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## **Metaphysics as praxis : Rereading Dōgen's Metaphysics through Deleuzian pragmatism and Pratīyasamutpāda**

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## CHAPTER TWO

## PRATĪTYASAMUTPĀDA AND THE CRITICAL BUDDHIST READING OF DŌGEN

**2.1 Introduction**

As I have briefly mentioned in the first chapter, there are two opposite factions in Dōgen interpretation concerning his use of metaphysical ideas. The first is that of Critical Buddhism which denies Dōgen’s metaphysics while upholding pratītyasamutpāda. Second are the “comparative” interpretations which positively affirm Dōgen’s metaphysics, often under influence of ‘Western’ philosophy, yet transgress pratītyasamutpāda. I will explain in the next two chapters why none of these factions can affirm Dōgen’s metaphysics in combination with pratītyasamutpāda. This is inherent to their common prejudice that metaphysics is by nature ‘representational’ and descriptive of a ‘true-way-reality-is.’ Therefore, these two distinct varieties of Dōgen interpretation constitute a polar dichotomy that continues to tie down Dōgen’s philosophy to a correspondence theory of truth. Overcoming these views necessitates a detailed analysis of their views on Dōgen and an explanation as to how and why they are shortsighted. The current chapter will analyze the first Dōgen interpretation: that of Critical Buddhism.

As mentioned in the introduction, to read Dōgen in line with pratītyasamutpāda is based on a dire ethical concern. There is the danger that Dōgen’s philosophy can lose its ethical integrity if read without reference to the overarching framework of pratītyasamutpāda. If pratītyasamutpāda is neglected and Dōgen’s ideas are interpreted in line with the idea of Original Enlightenment where reality is considered primordially ‘perfect,’ then his philosophy cannot differentiate between good and bad, nor can it affirm the necessity for altruism, personal and socio-political change.

The relationship between pratītyasamutpāda and ethics is a point that has been argued for extensively by the Critical Buddhists especially in reference to Hongaku doctrine in Japanese Zen

Buddhism. As previously mentioned, Critical Buddhism is a Japanese intellectual “movement” spearheaded by the Buddhologists Hakamaya Noriaki and Shirō Matsumoto. They consider *pratītyasamutpāda* and the act of critique as essential to an ethically viable Buddhism. Therefore, they take Japanese Buddhist doctrines, such as that of Dōgen, under extensive critical analysis in contrast to *pratītyasamutpāda*. The current study shares with the Critical Buddhist view that *pratītyasamutpāda* is imperative for Buddhism to be a spiritual practice that functions in accordance to a viable altruistic ethics. However, while the Critical Buddhist interpretation of Dōgen is the only one which takes seriously the consequences of reading various Buddhist doctrines in critical contrast to *pratītyasamutpāda*, it has its limitations. Critical Buddhism concludes that Dōgen’s metaphysics cannot be endorsed as “authentically” Buddhist. Since Critical Buddhism’s interpretation of Dōgen fully relies on its understanding of ‘authentic’ Buddhism as founded on *pratītyasamutpāda*, we can infer that their view on Dōgen is a logical consequence of a particular aspect of their understanding of *pratītyasamutpāda*. Of particular relevance to the current study is that Critical Buddhism denies the compatibility between metaphysics and *pratītyasamutpāda* entirely. Therefore, to what extent the current study can agree with Critical Buddhism’s view of *pratītyasamutpāda* and its application to Dōgen’s ideas needs to be discussed under reference to its criteria for ‘authentic’ Buddhism and why Dōgen is purportedly excluded from it.

Critical Buddhism is not interested in attempting to ‘rescue’ Dōgen’s many distinct metaphysical ideas from violating *pratītyasamutpāda*. Nor is Critical Buddhism interested in re-establishing a role for Dōgen’s ontology in what they consider authentic Buddhist practice. Thereby, Critical Buddhism simply labels Dōgen’s ontology as unacceptable from the perspective of *pratītyasamutpāda*. I consider this a conservative conclusion which neglects the deep wisdom found in Dōgen’s writings, a wisdom that can inspire life in accordance to *pratītyasamutpāda*. In contrast to the Critical Buddhists, the current study aspires to present a new reading of Dōgen’s conceptions of temporality and Buddha-nature, a reading that tries to do justice to their inherent relation to practice in a manner faithful to *pratītyasamutpāda*. In chapter five I will eventually reinterpret Dōgen by help of Deleuze’s pragmatist concepts, by conceiving Dōgen’s metaphysics as not ‘representational’ but as a

pragmatic tool to enhance an ethically viable application of his teachings to Buddhist practice. The current chapter lays part of the background for the above directive by analyzing what can be agreed to or not in Critical Buddhism's criteria for *pratītyasamutpāda* and how their prejudice concerning ontology conditions its view on Dōgen.

If Critical Buddhism's criteria for what does or does not adhere to *pratītyasamutpāda* are in line with preceding lineages of Buddhism, this means that their criteria are doctrinally supported and are more or less a generally applicable tool to protect *pratītyasamutpāda* from heretical ideas. This is significant, as I plan to utilize Critical Buddhism's criteria in the next chapter to critically analyze why Abe, Heine, Kasulis, and Glass neglect *pratītyasamutpāda* despite their affirmative interpretation of Dōgen's metaphysics. On the other hand, if we can successfully argue that Critical Buddhism's view of the incompatibility of *pratītyasamutpāda* and ontology is a mere prejudice, this may prove to be what limits its view of Dōgen. If true, this aspect of Critical Buddhism's understanding of *pratītyasamutpāda* and how it conditions its interpretation of Dōgen will need to be analyzed in order to overcome the limitations of the Critical Buddhist view.

As we shall see in this chapter, Critical Buddhism's kinship to views put forth by their historical predecessors may show that its understanding of *pratītyasamutpāda* is doctrinally correct, and its understanding of the concept's centrality in spiritual practice accurate. However, my hypothesis is that, to the extent that Critical Buddhism views *pratītyasamutpāda* as excluding ontology/metaphysics, it rests on the prejudice that ontology is by default descriptive of, or correspondent to, some kind of 'true-way-reality-is.' This prejudice makes Critical Buddhism erroneously see a general incompatibility between metaphysics and *pratītyasamutpāda* and precludes it from taking a wider view on how metaphysics could be applicable to spiritual practice. For the Critical Buddhist, to read Dōgen becomes a matter of either adhering to *pratītyasamutpāda* while denying metaphysics, or of denying *pratītyasamutpāda* while preserving metaphysics. This will become evident in the course of analyzing how Critical Buddhism interprets Dōgen's ontology as profoundly "non-Buddhist."

In order to fulfill the above directives, I will be pursuing the following questions through the

course of this chapter. The first half is dedicated to analyzing how Critical Buddhism defines *pratītyasamutpāda* and those ideas which deny it. How does Critical Buddhism define *pratītyasamutpāda* and ‘authentic’ Buddhism as founded on such a doctrine? What criteria does Critical Buddhism use to identify “Buddhist” philosophies contrary to *pratītyasamutpāda*? To what extent are these views doctrinally supported and in continuity with historically preceding views within Buddhism? And if there is a continuity, can these criteria be considered more or less generally applicable when criticising other Dōgen interpretations? Which aspect of Critical Buddhism’s view on *pratītyasamutpāda* implies a prejudice that ontology must be ‘representational’? The second half involves a detailed study of Critical Buddhism’s application of its view on *pratītyasamutpāda* in interpreting Dōgen’s views on Buddha-nature, and temporality in relation to practice. How do the Critical Buddhists apply the criteria for ‘authentic’ Buddhism to a critique of Dōgen? In precise terms, how does Critical Buddhism interpret Dōgen’s views on Buddha-nature, temporality and their relation to practice?

All of the above questions will ultimately lead to examining why Critical Buddhism’s reading of Dōgen must deny his metaphysics in contrast to upholding *pratītyasamutpāda*. Are their views on Dōgen a logical consequence of the prejudice that ontology is ‘representational’? Only by clearing these questions, can the study later argue for how Critical Buddhism’s conclusion concerning Dōgen be overcome by use of Deleuze’s pragmatism and without negating *pratītyasamutpāda*.

## **2.2 Elucidating Pratītyasamutpāda Through Critical Buddhism**

For the Critical Buddhists, their understanding of *pratītyasamutpāda*, commonly translated as the doctrine of *co-dependent arising/origination* or also the *law of causation*, determines the authenticity of any Buddhist doctrine. According to this view, Buddhist scriptures including Dōgen are judged in accordance to their understanding of *pratītyasamutpāda*. Since what it considers an ‘authentic’ Buddhism implies that it can only function ethically by placing *pratītyasamutpāda* over everything else, Critical Buddhism argues that “Buddhist” doctrines which favour ontological and or

epistemological perspectives which neglect *pratītyasamutpāda* cannot affirm altruistic ethics.

Therefore, to understand Critical Buddhism's description of *pratītyasamutpāda* and how they interpret Dōgen means to analyze what Critical Buddhism's leading scholars, Noriaki Hakamaya and Shirō Matsumoto, define as constitutive of 'authentic' Buddhism.

Despite Critical Buddhism's specific use of *pratītyasamutpāda* in contingency to their critical purpose, I consider its understanding of *pratītyasamutpāda* shows a continuity with the notion's Indian heritage as found in its Theravada and Indo-Tibetan counterparts. We will see that the Critical Buddhists inherit many elements of *pratītyasamutpāda* interpretation relying on Theravada doctrines as well as on Madhyamaka philosophy, and to that extent there is no abrupt discontinuity between Critical Buddhism and 'pre-Critical Buddhist' forms of Buddhism. Rather, one may observe that the Critical Buddhist's view of *pratītyasamutpāda* is in conformity to or complementary with the understanding of Buddhist doctrine made by other lineages of Buddhism that also strictly adhere to the centrality of *pratītyasamutpāda* and equally consider Madhyamaka and/or Theravada teachings as of essential importance. If this is so, to what extent can the current study agree or disagree with Critical Buddhism's interpretation of *pratītyasamutpāda* as a more or less generally applicable criteria to assess Buddhist philosophy?

Given that the Critical Buddhist interpretation of Dōgen is reliant on *pratītyasamutpāda* and that the current study challenges Critical Buddhism's conclusion concerning Dōgen's metaphysics, there must be a point of divergence. This can be elucidated by analyzing what in Critical Buddhism's understanding of *pratītyasamutpāda* leads to its conclusion that Dōgen's metaphysics is "non-Buddhist." Does this involve the presumption that metaphysics 'represents' reality? We shall examine this in the course of analyzing Critical Buddhism's view on *pratītyasamutpāda* as evident in their view on 'authentic' Buddhism.

### 2.2.1 'Authentic' Buddhism in Three Criteria

Hakamaya, in his interpretation of sections from the *Mahavagga sutra* of the Theravada collection known as the *Vinaya*,<sup>51</sup> clearly expresses three basic criteria of what he believes to be 'authentic' Buddhism. I believe that these points, elaborated with further passages by Hakamaya and Matsumoto, with reference to Theravada and Mahayana doctrines implied by them, can give us a lucid summary of what constitutes their version of 'authentic' Buddhism in what I summarize as the following:

1. Buddhism is founded on the doctrine of *pratīyasamutpāda*, which is the *Twelve Nidānas* and by inference means faithfulness to the doctrines of no-abiding-self and impermanence.
2. Adhering to *pratīyasamutpāda* necessitates the use of analytical, evaluative thinking (or *prajñā*) as indispensable in practice.
3. Buddhism must be essentially concerned with an altruistic ethics that is embedded within the application of *pratīyasamutpāda* in practice.

The three criteria can each be understood as describing different implications of *pratīyasamutpāda*. The first, ontological and phenomenological, since it has to do with the nature of perceived reality as causality and impermanence, the second, epistemological since it has to do with the nature of analytical thinking in relation to practice, and third, ethical, since it describes the necessity for altruism. All these criteria are rooted in the doctrine of *pratīyasamutpāda*, therefore, they constitute a measure to assess certain "Buddhist" philosophies' conformity with the doctrine. According to Critical Buddhism's use of the criteria, we will see that the failure to abide with even one criterion means that the whole of *pratīyasamutpāda* is neglected. I will elaborate on each criterion as follows.

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<sup>51</sup> Hakamaya Noriaki, *Hongaku-shisō Hihan* (本覚思想批判), (Tokyo: Ōkura, 1989), 10-12.

### **2.2.1.1 First Criterion: The Twelve Nidānas - Pratītyasamutpāda as Causation**

For the Critical Buddhist, pratītyasamutpāda strictly means the Buddha's practical teaching of the *twelve-fold chain of co-dependent arising* (also called the *Twelve Nidānas*), which they consider as the fundamental content of the Buddha's enlightenment experience.<sup>52</sup> The concept of pratītyasamutpāda as the twelve-fold chain of co-dependent arising constitutes the Buddha's further elaboration on the Four Noble Truths,<sup>53</sup> specifically on the second noble truth, that there is a cause to suffering and third, there is the cessation of suffering. The Buddha's claim that suffering arises due to a causal process is supported by the Buddha's detailed analysis of the process involving a twelve-fold collection of causal factors. These factors are: 1) ignorance, 2) formations, 3) consciousness, 4) name-and-form, 5) the six sense fields, 6) contact, 7) feeling, 8) craving, 9) sustenance, 10) becoming, 11) (re)birth, 12) aging and dying.

The interpretations of what these twelve factors entail, and how each should be understood as causally related to each other is a matter that varies amongst different philosophies and traditions of Buddhism.<sup>54</sup> However, one thing is constant throughout much of Buddhism in understanding pratītyasamutpāda as the twelve-fold chain of co-dependent arising: pratītyasamutpāda clarifies in a twelve-fold process how all suffering is causally traceable to ignorance (Skt. *avidyā*). By "ignorance" what is meant is ignorance of a correct insight to the nature of experienced reality. What this "correct insight" involves becomes clear in the following supplementary summary the Buddha gives concerning the *Nidānas*. The Buddha summarizes the whole twelve-fold chain in a simple tetralemma which states: "When this is, that is; from the arising of this comes the arising of that; when this isn't,

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<sup>52</sup> Hakamaya Noriaki, *Bukkyo Nyumon*, 150-160. Also Matsumoto Shirō, *Bukkyo e no Michi* (仏教への道), (Tokyo: Tokyo Shosen, 1993), 44-52.

<sup>53</sup> Hakamaya, *Bukkyo Nyumon*, 160-170. Also Matsumoto, *Bukkyo e no Michi*, 70-73. The most basic articulation of the Four Noble Truths as expounded in the first sermon can be found in the various extant versions of the *Dharmacakra Pravartana Sūtra*

<sup>54</sup> For example there are varied views on the causal direction of each of the Nidānas, whether it should be understood in a linear process, or a reverse process, middle to end, middle to beginning, or a mutually inter-causal process.

that isn't; from the cessation of this comes the cessation of that."<sup>55</sup> What is implied in this statement is the fundamental law that all things happen in accordance to the process of cause and effect,<sup>56</sup> hence one of the translations of *pratīyasamutpāda* in English is to call it the *law of causation*. Suffering is an effect of a cause, and this cause is ultimately ignorance to the causal nature of our perceived world and 'self.' If one can understand the causes, then one will know what to stop in order to end suffering. Therefore, to end suffering necessitates a proper insight into the nature of 'self' and phenomena as a causal process. This logically ensues two more of the Buddha's fundamental teachings. These are the teachings of *anātman* (*no-abiding-self* or in Jpn. 無我 *muga*), and *anitya* (*impermanence* or 無常 *mujou*)<sup>57</sup> as I will elaborate in the following section.

#### 2.2.1.1.1 Phenomena as Pratīyasamutpāda: No-Abiding-Self and Impermanence

The view that all things happen by way of a causal process as expounded in the *pratīyasamutpāda* can also be articulated in describing that all phenomena that constitute the 'I' whether physical, mental, or rooted in our perception, are characterized by a constant change in relation to their shifting conditions. In other words, since everything constituting the experience of a 'self' is a product of an endlessly shifting interaction between causes and effects, there cannot be a permanent selfhood. This leads to the Buddha's doctrine of no-abiding-self, which is posed in direct contrast against his Brahmanic contemporaries that supported the theory of a persisting *ātman* or individual essence, which was understood as identical to the supreme metaphysical reality or *Brahman*. This is the reason why later Buddhists like Nagarjuna and his Madhyamaka lineage as well as the Critical Buddhists fiercely criticise the reintroduction of ideas that parallel Brahmanic ontology into Buddhism as it means the total uprooting of the Buddha's teachings.

I consider Critical Buddhism's understanding of the doctrine of no-abiding-self to be rooted

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<sup>55</sup> Richard H. Robinson & Willard L. Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion: A Historical Perspective*, (London: Wadsworth, 1997), 28.

<sup>56</sup> Matsumoto, *Bukkyo e no Michi*, 50, 52.

<sup>57</sup> Hakamaya, *Bukkyo Nyumon*, 140-143.

in the Buddhist phenomenology traceable to the early Theravada traditions which designate the nature of the experience of a ‘self’ as constituted by a causal interaction between what are called the “five aggregates” (Skt. *Skandhas*) or components of experienced reality.<sup>58</sup> The five aggregates include: 1) ‘Form’ (*rūpa*) or reality as it seems to be constituted by matter. 2) Physical or mental ‘sensations’ (*vedanā*) as experienced through the six sensing faculties including eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind which could be either pleasant, unpleasant or indifferent.<sup>59</sup> This happens out of the contact between matter and senses. 3) ‘Perception’ (*sañjñā*) or the thought process which associates experience with knowledge and formulates ideas out of experience. 4) ‘Mental formations’ (*samskāra*) which are conditioned or habituated responses formed from past experience. This involves moral responses as good and bad. 5) ‘Consciousness’ (*viññāna*) by which is meant mere sensitivity or awareness. It is the neutral palette or mind-field on which the previous four skandhas interact.

All five skandhas causally interact to create what we experience to be our ‘self’ in relation to what we sense as being ‘real.’<sup>60</sup> For example, our sensation of seeing a physical object leads to the formation of a particular idea of that object which then if repeated, leads to a conditioned response. One perceives a flower, finds it to be pleasant, subsequently identifies a flower with the thought of beauty and pleasure, and craves to repeat the experience by seeking more flowers. Our identifying with the accumulated memory of these past sensational and conceptual responses to the flower comes to collectively constitute part of what we misconstrue as a sense of a persisting ‘Self’ and/or ‘objective reality.’ This causal process amongst the five skandhas is included within the Twelve Nidānas between the second to sixth nidānas.<sup>61</sup> This shows how the idea of no-abiding-self is firmly integrated within *pratītyasamutpāda*. Correct insight into the causal process of the skandhas as they unfold into

<sup>58</sup> This can be inferred from the fact that the skandhas constitute part of the Nidānas. Given the Twelve Nidānas is central for Critical Buddhism, both Hakamaya and Matsumoto also deals with the doctrine of the skandhas in a manner in which their significance is crucial in relation to both no-abiding-self and impermanence. See for example: Hakamaya, *Bukkyo Nyumon*, 145-150. Matsumoto, *Engi to Ku*, 27.

<sup>59</sup> “Mind” as mentioned in relation to the five skandhas do not imply the essentialist image that ‘mind’ is like a soul, or consciousness which exists ‘inside’ a body. Such a view is alien to Buddhist phenomenology as based in the five skandhas. ‘Mind’ is always considered a sense organ which creates certain senses like sadness, happiness, etc.

<sup>60</sup> For the Buddha’s detailed discourse on the nature of the skandhas refer to volume two of the *Samyutta Nikaya*, *Khandha Vagga*, sub-section “Khandha Samyutta” (SN 22.1 - SN 22.159).

<sup>61</sup> The same processual analysis of experience is included in the Twelve Nidānas between the nidānas of: 2) formations, 3) consciousness, 4) name-and-form, 5) the six sense fields, 6) contact.

one's experience of a 'self' is considered crucial in ending ignorance and ultimately suffering.

The 'I' is not a permanent reality, but a composite of the causal process happening dependently amongst the five skandhas.<sup>62</sup> Since the 'self' is a constantly changing phenomenon, attachment to any sense of a permanent selfhood is considered a fuel to the arising of suffering.<sup>63</sup> As long as one craves for security in creating a permanent identity he/she can call a "Self," by identifying one's existence with all forms of physical, mental, perceptive, cognitive, emotive, and conceptual phenomena, this fundamental ignorance of no-abiding-self will repeatedly create suffering in the perceiver.<sup>64</sup> The reason is, craving for permanence longs for something that is essentially non-realizable and will thus lead to an endless cycle of constant craving/attachment, fear of loss, pain of departure, unfulfillment and back to craving. Thus the doctrine of no-abiding-self primarily holds that the self is neither identical to nor identifiable with any of the phenomenal, mental, or conceptual causal conditions of experience to which we come to attach/identify ourselves with. Consequently, no (permanent) self exists isolated from causality.

The experience of the 'self' as a causal process amongst the five skandhas logically connects with the Buddha's teaching that time is impermanent. According to Matsumoto, the doctrine of impermanence is a logical consequence of how the Twelve Nidānas including the five skandhas need to be understood in practice. That is, the causal process beginning with ignorance towards the nature of no-abiding-self leading to the creation of mental formations which subsequently result in consciousness and eventually lead to old age and dying, is one which implies a lapse of time between

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<sup>62</sup> The five skandhas are not substantive realities and their causal relations can never produce a permanent 'essence.' The Buddha describes this through the simile of the chariot. Just as a chariot can only exist as a consequence of its dependent parts, so can a sense of 'being' happen only in dependence to the causal process of the five skandhas. This is mentioned in the *Vajira Sutta* (SN 5.10) in the collected sutras of the *Samyutta Nikaya*. See: "Vajira Sutta," *Wikipitaka - The Completing Tipitaka*, accessed July 23, 2015, [http://tipitaka.wikia.com/wiki/Vajira\\_Sutta](http://tipitaka.wikia.com/wiki/Vajira_Sutta).

<sup>63</sup> This does not mean that Buddhism denies any sense of an agent subjectivity as some may misconstrue the nature of anātman to mean. The conventional sense of a self-consciousness that can denote itself as an "I" or "me" in daily life is never negated, rather what is denied is the view that this "I" is a permanent entity which exists outside causality. Heinrich Dumoulin, *Understanding Buddhism: Key Themes*, trans. Joseph S. O'Leary. (New York: Weatherhill, 1994), 34-35. Also see: Shohaku Okumura, *Realizing Genjōkōan: The Key to Dōgen's Shōbōgenzō* (Boston: Wisdom, 2010), 27-28.

<sup>64</sup> This explication of the nature of impermanence in relation to the various conditions, self and suffering is thoroughly examined especially in the *Samyutta Nikaya*, Vol.IV Salayatana Samyutta, Chapters 34-35, trans. Bhikkhuni Uppalavanna, *Metta Net*, accessed April 15, 2011, <http://www.metta.lk/tipitaka/2Sutta-Pitaka/3Samyutta-Nikaya/index.html>.

each cause and the subsequent effect. The occurrence of one *nidāna*/skandha causing the subsequent *nidāna*/skandha always happens one after the other and cannot be a simultaneous causation.<sup>65</sup> All the skandhas, which constitute our experience of reality, are always changing in accordance to their causal process, therefore no aggregate of phenomena stays permanent. This means, there is always an irreversible movement of time between each condition causing the next. In other words, the Twelve *Nidānas* inclusive of the five skandhas, causally unfold as impermanence. Therefore, *pratītyasamutpāda* is by nature time.<sup>66</sup>

This gives the notion of time a particular significance in Critical Buddhism. From the view of Critical Buddhism, Buddhism ought to be concerned with temporality as impermanence, that is, the time in which we are living here and now, and in which we are born, suffer and ultimately die.<sup>67</sup> Matsumoto defines this critical existential concern for the irreversibility of time as “religious time” (*Shukyo-teki Jikan* 宗教的時間) which conditions an individual’s awakening to spirituality. In Matsumoto’s words, “Impermanence does not mean (the mere ontological definition) that things are constantly changing. It is rather tied to the problem of our life and death. It is when we *realize* impermanence in this very unsolvable problem of our own living and dying that an individual awakens to his/her religiosity.”<sup>68</sup>

The sense of existential crisis of religious time is further embedded in the fact that it allows no ontological ground for an assurance of permanent existence, or escape from the irreversibility of time, and ultimately death.<sup>69</sup> From the Critical Buddhist’s perspective this is the only time which should be of concern for a Buddhist since without proper insight into the nature of impermanence there can be no proper insight into the nature of phenomena as a causal process. Without the psychological preparedness and courage to face impermanence directly without escape, it becomes

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<sup>65</sup> Matsumoto argues for this point within the context of his critique of Watsuji’s view that the Twelve *Nidānas* imply a simultaneous mutual “causation” amongst metaphysical conditions. Such “causality” in fact denies the linear nature of causation and consequently impermanence, since the lapse of time within the movement from one cause to the subsequent effect is negated by simultaneity. *Engi to Ku*, 34-44.

<sup>66</sup> Hakamaya, *Hongaku-shisō Hihan*, 2, 10-11.

<sup>67</sup> Hakamaya Noriaki, *Dōgen to Bukkyō (道元と仏教)*, (Tokyo: Ōkura, 1992), 23.

<sup>68</sup> Matsumoto, *Bukkyō e no Michi*, 34. Additional phrase within parentheses added by myself for clarity of context.

<sup>69</sup> Matsumoto Shirō, *Engi to Ku: Nyoraizo-shisō Hihan (縁起と空 如来蔵思想批判)*, (Tokyo: Ōkura, 1989), 17, 34. Also Hakamaya, *Hihan Bukkyō*, 332.

nearly impossible to understand the Buddha's antidote to observe this causal movement. Therefore, any other theory of time that consequently negates irreversible impermanence by displacing it into some kind of otherworldly eternity, or spatializing it into infinite duration or a subsisting substratum behind phenomena cannot be endorsed. To deny impermanence that is the result of causality is to deny the law of causality (prafītyasamutpāda). We will later see how the above understanding of prafītyasamutpāda as impermanence plays itself out in Critical Buddhism's view on Dōgen's theory of time as incompatible with prafītyasamutpāda. According to Matsumoto, Dōgen is proposing a theory of time which claims a persisting substratum behind impermanence.

#### 2.2.1.1.2 The Twelve Nidānas and Impermanence in Relation to Ontology

The nature of the causal relationship between the nidānas as irreversible impermanence leads to the Critical Buddhist view that prafītyasamutpāda is incompatible with ontology. According to Matsumoto, prafītyasamutpāda as an impermanent process cannot accommodate ontology and metaphysical realities as he mentions:

The causal nature of the Nidānas, as appearance and disappearance means that phenomena lacks any sense of ontological assurance as individually grounded 'existences.' [...] The moment Buddhism defined the actual experience of living by the causal relationship amongst the five skandhas, it had diverged from any notion of realism concerning the actual 'existence' of phenomena. Whether the five skandhas or the Twelve Nidānas, there is no difference that these are both causal relations amongst appearing and disappearing properties of phenomena. These properties are not permanent and unchanging, but unstable and therefore always in a critical situation. Our lives lack any sense of ontological basis. We can exist only as such an unstable and critically endangered causal process unfolding in time.<sup>70</sup>

Accepting the nature of phenomena as prafītyasamutpāda, and therefore impermanent, logically ensues the view that the human's creation of ontological 'foundations' or 'grounds' of existence in order to construct the comfort of a permanently assured world and 'Self' is always bound to be illusory. Understanding that the strict observance of prafītyasamutpāda is by nature oppositional to metaphysical 'grounds' as suggested in the above quote is reasonable for practical purposes.

<sup>70</sup> Matsumoto, *Engi to Ku*, 27. Translated by myself.

Attempts at creating ontological ‘foundations’ or ‘grounds’ that nullify impermanence will be considered a product of a mind ignorant of the nature of phenomena as *pratītyasamutpāda* and no-abiding-self. The ignorance causes suffering, as these ‘foundations’ are like chasing castles in the air whose search leads to an endless cycle of attachment, un-fulfillment, disappointment and pain of departure. Not only may the reliance on permanent ‘foundations’ be a symptom of one’s attachment to assurance and ‘grounds,’ escapism from change and death, it can also worsen the situation by distracting one from taking the correct step to analyzing experience as a causal process. According to the Twelve *Nidānas*, a correct analysis of our experience of reality as the process of cause and effect unfolding in impermanence leads to the end of our ignorance. If so, a practitioner should not deny or escape from impermanence by believing in an a-temporal transcendental realm which ‘spatializes’ or ‘substantializes’ time by uniting it with some form of metaphysical ‘ultimate reality.’

I consider the practical implications of the above understanding of causal impermanence in relation to ontology as consistent with the practical steps needed to achieve correct insight into the nature of experience as *pratītyasamutpāda* and no-abiding-self. However, there is one theoretical problem underlying the above quote. Matsumoto seems to imply that what is ‘ontological’ is by nature always an attempt to create ‘grounds’ and, therefore, in contrast to and incompatible with the unstable and impermanent experience of life as expressed by *pratītyasamutpāda*. I infer that this is indicative of Critical Buddhism’s prejudice concerning the nature of ontology. When Matsumoto argues that *pratītyasamutpāda* is incompatible with ontology since *pratītyasamutpāda* as impermanence is contrary to the construction of any sense of ‘foundations’ or ‘grounds,’ he is implying that ‘ontology’ is by default a method to construct permanent ‘foundations’ to existence. In addition, he is implying that ‘ontology’ involves a sense of conceptual realism in believing such a ‘foundation’ to actually exist. Therefore, ‘realism’ allows ontological concepts to become an object for attachment by being considered a “valid” description of reality. This means Matsumoto holds the prejudice that ontology is by nature descriptive of, or correspondent to, some kind of ‘true-way-reality-is.’

I consider Matsumoto’s view that *pratītyasamutpāda* cannot accommodate ontology is a mere

prejudice since the view is accurate only if ontology functions ‘representationally.’ To the extent ontology as representation implies an objective and/or conceptual realism concerning the existence of the ‘reality’ it describes, it will certainly be contrary to *pratītyasamutpāda* (i.e. the causal origination of all phenomena) as it is tantamount to claiming the independent existence of reality beyond the causal process of experience. In addition, if the ‘reality’ described is one that creates a sense of a metaphysical absolute, ‘grounding’ phenomenon, then it also endangers impermanence and no-abiding-self by denying the critical reality of irreversible time and the non-existence of a permanently assured world and ‘self.’ In accordance to this view, there is no leeway to accept metaphysical ideas as compatible with *pratītyasamutpāda*. Therefore, to read Dōgen becomes a matter of either adhering to *pratītyasamutpāda* while denying metaphysics, or of denying *pratītyasamutpāda* while preserving metaphysics. Such a view does not consider the possibility that there may be a way to utilize ontology in spiritual practice without having to deny our critical situation as no-abiding-self and impermanence.

The objective of the current study is to read Dōgen in adherence to *pratītyasamutpāda* in a manner significant for spiritual practice, and not to deny it as “non-Buddhist.” To that extent, we cannot agree to such a prejudice concerning the utility of ontology in relation to *pratītyasamutpāda*. We will later see through the course of analyzing Critical Buddhism’s particular interpretation of Dōgen, how this prejudice conditions the inevitable conclusion that Dōgen’s metaphysics is “non-Buddhist.” Hence this aspect of Critical Buddhism’s understanding of *pratītyasamutpāda* necessitates a counter-argument for Dōgen’s metaphysics to be made to function in adherence to *pratītyasamutpāda*. Critical Buddhism’s poor view of metaphysics/ontology is unsuited for a pragmatist perspective on ontology as a practical tool and therefore needs to be overcome.

Critical Buddhism neglects the fact that ontology and metaphysics can be made to function outside representation. How can *pratītyasamutpāda* be reconceived as compatible with metaphysics if it is understood pragmatically as purely practical tools to enhance spiritual practice? How will such a view change one’s reading of Dōgen’s metaphysics? We must wait till chapter five in order to examine the full implication of these questions as it necessitates a thorough understanding of how Deleuze’s pragmatism allows for such a use of metaphysics prior to its application on Dōgen. For

now, we shall continue to examine Critical Buddhism's second and third criterion for what constitutes 'authentic' Buddhism in order to understand the full implications of following *pratītyasamutpāda* in evaluating and interpreting Buddhist doctrine.

### **2.2.1.2 Second Criterion: *Pratītyasamutpāda* and Analytical Reasoning (*Prajñā*)**

According to Critical Buddhism, 'authentic' Buddhism defends the doctrines of *pratītyasamutpāda*, no-abiding-self and impermanence against invading views by use of analytical critique to counter philosophies that endanger the law of causation.<sup>71</sup> This means that 'authentic' Buddhism must have as its basic insight, the importance of affirming and cultivating rational and analytical evaluative thought.<sup>72</sup> This is the type of human knowledge called *prajñā*, especially as it is utilized in the Theravada traditions in the form of *prajñā dharma-pravicaya* defined as "analytical discrimination of phenomena."<sup>73</sup> Within this tradition, *prajñā* is understood as wisdom pertaining to one's ability to analytically discriminate amongst phenomena and to rationally evaluate the nature of cause and effect.

*Prajñā* is significant for three reasons. First, in order to achieve the correct understanding of the nature of experience as no-abiding-self produced by the causal process of the *skandhas*. Without analysis, one cannot step out of the cause of suffering that is the ignorance of the nature of causality, impermanence and no-abiding-self.<sup>74</sup> Second, analytical thinking is necessary for a practitioner to distinguish between numerous doctrines and interpretations of teachings in how far they rightfully consider them to be the Dharma (meaning what is in accord with the Buddha's teaching of *pratītyasamutpāda* or not). Thereby distinguishing between teachings that are effective in practice and what is not.<sup>75</sup> We will later see that this is precisely what Critical Buddhism does when it develops the

<sup>71</sup> Matsumoto, *Bukkyo e no Michi*, 77-79.

<sup>72</sup> Hakamaya, *Hihan Bukkyo*, 160-164, 306, 326. *Hongaku-shisō Hihan*, 6. *Dōgen to Bukkyo*, 297-300.

<sup>73</sup> Hakamaya, *Hihan Bukkyo*, 31. Also *Dōgen to Bukkyo*, 67.

<sup>74</sup> Hakamaya, *Dōgen to Bukkyo*, 60-84.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 314-315. The idea that one's analytical decision making is central to evaluating matters is also reflective of the Buddha's own attitude towards how people should choose what to believe or not as mentioned in the *Jnanasara-samuccaya* sutra: "As the wise test gold by burning, cutting and rubbing it (on a piece of touchstone), so are you to accept my words after examining them and not merely out of regard for me." Narada. *The Buddha and His Teachings*.

criteria to criticise and to evaluate to what extent particular doctrines concur with *prāṭīyasamutpāda* or not. Third, *prajñā* is indispensable for individuals to act in accordance to the critical evaluation of what may be good or bad in different situations. This third reason is intermingled with the significance of *prajñā* in relation to ethics, therefore, I shall return to the details of this point in the next section where I describe the third criterion for ‘authentic’ Buddhism having to do with altruism.

From the Critical Buddhist stance, *prajñā* directly connects with the significance of language in understanding and expressing the teachings of the Buddha.<sup>76</sup> To the extent our discriminative thought and analytical abilities necessitate thinking in language, language cannot be denied or underestimated as secondary to experience. Language and concepts are indispensable tools necessary to gain correct insight into no-abiding-self by understanding the Buddha’s teachings of *prāṭīyasamutpāda* and to apply it to self-analysis.<sup>77</sup> Consequently, Critical Buddhism is against any idea of granting superiority to transcendental forms of experience that are considered to be beyond language and analytical thinking. Such forms of experience include variations of “mystical” experiences. From the perspective of *prāṭīyasamutpāda*, the priority granted to such forms of transcendental experiences whether they are called Zen “Kensho” (見性), “pure experience,” “direct experience” or “mystical intuition,” is problematic due to two underlying presumptions it is based. First, that there is a supreme ontological ‘truth’ or ‘ground’ transcendent to normative experience, and second, the only legitimate way to access this ‘ultimate reality’ or ‘ultimate truth’ is by transcending

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4th ed., (Kuala Lumpur: Buddhist Missionary Society, 1988), 285.

Similar views are repeated in other sutras such as the *Kalama Sutra* (from the *Mahavagga* chapter of the collection of sutras known as the *Anguttara Nikaya*). In the *Kalama Sutra*, the Buddha guides students not to follow certain views purely on the point of authority, convention, prejudice or tradition, but only in accordance to one’s critical analysis of the matter. Refer to: *Anguttara Nikaya*, Vol.I “Tika Nipata”, Chapter 7 “Mahavaggo,” 5:66, trans. A.D.Jayasundere, Metta Net, accessed May 13, 2014. <http://www.metta.lk/tipitaka/2Sutta-Pitaka/4Anguttara-Nikaya/Anguttara1/3-tikanipata/007-mahavaggo-e.html>.

Also see *Kalama Sutta The Buddha’s Charter for Free Inquiry*, trans. Soma Thera, Access to Insight, accessed May 13, 2014. <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/soma/wheel008.html>.

<sup>76</sup> Hakamaya, *Hihan Bukkyo*, 344-345. Also Matsumoto, *Engi to Ku*, 56. *Bukkyo e no Michi*, 18-19. “Religion is not the negation of language, but it is language itself” 94.

<sup>77</sup> Though language and concepts are considered as necessary tools in practice, it comes with a high degree of caution that no sense of ‘realism’ is to be attached to words or concepts in that they are believed to designate independently existing realities. Language and concepts are themselves products of the causal conditions that create our experience of being human and to that extent hold no sense of ontological assurance.

Yamaguchi Zuihō, “The Core Elements of Indian Buddhism Introduced into Tibet: Contrast with Japanese Buddhism,” *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: The Storm Over Critical Buddhism*, ed. Jamie Hubbard & Paul L. Swanson, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1997), 231.

prajñā.<sup>78</sup> Any philosophy that prioritizes irrational, “mystical,” or transcendental experience and denounces rational, analytical and discriminative thinking denies the necessity of using such abilities to reach an adequate self-analysis to gain insight into the causal processes creating our experience of a sense of ‘self.’ Consequently, such philosophies in effect deny the necessity and significance of the doctrine of pratīyasamutpāda in spiritual practice, which is tantamount to denying pratīyasamutpāda itself.

While it is reasonable to understand that upholding prajñā is a logical prerequisite to practice pratīyasamutpāda, Critical Buddhism’s emphasis on this aspect seems to imply their denial of practical significance to any “metaphysical” notions or to experiences that may not be immediately apparent to conscious reason. If this is so, it holds true to Critical Buddhism’s prejudice that ontology/metaphysics is by nature reliant on and ‘representing’ the existence of objective ‘grounds’ and therefore any claimed experience of such a reality must be transcending prajñā. Again, such a perspective does not consider the possibility that pratīyasamutpāda need not deny metaphysical concerns, and that there may be a way to utilize them within practice under the dictates of pratīyasamutpāda and prajñā by way of pragmatism. Prajñā is indispensable to Buddhist practice, yet we do not have to conceive it as incompatible with metaphysics. We shall explore this possibility in chapter four and five where we will analyze the utility of Deleuze’s pragmatism and apply it to a reading of Dōgen. Later in this chapter we will see that Dōgen’s assigning of a sense of universality not immediately apparent to perception as found in his use of such concepts as Buddha-nature and time is a particular case in point which comes at odds with Critical Buddhism’s above prejudice and therefore leads to their view that these ideas are “non-Buddhist.”

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<sup>78</sup> Matsumoto labels such philosophical systems that denounce analytical wisdom and language by prioritizing transcendental experience as “mysticism,” which for the sake of further clarity should perhaps be called transcendentalist mysticism. Matsumoto, *Engi to Ku*, 144-148. *Bukkyo e no Michi*, 137-140.

### **2.2.1.3 Third Criterion: Living Pratīyasamutpāda is to Practice Altruistic Ethics**

According to Hakamaya, Buddhism teaches that each individual is of different capacities and seeks to spread the teaching of altruistic compassion under consideration of these differences.<sup>79</sup> How Critical Buddhism considers altruistic ethics to be imperative for ‘authentic’ Buddhism also becomes evident when Matsumoto mentions, “If there is no awareness of people’s suffering in the world, there can be no spiritual awakening. When one forgets one’s self, feels the suffering of humanity as if it were their own and comes to aspire for the complete abolition of this suffering upon the resolution for self-sacrifice, then one becomes truly human, that is a bodhisattva.”<sup>80</sup> One can infer that this priority given to altruistic ethics is indicative of Critical Buddhism’s adherence to the Mahayana ideal of Bodhisattva-hood in which one vows to take the path to enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings as opposed to seeking personal liberation as its goal. The practice of selfless compassion, active generosity, benevolence, empathy and the helping of others for the sake of their liberation from suffering are not the means to one’s enlightenment, but the very directive for spiritual practice. Ultimately, one seeks enlightenment not because one wants to free him/herself from suffering, but so that one can help others end suffering. To the extent that such altruism can only be realized when one is completely freed from attachment to oneself, achieving correct insight into the nature of no-abiding-self is a prerequisite that cannot be circumscribed.

Therefore, altruism ensues from the practice of *prajñā* in applying *pratīyasamutpāda* to one’s analysis of phenomena. Understanding the self and world as no-abiding-self necessitates analyzing the experience of the ‘self’ as a composite of causal aggregates none of which comprises a permanent being for each aggregate is itself a composite of causal conditions. As I mentioned in the previous

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<sup>79</sup> Hakamaya, *Hongaku-shisō Hihan*, 12.

This aspect expresses the emphasis Critical Buddhism places on ethics as foundational for Buddhist practice as well as its imperative to be socio-politically engaged. Concerning the indispensable relation of ethics to Buddhist life Matsumoto mentions, “If one cannot accept the existence of evil in the world, there cannot be labour.” “The meaning to live and labour as a human being is, to exert oneself even it maybe a little bit, in the work to abolish this evil in the world.” *Bukkyo e no Michi*, 252.

<sup>80</sup> Matsumoto, *Bukkyo e no Michi*, 120.

section, the analytical, discriminative and evaluative thinking necessary in understanding this process of no-abiding-self is called *prajñā*. In the Indian tradition of Mahayana Buddhism, the growth of wisdom pertaining to one's use of *prajñā* is traditionally considered to be interrelated with the increase in the intensity of compassion<sup>81</sup> since correct insight into the complete lack of permanent 'selfhood' in all phenomena through analytical meditation (Pāli. *vipassana*) triggers the melting away of self-centredness and the excessive attachment to self-preservation.<sup>82</sup> Placing central concern over altruism in practice can also be mutually effective in achieving insight into no-abiding-self since an active realization of altruistic action as well as meditating on compassion and equanimity can help further the shift of focus from self-centredness to altruism. Either way, increase in the intensity of altruistic compassion is considered a consequence of the mutual effect of both correct insight into no-abiding-self and its actual realization in practice.<sup>83</sup>

Critical Buddhism alludes to the above nature of mutual influence between *prajñā* and altruism when it considers *prajñā* as the indispensable faculty with which one must observe, analyze, evaluate and decide in every situation what is good or bad in relation to the other.<sup>84</sup> In addition,

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<sup>81</sup> Compassion in the Buddhist sense is not motivated by pity for this implies viewing others to be in a 'lower' state than oneself, nor is it motivated by kinship as in the case of belonging to a group as in a family, friends, or country for this implies a collective attachment to identities. Rather Buddhist compassion and loving kindness is based in a proper insight into the equanimity of all beings concerning their longing for happiness, the universal nature of human suffering, and the no-abiding-self of all phenomena (including oneself). This insight ensues a sense of equanimity amongst beings, as suffering is shared by all existence and allows for one's capacity to feel and to act upon the suffering of others as if one's own in freedom from one's desire for results and personal merit. See Dalai Lama, *The Essential Dalai Lama: His Important Teachings*, ed. Rajiv Mehrotra, (New York: Penguin, 2005), 22-29, 94-105.

<sup>82</sup> Yamaguchi, 222.

On the view that *vipassana* or analytical meditation is the meditational method that most clearly reflects the practical integration of *prajñā* and *prāṭītyasamutpāda*, see Hakamaya, *Dōgen to Bukkyo*, 163.

For a more detailed description of what analytical meditation is and how it is practiced refer to: Dalai Lama, 148-153.

<sup>83</sup> Yamaguchi, 225-227, 230.

<sup>84</sup> Hakamaya mentions: "according to the orthodox Buddhist perspective *prajñā* is the ability to discriminate what is right (*prajñā dharma-pravicaya*)." Dōgen to Bukkyo, 133. This also means that Critical Buddhism understands 'authentic' Buddhism as fundamentally anti-authoritarian. See Matsumoto Shirō, *Dōgen Shisō-ron* (道元思想論), (Tokyo: Ōkura, 2000), 16. Also Hakamaya, *Hongaku-shisō Hihan*, 9. *Dōgen to Bukkyo*, 291.

The Critical Buddhist's strict adherence to *prajñā* means what is right or wrong, good or bad must always be critically evaluated and decided upon in accordance to every situation by each and every practitioner. This means nothing, other than the law of causation should be taken for granted and adhered to uncritically on the point of authority alone whether this authority comes in the form of absolutized dogma, government, "common sense" values, cult of personality, rank (i.e. blind adherence to gurus, and hierarchies based on "attainment"), or claimed superiority of particular religious practices. In Matsumoto's words, this is to practice Buddhism by "always searching for what is the right doctrine without ever absolutizing nor mystifying anything whatsoever while always being critical to one's self." Matsumoto, *Dōgen Shisō-ron*, 16. Succumbing to authority in deciding on what constitutes adequate views on doctrine and practice denies *prāṭītyasamutpāda* since it ignores the fundamental view that the doctrine of *prāṭītyasamutpāda* necessitates each and every human being to exercise their sovereign analytical wisdom individually in analyzing the causal process of suffering for themselves.

Hakamaya notes that since properly practiced analytical self-observance allows one to understand one's ignorance and thus reveals one's own mistakes and evils to one's self, it strengthens the aspiration for one to seek what is right and to fight evil.<sup>85</sup> As I have mentioned, altruism within the Indian lineage of Mahayana Buddhism is not a means, but the very principle for which spiritual practice is aimed. Prajñā realizes this aim by applying praṭītyasamutpāda to an analysis of experience in revealing the nature of no-abiding-self. In turn, altruistic action furthers one's detachment from self-centred perceptions of phenomena. This means that both prajñā and ethics are deeply integrated into the practice of praṭītyasamutpāda and that they are always foundational for 'authentic' Buddhist practice.

The priority of altruistic ethics adds to Critical Buddhism's claim that a proper application of praṭītyasamutpāda in practice cannot accommodate the view that Buddhist practice involves seeking an ultimate 'true-way-reality-is' or the attainment of a transcendental experience of such a reality.<sup>86</sup> In alignment with the Indian lineage of Buddhism, the goal of practice is not personal liberation through transcendent sensory experience, as Nirvana is often misconstrued in Zen. Rather, it is the cultivation of analytical wisdom by which the practice of 'great compassion' (Skt. *mahakarunā*) is realized through the deconstruction of one's understanding of the phenomenon of 'self.'<sup>87</sup> Therefore, Critical Buddhists oppose doctrines and practices that emphasize personal "attainment" through transcendental experiences as their central goal at the expense of cultivating prajñā, and altruistic compassion through self-negation.<sup>88</sup> A failure for particular doctrines or philosophical interpretations of Buddhism to uphold altruistic ethics in fact means that it fails to abide to the principle of praṭītyasamutpāda.

Though Critical Buddhism does not state this explicitly, I believe that their avoidance of

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<sup>85</sup> Hakamaya, *Dōgen to Bukkyo*, 320.

<sup>86</sup> Matsumoto, *Engi to Ku*, 191-219. Hakamaya, *Hihan Bukkyo*, 160. *Dōgen to Bukkyo*, 28-29.

<sup>87</sup> Yamaguchi, 222.

<sup>88</sup> Hakamaya, *Hihan Bukkyo*, 312-313. On compassion and self-sacrifice/self denial also see Matsumoto, *Bukkyo e no Michi*, 109, 112, 120.

Both Hakamaya and Matsumoto concur with their respected senior Buddhistologist Yamaguchi Zuihō on the point of Buddhist enlightenment as having nothing to do with the 'attainment' of transcendental experiences and metaphysical 'truth,' but the analysis of phenomena in accordance to no-abiding-self in order to realize altruistic compassion. See Zuihō's analysis of Zen in contrast to the Indian lineage of Buddhism as inherited in Tibet: Yamaguchi Zuihō, "The Core Elements of Indian Buddhism Introduced into Tibet: Contrast with Japanese Buddhism," *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: The Storm Over Critical Buddhism*, ed. Jamie Hubbard & Paul L. Swanson, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1997), 220-241.

explicating altruistic ethics on an ontological level implies their adherence to the following attitude attributed to the historical Buddha. The preference for altruism should be considered a matter of practical principle based in a purely soteriological and therapeutic basis rather than an ontological one. The reason is, once questions of the existence or non-existence of pain and suffering in relation to the emptiness of the ‘self’ are discerned, one enters a labyrinth of argumentative difficulties in justifying altruism.<sup>89</sup> Such a question for seeking reasons and ‘grounds’ for altruism is itself contrary to the Buddha’s warning not to be consumed by questions calling for ontological assurance such as those related to the existence or non-existence of reality. Rather, the Buddha administers a pragmatic approach to the problem of suffering. Much as it is useless for a man shot by a lethal poison arrow to be questioning from whence the arrow came or who shot it in order to rescue himself from death, so it is useless for people to seek questions of existence or non-existence, finitude or infinitude, the eternality of reality etc. since it does not help solve the problem of suffering at stake.<sup>90</sup> To the extent that suffering is an unavoidable reality in the experience of being human and to the extent one longs to remove it, to question the existence or non-existence of an objective origin or ground to their existence is a waste of time. Rather, one should use time wisely to analyze the perceptive and mental processes which lead to suffering. A similar position can be applied to the necessity for altruism. If the

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<sup>89</sup> Harris puts this point forth in his examination of Sāntideva’s argument for altruism in contrast to several modern critique/interpretations. Affirming altruism as a logical consequence of anātman or the ‘emptiness’ of the self leads to several difficulties. For example if the emptiness of the self allows for a conventional self, and we accept the theory of karmic rebirth, it will still be possible for one to prefer one’s own well being for the sake of his/her future conventional self above others. However if both ātman and conventional self are non-existent then no identity between one’s own and anybody’s present and future self can be established. This means one’s suffering is no more significant than the other’s and therefore if one is to remove suffering, one might as well remove all suffering. Here, altruism becomes a possible choice. However the same argument applies for total apathy. If no selves exist and all suffering is everyone’s suffering, why should one even care? Stephen Harris, “Does Anātman Rationally Entail Altruism? On Bodhicaryāvatāra 8:101-103,” *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 18, (2011): 94-123.

I view that the above debate is based on two misunderstandings of doctrine. First misunderstanding no-abiding-self as purely ontological as opposed to being an analysis of experience. Since it is not a realist ‘description,’ it does not limit altruistic action or aspiration. And second, on the *Tiṭṭhayatana Sutta* of the *Anguttara Nikaya*, the Buddha advises any theory of a karmic continuity of the conventional self not to be accepted as either “true” nor “false” on ontological grounds, but purely on pragmatic grounds for the sake of enhancing aspiration for practice. Therefore, it is skillful to avoid ontology completely in the question of altruism. Rather, together with praṭītyasamutpāda, altruism should be considered a matter of practical principle that conditions everything else including Buddhist ontology, epistemology and phenomenology, but never vice-versa. From this perspective, debating altruism on the point of ontological justification is irrelevant. Altruism is not a means nor consequence of the Bodhisattva path, it is its very condition. For the Buddha’s view on the karmic continuity of the self see: “Tiṭṭh’ayatana Sutta,” trans. Piya Tan, *The Living Word of the Buddha*, accessed April 28, 2011, <http://earlypalisutta.googlepages.com/6.8TiṭṭhayatanaSutta03.61piya.pdf>.

<sup>90</sup> This is the famous “parable of the arrow” found in the *Cula-Malunkiyovada Sutta*, which is chapter 63 of the *Majjhima Nikaya* within the *Sutta Pitaka*. “Cula-Malunkiyovada Sutta: The Shorter Instructions to Malunkya,” Trans. Thanissaro Bhikkhu, *Access to Insight: Readings in Theravada Buddhism*, accessed July 28, 2015, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.063.than.html>.

stopping of all suffering experienced by sentient beings necessitates correct insight into no-abiding-self and altruism constitutes both the aim and the integral means of practice for such insight to be pursued, then it is only a matter of practical principle that one aspires to realize altruism. Therefore, altruistic action needs no recourse to the desire for ‘reasons,’ justifying ‘grounds,’ or personal benefit, but is a practical necessity in the whole process of alleviating suffering amongst all sentient beings.

In summary, *pratītyasamutpāda* as the pillar for ‘authentic’ Buddhism involved three main criteria. First was ontological and phenomenological in the sense that it understood the experiencing of ‘self’ and reality as constituted by an endless process of cause and effect amongst relating functions (*skandhas*) of experience, including sensory perception, consciousness, identification, value judgment, habit etc. This logically ensued the observation that causality unfolds in impermanence. While Critical Buddhism’s view on no-abiding-self and impermanence was doctrinally consistent, their view that these ideas are incompatible with ontology implied a prejudice that all ontology is ‘representational.’ The second criterion was epistemological in the sense that it had to do with the nature of understanding and thinking in relation to applying *pratītyasamutpāda* to practice. Analytical and discriminative thinking (*prajñā*) is considered indispensable in order to have proper insight into the nature of one’s experience of reality as no-abiding-self unfolding through the process of cause and effect. Third, is the ethical criterion involving altruistic ethics. Altruism was considered an unquestionable primacy in the practice of Buddhism and a thoroughly embedded practical consequence to the understanding of ‘self’ and reality as impermanent and no-abiding.

We saw that these three factors of *pratītyasamutpāda* were in debt to views inherited from Indian Buddhism through Theravada and Mahayana doctrines. In this sense, Critical Buddhism’s views of what constitutes ‘authentic’ Buddhism was not exclusive, but exist in continuity with those lineages of Buddhism who equally considered *pratītyasamutpāda* as essential for its practice. All three factors were considered relative to each other, the second and third logically and practically ensuing from a proper adherence to *pratītyasamutpāda*. Therefore, the failure to adhere to even one factor means the whole of *pratītyasamutpāda* is disregarded.

Now that we have understood what constitutes an ethically viable Buddhism founded on *pratītyasamutpāda*, the next section will introduce how Critical Buddhism applies *pratītyasamutpāda* to the criteria for ontological critique in order to identify ideas that deny *pratītyasamutpāda*. What I will present as Critical Buddhism's criteria in criticizing the ontological claims made by Sino-Japanese Buddhist philosophies as Zen and Hongaku doctrine will show a further continuity between Critical Buddhism with other lineages of Buddhism.

### 2.2.2 Pratītyasamutpāda Applied to the Critique of Ontological Theories

In this section, we will see how Critical Buddhism incorporates the doctrine of no-abiding-self, impermanence, and its view of the significance of *prajñā*/ethics into a systematic criteria to deconstruct "Buddhist" philosophies which propose ideas contrary to *pratītyasamutpāda* and therefore deny altruistic ethics. These criteria are influenced by historically preceding Buddhist arguments by the Madhyamaka approach to philosophical critique as expounded by its Indian originator Nagarjuna and in its inherited form as utilized in the tradition of analytical debate in Tibetan Buddhism. The goal of this section is twofold: First, to make a case for the wider applicability of Critical Buddhism's criteria concerning what is or is not "Buddhism" through describing these criteria in relation to their historical precedents. Second, to introduce in detail the criteria for identifying ideas contrary to *pratītyasamutpāda* so that the reader is prepared for understanding how these criteria are applied in both Critical Buddhism's interpretation of Dōgen and my critical analysis of other comparative interpretations of Dōgen in the next chapter.

#### **2.2.2.1 Historical Precedents: Madhyamaka and the Debate at Samye**

In ontological terms, the notion of no-abiding-self is expressed in Mahayana Buddhism, especially by Nagarjuna (ca. 150 - 250 CE) and his Madhyamaka school, as the problem of no-self-existence (Skt. *a-svabhāva*) meaning that things do not exist in and out of itself isolated from

causality. Nagarjuna's thesis as expounded in his central work the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, is that nothing can be claimed to exist by its own-being outside of causal dependency. The experience of phenomena happens through co-dependence of the skandhas under continuously shifting causal conditions and therefore is "empty" of *svabhāva*, meaning self-generation, individual-essence, or independent-being.<sup>91</sup> Hence, there cannot be any self-asserting 'grounds' for being which exist outside the process of causal change. In accordance to this understanding, to claim the eternal existence of some form of a self-generated 'individual-essence' that subsists within matter and individuals as the 'true nature' of its existence beyond causality is a denial of the law of causation itself. Nagarjuna's critical logic was mainly targeted at his Brahmanist philosophical contemporaries<sup>92</sup> who claimed the existence of a supreme metaphysical reality in the form of a permanent 'True Self' or *ātman*; a view the historical Buddha clearly opposed through his doctrine of no-abiding-self. Critical Buddhism inherits Nagarjuna's framework for problematizing claims for *svabhāva*, not for the sake of criticizing opposing Brahmanist philosophies, but to criticize philosophies within the Sino-Japanese Buddhist tradition as heretical.

In addition to its debt to Madhyamaka philosophy, Critical Buddhism's criticism of doctrines that deny *prāṭīyasamutpāda* has another historical precedent. This is the debate which took place at the Tibetan Buddhist temple in Samye between the Indian monk Kamalaśīla (740 - 795 CE) and the Chinese representative of Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism Héshang Móhēyan (和尚摩訶衍, 8th century, birth and death date unknown). Though Matsumoto accepts a certain level of weakness in Kamalaśīla and his teacher Śāntarakṣita's view,<sup>93</sup> he considers their argument against Móhēyan as a valid case, which

<sup>91</sup> Anthony Birch, "Enlightenment and Time: An Examination Of Nagarjuna's Concept Of Time," <http://sped2work.tripod.com/nagarjuna.html>, (October 1, 2014).

<sup>92</sup> This was most probably the essentialist and realist inclined Naiyāyika school of orthodox Hindu thought. There is also the scholarly view that Nagarjuna's intended opponents were the fellow Buddhist Sarvāstivādins and what is interpreted as the essentialist tendencies in their view of reality as composed of atomic elements ("dharmas"). I disagree to this perspective. In agreement with Schroeder, I consider such an interpretation of the Sarvāstivāda is misguided in that they consider Sarvāstivāda as purely theoretical and overlooks their central concern for praxis. Sarvāstivāda is not a 'representational' explanation of reality, but tools for meditation. Schroeder considers that while Nagarjuna did see certain elements of Sarvāstivāda as part of his intended opponent, this was not based on an ontological debate over essentialism, but over cautioning their dogmatism towards a particular meditational method, which seems to have misunderstood *prāṭīyasamutpāda*.

John Schroeder, "Nagarjuna and the Doctrine of Skillful Means", *Philosophy East and West* 50.4 (2000): 563-569.

<sup>93</sup> While Matsumoto tends more towards Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla's perspectives concerning the positions taken at the debate at Samye and considers the debate an exemplary case where the problems of Ch'an/Zen philosophy has been exposed, he also considers Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla's views as lurking in dangerous waters adjacent to

exposed the heresy of the Ch'an/Zen stance in contrast to *pratīyasamutpāda*. Kamalaśīla's critique against Mōhēyan can be considered a prototype to Critical Buddhism's critique of Japanese Zen, Hongaku-shisō and ultimately Dōgen as we shall see in the following sections. For this reason it will be fruitful to present a brief background to this historical debate so that we can paint a wider picture of Critical Buddhism's philosophical continuity with their historical peers.

During the eighth century, Indian lineages of Vajrayana, Theravada and Mahayana Buddhist teachings including Madhyamaka were firmly established in Tibet by such Indian monks as Padmasambhava, Śāntarakṣita (725 - 788 CE), Kamalaśīla, and the Sarvastivadins from Kashmir. Chinese Buddhists had also been active in Tibet, though in a minor degree due to having less official support from the royalty. This led to occasions where Indian monks came into intellectual contact with Chinese Buddhists. One such case happened when emperor Trisong Detsen (742 - 797 CE) invited the Chinese Ch'an master Héshang Mōhēyan to preach the dharma in Tibet. It is said that Śāntarakṣita found Mōhēyan's teachings to be in such stark contrast to the Indian tradition of Buddhism that he predicted the need for an official debate to be held between representatives of both schools. Seeing that support for Mōhēyan's teachings led to a disregard for stricter practices in the Indian lineages which promoted altruistic deeds upon the realization of no-abiding-self, Trisong Detsen eventually condemned Mōhēyan's teachings as "antisocial" in 793.<sup>94</sup> Emperor Trisong Detsen later revoked the decree and allowed Mōhēyan to have an official debate with Kamalaśīla at what is now called the famous *debate at Samye*, under the condition that the one who loses leaves the country. Mōhēyan was defeated and henceforth, the Indian lineage of Buddhism was considered the "correct" path to be pursued in Tibet.

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dhātu-vāda. While they emphasized *pratīyasamutpāda* and the necessity of analytical thought to apply *pratīyasamutpāda* to the analysis of no-abiding-self, they both coincide with Mōhēyan on the point that there ultimately is a thought, wisdom or mode of perception which is beyond discrimination. Matsumoto considers this perspective originally arose from a misinterpretation of Nagarjuna and is weary of such a perspective, since accepting a transcendental state of 'knowing' really amounts to accepting a transcendental 'truth' or 'reality' as an object of this transcendental 'knowing' and therefore only a slip away from pure dhātu-vāda. Matsumoto on the contrary emphasizes that according to Nagarjuna, the ultimate insight into the nature of no-abiding-self does not consider an 'object' to be known, but happens only through reflective analysis of one's own experience of reality, since reality as experienced cannot be known outside of one's meditation on the causal process of the skandhas. Therefore, ultimately such insight is itself 'empty' of self-nature. In this sense, Matsumoto seems to support Nagarjuna's original Madhyamaka stance. Matsumoto Shirō, *Zen Shisō no Hihanteki Kenkyū* (禅思想の批判的研究), (Tokyo: Ōkura, 1994), 21-35.

<sup>94</sup> Yamaguchi, 220-221.

The debate between Mōhēyan and Kamalaśīla largely revolved around the difference in views concerning the need for gradual practical development involving analytical and discriminative thought. Mōhēyan's teachings advocated the existence of an 'ultimate reality' which immediately endowed one with a form of transcendental wisdom once the practitioner seized all thought to realize his original unity with this ultimate reality. "Enlightenment" is instant and necessitates no need for the gradual training of analytical and discriminative thinking, and rather such states of thinking need to be abolished to make way for the 'original' purity of the mind to be revealed. On the contrary, Kamalaśīla, in adherence to praṭītyasamutpāda, considered such practices involving analytical thought as indispensable since a correct insight into praṭītyasamutpāda and its application in analyzing experience cannot be realized without correct discrimination and analysis amongst cause and effect.<sup>95</sup> Mōhēyan's teaching denies praṭītyasamutpāda on two grounds: a denial of causality by accepting the existence of a foundational metaphysical reality and considering it transcendent to analytical thought. These two grounds consequently lead to the disregard of praṭītyasamutpāda on ethical terms as it cannot affirm the need for practicing the analysis of experienced reality in order to realize no-abiding-self which then in turn realizes compassion and altruism.<sup>96</sup> As we shall see in the following section, Critical Buddhism's critique of Japanese Zen and Hongaku-shisō follows in the footsteps of Kamalaśīla's critique of Mōhēyan.

#### **2.2.2.2 Understanding Dhātu-vāda and its Exemplary Case, Hongaku Doctrine**

Critical Buddhism's critique of Sino-Japanese "Buddhist" ontologies and epistemologies that neglect praṭītyasamutpāda parallels the argumentative methods utilized by Nagarjuna to protect praṭītyasamutpāda against *svabhāva*, as well as by Śāntaraksita and Kamalaśīla's in their criticism against Mōhēyan. The influence of these historical precedents are put to full use in the criteria Critical

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<sup>95</sup> Matsumoto, *Zen Shisō no Hihanteki Kenkyū*, 22-25.

<sup>96</sup> Moreover, Mōhēyan's claim that all that is needed for enlightenment is the seizing of thought, and that Nirvana is a state liberated from all thinking could not counter Kamalaśīla's critique that such a view leads to the appalling logical conclusion that simply passing out and becoming unconscious cannot be differentiated from "enlightenment." Such an inconsistent philosophy will endanger the very significance of spiritual practice in Buddhism.

Buddhism lays out in order to identify ideas that they do not consider “authentically” Buddhist, ideas which they call, *dhātu-vāda*. *Dhātu-vāda* is a Sanskrit neologism created by the Critical Buddhist scholar, Matsumoto, to refer to ideas contrary to *prāṭīyasamutpāda*, impermanence and no-abiding-self. The term includes the word “*dhātu*” meaning ground or essence, and “*vāda*” meaning views, or philosophical stance. In short, *dhātu-vāda* means any philosophical stance founded on an ontology and/or epistemology which necessitates the assertable existence of an ontological or epistemological ‘ground.’

If we borrow several terminologies from Western philosophy, *dhātu-vāda* can be defined as ideas based on ‘realism,’ ‘foundationalism’ and/or ‘essentialism.’ Believing that reality substantively ‘exists’ as an independent object irrelative to the causal process of the *skandhas*, or that reality must be ‘based’ on an assuring ontological foundation, essence, or metaphysical truth, all constitutes *dhātu-vāda*. This can also apply to epistemological perspectives as in the case of understanding that knowledge must be ‘based’ on a corresponding meaning, reason, or truth that somehow exist apart from the causal relations amongst the experiential process of the *skandhas*.<sup>97</sup> To offer more examples, *dhātu-vāda* will include any philosophy that ontologically places an intrinsically existing ultimate reality or metaphysical ‘truth’ beyond, behind or as ‘essence’ to ordinary reality as principle to, assurance to, or as reason of its existence. This also applies to philosophies that define the ontological ‘ground’ as a self-contained metaphysical ‘space’ as in the case of some ultimate ‘place’ or ‘realm,’ on which everything else is fully dependent for its existence. Such ideas are all considered a form of *svabhāva* from the perspective of Madhyamaka critique.

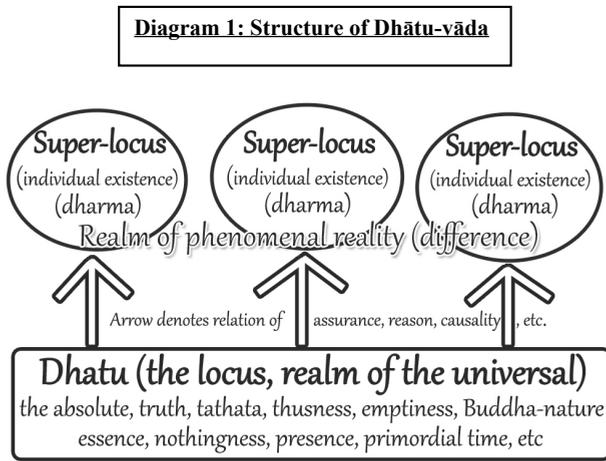
Realism, foundationalism, and essentialism are problematic from the side of *prāṭīyasamutpāda*, since claiming the independent existence of an assuring, unchanging ‘foundation’ to reality or knowledge is tantamount to saying that such a ‘foundation’ exists in a manner

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<sup>97</sup> According to Yamaguchi: “In its effort to decide how the mind should work, Buddhist epistemology rejects verbal conceptualizations that see real objects as spatial existences extracted from their temporal context. All such ideation is seen as a “provisional construct” erected in the service of verbal expression. Indeed “space” and “time” themselves are seen as no more than makeshift “scaffolding” for verbal expression, not the form of a priori existence itself.” 231. In other words, from the perspective of applying *prāṭīyasamutpāda* in practice, language and concepts need to be seen as itself a makeshift product of the temporal process of causal conditions (*skandhas/Nidānas*) constituting our experience of phenomena, and although are indispensable tools for *prajñā*, should never be considered as substantive ‘realities’ or actual descriptions of the ‘true-way-reality-is.’

transcendent to causal dependency and impermanence. In addition, an existential attachment or belief in such an assuring ‘ground’ to life/existence can hinder a Buddhist from properly observing the nature of impermanence and *prāṭīyasamutpāda* in their practice. Critical Buddhism calls such ‘foundations’ on which reality and/or knowledge must be based, “loci.” In turn, everything else that exists in dependency or in virtue of the ‘grounding’ locus are labeled as “super-locus.”<sup>98</sup>

The following diagram expresses the basic structure of *dhātu-vāda*:



According to Critical Buddhism, the following points constitute the criteria for *dhātu-vāda*:

1. The locus is always ground to the super-locus (not vice-versa, the locus is always privileged, primordial and superior to the super-locus).
2. The locus is principle to (the reason of, assurance to, and/or cause of) the appearance of the super-locus.
3. The locus is understood as ultimately One (or beyond discrimination) and the super-locus is multiplicity or difference.
4. The locus exists intrinsically, but the super-locus is ultimately non-existent.
5. The locus is ‘essence’ (*ātman*) to the super-locus.

<sup>98</sup> ‘Super’ here does not denote a qualitative or quantitative superiority or higher value of the phenomena founded on the grounding reality, but is used in the sense of phenomena being ‘placed above’ or ‘situated on top’ of the ontological ‘ground’ or the ‘loci.’ I will refrain from substituting this term with another since it is the original English term that Matsumoto himself uses.

6. Although the super-locus is ultimately non-existent, it owns a certain quality and reason of existence by nature of the fact that it holds the locus as its essence or substance.
7. The totality of all super-loci is unconditionally embraced by the locus.
8. The locus is beyond temporality and therefore negates irreversible impermanence.
9. The super-locus is expressible by language, but the locus exists beyond language.<sup>99</sup>

These criteria are specifically designed to counter ideas found in Zen, and Hongaku doctrine in which its debt to a metaphysical ‘ground’ is quite explicit. However, I add that a logical critique against dhātu-vāda must also apply to dhātu-vādic philosophies that seemingly undercut dhātu-vāda in terms of its superficial presentation. For example, there can be “Buddhist” philosophies that attempt to slip through dhātu-vāda on the point of rhetoric. As I will analyze in the next chapter, such will be the case in Abe’s interpretation of Dōgen that equates the Buddhist concept of *sūnyatā* (emptiness) with a sense of absolute reality, but claiming this absolute is not intrinsically existing for it is itself ‘empty’ of inherent-nature. A similar move is made by the Heideggerian interpreters of Dōgen who claim there is an absolute ground behind phenomena, but that absolute is non-substantive nothingness therefore non-being or “presence” etc. This kind of ontological rhetoric seemingly accepts that everything is only co-dependently happening, but in effect assigns an ultimate ontological ‘groundness’ to this interdependence as a whole.<sup>100</sup> I will give a detailed critique of such comparative interpretations of Dōgen in the next chapter in order to show how they ultimately fail to uphold *prafityasamutpāda*. The problem with such ideas is that no matter how these concepts are ontologically defined as not intrinsically existing, or devoid of a substantive being, they function as dhātu-vāda as long as they necessitate an ontological primacy of a locus (regardless of whether this locus is understood as a self-existing ground or not). For this reason, a logical critique of dhātu-vāda needs to include an analysis of how the ideas in question *function* in context and practice as opposed to simply adhering to how these concepts are ontologically defined.

Therefore, in addition to the aforementioned criteria defined by Critical Buddhism I propose

<sup>99</sup> Hakamaya, *Dōgen to Bukkyō*, 28. Also see Matsumoto, *Engi to Ku*, 5-6. 9th criterion inferred from their view on *prajñā* and language.

<sup>100</sup> This will be the case whatever name the philosophy at stake calls this metaphysical ‘ground,’ whether it be ‘emptiness’ (*sūnyatā*), ‘suchness’ (*Tathātā*), ‘Buddha-nature’ or as ‘Dharma-realms’ (*Buddha-dhātu*).

the following as the tenth criterion for dhātu-vāda. Any framework of thought which must rely on a view of reality based on concepts that function in a dual subject/object, locus/super-locus, essence/appearance, signified/signifier structure for the sake of creating some form of assertable ‘truth,’ assurance or reason to existence is dhātu-vāda regardless of their ontological claim to non-intrinsic-existence. Regardless of form, it is the necessity for and dependence of the role of a locus that makes a philosophy function as dhātu-vāda.

Critical Buddhism’s criteria are applied in their critique against what they consider an archetypal dhātu-vāda that recurs throughout Japanese Buddhism including that of Dōgen. This is a pervasive doctrine found in many aspects of Chinese and Japanese Tendai<sup>101</sup> and Zen schools of Buddhism, what is called *Hongaku-shisō* (本覚思想) translated as the “Doctrine of Original Enlightenment.” Since Dōgen was originally schooled in the Tendai-influenced traditions of Buddhism that were culturally embedded in Hongaku doctrine, the Critical Buddhists analyze that its influences can be identified in Dōgen’s ideas. Matsumoto claims that many concepts that seem to be philologically traceable to Hongaku-shisō recur throughout Dōgen’s writing. Thus, understanding the Critical Buddhist position against Hongaku doctrine is important in understanding its interpretation of Dōgen. In addition, Hongaku-shisō constitutes the archetypal dhātu-vāda that has inspired many philosophical interpretations of Dōgen in the past. Much of the comparative interpretations I will be dealing with in the next chapter are no exception to this tendency. Hence, understanding Hongaku-shisō is also significant in identifying how Hongaku ideas are reiterated in these comparative interpretations of Dōgen leading to their neglect of *pratīyasamutpāda*.

In short, Hongaku-shisō is the idea that all beings are originally and primordially endowed with a pure Buddha-nature which is itself “enlightened” and therefore all beings are “originally enlightened” even before any practice or learning of the Dharma (i.e. Buddha’s teachings) takes place.<sup>102</sup> In detail, Hakamaya interprets the Hongaku doctrine of Original Enlightenment as being

<sup>101</sup> Tendai is a Japanese school of Mahayana Buddhism that shares doctrines with its precursor, the Chinese Tiantai. Tiantai doctrines came into Japan in the middle of the eighth century, but did not gain ground until the appearance of the monk Saichō (最澄) who brought more Tiantai doctrines back from China (in 805 CE) and established a temple on Mt. Hiei that eventually became the centre of Japanese Tendai Buddhism. Dōgen was originally schooled at Mt. Hiei.

<sup>102</sup> Hongaku-shisō has its direct roots in Chinese Buddhism and most notably in the *Awakening of Faith in the*

thoroughly dhātu-vāda for three reasons. First, Hongaku-shisō identifies the concept of Buddha-nature with the existence of an ultimate self or a primordial “True Self” which functions as a form of an intrinsically existing ‘essence’ existing behind our conventional sense of selfhood.<sup>103</sup> This leads to the pervasive view found in Zen that an “enlightened” being is one who has realized his “True Self” as in the case of Linji’s famous dictum of the “true self without any rank.”<sup>104</sup> These views dangerously proximate the Brahmanist system of thought which will run against the Buddha’s teaching of no-abiding-self.<sup>105</sup> Since the idea of Buddha-nature in Hongaku doctrine conjures a sense of ‘Self’ as ‘essence,’ Critical Buddhists are against any variation of the Buddha-nature doctrine as a disguised reintroduction of the Brahmanist doctrine of the *ātman* back into Buddhism.<sup>106</sup> Matsumoto describes this idea of individuals “having” a primordially pure Buddha-nature as a theory of “*inherent Buddha-nature*” (仏性内在論 *Busshō Naizai-ron*), and considers it the orthodox form of Hongaku doctrine.<sup>107</sup>

Second, Hongaku-shisō accepts the idea of a locus of reality<sup>108</sup> in the form of an ultimate metaphysical reality or ‘Truth’ called *Tathātā* (meaning thusness, or reality-as-it-is, Jpn. 真如 *Shin-nyo*) also understood as a spatial ‘realm of the absolute’ (*Dharma-dhātu* or *Buddha-dhātu* trans. Buddha-realm or world, Jpn. 法界 *Hokkai*). Hongaku doctrine supplements the ‘true reality’ of the ‘Self’ with such a ‘Truth’ of reality as a whole. Simply put, Buddha-nature in Hongaku doctrine is the ‘true reality’ of the ‘Self,’ and since this ‘Truth of the Self’ is itself always untainted and unhindered as an extension of the primordially undefiled ‘thusness’ of reality, Buddha-nature *is* *Tathātā* (or

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*Mahayana Sutra* (大乘起信論 *Daijō-kishin-ron*) written in the 5-6th century AD. Hakamaya, *Hongaku-shisō Hihan*, 6-7, 373-375. Religious record has it that the sutra is based on a older Sanskrit version from India, but no Sanskrit nor Tibetan language version remains and most modern scholarship sees the sutra as a likely Chinese creation in the 5th-6th century AD.

Matsumoto traces the philosophical genealogy of Hongaku even further in claiming that the nascent ideas that eventually lead to its development can be traced back to the Tathāgatagarbha doctrines developed during the 2nd to 3rd century CE in India. Matsumoto Shirō, “Nyoraizo-shisō to Hongaku-shisō,” *Komazawa University Annual Research Journal for Buddhist Studies* Vol.63 (2005): 1-29. Also Matsumoto, *Zen Shisō no Hihanteki Kenkyū*, 588-592.

<sup>103</sup> Hakamaya, *Dōgen to Bukkyō*, 15.

<sup>104</sup> Linji, *Rinzai-roku* (臨濟錄), Trans. Iriya Yoshitaka, (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1989), 21.

<sup>105</sup> Matsumoto makes an extensive critical study of Linji’s idea of the “True Self” as a recurrence of the Brahmanic theory of *ātman* which was disseminated through Chinese Zen via the influence of the Hindu-oriented Mahāvairocana Sutra. Matsumoto, *Zen Shisō no Hihanteki Kenkyū*, 226-387.

<sup>106</sup> Hakamaya, *Dōgen to Bukkyō*, 27.

<sup>107</sup> Matsumoto, *Dōgen Shisō-ron*, 28-29.

<sup>108</sup> Hakamaya, *Dōgen to Bukkyō*, 27,

Dharma-dhātu) vice-versa. By virtue of this identity between individual Buddha-nature and “enlightened” reality, we are always “already enlightened,” perfect and pure to begin with despite the numerous defilements collected in the mind.<sup>109</sup> As Matsumoto and Hakamaya note,<sup>110</sup> this logic constitutes the greatest ethical flaw in Hongaku philosophy since the idea of primordial perfection unconditionally affirms everything regardless of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ and therefore can neither necessitate nor affirm the need for altruism or social-ethical reform. Therefore, not only does Hongaku doctrine negate *pratītyasamutpāda* on grounds of introducing an ontological locus to reality and the self, it also negates *pratītyasamutpāda* on the grounds of making ethics superfluous. Therefore, Hongaku-shisō undermines the possibility of gaining correct insight into no-abiding-self for the sake of realizing altruistic compassion.

Thirdly, this *Tathāta* qua “True Self” is understood as transcending language and discriminative thought and therefore inaccessible by such means.<sup>111</sup> This leads to the widely disseminated view in Chinese and Japanese Zen that an authentic insight into “enlightened” reality can happen only through “special transmission outside the scriptures without reliance on words and letters.”<sup>112</sup> Such a view necessitates Zen to become a transcendental experientialism<sup>113</sup> based on a special form of transcendental experience called *Kensho* (見性)<sup>114</sup> that is differentiated from our ordinary way of perceiving and knowing. On those grounds, much of the Zen traditions denounces analytical evaluative thinking as insignificant for enlightenment. Consequently, Zen as founded on Hongaku-shisō does not respect the idea that putting *pratītyasamutpāda* into actual spiritual practice

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<sup>109</sup> These ideas endowing a sense of metaphysical spatialness to the absolute which is then identified as immediately equal to one’s own ‘True-Self’ are directly rooted in the idea of *Jiji-muge-hokkai* 事事無礙法界 (meaning that “all phenomena are non-obstructing and one with the Dharma-realm”) found in Chinese Hua-yen Buddhist philosophy that is the precursor and foundations to Japanese Tendai Buddhism.

Izutsu Toshihiko, *Toward a Philosophy of Zen Buddhism*, (Boulder: Prajñā Press, 1977), 53. Also see 1-7, 50-58, 65-82 for how Izutsu describes *Jiji-muge-Hokkai* in relation with Hongaku doctrine in explaining Zen selfhood as the actualization of the ultimate field in the form of the conventional self.

<sup>110</sup> See chapter 1 section 1.4, also footnotes 14-16.

<sup>111</sup> Matsumoto in his critical study of Chinese Zen argues that meditation in the Zen tradition fundamentally means “the stopping of thought.” *Zen Shisō no Hihanteki Kenkyū*, 3-4. See also Hakamaya, *Dōgen to Bukkyō*, 124.

<sup>112</sup> Hakamaya, *Hongaku-shisō Hihan*, 376-380.

For the historicity of how the idea came to be a fundamental part of Chinese Ch’an Buddhism see:

Albert Welter, “The Disputed Place of a “Special Transmission” in Ch’an,” *The Zen Site*, accessed October 16, 2012. [http://www.thezensite.com/ZenEssays/HistoricalZen/A\\_Special\\_Transmission.htm](http://www.thezensite.com/ZenEssays/HistoricalZen/A_Special_Transmission.htm).

<sup>113</sup> Hakamaya, *Hongaku-shisō Hihan*, 10. Matsumoto, *Zen Shisō no Hihanteki Kenkyū*, 3-13.

<sup>114</sup> Matsumoto, *Bukkyō e no Michi*, 220, 228.

necessitates *prajñā dharma-pravicaya* (or the wisdom pertaining to analytical discrimination of phenomena). Paralleling much of Kamalaśīla’s critique against Mōhēyan, this is tantamount to denying the doctrine of *pratītyasamutpāda* itself since it denies the necessity and function of the law of causality in evaluating the cause of one’s own suffering. Such an analysis of Hongaku-shisō, therefore, logically leads Critical Buddhism to the provocative conclusion that to the extent that much of Zen is rooted in Hongaku-shisō, Zen is not Buddhism.<sup>115</sup>

I consider Critical Buddhism’s critique of Hongaku-shisō and Zen as both logically and doctrinally convincing since Hongaku-shisō, much like Mōhēyan’s position against Kamalaśīla, has no convincing counter argument against critique. We saw that Japanese Zen parallels much of Mōhēyan’s Ch’an philosophy in its claim. Both advocate an ontological locus and the idea that enlightenment is a personal liberation through a transcendental experience that leaves behind *prajñā* and unites the practitioner with the originally undefiled locus. As Yamaguchi Zuihō points out, Mōhēyan did not have a satisfying counter argument to Kamalaśīla’s critique that such a view neglects the practice of the *six pāramitā* or the six perfections of virtues<sup>116</sup> considered essential in the process of gaining correct insight into no-abiding-self for the sake of practicing great compassion. Mōhēyan resorted to a transcendental claim that since the “enlightened” person attains a superior wisdom beyond discriminatory and analytical thinking, he/she exists beyond worldly virtues and therefore does not need the *six pāramitā*.<sup>117</sup> Such a view is unconcerned of the need for actual altruistic action within the worldly dimension as integral for Bodhisattva-hood, and is purely reliant on an abstract ontological claim the validity of which cannot even be verified or evaluated. Given the fact that

<sup>115</sup> Hakamaya, *Dōgen to Bukkyo*, 145-146.

Hakamaya defines Zen as a form of dhātu-vādic pseudo-Buddhism which, people like Ichikawa Hakugen also emphasize, was more a product of the attempt to syncretise Buddhism with indigenous Chinese Daoism which assimilated Buddhism to the socio-political environment of its age. From the perspective of Critical Buddhism, Zen was a “Buddhism” which succumbed to dhātu-vāda rather than to critically reflect what an authentically practical Buddhism should be against the indigenous philosophical status quo. See Hakamaya, *Hongaku-shisō Hihan*, 16-17. *Dōgen to Bukkyo*, 113, 227-229. Also see James Marks Shields, *Critical Buddhism: Engaging with Modern Japanese Buddhist Thought*, (Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), 55-57. Christopher Ives, *Imperial Way Zen: Ichikawa Hakugen’s Critique and Lingering Questions for Buddhist Ethics*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 2009), 60-68.

<sup>116</sup> The six *pāramitā* includes: 1) *Dāna* *pāramitā*: generosity, giving of oneself 2) *Śīla* *pāramitā*: virtue, morality, discipline, proper conduct 3) *Kṣānti* *pāramitā*: patience, tolerance, forbearance, acceptance, endurance 4) *Vīrya* *pāramitā*: energy, diligence, vigor, effort 5) *Dhyāna* *pāramitā*: one-pointed concentration, contemplation 6) *Prajñā* *pāramitā*: wisdom, insight

<sup>117</sup> Yamaguchi, 222-224.

Móhēyan could not logically differentiate between what he considered to be “enlightenment” as the stopping of discriminative thinking with the state of becoming unconscious or simply passing out,<sup>118</sup> his claim for the superiority of the “enlightened” state over the practice of compassion is also appallingly unconvincing. Moreover, we can say that Móhēyan’s insistence on the primacy of attaining transcendental experience undermines the whole Bodhisattva path for it values personal liberation over altruism.

Japanese Zen is similarly unconvincing in its view of altruistic practice since by nature they share the identical ontological premise with that of Móhēyan. Much like Móhēyan, Hongaku-shisō cannot support the need for actual altruistic practices in the worldly dimension. Rather, Zen/Hongaku also resorts to a transcendental claim that since everything is “originally enlightened,” and everyone is primordially united with this locus in a manner beyond prajñā, this reveals that the world is primordially perfect in a manner incomprehensible to the normative mind and therefore in no need for correction. This is tantamount to saying that the “enlightened” one becomes an a-moral being perfected in a manner incomprehensible to our normative thinking and that he/she exists beyond the necessity for worldly ethical practices.<sup>119</sup> This repeats Móhēyan’s view that the attaining of transcendental wisdom can disregard the practice of the six pāramitā. In addition, due to the transcendental nature of the Hongaku claim, the validity of their purely ontological justification for an original perfection cannot be verified or evaluated. Such a transcendental argument merely attempts to escape critique on the point of rhetoric and is not convincing on both logical and practical grounds.

In summary, Critical Buddhism followed in the footsteps of Madhyamaka and the debate at Samye in defining “non-Buddhist” those doctrines that deny causality while holding a variation of ‘realist,’ ‘essentialist’ and ‘foundationalist’ views. This included both ontological views as in advocating a ‘supreme metaphysical reality’ that functions as essence and/or ground to being, and epistemological views such as those that believe in the independent existence of an ‘ultimate truth’ transcendental to thinking. I also added to this the need to critique doctrines on the point of their

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<sup>118</sup> Matsumoto, *Zen Shisō no Hihanteki Kenkyū*, 31-32.

<sup>119</sup> This kind of perspective seems to be reflected in stories of old Ch’an/Zen masters who act in eccentric manners beyond conventional norms of “good” or “bad” as we find in the *Linji Lu* or the *Rinzai-roku* (臨濟錄).

function so that any philosophy relying on ‘grounds’ and dualities can be identified as dhātu-vāda regardless if they use the rhetoric of ontological non-substantiality. Critical Buddhism made full use of their criteria in exposing the problem of Hongaku-shisō and Zen. Paralleling much of Kamalaśīla’s argument against Mōhēyan, Hongaku-shisō was concluded to be thoroughly dhātu-vāda.

Throughout the course of examining Critical Buddhism’s view of what is or is not “authentic” Buddhism, we have seen how Critical Buddhism’s position concerning pratīyasamutpāda is akin to its historical precedents of the Theravada, and the Indian Madhyamaka lineages inherited in Tibet. This included its debt to Theravada views on the Twelve Nidānas, and the practical necessity for analytical discriminatory thought, as well as the influence of Madhyamaka critique in defining dhātu-vāda. Critical Buddhism’s doctrinal continuity with preceding Buddhist philosophies leads the current study to consider their criteria for ‘authentic’ Buddhism and for identifying dhātu-vāda, as a more or less generally acceptable set of tools that can be shared amongst any Buddhist position that will equally consider pratīyasamutpāda, no-abiding-self and impermanence as primary for its practice. This means that the criteria are applicable to critically examine if other interpretations of Dōgen’s philosophy adhere to pratīyasamutpāda or not. We will utilize the criteria in the next chapter when we analyze four exemplary types of comparative interpretations of Dōgen and see how they fall short of affirming Dōgen’s metaphysics in concurrence with pratīyasamutpāda. In addition, accepting Critical Buddhism’s criteria for ‘authentic’ Buddhism and dhātu-vāda means that our “new” interpretation of Dōgen, to be presented in chapter five, must also adhere to the criteria if it is to be faithful to pratīyasamutpāda.

However, our previous analysis suggested Critical Buddhism’s view that pratīyasamutpāda is incompatible with metaphysics was mere prejudice owing to its assumption that metaphysics is by nature ‘representational.’ We will see in the next section how Critical Buddhism makes the case that Dōgen, despite understanding that orthodox Hongaku-shisō is heretical, could not successfully overcome Hongaku-shisō. There, I will analyze to what extent such an argument is acceptable or not. Ultimately I will show that such an interpretation of Dōgen is latently conditioned by Critical Buddhism’s prejudice that ontology is by default ‘representational.’

### **2.3 Matsumoto's Interpretation of Dōgen**

As seen in the previous section, the current study coincides with much of what Critical Buddhism considers “Buddhism” or not. However, the current study diverges from Critical Buddhism on a crucial point concerning the relationship between *pratītyasamutpāda* and ontology. As previously stated, Matsumoto’s view that *pratītyasamutpāda* is incompatible with ontology owing to his prejudice that all ontology is ‘representational,’ is one that may be conditioning the Critical Buddhist conclusion that Dōgen’s metaphysics is “non-Buddhist.” The objective of the current study is to read Dōgen in adherence to *pratītyasamutpāda* in a manner significant for spiritual practice, and not to deny it as “non-Buddhist.” To that extent, we must seek a way not to reiterate Critical Buddhism’s assumptions in interpreting Dōgen. This necessitates a thorough understanding of how Critical Buddhism argues Dōgen’s metaphysics is *dhātu-vāda*.

Therefore the following section tries to achieve two directives in the process of analyzing Matsumoto’s critical interpretation of Dōgen’s views on Buddha-nature, and temporality in relation to practice. First, to argue for the case that Critical Buddhism’s view on Dōgen’s metaphysical ideas is conditioned by its prejudice that ontology is by nature ‘representational.’ Second, to analyze how Critical Buddhism applies its criteria for *pratītyasamutpāda* and *dhātu-vāda* in its interpretation of Dōgen, and to learn what kind of interpretation keeps Dōgen within *dhātu-vāda*, and therefore, should be avoided. This way, we can have an adequate understanding of Critical Buddhism’s view on Dōgen’s metaphysics as a point of contrast and departure when we examine our “new” interpretation of Dōgen using Deleuzian notions in chapter five.

Critical Buddhism’s identifying of Hongaku-shisō, and Zen as *dhātu-vāda* leads to its following fundamental stance in reading Dōgen. That is, to the extent that Dōgen’s thought is in line with Zen, it cannot be endorsed as “authentically” Buddhist.<sup>120</sup> While Matsumoto does not believe

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<sup>120</sup> Hakamaya observes that Dōgen was himself critical against certain Zen teachings and practices that evoke orthodox Hongaku-shisō and that his philosophy continuously evidence an awareness to distance himself from Hongaku/Zen orthodoxy. Hakamaya, *Dōgen to Bukkyo*, 234. This naturally leads the Critical Buddhist stance on Dōgen to challenge the orthodox views taken by those in the

that Dōgen reiterated Hongaku doctrine in its orthodox form as the theory of ‘inherent Buddha-nature,’ he does think that Dōgen continues to draw on what I previously clarified as the three dhātu-vādic traits of Hongaku doctrine by supporting a more sophisticated form of Hongaku-shisō. The details as to how Critical Buddhism sees Dōgen as mostly in line with Hongaku and Zen will be evident in the following.

### 2.3.1 Universal Buddha-Nature and Constant-Abiding

Matsumoto’s interpretation of Dōgen in *Dōgen Shisō-ron* holds that much of Dōgen’s philosophy is dhātu-vāda since it never successfully overcomes the influences of Hongaku-shisō. According to this view, Dōgen develops an ontology founded on a variant of Hongaku, one which Matsumoto calls the theory of *universal Buddha-nature* (仏性偏在論 *Busshō Henzai-ron*).<sup>121</sup> Instead of the ‘inherent Buddha-nature’ perspective, the ‘universal Buddha-nature’ perspective in its most extreme form, proposes the whole of reality as Buddha-nature itself in a relationship of immediate identity. Consequently, one does not “have” a Buddha-nature as an “originally enlightened” individual essence. Rather, we exist within Buddha-nature and participate in the totality of reality that is itself the primordially enlightened Buddha-nature. According to Matsumoto, Dōgen’s support for the later perspective is most evident in his famous reinterpretation of the Chinese line from the *Mahāpari-Nirvāna Sutra* (大般涅槃經 *Chn. Dà Bān Nièpán Jīng*) whose orthodox understanding was to read it as “All sentient beings possess Buddha-nature without exception.” Dōgen deliberately read the same sentence as “All existence *is* Buddha-nature,” thereby clarifying his most central perspective on Buddha-nature as universal Buddha-nature.<sup>122</sup>

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lineage of “Zen” Buddhism Dōgen is credited as founded called Sōtō Zen. Not only does Sōtō orthodoxy read Dōgen uncritically as an absolute authority, they also tend to ignore Dōgen’s own criticism against Hongaku-shisō in conflating his ideas with a more purely Zen-based philosophy that does not necessarily belong to Dōgen. This point is argued for by both Hakamaya and Jikisai. Minami Jikisai, *Shōbōgenzō wo Yomu: Sonzai suru to wa dōiu-kotoka* (正法現藏: 存在するとはどういうことか), (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2008), 12-19. Hakamaya, *Hongaku-shisō Hihan*, 319-325. However Critical Buddhism’s conclusive view on Dōgen’s philosophy is that while Dōgen was aware of the heretical dangers in Hongaku-shisō, his philosophy could not overcome its problems entirely and ultimately Dōgen’s metaphysics stayed within the confines of dhātu-vāda.

<sup>121</sup> Matsumoto, *Dōgen Shisō-ron*, 28-29.

<sup>122</sup> Hee-Jin Kim, *Eihei Dōgen Mystical Realist*, (Boston: Wisdom, 2004), 125-126.

Matsumoto claims that Dōgen’s support of the universal Buddha-nature perspective as a fundamental view of Buddhism can be further elaborated through an analysis of statements from the “Bendowa” fascicle of the *Shōbōgenzō* where Dōgen says:

So remember, in the Buddha-Dharma, because the body and mind are originally one reality, the saying that essence and form are not two has been understood equally in the Western Heavens and the Eastern Lands, and we should never dare to go against it. [...] Furthermore, we should realize that living-and-dying is just nirvana.

Remember, the lineage of the Dharma which [asserts that] “in the Buddha-Dharma the essential state of mind universally includes all forms,” describes the whole great world of Dharma inclusively, without dividing essence and form, and without discussing appearance and disappearance. There is no [state], not even *bodhi* or nirvana, that is different from the essential state of mind. All *dharmas*, myriad phenomena and accumulated things, are totally just the one mind, without exclusion or disunion. All these various lineages of the Dharma assert that [myriad things and phenomena] are the even and balanced undivided mind, other than which there is nothing; and this is just how Buddhists have understood the essence of mind.<sup>123</sup>

Matsumoto points out that the essential non-dualistic idea that the mind is identified with all forms as expressed in the above quotation, is one that has its direct roots in the *Awakening of Faith Sutra* where Hongaku originates.<sup>124</sup> As Hakamaya claims in his study of the *Awakening of Faith*, the term “mind” (心 *shin*) functions within the sutra as an equal concept to Tathātā (thusness) which designates the ultimate nature of reality. The term “mind” is itself understood, not as an individual consciousness or ego, but as the eternally subsisting ‘true nature’ (thusness) of reality inclusive of individual consciousness.<sup>125</sup> Here the “mind” precedes and functions as locus to the totality of phenomenal reality. The (impersonal) mind is therefore the primordially enlightened Tathātā that works as the locus to the super-locus that is the individual’s Buddha-nature, who, as long as he/she is

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The original Chinese line as quoted by Dōgen in the *Shōbōgenzō* reads as follows: “一切衆生悉有仏性。” Dōgen Kigen, *Shōbōgenzō*, Vol.1, ed. Mizuno Yaoko, (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1990), 72.

Classical Chinese involves a certain grammatical ambiguity that allows for a variation of meanings when translated into Japanese. These grammatical tendencies are opportune for Dōgen who often makes deliberately unorthodox readings of Chinese Buddhist doctrines in accordance to his creative interpretations of these texts. On how Dōgen deliberately plays around with language see: Hee-Jin Kim, “The Reason for Words and Letters: Dōgen and Kōan Language,” *Dōgen Studies*, ed. William R. LaFleur, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1985), 54-82.

<sup>123</sup> Dōgen Kigen, *Shōbōgenzō*, Vol.1, trans. Gudo Wafu Nishijima & Chodo Cross, (Berkeley: Numata Centre, 2007), “Bendowa”, 15.

<sup>124</sup> The statement, “in the Buddha-Dharma the essential state of mind universally includes all forms,” is one that is directly quoted from the *Awakening of Faith Sutra*. *Dōgen Shisō-ron*, 27. Also Akiyama Hanji, *Dōgen no Kenkyū* (道元の研究), (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1935), 105-106.

<sup>125</sup> Hakamaya, *Hongaku-shisō Hihan*, 69-76.

deluded cannot realize its primordial identity with this true nature of reality as Tathātā.

Simply reiterating the above idea concerning the “mind” in the *Awakening of Faith* leads to the view of inherent Buddha-nature whereby all beings possessing a mind (i.e. sentient beings), possess Buddha-nature and are primordially enlightened due to that mind’s original identity with Tathātā. Dōgen is very aware of the dangerous proximity of this idea to what is called the “Senika heresy.” This is the heresy of affirming the Brahmanic view of the independent existence of an eternal Self; a view which the Buddha had originally denied.<sup>126</sup> Matsumoto thinks that Dōgen considered the universal Buddha-nature perspective as a solution to avoiding this heresy.

According to Matsumoto, the theory that sentient beings “have a Buddha-nature” (有仏性 *yu-Busshō*) is considered too close to the Senika heresy from the stance of Dōgen’s universal Buddha-nature. The theory is inadequate since it continues to conceive mind/body and essence/phenomenon as a hierarchical and dualistic structure. In order to overcome the shortcomings of the inherent Buddha-nature perspective, Dōgen’s universal Buddha-nature perspective adds to the basic logic of the identity between ‘mind’ and Buddha-nature found in the *Awakening of Faith* and radicalizes it by extending the notion of mind beyond sentient beings to include all non-sentient existence.<sup>127</sup> Thereby, his view makes ‘mind’ equal to the totality of reality. Buddha-nature, then, becomes an un-limited all-pervading ontological structure, that is non-local to a sentient being or a concept of mind hierarchically preceding phenomena. The relationship between locus and super-locus becomes monistic so that Buddha-nature immediately and unconditionally equals reality. In virtue of the nature of Buddha-nature as universally embracing and constituting the substance of every individual existence, every single entity is allowed to participate *as* Buddha-nature. According to Matsumoto, this is evidenced when Dōgen writes:

Those called “living beings,” or called “the sentient,” or called all forms of life, or called “all creatures,” are living beings and are all forms of existence. In short, “total existence” is “the buddha-nature,” and the perfect totality of “total existence” is called “living beings.” At just this moment, the inside and outside of living beings are the total

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<sup>126</sup> *Shōbōgenzō*, Vol.1, “Bendowa”, 13-15.

<sup>127</sup> This includes everything without a consciousness as rocks, trees, mountains, water etc.

existence of the buddha-nature.<sup>128</sup>

Here, Matsumoto holds that Dōgen did not dichotomize nonliving against living beings, or the non-sentient against the sentient. He rather included the later in the former. Dōgen's often repeated phrase where he identifies Buddha-nature to "fences, walls, tiles, and pebbles" (牆壁瓦礫 *shoheki-gwaryaku*) as well as his repeated claim that "mountains, rivers, and earth are all the ocean of Buddha-nature"<sup>129</sup> also emphasize this point.<sup>130</sup>

In accordance to the above view, Matsumoto discusses why Dōgen favoured Chinese Zen master Guīshān Língyòu's (潯山靈祐 771 - 853) statement of "without-buddha-nature" (無仏性 *mu-Busshō*) over the theory that claims only sentient beings "have" a Buddha-nature (有仏性 *yu-Busshō*).<sup>131</sup> Dōgen saw the theory that sentient beings do not possess Buddha-nature as much closer in the path towards a complete understanding of universal Buddha-nature. Buddha-nature is not something sentient beings "have," but *is* the totality of reality.<sup>132</sup> Better yet, Matsumoto views that Dōgen's claim of "impermanence is itself Buddha-nature" (無常仏性 *Mujyō-Busshō* literally meaning "impermanence-Buddha-nature") becomes the most complete way of expressing the view that the totality of reality is without reserve in its impermanence as-it-is, is Buddha-nature.<sup>133</sup>

Matsumoto observes that this logic of immediate affirmation of reality equaling the absolute can be further elaborated if we examine Dōgen's statement that, "in the lineages that discuss constant-abiding (常住 *Joju*), the myriad *dharmas* are all constant-abiding: body and mind are not divided."<sup>134</sup>

<sup>128</sup> Dōgen Kigen, *Shōbōgenzō*, Vol.2, "Busshō", trans. Gudo Wafu Nishijima & Chodo Cross, (Berkeley: Numata Centre, 2008).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>130</sup> As both Tsujiguchi and Matsumoto analyzes, this evidences Dōgen's universal Buddha-nature as an extension of a lineage of views which came from the Chinese and Japanese Buddhist debate on the presence or non-presence of Buddha-nature amongst non-sentient existence. Tsujiguchi Yuichirō, *Shōbōgenzō no Shiso-teki Kenkyū* (正法眼藏の思想的研究), (Tokyo: Hokuju, 2012), 116.

The phrase "fences, walls, tiles, and pebbles" is borrowed from the Chinese Zen monk Nányáng Huizhōng (南陽慧忠 date of birth unknown ~ 775) whose view was also that of equating all existence with Buddha-nature. Matsumoto, *Dōgen Shisō-ron*, 31-34. *Bukkyo e no Michi*, 242-243.

<sup>131</sup> *Shōbōgenzō*, Vol.2, "Busshō", 10.

<sup>132</sup> Matsumoto, *Dōgen Shisō-ron*, 47-48.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>134</sup> *Shōbōgenzō*, Vol.1, "Bendowa", 15. Cross quite misleadingly translates Joju as "eternal existence" rather than constant-abiding. Therefore I have slightly modified the translation.

According to Matsumoto, the term *Jojyū*, which I have translated as ‘constant-abiding’ is one that can also be found in the *Sanjushikakotogaki* (三十四箇事書) text attributed to the Japanese Tendai monk Kokaku (皇覺, later Heian period 1068-1185 exact birth and death date unknown) which has been long considered as one of the foundational texts in the development of Japanese Hongaku-shisō. At first glance the term *Jojyū* seems like it designates the opposite of 無常 *Mujyō* (impermanence or the lack of constancy) in the traditional Indian Buddhist sense whereby the opposite of impermanence is understood as eternal existence.<sup>135</sup> However, Matsumoto’s analysis claims the usage of the term in *Sanjushikakotogaki* and Hongaku-shisō in general does not mean permanence or “eternal existence.” Rather the *Sanjushikakotogaki* says:

When it is said that the “phenomenal world is constant-abiding,” constant-abiding does not mean unchanging and immovable. Phenomenal reality is the principle of constant-abiding, is the principle of difference. Impermanence is as impermanence in its own way constantly-abiding and does not perish. Difference is as difference in its own way constantly-abiding and does not perish. [...] Though waves are moving, it is moving while the totality of the triple world constantly-abides without beginning or end to its movement.

Furthermore,

It is not said that sentient beings transform and become Buddhas. One is to awaken to the fact that sentient beings while remaining sentient beings, Buddha-worlds remaining Buddha-worlds is constantly-abiding.<sup>136</sup>

*Jojyū* or constant-abiding does not mean that impermanent reality transforms to become eternally unchanging or a permanent absolute. Rather, every impermanent phenomenon constituting reality is as it is, constantly-abiding. Therefore ‘constant-abiding’ is a term to designate how things are in their own individual ways always already primordial Buddha-nature, enlightened and perfect without having to change from normative being to Buddha-hood or impermanence to permanence.<sup>137</sup> All existence is in its singular ways and movement already the expression of Buddha-nature. Matsumoto suggests that there is a direct correlation between this Hongaku idea and Dōgen’s

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<sup>135</sup> Matsumoto, *Dōgen Shisō-ron*, 44, 47.

<sup>136</sup> As quoted on Matsumoto, *Dōgen Shisō-ron*, 44-45. Translated by myself.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 44-52.

understanding of universal Buddha-nature as impermanence-buddha-nature where what is impermanent is seen as Buddha-nature as-it-is. From a Critical Buddhist perspective, such a logic of immediate affirmation of phenomena as absolute cannot be supported, since it holds the great danger of being unable to necessitate and affirm ethical action, critical evaluation and change.

At first glance, the philological depth Matsumoto implores in interpreting Dōgen's view on Buddha-nature and its identity with the whole of impermanent reality as constant-abiding, seems doctrinally sound and irrefutable. However, I consider the view that the concept of Buddha-nature corresponds to a 'locus' is a product of Matsumoto's prejudice that any seemingly 'ontological' concept implies a realism. This prejudice may be conditioning Matsumoto to prefer analyzing Dōgen's use of Buddha-nature and constant-abiding with a dhātu-vāda/Hongaku oriented interpretation. In other words, the following presumption may be at stake: if all ontological statements are 'corresponding' to a locus, then everything that Dōgen says that sounds like ontology by nature must be close to Hongaku-shisō.

In addition, Matsumoto clarifies elsewhere that he considers the idea of Buddha-nature as a product of the development of Tathāgatagarbha<sup>138</sup> thought where what used to designate a 'potential for enlightenment' gradually became substantialized as an 'individual-essence.'<sup>139</sup> Matsumoto seems to be conditioned by this presumption concerning the historical narrative surrounding Buddha-nature in taking for granted that Dōgen's use of the concept must also be in continuity with these past views on Buddha-nature. A similar presumption is observable in Matsumoto's reference to the concept of 'constant-abiding.' Only because the concept of 'constant-abiding' is rooted in a Hongaku doctrine, does not mean that Dōgen utilized the term in line with its definition in the *Sanjushikakotogaki*. Dōgen's tendency to deliberately play with Chinese Buddhist terms and phrases to befit his creative reinterpretation of past doctrines may also be an indication that Matsumoto's assumption that Dōgen utilized these terms in continuity with past interpretations may not be necessarily the case.

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<sup>138</sup> Tathāgatagarbha is a Sanskrit term meaning "the womb of the thus-gone-one," designating the idea that every being has an innate 'womb' or 'embryo' of Buddha-hood much like a seed which grows by being fed the Dharma. This led to the idea of Buddha-nature. The idea developed over the course of the history of Indian Buddhism (leading back to statements made in the Lotus Sutra written between 100 BCE 200 CE) and eventually became a central doctrine in Chinese and Japanese Buddhism.

<sup>139</sup> Matsumoto, *Zen Shisō no Hihanteki Kenkyū*, 588-592.

Matsumoto's philological presumptions and his prejudice concerning ontology precludes him from imagining how absolutely different sets of assumptions concerning the utility of metaphysics may be applied to Dōgen's use of the above concepts.

Despite these limitations, there is one thing we can learn from Matsumoto's analysis of Buddha-nature. If we are to reinterpret Dōgen's Buddha-nature as significant for practice based in *pratītyasamutpāda*, then it cannot be utilized as 'corresponding' to a substantive 'individual-essence,' or an 'originally enlightened' realm, or ground. We will now see that Matsumoto's prejudice concerning ontology also conditions his interpretation of Dōgen's view on time.

### 2.3.2 Constant-Abiding and Dōgen's Metaphysics of Temporality

The previously stated idea of constant-abiding gives Matsumoto a foundation for making sense of Dōgen's ideas on temporality where Dōgen seems to be advocating a view of temporal (non)continuity where each instant is cut off from past and future. This idea is elaborated in the "Genjōkōan" fascicle of the *Shōbōgenzō* where Dōgen notes:

Firewood becomes ash; it can never go back to being firewood. Nevertheless, we should not take the view that ash is its future and firewood is its past. Remember, firewood abides in its particular Dharma-position (住法位 *Jyū-hōi*). It has a past and it has a future. Although it has a past and a future, the past and the future are cut off. Ash exists in its particular Dharma-position. It has a past and it has a future. The firewood, after becoming ash, does not again become firewood. Similarly, human beings, after death, do not live again. At the same time, it is an established custom in the Buddha-Dharma not to say that life turns into death. This is why we speak of "no appearance." And it is the Buddha's preaching established in [the turning of] the Dharma wheel that death does not turn into life. This is why we speak of "no disappearance." Life is an instantaneous situation, and death is also an instantaneous situation. It is the same, for example, with winter and spring. We do not think that winter becomes spring, and we do not say that spring becomes summer.<sup>140</sup>

Matsumoto considers Dōgen's use of the term "*Dharma-position*" can be traced to a particular Hongaku interpretation of a line in the *Lotus Sutra* which began with the Chinese monk, *Zhi Yi* (智顛, 538-597). In this reading, Dharma-position is understood as the description of how things

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<sup>140</sup> *Shōbōgenzō*, Vol.1, "Genjōkōan", 42. Slight modifications made by myself.

do not exist outside of the Dharma or Tathātā (ultimate reality as thusness). The term Dharma is itself equated to the whole of existence. Therefore, to abide in a Dharma-position is to express how each individual existence, regardless of being sentient or non-sentient, abides within the totality of Tathātā in a constant manner that neither newly arises nor perishes, while remaining as they are in their normative state.<sup>141</sup> Therefore, in Matsumoto's view, the term "Dharma-position," reiterates the concept of constant-abiding, and is a term that describes the logic of absolute identity between the locus and super-locus.

When the above is applied to Dōgen's idea of the instant cut off from past and future, it means that each instant is as it is, absolute in its singularity. Each instant is without reserve the full totality of reality as Tathātā.<sup>142</sup> Consequently, Matsumoto claims that Dōgen's theory of time by absolutizing every instant as a singular event cut away from causal continuity, in fact denies temporality as understood through *pratītyasamutpāda* (i.e. as irreversible impermanence). This means that despite Dōgen's logic of equating Buddha-nature with impermanence, his universal Buddha-nature stance consequently keeps him from correctly referring to the critical nature of our lived time that is causally irreversible and ultimately leads to death.<sup>143</sup> Therefore, Matsumoto concludes Dōgen's idea of time cannot be endorsed as legitimately Buddhist since it points at a kind of permanent substratum of time that is equated with the singular moment.

Matsumoto points out that such an idea of time in which the instant is absolutized is also evident in the famous "Uji" fascicle of the *Shōbōgenzō*. As I will elaborate in the next chapter, the term *Uji* (有時) is commonly translated as "Being-time" by many English language scholars and is understood as designating the absolute unity of Being and time. However, Matsumoto does not agree with this and rather poses an alternative interpretation. When Dōgen mentions, "time is already just

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<sup>141</sup> Matsumoto, *Dōgen Shisō-ron*, 201-210.

<sup>142</sup> While not a Critical Buddhist, Tsujiguchi's analysis of Dōgen's time closely echoes Matsumoto's analysis. Tsujiguchi arrives at the same conclusion not through closing up on the idea of constant-abiding, but from a philological study of the term *Zengo-saidan* (前後際断). The term is usually interpreted as "cut away from front (future) and rear (past)," but Tsujiguchi rather reads it as being "cut away from limits." This means reality should not be understood from the side of temporal categories, but the present is in itself absolute without borders. Tsujiguchi, 170.

<sup>143</sup> Matsumoto, *Dōgen Shisō-ron*, 209.

existence, and all existence is time,”<sup>144</sup> Matsumoto analyzes that the compound statement does not place equal value on both halves, inferring the definition that Being equals time. According to Matsumoto Dōgen intends the first statement that “time is already just existence” to hold precedence and priority over the later statement.<sup>145</sup> This leads to a completely different reading of Uji as a concept thoroughly based on universal Buddha-nature. From this perspective, Uji means that temporality is reduced to the priority of the totality of existence (or Tathātā) and not the other way around. Therefore, time as irreversible impermanence is once again denied, since every existence by virtue of being in a Dharma-position abides *as* the totality of Tathātā in which temporal movement is negated as non-arising and non-perishing. For Matsumoto, the concept of Uji reduces time to the constant-abiding nature of the totality of existence through which its impermanent nature becomes nullified to the state of mere terminology.<sup>146</sup>

The above allows Matsumoto to make sense out of Dōgen’s seemingly paradoxical claim for some kind of continuity amongst time as singular instances. Dōgen notes, “Those who fail to experience and to hear the truth of being-time do so because they understand [time] only as passing. To grasp the pivot and express it: all that exists throughout the whole universe is lined up in a series (original Japanese: つらなりながら *tsuranarinagara*) and at the same time is individual moments of time.”<sup>147</sup> The phrase “*tsuranarinagara*” which Nishijima and Cross translates as “lined up in a series,” can also be more simply translated as “linked.” Either way, the term seems to designate some kind of continuity between instances, but Matsumoto emphasizes that since Dōgen claims “moments of the past and present are neither piled up one on top of another nor lined up in a row,”<sup>148</sup> what this “linked” means cannot be any sense of sequential causal continuity. It cannot be a causally connected “flow” of time in which the passing of one causal condition to the next always implies an irreversible lapse of time. Rather, Matsumoto claims that since all instances are absolute in their Dharma-positions, and therefore one moment does not become the next (vice-versa), nor one moment passes to the next,

<sup>144</sup> *Shōbōgenzō*, Vol.1, “Uji”, 143.

<sup>145</sup> Matsumoto, *Dōgen Shisō-ron*, 211.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>147</sup> *Shōbōgenzō*, Vol.1, “Uji”, 145.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

“linked” here means that all singular instances are simply accumulated as the Tathātā without interference from each other. In other words each instant is not “linked” or “lined up” by virtue of a sequential causal process unfolding as impermanence, but rather because all time participates in a limitless constantly-abiding Tathātā without beginning nor end.<sup>149</sup> Consequently, this adds to Matsumoto’s interpretation that Dōgen’s view on temporality denies impermanence.

I do agree that Dharma-position is a key concept in interpreting Dōgen’s view on time. However, I do not agree that interpreting Dharma-position in line with *Zhi Yi* and constant-abiding is a good idea. Given Matsumoto’s analysis that *Zhi Yi* and constant-abiding are philologically in debt to Hongaku doctrine, interpreting Dharma-position in relation to a constant-abiding style rhetoric will automatically limit the idea within the confines of Hongaku-shisō. There are other concepts Dōgen uses in the *Shōbōgenzō* such as *Total-function* (Zenki 全機) and *Total-exertion* (Gūjin 究尽) which I consider are more indicative of Dōgen’s novel take at Buddhist philosophy and may play a key role in interpreting Dōgen’s view on Dharma-position as well as Buddha-nature away from Hongaku-shisō. In addition, the fact that the term “constant-abiding” is utilized only once throughout the whole of the *Shōbōgenzō* may be indicative of its lesser importance for Dōgen. On the other hand, Dōgen dedicates a whole fascicle to the concept of Total-function. Despite this fact, Matsumoto insists in making the Dōgen-Hongaku connection by his reference to the idea of constant-abiding.

Once again, I claim that Matsumoto’s preference for constant-abiding as the key concept to interpret both Dōgen’s use of ‘impermanence Buddha-nature’ and Dharma-positions is indicative of his prejudice that ontology is ‘representational.’ According to this prejudice, all ontology is dhātu-vāda, therefore, it seems inevitable that Matsumoto emphasizes the idea of constant-abiding that is more tactical to make the case that Dōgen’s view of time is dhātu-vāda. My view is that the concept of Total-function interpreted with insights from Deleuze’s pragmatism may become a more suited key to help make consistent sense out of Dōgen’s metaphysical ideas in a manner that adheres to prafityasamutpāda. How will such a reading radically depart from Critical Buddhism’s interpretation of Dōgen? A full-fledged alternative interpretation will be explored in chapter five. For now it will

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<sup>149</sup>Matsumoto, *Dōgen Shisō-ron*, 213.

suffice to learn from Matsumoto that if we are to read Dōgen’s metaphysics as compatible with *pratītyasamutpāda*, then a constant-abiding based explanation should not be applied, not only to Dōgen’s view on Buddha-nature, but also to his view on time as Uji and Dharma-positions. The rhetoric of constant-abiding is too proximal to Hongaku-shisō and therefore merits complete avoidance.

### 2.3.3 Universal Buddha-Nature and Dōgen’s Theory of Practice

Matsumoto observes that Dōgen’s ideas on universal Buddha-nature not only have direct consequences on Dōgen’s idea of time, but also on how he ontologically justifies the absolute primacy and necessity of meditational practice. To the extent that Matsumoto’s interpretation of Dōgen’s views on the relationship between Buddha-nature and practice is an extension of his critique of Dōgen’s ‘universal Buddha-nature,’ we will see that it is bound to the conclusion that it is *dhātu-vāda*.

As briefly mentioned in the introductory chapter, Hongaku-shisō involves a paradox that Dōgen is said to have aspired to solve throughout his life as a practicing monk.<sup>150</sup> The paradox is as follows. When everything is unconditionally and immediately primordially “enlightened,” there cannot be any necessity for religious practice (and therefore why even practice meditation?). In other words, adherence to orthodox Hongaku doctrine in the form of inherent Buddha-nature cannot necessitate meditational practice. Matsumoto views that Dōgen did indeed attempt to solve this paradox by incorporating his views on universal Buddha-nature, but was unsuccessful in creating a philosophy that convincingly overcame it.

According to Matsumoto’s interpretation, Dōgen accepted that the totality of reality is primordially enlightened, but considered only the act of meditation allows this ‘truth’ to be manifested by the sentient practitioner. Universal Buddha-nature is manifested not by the *effect* of meditational practice, but by the practitioner’s very act of sitting in meditation without thought.<sup>151</sup> Therefore, practice and enlightenment are unitary and the manifestation of enlightenment only persists while the

<sup>150</sup> Hee-Jin Kim, *Eihei Dōgen Mystical Realist*, 22-23.

<sup>151</sup> Matsumoto, *Dōgen Shisō-ron*, 223, 235-238.

sitting is pursued. In Dōgen’s words,

In the Buddha-Dharma practice and enlightenment are completely the same. [Practice] now is also practice in the state of enlightenment; therefore, a beginner’s pursuit of the truth is just the whole body of the original state of enlightenment. This is why [the Buddhist patriarchs] teach, in the practical cautions they have handed down to us, not to expect any enlightenment outside of practice. And the reason may be that [practice itself] is the directly accessible original state of enlightenment. Because practice is just enlightenment, the enlightenment is endless; and because enlightenment is practice, the practice has no beginning.<sup>152</sup>

This relationship between practice and enlightenment is expressed by such terms as *Shushō-Ittō* (修証一等, meaning “the unity of practice and enlightenment”) and *Shushō-Funi* (修証不二, meaning “the nonduality of practice and enlightenment”),<sup>153</sup> what Matsumoto calls Dōgen’s “theory of practice based on universal Buddha-nature” (仏性修遍論 *Busshō-shuhen-ron*).<sup>154</sup> Matsumoto claims Dōgen’s theory of practice is founded on the basic idea of universal Buddha-nature in which all non-sentient existence are ‘primordially enlightened’ prior to any sentient beings ever consciously realizing enlightenment. This leads to the view that sentient beings are “enlightened” only by virtue of the ‘primordial enlightenment’ of non-sentient existence (this is the Hongaku idea of *mujyō-seppo* 無常說法 which is a concept meaning that “non-sentient existence enlighten sentient beings by teaching them the Dharma”).<sup>155</sup> According to Matsumoto, these ideas can be observed in the fundamental two-part logic utilized throughout the 75 fascicle *Shōbōgenzō* that elaborates Dōgen’s understanding of how the practitioner is related to enlightenment. The logic is most archetypically expressed in the following lines from the “Genjōkōan” fascicle:

A) “Driving ourselves to practice and experience the myriad *dharmas* is delusion.”

<sup>152</sup> *Shōbōgenzō*, Vol.1, “Bendowa”, 12. Nishijima and Cross translate 証 (shō) quite cryptically as “experience” but I have adhered to translations by Kim and Abe and have replaced it with “enlightenment.”

<sup>153</sup> The view that the term “Shō” 証 is to be interpreted as ‘enlightenment’ is contested by Minami Jikisai in his study of the *Shōbōgenzō*. As a strict adherent of the understanding that *prāṭīyasamutpāda* is essential to authentic Buddhism, Jikisai points out that since the Japanese term “Shō” simply means to “authenticate” or “prove” the term does not mean “enlightenment,” but rather to prove the functional authenticity of the Buddha’s teaching of *prāṭīyasamutpāda* and *prajñā* in practice. Jikisai, 38-39. I shall return to the problem of how this term should be understood later in chapter five.

<sup>154</sup> Matsumoto, *Dōgen Shisō-ron*, 215.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 131-138, 145-146. As absurd as this may sound, the idea that non-sentient existence like rocks and wood are teaching the dharma was a seriously debated stance in traditional Chinese and Japanese Hongaku doctrine.

- B) “When the myriad *dharma*s actively practice and experience ourselves, that is the state of realization.”

The first statement I have labeled (A) stands for the position of the deluded mind that thinks one innately has the ability to realize enlightenment by his/her agency trying to understand reality from his/her side alone. The second statement (B) is the basics of Dōgen’s view of a right understanding of Buddhism, that is, sentient beings are only enlightened from the side of the totality of phenomenal reality (i.e. Tathātā). Enlightenment is a reality for the practitioner only by virtue of Tathātā’s inclusivity that allows us to participate in its totality and never the other way around. Therefore, the movement from “practitioner to Tathātā” whereby the practitioner tries to understand reality from his/her perspective is considered delusional while the movement from “Tathātā to practitioner” is considered the right path.<sup>156</sup>

The problem of how the practice of meditation actually functions for the realization of (B) remains an open question. In short, Dōgen’s idea of meditation solves this problem by conceiving practice as the act by which one can “join” the ‘primordial enlightenment’ of the non-sentient. According to Matsumoto’s reading of Dōgen, despite the fact that the entirety of phenomenal reality is originally enlightened, the sentient mind is deluded by its ability of discriminative thinking (Jpn. 知見 *chiken*) in order for the individual to be able to manifest that original reality without reserve.<sup>157</sup> Matsumoto claims that this view is evident in the “Bendowa” fascicle where Dōgen mentions, “This Dharma is abundantly present in each human being, but if we do not practice it, it does not manifest itself, and if we do not experience it, it cannot be realized.”<sup>158</sup> Therefore, the movement of “Tathātā to practitioner” is only manifested while the practitioner sits in meditation through which one’s attachment to all thought processes is let go in what Dōgen calls the state of “without-thinking” (非思

<sup>156</sup> Matsumoto, *Dōgen Shisō-ron*, 215-222. Matsumoto sees that Dōgen utilizes a more complex structural understanding of the relationship between meditation and enlightenment in the “Bendowa” fascicle than the one he expounds in “Genjōkōan.” There Dōgen supports the idea that the non-sentient must be enlightened first by the practice of the sentient who then in turn will be enlightened by virtue of enlightened non-sentient existence. See *Ibid.*, 62-69, 137.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 139-141, 157, 241.

<sup>158</sup> *Shōbōgenzō*, Vol.1, “Bendowa”, 3

量 *Hishiryō*).<sup>159</sup> This is the reason why both Hakamaya and Matsumoto criticize early Dōgen's views on meditational practice as non-Buddhist; they find them to be a typically Zen Buddhist influenced understanding of meditation as transcendental experientialism which consequently denies the significance of analytical and evaluative thought.<sup>160</sup> From the Critical Buddhist perspective, the nature of the meditational practice is problematic in itself, but Matsumoto further criticizes the idea that Tathātā is only manifested while the practitioner meditates in fact introduces the greatest weakness of Dōgen's logic of practice based on universal Buddha-nature.

Matsumoto points out that the idea that practitioners only manifest Tathātā while meditating compromises the absolute monism of universal Buddha-nature (in the form of understanding phenomena as unconditionally equaling Tathātā) by introducing a temporal and epistemological lapse between the locus and super-locus. A full affirmation of the 'phenomenon-as-it-is = Tathātā' logic, needless to say, can never necessitate practice, since all things are "enlightened" regardless of practice. To compromise the absolute identity between locus and super-locus means that a certain aspect of Tathātā must be hidden and no longer be immediately manifest,<sup>161</sup> so that some form of practice is necessitated for it to become manifest. In the process of this "hiding away," the dualism between locus and super-locus must be reintroduced into the equation. In addition, the compromise must also reintroduce a certain sense of innate potentiality in the individual to attain enlightenment as can be noticed in Dōgen's above statement "this Dharma is abundantly present in each human being." This actually regresses the monism of universal Buddha-nature back to what resembles a dualistic inherent buddha-nature perspective.<sup>162</sup> While both universal and inherent buddha-nature perspectives are ultimately dhātu-vāda, the former tries to overcome the heresy of supporting a view of having an 'individual-essence' (i.e. the Senika heresy) by upholding the idea of no-abiding-self against the understanding of Buddha-nature as personal 'essence.' Yet, Matsumoto concludes that attempts of

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<sup>159</sup> According to Matsumoto this point is also evident in Dōgen's guide to meditation, the "Fukanzazengi" where he mentions: "Moreover, the changing of the moment, through the means of a finger, a pole, a needle, or a wooden clapper; and the experience of the state, through the manifestation of a whisk, a fist, a staff, or a shout, can never be understood by thinking and discrimination." *Dōgen Shisō-ron*, 241. Also see: *Shōbōgenzō*, Vol.1., "Fukanzazengi", 364-365.

<sup>160</sup> Matsumoto, *Dōgen Shisō-ron*, 139-141, 240 - 241.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 236-238.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

Dōgen to keep away from the Senika heresy backfired. This is due to the incompatibility of the universal Buddha-nature's absolute monism with the necessity for a dualized structure between practitioner and enlightenment when trying to fit in the necessity of practice into the formula.<sup>163</sup>

I do agree that Dōgen's statements "Driving ourselves to practice and experience the myriad *dharmas* is delusion" and "When the myriad *dharmas* actively practice and experience ourselves, that is the state of realization," are a key in unfolding how Dōgen conceived of his metaphysics as related to practice. I also consider Dōgen's term, *Shushō-Ittō* is another key in understanding how he integrated his ideas on Buddha-nature with practice. Matsumoto's critique of Dōgen's theory of practice based on universal Buddha-nature seems logically consistent and in accord to his preceding critique of Dōgen's ideas on Buddha-nature. However, I have two points of disagreement. First, the conclusion that Dōgen simply regresses to the 'inherent Buddha-nature' perspective is only valid in contingency to Matsumoto's framework of understanding that ontological concepts of Buddha-nature are always dhātu-vāda. I will demonstrate in chapter five that once we accept a completely different framework of understanding the function of metaphysics by help of Deleuze's pragmatism, we can reinterpret the way Dōgen's metaphysics relates to practice in a radically different manner to Critical Buddhism without having to neglect *pratīyasamutpāda*. From such a framework, Dōgen's above statements from the "Genjōkōan" as well as his term *Shushō-Ittō* can be given a completely new significance.

Second, I find a problem in Matsumoto's view that Dōgen's theory of practice must reintroduce a dualism where the 'truth' of primordial enlightenment must be hidden away to

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<sup>163</sup> While Critical Buddhism analyzes much of Dōgen's philosophy elaborated in his early 75 fascicle *Shōbōgenzō* as not Buddhist, they do believe that later Dōgen in his 12 fascicle *Shōbōgenzō* shows a fundamental change in stance considering what he understood as fundamental to Buddhism. According to Critical Buddhism Dōgen got rid of much of his metaphysical ideas concerning Buddha-nature and time and shifted to making "deep faith in *pratīyasamutpāda*" as central for Buddhist practice. Although this does not escape the area of speculation, Matsumoto feels that Dōgen's change in ideas between the 75 fascicle and 12 fascicle *Shōbōgenzō* maybe indicative of a deep spiritual-existential crisis in Dōgen through which the idea of Original Enlightenment as a foundation for practice was challenged and had to be reconsidered. *Ibid.*, 244. This view that Dōgen went through a fundamental change of heart between his early and later years and that this change influenced the complete shift in the foundations of his ideas is not exclusive to Critical Buddhism. Dōgen scholar, Tsujiguchi, though not a Critical Buddhist nor in agreement with the irreconcilable philosophical discontinuity Critical Buddhists place between the 75 fascicle and 12 fascicle *Shōbōgenzō*, does agree that the analysis of the contents of the two *Shōbōgenzōs* does reveal a fundamental change in Dōgen's attitude towards the understanding of Buddhism and that this was most probably due to an essential spiritual-existential shift in Dōgen himself. Tsujiguchi, 159-160. Also refer to footnote 8 in chap. 1.

necessitate practice to reveal it. While this interpretation makes logical sense within Matsumoto's framework of understanding, it neglects Dōgen's own claim of *Henkai-fusanzo* (遍界不曾藏) or "the entire universe has never been hidden"; a statement Dōgen makes multiple times throughout the *Shōbōgenzō*.<sup>164</sup> Matsumoto's interpretation gives no sufficient explanation to the fact that in this statement Dōgen seems to be advocating the view that there is absolutely nothing that needs revealing through practice. Such a claim for absolute immanence stands in contrast to Matsumoto's view that Dōgen's view of practice is dualist and calls for transcendental experientialism for the hidden 'truth' to be manifest. I will show in chapter five how introducing a completely different framework in understanding Dōgen's metaphysics will allow us to incorporate Dōgen's claim for immanence as non-contrary to his metaphysics in relation to practice.

In summary, Matsumoto's critique of Dōgen's views on Buddha-nature took issue with the concept of 'universal Buddha-nature.' While the concept was allegedly designed to save the notion of Buddha-nature from reiterating a theory of a constant individual-essence, it could not overcome the ontological reliance on a locus in the form of a universalized Buddha-nature. Matsumoto further argued that this basic logic of immediate identification between the totality of phenomena and Buddha-nature was implied in Dōgen's view of time as singular moments. By virtue of the concept of constant-abiding, each moment was understood as perfect in itself due to its identity with totality. Hence, Dōgen's theory of time was considered as suggesting an infinite substratum of time that operated outside causal impermanence. I had argued that Matsumoto's tendency to proximate Dōgen's ideas on Buddha-nature and time with Hongaku-shisō through the utility of the concept of constant-abiding was conditioned by two factors. First was his prejudice that ontology must be 'representational,' and second was his assumption that since Dōgen uses ideas philologically traceable to Hongaku doctrine, his use must be in continuity to the dhātu-vāda evident in Hongaku-shisō. As a consequence to these presumptions, Matsumoto claimed Dōgen's application of universal Buddha-nature to meditational practice was incapable of overcoming its inconsistency and regressed Dōgen's

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<sup>164</sup> The term is utilized in *Shōbōgenzō*, Vol.2, "Busshō", 4. "Gyobutsu-Yuigi", 46,47,48. "Zazenshin", 125. "Juki", 245. "Arakan", 273. "Mochu-Setsumu", 322.

universal Buddha-nature to something akin to orthodox Hongaku doctrine. In addition, Dōgen's insistence on the attainment of a state of "without-thinking" suggested a transcendental experientialism which disregarded *prajñā*. Conclusively, Matsumoto's presumptions gave him no recourse but to claim that Dōgen's metaphysical concepts and their application to a theory of practice were all out of step with a proper adherence to *pratītyasamutpāda*.

#### **2.4 Conclusion: The Limitations of Critical Buddhism's Reading of Dōgen**

In the first half of this chapter, I have argued that Critical Buddhism's criteria for *pratītyasamutpāda* and *dhātu-vāda* are doctrinally sound in virtue of its philosophical continuity with historical predecessors. In this sense Critical Buddhism's criteria for *pratītyasamutpāda* and *dhātu-vāda* can be used as a general tool to criticise other interpretations of Dōgen in contrast to *pratītyasamutpāda*. However, I pointed out that their view that *pratītyasamutpāda* is incompatible with ontology implied the prejudice that metaphysics by nature 'represents' a supposedly existing ontological 'ground,' and therefore cannot be accepted. While it is doctrinally sound to view that *pratītyasamutpāda* as causality, no-abiding-self, and impermanence does not provide any assurance of an ontological 'locus,' to view that therefore, any ontological claim is corresponding to a 'true-way-reality-is,' is merely a prejudice rather than a logical consequence of the former.

In the second half of the chapter I analyzed how this prejudice conditions Matsumoto's interpretation of Dōgen. To the extent that Matsumoto considers ontology as always advocating a corresponding 'truth' or 'ground' there can be no other way than to understand Dōgen's metaphysics as incompatible with *pratītyasamutpāda*. Whether it be Matsumoto's view that Dōgen is advocating the existence of a 'universal Buddha-nature,' or a theory of temporality which unites all singular moments into a constantly-abiding substratum, he naturally took for granted that these metaphysical ideas are describing a corresponding ontological 'locus' that existed in a spatial or substantive manner. From such a perspective, Dōgen can only either adhere to *pratītyasamutpāda* by not doing metaphysics

or deny *pratītyasamutpāda* by doing metaphysics. As we have seen, the Critical Buddhist conclusion was the latter.

The preceding prejudice also conditioned Matsumoto's interpretation of Dōgen in another manner. The understanding that ontology can only be 'representational' will naturally lead one to identify anything that resembles metaphysical ideas in Dōgen as descriptions of reality. In this sense I considered it inevitable that Matsumoto takes for granted that any mention of the concept of Buddha-nature is by nature *dhātu-vāda* and therefore, prefer to connect Dōgen's ideas with the Hongaku definition of constant-abiding and Dharma-position which emphasizes his case that Dōgen's view on 'impermanence Buddha-nature' and singular time are *dhātu-vāda*. Matsumoto cannot but interpret Dōgen's metaphysics in proximity to *dhātu-vāda* since he is limited within his own framework of understanding ontology as well as to his philological narrative within which ideas as Buddha-nature and constant-abiding is considered inherently *dhātu-vāda*. Such a prejudiced framework cannot accommodate the imagination and creativity to reinterpret Dōgen's metaphysics away from *dhātu-vāda* and in concurrence with *pratītyasamutpāda*. Neither can it open eyes to the possibility that Dōgen's philosophy may be showing a radical break with his historical precedents in his use of ideas such as Buddha-nature and Dharma-position. With the absence of Dōgen, what his accurate intention may had been cannot be verified, however, we can still attempt to pursue hitherto unsought potentials of Dōgen's metaphysics by interpreting it by an absolutely different set of assumptions concerning the significance of metaphysics. Critical Buddhism's manner of approaching Dōgen proved to be unfit for such a task.

Despite the limitations of Critical Buddhism's interpretation of Dōgen there were several points that could be learned from both their criteria for *pratītyasamutpāda*/*dhātu-vāda* and their analysis of Dōgen. First, taking *pratītyasamutpāda* seriously means to understand that Buddhism must take altruistic ethics and *prajñā* as its primary concern through the course of gaining "correct" insight into no-abiding-self and impermanence. Second, if we are to consider Dōgen's metaphysics as compatible with *pratītyasamutpāda*, it cannot be interpreted in a manner implying 'realism,' 'essentialism,' or 'foundationalism,' as any of these tendencies will lead to *dhātu-vāda*. Therefore,

Buddha-nature cannot be considered a substantive reality either as ‘individual-essence’ or as a constantly-abiding metaphysical ‘truth’ in unity with the whole of existence. Neither should Dōgen’s idea of time as Dharma-positions be interpreted as a substantialized or spatialized temporality designating the constantly-abiding totality of all moments within the singular moment. These ideas inevitably lead to a theory of practice which, much akin to Mōhēyan, jeopardized the necessity for the practice of gaining insight into no-abiding-self and impermanence through *prajñā* as founded on the primacy of altruistic ethics. Consequently, such interpretations compromise Dōgen’s claim for the priority for Buddhist practice by confining him to Hongaku-shisō and as a result renders it insignificant for *pratītyasamutpāda*. Our “new” interpretation of Dōgen’s metaphysics in relation to practice must avoid all of these elements to successfully incorporate his metaphysics as useful within the practice of *pratītyasamutpāda*.

Finally, I emphasize that Critical Buddhism’s conclusion concerning Dōgen is only valid to the extent ontology is considered to function ‘representationally’ and therefore, must always imply a conceptual or objective realism. Matsumoto’s interpretation that Dōgen’s ideas of ‘universal Buddha-nature,’ and time as dharma-positions are valid only if Dōgen believed that such metaphysical realities actually existed in a substantive manner. What if Dōgen’s metaphysics does not ‘describe’ or ‘represent’ a supposedly existent ‘ultimate locus,’ but functioned as purely abstract conceptual tools for practitioners to help recondition their understanding of experienced reality? What if metaphysics was understood beyond conceptual or objective realism and capable of fully functioning as tools to fulfill intended practical purposes without regards to if the ideas actually ‘corresponded’ to reality or not? How will such a pragmatist view of metaphysics change the way we can interpret *pratītyasamutpāda* as compatible with ontology? And in turn how will such a view of *pratītyasamutpāda* condition a new interpretation of Dōgen’s metaphysics?

Answering these questions must wait until chapter five for this first necessitates a detailed introduction to how Deleuze’s pragmatism and metaphysics works. But first, we must examine in the next chapter what I consider the other pole of the dichotomy of Dōgen interpretation: that of the comparative philosophers. I will criticise four exemplary types of comparative interpretations by

applying the criteria for dhātu-vāda and argue for the shortcomings of each type of interpretation.

This will ultimately make the case for why Deleuze is necessary as a solution to the shortcomings of both Critical Buddhism and the comparative interpretations.