triple sphere is not correct. Sometimes a three-sphere’s view of the triple sphere is called an old formulation (i.e. illusion), whereas sometimes it is taken as a new conception (i.e. enlightenment). The old formulation is *viewing*-the-triple-sphere and the new conception (too) is *viewing*-the-triple-sphere. For this reason the Buddha has said, “there is no better view than that of the triple sphere’s *viewing* of the triple sphere.” This *viewing* is the triple sphere and the triple sphere is just the *viewing*⁷⁾

Because Dōgen chose to read the quotation attributed to the Buddha in this fashion, commentators have adjusted the order and meaning of the characters of the original so as to support Dōgen's interpretation. *Okikigaki-shō* 御聴書鈔 on *Shōbōgenzō kūge* 正法眼藏、空華 noted:

A scriptural scholar would accept reading this (passage as) "not in the manner of the triple sphere does he view the triple sphere," but our tradition would read it as "the Buddha's perspective is not better than the triple sphere's view of the triple sphere."

The different interpretation Dōgen gave this passage turns on his reading of the characters 不如 that in the original are to be understood to mean "not in the manner of," but were rendered by Dōgen as "is not better than." Although, this passage, in the context in which it was employed in *Shōbōgenzō*, is to be read as *Okikigaki-shō* advised, in the context of the *Lotus Sutra*, this is a strained reading.

A second example appears in *Shōbōgenzō*, Juki.

At that time, through the bodhisattva Medicine King (Bhaiṣajya-rāja), the World-Honored One addressed the eighty thousand great worthies: "Medicine King, do you see within this great multitude incalculable gods, dragon kings, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, mahoragas, humans and nonhumans, as well as bhikṣus, bhikṣuṇīs, upāsakas, upāsikās, seekers after the rank of voice-hearers, seekers after the rank of pratyekabuddhas, and seekers after the rank of Buddhas. If any like these in the Buddha's presence hears a single gāthā or a single phrase of the Scripture of the Blossom of the Fine Dharma, or devoted to it a single moment of rejoicing, I hereby confer on him a prophecy that he has already attained anuttara-samyaksambodhi."⁸⁾

This passage was taken from the "Preachers of Dharma" chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*. As was the case with the previous example, Dōgen accurately quoted the original, but, again, with respect to its meaning and import, he interpreted it in a sense altogether different from what it conveys in the *Lotus*. In the original the meaning is that, "to anyone who hears a single gāthā or a single phrase of the

Scripture of the Fine Dharma, or devoted to it a single moment of rejoicing, I hereby confer on him a prophecy that he shall attain anuttarasamyaksambodhi.” With the words “he shall attain,” the prophecy speaks of the future. In *Shōbōgenzō*, Juki, however, Dōgen read the characters for “he shall attain” as “he has already attained,” thereby interpreting the prophecy as relating to our present life. For this reason, Dōgen read *tang-te* 当得 not as an expression indicating the future or possibility but rather as indicating the present or actuality. Thus, from Dōgen’s point of view, *tang-te a-nou-to-lo-sam-no-sam-p’u-t’i* 当得阿耨多羅三藐三菩提 was not read “I hereby confer on him a prophecy that he shall attain anuttarasamyaksambhodhi” but as “I truly confer on him a prophecy that he has already attained anuttarasamyaksambodhi.” Although the commentator of *Shōbōgenzō* *Juki benchū* 正法眼藏授記辨注 explains Dōgen’s reading of this phrase by noting that “the ‘*tang-te*’ 当得 of the scriptural passage ‘*tang-te wu-shang p’u-t’i*’ 当得無上菩提 means ‘already having attained.’ or just ‘having attained,’” and although this is, indeed, a forced reading, it is, nonetheless, the only one permissible given Dōgen’s position. The problem then becomes why Dōgen had to alter the reading of the text in this way. The answer to this lies in nothing other than the difference in the *Lotus Sutra* and Dōgen’s notion of reality.

One of the major themes of the *Lotus Sutra* was to speak about Triyana only so as to induce the reader to accept Ekayana teaching. Accordingly, from the standpoint of the *Lotus Sutra*, the Buddha’s perception of reality and that of ordinary men had to be strictly demarcated. For this reason, because the triple sphere’s perception of reality was one that had *in due time* to be guided by the Buddha’s true perception of that same reality, for the *Lotus Sutra*, the path leading from the one perception to the other was of signal importance, but the description of the world that opens up at the end of this path was not. With Dōgen, though, reality was conceived from the

point of view of one who had *already* been led to the Buddha's perception. Thus, even though both the *Lotus Sutra* and Dōgen spoke of the same triple sphere, Dōgen's view was that of one who had *returned* bearing the Buddha's vision of the world. His was a view that saw the Buddha's perception of reality as nothing other than that of the triple sphere; it saw in the triple sphere, as it were, a complete and total revelation of the Buddha's perception of reality. From the point of view of the *Lotus Sutra*, reality (the triple sphere), when compared to the Absolute, was only a relative reality; but, for Dōgen, reality was an Absolute Reality wherein the Absolute was completely revealed. A Reality of this sort was ever existent and was always absolute. The reality expressed by the phrase "he shall attain anuttarasamyaksambodhi" was a relative reality when compared with Absolute Reality, but "he has already attained anuttarasamyaksambodhi" was Absolute Reality itself. At least with regard to Dōgen, all the sutras were read as revealing the absolute and existent Reality. Accordingly, for Dōgen at least, the *Lotus Sutra* was taught not in order to make known some unique intention of the *Lotus* but as a medium facilitating the revelation of the absolute and existent Reality.

Dōgen's position with relation to this Reality corresponds to that which he took in support of the doctrine of original enlightenment, the orientation of which is toward the phenomenal, as opposed to that of gradual enlightenment, which proceeds to the noumenal. For this reason, Dōgen's reading of the *Lotus Sutra* may be seen as an original-enlightenment interpretation of the text and as revealing Dōgen's indebtedness to the Japanese Tendai school of original-enlightenment theorists. In fact, Japanese Tendai scholars did not always follow the letter of the original Chinese T'ien-t'ai texts. Taking a phenomenological and existentialist approach, they read the texts freely. An instance of this was the interpretation given the following well-known passage from the preface of *Mo-ho-chih-kuan* 摩訶止觀：

円頓者初縁実相。造境即中無不真实。一念法界，一色一香無非中道。

From the very *beginning* of the meditation practice, whereby one sees the reality of all things in a perfect and immediate manner, knowledge of Truth is a required condition. As the practioner visualizes the object of the meditation, he enters upon the middle way, wherein there is nothing that is not an embodiment of Truth. (The practitioner) directly perceives Truth (*dharma-dhātu*); the act of visualizing and Truth (*dharma-dhātu*) become one and the same. There is not a hue or a fragrance [i.e., there is nothing at all] that is not of the middle way.

The character *ch'u* 初, translated here as “beginning” and used in this passage to indicate the point in time when the practioner commences the meditation practice *endon shikan* 円頓止観, was read in Japanese Tendai as meaning the ultimate basis of all things. Dr. Nakamura Hajime mentions this particular example in *Tōyō-jin no shii hōhō* (Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples)⁹⁾ and makes the following observation:

One factor contributing to the rather free interpretations Shinran and Dōgen gave to the scriptures is this historical custom.¹⁰⁾

Thus, Dr. Nakamura gives the Hiei tradition of interpreting the meaning of a passage in a way the original never intended as one explanation for Dōgen’s practice of reading a text unconventionally. Looked at in this way, Dōgen’s free interpretations of passages from the *Lotus Sutra* can be thought to mark him as having been an heir to the Tendai scholarly tradition of original-enlightenment doctrinal exegeses and to reveal him as having been educated within that sect.

There remains, however, one problem which needs to be examined before accepting the idea that Dōgen’s interpretation of the *Lotus Sutra* was grounded in the original-enlightenment doctrine of Japanese Tendai. The problem lies in that Dōgen can be said to be following the Chinese Zen tradition which very early in its history began to freely interpret the sutras and records of the Zen masters. For the follower of Zen, who spoke of a transmission of doctrine independent

of scriptural writing, and who cited the sutras and records of the Zen masters in support of his own positions, there was nothing unusual in this interpretative practice. For example, in *Lin-chi lu* 臨濟錄 (The Record of Lin-chi), there is this passage:

Someone asked: "What is the karma of the five heinous crimes?"

The Master said: "Killing the father, slaying the mother, shedding the blood of a buddha, destroying the harmony of the saṃgha, and burning the scriptures and images—this is the karma of the five heinous crimes."

"What is meant by 'father?'"

The Master said: "Avedyā is the father. A single thought in your mind whose place of arising or extinguishment is not to be found, like a sound reverberating throughout space—and [thus] there's nothing for you to do—this is called 'killing the father.'"

"What is meant by 'mother?'"

The master said: "Covetousness is the mother. A single thought in your mind, lacking covetousness, on entering the world of desire sees that all dharmas are but empty forms—and [thus] you've no attachment anywhere—this is called 'slaying the mother'."¹¹⁾

As usually interpreted, the karmic retribution meted out to those who commit the five heinous crimes are the five mortal punishments that lead to damnation in endless hell. For Lin-chi 臨濟, however, killing one's father meant killing delusion, a state with which ordinary men are most familiar; and killing one's mother was thought of as killing coveteousness, a vice in which ordinary men are well-versed. In this way, Lin-chi gave each of the karmic retributions allotted to the five heinous crimes an entirely different but Zen-like signification. Accordingly, these acts no longer produced karma that led to hell but instead became "the five heinous crimes that directly win (a person) 'release,'" or in other words, a pure practice. While Lin-chi, thus, gave a meaning to the karmic retribution attending on the five heinous crimes that was entirely different from what was originally intended, the free interpretative approach to the sutras and records

of the Zen masters that he employed was not one that was unique to him but one whose practice within the Zen sect long anteceded him. For this reason, Dōgen's free interpretation of passages from sutras and records of the Zen masters can be said to have simply been in keeping with Zen tradition and not dependent on the Japanese Tendai practice of altering the meaning of originals.

Since his revisions of the sutras and records of the Zen masters showed a tendency of reading an original-enlightenment meaning into passages that are gradual enlightenment in implication, Dōgen might possibly be thought to have been influenced by the Japanese Tendai doctrine of original enlightenment. But this doctrine had been basic to Zen teaching from early in the history of the sect; Zen did not become original enlightenment in character only after the doctrine received sectarian development elsewhere. This was recognized by Shimaji Daitō, who expressed the matter long ago by saying, "Zen is at the heart of original-enlightenment thought."¹² Thus, while the revisions that Dōgen gave passages which were gradual enlightenment in meaning might be said to reflect the original-enlightenment position taken by Japanese Tendai, the conclusion that Dōgen's viewpoint issued from the Japanese Tendai position does not immediately follow. For this reason, the question whether Dōgen's interpretation of the *Lotus Sutra* derived from the original-enlightenment tradition of Japanese Tendai or was based upon Dōgen's own experience in practicing Zen is one that needs to be more thoroughly examined. Concerning this, Shimaji Daitō has written: "The problem of the relation of Zen to early Japanese Tendai is the most difficult one to be addressed in this study. At the same time it is the most fascinating."¹³ As to the relation of Dōgen and Tendai original-enlightenment teaching, a number of problems still remain to be clarified. What I would like to do now is to outline the nature of these problems.

To begin with, an examination of Dōgen's citation of the *Lotus Sutra* shows that Dōgen quoted far more frequently from the first half of the sutra, in which only the teachings of the temporal Buddha are revealed, than from the second half, where the teaching of the eternal Buddhas are set forth. More specifically, of the fifty-one citations Dōgen made of the *Lotus Sutra*, thirty-seven were from the first fourteen chapters that depict the Buddha in his temporal aspect while just fourteen quotations were taken from the latter half. Of the two halves into which the twenty-eight chapters of the *Lotus* may be divided, the original-enlightenment teaching of Japanese Tendai emphasized the second half, which represents the Buddhas as eternal, but Dōgen, if we restrict our remarks to the matter of citation, valued more the first half of the *Lotus Sutra*, where the Buddha is depicted as temporal. Of course, it may be said that placing importance on the frequency of citation does not prove anything; yet arguing in this way does show that, at the very least, with respect to citations, Dōgen's standpoint was unrelated to that of the original-enlightenment teaching of Tendai.

Secondly, while there is much in the writings of Dōgen that reveals an indebtedness to Chinese T'ien T'ai, nothing in them shows any connection with its Japanese counterpart. In *Gakudō yōjin shū*, 学道用心集 Dōgen criticized the ancient masters of Buddhism in Japan.

Although ancient masters of the country wrote books, taught disciples, and expounded teachings to men and gods, their speeches were green and their expressions yet immature. They did not attain the summit of an intellectual grasp of doctrines, much less the neighborhood of enlightenment. They merely transmitted words and letters, while their disciples recited names and sounds. Day and night they counted others' riches for nothing. Herein lies my charge against the ancient masters.¹⁴⁾

Among others, this criticism was undoubtedly directed at Saichō (767-822), the founder of Japanese Tendai posthumously honored by Emperor Seiwa with the title Dengyō Daishi. In contrast to this,

Dōgen was lavish of praise for T'ien-t'ai Ta-shih Chih-i 天台大師智顗 (538-597). In the *Hōkyōki* 宝録記, Dōgen wrote of him as follows:

Having made a comprehensive study of the views of teachers of sutras and sastras, (I concluded) that in his understanding of sutras, vinaya regulations and sastras, Zen master Chih-i alone far surpassed all others. It should be said that such brilliance was never known before or after him.

While among Dōgen's writings, the T'ien T'ai *Mo-ho-chih-kuan* is quoted four times and *Fa-hua san-mei ch'an-i* 法華三昧懺儀 once, the number of citations from *Chih-kuan fu-hsing ch'uan hung-chüeh* 止觀輔行伝弘決 of Chan-jan 湛然 (711-782) amounts to more than twenty. Not only are the quotations from the *Hung-chüeh* generally lengthy, they clearly show that even when Dōgen attributed a passage to *Mahāprajñāpāramitopaseśa* fascicle XIII, *Samyuktāgama*, Nāgārjuna, *Dharma-pada*, *Adbhuta-dharma-sūtra*, *Ch'ing-chang fa-hsing ching* 清淨法行經, *lieh-ch'uan* 列伝, or *T'ai-ts'ang ching* 胎藏經, the passage cited was not a direct quotation of the original source but rather quoted only as it had appeared in the *Hung-chüeh*. In particular, as Chan-jan had taught that the teaching of Confucius and Lao-tsu amounts to no more than "ethics and metaphysics" and in no way approaches the "teaching of deliverance" that constitutes the Buddhist dharma, Dōgen, in inverse proportion to his dislike of the Sung Zen advocacy of the theory that the three teachings (Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism) were fundamentally the same, sympathized strongly with him. For this reason, when citing the *Hung-chüeh*, Dōgen used the respectful term "patriarch" to refer to Chan-jan. In *Shōbōgenzō*, Shizen biku 正法眼藏、四禪比丘, he even expressed admiration for him:

How truly the words of the Eminent Patriarch express the essence of the Buddha dharma and make clear the ways of the world.

From these observations, the relation of Dōgen to Chinese T'ien T'ai is thoroughly evident but one to Japanese Tendai can not be detected.

Thirdly and last, Dōgen's view of original enlightenment and the

Tendai theory pertaining to this doctrine are different. In Tendai, original-enlightenment thought was pushed to its logical conclusion and, in consequence, fell into naturalism. Dōgen rejected this trend of thought as “original enlightenment (arising) from the mental constructions of mortal men” (*Shōbōgenzō*, Gyōbutsu igi). Thus, while both Dōgen and Tendai original-enlightenment theory affirmed reality, the original enlightenment of Tendai did not require the intermediacy of practice but affirmed reality directly, just as it was; from Dōgen’s point of view, however, this position, which made light of the intermediary role of practice, was an objectionable naturalism. In Dōgen’s view, reality-as-it-is was not directly affirmed; rather it attained the significance of original enlightenment only through the intermediacy of a moment of denial (practice).

This difference in outlook appeared even with respect to the varied readings each gave the *Lotus Sutra*. Thus, where Tendai original enlightenment gave an interpretation that directly affirmed reality, Dōgen would read into the passage a requirement that reality always be negatively intermediated. Although, as I noted on page 11, Dōgen interpreted the *Lotus Sutra* passage that reads: “not in the manner of the triple sphere does he view the triple sphere” as “there is no better view than that of the triple spheres’ *viewing* of the triple sphere,” on the other hand he denied the view of ordinary men. Dōgen stated this in *Shōbōgenzō*, Gyōji 正法眼藏、行持:

From the time one enters into the Buddha Path, a devotee far and away transcends the triple sphere of men and gods. (The true way) lies in not being controlled by the triple sphere; it is unrelated to any thought originating in the triple sphere.

Although this position seems to directly contradict what has previously been said, the reality about which Dōgen spoke was not an easily affirmed immediate reality but one realized through ascetic self-denial

(practice). Consequently, Dōgen may be said to be in agreement with Tendai in the sense that his affirmation of reality arose from original-enlightenment theory; at the same time, as this affirmation required the intermediacy of denial, it differed. This point is of considerable importance in discussing the relation of practice and enlightenment. While it requires detailed explication, Dōgen's standpoint, in any event, was one that gainsaid that taken by original-enlightenment theorists of Tendai; it clearly reveals that it cannot be derived merely from Tendai original-enlightenment theory.

In the preceding analysis, I have examined the relation of Dōgen and the Tendai doctrine of original enlightenment in connection with the matter of Dōgen's citation of the *Lotus Sutra*. On the basis of this, there is no doubt that elements of Dōgen's standpoint are made clear by means of an examination of the relation of his standpoint and the Tendai doctrine of original enlightenment; but, in view of Dōgen's approach to the *Lotus Sutra*, there are several problems that must be resolved before the relation between Dōgen and the Tendai doctrine of original enlightenment can be securely made. For this reason, how can one not doubt the claim that the relation between Dōgen and Tendai original-enlightenment theory is a clearly established fact simply because Dōgen had studied on Mt. Hiei?¹⁵⁾

NOTES

1) This article is a translation of "Dōgen Zenji to *Hokkekyō*," the first part of Chapter Four in *Dōgen Zenji to inyō kyōten, goroku no kenkyū* (Research on Dōgen and Citations of the Sutras and Records of Zen Masters in His Work) (Tokyo: Mokujisha, 1965), 121-37. —Trans.

2) The translations of the *Lotus Sutra* that appear in this article are quoted from Leon Hurvitz, trans., *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976). —Trans.

3) See Kagamishima, "Dōgen Zenji no kyōten kan," in *Dōgen Zenji to inyō kyōten*.

4) See Kagamishima, "Dōgen Zenji no kyōten kan," in *Dōgen Zenji to inyō kyōten*.

5) See Kagamishima, "Inyō shutten ichiran-hyō, Dai-ichi: Dōgen Zenji no inyō kyōron ichiran-hyō, in *Dōgen Zenji to inyō kyōten*.

6) Chapter titles of the *Lotus Sutra* conform to those of Hurvitz. —Trans.

7) The translation of this difficult passage owes largely to assistance given by Prof. Nara Yasuaki.

8) With the exception of the last relative clause of this passage, the translation is that of Hurvitz, p.174. —Trans.

9) Nakamura Hajime, *Tōyō-jin no shii hōhō* (Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples) (Tokyo: Shunshūsha, 1962), III, 26, fn. 4.

10) *Ibid.*

11) This passage is quoted from Ruth F. Sasaki, trans., *The Recorded Sayings of Ch'an Master Lin-chi Hui-chao of Chen Prefecture* (Kyoto: The Institute For Zen Studies, Hanazono College, 1975) 35-6. —Trans.

12) Shimaji Daitō, *Bukkyō taikō* (An Outline of Buddhism) (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1931), 15.

13) Shimaji Daitō, "Nihon Ko-Tendai kenkyū no hitsuyō wo ron zu" (A Lecture on the Need for Research on Early Japanese Tendai), *Shisō*. No. 60 (1926).

14) The translation of this passage is taken from Hee-Jin Kim, *Dōgen Kigen—Mystical Realist* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1975), 30. —Trans.

15) For a full discussion of the relation of Japanese Tendai and its influence on Dōgen's thought, see Hazama Jikō, *Nihon Bukkyō no kaiten to sono kiban* (The Development of Japanese Buddhism and Its Basis) (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1948); and Dr. Tamura Yoshirō, *Kamakura Shin-bukkyō shisō no kenkyū* (A Study of the Thought of the New Buddhist Movements of the Kamakura Era) (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1965).

In particular, Dr. Tamura sheds light on the problems discussed in this paper from the perspective of Tendai original-enlightenment theory (*Kamakura Shin-Bukkyō*, 569-71). Tamura's study criticizes a paper of mine entitled "Dōgen Zenji to Tendai honkaku hōmon—Hokkekyō inyō ni kanren shite" (Dōgen and Tendai Original-Enlightenment Theory—Considered in Relation to Dōgen's Citation of the *Lotus Sutra*) *Shūgaku Kenkyū* 2, (1960): 50-7. Tamura's discussion

is full of suggestions for elucidating an area that has hitherto been vague, but its criticisms of my position contain misunderstanding. The intention of my previously published article was that “the claim that the relation between Dōgen and Tendai original-enlightenment theory is clearly established is a questionable ascertainment” (*Shūgaku Kenkyū* 2); I was not arguing so as to propose that Dōgen and Tendai original-enlightenment theory were unrelated. What I had wished to say was that unless the problem I put forward is not answered antithetically, no argument can satisfactorily establish a relation between Dōgen and the Tendai doctrine. Thus, even though what I have said previously in connection with the problem of Dōgen’s citation of the *Lotus Sutra*, i.e., that “the relation of Dōgen to Tendai original-enlightenment theory is weak” (*Shūgaku Kenkyū* 2), and what I stated later, i.e., that “this leads us to the problem of how Dōgen and the Tendai theory of original enlightenment are related” (*Dōgen Zenji to sono monryū* (Dōgen and His School) [Tokyo: Seishin Shobō, 1961], p.27), may seem contradictory, I do not believe that it is. At any rate, this represents one instance of a consistent pursuit on my part of the theoretical topic of how Dōgen’s thought is to be placed in relation to Tendai original-enlightenment theory. My view on this matter is for the present resolved in “Honshōmyōshū no shisō shiteki haikai” (The Historical Background to the Idea of Original Enlightenment and Practice) *Shūgaku Kenkyū* 7 (1965): 24–9.

Translated by Dennis J. Nolan