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## **From prominence to obscurity : a study of the Darumashū : Japan's first Zen school**

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## CHAPTER SIX

### DARUMASHŪ TEXTS (2)

#### PRIMARY DARUMASHŪ TEXT II:

#### KENSHŌJŌBUTSUGI (ON SEEING THE NATURE AND BECOMING A BUDDHA)

##### Introduction

The second primary Darumashū text that will be examined, *Kenshōjōbutsugi*, is preserved in booklet manuscript (*detchō* 粘葉) of the Kamakura period.<sup>464</sup> The front sheet of the document reads *Kenshōjōbutsuron* 見性成佛論. The opening page of the text reads *Kenshōjōbutsugi yo* 見性成佛義予 (Preface to *Kenshōjōbutsugi*).<sup>465</sup> Probably the treatise was known as both *Kenshōjōbutsuron* and *Kenshōjōbutsugi*. In accordance with an external reference to the treatise in the thirteenth century *Kinkōshū* 金綱集 (Golden Net Anthology), I refer to the text as *Kenshōjōbutsugi*.<sup>466</sup>

Nothing is known about *Kenshōjōbutsugi*'s authorship. Seeing that the theme of the treatise is *kenshōjōbutsu* (seeing the nature and becoming a buddha) and that it cites the *Śūraṅgama sūtra*, it has been speculated that *Kenshōjōbutsugi* was authored by Nōnin's student Kakuan, for Kakuan is known to have instructed his students in the principle of *kenshōjōbutsu*, using the *Śūraṅgama sūtra*.<sup>467</sup> The colophon of the manuscript merely provides a date, Einin 5/8/3 (1297), which I take to refer to the time of redaction or transcription.

The Darumashū provenance of *Kenshōjōbutsugi* is corroborated by writings of Dōgen and his commentators. Dōgen's writings were mainly addressed to his monastic community, which was dominated by (former) Darumashū adherents. Accordingly, Dōgen's texts contain implicit criticisms of ideas that were current among members of this Darumashū subgroup. This will be examined in more detail in Chapter Eight. For now it is apt to note that a major commentary on Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō* 正法眼藏, composed by Dōgen's students, explicitly identifies the Darumashū as the object of some of Dōgen's criticisms: in this context the commentary cites a phrase that is found verbatim in *Kenshōjōbutsugi*.<sup>468</sup> This is the philological evidence in the matter of the text's connection to the Darumashū.<sup>469</sup> *Kenshōjōbutsugi*, moreover, predominantly quotes from the *Zongjinglu*, Dainichi Nōnin's favourite text.

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<sup>464</sup> KBSZ 1, Zensekihen, p. 272.

<sup>465</sup> KBZS, Zensekihen, p. 174-175.

<sup>466</sup> *Kinkōshū* 金綱集 (Golden Net Anthology), *Nichirenshū shūgaku zenshō*, vol. 13/14, p. 307.

<sup>467</sup> Shinkura Kazufumi, "Dōgen no Darumashū hihan," IBK 32/2 (1984): pp. 682-683.

<sup>468</sup> See Chapter Eight, "Dōgen's criticism."

<sup>469</sup> Recently the Darumashū provenance of *Kenshōjōbutsugi* has been questioned by Furuse Tatami. In an article published in 2010, Furuse connects *Kenshōjōbutsugi* to Nōnin himself. See Furuse Tatami, "Kanazawa Bunko toshokanzō *Kenshōjōbutsuron* ni tsuite: shisōteki tokuchō oyobi jinbutsuzō," IBK 58/3 (2010): 1288-1292. In a subsequent article he, unconvincingly, problematizes the Darumashū provenance. See Furuse Tatami "Kanazawa Bunkozō *Kenshōjōbutsuron* to den Daruma daishi Kechimyakuron: kenshō no shisō ni chakumoku," IBK 59/2 (2011): pp. 736-739.

Citations from *Kenshōjōbutsugi* appear in at least two external sources. One of these is the earlier mentioned *Kinkōshū* 金剛集 (Diamond Collection), a collection of lectures by Nichiren 日蓮 (1222-1282), compiled by Nichiren's student Nikō 日向 (1253-1314).<sup>470</sup> As examined in Chapter Two, Nichiren was highly critical of the Zen school and frequently mentioned Nōnin and Kakuan as its chief representatives. The quotations in the *Kinkōshū* are duly attributed ("*Kenshōjōbutsugi iwaku*") and correspond largely, but not always precisely, to the Kanazawa Bunko manuscript of *Kenshōjōbutsugi*. One noticeable difference is the use of Chinese logographs in *Kinkōshū* where the Kanazawa Bunko manuscript has *kana* syllables. It is conceivable then that the Kanazawa Bunko manuscript is an (imprecise?) vernacular rendition of an earlier, more Sinitic version of *Kenshōjōbutsugi*. Citations from *Kenshōjōbutsugi* also surface in *Kenmitsu mondōshō* by the Shingon monk Raiyū 頼瑜 (1226-1304).<sup>471</sup> These citations indicate that *Kenshōjōbutsugi* enjoyed a wide circulation that extended into Zen, Shingon and Nichiren communities.

*Kenshōjōbutsugi* follows a question and answer format. The text reads as a transcript of a discussion between an anonymous speaker (from here on referred to as "Zen master") and unnamed interlocutor(s). With the exception of the Chinese introductory section, the treatise is written in Japanese, in a mixture of *kanji* and *katakana*. In the (Chinese) preface the author emphasizes that he teaches in Japanese and writes in the Japanese script, suggesting that he aimed to make the Zen teachings accessible to a wider audience. At times the text concludes elaborate expositions with succinct sayings, which may similarly indicate an attempt to increase accessibility by making doctrinal complexities intelligible to an audience not versed in Buddhist scholastics. In one passage the text expresses concern over the fact that ordinary people have lost touch with the truth that they are actually buddhas, and it is lamented that this truth has been confined to religious specialists. Still, the text gives the impression of being directed at an audience that is highly familiar with Buddhist idiom and doctrinal issues.

As is common in Buddhist treatises, *Kenshōjōbutsugi* freely cites from other Buddhist materials. The citations are mostly taken from sūtras and Chan records, notably the *Zongjinglu*. Quite a number of citations appear unattributed. The various citations usually follow the Chinese as found in the primary texts. In several cases the primary text is paraphrased in Japanese. Besides fullfledged quotes there are also passages that are made up from fragmented bits and bobs of other (unattributed) texts. In a few cases both the question & answer draw on the *Zongjinglu*, which leads to the suspicion that the debate recorded in the text is a literary creation of a fictive event, or a heavily edited version of an actual event, or a combination of the two.

Structurally, the work, I propose, should be divided as follows:

#### I. PREFACE

Preface written in Chinese (with added *kanbun* markers).

<sup>470</sup> *Kinkōshū* is a collection of lectures given by Nichiren at Mount Minobu in the concluding years of his life, compiled by one of his chief students Nikō 日向 (1253-1314). The work, which exists in various versions under different titles, was transmitted in the Minobu sub-lineage of the Nichiren school; it systematically examines a range of Buddhist schools and includes a chapter about the Zen school, entitled *Zen kenmon* (pp. 289-348). See Ishikawa Rikizan, "Nichiren no zenshū kan: Kinkōshū ni okeru zenshū hihan no konkyō to sono shiryō," IBK 42/1 (1983): pp. 151-157.

<sup>471</sup> See Chapter Eight.

## II. DIALOGUES

II.A. Questions and Answers 1~10. Extensive explanations, representing the expedient, doctrinal aspect (*kyōmon* 教門) of the Buddha's dharma, corresponding to the hermeneutical category of "Buddha's words" (*butsugon* 佛言).

II.B. Questions and Answers 11~44. Short questions and short (at times cryptic) answers, representing the Zen aspect (*zenmon* 禪門) of the Buddha's dharma, corresponding to the hermeneutical category of "Buddha's mind" (*busshin* 佛心).

Section A takes up the bulk of the treatise. It comprises ten relatively lengthy questions and answers. A significant place is occupied by explaining the relation between Zen and the doctrinal schools of Buddhism, particularly Tendai. To this end, the text employs various hermeneutical categories, such as *teaching/mind*; *inside the teachings/outside the teachings*; *buddha word/buddha mind*; *name/substance*. Section B starts with Q&A number eleven, which introduces a different mode of exposition. The questioner demands straightforward instruction that is in accord with the non-discursive "Zen aspect" 禪門 of the dharma. The result is a dialogue of thirty-four pithy questions and answers, giving the impression of a rapid altercation.

As in the previous examination of *Jōtōshōgakuron*, the following examination of *Kenshōjōbutsugi* provides section numbers in square brackets so as to allow crossreferencing with the translation of the text in the back of this book (Part Four: Translations, Text II).

### ***KENSHŌJŌBUTSUGI***

#### I. PREFACE

[I][a] *Kenshōjōbutsugi* opens with a concise biographical sketch of Bodhidharma, partly derived from the short biography of Bodhidharma by the Chinese monk Tanlin 曇琳 (sixth century).<sup>472</sup> The preface highlights the patriarch's first meeting with his future successor Huike. It is stressed that Huike attained awakening by realizing his inherent nature, rather than by studying words or by obtaining something from Bodhidharma. Huike, it is said, attained "clear and ever-present awareness" (*ryōryō jōchi* 了了常知).

The gist of the brief preface is that by seeing the nature (*kenshō*) one can personally accomplish the same awakening as the ancient buddhas and patriarchs. This, we are told, is not accomplished through the study of convoluted texts. Rather, it is to be realized in "seeing forms and hearing sounds" (*kenshiki monsho* 見色聞聲), through the faculties of "seeing, hearing,

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<sup>472</sup> Tanlin's short biography of Bodhidharma is found in *Jingde chuandenglu* (T. 2076, 458b07-b12).

sensation and knowing” (*kenmon kakuchi* 見聞覺知). This principle is illustrated by a string of examples from the lives of several Chan monks of the past, showing how their awakening experience was triggered by a sound, a sight, or a by just “a few words of gold.” The examples include the cases of Lingyun Zhiqin 靈雲志勤 (n.d.), who realized awakening upon seeing a flower; Dongshan Liangjie 洞山良价 (807-869), who attained insight when glimpsing his reflection in a stream; Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一 (709-788), who taught by glaring with his eyes; and Hanshan 寒山 (n.d.) who taught by wielding a skewered eggplant. It is hard to ascertain on which sources our author relied for these examples, but most are found in the Chan records *Jingde chuandenglu* and *Liandeng huiyao* 聯燈會要 (Outline of Linked Lamps).<sup>473</sup>

The preface expressly places the realization of buddhahood outside the confines of scholarly study. By the same token it elevates Zen above the scholasticism of the Buddhist establishment – an ideological move as old as the Chan/Zen school itself. In the closing paragraph of the preface, the Zen master urges his listeners to cleanse their hearts of “dry slander” and of “floods of reproach.” This may be read as a mere exhortation to cease deluded thinking, were it not that the words “slander” and “reproach” are somewhat odd in that context. The remark is perhaps better understood as reflecting actual hostilities; hostilities emanating from conservative corners in the Buddhist world, more specifically the Tendai establishment on Mount Hiei, that felt its power – predicated on ritual and textual expertise – being undermined by the Zen rhetoric of “a special tradition outside the scriptures.”

## II. DIALOGUES

### II.A

#### [1] Question & answer one

A questioner asks how to escape from the cycle of life and death (Skt. *samsāra*) and reach the state of awakening (Skt. *bodhi*). In reply the Zen master discredits this very dichotomy. Central in the explanation is the metaphor of “flowers in the sky” (*kūge* 空花), which describes how distorted vision creates images of flowers where in fact there is nothing but empty space. Similarly, a confused mind perceives all kinds of *samsāric* phenomena in what is in fact nothing but the undifferentiated state of awakening (*bodhi*).

The *kūge* metaphor is central to the *Yuanjuejing* 圓覺經 (Sūtra of Perfect Awakening), a sinicized apocryphon with strong Huayan and Chan imprint. Further down in *Kenshōjōbutsugi*, two other metaphors that derive from the *Yuanjuejing* are highlighted, indicating (indirect) influence of this ‘sūtra’ on our text. The ‘sūtra’ was the object of an extensive commentary by the scholar monk and Chan master Zongmi and is, in extension, repeatedly cited in Yanshou’s *Zongjinglu*.<sup>474</sup> Seeing the intimate relation between *Kenshōjōbutsugi* and the *Zongjinglu* we infer that the use of this metaphor in *Kenshōjōbutsugi* derives from the *Zongjinglu*. This is supported by the fact that, as a kind of coda to his explanation, our Zen master actually cites the *Zongjinglu*.

A characteristic of Zongmi’s thought that was inherited by Yanshou, is a Yogācāra type affirmation of an ontological ground, a substratum that remains when phenomenal appearances

<sup>473</sup> *Liandeng huiyao* 聯燈會要 was compiled in 1183 by Huiweng Wuming (1089-1163), a monk in the lineage of Dahui Zonggao.

<sup>474</sup> For instance, *Zongjinglu* (T. 842, 914a10-a15).

have been deconstructed by emptiness.<sup>475</sup> This ontological tendency is often referred to by researchers as kataphatic, in contradistinction to apophatic.<sup>476</sup> An apophatic interpretation of the *kūge* metaphor would read the metaphor along the lines of classical Mādhyamika. Whalen Lai clarifies: “All forms (the flowers) are empty (without self-nature); they seemingly are because of emptiness (space), but this basic higher *paramārtha* emptiness-essence (Skt. *svabhāva*) is no more an entity that one can grasp: reality is a mirage-like flower in thin air, supported by emptiness, which itself is empty. Emptiness itself has to be emptied (Skt. *śūnyatā-śūnyatā*).”<sup>477</sup> A kataphatic, Huayan type reading tends to affirm the empty space (buddha-nature; mind-ground) as a luminous substance and consider the flowers as nonexistent entities that appear when this substance “accords with conditions” (*zuien* 隨緣). In this conception the phenomena, as phenomena, are unreal; but in their unreality they partake of the essence (just like foamy waves partake of the ocean). It is this type of nonduality that is alluded to throughout *Kenshōjōbutsu*, and in its reading of the sky flower metaphor:

When empty space is hidden in imaginary flowers, it seems to no longer exist, but since, in actuality, it does not perish, it cannot now disappear. Bodhi is precisely like this. When for some time it is hidden in unreal *samsāra*, it seems to have perished, but since, in actuality, it remains, it cannot now be obtained. So, since there are no sky flowers separate from empty space, you should not search for empty space outside of sky flowers. In the same way, since there is no *samsāra* separate from bodhi, you should not look for bodhi outside of *samsāra*. From beginning to end, sky flowers have no substance. From beginning to end, empty space is truly not without substance.<sup>478</sup> You should understand *samsāra* and bodhi in the same way.

## [2] Question & answer two

A questioner maintains that *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are opposites: to achieve *nirvāṇa* one must separate from *samsāra*.<sup>479</sup> The Zen master rebukes the “stupidity” (*gu* 愚) of such a dualistic view: *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are nondual, like a voice and its echo. This nondual reality is the “one mind” 一心, a term that is found frequently in the text. For instance, elsewhere [4.d] the questioner is told to “awaken to the one mind.” Further down in the text [7], it is declared that “the one mind alone is true reality” (*shinjitsu* 眞實). The one mind – the “empty space” of the sky-flower metaphor – is functionally equivalent to a range of other terms in the text, such as *tathāgataragbha*, intrinsic pure mind (*jishō shōjōshin* 自性清淨心), buddha mind (*busshin* 佛心), true mind (*shinjin* 眞心), mind-ground (*shinchi* 心地), and so forth. Implicit in *Kenshōjōbutsu* is the idea of the one mind as described in *Dasheng qixin lun* (Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith)

<sup>475</sup> See Peter. N. Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), pp. 206-223. Albert Welter, “The Problem of Orthodoxy in Zen Buddhism: Yongming Yanshou’s Notion of Zong in the *Zongjing lu* (Records of the Source Mirror).” *Studies in Religion* 37/1 (2002), p. 15, note 3.

<sup>476</sup> See Robert M. Gimello, “Apophatic and Kataphatic Discourse in Mahāyāna: A Chinese View,” *Philosophy East and West* 26/2 (1976), pp. 117-136. Gadjin M. Nagao, “What Remains in *Śūnyatā*: A Yogācāra Interpretation of Emptiness,” in *Mādhyamika and Yogācāra*, Gadjin M. Nagao and Leslie S. Kawamura (tr.) (State University of New York Press, 1991): pp. 51-60.

<sup>477</sup> Whalen W. Lai, “Illusionism in Late T’ang Buddhism: A Hypothesis on the Philosophical Roots of the Round Enlightenment Sūtra,” *Philosophy East and West* 28/1 (1978), pp. 46-47. (Slightly modified).

<sup>478</sup> 實慧ナキニアラス。 (KBSZ, Zensekihen, p. 177). The added *kana* indicate reading *jitsu ni tai naki ni arazu* 實ニ慧ナキニアラス。 Ignoring the *kana* one could also read *jittai* (實慧) *naki ni arazu*, (“does not lack true substance”), which would point up the kataphatic overtones of the passage.

<sup>479</sup> The pair *samsāra/nirvāṇa* here is functionally equivalent to *samsāra/bodhi* in the previous question and answer.

and developed in Huayan thought: the one mind and its two aspects. Whereas the absolute aspect (suchness) of the one mind is always pure and tranquil, the relative aspect (arising and extinction) is involved in discriminative thinking and so produces the samsaric world of differentiated phenomena.<sup>480</sup> An important implication of this model is that samsāra (delusions/afflictions) is seen to be integrated in nirvāṇa (awakening/bodhi). Buddhahood, then, consists not in discarding the first and obtaining the latter, but in having a clear insight into their nonduality.<sup>481</sup> As *Kenshōjōbutsugi* has it: “Rather than wishing for bodhi, you should wish to understand that afflictions and bodhi are one mind. If you do, you will surely separate from afflictions and attain bodhi.”

### [3] Question & answer three

This question clearly comes from a different (more advanced) questioner. This person acknowledges nonduality but points out that there is an operational difference between being deluded and being awakened. An awakened person “sees the nature” (*kenshō*), stops differentiating, and thus realizes nonduality. A deluded person is fundamentally awakened, but mired in dualistic perceptions, he does not realize it. The questioner eventually inquires: “What kind of buddha lamps should we hoist to illumine the road to bodhi?” In other words, what should people be taught, so that they can awaken?

The Zen master replies that the key to awakening lies in ceasing the movements of consciousness. The explanation centers on two images that derive from the *Yuanjuejing*. The first is that of a shore that seems to move when seen from a sailing ship. The second is that of the moon that appears to fly when clouds pass by it. In both cases, motion causes a stationary object to be misperceived as moving. The true motionless state of the shore is at once seen when the ship halts; the true motionless state of the moon is at once seen when the clouds clear. Analogously, *Kenshōjōbutsugi* explains, the immutable state of awakening – referred to as bodhi and *hongaku* 本覺 – will be perceived when the ship of consciousness stops and the clouds of ignorance clear. “Consciousness” here translates *ishiki* 意識 (Skt. *mano-vijñāna*), the thinking part of the mind that differentiates and objectifies the data coming in through the five senses. The general idea is clear: once the fluctuations of thought cease, the original state of awakening appears.

### [4] Question & answer four

A questioner praises the foregoing explanation, but also observes that it is descriptive and therefore insufficient, “like the antlers of a snail that cannot prod the vast skies.” The questioner accepts the merits of such limited teachings, but stresses that the greatest benefit is achieved when a teaching appeals to person’s fundamental capacity for awakening (*konki* 根機). The Zen master is asked to clarify, in this regard, the distinction between the “Buddha’s words” 佛言 and the “Buddha’s mind” 佛心, and explain the concept of “inside the teachings” (*kyōnai* 教内) and “outside the teachings” (*kyōge* 教外). In addition, the questioner wants to know how fast liberation is attained. These inquiries intimate the Chan/Zen school’s famous claim of representing a special tradition that transmits the “mind of the Buddha” without relying on words

<sup>480</sup> See Yoshito S. Hakeda (trans.), *The Awakening of Faith* (Columbia University Press, 1967), pp. 38-42.

<sup>481</sup> See Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, pp. 5-7.



and texts. In addition they point to the notion of sudden awakening, as opposed to a gradual cultivation. The inquiries set up the Zen master for an extensive elaboration on the position of the Zen school vis-à-vis canonic texts and the exegetical schools of Buddhism.

In reply the Zen master first discusses the notion of “Buddha’s words” in relation to “Buddha’s mind.” He starts by asserting that bodhi cannot be conveyed in words: “Picking up a brush to write about it is like trying to mark off the ocean with an inked carpenter’s string. Using words to talk about it is no different from chewing on empty space.” Yet words are deemed highly important as “expedient means” 方便 and “preliminary inducements” 弄引. The sūtras are valued and praised as the Buddha’s words; the diversity of these words is seen to reflect the Buddha’s various teaching strategies. The Buddha’s sūtras are thus considered “good medicine” 良藥 against delusion, but they can only be administered accurately by someone who is thoroughly familiar with the source from which they sprang: the Buddha’s mind. It is the Zen school 禪宗 that transmits the Buddha’s mind.

The transmission of the Buddha’s mind – beyond words and beyond all traditional Buddhist disciplines – is highlighted in this section as the defining feature of the Zen school, setting it school apart from the eight established mainstream schools in Japan:

Transmitted to Japan are the eight schools and the Zen school. Jōjitsu, Kusha and Ritsu are Hīnayāna schools. Hossō and Sanron are provisional Mahāyāna schools. Kegon, Tendai and Shingon are true Mahāyāna schools. The Zen school is outside of Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna, and not within the true and provisional schools. For this reason it is called “the school of separate transmission, outside the teachings, not reliant on words and letters” and “the dharma transmitted by way of the kāśāya.” It has been said that the great master who spread the dharma [Bodhidharma] sealed the buddha mind of the Eastern Land [i.e. China] with the buddha mind of the Western Skie s [i.e. India] and that Caoxi [Huineng]’s kinsmen of abstruse principle are among those who respond to the pivotal point. This is transmitting mind to mind and not transmitting words. [The Zen school], therefore, is a school that transmits [the dharma] outside of the threefold training of precepts, meditation and wisdom 戒定慧三學 and beyond the threefold discipline of teaching, practice and realization 教行證三重.<sup>482</sup>

The analytical device of distinguishing between the words and the mind of the Buddha to clarify the relationship between Zen and the doctrinal schools of Buddhism, as employed here, draws on the writings of Zongmi, no doubt via the conduit of Yanshou’s *Zongjinglu*. *Kenshōjōbutsugi*, in fact, mentions “Chan master Zongmi” 宗蜜禪師 and paraphrases a line from his *Chanyuan zhuquanji duxu* 禪源諸詮集都序 (*Chan Preface*):

The teachings are Buddha’s words. Zen is Buddha’s mind.<sup>483</sup>

<sup>482</sup> KBSZ, Zensekihen, p. 181.

<sup>483</sup> KBSZ, Zensekihen, p. 181. Zongmi’s *Chan Preface* (T. 2015, 400b10-11) reads: “All lineages regard Śākyamuni as their first patriarch. The scriptures are Buddha’s words, Zen is Buddha’s intention. The Buddha’s mind and speech certainly cannot contradict each other. 初言師有本末者。謂諸宗始祖即是釋迦。經是佛語。禪是佛意。諸佛心口必不相違。 These lines are also quoted in Yanshou’s *Zongjinglu* (T. 2016, 418b5-6).

*Kenshōjōbutsugi* now proceeds to clarify Zongmi's maxim. This clarification forms one of the most extensive passages in *Kenshōjōbutsugi*, suggesting the importance of this theme. First the lecturer clarifies the meaning and essence of the "teachings" [4.c], followed by a clarification of "mind" [4.d]

#### [4.c] TEACHINGS

*Kenshōjōbutsugi* straightforwardly associates the rubric "teachings" (*kyō*) with the eight schools established in Japan: Jōjitsu, Kusha, Ritsu, Hossō, Sanron, Kegon, Tendai and Shingon. The need to identify the Zen school in this manner suggests that its institutional status as a separate school was still a contested issue. The discussion of "teachings" is exclusively focused on the teachings of the powerful Tendai school, the early Zen movement's most forceful opponent. Seeing that Nōnin, Kakuan and other Darumashū monks hailed from Mount Hiei, the deep familiarity with Tendai doctrine that is displayed in this particular section of *Kenshōjōbutsugi*, is not surprising. The conscious juxtaposition of Zen to Tendai indicates a strong Zen sectarian awareness, but also a significant intellectual interconnection with Tendai discourse.

To start with the conclusion of the elaborate argument: the Zen master concludes that the imposing doctrinal edifice of Tendai doctrine in the end teaches nothing more than the truth that ordinary beings are *a priori* buddhas. The supporting argumentation calls upon the Tendai hermeneutical classification of "Four Teachings" (*shikyō* 四教). According to this classification the Buddha established four different teachings: the Tripiṭaka Teaching (Hināyāna), Shared Teaching, Distinct Teaching and the Perfect Teaching, the latter being the all-inclusive teaching of the Buddha as comprised the *Lotus sūtra*, the central scripture of the Tendai school.<sup>484</sup> The point that *Kenshōjōbutsugi* makes is that both the rudimentary Tripiṭaka Teaching (Hināyāna) as well as the advanced Perfect Teaching of the Tendai school distinguish stages in the path to buddhahood. The Tripiṭaka Teaching asserts that the Buddha achieved awakening by gradually ridding himself of impurities during a long and arduous path of austerities. The Perfect Teaching of the Tendai school, we are informed, divides the path to buddhahood into six successive stages, called the six identities (*rokusoku* 六即). The Tendai theory of six identities, originating with Tiantai Zhiyi, describes six stages through which ordinary beings ascend towards buddhahood:

- 1) Principle identity (*risoku* 理即). The fundamental identity of ordinary beings and Buddha, even prior to spiritual practice.
- 2) Verbal identity (*myōjisoku* 名字即). Through listening to a teacher or reading a sūtra one gains a discursive understanding of one's fundamental buddhahood. This stage marks the beginning of practice.
- 3) Identity of contemplative practice (*kangyōsoku* 觀行即). A more intimate understanding arises through spiritual practices.
- 4) Identity of resemblance (*sōjisoku* 相似即). The practices lead to wisdom that resembles buddhahood.
- 5) Partial identity (*bunshōsoku* 分證即). Partial realization of buddhahood.
- 6) Ultimate identity (*kukyōsoku* 究竟即). Full realization of buddhahood.<sup>485</sup>

<sup>484</sup> On the Tiantai classification system see Leon Hurvitz, *Chih-i (538-597): An Introduction to the Life and Ideas of a Chinese Buddhist Monk* (Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques XII, Bruxelles: Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1962), pp. 229-268

<sup>485</sup> Based on Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, pp. 197-198.

The Perfect Teaching considers the various stages to be linear but also “perfectly interfused” (*enyū* 圓融): the fundamental identity with Buddha is present in each stage. This perfect interfusion of the various stages is exactly the basis for the Zen master’s conclusion. After a (deliberately) long-winded description of the six stages, we read the following:

One level is comprised in all levels and all levels are comprised in one level. Indra’s net encompasses everybody from high to low: at the first stage one is [already] an immediately awakened buddha! Though the doctrinal specifics of the One Tendai House are very impressive, they [simply] explain that having cultivated understanding and awakening, one returns to the first abode. The reason for this is that, in truth, the great matter is to solely obtain first-abode awakening. Thus it is said: “The aspiring mind and the ultimate are not two separate things. Thus it is impossible to say which of these two minds comes first.” “Like bamboo bursting through the first node.” How true this analogy! From the second abode upward, ignorance gradually expires; having developed *samādhi*, the perfect and subtle state of awakening spontaneously increases and mutable existence decreases. Therefore, even without planning anything at all, one spontaneously flows into the sea of Buddha’s wisdom. Like this, the wisdom of actualized awakening is fused with original awakening. The nonduality of actualized and original [awakening] is the ultimate buddha-fruit.<sup>486</sup>

This passage does not reject religious practice *per se*, but it points out that buddhahood is not the gradually achieved result of practice. As it is already fully present at the first stage of principle identity, buddhahood can never be consequenced by practice. Rather, it exists originally (*hongaku* 本覺) and is actualized in practice (*shigaku* 始覺), in the way that a bamboo stalk unfolds once the first node has burst. The event – the required bursting of the first node – is, by implication, the stage of verbal identity (*myōjisoku*), when an ordinary being is informed by a teacher or a text of his or her principle identity (*risoku*) with the Buddha. For the Zen master this is where the “path” ends: “the great matter is solely to obtain first-abode awakening.” The remainder is inconsequential: “even without planning anything at all, you will nonetheless spontaneously flow into the sea of Buddha’s wisdom.”

The descriptions and the reductionist interpretation in *Kenshōjōbutsugi* of Tendai theory reflect the language and concerns of Tendai *hongaku* discourse. One of the characteristics repeatedly found in medieval Tendai *hongaku* literature is the use of the six identities theory to downplay gradual models and extol original awakening. An example of this is *Sanjū shika no kotogaki* 三十四箇事書 (Notes on Thirty-four Articles) a compilation of *hongaku* teachings ascribed to Genshin (942-1017) and compiled by the Tendai monk Kōkaku (fl. 1150).<sup>487</sup> According to this text, the path of practice is an outcome of awakening, not its cause. The actualization of original awakening is, in this text, equated with the second stage of verbal identity (*myōjisoku*): the moment a “good friend” (*chishiki* 知識) reveals the truth about one’s buddhahood, this truth is instantly attained.<sup>488</sup>

<sup>486</sup> KBSZ, Zensekihen, pp. 182-183.

<sup>487</sup> *Sanjū shika no kotogaki* is included in *Tendai Hongakuron*, pp. 357-368 (*genbun*) and 152-184 (*kakikudashi*). Analyses and translated excerpts of this and other Tendai *hongaku* texts are found in Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, pp. 190-236. The date and compilation of *Sanjū shika no kotogaki* are matters of scholarly dispute. Most researchers place the text in the late Heian period. See Stone *Original Enlightenment*, pp. 387-388 note 190.

<sup>488</sup> For example:

One does not move from one stage to another. The time of encountering the teaching is precisely the time of realization. All practices and good deeds are expedient means subsequent to the fruit [of original awakening]. [...] The matter of returning to and unifying with original awakening (*gendō hongaku* 還同

A similar use of the six identities surfaces in *Shinnyokan* 眞如觀 (Contemplation of Suchness), a twelfth century Tendai *hongaku* text that is likewise attributed to Genshin. *Shinnyokan* invokes the six identities to explain the nonduality of ordinary beings and Buddha (specifically Buddha Amithābha) in terms of “suchness” (*shinnyo* 眞如). It asserts that full awakening is realized at the stage of verbal identity, when one first encounters the teaching. The pivotal factor in this realization is “faith” or “trust” (*shin* 信): one has to believe that “oneself is precisely suchness.”<sup>489</sup> Earlier, I suggested that *Shinnyokan* had certain characteristics in common with *Jōtōshōgakuron*. The latter claims that buddhahood is accomplished fully upon being informed of the truth that one is already a buddha, provided that this truth is accepted in faith (*shinju* 信受). As we will see below, *Kenshōjōbutsugi* makes exactly the same claim.

*Kenshōjōbutsugi* can be said to have emerged from the matrix of Tendai *hongaku* discourse. The Darumashū monks came from Mount Hiei, from the Yokawa precincts to be exact, a place known to be a locus of *hongaku* transmissions. They were not only familiar with *hongaku* discourse, but also actively contributed to its development. This at least is suggested in *Shinnyokan*, which makes explicit and positive reference to ideas about the mind-nature (*shinshō* 心性) as propagated in the Darumashū.<sup>490</sup> We will pick up on this reference later.

As kind of coda to this exposition on the category of “teachings,” *Kenshōjōbutsugi* produces two verses attributed to Baozhi, the illustrious contemporary of Bodhidharma. The first verse mocks Dharma Masters (*hōshi* 法師), who are portrayed as sweet talking lecturers, interested only in the money of their students. The second verse ridicules Precept Masters (律師 *risshi*), who in their obsession with Buddhist rules of conduct are not only far removed from true insight, but also hinder the salvation of their pupils. Both verses read as harsh criticisms on the mainstream Buddhist institutions. The second verse may, incidentally, also tell us something about the attitude in the Darumashū toward observance of the precepts. The verse reads:

Once there were two monks who violated the precepts.  
 Afterward they went to inquire with Upāli.  
 [Upāli] explained their offense according to the Vinaya.  
 But the monks persisted all the more in trapping birds and catching fish.  
 Then Vimalakīrti, the layman who lived in a ten feet square hut,  
 arrived and scolded him. Upāli was silent, he had no answer back.  
 Vimalakīrti’s clarification of the dharma is unsurpassed.<sup>491</sup>

The episode in the *Vimalakīrti sūtra* to which Baozhi’s verse alludes, criticizes literal adherence to the precepts. Instead it recommends insight into the emptiness of transgressions and the

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本覺) must be thoroughly studied. From the stage of verbal identity onwards, returning to and unifying with original awakening is discussed in stadia. This is because original awakening is simply present in delusion and actualized awakening is simply present in [original] awakening. Knowing that original awakening and actualized awakening are one is called returning to and unifying with original awakening (Tada Kōryū, et al., *Tendai hongakuron*, p. 357.)

<sup>489</sup> Tada Kōryū, et al., *Tendai hongakuron*, pp. 120-149. A discussion and translated excerpts of the text are found in Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, pp. 190-236.

<sup>490</sup> Darumashū influence on Tendai *hongaku* thought has been suggested by Tamura Yoshiro. See Stone, *Original enlightenment*, p. 174.

<sup>491</sup> KBSZ, Zensekihen, p. 183.

original purity of the mind. A person with such insight is “a true upholder of the Vinaya.”<sup>492</sup> As noted earlier, a similar sentiment is voiced in *Jōtōshōgakuron*. This attitude, which takes insight into the mind as the true way of keeping the precepts, is reminiscent of the notion of “formless precepts” (*musōkai* 無相戒), articulated for instance in the *Platform sūtra*.

[4.d] MIND

*Kenshōjōbutsugi* now turns to “mind,” as in the second part of Zongmi’s maxim: “The teachings are Buddha’s words. Zen is Buddha’s mind.”

We are informed that the Zen school avoids the kind of scholarly talk associated with the doctrinal schools: this kind of talk is no more than “playing with pebbles” 學語翫砂. The Zen school – now aptly called “Buddha mind school” (*Busshinshū*) – is concerned only with “instant awakening to the mind-nature.” The way to achieve this is not through strategic practices that are based on the idea of cause and effect (*shūin eka* 修因得果), but through direct insight into the formless (*musō* 無相), nondual mind. A vivid description of this mind follows:

This mind is a numinous light that shines on its own 靈光獨照, uninvolved with external objects. Towering and dignified, it transcends the highest regions of awakening. Marvelous and ultimate, it is beyond appearances such as ordinary and holy. Being of indestructible adamant substance, even the eight-armed King Mārā cannot disturb it. Being a long-living and undying mind, even twice-killed demons cannot devour it. Shapeless and formless it gulps down Mahāvairocana, the unaging Mahāpuruṣas and all the Buddhas in one sip. It picks up and squashes ten thousand dharmas in a single moment.

The Zen master explains that when this formless mind “accords with conditions” (*zuien* 隨緣) all kinds of forms are differentiated (i.e. *saṃsāra*). These forms are but illusory apparitions, images in a mirror, grounded nonetheless on the formless mind – a situation likened in our text to the presence of turbulent waves on the vast ocean. There is, in other words, a nondual connection between the pure mind and the illusory forms appearing in it. Buddhahood is attained by seeing the forms for what they really are: non-forms. This kind of perception is referred to in the text as “formless perception” (*musō chigaku* 無相知覺), the perception of a buddha.

The argument is in part framed on allusions to a famous episode in the *Diamond sūtra*. In this episode the Buddha leads his student Subhūti to the insight that the true Buddha (reality as it truly is) is not seen in the Buddha’s physical characteristics but in the emptiness of those characteristics. The Zen master warns his audience not to become infatuated with the beautiful characteristics of external Buddhas, but to see the genuine, formless, universal buddha-nature:

Why would only someone with a body height of sixteen feet and a purple-golden hue be called Universal Wise Bhagavat, or only one with a radiant nimbus and a long broad tongue be called World Honored Tathāgata? [Buddha] said: “All possession of characteristics is unreal.” So, treat the true buddha of self-nature as the Buddha! [Buddha also] explained: “Those who see me through forms are on the wrong track.” So, perceive with formless

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<sup>492</sup> Robert A. F. Thurman (tr.), *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti: A Mahāyāna Scripture* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1991), pp. 30-31.

perception! Why not truly awaken to the one mind and treat it as the Buddha [instead of] longing for an [external] Buddha and going after all kinds of colors?<sup>493</sup>

*Kenshōjōbutsu* here shows similarities with *Shinnyokan*, one of the Tendai *hongaku* texts mentioned earlier. *Shinnyokan* similarly downplays reverence for the physical attributes of the Buddha and instead encourages awareness of “suchness” (*shinnyo*), a designation for the true, empty state of reality, equated in that text with tathāgatagarbha, dharma-nature, buddha-nature and mind-nature. When elucidating the term mind-nature, *Shinnyokan* actually produces a reference to the Darumashū:

In the Darumashū they say that dharmas have only nature and no form. Concerning this the Venerable Bodhidharma composed the *Hassōron*, [saying that] the nature is revealed when forms are seen through. This means that one who understands that dharmas are just nature and have no form, is called a buddha. Indeed, we imagine false forms inside the one true and formless principle, but like images seen in a dream they are not real. This happens because in the one buddha-nature there is distortive thinking. Confused by external forms we think “this is a horse, that is an ox and that is a human being” and in the mind we make countless distinctions and project them outward. The external forms are like dreams, they are not the true buddha. When you know that in truth they are one buddha-nature and remember that there are no forms, then you are a buddha. Thus the *Avatamsaka sūtra* says: “All dharmas have no form. This is the true substance of the Buddha.”<sup>494</sup>

This line of reasoning resonates with views expressed in *Kenshōjōbutsugi*. The differentiated forms of the everyday world (things, buddhas, opinions, concepts, ants, crickets, etc) are nothing but misperceived formless buddha-nature, flowers in empty space, waves upon the ocean, all of the same empty one mind-substance. Nothing needs to be eradicated, one only has to wake up to this undifferentiated totality.

#### [5] Question & answer five

This question follows up on the distinction made earlier between Zen and the doctrinal teachings. The questioner argues that since the words of the scriptures are no less than the oral teachings of the Buddha, it is needless to posit, as the Zen school does, the separate categories of “Buddha’s mind” (*busshin*) and “outside the teaching” (*kyōge*).

In response the Zen master first explains mere referentiality of spoken and written words. He does this by juxtaposing “name” (*myō* 名) and “substance” (*tai* 体). The thrust is as follows: a word like *water* is a name that merely refers to a substance, namely: *wetness*. Because the name is not the substance itself one can say *water* all day without slaking one’s thirst. This principle is applied to the categories “inside the teachings” and “outside the teachings.” The words of the Buddha, recorded in the scriptures, are *names* that refer to a *substance*, namely: the Buddha’s mind (*busshin*). The doctrinal schools of Buddhism – “inside the teachings” – are engrossed in names; its adherents study and recite the Buddha’s words without having realized the Buddha’s mind. The Zen school – “outside the teachings” – operates on the level of the Buddha’s mind and is

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<sup>493</sup> KBSZ, Zensekihen, p. 183.

<sup>494</sup> Tada, et al (eds.), *Tendai hongakuron*, p. 137

therefore not only superior in interpreting the words of the scriptures but also in their didactic employment. The non-reliance on texts that is formulated here is not a categorical rejection but rather a repositioning of the status of texts. This repositioning in effect opens up the door to active engagement with texts and words. As a text, *Kenshōjōbutsugi* itself may serve as an example of this principle.

The use in *Kenshōjōbutsugi* of the analytical tool of *name/substance* to elucidate the distinction between the signifying language of the scriptures and the signified truth itself, can be traced to Zongmi. In his *Chan Preface*, Zongmi advances a similar thesis, structured around the example of water and wetness.<sup>495</sup> Peter Gregory notes that for Zongmi this distinction “emphasizes the fundamental qualitative difference between abstract and experiential understanding.”<sup>496</sup> Zongmi’s *name/substance* argument is also cited in Yanshou’s *Zongjinglu*, on which *Kenshōjōbutsugi* no doubt relied.<sup>497</sup> In the *Zongjinglu*, the dyads *name/substance* and the structurally equivalent *mind/word* serve Yanshou’s overall project to demonstrate that the principles of Zen are in harmony with the Buddhist textual traditions.<sup>498</sup> *Kenshōjōbutsugi* agrees with Yanshou in a general way: the sūtras contain the Buddha’s words and are as such valuable expedients. In a way reminiscent of Yanshou, *Kenshōjōbutsugi* illustrates the congruence between the *mind* and the *words* of the Buddha by mentioning several Mahāyāna sūtras and by pointing out how in essence all these sūtras describe different aspects of the luminous buddha mind. But, even Yanshou admits that texts, though useful as guides, are ultimately void and illusory and therefore must be transcended.<sup>499</sup> *Kenshōjōbutsugi* appears more forceful on this point; it uses the *word/mind* and *name/substance* distinctions in a way similar to Yanshou, yet in the end the intent of our Zen master seems more divisive than unifying. Albert Welter recently described Yanshou’s conception of Zen (Chan) as “a special tradition *within* the scriptures.”<sup>500</sup> This is not how our Zen master sees it. Despite the unmistakable validation of the Buddha’s words, as comprised in the Buddhist scriptures, *Kenshōjōbutsugi* is heavily weighted towards the Buddha’s mind – the keystone that elevates Zen above the eight doctrinal schools.

“We do not observe the practice of meditation”

After an illegible part in the manuscript, *Kenshōjōbutsugi* again asserts the fundamental nonduality of buddhas and ordinary beings. The notion of a long and gradual path to buddhahood and the need to engage in meditative practice is now explicitly rejected:

In reality there is no distinction between wise and stupid ones, and no such category as “one who learns.” Fundamentally equal, you are an [infinitely] long ago realized buddha. [Buddhahood], then, does not come after incalculable kalpas, or advance over countless units of time. [The Zen school] is not a gate for gradual advancement toward excellence, and for this reason we do not concentrate on contemplative wisdom. We are different from the teachings, [which aim to] realize the principle through the excision of impurities, and for this reason we do not observe the practice of meditation.<sup>501</sup>

<sup>495</sup> *Chanyuan zhuquanji duxu* (T. 2015, 406c05-407a04). Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*, pp. 145-147.

<sup>496</sup> Peter N. Gregory, “Tsong-Mi and the Single Word Awareness,” *Philosophy East and West* 35/3 (1985): pp. 249-269.

<sup>497</sup> *Zongjinglu* (T. 2016, 616c02).

<sup>498</sup> See Albert Welter, *Yongmin Yanshou’s Conception of Chan: A Special Transmission Within the Scriptures*, (Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>499</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>500</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>501</sup> KBSZ, *Zensekiken*, p. 187.

The ingredients for attaining awakening are now put forward, namely: the presence of a teacher who explains the truth of inherent buddhahood and a listener with faith. As noted earlier this recipe has its correlates in Tendai *hongaku* discourse. *Kenshōjōbutsugi* reads:

Awakening is attained upon encountering someone who thoroughly explains this essential point [...] So, discard your haughty attitude and set your mind on joyous faith, then without casting away the ordinary mind you will manifest the buddha mind, and without parting from your flesh body you will take on the buddha body.<sup>502</sup>

Interestingly, the notion of faith is further discussed with reference to rebirth in the Pure Land and the practice of *nenbutsu*. Belief in rebirth in a distant Pure Land through reverence and invocation of the Buddha is negatively evaluated and contrasted with the notion of faith in the Zen school. Genuine birth in the Pure Land is defined as an inner event that links faith in the Buddha with personal realization of the inherent buddha-nature. The criticism of literal Pure Land belief and *nenbutsu* practice is resumed in the course of the subsequent dialogue.

#### [6] Question & answer six

*“Karmic impediments are fundamentally void and calm”*

This entry addresses causality and karmic recompense. A questioner supposes that evil deeds committed in one’s life cause karmic afflictions, which in turn lead to rebirth in one of the six realms of transmigration. Seeing that this karmic chain of cause and effect has been going on from beginningless time, the question arises: how can it be eliminated?

In reply the Zen master deconstructs the very process of karma. Karma, the principle that *good* deeds invite future rewards and *evil* deeds create future retribution, is shown to rest on a delusion, namely the delusion of accepting *good* and *evil* as real entities. In truth, all entities are imaginary, insubstantial constructs of a mind that is caught up in discriminative thinking. This truth is illustrated in our text with the story of the Korean monk Wōnhyo 元曉 (617-686):

Wōnhyo and Uisang, two dharma masters from the Eastern Land (Silla), came to Tang China in search of a master. When the night fell they took lodging inside a desolate crypt. Thirsty, Dharma master Wōnhyo was thinking of juice. Having spotted a cup of fresh water he picked it up and drank. It was very tasty! At the brightening of the skies he saw it had been fluid from a corpse. Overcome with nausea he vomited and [suddenly] attained great awakening. He said: “I heard the words of the Buddha: ‘The three worlds are only mind, the myriad [dharma]s are only consciousness.’ The tastiness and filthiness were in me, not actually in the water!”

Expressing the same truth, our Zen master declares: “The ten good acts are not good (...) the ten evil acts are not evil (...) If you weren’t making distinctions, there wouldn’t be good and evil. Good and evil are not intrinsically designated [“good” and “evil”].” This argument, of course, has immediate bearing on the concept of karma. Once discriminative thinking is abandoned and the nondual nature of reality is discerned, the karmic process – based as it is on differentiating

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<sup>502</sup> Ibid.



between good and evil acts – is said to immediately loose its hold: “In one kṣaṇa it obliterates the karma that leads to the Avīci hell.”

A corollary to this idea is that meditative practices are useless. They are useless because they aim at counteracting afflictions that do not really exist. One just has to stop discriminative thinking so one can be in harmony with the “true mind” or “mind-nature” and thus “be free and unobstructed” and “act without constraints.” The idea is illustrated by a citation from a dialogue between the fourth Chan patriarch Daoxin and the monk Niutou (Oxhead) Farong.

[Daoxin] said: “All karmic impediments are fundamentally void and calm. All causes and effects are like phantasmal dreams. Be free and unobstructed, rely on the mind and act without constraints. Don’t create all sorts of good and evil.”

Farong asked: “Seeing that you do not allow the practice of meditation, how is the mind to counteract sense objects when they arise?”

[Daoxin] answered: “External objects are not [inherently] attractive or repulsive. Attractiveness and repulsiveness arise in the mind. When the mind stops obstinately assigning names, from where then would delusive emotions arise? When delusive emotions no longer arise, the true mind will be in its natural state of full awareness.”<sup>503</sup>

#### “Birth in the Pure Land”

Further clarifying the point, *Kenshōjōbutsugi* again picks up on the notion of birth in the Pure Land. According to our text, true birth in the Pure Land has nothing to do with being born in an external Pure Land, where one enjoys sermons by Amida or Kannon. True birth in the Pure Land, rather, is the manifestation of one’s original awakening 本覺. Birth in the Pure Land, the Zen master clarifies, means that one goes “beyond both the Noble and the Pure Land paths (*shōdō jōdo nimon* 聖道淨土二門).”

This last remark merits extra attention. The juxtaposition of the “Noble path” (*shōdōmon* 聖道門) and the “Pure Land path” (*jōdomon* 淨土門) and the use of the compound *shōdō jōdo nimon* are typical of the Pure Land teachings as propagated by Hōnen and his lineage descendants.<sup>504</sup> In his *Senchaku hongan nenbutsushū* (ca. 1198), Hōnen traces this taxonomy to the dhyāna master Daochuo 道綽禪師 (562-645) and argues that conventional Buddhist practices (*shōdōmon*), such as meditation and observance of the precepts, must be rejected in favor of the Pure Land practice of faithfully reciting Amida’s name (*jōdomon*).<sup>505</sup> In the disputes that arose among Hōnen’s students and later Pure Land teachers, the soteriological status of conventional practices in relation to the practice of *nenbutsu* was a central issue. The advice in *Kenshōjōbutsugi* to go beyond both *shōdōmon* and *jōdōmon* practices appears to be formulated with knowledge of Hōnen’s ideas and these related issues. As examined in the previous chapters, several intersections between the Darumashū, Amidism, and Hōnen’s Pure Land movement can

<sup>503</sup> KBSZ, Zensekihen, pp. 189-190.

<sup>504</sup> The compound *shōdō jōdo nimon* 聖道淨土二門 appears to be distinctively Japanese. I have not been able to locate it in Chinese sources. It is frequently used in texts from the Kamakura period that are connected to Hōnen and the Pure Land school, e.g. *Senchaku hongan nenbutsushū* 選擇本願念佛集 (T. 2608) by Hōnen, *Senchaku mitsuyō ketsu* 選擇密要決 (T. 2620) by Shōkū, *Tetsu senchaku hongan nenbutsushū* 徹選擇本願念佛集 (T. 2609) by Shōkō, *Senchaku denkōketsu gishō* 選擇傳弘決疑鈔 (T. 2610) by Ryōchū and *Kurodani Shōnin gotōroku* 黒谷上人語燈錄 (T. 2611) by Ryōe.

<sup>505</sup> See *Senchakushū English Translation Project, Hōnen’s Senchakushū: Passages on the Selection of the Nembutsu in the Original Vow* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), pp. 1-56.

indeed be identified.<sup>506</sup> As Robert Sharf pointed out in the context of early Chan in China, criticisms of Pure Land *nenbutsu* practice do not necessarily entail a rejection of the practice *per se*. Such criticisms, on the contrary, often appear in texts associated with communities in which *nenbutsu* was an important practice. What is in fact being repudiated is a particular understanding of *nenbutsu* that posits the objective existence of buddhas and Pure Lands external to the practitioner.<sup>507</sup> The critical references in *Kenshōjōbutsugi* to *nenbutsu* and birth in the Pure Land may similarly be taken to indicate that *nenbutsu* was an accepted practice among members of the addressed audience – a contested practice in need of a serious corrective.

#### [7] Question & answer seven

*Do not attach to emptiness*

Still resisting the idea of nonduality, the questioner maintains that good and evil, cause and effect are different: “How can you say that through the power of *kenshō* one instantly apprehends them as one mind, without differentiation?”

In reply, Zen master repeats that it is a deluded mind that makes all these inapt distinctions. Then there follows an interesting stipulation:

Those who simply [ ] and cultivate evil, saying: “We refute causality, good and evil are nondual,” are people with a view of emptiness that leads to the evil realms. Not even the guidance of the Buddhas will protect them. They are thieves in the Buddhadharmā. Therefore it is said that even though falling into a view of existence 有見 [is a mistake] as big as Mount Sumeru, one should also not be covered under a view of emptiness 空見, not even to the extent of a poppy seed.<sup>508</sup>

Deconstruction of dharmas (such as good and evil) by way of emptiness can easily be construed as a theoretical foundation for transgressive behavior. Starkly put: when all things and values are equally nonsubstantial, anything goes. The Zen master, however, sternly reprimands those who take emptiness as a rationale for evil-doing: such persons are “thieves in the Buddhadharmā.” The concerns expressed in this reprimand may very well bear on a social reality in the addressed audience. As was the case in Hōnen’s Pure Land movement, some groups or individuals associated with the Darumashū may very well have displayed behavior that was seen as dissolute.<sup>509</sup> As will be clear from Chapter Eight, the criticism of the Darumashū voiced by Eisai exactly focuses on this issue and uses similar language to denounce it.

To check those who cultivate evil on the basis of emptiness, *Kenshōjōbutsugi* points out that emptiness (here delineated as “nonexistence”) is a concept that in the end must be transcended:

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<sup>506</sup> For instance: Dainichi Nōnin discoursed with Hōnen’s student Shōkō and was involved in raising funds for an Amida statue at the Kenkō-in, presided over by Hōnen’s student Shōkū; the Darumashū temple Sambōji was frequented by *nenbutsu hijiri*; the Darumashū monk Ekan lectured on the three major Amitābha sūtras; the Darumashū/Sōtō/Shingon monk Gijun practiced Amida fire rituals.

<sup>507</sup> Robert H. Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treatise* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press), p. 46.

<sup>508</sup> KBSZ, Zensekihen, pp.191-192.

<sup>509</sup> On radical Amida groups see Fabio Rambelli, “Just behave as you like, “Prohibitions and impurities are not a problem”: Radical Amida Cults and Popular Religiosity in Premodern Japan,” in *Approaching the Land of Bliss: Religious Praxis in the Cult of Amitābha*, edited by Richard K. Payne and Kenneth K. Tanaka (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), pp. 169-201.

The Buddha, in fact, expounded neither existence nor emptiness. When people grasped at existence he expounded emptiness, just to break their attachment to existence. He did not say: “Cling to emptiness!” When people were attached to emptiness, he proclaimed existence, just to grind their attachment to emptiness, but he did not say: “Cling to existence!” Why would he speak of existence and emptiness to benefit those who cling to neither? When the extremes “emptiness” and “existence” are both gone, the designation “middle way” also disappears. [To view reality in terms of ] the threefold truth [as the Tendai school does] is a provisional stage. The one mind alone is true reality.<sup>510</sup>

The warning not to use emptiness as a way to negate values (and hence karma), and so justify evil behavior, seems to be pragmatic. It shows an awareness of the ethical perils of emptiness thought. And yet, by invoking the “one mind” as the ultimate reality – a kind of higher emptiness, the *tathāgatagarbha* (the empty space under the empty flowers) – the argument circles back to what comes close to a negation of the karmic process. In the end, it is reasserted that those who transcend textual study and awaken to the one mind understand that there is ultimately no good and evil, and hence no karmic causality: “there is no causality-dust on the one mind-ground, and there are no good or evil waves on the sea of true reality.

#### **[8] Question & answer eight**

*“Just apprehend the one mind”*

According to the questioner karma has been accumulating for kalpas, it sticks to a person like glue: how could it possibly be erased simply by awakening to the one mind?

The Zen master rehearses that a deep understanding of emptiness exposes the building blocks of karma as illusory creations arising from the one mind, which itself is always formless and calm. In addition, it is emphasized that this understanding is not attained gradually over eons, by way of practice – rather, it occurs suddenly “in the time it takes to stretch and bend back your arm.” The Hongzhou Chan master Dazhu Huihai is cited in support: “Deluded people seek attainment and realization. Awakened people do not seek or attain anything. Deluded people anticipate longlasting kalpas. Awakened people suddenly see the original buddha.”<sup>511</sup>

Much of the entry (including the question part!) is cited or paraphrased in Japanese from the *Zongjinglu*. For instance:

Bodhisattva Yongshi committed a sexual transgression and still awakened to non-arising. Nun Hsing had no spiritual practice and still realized the fruit of the path. So, [if even they succeeded], how could one who trusts and understands the buddhadharma, and who clearly apprehends his own mind, fail to attain awakening? Someone who doubted this said: “Why should we not eliminate the afflictions?” I explained: “Just clearly see that murder, theft, sexual transgressions and conceit all issue from the one mind! The moment they arise they are calm: what need is there for further elimination? Just apprehend the one mind and the myriads of objects will naturally become like phantasms. Why? All dharmas arise from the mind. Since the mind is formless, what characteristics could dharmas possibly possess?”<sup>512</sup>

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<sup>510</sup> KBSZ, Zensekihen, p. 192.

<sup>511</sup> Ibid., p.193.

<sup>512</sup> Ibid., pp.193-194.

It is not difficult to imagine how a passage as this one, which on first glance trivializes murder, theft, rape and deceit, may have fueled indignation in contemporaries, especially in those who sought to restore strict observance of the Buddhist precepts, such as for instance Eisai. No doubt it was in part this kind of language that made the Darumashū a controversial movement.

#### [9] Question & answer nine

A questioner wonders why, given the alledged nondual state of reality, the master still distinguishes between ordinary beings and buddhas. The Zen master explains that these distinctions are indeed redundant, but that they seem real to those who have not yet awakened. The required, sudden insight into nonduality is compared to a surgical scalpel cutting through a cataract that distorts one's perception:

The moment red and green are in the eyes, a thousand flowers distort the sky. The moment the golden scalpel cuts the eye-membrane, all is empty, tranquil and serene. The moment you are in a nonawakened state of mind, ordinary beings and sages, worthy and despicable, are differentiated. The moment you are in a fully awakened state of mind, the sad distinction between ordinary beings and buddhas is gone.<sup>513</sup>

The metaphor of the golden scalpel derives from the *Nirvāṇa sūtra*. Like a good doctor who removes his patient's cataracts with a scalpel, the Buddha (by preaching the *Nirvāṇa sūtra*) reveals the difficult to perceive buddha-nature. Whereas the patients in the *Nirvāṇa sūtra* regain clear vision gradually, *Kenshōjōbutsugi* takes the position that awakening is attained suddenly and all-at-once: "The moment the golden scalpel cuts the eye-membrane, all is empty and tranquil."

#### [10] Question & answer ten

The questioner insists that good and evil (and the concomitant karmic process) are simply a fact: "A thoroughly evil icchantika [i.e. a sentient being incapable of attaining nirvāṇa] falls into the Avīci hell, a thoroughly virtuous Tathāgata dwells in tranquil light."

In reply, the Zen master once more explains that this is deluded thinking. He then resorts to some highly wrought lament:

Your [mistaken] view of a self is towering. Your deluded attachments reach deep. When, Oh when, will be the day that Mount Self suddenly crumbles to reveal the sky of the true self? When will Delusion Ocean dry up instantly to [reveal] the void of the golden lake? The sword of self-assertion is the enemy that injures your body. The rope of deluded attachment is the error that binds your chest. You must throw away the sword of the provisional self and polish the sword of the true self, cut the ropes of bondage and seize the cord of great samādhi.<sup>514</sup>

Descriptions such as this bring out the paradox of nonduality, something that is present throughout *Kenshōjōbutsugi* and rests on a very old distinction between relative truth (Skt. *saṃvṛti-satya*) and absolute truth (Skt. *paramārtha-satya*). From a deluded perspective there is

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<sup>513</sup> Ibid., p. 194.

<sup>514</sup> Ibid.

delusion and awakening, while from an awakened perspective this bifurcation is nonexistent. The Zen master, accordingly, teaches his deluded students in dualistic terms – positing for instance a false self and a true self. But in the end he again disrupts his own description, by saying that such oppositions are in truth indifferentiable: “The true and false paths are not two (...) *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are one. How true these words are!”

## II. B

Though the discussion continuous as before, there is a change in form and didactic style. Rather than going through each dialogical entry separately, I will provide a concise overview, citing only from a few entries. This should be sufficient to illustrate the gist of this section and examine some of the details.

The sequence of thirty-four short questions and answers [11~44] create the impression of a vivid exchange between the Zen master and a single questioner. On part of the Zen master there is a shift from discursive, doctrinal explanation to rhetorical counterquestion and cryptic statement. This shift becomes visible in Q&A eleven and twelve, at which point the Zen master is asked to explain the essence of Zen without taking recourse to doctrinal theories:

[11] QUESTION: It seems that [you are using] words in various ways here, but your replies do not go beyond the doctrinal side [of Buddhism]. Are we to consider this the dharma gate of the Zen school? Or have you been answering in accord with the doctrinal gate?  
ANSWER: In accordance with the questions asked I just momentarily borrowed from the doctrinal gate. It is not the true purport of the Zen gate.

[12] QUESTION: Please explain the real meaning of this true teaching, so I will understand it.  
ANSWER: The moment stone tigers fight at the foot of a mountain and reed flowers sink to the bottom of a lake, I will tell you the essential point of this teaching.<sup>515</sup>

The Zen master clarifies that his earlier, wordy explanations were simply a response to a certain type of inquiry. He was, in other words, simply using doctrinal teachings as an expedient means appropriate to the level of the questioner. The metaphors of the “stone tigers” that fight at the foot of a mountain and the “reed flowers” that sink in a lake illustrate things that are impossible. The expressions here indicate the impossibility of verbally imparting the essential point of Zen. The questioner has to realize it for himself. This point has of course been repeatedly made earlier in the text (e.g. “talking about it is like chewing on empty space”). The uncomprehending and obstinate questioner nonetheless keeps on demanding answers. The Zen master refuses to reembark on discursive exposé. He either rhetorically reverses the questions or posits short and sometimes cryptic statements.

At times the Zen master’s statements appear rather cryptic, but they are in fact not nonsensical. For instance, with the phrase “There is no hair on the back of a tortoise [34],” the master tries to make it clear to the questioner that he is pointlessly grappling with concepts that have no basis in

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<sup>515</sup> Ibid., p. 195.

reality. Another one-line answer – “Sun and moon have no flaws” [35] – may be taken to refer to the buddha-nature, which like the sun and the moon is ever immaculate and luminous. When the questioner asks how to attain the awareness of a buddha, the master in reply does not expand on how this might be done. Instead he merely says: “The lantern boy comes looking for fire” [42], a Zen phrase that indicates the fallacy of searching for what one already possesses. When the questioner says he does not understand, the master replies: “The bowl faces up, the kashaya points down.” The kashaya and bowl are of course the quintessential symbols of the Zen lineage. But they are also tangible objects that were used by Buddhist monks and nuns in their daily lives. The remark then may be interpreted as an affirmation of the “suchness” of the everyday world. The questioner’s rice bowl faces up and his kashaya points down. Right there, the functioning of the buddha-nature is immediately and perfectly manifest. Form is emptiness, emptiness is form. Nothing needs to be added or taken away.

The questioner repeatedly says he does not understand. At a certain point he even qualifies the Zen master’s statements as “incomprehensible” and “nonsense” (*itazura*). Within the parameters of the text, these remarks represent the questioner’s spiritual obstructions, bringing to the fore the epistemic mismatch between the the struggling student and the awakened teacher. In this sense section II.B resembles the so-called “encounter dialogues” of classical Chan. John Mcrae explains:

Chan encounter dialogue eschews the straightforward exchange of ideas; it is characterized by various types of logical disjunctions, inexplicable and iconoclastic pronouncements, gestures and physical demonstrations, and even assaultive behavior such as shouts and blows with hand, foot, or stick. The best way to understand such features is as a function of the fundamental mismatch of intention between the students and masters as depicted in these texts. The students are generally depicted as requesting assistance in ascending the path of Buddhist spiritual training toward enlightenment. The masters, for their part, are represented as refusing to accede to their students’ naïve entreaties, instead deflecting their goal seeking perspective and attempting to propel them into the realization of their own inherent perfection.<sup>516</sup>

The effected “mismatch” in section II.B of *Kenshōjōbutsugi* can be said to reflect this Chan literary model. At the same time it may also be an echo of actual discords in the historical reception of the Darumashū. The use of codified Zen lore by Japanese Zen teachers in the late Heian and Kamakura periods both attracted people and antagonized people. A sign of this can be seen in the emergence of the so-called “Daruma-uta” in contemporary literary circles. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the term *Daruma uta* 達磨歌 (Bodhidharma verse) was adopted by a circle of poets around the nobleman Fujiwara Teika (1162-1241), who were fascinated with Zen lore. These poets, according to Matsumura Yūji, were influenced by the activities of Nōnin’s Darumashū. Critics rejected the circle’s unconventional style and appropriated the word *Daruma uta* as a pejorative for obscurantist nonsense poetry.<sup>517</sup>

In closing, I would like to draw attention to Dialogue no. 39, which contains a strikingly succinct answer by the Zen master. It consist of one word, *reichi* 靈知 (numinous awareness), an important concept in Darumashū discourse:

<sup>516</sup> McRae, *Seeing Through Zen*, p. 77.

<sup>517</sup> See Matsumura Yūji, “Teika: Daruma-uta wo megutte,” in *Shinkokinshū to sono jidai*, Waka Bungaku Ronshū 8 (Tokyo: Kazama Shobō, 1991).

QUESTION: If one maintains that the mind-nature is neither foolish or wise, should it not follow that it is devoid of understanding, like hollow space, a tree, or a rock?

ANSWER: Numinous awareness 靈知.

QUESTION: If one maintains that it has awareness, should it not follow that it deliberates, measures and calculates?

ANSWER: It goes with the flow 任運.

The term “numinous awareness” (*reichi* 靈知) is of central importance in the Chan thought of Zongmi; in extension it is frequently found in Yanshou’s *Zongjinglu*. Zongmi uses the term “awareness” – along with “clear and ever-present awareness (*ryōryō jōchi* 了了常知), “empty tranquil awareness” (*kūjakuchi* 空寂知) and “spontaneous tranquil awareness (*nin’un jakuchi* 任運寂知) – as synonymous with the buddha-nature. As noted earlier, “awareness,” for Zongmi was “not a specific cognitive faculty but the underlying ground of consciousness that is always present in all sentient life.”<sup>518</sup> This description resonates with the view on buddha-nature (mind-nature, etc) expressed in *Kenshōjōbutsugi*. In fact, the above cited dialogue is based on a passage from Zongmi’s *Chan Preface* (also cited in the *Zongjinglu*).<sup>519</sup>

The use of the term *reichi* in *Kenshōjōbutsugi* is notable, too, because it matches allusions to Darumashū teachings in external sources. The Sōtō/Darumashū monk Keizan writes that when Ejō and Dōgen first met they discussed *kenshō reichi* (seeing the nature, the numinous awareness), the implication being that *kenshō reichi* is what Ejō had been studying in the Darumashū, before meeting Dōgen.<sup>520</sup> *Reichi* is moreover integral to the criticism on the Darumashū implicit in writings of Dōgen. Dōgen connects the notion of numinous awareness to the so-called “Śreṇika heresy,” the idea of an indestructible self. We will return to this issue in Chapter Eight.

### *Concluding remarks*

*Kenshōjōbutsugi* consists of dialogues between a Zen master and his audience. The text heavily relies on Yanshou’s *Zongjinglu* and on writings of Zongmi (mostly via the *Zongjinglu*). The work is much concerned with explaining the difference between Zen and the doctrinal schools of Buddhism, which are equated with the so-called eight schools of Buddhism in Japan. At the heart of the text is a juxtaposition between the Tendai and Zen schools. Tendai is said to operate on the level of the “Buddha’s words,” whereas Zen operates on the level of the “Buddha’s mind.” The teachings of Tendai are presented as an imposing system of practices and textual studies and yet in the end this system is said to teach only one simple lesson: ordinary beings are a priori buddhas. It is stressed that buddhahood is not achieved through practices, but accomplished instantly the moment it is revealed by a teacher – provided one has “joyous faith” in the truth that is being proclaimed. In its reduction of the soteriological path to its bare minimum, *Kenshōjōbutsugi* shows a deep affinity with certain strands of Tendai *hongaku* discourse.

*Kenshōjōbutsugi* contains critical remarks on *nenbutsu* practice. It rejects literal conceptions of the Pure Land, and points out that birth in the Pure Land is a spiritual state. The particular phrasing in this criticism suggests interaction with the Pure Land movement of Hōnen. The text’s

<sup>518</sup> Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, p. 218

<sup>519</sup> *Zongjinglu* (T. 2016, 615a7-10).

<sup>520</sup> *Denkōroku* (T. 2585, 409b09).

obvious concern with correcting mistaken views of Pure Land *nenbutsu* no doubt points to the significance of this practice in the community that produced the text.

At a certain point in the treatise the style of discourse changes. The discursive method of explanation that characterized much of the foregoing section makes place for a kind of “encounter dialogue.” This part of the text aims to depict the immediate, nondiscursive “Zen aspect” of the dharma. Thus the twofold structure of the text as a whole can be said to mirror the guiding principle of its argument, namely Zongmi’s dictum: “The teachings are Buddha’s words. Zen is Buddha’s mind.”