



Universiteit  
Leiden  
The Netherlands

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

Breugem, V.M.N.

### **Citation**

Breugem, V. M. N. (2012, May 30). *From prominence to obscurity : a study of the Darumashū : Japan's first Zen school*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/19051>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/19051>

**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/19051> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

**Author:** Breugem, Vincent Michaël Nicolaas

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

**Issue Date:** 2012-05-30

### PART THREE: DISPARAGEMENTS

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### DARUMASHŪ DETRACTORS

#### EISAI'S CRITICISMS

Fueled by the complaints of the monk Ryōben, Tendai monks of Mount Hiei petitioned the court for a ban on the increasingly popular Zen movement. Their appeal was successful and led to the 1194 imperial proscription of Zen propagation. The proscription, it will be remembered, explicitly mentions Eisai and Nōnin as founders of a distinct Zen school, referred to as Darumashū. In reaction to this ban, and to counter criticisms on his propagation of Zen, Eisai wrote his famous *Kōzengokokuron* (Treatise on the protection of the state through the propagation of Zen) (1198). *Kōzengokokuron* appropriates the term Darumashū to denote Nōnin's group which, according to Eisai, represented a distortion of the Zen tradition, not to be confused with the real thing. In doing so, Eisai aimed to disassociate himself from Nōnin with whom he was conflated. On the basis of various passages in *Kōzengokokuron* that directly or indirectly refer to the Darumashū, we will examine how Eisai tried to effect this disassociation.

The overarching theme in *Kōzengokokuron* is Eisai's appeal to restore observance of the precepts in what was widely believed to be a period of decline (*mappō*). To Eisai the monastic laxity and disregard for the precepts that he witnessed around him were bound up with an erroneous interpretation of the doctrine of emptiness, an error that he considered to be personified in Nōnin's Darumashū and the radical *hongaku* currents within the Tendai school. Passages in *Kōzengokokuron* that allude to this issue are found especially in the third chapter of the treatise, entitled *Sejinketsugimon* 世人決疑門 (Settling the Doubts of the Public). The Darumashū is directly mentioned in the question eleven:

QUESTION: When talking about the Zen school some people erroneously call it the Bodhidharma school (Darumashū). [Followers of that school] themselves say: "No practice, no cultivation. Originally there are no afflictions; fundamentally they are bodhi. So, there is no need to keep the precepts and no need to practice. We can just lie down and sleep. Why toil at practicing Buddha invocation, worship relics or restrain one's intake of food?" What do you think about this teaching?<sup>579</sup>

The question cleverly narrows down the term "Darumashū" to designate a specific group – Nōnin's movement – and opposes it to the "Zenshū," the genuine Zen tradition represented by Eisai. In addition, the passage provides a nutshell characterization of Darumashū ideas. In paraphrase: originally there are no defilements, everything and everyone is equally buddha, formal practices and moral disciplines are therefore redundant: we should just behave naturally.

---

<sup>579</sup> 問曰。或人妄稱禪宗名曰達磨宗。而自云。無行無修本無煩惱元是菩提。是故不用事戒不用事行。但應用偃臥。何勞修念佛供舍利長齋節食耶云云是義如何。(T. 2543,7c26-8a01). A critical edition of *Kōzengokokuron* by Yanagida Seizan is included in *Chūsei Zenke no shisō*, Nihon shisō taikai 16 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1976), pp. 7-122. For convenience I refer to the Taisho edition.

The dictum ascribed to the Darumashū – “originally there are no afflictions; fundamentally they are bodhi” – is the statement whereby Huike earned Bodhidharma’s blessing and became the second Chan patriarch. This statement, it will be remembered, derives from an early version of the Bodhidharma myth; this version was prominently cited in *Hōmon taikō*, from which Eisai probably lifted it. Eisai’s extensive answer to the above cited query starts as follows:

These [Darumashū followers] are the kind that does not refrain from evil. They are like those who in the sacred scriptures are said [to have a wrong] view of emptiness. You should not talk with these people or sit in their company. You should evade them by a hundred *yojanas*.<sup>580</sup>

Eisai’s answer captures his twofold critique of the Darumashū: Nōnin and his adherents engage in evil activities (i.e. violate the Buddhist precepts), and do so on the basis of a wrong understanding of emptiness (*kūken* 空見, Skt. *śūnyatā-dṛṣṭi*)

### *Wrong understanding of emptiness*

The teaching of emptiness, as developed in the Mādhyamika tradition centring on Nāgārjuna, holds that all things (dharmas) are devoid of inherent existence (Skt. *svabhāva*). A classic example is the chariot, which upon analysis turns out to be an assemblage of parts (axles, wheels, spokes, etc). Something that is intrinsically a chariot is not found. The chariot in this sense is empty, an unreal object, fabricated by the imputing and conceptualizing workings of the mind. The same goes for the chariot’s axles, wheels, spokes of the wheel, and so on. Real entities, things that have *svabhāva*, are not found. The teaching of emptiness aims to cure people of the tendency to fabricate such things – a tendency that causes suffering, since with regard to these things people develop desires, revulsion, confusion and so on (which are likewise empty). To understand emptiness involves the relinquishment of all views that lead one to acknowledge things as having *svabhāva*. To prevent emptiness itself from being so objectified, Mādhyamika posits the emptiness of emptiness (Skt. *śūnyāta śūnyāta*). This notion implies that emptiness is not to be categorically adhered to; it is an instrument that serves to reveal the true state of affairs (emptiness); once it is understood it should be relinquished, like a medicine ingested when ill and relinquished when cured. To have a wrong “view of emptiness” implies objectifying emptiness as if it were an existent thing or, conversely, understanding emptiness as the complete

<sup>580</sup> 答曰。其人無惡不造之類也。如聖教中言空見者是也。不可與此人共語同座。應避百由旬矣。Eisai carefully draws from canonical sources. Yanagida (*Chūsei Zenke no shisō*, p. 42) traces Eisai’s words as follows: “The kind that does not refrain from evil” derives from the (apocryphal) *Fanwanjing* 梵網經 (T.24,1006b7-8): “A disciple of the Buddha who maliciously watches a precept-holding monk handle an incense burner while performing a bodhisattva practice, or argues and two-facedly slanders an upright man and does not refrain from evil: such a person commits a minor offence.” The warning to evade such evil people “by a hundred yojanas” is traced to the *Dabaojijing* collection 大寶積經 (Skt. *Mahāratnakūṭa sūtra*; *Daihōshakukyō*) (T. 310, 528a10-11): “In a place of frivolous talk and disputes, passions arise in abundance. The sage must by all means stay far from such a place and distance himself a hundred yojanas.” The warning to “not talk with these people or sit in their company,” according to Yanagida, echoes the *Lotus sūtra* (T. 262, 37a22-37b02):

As for the associations proper for them, bodhisattvas and mahasattvas should not associate closely with rulers, princes, high ministers or heads of offices. They should not associate closely with non-Buddhists, Brahmins or Jains, or with those who compose works of secular literature or books extolling the heretics, nor should they be closely associated with lokayatas or anti-lokayatas. They should not be closely associated with hazardous amusement, boxing or wrestling, or with actors or others engaging in various kinds of illusionary entertainment, or with the cāṇḍālas, persons engaging in raising pigs, engaged in raising pigs, sheep, chickens or dogs, or those who engage in hunting or fishing or other evil activities. If such persons at times come to one, then one may preach the Dharma for them, but one should expect nothing from it. (Translation: Burton Watson, *The Lotus Sutra*, Columbia University Press, 1993, p. 197)

annihilation of things.<sup>581</sup> According to Nāgārjuna, having a wrong view of emptiness is extremely harmful: “The great noble ones explained that the method of emptiness is meant for relinquishing all views. Those with a view of emptiness, the Buddhas cannot reform.”<sup>582</sup>

Channeled through Yogācāra and tathāgatagarbha thought, Mādhyamika teachings of emptiness would undergo significant modulations, especially in East Asian appropriations.<sup>583</sup> Throughout, Nāgārjuna’s admonitions and comparable warnings against *śūnyatā-drṣṭi* were consistently invoked. Eisai, too, points up a wrong view of emptiness (*kūken*) as the gravest of errors:

It is better to give rise to a view of an [existent] self that towers high as Mount Sumeru, than to give rise to arrogance based on a view of emptiness! Why? All views can be removed with emptiness, but those who give rise to a view of emptiness are incurable.<sup>584</sup>

The wrong view of emptiness that Eisai ascribes to the Darumashū pertains to the aspect of annihilation, a misapplication of emptiness that leads to the uncontrolled rejection of Buddhist practices and moral discipline. Through a lengthy quote from Zhiyi’s *Mohe zhiguan*, Eisai illustrates this error and warns his audience of its ruinous effects. These effects, it is explained, do not only relate to the individual, but extend to the whole of society and, ultimately, to the very fate of Buddhism:

In the *Zhiguan* of the Tendai school it says:<sup>585</sup> “North of Huai and the [Yellow] river there are people who practice [a wrong kind of] Mahāyāna emptiness. Ignoring the prohibition, they handle snakes.<sup>586</sup> I will explain this now. Their late master contemplated good dharmas. A long time passed but he did not penetrate them. Letting his mind wander off he turned to evil dharmas and contemplated these. He gained a little concentration and developed a pale understanding of emptiness. He did not know about karmic conditions and individual propensities. He did not come up to the intent of the Buddha. Relying solely on this method he enthusiastically taught others. Teaching others for a long time, some came upon a scrap of benefit, like termites that accidentally trace a glyph when gnawing through a piece of wood. Taking this as a confirmation, he considered [his method] a proven truth. Anything else he considered deluded talk. He laughed at people who observed the precepts and cultivated virtue, and considered them violators of the way. He zealously instructed people, causing evil everywhere. Eyeless and blind, he did not distinguish right from wrong; his spiritual faculties were dull, his afflictions heavy. Listening to his explanations and going along with his profligacy, everyone trusted him and followed him in rejecting rules and prohibitions. There is no wrong he did not commit. His transgressions piled up as high as mountainpeaks. In the end he had caused the whole populace to ignore the precepts as [one

---

<sup>581</sup> Drawing on NG Yu-kwan, *T’ien-t’ai Buddhism and Early Mādhyamika* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), pp. 12-38.

<sup>582</sup> *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā* (Verses of the Middle Way), translated into Chinese by Kumārajīva (344-413) (*Zhonglun* 中論, T. 1564, 18c16-c17).

<sup>583</sup> See Robert M. Gimello, “Apophatic and Kataphatic Discourse in Mahāyāna: A Chinese View,” *Philosophy East and West* 26/2 (1976): pp. 117-136.

<sup>584</sup> [寶雲經云。] 寧起我見積如須彌。莫以空見起增上慢。所以者何。一切諸見以空得脫。若起空見則不可治。 (*Kōzengokokuron*, T. 2543, 8a03-05).

<sup>585</sup> *Mohe zhiguan* (T. 1911, 18c21-19a11).

<sup>586</sup> An allusion to a simile found in Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā* about the danger of the teaching of emptiness: “By a misperception of emptiness a person of little intelligence is destroyed. Like a snake incorrectly seized. Or a spell incorrectly cast.” (Jay L. Garfield, *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nāgārjuna’s Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā*, Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 68).

would ignore] a blade of grass. The sovereign and his ministers thereupon destroyed Buddhism. A poisonous vapour had deeply entered [society] and to this day it has not been removed. This is the ghost of the destruction of Buddhism. It is also the ghost of our present age. Why do [these people] stick to their own [flawed] ideas? What's the reason for this? Fools like this have no wisdom in their minds. They trust their original teacher, emulate his predecessors, and staunchly assert that this is the way. They follow their whims and take it easy, they indulge in pleasures and fail to rectify their delusions.”

This is about a mad man long ago, North of Huai and the [Yellow] river. He faintly heard about the excellence of the Zen teaching, but was ignorant of its practical methods. He just meditated randomly, discarded praxis in both its concrete and theoretical aspects, and so got enmeshed in false views. Such persons are called “masters with an evil attachment to emptiness.” They are dead corpses in the Buddha’s dharma.<sup>587</sup>

In Zhiyi’s *Mohe zhiguan*, the above translated passage refers to the persecution of Buddhism under Northern Zhou Emperor Wudi in the years 574-577. Lifted from the original (con)text and inserted into Eisai’s text, the passage transforms into a thinly veiled attack on Nōnin and his followers. Sixth century northern China is transposed to late Heian period Japan, the deluded master in Zhiyi’s text becomes Nōnin who, having descended into a wrong understanding of emptiness, rejects practices and precepts and thereby violates the intent of the Buddha. Propagating his false teaching, the deluded master commits every thinkable transgression and ends up infecting the whole of society with his evil. Eisai here circuitously depicts Nōnin and his following as a dissolute group and warns of their potential danger: the vices of this bogus Zen group will spread through the country, cause social deterioration, and potentially ignite a state led persecution of the Buddhist religion.

The link between Buddhism, state and society that is implied here is a central theme running through *Kōzengokokuron* and other works by Eisai. Not unlike Nichiren, Eisai envisioned a Buddhist state where the Law of the Buddha and the Law of the Sovereign are in harmony, a model exemplified for instance in a parable from the *Nirvāṇa sūtra*, mentioned by Eisai in the *Sejinketsugimon* chapter. In this parable a virtuous King takes up arms against a group of evil monks within his realm, who threaten to attack a pure monk, devoted to the precepts.<sup>588</sup> In a Buddhist state, it is implied, forceful legal measures must be taken by the sovereign against monks who contravene the Buddhist code of discipline. The 1194 imperial ban on the Bodhidharma school can, in a way, be seen as such a legal measure. Eisai did not question the judiciary or religious legitimacy of the prohibition, but simply wanted it to bear on Nōnin’s movement alone.

<sup>587</sup> *Kōzengokokuron* (T. 2534, 8a09-26). My translations from *Kōzengokokuron* benefitted from the translation by Gishin Tokiwa, included in *Zen Texts*, edited by John McRae (California: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2005), pp 45-238.

<sup>588</sup> The story from the *Nirvāṇa sūtra* (T. 374, 383c20-384a13) is situated in the immeasurably remote era of a Buddha named Bliss Amplification 歡喜增益. It tells of a pure monk named Awakened-Virtuous 覺德比丘 who is attacked by evil monks for propagating the precepts. Hearing of the attack the King of the realm, named Possessor of Virtue 有德王, takes up arms against the evildoers and subdues them, but in the act becomes fatally wounded. The monk praises the King for his protection of the dharma and assures him of future merit. The King rejoices and dies to be reborn in the paradise of Buddha Akṣobhya, where he becomes this Buddha’s chief student and is eventually joined by his relatives, his soldiers and subjects.

### Lazy fellows, dead corpses, and thieves in the Buddhadharma.

Criticism directed at the Darumashū can also be read in several of Eisai's remarks about Zen followers who, in his view, misapply the Zen school's dictum "no reliance on words and letters" (*furyū monji* 不立文字). Eisai himself, to be sure, affirms *furyū monji* as one of the key statements made by Bodhidharma; a statement that pronounces the ineffable and unobtainable nature of the Buddhadharma – of which Zen is the direct manifestation:

A person who says that Buddha's Zen resides in words, letters and language actually slanders the Buddha and slanders the sangha.<sup>589</sup>

The text-transcending muscle that Eisai is flexing here is in fact firmly embedded in a model of Zen praxis that appreciates and incorporates textual study. Eisai, in this context, comments on "lazy fellows" (*randa no tomogara* 懶惰輩) who – under the pretext of "no reliance on words and letters" – ignore the Buddhist scriptures and so "ruin the Buddhadharma" 滅佛法:

The *Guanfo sanmei jing* says: "Students in the future who want to see the Buddha must cultivate three methods. One, recite the profound scriptures that are the sūtras. Two, immaculately observe the precepts and behave without faults. Three, restrain one's thoughts and have a mind without distractions." This is why, this [Zen] school qua study covers the eight divisions of the canon and qua practice combines the six pāramitās. As for those who under the pretext that in the Zen school "this very mind is buddha" do not investigate the [textual] traces of the [Buddha's] teachings: how are they not different from someone who extinguishes a torch at night – when it is dawning but not yet light – and then falls into a ravine?<sup>590</sup>

In 1198 – the year *Kōzengokokuron* was completed – the only Zen group active in Japan, besides Eisai's, was Nōnin's Darumashū. Passages in the text that allude to other, "lazy" or "evil" Zen followers (such as that cited above) cannot but refer to Nōnin's group. The excuse of these "lazy fellows" for not studying Buddhist scriptures is said to be the idea – universally accepted in the Chan/Zen tradition – that "this mind is buddha" (*sokushin zebutsu* 即心是佛). To Eisai such a rejection of textual study on account of the fact that "this mind is buddha" was a dangerous mistake that obscured the concrete Buddhist path.

Further down in *Kōzengokokuron* the matter of "no reliance on words and letters" is raised again. It is made clear that the misuse of this dictum is bound up with an "evil attachment to emptiness" (*akushūkū* 惡取空), i.e. the wrong view of emptiness that Eisai ascribed to the Darumashū. Distancing himself from these "Zen masters of dim realization" (*anshō zenji* 暗證禪師) who commit this error, Eisai declares:

Our Zen school abhors those masters whose realization is dim 暗證師 and hates those with evil attachment to emptiness 惡取空, just like the bottom of the great ocean repels corpses 大海底厭死屍. We rely only on the perfect stage and cultivate the perfect and sudden [teaching]. Externally, with the rules of discipline, we keep away from wrongs. Internally, with compassion, we benefit others. This is called the Zen school. This is called the

<sup>589</sup> 若人言佛禪有文字言語者。實是謗佛謗法謗僧。(Kōzengokokuron, T. 2543, 11b27-b28).

<sup>590</sup> Kōzengokokuron (T. 2543, 6c11-c17).



Buddhadharma. The fellows of blind Zen 盲禪 and evil attachment [to emptiness] do not have these principles. They are thieves in the Buddhadharma! 佛法中之賊.<sup>591</sup>

The severity of Eisai's accusations is mirrored in his harsh tone and derogatory idiom. Eisai "hates" (*nikumu* 惡) and "abhors" (*kirau* 嫌) followers of the Darumashū. He refers to them as "dead corpses" and "thieves." The expression "thieves in the Buddhadharma" derives from the *Fanwang jing* and refers to violators of the precepts, who are "no different from an animal or a piece of wood."<sup>592</sup> To say that someone is a corpse is rude, especially in Buddhist contexts wherein bodies and corpses are strongly associated with impurity and disgust.<sup>593</sup> The references to corpses, moreover, engage a particular Buddhist simile. A classic instance of this simile is found in the *Cullavagga* of the Vinaya Piṭaka:

Just, O Bhikkhus, as the great ocean will not brook association with a dead corpse; but whatsoever dead corpse there be in the sea that will it – and quickly – draw to the shore, and cast it out upon the dry land – just so, O Bhikkhus, if there be any individual evil in conduct, wicked in character, of impure and doubtful behaviour, not a Samana though he have taken the vows of one, not a religious student though he have taken the vows of one, foul within, full of cravings, a worthless creature; with him will the saṃgha brook no association, but quickly, on its meeting together, will it cast him out. And what though that man should himself be seated in the midst of the Bhikkhu-saṃgha, verily, both is he afar off from the saṃgha, and the saṃgha from him.<sup>594</sup>

*Dazhidulun*, attributed to Nāgārjuna, similarly has: "The saṃgha is a great ocean. Moral discipline is the shoreline. One who violates the moral discipline is ultimately not counted as a member of the saṃgha. Like the great ocean, it does not cohabit with dead corpses!"<sup>595</sup> The simile illustrates expulsion from the saṃgha. Eisai, in other words, states that transgressive monks like Nōnin and his group do not belong in the Buddhist community and must be excommunicated.

This type of criticism pervades *Kōzengokokuron*. Elsewhere in the treatise, Eisai disparages a certain "band that breaks the precepts and prohibitions." Some of these criticisms are aimed at a broader trend that connects the Darumashū to radical *hongaku* elements in the Tendai school, the

---

<sup>591</sup> *Kōzengokokuron* (T. 2543, 7b27-c01).

<sup>592</sup> *Fanwang jing* 梵網經 (Bommōkyō) (T. 1484, 1009a13-a19):

If a disciple of the Buddha sincerely leaves home and receives the Buddha's true precepts, but then raises thoughts of violating these precepts, then he is not allowed to receive any offerings from supporters, he may not walk on the King's land and not drink the King's water. Five thousand huge demons will always stand in front of him, shouting: "Big thief!" When he enters a house or a city dwelling these demons will constantly sweep away his footprints. Society curses such a person, calling him, "thief in the Buddhadharma." Sentient beings do not want to set their eyes on him. One who breaks the precepts is no different from an animal or a piece of wood. One who slanders the correct precepts commits a minor offence. 若佛子。信心出家受佛正戒。故起心毀犯聖戒者。不得受一切檀越供養。亦不得國王地上行。不得飲國王水。五千大鬼常遮其前。鬼言大賊。若入房舍城邑宅中。鬼復常掃其腳跡。一切世人罵言佛法中賊。一切衆生眼不欲見。犯戒之人畜生無異木頭無異。若毀正戒者。犯輕垢罪。

<sup>593</sup> See for instance Liz Wilson, *Charming Cadavers: Horrific Figurations of the Feminine in Indian Buddhist Hagiographic Literature* (University of Chicago Press, 1996). Rajyashree Pandey, "Desire and Disgust: Meditations on the Impure Body in Medieval Japanese Narratives," *Monumenta Nipponica* 60 (2005): pp. 196-234.

<sup>594</sup> T. W. Rhys Davids and Hermann Oldenberg (trans.), *Vinaya Texts*, part III, *Kullavagga* IV-XII, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. XX (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1881), p. 303.

<sup>595</sup> *Dazhidulun* attributed to Nāgārjuna (T.25, 1509, 225a8-10). Elsewhere in *Kōzengokokuron* (T. 2543, 14b29-14c04) Eisai similarly states: "Having received the precepts one must always guard and sustain them. (...) Those who violate the moral discipline must absolutely be excommunicated. [The saṃgha] is like bottom of the ocean: it does not retain corpses."

socalled evil monks (*akusō* 惡僧), whose lax attitude toward the precepts rested on shared notions of emptiness, *hongaku* and nonduality. Eisai bluntly associates this trend with one of the socalled “six heretic teachers” in the Buddha’s lifetime, namely Pūraṇa Kassapa 富蘭那迦葉 (Furanna Kashō)<sup>596</sup> – and emblematic evildoer, whom Buddhist sources grotesquely present as having taught that human actions like killing and torturing have no moral content and no karmic consequence.<sup>597</sup>

### Eisai’s criticism and the Darumashu teachings

To what extent do Eisai’s criticisms reflect Darumashū views? Eisai starts by associating the Darumashū with the dictum: “Originally there are no afflictions; fundamentally they are bodhi” and subsequently asserts that on the basis of this dictum – and the view on emptiness it engages – the followers of the Darumashū abandon Buddhist practices and moral injunctions, and instead encourage spontaneous activity. As noted earlier, this dictum is indeed prominently cited in the Darumashū text *Hōmon taikō*.

In Chan/Zen discourse, the idea that insight into emptiness renders practices and precepts redundant is not extraordinary. A comparable position can be found especially in early Chan.<sup>598</sup> The Darumashū texts examined in the previous chapters, in part at least, and to varying degrees, similarly move away from practice and discipline. *Hōmon taikō*, for instance, notes that our “defiled activities are empty and calm” and the inner buddha-nature “is not conditional on austere practices.” *Kenshōjōbutsugi* emphasizes that buddhahood is not caused by “excision of impurities” and proclaims: “we do not observe the practice of meditation.” The need for observing the precepts is deconstructed in a similar way. *Jōtōshōgakuron*, for instance, opens with a poem that expresses the emptiness of both virtuous and transgressive acts. Later it is pointed out that an empty state of mind (no-mind) abrogates the need for moral precepts. *Kenshōjōbutsugi* denigrates masters of the Buddhist precepts and praises a transliteral attitude towards the precepts, as championed by Vimalakīrti. The ideal is to “be free and unobstructed” and “act without constraints.” But at the same time a text like *Hōmon taikō* endorses the practice of *nenbutsu* recitation. The same text also includes a manual for seated meditation.

Eisai maintains that followers of the Darumashū – under the pretext Bodhidharma’s slogan “no reliance on words and letters” (*furyū monji*) – reject textual study. Bodhidharma’s slogan is indeed found in all three of the Darumashū texts examined previously. *Kenshōjōbutsugi* in particular has various passages that stress the inability of words to convey the buddhadharma. The preface to *Kenshōjōbutsugi* calls for awakening through hearing sounds and seeing forms: “why

<sup>596</sup> *Kōzengokokuron* (T. 2543, 14b06-08).

<sup>597</sup> A chilling description of the teaching ascribed to Pūraṇa Kassapa is found in the Pāli *Samaññaphala Sutta* (The Fruits of the Ascetic Life):

If someone were to take a razor-edged discus and make of the creatures of this earth one single mass of flesh, one single heap of flesh, there would be nothing bad in that, nothing bad would come of it. Again, if someone were to go along the southern bank of the Ganges killing and getting others to kill, wounding and getting others to wound, torturing and getting others to torture, there would be nothing bad in that, nothing bad would come of it. Again, if someone were to go along the northern bank of the Ganges, making gifts and getting others to make gifts, performing sacrifices and getting others to perform sacrifices, there would be nothing good in that, nothing good would come of it. In giving, discipline, restraint and speaking the truth there is nothing good, nothing good comes from them. (Rupert Gethin, *Sayings of the Buddha*, Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 11.)

<sup>598</sup> Yanagida points to the *Daruma Sanron*, *Jueguanlun* (Treatise on Destroying Contemplation) and *Linji lu* 臨濟錄 (Record of Linji). Yanagida Seizan, “Kūbyō no mondai,” p. 775. Ishii Shūdō points to the *Daruma Sanron*. Ishii Shūdō “Shōbōji monjo yori mitari Nihondarumashū no seikaku,” pp. 12-13.

would someone who experienced [awakening like this] gaze at treatises or bother with taking notes?" But at the same time it is clear that texts are not categorically rejected. Citing Zongmi, *Kenshōjōbutsugi* holds that Zen is the Buddha's mind and the teachings (scriptures) the Buddha's words; the role of texts as expedient means and "preliminary inducements" is duly acknowledged. Zen adepts are in fact said to be exclusively apt in engaging with texts.

Eisai's (fictive) questioner specifies the practices rejected by the Darumashū: relic worship, *nenbutsu* and restraint in eating. The description, in this sense, does not square with the Darumashū materials examined in the foregoing chapters, some of which indicate a concern with seated meditation and *nenbutsu* practice, not to mention relic worship. It could be argued that such practices were incorporated into Darumashū communities at a later point in time, partly in response to accusations such as those made by Eisai. Ishii Shūdō in fact suggested this with regard to the relic cult at Sambōji.<sup>599</sup> But such explanations are not necessary. We should accept the capacity of individuals and communities to operate in seemingly contradictory ways. Darumashū teachers proclaimed the pointlessness of practice whilst endorsing practices as expedients. Such a double structure is, arguably, inherent the fundamental Mahāyāna notion of the twofold truth, which sets up conventional versus absolute while insisting on their nonduality.

As various scholars noted, Chan/Zen antinomianism does not automatically entail the actual rejection of works. The stress on formlessness, nonthought and so on, according to Wendi Adamek, "should be seen within the larger context of Chinese elaborations on apophatic Prajñāpāramitā discourse. Deconstruction of moral distinctions and the precepts serves as a particularly dramatic means to introduce the student to the disorienting paradoxes of nonduality."<sup>600</sup> Similarly, John Mcrae remarks, "the point of all the negation and denial then is not that there was no positive goal to be reached, but that the discrimination or conceptualization of goals, techniques, and moral standards was absolutely rejected (...) one should practice the bodhisattva path, but never perceive there to be any path or any person practicing it."<sup>601</sup> Darumashū antinomianism, likewise, operated in the context of Buddhist practices. The call for the abandonment of practices and standards would not make sense if it were not delimited in this way. In the approach to Buddhist practice that emerges from Darumashū texts such as the *Hōmon taikō* and *Kenshōjōbutsuron*, it is not praxis *per se* that is attacked, at least not always, but the goal-oriented, dualistic premise undergirding it. Practices – "superior expedients" – are actually encouraged, provided they be practiced as a kind of non-practices. Central to this is the notion of faith or trust: the practitioner must start by having trust in his own a priori buddhahood.

Eisai's characterization, though not wholly inaccurate, then, is one-sided and exaggerated. No doubt this was in part done for effect. Still, taking into account the commotion that the Darumashū provoked in the Buddhist world, it seems that the negative image of the movement rested not only on rhetorical grandstanding, but may also have been fed by (perceived) deviant behavior of its representatives. In this respect, the Darumashū may have been comparable to (and possibly have overlapped with) radical groups within Hōnen's Pure Land movement, studied by Rambelli.<sup>602</sup> Wandering Zen monks and travelling preachers of the thirteenth century, depicted in writings and illustrated scrolls of the time, such as *Tengu zōshi* 天狗草紙, may exemplify a

<sup>599</sup> Ishii, *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>600</sup> Adamek, *Mystique of Transmission*, p. 220.

<sup>601</sup> McRae, "The Ox-head School of Chinese Buddhism," p. 217.

<sup>602</sup> Rambelli, "Just behave as you like," in *Approaching the Land of Bliss*, Payne and Tanaka (eds.): pp. 169-201.

similar trend.<sup>603</sup> Yanagida, in this context, draws a line between the Darumashū and the negative descriptions of Zen monks in the 1295 *Nomori no kagami* 野守鏡 (Mirror of the Watchman in the Fields).<sup>604</sup> The problem of “evil behaviour” also appears to have been acknowledged within the Darumashū itself. *Kenshōjōbutsugi* shows a clear awareness of the trappings of emptiness thought. It explains that emptiness, too, is a relative concept and (in wordings similar to that of Eisai) denounces those who take emptiness as a pretext for doing evil. Such disclaimers notwithstanding, Darumashū materials provide ample support for breaking the precepts. The disclaimer itself, in a sense, affirms the disclaimed transgression.

Altogether, Eisai’s characterization of the Darumashū can be said to have been strongly motivated by power politics. Eisai strategically accentuated radical elements in the Zen of the Darumashū so as to deflect the contemporary hostility towards the Zen movement and reroute it in Nōnin’s direction. By evoking an image of Nōnin and his followers as a band of subversive layabouts, Eisai presented a (semi) straw man to the Buddhist establishment, with whom he himself wished to remain on good footing.

### ***Mirai-ki* (Prediction)**

Criticism on Nōnin is found too in *Mirai-ki* (Prediction), an addendum to *Kōzengokokuron*. This short text is said to have been composed by Eisai in 1197, prior to *Kōzengokokuron*, but it is probably apocryphal.<sup>605</sup> In this text Eisai is presented as the presaged transmitter of Zen in Japan, while earlier Zen transmissions are disparaged. *Mirai-ki* relates how at the port of Hakata (Kyūshū) Eisai is met by a Chinese who tells him about his audience with Chan master Fohai 佛海禪師 (1103-1176) at Lingyin monastery. Fohai told his visitor that a superior man (*shōnin* 上人) from Japan will visit China in the future and return to his country to transmit the Zen school. Fohai also predicted his own death for the following year and prophesised that twenty years hence the Zen school will flourish overseas. The following year the visitor again stopped at Lingyin monastery to find out that Fohai indeed passed away on the predicted day and has since been succeeded by Chan master Fozhao 佛照禪師 (1121-1203). Eisai comments:

Chan Master Fohai is one who perceived the truth of nonproduction. He had the ability to discern future events. I, Eisai, went yonder [to China] and returned to transmit [the Zen school]. Though I am unworthy, these [predicted] events pertain to me. If not me, who else? A skillful man did not cross the sea. A fool did, but what was his point? Perceptive people, be clear on this! Between the prediction of Chan master Fohai and my crossing of the ocean of the Penglai islands are exactly eighteen years. Isn’t this marvellous prediction highly [accurate]? Pondering on the future, [I foresee that] the Zen school will not waste away. Fifty years after I depart from this world this school will rise to ascendancy. This is what I myself, Eisai, predict.<sup>606</sup>

*Mirai-ki* sets up Eisai as the authentic transmitter of Song Chan to Japan. As Yanagida and others observed, it is of course no coincidence that the story of the prediction is framed around the Chan masters Fohai and Fozhao: these masters were the Chan lineage fathers of Eisai’s forerunners

<sup>603</sup> See Harada Masatoshi, Tengu zōshi ni miru Kamakura jidai goki no buppō,” *Bukkyōshigaku kenkyū* 37/1 (1994): pp. 40-79.

<sup>604</sup> Yanagida, *Kūbyō no mondai*, p. 767.

<sup>605</sup> Yanagida, *Chūsei zenke no shisō*, pp. 470-71.

<sup>606</sup> *Kōzengokokuron* (T. 2543, 17b06-b13).

Kakua and Nōnin.<sup>607</sup> Kakua studied with Fohai in China between 1171 and 1175 and is obviously the “fool” (*gunin* 愚人) mentioned by Eisai. Nōnin is the “skillful man” (*kōjin* 好人) who failed to go to China but nevertheless received Fozhao’s sanction.<sup>608</sup>

## DŌGEN’S CRITICISMS

As discussed in Chapter Three, the Darumashū monk Ejō joined Dōgen’s incipient Zen community at the Kōshōji near Kyoto in the winter of 1234, followed, in the spring of 1241, by the leading Darumashū monk Ekan and a group of his students. As various scholars pointed out, the course of Dōgen’s teaching career was seriously influenced by this new constituent in Dōgen’s community.<sup>609</sup> The Darumashū monks and nuns that entered Dōgen’s community did so equipped with an awareness of their own lineage and with an established sense of what Zen practice and theory entailed; they also brought along their own texts and relics. As the expulsion of the Darumashū monk Gemmyō indicates, Dōgen’s monastic style was not necessarily compatible with Darumashū standards.

Dōgen’s literary output dramatically increased with the arriving of the Darumashū adherents in his community.<sup>610</sup> Dōgen’s talks and formal lectures from this period were, in part, a response to the presence of the Darumashū monks and nuns in his audience. Dōgen’s teachings can, in this sense, be seen as efforts to convince, educate and reform the Darumashū adepts. By the same token, Dōgen’s texts can be read as a reflection of this dialogical tension. As Bernard Faure expresses it: “The teachings of the Darumashū form the pre-text, the hidden matrix, the elusive discourse on which Dōgen’s own discourse is surreptitiously grafted.”<sup>611</sup> Dōgen’s textual production, then, might be seen as an immense stretch of variegated land that is capable of being foraged for sediments of Sōtō/Darumashū contact. Here we will skim over this land to pick up some of this sediment and, if possible, weigh it against the Darumashū “pre-texts.” The focus is mainly on the *Shōbōgenzō*, the collection of Dōgen’s vernacular writings, but reference will also be made to other sources.

### *Shōbōgenzō: Bendōwa* (A Talk on Discerning the Way)<sup>612</sup>

One of the early textual expressions of the Dōgen/Darumashū junction is found in *Bendōwa* (A Talk on Discerning the Way), written in 1231. The work consists of two sections. In the concise opening section of the work Dōgen expands on the inseparability of the absolute self-enjoying state of awakening (*jijuyū sanmai* 自由三昧) and the concrete practice of seated meditation. The second, larger section of the work is taken up by a string of dialogues in which Dōgen clarifies his own position and refute the views of his questioner. According to Takeuchi Michio, *Bendōwa*

<sup>607</sup> Yanagida, *Chūsei zenke no shisō*, pp. 470-71.

<sup>608</sup> The term *kōjin* here must be ironic. Morohashi provides three meanings of the word: a person skillful in his work 仕事の上手な人, a great person 大人, and a person of perfect moral conduct 品行純正の人.

<sup>609</sup> For instance, Faure, “Darumashū.”

<sup>610</sup> See Steven Heine, *Did Dōgen go to China?*, p. 2 (Table I).

<sup>611</sup> Bernard Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition* (Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 144. Shinkura Kazufumi “Dōgen to Ejō no rondanhossen ni tsuite” IBK 31/2, 1983), p. 111. Faure, “Darumashū,” pp. 39-45.

<sup>612</sup> Starting from 1684, editions of the *Shōbōgenzō* include *Bendōwa* as its opening essay. The text was originally written as a separate work, not included in the *Shōbōgenzō*. See Heine, *Did Dōgen go to China*, p. 123.

crystallized from Dōgen's debates with the then Darumashū monk Ejō at Kenninji.<sup>613</sup> Ejō and Dōgen, it will be remembered, first met in 1229 at Kenninji in Kyoto, where they engaged in a "dharma discourse battle." Though *Bendōwa* can probably not be wholly reduced to a being record of any particular debate, it is clear that Dōgen in this work responds to views prevalent in his surroundings, including Darumashū views. Takeuchi and others specifically point to dialogue number ten and sixteen.

#### *Bendōwa dialogue ten*

Dialogue ten opens with a questioner (arguably modeled on Ejō) who presents a certain view of Zen and asks Dōgen what he thinks of it. According to this view the one prerequisite for separation from saṃsāra is to know that "mind-nature is eternally abiding" (*shinshō no jōjū* 心性ノ常住). Paraphrased, the questioner asserts the following: the perishable body is subject to saṃsāric rebirths, the mind-nature is not. Simply by knowing this truth, one instantly separates from saṃsāra. Upon death, one's residual karma evaporates, one will flow into the "ocean of nature" (*shōkai* 性海), endowed with the virtues of the buddhas. Thus it is of no use to spend one's days vainly sitting in meditation: the point simply is to know that the mind-nature is permanent.<sup>614</sup>

In response Dōgen condemns this view as the Śreṇika heresy (*senni gedō* 先尼外道), a Buddhist appropriation of the accursed ideas of Śreṇika, a Brahmanic teacher contemporaneous with Buddha Śākyamuni. Dōgen explains that the Śreṇikan view conceives a dualism between impermanent forms (such as the human body) and a permanent mind-nature that inhabits these forms, called "numinous awareness" (*reichi* 靈知). In contrast to this false view, Dōgen explains that in true Buddhism body/mind, nature/form and saṃsāra /nirvāṇa are understood as nondual. As a final counsel Dōgen adds: "You are already a child of the Buddha, do not lend your ear to the babble coming from madmen who teach this heretical view."<sup>615</sup>

Leaving aside for now whether Dōgen's analysis is accurate, the idea of an eternally abiding "mind-nature" that is endowed with "numinous awareness" can certainly be connected to the Darumashū. We will return to this later.

#### *Bendōwa dialogue sixteen*

Dōgen's questioner in *Bendōwa* dialogue number ten expressed the idea that the key to awakening is not in practice, but simply in knowing the truth about the mind-nature. A parallel idea is taken up in *Bendōwa* dialogue number sixteen, which can likewise be seen as a criticism of the Darumashū:

QUESTION: Some say that if, in the Buddhadharmā, we apprehend the thesis "this mind is buddha", then although we do not chant the scriptures and physically practice the path of the Buddha, we are in no way deficient in the Buddhadharmā. Just knowing that the Buddhadharmā fundamentally exists in oneself, this is the fulfilment of attaining the way. There is no need to approach others and seek further. So why would I take the trouble to discern the way through seated meditation?

<sup>613</sup> Takeuchi, *Eihei niso Koun Ejō Zenjiden*, pp. 99-103.

<sup>614</sup> *Bendōwa* (T. 2582, 19a13-b08). For a translation of *Bendōwa* see Norman Waddell and Masao Abe (trans.), *The Heart of Dōgen's Shōbōgenzō* (State University of New York Press, 2002), pp. 7-30.

<sup>615</sup> *Bendōwa* (T. 2582, 19b08-20a8).

The questioner presents the view that practices are expendable, provided we just understand that “this mind is buddha” (*sokushin zebutsu* 即心是佛): simply by knowing that one is inherently a buddha we completely fulfil the Buddhist path; further cultivation is not necessary. This idea is well-attested in Darumashū materials. *Jōtoshōgakuron*, for instance, devotes a whole section to the equivalent dictum “your own mind is buddha” (*jishin soku butsu*). The no-practice element may be discerned in the verse of minister Pei Xiu, included in *Jōtoshōgakuron*: “Mind is buddha. A buddha is an ordinary being. Do not search! Do not act! Making a buddha search a buddha is a double waste of effort.” The expendability of practice on account of innate awakening is also implicit in the notion of “principle identity” (*risoku*) or “first abode awakening” (*shojū no satori*), described in *Kenshōjōbutsugi*.

In his reply Dōgen rejects the questioner’s assumption: buddhahood is not consummated by simply accepting the fact that ones own mind is buddha; buddhahood is contingent on practice:

A: This is entirely baseless. If it is as you say, which conscious being would fail to know this thesis when told about it? You should know that the Buddhadharmā is studied by relinquishing views that [discriminate between] self and other. If attainment of the way would amount to just knowing that oneself is the Buddhadharmā, then the worthy Śākya long ago would not have taken the trouble to teach. I will substantiate this with a splendid case about virtuous men of the past...

The “splendid case” that Dōgen recounts to corroborate his point is the case known as “Xuanze’s lantern boy.” The story centres on the line “The lantern boy comes looking for fire,” a Zen maxim that expresses the situation of a novice seeking for awakening outside, not realizing it is within. The case presents the monk Xuanze, who thinks he has attained awakening upon having once heard this maxim. Chan master Fayān, the abbot of the monastery where Xuanze resides, discredits Xuanze’s insight. Deeply vexed, Xuanze leaves the monastery. Eventually he returns and asks Fayān: “What is the self of this student?” Fayān answers “The lantern boy comes looking for fire,” whereupon Xuanze genuinely awakens. The point of the story, Dōgen explains, is that a mere understanding of “this mind is buddha” is inadequate. What is required is to “face a virtuous teacher, inquire after the procedures of practice and then intently discern the way through seated meditation.” Dōgen thus strongly opposes the idea that mere acceptance of truth has a liberating effect: sustained practice and a face to face meeting with a teacher are indispensable. This last remark might be read as stab at Nōnin, who failed to meet his master. Interestingly, the line “the lantern boy comes looking for fire” prominently appears in *Kenshōjōbutsugi*. The phrase turns up in the closing section of the text, in an encounter dialogue between the narrating Zen master and a student. According to *Kenshōjōbutsugi* it is not meditative practice that leads to awakening; rather, it is exactly through hearing and accepting such truths as “this mind is buddha” and “the lantern boy comes looking for fire” that a Zen student is to awaken.

### ***Shōbōgenzō: Sokushin zebutsu (This Mind is Buddha)***

As seen in the *Bendōwa*, the thesis “this mind is buddha” (*sokushin zebutsu*) represented a point of tension between Darumashū subitism and Dōgen’s insistence on sustained formal practice. Dōgen links this subitist reading of “this very mind is buddha” to a false idea of an eternal self: the Śreṇika heresy. This theme is taken up again in the *Shōbōgenzō* fascicle *Sokushin zebutsu*,

composed in 1239.<sup>616</sup> In the beginning of this text Dōgen posits the problem: the dictum “this mind is buddha” has caused many Buddhists to fall into heretical ways:

Hearing talk about “this mind,” idiots think that “this mind” is the ordinary being’s mind of discriminative consciousness prior to the resolve to attain awakening, and so they imagine themselves to be buddhas. This is because they have never encountered a genuine teacher.<sup>617</sup>

Dōgen here opposes the idea that ordinary beings, without any concrete religious practice, are wholly buddhas. Observing that the thesis “this mind is buddha” is mistakenly taken to abrogate the need for practice, Dōgen links this trend to the Śreṇika heresy. He first provides an extensive description of the Śreṇikan view:

As for these heretical fellows, in India there was a nonbuddhist named Śreṇika. His perspective amounts to this:

The great way resides in our present body. Its presence can easily be known. It distinguishes suffering from happiness, it naturally knows warm and cold and discerns pain and itch. It is not constrained by the myriad dharmas and not involved in conditions. Objects come and go, conditions arise and cease, but numinous awareness is always there, changeless. This numinous awareness pervades ordinary beings and sages without distinction. Within this numinous awareness unreal phenomena 妄法 – sky flowers 空華 – momentarily appear, but when a single thought moment is in accord with wisdom, when objects are destroyed and conditions obliterated, then numinous awareness – original nature – remains on its own, in perfect clarity, calm and enduring. (...) Self and other are equally endowed with it. Deluded and awakened beings are both penetrated by it. [Understand] that the myriad dharmas and all conditions are so. Numinous awareness does not commingle with the conditions. It is not the same as the objects. It abides eternally, as kalpas go by. The conditions that are actually present now can be said to be real, as they depend on the presence of numinous awareness. Because they dependently arise from the original nature (*honshō yori engi* 本性ヨリ縁起), they are real dharmas. And yet, because they appear and disappear, they do not eternally abide in the same manner of numinous awareness. [Numinous awareness] is not involved in bright and dark, because it is aware numinously. This is what we call numinous awareness. It is also called the true self 真我, the basis of awakening 覺元, original nature 本性 and original substance 本體. One who awakens to this original nature is said to return to that which continually abides, and is called a Mahāsattva who returned to the real. [Such a person] will thereafter no longer go round in the samsaric cycle but experientially enter the unborn and unceasing nature-ocean. Apart from this there is no reality. To the extent that this nature is not actualized, the three time periods and the six worlds [of transmigration] arise in turmoil.

This then is the view of the nonbuddhist Śreṇika.<sup>618</sup>

In the above cited passage, Dōgen, significantly, establishes a link between the Śreṇikan view of permanence and the term “numinous awareness” (*reichi*) – a link that as far as I know is peculiar to Dōgen. The concept of numinous awareness was central to the Darumashū, Dōgen’s actual target. Dōgen’s description does, on the surface, reflect Darumashū views and terminology. I am

<sup>616</sup> According to its colophon, *Sokushin zebutsu* was delivered as a formal lecture in 1239 and redacted by Ejō in 1245.

<sup>617</sup> *Sokushin zebutsu* (T. 2582, 28b09-b12).

<sup>618</sup> *Sokushin zebutsu* (T. 2582, 28b14-c19).



thinking for instance of the first dialogue in *Kenshōjōbutsugi*, which is framed on the metaphor of flowers in the sky (*kūge*). *Kenshōjōbutsugi* explains that the illusory flowers (phenomenal objects) that appear in empty space are nonsubstantial, whereas the underlying empty space is the true substance. *Kenshōjōbutsugi* considers this substance – the mind-nature – to be “uninvolved with external objects” and yet ontologically connected to the objects: the objects appear when “the intrinsic nature accords with conditions” (*jishō zuien* 自性隨緣). Similarly, Dōgen has Śreṇika maintain that the objects “dependently arise from the original nature” (*honshō yori engi* 本性ヨリ縁起).

Dōgen’s criticism of notions that imply the permanence of the mind-nature, buddha nature and so on, can be seen to increase from around the time that the Darumashū monks join his community at Kōshōji in 1241. For instance, in *Busshō* (Buddha-nature), delivered as a lecture in 1241/10/14, Dōgen again brings up the Śreṇika heresy, saying that many of his students misconstrue the buddha-nature as a permanent nature.<sup>619</sup>

Researchers on Dōgen and the *Shōbōgenzō* have frequently pointed out that far from being a harmonious whole, the texts that make up the *Shōbōgenzō* contain inconsistencies that reflect changes in Dōgen’s thinking.<sup>620</sup> One of the notable shifts in Dōgen’s attitude, as expressed in the text’s various fascicles, is the move from a universal appreciation of the Chan tradition to a narrow glorification of the lineage and personality of Dōgen’s own teacher Tiantong Ruji, a move that is paralleled by an increasing derision of the Linji (Rinzai) school of Chan. Noting that this shift emerged in the 1240ies (long after Dōgen’s return from China) scholars looking to explain this new attitude have turned to events in Dōgen’s immediate surroundings in this period. One view sees Dōgen’s sectarian turn as a response to the political success of the emerging Rinzai establishment in Japan, symbolized by the construction – under Hōjō patronage – of the grand Tōfukuji monastery, close to Dōgen’s temple. Dōgen’s failure to gain similar support not only led him to leave, in 1243, the old capital for rural Echizen, but also triggered a discontented reassessment of the entire Rinzai tradition. Another (not incompatible) view considers the shift to be linked with the presence of the Darumashū monks in Dōgen’s community, who formally adhered to the Dahui branch of the Rinzai school. According to this view, Dōgen’s praise for Ruji and the criticism of the Rinzai tradition serve to reform the Darumashū monks and – especially after the move to Echizen in 1243 – inculcate a sense of concord in what was a fragile community.<sup>621</sup> This Rinzai/Darumashū criticism notably surfaces in the *Shōbōgenzō* fascicles *Gyōji*, *Jishō sanmai* and *Shisho*.

---

<sup>619</sup> *Busshō* (T. 2582, 91c07-101a20)

<sup>620</sup> See Steven Heine, “Critical Buddhism (*Hihan Bukkyō*) and the Debate Concerning the 75-fascicle and 12-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō* Texts,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 21/1 (1994): pp. 37-72.

<sup>621</sup> Imaeda Aishin, *Chūsei Zenshūshi no kenkyū*, pp. 27-40. Carl Bielefeldt, “Recarving the Dragon: History and Dogma in the Study of Dōgen,” in *Dogen Studies*, edited by William R. LaFleur (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985): pp. 21-53.

### ***Shōbōgenzō: Gyōji (Continuous Practice)***

As Imaeda Aishin and Carl Bielefeldt pointed out, Dōgen's criticism of the Rinzai school – besides implicating Linji (d. 866) (Rinzai 臨濟) himself – exclusively targets Dahui and Fozhao, the two masters through whom the Darumashū, via Nōnin, identified itself as a Zen movement.<sup>622</sup> Fozhao Deguang is severely criticized in Dōgen's *Gyōji* (Continuous Practice), composed in 1242 at Kōshōji. Dōgen, purportedly citing his master Rujing, depicts Fozhao – abbot of Mount Jingshan monastery – as a cleric chasing after fame and profit, ignorant of the meaning of Buddhism. Fozhao tells his monks that Zen is to be learned by oneself, not from the words of a teacher; he is unconcerned with implementing monastic discipline, his monks run the monastery as a place to entertain lofty guests; Fozhao “never practiced Zen,” his descendants are everywhere and “have no heart for the way” (*mudōshin* 無道心). Dōgen adds: “When Rujing spoke like this, many of Fozhao's descendants were in the audience, but they did not resent him for it.”<sup>623</sup> This message would of course not be lost on the Darumashū monks in Dōgen's audience.

### ***Shōbōgenzō: Jishō sanmai (Samādhi of Self-verification)***

Dahui Zonggao is attacked especially in *Jishō sanmai* (Samādhi of Self-verification), delivered in 1244 at Kippōji in Echizen. Taking up the concepts of self-verification (*jishō* 自證) and self-awakening (*jigo* 自悟), Dōgen compares Dahui to one of those “crude people” (*sojin* 蠢人) who take these terms to mean that buddhahood is attained through “autonomous study” (*jigaku* 自學) and that a dharma-transmitting teacher is unnecessary. This idea, Dōgen tells us, amounts to “the Indian heresy of naturalism” (*saiten no tennen gedō* 西天ノ天然外道). To illustrate his point Dōgen provides a lengthy description of Dahui's career. Initially a student of sūtras and śāstras, Dahui turns to Zen and investigates old cases with a Linji teacher, without any success. He then practices under the Caodong (Sōtō) master Daowei 道微 and again fails to attain any insight. Having heard about certificates of succession (*shisho*), Dahui badgers Daowei for a certificate, but the master refuses:

[Daowei said]: “If you want to inherit the dharma, you must not be in a hurry. You must study hard and work. The transmission of the buddhas and patriarchs is not conferred at random. I am not being stingy about transmission, it is just that you are not equipped with the eye. [Dahui] Zonggao replied: “I am originally equipped with the true eye that is verified of itself and awakened of itself” (*jishō jigo* 自證自悟). So how can you withhold the transmission?” Venerable Wei just laughed and let it be.<sup>624</sup>

Dōgen subsequently describes Dahui's apprenticeship under the Linji master Zhantang Wenzhun 湛堂文準 (1061-1115) and concludes that Dahui again failed to have true understanding. Dōgen then offers his harsh verdict on Dahui:

Rash in his studies, Dahui impertinently asked for a certificate of succession. This is the height of lacking a heart for the way, an extreme failure to investigate the past. We must conclude that he is indiscrete, and incompetent in the way, a prime example of laxity in

---

<sup>622</sup> Ibid.

<sup>623</sup> *Gyōji* (T. 2582, 143a19-b03).

<sup>624</sup> *Jishō sanmai* (T. 2582, 253c28-254a04).

study. Craving for fame and enamored by profit he tried to invade the private room of the buddhas and patriarchs. How pitiable he never knew their words! He does not realize that investigation of the past is self-verification. He never heard that fording through [the records] and hunting after [the accomplishments] of past generations is self-awakening. Such wrongs and self-deception are caused by lack of study. Because Zen master Dahui was like this there is not one, or even half a true nose-ring (i.e. competent one) among his students. Most of them are fakers. They do not understand the Buddhadharma. Misunderstanding and not misunderstanding the Buddhadharma is like this. So, water-cloud trainees of today better practice and study with utmost care. Do not be lax and arrogant!<sup>625</sup>

Dōgen, in addition, rejects reports on Dahui's awakening under his formal master Yuanwu Keqin (1063-1135). Though Keqin is a worthy "old buddha," Dahui is unenlightened: "his mouth is just a place for meaningless blah blah" (*kōhahachi* 口吧吧地). Dahui's incompetences, Dōgen finishes, extend to his descendants, none of whom understand the meaning of "self-verification and self-awakening." The truth is only known in the Sōtō lineage, through which certificates of succession have been authentically transmitted (*shisho shōden* 嗣書正傳).<sup>626</sup>

Noteworthy in these criticisms is the juxtaposition that is constructed between the naturalistic self-verification of the fake Dahui monks and Dōgen's insistence on guided training and orthodox transmission of certificates. Dahui, according to Dōgen, thinks that self-awakening means that one's possession of the innate "true eye" – the buddha-nature – obviates the need to practice with a teacher. Dōgen, in contrast, explains that self-awakening occurs when practicing under a true teacher, like Rujing. Dōgen's rendition of Dahui's case, of course, evokes the spectre of Nōnin: through wrongly grasped "self-verification" Nōnin claims awakening; thinking that ordinary beings are naturally equipped with buddhahood he dismisses works and study; "impertinently" coveting a transmission certificate he solicits one from Fozhao, one of Dahui's dubious descendants. In contrast, Dōgen holds up his own training and certification in China, directly under "old buddha" Rujing.

### ***Shōbōgenzō: Shisho (Certificate of Succession)***

The arguments in *Jishō sanmai*, as outlined above, appear to be tentatively prefigured in Dōgen's *Shisho* (Certificate of Succession). As a lecture, *Shisho* was delivered a few years earlier than *Jishō sanmai*, in 1241, when the Darumashū monks had just entered Kōshōji. In this lecture Dōgen introduces the concept of *mushidokugo* 無師獨悟 (independent awakening without a teacher). Dōgen firmly situates *mushidokugo* in the context of a face to face encounter between teacher and his successor. Authentic awakening, he explains, is inextricably linked to dharma transmission from master to student. Dōgen specifies two aspects of dharma transmission, which we may loosely dub transcendental and localized. Regarding the first, Dōgen equates transmission with the very of state of bodhi itself. When transmission takes place, teacher and student verify each other in a mutual recognition between a buddha and a buddha. In this event dualities dissolve and what remains is "independent awakening without a teacher" (*mushidokugo*) and "independent awakening without a self" (*mushi jigo* 無自獨悟).<sup>627</sup> On this level, the conventional chronology inherent in "transmission" and "succession" is subverted. In a way that defies spatial and

<sup>625</sup> *Jishō sanmai* (T. 2582, 254b11-b26).

<sup>626</sup> *Jishō sanmai* (T. 2582 255a0-b13).

<sup>627</sup> *Shisho* (T. 2582, 67c22-68a2). Dōgen's take on "awakening without a teacher" has its roots in Tendai discourse. See Nomoto Kakujō, "Keiranshūyōshū shōfuyuta kanjō no haikai – Zenshū hihan," IBK 39/1 (1990): pp. 257-262.

chronological conceptualization, transmission/bodhi is continually happening in the past, present and future, with all patriarchs from India and China in concert.<sup>628</sup> In addition Dōgen emphasizes the conventional, localized aspect of transmission: “There is also the principle to be penetrated in practice that Buddha Kāśyapa succeeds to the dharma of Buddha Śākyamuni.” On this localized, linear level the transferral of objects from master to successor is considered to be imperative by Dōgen. Dōgen mentions various objects that were transmitted by the patriarchs, and he insists that in all cases certificates of succession were also passed on:

Buddha’s state of awakening is always passed on through dharma succession, at which time there invariably is a certificate of succession. Without a certificate of succession one is a naturalist heretic.<sup>629</sup>

Dōgen describes the formats of several certificates that he was overjoyed to have inspected in China, including one document composed by Fozhao Deguang: apparently Dōgen’s negative evaluation of everything related to the Dahui lineage had not yet fully gestated. Dōgen, however, does find it opportune to point out the gross misuse of certificates and *chinsō* portraits that he witnessed in China. Dōgen explains how the contemporary Song monastic establishment is undermined by conniving monks – “a pack of dogs” – who join the assemblies of eminent Chan masters in order to procure *chinsō* paintings and written “dharma words.” These monks keep such items as proofs of dharma succession and exploit them as affidavits to obtain abbacies. Dōgen condemns this state of affairs; he clarifies that in the Chan tradition *chinsō* and dharma words were customarily given to a great variety of people (men, women, lay, ordained, servants, traders). Yet sometimes:

when some undeserving person, out of a rash desire for evidence of succession to the dharma, wants to get a certificate, [a master] will reluctantly take up the writing brush, though those who possess the truth hate to do so.<sup>630</sup>

Whether or not Dōgen’s descriptions tally with a Chinese historical reality, the suggestion of a widespread, improper conferral and misuse of documents and *chinsō* in Song Chan circles (coupled to the discussion about “independent awakening without a teacher” and “naturalist heresy”) were no doubt intended to evoke and disparage the case of Nōnin and discredit his lineage. This idea is strengthened by Dōgen’s identification of the wrongdoers: “fellows calling themselves distant descendants of Linji.”

### ***Shōbōgenzō: Kūge (Flowers in the Sky)***

In the *Shōbōgenzō* fascicle *Kūge* 空華, delivered as a lecture in 1243, Dōgen provides a dazzling exposition of the meaning of “flowers in the sky” (*kūge*), or as a recent translation renders it, “the flowering of the unbounded.”<sup>631</sup> At one point Dōgen criticizes what he sees as a wrong

<sup>628</sup> *Shisho* (T. 2582, 68b15-b16).

<sup>629</sup> *Shisho* (T. 2528, 68b26-b28).

<sup>630</sup> The translation here is taken from Gudo Nishijima and Chodo Cross (trans.), *Master Dogen’s Shobogenzo*, Book 1 (Booksurge, 2006) (reprint), p. 165.

<sup>631</sup> Hubert Nearman, *The Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching* (2007). Accessible online: [http://www.shastaabbey.org/teachings-publications\\_shobogenzo.html](http://www.shastaabbey.org/teachings-publications_shobogenzo.html)

understanding of this metaphor – an understanding that is being propagated by “simple fools” (*bongu* 凡愚):

Having been informed of the Tathāgatha’s expression “that which is seen by cataracted eyes are flowers in the sky,” simple fools think that “cataracted eyes” are the distorted eyes of ordinary beings. They teach that diseased eyes, due to distortion, perceive empty flowers in pure empty space. Fixated on this principle they think that the three worlds and the six paths (i.e. hell, hungry ghosts, animals, asura, humans and divine beings), buddhas and non-buddhas, are all nonexistent but are falsely seen to exist. They make a living saying that if these deceptive eye cataracts are removed, these flowers will no longer be seen, and that this is why the sky is originally without flowers. How pitiful are such fellows, for not knowing the time – the beginning and end 始終 – of the sky flowers spoken of by the Tathāgatha. The true principle of cataracted eyes and sky flowers spoken of by the Tathāgatha is not seen by commoners and deviants.<sup>632</sup>

Dōgen’s criticism appears to reflect an argument that is found in *Kenshōjōbutsugi* [II.A][1]. In *Kenshōjōbutsugi* it is explained that eye illness (deluded perception) causes one to see flowers in the empty sky. The flowers (samsaric phenomena) are imaginary constructs of a deluded mind. Underlying these deceptive phenomena there is the ever-present empty sky: “From beginning to end, sky flowers have no substance. From beginning to end, empty space is truly not without substance.” Once the cataract is removed, the empty space is perceived without distortion: “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 [II.A.9].”

In the commentary on the *Shōbōgenzō* known as *Gokikigaki* 御開書 (circa 1263), the Sōtō monk Senne 詮慧 (n.d.), one of Dōgen’s leading disciples, explicitly links Dōgen’s fault-finding remarks in *Kūge* to the Darumashū:<sup>633</sup>

In heterodox teachings among humans and devas, emptiness is discussed vainly. Nowadays they simply take the flowers to be emptiness. In the talks of the Darumashū there is a thing called “deluded view concerning homogeneity and resemblance” 同分相似妄見. The Buddha’s appearance in the world, his preaching of the dharma, [and so forth], are time moments. [In the Darumashū] they say that such “time moments” are also a deluded view. We must not adopt these [ideas].<sup>634</sup>

Senne brings up “talks of the Darumashū” (*Darumashū no dan* 達磨宗ノ談) that would mention something called “deluded view concerning homogeneity and resemblance” (*dōbun sōi mōken* 同分相似妄見); in addition, these talks would refute the idea of “time moments” (*jikoku* 時刻) in the Buddha’s career. The description is rather cryptic, but can be connected to *Kenshōjōbutsugi*.<sup>635</sup>

The corresponding passage in *Kenshōjōbutsugi* occurs just after an illegible part in the

<sup>632</sup> *Kūge* (T.2528, 170b01-b14).

<sup>633</sup> Senne’s commentary survived as part of another commentary entitled *Shōbōgenzōshō* 正法眼藏抄, composed by Senne’s student Kyōgō (n.d.), who also studied directly under Dōgen. The combined commentaries are referred to as *Shōbōgenzō gokikigakishō* 正法眼藏御開書抄. Internal evidence indicates that Senne composed his original commentary around 1263. See William Bodiford, *Sōtō Zen*, pp. 45-50. According to Itō Shūken, the direct references to the Darumashū in *Shōbōgenzō gokikigakishō* appear in Senne’s part of the commentary. Itō Shūken, “Shōbōgenzōshō in mirareru kindai no zensō hihan,” IBK 29/1 (1980): pp. 195-198.

<sup>634</sup> Takahashi, *Darumashū ni kansuru shiryō* 2, p. 27-28

<sup>635</sup> The correspondence was noted by Shinkura Kazufumi, “Dōgen no Darumashū hihan,” IBK 32/2 (1984): pp. 682-683.

Kanazawa Bunko manuscript. Though I have already cited this passage earlier I will, for the benefit of clarity, cite it again:

...is a deluded view concerning homogeneity and resemblance (*dōbun sōji mōken* 同分相似 妄見). 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>636</sup>

This passage in *Kenshōjōbutsugi* covers two elements put forward in Senne’s description: it contains the peculiar compound *dōbun sōi mōken*, and it refutes the idea that the path to buddhahood is a gradual process that advances over “units of time” (*jibun* 時分). The pertinent passage is a significant one: it is the one place in the three examined Darumashū texts that unequivocally dismisses meditative practice.

### ***Shōbōgenzō : Tsuki (Moon)***

In the essay *Tsuki* (Moon) (written 1243/1/6) Dōgen at one point turns to the exegesis of a line from the *Yuanjuejing* 圓覺經 (Sūtra of Perfect Awakening): “When clouds drift, the moon flies. When a ship sails, the shore moves.” Dōgen explains that the movements of the clouds, moon, ship and shore do not unfold in a temporal and spatial sequence but occur simultaneously: “the moving together of the cloud and the moon, in the same step, at the same time, in the same way, is beyond beginning and end and is beyond before and after (...) “the flying of a cloud is beyond east, west, north, and south, and the moving of the moon is ceaseless day and night, past and present.”<sup>637</sup> Dōgen admonishes his audience not to “stupidly consider this with a limited view.” He then singles out some who do:

Fools 愚人 have opined that the unmoving moon only seems to move because the clouds drift, and that the motionless shore only seems to move because the ship sails. If it is as the fools say it is, how could it be what the Tathāgata says? The fundamental point of the Buddha’s dharma is not the narrow thinking of humans and devas.<sup>638</sup>

Dōgen, in addition, maintains that the Buddha did not liken the moon, clouds, shore and ship to something else, and he accordingly dissuades his students from approaching this line from the *Yuanjuejing* as a metaphor.<sup>639</sup> These criticisms look as if they are specifically designed to counter views expressed in *Kenshōjōbutsugi*. *Kenshōjōbutsugi* quite lengthily expands on exactly these two images from the *Yuanjuejing*:

II.A [3] When a ship sails, the shore moves. When clouds drift, the moon flies. [In reality] there is not a motionless shore in addition to an apparently moving shore. Neither is there a

---

<sup>636</sup> KBSZ, Zensekihen, p. 187.

<sup>637</sup> Translation taken from Nishijima and Cross (trans.), *Master Dōgen’s Shōbōgenzō*, Book 3, p. 5.

<sup>638</sup> *Tsuki* (T. 2582, 169a29-b06).

<sup>639</sup> *Ibid.* (T. 2582, 169b10-b13).

stationary moon besides a seemingly flying moon. The motionless shore just appeared to be moving and the stationary moon just seemed to be flying. Now keep this example in mind. When the ship of consciousness sails, it seems the distant shore of bodhi moves. When the clouds of ignorance drift, it appears as if the bright moon of original awakening flies in opposite direction.<sup>640</sup>

*Kenshōjōbutsugi* does exactly what Dōgen attributes to his unnamed “fools”: it explains that the apparent movements of the shore and the moon are merely an effect of the moving of the ship and the clouds; subsequently it takes the images as metaphors for original awakening and discriminative thought. From this we can work out that Dōgen must have been aware of *Kenshōjōbutsugi*.

#### *Eisai/Dōgen: concluding remarks*

The samples from Dōgen’s writings examined above confirm that Dōgen’s own doctrinal positions and his sectarian identity were to a significant degree forged in contradistinction to the ideas and lineage awareness of the Darumashū group within his ranks. In light of the above, I propose that in this process the treatise *Kenshōjōbutsugi* played a significant role.

Dōgen, as we have seen, construed Darumashū ideas about the mind-nature and numinous awareness as a form of substantialism, personified in the heretic Śreṇika. Dōgen also referred to this substantialist trend as the “naturalist heresy” (*jinen gedo* 自然外道 or *tennen gedō* 天然外道). “Natural” in this context indicates the idea that buddhahood is seen to be spontaneously present and therefore unconnected to karmic cause and effect: the realm of causal practice. Eisai, on the other hand sees, Darumashū teachings to be predicated on the reverse position: a nihilistic view of emptiness, personified in the heretic Pūraṇa Kassapa. Arguably both positions can be read into Darumashū sources. For instance, *Jōtōshōgakuron* equates the mind of the ordinary being with the Buddha, and qualifies it as permanent, blissful, individual and pure (*jōrakugajō* 常樂我淨). *Jōrakugajō* is of course a standard description of the tathāgatagarbha, a Buddhist concept that has always been susceptible (rightly or not) to charges of substantialism. On the other hand, the Darumashū materials keep on pointing out that mind/bodhi/tathāgatagarbha is formless, unobtainable and empty, and that all objects that we deludedly perceive to exist are but insubstantial mirages. These two positions may also be conflated; tathāgatagarbha, in that case, is simply considered as another term for emptiness. The antinomian potential of both concepts is the same: everything we do is an expression of buddha-nature, or everything we do is an expression of emptiness. In both cases all distinctions (good/evil, buddha/ordinary being) are collapsed, and with this collapse the need for practices and precepts, which is predicated on such distinctions, falls away. This antinomian aspect is certainly part of Darumashū lore. But Dōgen and Eisai remain silent about the other side of the Darumashū, the side that accepts texts as medicinal “words of the Buddha” and acknowledges practices as expedients. The very fact that the Darumashū monks of Hajakuji came to Dōgen for instruction shows that the radical elements in Darumashū doctrine did not result in its adherents (at least not these adherents) giving up all effort and be content to just hang around raising their hands or feet as total expressions of their empty buddha-natures. Still, as the Gemmyō incident shows, there no doubt was a gap between

---

<sup>640</sup> KBSZ, Zensekihen, p. 178.

the rigorous disciplines insisted on by Dōgen and the customs in the Darumashū. In this setting Dōgen diagnosed and “corrected” his “deviant” students and in the process delineated his own distinct views.

## SHINGON CRITICISMS

In writings of Shingon monks of the Kamakura period we find critical references to Zen that are informed by Darumashū discourse. An example of this is found in *Daibirushana jōbutskyōsohenmyō shō* 大毘盧遮那成佛經疏遍明鈔 (Extensive Elucidation of the Commentary on the Mahāvairocana sūtra) by the Shingon monk Dōhan 道範 (1178-1252). As the title indicates Dōhan’s text is an elucidation of *Dapiluzhena chengfojing shu* (Commentary on the Mahāvairocana sūtra) by the Chinese Tantric monk and Northern Chan adept Yixing. In his commentary, Yixing criticized some of his Southern Chan contemporaries with the following words:

Some declare: “The way of the bodhisattva is to simply view the formlessness and nonactivity of the mind-nature, and not to be occupied with all sorts of distracting activities.” This idea is wrong.<sup>641</sup>

In his elucidation, Dōhan 道範 (1178-1252) explains that this passage refers to “a certain band of Zennists” (*ichirui shitsuzen* 一類執禪) who rely on their “original wisdom nature” (*honchishō* 本智性) and “do not practice or cultivate anything” (*musa mushū* 無作無修). Dōhan goes on to explain that this Zen group “one-sidedly depends on emptiness and rejects practices” (*henkū mugyō* 偏空無行). As Chiba Tadashi pointed out, it is likely that instead of glossing a Tang dynasty Chinese situation, Dōhan here is actually criticizing native Zen currents of his own time, in particular the adherents of the Darumashū.<sup>642</sup>

More elaborate allusions to Darumashū discourse are found in the writings of the Shingon monk Raiyu 賴瑜 (1226-1304).<sup>643</sup> The critical concern with Zen that is found in Raiyu’s writings is a response to strands within the Shingon school that advocated an amalgamation of Shingon and Zen. The Zen element in this amalgamation traces to several directions, one of these being Darumashū discourse. Before turning to the references in Raiyu’s writings that are relevant to this issue, it is perhaps useful to say one or two words about Shingon doctrine and its system of doctrinal evaluation.

---

<sup>641</sup> Ibid. (T. 1796, 592b14-15).

<sup>642</sup> *Daibirushana jōbutskyōsohenmyō shō*, cited in Chiba Tadashi, “Chūsei Shingon mikkyō no zenshūkan,” *Shūgaku kenkyū* 44 (2002): pp. 27-28.

<sup>643</sup> The following examination of Shingon texts by Raiyu is indebted to Makino Kazuo, “Enkeibon Heike monogatari to Darumashū: Raiyu shūhen no ni san,” *Jissen kokubungaku* 58 (2000): pp. 39-54; Chiba Tadashi, “Chūsei Shingon mikkyō no zenshūkan: Dōgen Zen ni okeru mikkyō kenkyū no hitsuyōsei,” *Shūgaku kenkyū* 44 (2002): pp. 25-30; Sueki Fumihiko, Raiyu no shōshūkan,” in *Shingi Shingon kyōgaku no kenkyū: Raiyu Sōjō nanahyakunen goonki kinen ronshū*, edited by Sanpa Gōdō kinen ronshū henshū iinkai (Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 2002), pp. 217-228.



## Shingon doctrine

The Shingon perspective on doctrinal classification, which was presumed by monks such as Raiyu, was delineated by Kūkai. Kūkai distinguished between exoteric teachings (*kengyō* 顯教) and esoteric teachings (*mikkyō* 密教). Esoteric teachings, Kūkai claimed, were taught by the dharmakāya (dharma body) – the absolute Buddha – identified as Mahāvairocana Tathāgata (Dainichi Nyorai 大日如来). The teachings of Mahāvairocana find their chief textual expression in the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* and the *Vajrasekhara sūtra* (*Kongōchōkyō* 金剛頂經). In Kūkai's conception the absolute (dharmakāya Mahāvairocana) is not ineffable but expresses itself directly through texts, mantras (*shingon* 真言), maṇḍalas, sculptures, ritual implements and so forth. In fact, Mahāvairocana's continual samādhi reveals itself as the natural universe as such. Ritual practices, secretly transmitted in the Shingon lineage, enable initiated practitioners to partake of this samādhi and achieve mystical integration with Mahāvairocana, that is, achieve buddhahood in this very body (*sokushin jōbutsu* 即身成佛). The exoteric Buddhist teachings, on the other hand, are said to have been taught by the nirmāṇakāya (response body) – the historical Buddha Śākyamuni – and are hence conditional on time, place and circumstance. Nonetheless, since Śākyamuni (nirmanakāya) is a historical manifestation of the timeless Mahāvairocana (dharmakāya), the exoteric teachings, too, are infused with absolute truth. Kūkai worked out the relationships between the exoteric and esoteric in several doctrinal tracts. In *Jūjūshinron* 十住心論 (Treatise on the ten stages of mind) and the synoptic *Hizō hōyaku* 秘藏宝鑰 (Precious Key to the Secret Treasury) Kūkai identified ten levels of the human mind and correlated these to various Buddhist and non-Buddhist teachings, effectively creating a soteriological map/doctrinal classification.<sup>644</sup> Plainly outlined, Kūkai's classification amounts to the following<sup>645</sup>:

### Exoteric teachings

1. Animal instincts
2. Confucianism
3. Brahmanism and Daoism

- |             |          |
|-------------|----------|
| 4. Śrāvaka  | Hīnayāna |
| 5. Pratyeka |          |

- |                        |          |
|------------------------|----------|
| 6. Hossō (Yogācāra)    | Mahāyāna |
| 7. Sanron (Mādhyamika) |          |
| 8. Tendai              |          |
| 9. Kegon               |          |

### Esoteric teachings

- |             |           |
|-------------|-----------|
| 10. Shingon | Vajrayāna |
|-------------|-----------|

This brief outline should suffice to follow the various criticisms of Zen formulated by the Shingon monk Raiyu, examined below.

---

<sup>644</sup> For translations of Kūkai's major works and a study of his thought see Hakeda, Yoshito. S., *Kūkai: Major Works* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972).

<sup>645</sup> Based on *Mikkyō jiten*, p. 345.

### ***Shinzoku zakki mondōshō* (Miscellaneous Dialogues on the True and the Mundane)**

Raiyu's *Shinzoku zakki mondōshō* 真俗雜記問答鈔 (Miscellaneous Dialogues on the True and the Mundane) is an voluminous work with numerous entries on a variety of doctrinal subjects. Three of these entries include the term "Darumashū." Two of these are no more than terse notes and not much can be distilled from them.<sup>646</sup> The third is quite substantial and contains a dialogue about the error of discarding Buddhist practices. The entry is entitled "Shingon asserts original perfection yet adopts practice" 眞言雖談本具用修行事.

QUESTION: Raiyu's interlocutor points out that exotericism represents the approach to buddhahood from cause to effect. It adopts practices (causes) as a means leading to buddhahood (effect). Shingon reverts this direction. Shingon, as the embodiment of Mahāvairocana's absolute awakening, is "the ocean of effect," completely free of causal conditions. From the standpoint of Shingon, then, there is no need for the cultivation of causes, and yet practices (causes) are not expendable: the Shingon adept descends into the causally conditioned world to practice expedient means for the benefit of others. The interlocutor likens this twofold structure to the categories "inside teaching" (*kyōnai* 教内) and "outside the teachings" (*kyōge* 教外), as established in the Darumashū. But, in one branch of this Daruma school (*Daruma issū* 達磨一宗), we are informed, practice is mistakenly rejected:

In one school of Daruma they say: "Since ordinary beings and buddha are one substance there is absolutely no need to be concerned with textual theories. We are, therefore, outside the teachings. Other schools take the cultivation of practices as their main point and are, therefore, inside the teachings. For us, practice means that we practice by way of realizing the principle. We deny that the principle is realized by way of practice." That [one school of Daruma] is currently spreading this talk, not to mention Shingon. In this regard, it says in the *Monjugiki*: "When even momentarily a secular thought arises, one certainly falls into the Avīci hell." I do not understand. What does this mean?<sup>647</sup>

RAIYU'S ANSWER. In reply, Raiyu asserts that scriptures and practices are the functioning of Mahāvairocana in the phenomenal world. They are intrinsic to Shingon soteriology and cannot be discarded:

One must practice. For this reason the entire canon consists of profound manuals for abandoning delusion and realizing awakening. It is the essential path for breaking free of suffering and attaining bliss. If Shingon were not to admit practices, what would have been the point of Buddha's original intention of expounding the teachings? (...) Next we come to the issue of the Darumashū. To avoid the view that Buddha and ordinary beings are of a different substance, they say that since we are fundamentally Buddha there is no need to rely on the teachings or on realizing the principle by way of practice. Further [ ] no personal practice. Fearing that realizing the principle by way of practicing entails the view that ordinary beings and Buddha are of a different substance, they hold on to the notion of practicing by way of realizing [the principle]. We must by no means abandon practice. When discerning the logic of the teachings, we see that a Shingon practitioner receives a vajra name and hence transcends the two vehicles and the ten [bodhisattva] stages. Even so,

<sup>646</sup> *Shinzoku zakki mondōshō*, *Shingonshū zensho* 37, p. 78 (entry no. 63), p. 201 (entry no. 34).

<sup>647</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

prior to the levels of men and deities not a hair's width of defilement is eliminated. So, why not practice?<sup>648</sup>

***Kenmitsu mondōshō* (Dialogues about the Exoteric and Esoteric)**

*Kenmitsu mondōshō* 顕密問答鈔 consists of two volumes and is arranged in a question and answer format. In the first volume Raiyu critically evaluates the Buddhist teachings of the Hossō, Sanron, Tendai and Kegon schools in accordance with the hermeneutical framework provided by Kūkai. Raiyu is especially concerned with demonstrating that absolute reality (Mahāvairocana) is, in the final analysis, not formless (*musō* 無相) but possessive of form (*usō* 有相). In the second volume of *Kenmitsu mondōshō* the Zen school is evaluated. Here, too, Kūkai's classification is presumed. Raiyu, however, was faced with the problem that Kūkai's writings do not mention Bodhidharma and provide no classification of the Zen school.

Raiyu is noticeably concerned with rejecting any insinuation that Zen is somehow on par with the splendor of Shingon. The specific efforts to refute perceived compatibilities between Shingon and Zen indicate that such syncretism circulated in Raiyu's community. Correlations between Raiyu's text and Darumashū material (presented below) indicate that Raiyu's view on Zen was, to a degree, informed by Darumashū discourse, notably *Kenshōjōbutsugi*. Now let have a closer look at *Kenmitsu mondōshō*. For the purposes at hand we will focus on the two opening dialogues of volume two, which explicitly juxtapose the Shingon and Zen traditions.

*Kenmitsu mondōshō, volume 2: First dialogue.*

QUESTION. The lengthy opening question of the second volume of *Kenmitsu mondōshō* is an inquiry into the various claims that are made in the Zen school. These claims are placed in the mouth of an unnamed Zen adherent with whom the questioner had a previous discussion. First a full translation of the question:

With reverence I have been receiving your charitable instructions and deeply awakened to my innate virtue. You have employed the precious inner treasure without reserve. Peasants engrossed in dreams are in reality princes. However, recently the are Zen people (*zenmon no hito* 禪門人) who exalt Bodhidharma and put down the exoteric and esoteric schools. One of them told me the following:

The teachings set forth paths of counteraction and [aim] to realize the original principle through the elimination of phantasmal afflictions. In the *Sugyōroku*, accordingly, the established teachings of Shingon, Hokke, Kegon, Sanron and Hossō are listed in detail and all designated as teachings that counteract defilements. Because [they seek to counteract defilements that are in fact unreal] the wondrous visualizations of five forms and five elements [practiced in Shingon] are a dense fog of triple delusion, and the subtle observances of triple wisdom and the threefold contemplation [practiced in Tendai] are a five-layered mass of clouds (i.e. delusions). Thus we know that the various teachings all clarify the elimination of mind-characteristics through wisdom, but they do not reveal the fundamental Buddha of the mind-nature. Already awakened to the mind-substance we [Zen adepts] admit neither delusion nor awakening and attain liberation without eliminating or verifying anything. We separately transmit this form-transcending

---

<sup>648</sup> Ibid., pp. 58-59

substance outside of the teachings. This is why our patriarch [Bodhidharma] said: “No reliance on words and letters, no dependence on expedients, directly point to your mind, see the nature and become a buddha. This is what is called the Zen gate.” And Huangbo, the limit-destroying Zen master, said: “If you just apprehend this mind, then there will be no mind and no dharmas.” And [Bodhidharma’s] *Goshōron* 悟性論 says: “In this true seeing nothing is unseen and nothing is seen. [True] seeing fills the ten directions without the presence of seeing. Why? Because nothing is seen, because non-seeing is seen, and because seeing is not seeing. What is seen by an ordinary being is called deluded thought. When in tranquil extinction there is no seeing, then for the first time it is called true seeing. Mind and objects oppose each other. [True] seeing arises in the middle.” And the *Sūtraṅgama sūtra* says: “Wisdom-seeing that establishes wisdom is the basis of ignorance. Wisdom-seeing devoid of seeing is nirvāṇa.” Thus it is known that the substance of suchness and the principle of seeing the nature are separately transmitted outside the teaching, and forever different from the various teachings.

The [Zen follower] also said:

In the Buddhadharma there are, on the whole, two approaches. The first is the path of the teaching and the second is the path of realization. In the teaching of Tendai it is said that among [the followers of] the Tripiṭaka, Shared and Distinct Teachings, no one is capable of attaining the fruit [of buddhahood], and thus they will eventually become followers of the Perfect Teaching. In the Shingon school it is said that once the followers of the exoteric Perfect teaching have climbed the first stage they all arrive at Shingon. In the Zen school we say that [the followers of] the exoteric and esoteric repositories are like mice storing up chestnuts, and that esotericists, after a phase of causal practices, will [eventually] arrive at the Mind school [i.e. Zen]. It should be understood that the highest ranks of the various teachings do not surpass an initial stage. As for a second stage and above, there are teachings but none of them realize them. Thus the *Shinyō* says: “Pretending that yellow leaves are golden coins momentarily stops the crying of a little child.” Those knowing [only] of these yellow leaves do not have fruition [of buddhahood]. In the time of the Buddha everyone had access to the true nature. However, from the congregation of eighty-thousand he entrusted only one person – Mahākāśyapa – with the mind-seal: this represents the boundary of the conventional teachings and its methods. A true person without obstructions can access [buddhahood] everywhere. But for the sake of people in the final age (*masse*), who have attachments to characteristics, [the Buddha] especially transmitted the robe and the dharma, unrestricted by expedients.

I investigated this and found that in *Daibonōshomonkyō* it says: “I possess the repository of the true dharma eye, the subtle mind of nirvāṇa. It is not established on words and letters. It is a separate transmission outside the teachings. I entrust it to you. In the future you must promulgate it and not let it be cut off.” If this is so, scholiasts of the latter age will remain in fox-like bewilderment forever. Again, could you send out your light of wisdom to shine upon my lingering darkness?<sup>649</sup>

---

<sup>649</sup> *Kenmitsu mondōshō, Zoku Shingonshū zensho* 23, pp. 33-34.

Qua tone, style and doctrinal content the explanations of the cited Zen adept are reminiscent of Darumashū discourse. As Chiba Tadashi pointed out, a concrete link between this passage and the Darumashū is found in a quotation in this passage from the Darumashū treatise *Kenshōjōbutsugi*.<sup>650</sup> *Kenmitsu mondōshō* has the following line:

故宗鏡中具列真言華嚴華嚴三論法相所立教門皆名宗染汚對治之教 In the *Sugyōroku*, therefore, the established teachings of Shingon, Hokke, Kegon, Sanron and Hossō are listed in detail and all designated as teachings that counteract defilements.

The equivalent line in *Kenshōjōbutsugi* reads:

故ニ宗鏡ニハ三論法相華嚴等ノ宗ヲハ染[汚]對治チノ教トイヘリ. In the *Sugyōroku*, therefore, the Sanron, Hossō and Kegon schools are called teachings that counteract defilements.

Chiba suggests that Raiyu altered the line to include “Shingon.” This is possible, but not necessarily so. Comparing the two fragments it is plain that Raiyu’s rendition is in Chinese logographs, whereas the corresponding line in *Kenshōjōbutsugi* is in Japanese. As noted in Chapter Three, several citations from *Kenshōjōbutsugi* that appear in Nichiren’s *Kinkōshū* show the same discrepancy. The citations that appear in the *Kinkōshū*, moreover, include parts that do not appear in the Kanazawa Bunko manuscript of *Kenshōjōbutsugi*. This makes it very likely that there circulated a different, “more Chinese” and perhaps more accurate version of *Kenshōjōbutsugi*, of which the Kanazawa Bunko version is a Japanese, vernacularized rendition. The quote in *Kenmitsu mondōshō*, then, might be based on this earlier version of *Kenshōjōbutsugi*.

In addition to the match between *Kenshōjōbutsugi* and *Kenmitsu mondōshō* located by Chiba, I offer a match between *Kenmitsu mondōshō* and the Darumashū treatise *Jōtōshōgakuron*. *Kenmitsu mondōshō* has Bodhidharma pronounce: “No reliance on words and letters, no dependence on expedients, directly point to your mind, see the nature and become a buddha.” The atypical inclusion of the words “not depending on expedients” into this otherwise standard string of Bodhidharma slogans is precisely matched in *Jōtōshōgakuron* (section [A][2]). Another special feature that the above cited passage in *Kenmitsu mondōshō* has in common with *Jōtōshōgakuron* is the idea that the transmission of the “mind seal” from the Buddha to Mahākāśyapa was carried out to benefit people in the future age of decline (section [A][1]).

Chiba also points out that the unnamed Zen adept in *Kenmitsu mondōshō* holds up various scriptural sources to make his case: Yanshou’s *Sugyōroku*, the *Śūraṅgama sūtra*, Bodhidharma’s *Goshōron* and Huangbō’s *Denshin hōyō*. As the previous chapters will have made clear these works can all be counted among the foundational texts of the Darumashū. In addition we note that Huangbō’s *Denshin hōyō*, which was published in Japan by Nōnin, is referred to in the above cited passage as “*Shinyō*” 心要 (Mind Essentials), an abbreviation peculiar to the Darumashū.<sup>651</sup>

RAIYU’S ANSWER. In response to the opening question, Raiyu reviews a number of doctrinal classifications and textual passages, mainly from Tendai and Kegon works, so as to map out the

<sup>650</sup> Chiba Tadashi, “Chūsei Shingon Mikkyō no zenshūkan,” *Shūgaku kenkyū* 44 (2001), p. 30.

<sup>651</sup> The colophon of the edition of *Denshin hōyō* that was published by Nōnin and Mugu refers to the work as “*Shinyō*” 心要. See Chapter Five. Kakuan’s lost commentary on *Denshin hōyō* is entitled *Shinyō teishi* 心要提示. See Chapter Four.

features and doctrinal position of the Zen school. In the end he comes with his own arrangements, in which Zen is primarily associated with Mādhyamika thought and placed at stage seven in Kūkai's tenfold classification system, corresponding to the Sanron school.<sup>652</sup>

Raiyu, further, takes issue with several points that were raised by the anonymous Zen adept. The Zen adept claimed that Shingon is a provisional expedient, whereas Zen is the ultimate truth; Shingon followers are like crying children, soothed by pretending that yellow leaves (expedients) are golden coins (truth); in addition they are compared to mice that hoard chestnuts, suggesting they collect knowledge without consummating actual buddhahood. In the eyes of the Zen adept, Shingon represents a preliminary stage which, when fulfilled, leads the practitioner to Zen. Raiyu of course will have none of this: "Though my body has entered the esoteric house my mind does not idle in the gate of Zen."<sup>653</sup>

Another point that Raiyu attacks is the claim that Zen represents a unique transmission that is independent of Buddhist scriptures and exegetical traditions 教外別傳不立文字. According to Raiyu this claim entails the logically untenable position of the Indian ascetic Dīghanakha, who claimed to categorically reject everything but was unable to reject his own categorical claim.<sup>654</sup> Raiyu, in addition, sees a discrepancy between Zen's supposed non-reliance on texts and the experience of the sixth patriarch Huineng, who awakened upon hearing a passage from the *Diamond sūtra*: "How is it he abrogated scriptures?"<sup>655</sup> What is at stake here, of course, is the status of language, texts and exegesis. From the esoteric Shingon perspective all sounds, words and letters are an extension of Mahāvairocana and *ipso facto* possessive of wonderful buddhic qualities. Zen, on the other hand, is predisposed to Mādhyamikan deconstruction, seeing words as deceptive designations, expedients that are to be transcended. Such a view is discernible, for instance, in *Kenshōjōbutsugi*. Using the analytical devices of *mind/word* and *name/substance*, *Kenshōjōbutsugi* explains that words are expedients, and it thereby elevates the silent mind transmission of the Zen school over the text-based activities of the eight conventional schools, including Shingon.

Next, Raiyu refutes the Zen adept's claim that Shingon is a mere expedient teaching that aims to "counteract defilements" 染污對治之教. As we have seen, this claim was culled from *Kenshōjōbutsugi*. Finally, Raiyu objects to the Zen adept's derogatory way of assessing Shingon. The references to crying children and hoarding mice are a "Grave offence!" 大罪 and an "Unjustifiable impertinence!" 不可不慎. Echoing Eisai's Darumashū criticism, the "Zen people"

<sup>652</sup> *Kenmitsu mondōshō*, p. 35. Raiyu uses the term *kakushinjō* 覺心乘, which corresponds to stage seven in Kūkai's system of the ten stages of mind, called *kakushin fushōshin* 覺心不生心 (the mind that awakens to the nonarising of the mind). This stage represents Mādhyamika, represented in Japan by the Sanronshū 三論宗 (Three Treatises school).

<sup>653</sup> *Kenmitsu mondōshō*, p. 34

<sup>654</sup> The story of the wandering ascetic Dīghanakha can be found in *Changzhua fanzhi qingwenjing* 長爪梵志請問經 (T. 584) and in *Dazhidulun* 大智度論 (T. 1509). The nihilistic Dīghanakha categorically rejected all views. The Buddha pointed out to him that this was impossible since he obviously could not reject his own categorical thesis. Thereafter Dīghanakha converted to the Buddha's teaching and attained the first level of arhatship.

<sup>655</sup> *Kenmitsu mondōshō*, p. 36

[In the Zen school] they assert "a separate transmission outside the teachings" and "non-reliance on words and letters." Do these statements accord with the teachings or not? If one admits that [these statements] are in accord with the teachings one cannot say "outside the teachings." [In the Zen school] they contrive a discourse that does not rely on words and letters: hence they are like that long nailed Brahmacarin [Dīghanakha] who relied on non-acceptance yet accepted the view [of non-acceptance]. This Zen school you talk about must stop saying it is "outside the teachings," not to mention that transmission of three robes and the raising of a flower. The six sense fields are all words and letters and therefore [words and letters] are nothing less than the substance of the teachings. What about the sixth patriarch who attained the dharma on the basis of the *Diamond Sutra*? How is it he abrogated scriptures?

under consideration here are called “Zen masters of dim realization.” They are “drunkards scoffing at the sober” 痛狂咲不酔.<sup>656</sup>

*Kenmitsu mondōshō*, vol. 2: *Second dialogue*

*QUESTION.* The second dialogue presents a questioner who advocates harmony between Shingon and Zen. Two points of convergence are put forward. The first point is the “mind to mind transmission” (*isshin denshin* 以心傳心). The questioner claims that both Bodhidharma and Kūkai considered *isshin denshin* the most profound form of transmission. The second point is Huīke’s dictum “originally there are no afflictions; fundamentally they are bodhi.” The questioner praises this dictum as the gist of Zen and the highest principle of all schools.

In addition the questioner objects to Raiyu’s contention that Zen is an inferior school that seeks to “counteract defilements.” To illustrate his point he quotes a passage from Bodhidharma’s *Kechimyakuron*. In this passage Bodhidharma equates the workings of “numinous awareness” (*reichi* 靈知) with lust and anger and with trivial things, such as shuffling one’s feet. Such an equation, the questioner observes, does not warrant the label “counteract defilements.” The questioner hence doubts whether Raiyu is correct to identify the “one mind” expounded by Bodhidharma with the “formless one mind” that is promoted in the exoteric Sanron school (Mādhyamika):

In the Zen school, from the time that the seven Buddhas of the past, as it were, proffered their hands, the patriarchs have transmitted the mind, investigating the essential point and destroying words at the tips of their tongues. Thus the principle of mind to mind transmission justly resides at the zenith of the Secret Vehicle (Shingon) and the dictum “fundamentally there are no afflictions” wanders lonely on the summit of the various schools. This is why the great master [Kūkai] explained: “The innermost truth in the secret repository is not obtained from written words. It is only transmitted from mind to mind (*isshin denshin*).”<sup>657</sup> These words tally with Bodhidharma’s mind to mind transmission (*isshin denshin*). Mind to mind transmission has always been considered the zenith of the True School (Shingon). This being so, why do you characterize [Zen] as a teaching that represses the passions and fails to manifest virtues? Bodhidharma’s *Kechimyakuron* says: “Buddha is an Indian word. In this country it is called awakening. Being intrinsically awakened is called numinous awakening. Guiding beings in accord with their capacities, raising your eyebrows, blinking your eyes, moving your hands and shuffling your feet, all this is your numinous, radiant nature. The nature is the mind. The mind is buddha. Buddha is the path. And the path is Zen. This single graph *Zen* is not something gauged by ordinary people.” And: “If a layman sees that his own mind, he is a buddha. If a monk fails to see his nature, he is a deviant. I just say *see your nature* and do not say anything about lust because...” Thus we know that lifting the legs and moving the hands is the fundamental

---

<sup>656</sup> Ibid., pp. 34-36. The last remark – drunkards scoffing at the sober – derives from Kūkai’s *Hannya shingyō hiken* 般若心經秘鍵 (The Precious Key to the Secret Treasury) (T. 2203A, 11a13 : 痛狂咲不酔).

<sup>657</sup> These words are from a letter by Kūkai to Saichō. Saichō had received esoteric initiation (*abhiṣeka*) from Kūkai but did not undergo a prolonged training period under Kūkai, as Kūkai had apparently stipulated. Kūkai provided Saichō with many esoteric texts to copy. When Saichō wrote him a letter asking to borrow the *Rishushakuyō*, Kūkai refused and chided Saichō for his overtly textual approach to Esoteric Buddhism: “The innermost truth in the secret repository is not obtained from written words but only transmitted from mind to mind. Words are just dregs and gravel.” 祕藏奧旨不貴得文只在以心傳心 文是糟粕文是瓦礫. See Ryuichi Abe, “Saichō and Kūkai: A Conflict of Interpretations,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 22 (1995), pp. 104-137.

buddha of the one mind, and that lust and anger are simply awakened nature 覺性 [endowed with] numinous awareness 靈知. So, why do you name it “formless one mind” and consign it to the foremost principle of the three vehicles (i.e. Sanron)?<sup>658</sup>

In its motifs (seeing the nature, numinous awareness, awakened nature) and its reliance on Bodhidharma’s *Kechimyakuron* (one of the so-called *Daruma sanron*), the above passage is suggestive of Darumashū discourse. The emphasis on the buddhic quality of everyday acts, like blinking an eye and so on, though not literally mentioned, is frequently implied in the previously examined primary Darumashū texts. We may also recall Gikai’s (1219-1309) description in *Goyuigon kiroku*, of the loose attitude of his incorrigible Darumashū comrades: “Lifting the arms and moving the legs, all that we do, the arising of dharmas in general, everything is the Buddhadharmas.”<sup>659</sup>

RAIYU’S ANSWER. In his elaborate response to the question, Raiyu sets out to refute the idea that Zen is somehow equal to Shingon. He does so on genealogical and doctrinal grounds.

In terms of genealogy (lineage), Raiyu diminishes Zen by pointing out that the transmitter of Zen – Bodhidharma – was a *nirmāṇakāya* (*keshin* 化身), a temporarily manifested buddha body. Shingon, on the other hand, is continually preached by the cosmically immanent dharmakāya Buddha. Bodhidharma’s successor Mahākāśyapa is put down as a “shallow little man” (*senkin no shōnin* 淺近之小人) and contrasted with the unfathomably profound Vajrasattva, the second patriarch in the Shingon lineage. Finally, Kūkai’s *Fuhōden* is cited to show that the Zen lineage was cut off by the death of the patriarch Śiṃha, whereas the Shingon lineage remained uninterrupted.<sup>660</sup>

In terms of doctrine, Raiyu’s critique mainly centres on the apophatic nature of the Zen teachings. Citing from a range of texts, including Chan texts, Raiyu demonstrates that the Zen school upholds notions such as emptiness, tranquility and unobtainability, and adheres to the tenets “this mind is buddha” and “originally there are no afflictions; fundamentally they are bodhi.” All this is classified as Sanron (Mādhyamika).<sup>661</sup>

Next Raiyu considers the mind to mind transmission (*isshin denshin*) of the Zen school, which his questioner equated with the mind to mind transmission of the Shingon school. Raiyu identifies Bodhidharma’s mind transmission as an exoteric tradition, stemming from Buddha Śākyamuni. Subsequently he associates it with the highest Kegon principle of “one substance” (*ittai* 一體). In terms of Kūkai’s tenfold classification, the Zen school, in this respect, is placed on top of Kegon, below Shingon. Raiyu thus posits that “the highest peak of the exoteric vehicle (Kegon/Zen) is the opening door to the esoteric vehicle (Shingon).”<sup>662</sup> According to Raiyu,

---

<sup>658</sup> *Kenmitsu mondōshō*, p. 37. The Mahāyāna Buddhist concept of three vehicles (Skt. *trikāya*) distinguishes three pathways to three qualitatively different attainments of awakening: śrāvaka, pratyeka and bodhisattva. In Kūkai’s esoteric system the bodhisattva vehicle corresponds to Hossō (Yogācāra) and Sanron (Mādhyamika). One of the earliest and most influential scriptures to define the three vehicles was the *Lotus sūtra*, in which the three vehicles figure as a foil to annunciate the superior “one vehicle.” The *Avatamsaka sūtra* likewise expounds the vision of one vehicle. Whether this one vehicle meant the exaltation of the bodhisattva vehicle or the emergence of a separate (fourth) vehicle became a debated issue. See Fujita Kotatsu (trans. Leon Hurvitz), “One Vehicle or Three?”, *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 3/1-2 (1976), pp. 79-166.

<sup>659</sup> *Goyuigon kiroku* (SSZ, Shūgen 2, p. 258).

<sup>660</sup> *Kenmitsu mondōshō*, p. 37.

<sup>661</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38. Raiyu uses the term *sanjō kyōkuri* 三乘極理 (the uppermost principle of the three vehicles), which in Kūkai’s esoteric system corresponds to the Sanron school (Mādhyamika).

<sup>662</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.



Shingon reveals that the formless one mind of the Zen tradition is in fact grounded on the three form-possessing (*usō* 有相) mysteries of Mahāvairocana; mysteries that are neither formless nor inconceivable, but expressed in the esoteric syllable *hūm* and in the graphic language of the Shingon maṇḍalas. For Raiyu, Zen apophysis falls short in grasping the esoteric language of Shingon:

[Bodhidharma] takes the principle of one mind as the fundament. He did not understand that this one mind is a product of the six elements and three mysteries [of Mahāvairocana] (...) I submit that [the Zen school] asserts a “special transmission outside the teachings” because it does not come up to the language of the four [maṇḍalas]. I proclaim words in accord with truth to that [Zen adherent] and therefore I say that the syllable *hūm* is that which supports [the one mind]. Just saying “to move the hands and shuffle the feet is numinously aware nature” amounts to the idea that conditioned characteristics are contained within the nature (*shōsō kishō* 攝相歸性), and this not [in accordance with] the three features of the dharmakāya Buddha reality. To say “being lustful and angry is the principle of seeing the nature” amounts to the idea that delusion and substance are intrinsically empty, and this is not [in accordance with] the intrinsic buddhas and virtues of the four maṇḍalas.

Raiyu wants to make sure it is understood that the mind transmission mentioned by Kūkai is definitely not the same as Bodhidharma’s mind transmission. In Shingon, we are informed, the term “mind transmission” is used to indicate that secret truths are being transmitted only orally; it does not imply the abrogation of texts. Mind transmission, Raiyu further clarifies, can also refer to the domain of Mahāvairocana’s “self-verification” (*jishō* 自證) wherein “preaching is without words and viewing is without seeing.” The mind to mind transmission of the Zen school is said to be of a lesser order: “It is an observance of the response-buddha (*ōbutsu* 應佛 i.e. nirmāṇakāya) in response to people’s spiritual capacities” (*ōki* 應機).<sup>663</sup> In support of this last claim Raiyu cites an unnamed treatise, attributed to Kūkai:

Therefore a commentary by great master [Kūkai] says: “With the buddha-mind of the Western Skies he sealed the mind-buddha of the Eastern Land. Caoxi’s kinsmen of abstruse principle are among those who respond to capacities. – I have not seen the original text . 故大師釋云 以西天佛心印東土之心、曹谿玄旨宗屬在應機者。未見正文。<sup>664</sup>

“Caoxi’s kinsmen of abstruse principle” cannot be but a reference to the lineage of Caoxi Huineng, the sixth Chan patriarch. So, interestingly, we seem to be dealing here with a text wherein Kūkai himself mentions the Zen tradition. Though the exact meaning of the line 屬在應機者 (*ōki no mono ni shoku zaisu*) is hard to pin down, it is clear that Raiyu interpreted this passage as a statement by Kūkai that positions the Zen school on the level of nirmāṇakāya (*ōbutsu* 應佛). The existence of a text by Kūkai with a direct reference to the sixth Chan patriarch would be highly notable. Raiyu’s interlinear note, however, indicates that he did not see an original manuscript. The passage, I suggest, was taken from *Kenshōjōbutsugi*, which has the near identical line 弘法大師ハ以西天佛心印東土佛心曹谿玄旨宗屬在應機者トイヘリ。<sup>665</sup> In

<sup>663</sup> Ibid.

<sup>664</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>665</sup> KBSZ, Zensekihen, p. 181. Translations, Text II, section [4.b].

*Kenshōjōbutsugi* the passage is meant to illustrate the concept of mind to mind transmission of the Zen school by giving two examples: Bodhidharma and Huineng. Though Bodhidharma is, oddly, referred to as *kōbō daishi* (great master who spread the dharma) it is clear that the passage has nothing to do with Kūkai, who was of course known as Kōbō Daishi.<sup>666</sup> Raiyu, in any event, put great effort in dispelling the idea that the Shingon and Zen principles of “mind transmission” were compatible. This idea evidently circulated in his environment.

#### *Concluding remarks*

Raiyu’s concerns about Zen, examined above, did not come out of thin air. He responded to developments around him. It is clear that Zen was being discussed in Raiyu’s environments and that a notable group among his addressees advocated a combination of Shingon and Zen. The harmony between Shingon and Zen that is discussed in *Kenmitsu mondōshō* through the medium of the anonymous Zen adept, is not a focal point in the previously examined Darumashū texts, but it is not entirely absent: *Hōmon taikō* explicitly identifies the formless original mind (*musō honshin* 無相本心) of the Zen tradition with “the secretly explained A-syllable” of Shingon.<sup>667</sup> This type of correlative thinking partook of a broader Zen/Esoteric current, represented by Eisai, Gyōyu, Kakushin and Enni Ben’en (1202-1280).

From several citations in *Kenmitsu mondōshō* we know that the Darumashū text *Kenshōjōbutsugi* circulated in Raiyu’s surroundings. One of the probable loci for Zen/Shingon interaction was the Kōmyōzammai-in temple on Mount Kōya, which is known to have been a hub of Tendai, Shingon and Zen studies. As noted in Chapter Four, various lines connected the Kōmyōzammai-in to Dōgen’s Sōtō/Darumashū community. For instance, the Shingon monk Kakushin (1207-1298) – a student of Kōmyōzammai-in’s first abbot Gyōyū (1163-1241) – briefly resided at Kōshōji, where in 1242 he received bodhisattva precepts from its abbot Dōgen. The Darumashū/Sōtō monk Gijun is known to have moved from Eihei-ji to the Kongōzammai-in, becoming a Shingon monk under the *ācārya* Raiken 賴賢 (1196-1273). Conversely, the Shingon monk Dōsen 道荐 (d. 1289) is known to have moved from Mount Kōya to Eihei-ji after having met the Darumashū/Sōtō monk Gikai on Mount Kōya. Sambōji in Settsu must have been another place of intersection. Nōnin’s temple preserved esoteric texts, including the *Kōya sappitsushū*, a collection of writings by Kūkai. In this regard it is also interesting to recall that Nōnin, himself an esoteric *ācārya*, is reported to have been involved in discussions concerning the so-called esoteric fifth samādhi, also known as *shin kanjō*, or *isshin denshin kanjō*, a type of esoteric mind to mind transmission.

<sup>666</sup> The title Kōbō Daishi was posthumously bestowed on Kūkai by Emperor Daigo in 921.

<sup>667</sup> Translation, Text III, section [I.e].

