Chapter 6
The Philosophical Reception of Japanese Buddhism After 1868

Ralf Müller

In the writings of the Japanese Pure Land Buddhist Shinran 親鸞 (1173–1263) we read: "I, Shinran, do not have a single disciple of my own" (SZ Supplement: 10; Saitō 2010: 242; Yuien 1996: 6).[1] Is he simply being modest? Does Shinran defy discipleship? Does he rule out the possibility of the reception of his thought? The answer to these questions is not clear; nevertheless, what we do know is that the reader of his writings is supposed to arrive at the Buddha's original teaching. Shinran's voluminous works, however, exhibit more than an introduction to, or simple interpretation of, the Buddha's preaching. We may say that Shinran has given us sermons and treatises that manifest an authentic and unique appropriation of the Buddhist tradition, and, therefore, his works offer the possibility of a thoughtful reception for his interpreters and disciples.

1 Reception and Its History: Remains and Reminders of the Past

The philosopher KUKI Shūzō 九鬼周造 (1888–1941) wrote remarkable verses about Shinran seven centuries after his death: "I will have no disciple, said Shinran; as for me [Kuki], I long to have his soul" (KSZ Supplement, 146; Saitō 2010: 242). Kuki's poetic reflections express Shinran's quest for an authentic life, and echo back the existentialist aspect of his philosophy. More than this, his words commit him to Shinran as his teacher. Do these words not enact the most authentic discipleship possible? In fact, SAITŌ Takako takes Kuki's verses as *empirical evidence* of his

[1] Quoted from Shinran's *Tannishō*. English translation is Yuien's. This exposition of Shinran and Kuki is indebted to Saitō's article.

R. Müller (✉)
University of Hildesheim, Hildesheim, Germany

G. Kopf (ed.), *The Dao Companion to Japanese Buddhist Philosophy*,
Dao Companions to Chinese Philosophy 8,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-2924-9_6

receiving the intellectual legacy of Shinran. Thus, at the end of her article, the proof of historical facticity of reception retroactively justifies Saitō's careful comparison of Kuki's thought with Shinran's, which began based on presuming similarities in content. In other words, the factual findings prove the validity of comparing Shinran and Kuki, although a truthful reading is impossible to verify historically.[2] Be that as it may, Kuki's poetic expression demonstrates the history of the reception of a pre-modern Buddhist by a modern philosopher in Japan, regardless of whether this discipleship was ultimately judged to be authentic and perfected, or an untimely failure.

1.1 Nishida Kitarō: A Recipient of Buddhism?

While there are cases such as Kuki's resonance with Shinran that require empirical proof (which Saitō has ultimately delivered), there are other cases of reception which seem so clear that they supersede the requirement for textual evidence: NISHIDA Kitarō's 西田幾多郎 (1870–1945) reception of Zen Buddhism is a case in point. In fact, the lack of historical material which links Zen and philosophy in Nishida's thinking is rarely at stake. Explanations of Nishida's intellectual appreciation of the Buddhist tradition are equally rare. The relation seems so evident that citing from one of Nishida's few letters in which he explicitly talks about Zen and philosophy seems to prove sufficiently their relation in his thinking rather than evincing a scarcity of textual evidence.[3]

While authors of the European tradition are quoted extensively in most of Nishida's works published during his lifetime,[4] authors of Indian, Chinese, or Japanese literature become more visible only in his later works, and even then in a comparably smaller number of quotes, limited mostly to places where Nishida writes about Eastern culture and its distinction from the West. It is, in fact, difficult to identify an author or a group of authors of the Zen Buddhist tradition as major or even main sources of Nishida's philosophy. Neither the Chinese Zen Master LINJI

[2] To elaborate on Shinran's philosophical reception: though often considered a religious and pious practitioner of Buddhism only, Shinran is, perhaps, the most widely read pre-modern Buddhist in Japanese philosophy since 1868. TANABE Hajime 田辺元 (1885–1962) was famous for reading Shinran and was inspired to do so by his student TAKEUCHI Yoshinori 武内義範 (1913–2012). In 1935, preceding the works of Tanabe and Takeuchi, two pertinent publications by MATSUBARA Kan and TERADA Yakichi, with the same title are found: *The Philosophy of Shinran*. Another writing that should be mentioned is MIKI Kiyoshi's 三木清 (1897–1945) work on Shinran and Pascal (Miki 1999). The sheer amount of material awaits a comprehensive account. Two representative works show the range of Shinran's intellectual readers: Bloom (2004) presents excerpts of writings by KIYOZAWA Manshi 清沢満之, SUZUKI Daisetsu 鈴木大拙, TAKEUCHI Yoshinori, and others (see Matsuoka 2009).

[3] See his letter to Nishitani (NKZ 19: 224–225).

[4] References to Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) are the most numerous with approximately 800 footnotes, as indexed in NKZ 24. More than half of the references fall into the philosophical works published during Nishida's lifetime, vols. 1–10.

Yixuan 臨濟義玄 (J. Rinzai; died 866 C.E.) nor the great Japanese Master HAKUIN Ekaku 白隠慧鶴 (1686–1768) are highly visible in any of Nishida's published works, despite being the founding spirits of modern Japanese Rinzai temples, and, thereby, Nishida's most intimate guides in his Zen practice.

Hakuin is explicitly quoted only once in 1914, and never thereafter. In none of his writings does Nishida evolve a coherent interpretation of any major work of the Zen Buddhist or any other tradition in order to establish proof of the viability or applicability of his philosophical system. Nevertheless, while there are authors who try to determine Nishida's use of tradition,[5] these ideas are put forth for the most part to show that Nishida's philosophy is furnished by Zen Buddhism as mediated through his own practice, on the one hand, and as mediated by Japanese culture being infused with Zen Buddhism, on the other.[6]

Without delving too deeply into these speculations, and without judging if we are to take Nishida as a recipient of Eastern, Buddhist, or Zen Buddhist thought, his works expose a diversity of evidence of his being familiar with pre-modern Buddhists other than those of Zen origin. These works range in topics from calligraphy[7] to the works of researchers among his contemporaries with whom he was in contact. Together, these offer a broad view of the sources that might have been informing his works. Hence, even in the case of someone such as Nishida, it is worth exploring the textual evidence more deeply to determine what aspects of the Japanese Buddhist tradition and beyond may have influenced him as a philosopher.

1.2 Buddhist Thinkers Not Discussed in Nishida's Writings

To explore the example of Nishida's influences further, let us explore other figures of the Buddhist literature of pre-modern Japan. Three names provide a good starting point: SHŌTOKU Taishi 聖徳太子 (574–622), Kūkai 空海 (774–835), and JIUN Onkō 慈雲飲光 (1718–1804). To begin with the last of the three, Jiun comes up in a roundtable discussion, where TANIKAWA Tetsuzō 谷川徹三 (1895–1989) draws Nishida's attention to his calligraphy. Nishida acknowledges the greatness of Jiun's style but does not state anything else. Later, we find Jiun's name in a letter Nishida writes to KISHIMOTO Tokiya, stating that Nishida approves of Kishimoto's studies

[5] See Kopf (2005) and Maraldo (2010). However, the problem of a history of reception or of effect is not explicitly treated therein.

[6] The Shin Buddhist influence coming from his family as well as from Japanese culture in general is left unmentioned here, since it does not necessarily contradict the reasoning about his Zen Buddhist outlook mentioned before.

[7] Calligraphy is a form of thoughtful expression, which should be considered more carefully as a source of Buddhist thought that Nishida was exposed to, and that was, therefore, possibly intensively absorbed by Nishida.

on Jiun and that he agrees with their results.[8] In the case of the Shingon Buddhist Kūkai, there are more instances in which Nishida refers to him or his writings. Most telling are his reflections on cultural morphology and Japanese sources of philosophy, in which he acknowledges the intellectual potential of Kūkai's writings, for their particular content that diverges from and contributes to philosophy in the West.[9] Again, he praises Kūkai's calligraphy as he does that of Jiun and Hakuin.

Regarding Shōtoku, the last of the three pre-modern Buddhists mentioned above, the references are most scarce, based on the recent index of his collected works. In 1942 he sent a letter to DOI Torakazu in which he addresses Doi's article on Aristotle and Shōtoku. Nishida states that he would agree with Doi's reading of Aristotle, while he could not comment on Shōtoku because of his lack of proficiency.[10] As little text as there is to be found on prominent figures such as Shōtoku, or as strong as Nishida's interest in calligraphy is, there remains a lot of significant material to be unearthed that will contribute to or change our view of Nishida's reception of Japanese Buddhism and Buddhist literature. In particular, to give an accurate account of how he received Zen Buddhism, it is important to undergird all reasonable assumptions with all of the philological material available.

1.3 The History and Reception of Philosophy in Japan

Developing an account that shows how individual thinkers or their works have been received since the Meiji-period gives insight into pre-modern history beyond mere speculation about intellectual sources and offers more reliable grounds for further exploring how pre-modern ideas have shaped the works of contemporary philosophers. While this article is about pre-modern Buddhists, it is not a study about their respective works as such. Rather, it shows how their works were *received by* modern thinkers. This will be not an account of the "history of effect" (G. *Wirkungsgeschichte*)

[8] The letter dates 02.12.1944 (NKZ 23: 292). Kishimoto's writings on Jiun that Nishida refers to could not be located.

[9] The comment on Kūkai mentioned here is found in a newspaper interview in which he was asked if there was any philosopher in ancient Japan. Nishida's answer remains vague but positive: "I don't know Kōbō Daishi [i.e. Kūkai] so well, but people like him are a kind of philosopher, right?" (NKZ 24: 83–84). He adds: "Since nowadays philosophy is scientific philosophy of the West, there was no philosophy in that sense, but philosophy is not just a matter of form, but of content based on which the works of Confucius and Mencius contain philosophical import" (ibid.). In a text on cultural morphology, Nishida writes that "religions such as the philosophical [schools] of Kegon and Tendai […] did not become religions of our country. As far as the school of Shingon that was Japanized by Kōbō Daishi [i.e. Kūkai] is concerned, it seems to me that its realistic sense converges with our mentality" (NKZ 6: 352). Nishida attributes the most distinguished impact on Japanese culture to the Zen school. Finally, there is his critique on TANAKA Ōdō 田中王堂 (1868–1932). Nishida maintains that philosophy in Japan is lively and not without a pre-modern tradition to draw on. Among the Buddhists he mentions we find Shinran, Nichiren, Dengyō and Kūkai (Kōbō Daishi) (See NKZ 11: 116).

[10] Letter no. 3645, dated 22.08.1942 (NKZ 23:39).

of pre-modern thought but a "history of reception" (G. *Rezeptionsgeschichte*). This approach can then be developed into a proper comparison with the original works and can focus on displaying the multiplicity of readings of such original works.[11]

The problem of reception of the pre-modern tradition is distinctive to philosophy in Japan insofar as from the time academic philosophy was introduced from the West, the origin of philosophy was located outside Japan, namely, in Greece. From that perspective, "Japanese" philosophy could only mean "Western" philosophy in Japan. Speaking of other sources of philosophy outside of Europe seems, to most Japanese academics, as only reasonable, if viable at all, if one is referring to the literature of China and India. However, since the Meiji period there have been voices suggesting the existence of original sources that lay the ground for an autochthonous history of Japanese philosophy. In a sense, any account of the reception of pre-modern thought—in the present case limited to the Buddhist tradition—contributes to the construction of a history of Japanese philosophy and helps uncover continuities within the autochthonous literature of pre-Meiji Japan.[12]

2 Contemporary Accounts of Japanese Buddhist Philosophy

While there are quite a few historical accounts of Japanese philosophy that include the pre-modern era, only some of them thematize pre-Meiji thought as philosophy. That is exactly what *Japanese Philosophy: A Sourcebook* (Heisig et al. 2011) attempts to do. Offering more than a simple historical outline of the original texts, the *Sourcebook* is, moreover, structured in a way that exhibits the *reception* of pre-modern sources, for example, by grouping together authors of Pure Land and Zen Buddhism across the divide of the pre-modern and modern periods marked by 1868. Instances of explicit reference to pre-Meiji times include authors such as KARAKI Junzō 唐木順三 (1904–1980) and TANABE Hajime 田辺元 (1885–1962), both of whom explore the thought of the Zen Buddhist Dōgen 道元 (1200–1253). However, while the *Sourcebook* brings up the matter of the existence of philosophy in pre-modern Japan, there is no particular case from within the ostensibly autochthonous materials that suggests a model for how this appropriation was carried out. In other words, the matter of reception as such is not brought into focus.

In fact, there is hardly any account that straightforwardly thematizes the matter of reception itself. One must look into the more recent accounts of Buddhist philosophy in Japan focusing on strands of reception to gain this perspective. Among them Gregor Paul's account in the *Encyclopedia of Asian Philosophy* is worth mentioning for being concise and comprehensive as well as provocative (Paul 2001).

[11] The attempt to compare the respective readings with each other and eventually with the original texts promises valuable insights of a systematic nature, if sufficient scrutiny is carried out.

[12] Inasmuch as philosophy is attributed to individual thinkers, not anonymous collectives, only the former are addressed here. It becomes an almost insurmountable task to identify intellectual currents when speaking of Tendai or Kegon Buddhism, or other schools in general.

Criticizing the Kyōto School's presumed self-understanding as an original as well as an authentic appropriation of Buddhist tradition,[13] Paul questions their all-encompassing approach to Buddhism. Hence, he tries to force a wedge into what is called Buddhism ultimately to parse it into what can be considered philosophy and what remains to be taken as religious thought. On this basis, Paul differentiates the authors mentioned in his account as perceiving Buddhism either as an analytically determined corpus of intrinsically philosophical texts or as a comprehensive phenomenon, thereby conflating religion and philosophy. Apart from his analytic rigor, Paul reminds the reader of forgotten themes within the reception and tradition of Buddhism, such as the strand of *hetuvidya*-tradition in early Japanese Buddhism, upon which Paul grounds his critique of the Kyoto school:

> Most *hetuvidya* scholars are critical about the views, which representatives of the Kyoto school, and scholars related to this school, such as Suzuki Daisetz […], have on Buddhism. They hold that these views cannot be justified philologically, and are often irrational. Also, they argue that—contrary to what many followers of the Kyoto school believe—Zen is no exemplary Buddhism but only one branch among many others. (Paul 2001: 92)

Paul's classification of the modern reception of Buddhism, which is more historical than philosophical, includes a wide variety of authors. At first he introduces changes of Buddhism through Meiji Restoration, and mentions NANJO Bun'yu 南条文雄 (1849–1927), TAKAKUSU Junjiro 高楠順次郎 (1866–1945), UI Hakuju 宇井白寿 (1882–1963), and thinkers such as INOUE Enryō 井上圓了 (1858–1919) and ANESAKI Masaharu 姉崎正治 (1873–1949), "[who] became interested in comparative philosophy and religious history, and tried to reconstruct Buddhist doctrines from respective points of view" (Paul 2001: 90). While Paul sees, for example, Takakusu's works as more philological and historical, he contrasts them with Inoue's works by adding: "Because of his [Inoue's] willful speculations he was strongly criticized by ONISHI Hajime" (Paul 2001: 91). Paul remarks on the beginning of the Meiji period: "The differences in interests and methods characteristic to the approaches [to a reception of Buddhism] exemplified by Ui, [Inoue] Enryo and Anesaki, may be called exemplary for the whole of Buddhist philosophy since Meiji times" (Paul 2001: 91).

All in all, Paul summarizes the modern period and mentions more thinkers and scholars rarely spoken of in this context: "Apart from the given examples of what could still be called (1) scholastic Buddhism—best exemplified by *hetuvidya*; (2)

[13] See Paul's summary in five points: "(1) Western logocentrism, scientific orientation, and technology are no means to grasp the absolute or reality as such. Understanding this reality, however, is essential for being able to lead a life […]. Further, an understanding of the absolute is possible, for example, by means of 'direct experience' and mystical union. (2) Western logocentrism, its scientific orientation, and technology are dangerous because they may lead to man's self-destruction. (3) These orientations justify an—unjustified—anthropomorphism because they are employed to enslave nature. Humans ought to live in harmony with nature. (4) The notion of nothingness (in Japanese: *mu*) and/or emptiness (in Japanese *kū*) is more fundamental, and more adequate to reality as such, than the notion of being. (5) A kind of dialectical logic is a better means to solve important problems than formal logic. Formal contradictions are no real obstacle for deep thought" (Paul 2001: 92).

highly speculative comparative ontology informed by Zen and notions of nothingness and emptiness—best exemplified by the Kyōto school—and (3) comparative studies relevant to a philosophy of religion, some other examples of Japanese Buddhist philosophy may be mentioned" (Paul 2001: 91) such as NAGAO Gadjin, DOI Torakazu 土井虎賀寿, TACHIKAWA Musashi, and SUEKI Fumihiko 末木文美士.

Contrary to Paul's account, John Maraldo's entry "Japanese philosophy" in the Routledge Encyclopedia is an example of how an historical account invites philosophizing beyond mere critique on philological grounds (Maraldo 2010). He draws on themes within the history of the Japanese Buddhist tradition, which become crucial and vital for discussion for modern thinkers until the present. One of these themes that carries through from pre-modern texts to their modern readers in Buddhist philosophy is language and linguistic articulation.

An imbalance might be felt in Maraldo's entry with regard to the weight given to certain modern authors compared to both their contemporaries and their pre-modern forebears. While he brings up a number of schools and names of pre-Meiji times, such as the so-called six schools of Nara, then Saichō, Kūkai and Dōgen, the Kegon- and Tendai-Buddhism, as well as Shinran, Honen, Ippen, and Nichiren, only Nishida and D.T. Suzuki refer to philosophical adepts of the Buddhist tradition in post-Meiji times. This contrasts starkly with Paul's broad historical outline. However, whereas Paul calls attention to more logical and philological scrutiny, which justifies the work of authors such as Ui or Takakusu, Maraldo comes to a more philosophical conclusion by pointing to a convergence of Buddhist thought in modern and pre-modern Japan.

As it pertains to an open-ended pursuit both on an epistemological and ontological level, the reader can take up the Buddhist tradition through the eyes of Nishida, its modern recipient:

According to many Buddhist thought systems, there is no whole, universal or absolute, without its manifestation in concrete, distinct and relative particulars. In the twentieth century, Nishida reformulated this principle paradoxically: the more relative a truth is—that is, the more deeply embedded or embodied in particulars—the more absolute it is. The absolute must encompass the relative, not stand in opposition to it. In general, Japanese Buddhist philosophy developed through a kind of synecdochic argumentation that appealed not to a priori reasons or empirical evidence nor simply to scriptural sources of authority but to this mutual accommodation of relative and absolute.

2.1 The History of Effects and the Hermeneutics of Reception

What does it mean to respond to a tradition, to take up ideas, to appropriate the work of a predecessor, to be a disciple or interpreter? These questions are the concern of the following pages insofar as an account of the history of reception is given and prioritized over against the history of effect. The latter is the central concept of

Hans-Georg Gadamer's (1900–2002) work, *Truth and Method* (2004), the former being an adaptation and complementary concept brought forth in response to Gadamer by Hans-Robert Jauß (1970).

Gadamer inserts the idea of the history of effect into the terminology of philosophical hermeneutics in order to reconstruct the linguistic self-relation of subjectivity within the horizon of tradition: the "consciousness of historical effect" opens up the horizon of understanding, and Gadamer determines the horizon-opening function of the historical as being contingent on the pre-understanding of the living presence of the past. Hence, in distinction to the term "effect," "reception" marks the position of the interpreting subject in its creative appropriation of the object of the past.

While Gadamer formally acknowledges the productivity of the subject, he effectively deprives it in the face of the overwhelming of tradition. In a critique of Gadamer, Jauß (as well as Wolfgang Iser) grounds the position of the receiving subject in its finite, but irreducible and original engagement. Prioritizing the productivity of the subject, the history of appropriating the past cannot be divided into success and failure since, if applied coherently, categories such as "misinterpretation" presuppose a given sense and meaning in the work that precedes its being received. Rather than construing the historical appropriation of a particular work as a succession of failed interpretations being overcome by yet other re-readings, the work is originally nothing but its reception.

In this context, a history of reception of pre-modern Buddhist authors and their works cannot in the vast multiplicity of their stories be told simply as deformations of original texts and intentions, which would require being measured against buddhological and philological "correct" research of some original meaning. A history of the reception of pre-modern Buddhist authors must reconstruct in a hermeneutically sufficient way the imaginative constructions of the respective authors, regardless of whether they originate from within or beyond scientific discourse. The focus of reception lies in the process of the subjective appropriation instead of in the "pregiven unity" of the text.

Consequently, the history of effect presumes a history of reception in that it means more than a direction of inquiry; it encompasses a relation to history and cannot be without a historiography. However, the point of caution is that, against any positivistic or historicist approach to the historiography, the presuppositions and the context of the historiography must be addressed and made transparent.

2.2 History of Reception and Buddhist Hermeneutics

The history of the philosophical reception of Buddhist thought can also be thought through from within the Buddhist understanding of history. In the face of a persistent and continuous commentary on the Buddhist sūtras, which themselves grow out of the "original words" of the Buddha, there is a trend of interpreting this history as a history of degradation. However, there is a way of understanding particular means

of teaching, that is, *hōben* 方便, which, to a certain degree, temporarily neutralizes the direction of time, regarding the original understanding of texts or teachings. There is the possibility of reversing this direction of time, where the means to a text's transmission is actually perfected in later times. Different factions are split based on their reasoning on this possibility.

We can, however, go further into different approaches to commentary. Are we to interpret word-for-word and try to do justice to tradition in the narrowest sense, or can the interpreting be elevated to a higher level? In Jacqueline Stone's account of Tendai's tradition of commentary, she proposes using traditional *exegesis* as a counterfoil to *eisegesis,* which can be taken as an equivalent to reception as opposed to effect. In Stone's coining, it is the "mind contemplation" (J. *kanjin kuden* 観心口伝) commentary style, which she compares to the former, less productive style of commentary. Stone explains:

> The *kanjin*-style interpretative mode found in many medieval *kuden* texts aims at retrieving hidden meanings held to embody the most profound insights of religious liberation. Such hidden meanings, it was thought, could be accessed only by those with enlightened insight and transmitted only to the properly initiated; they were not part of common doctrinal understanding. This mode of interpretation has been characterized by modern scholars as undermining orthodox doctrinal understanding by encouraging the proliferation of arbitrary, private readings. (Stone 2003: 156)[14]

Apparently, the hermeneutic dimension of historiography is not directly implied by the distinction of the *kanjin*-style of interpretation from the common mode of textual interpretation. We can take this distinction, however, as the ground on which the strong position of the receiving interpreter gives greater importance to actuality over historicity.

2.3 *Buddhist Thought in Meiji Japan and "Japanese Philosophy"*

In considering Tendai-Buddhism commentary, one can see how INOUE Enryō understands the taxonomy of the teachings (J. *kyōsō hanjaku* 教相判釈) in a modern perspective. He refers to this taxonomy, and uses the Japanese term in his own philosophy. It is Gerard Clinton Godart who reminds us of Inoue's ingenuity with regard to the textual transmission of Buddhism and his traditional techniques of commentary. In his work *Buddhist Philosophy* (J. *Bukkyō tetsugaku* 仏教哲学) Inoue "contrasts traditional Buddhist scholarship, which he calls 'annotation-study,'

[14] And further: "What all *kanjin*-style readings have in common is that, from a modern perspective, they are not exegesis, the 'reading out' from a text to determine its meaning, though the medieval thinkers who produced them may often have understood what they were doing as uncovering the text's true purport. Rather, they are a deliberate eisegesis or 'reading in' that reconfigures the text in support of a prior insight or philosophical position—in this case, that of original enlightenment" (Stone 2003: 158). See Tuck (1990) who suggests the same division into *exegese* and *eisegese*.

and study in terms of development" (Godart 2004: 124). Formally speaking, Inoue's approach is based on a reversal of historical perspective, but he does not let go of the idea of progression apart from questions of content and the actual interpretation of Buddhism. Thus Inoue writes:

> According to annotation-study, all possible truths of Buddhism were already fully explained by Śākyamuni. If one thinks in terms of development, then Śākyamuni, as the first, laid the seed of Buddhism. In other words, according to the former the flower had already opened, while according to the latter the seed planted by the Buddha gradually develops and opens later. (Godart 2004: 124; IES 7: 114)

Even if his own taxonomy of Buddhist schools is inspired by the most progressive commentary style of the Tendai-school, his classification can be seen as originary (see IES 4: 224), insofar as he develops it in line with philosophical theories and concepts. Godart summarizes:

> What is new about his classification is that he explains it in terms of modern philosophy. In sum, Inoue's history of Buddhism is a hybrid of classical Buddhist scholars' *kyōsō hanjaku*, Hegelian dialectics and evolutionary theory. (Godart 2004: 130)[15]

We can attribute the beginning of the philosophical reception of Japanese Buddhism in the mid Meiji-period to INOUE Enryō. Only few intellectuals cared for the Buddhist tradition at all. Among them is HARA Tanzan 原坦山 (1819–1892) who taught Indian and Chinese philosophy at Tōkyō Imperial University. INOUE Tetsujirō 井上哲次郎 (1855–1944) brought Neo-Confucianism into view, while others such as NAKAE Chōmin 中江 兆民 (1847–1901) were skeptical of whether using the term "philosophy" was appropriate in the face of the Japanese tradition. That is to say that the history of Japanese philosophy, and in fact, the history of the reception of Buddhist thought, still needs to be written. To what extent this might amount to overcoming Western philosophy remains to be seen.

3 Outline of the Present Account

Since there is not a single case in which a pre-modern author has ever been studied in relation to his philosophical reception in modern Japan, the following account remains a proposal. Three Buddhists taken up as sources of philosophy in post-Meiji Japan (Shōtoku, Kūkai, and Jiun) have been mentioned. The Zen-Buddhist Dōgen remains to be considered.

Shōtoku remains prominent to the present day for introducing Mahāyāna Buddhism to Japan. However, after research peaked in the 1930s, his Buddhist legacy has become neglected, in great part due to difficulties in proving Shōtoku's authorship of *Sangyō gisho*, the three earliest sūtra commentaries thought to be written in Japan.[16] In the case of Kūkai, his philosophical import has been mentioned

[15] For example, Inoue uses the Buddhist notion of "*hōben*" 方便 to develop his philosophy.

[16] Dennis (2011) provides an excellent attempt to work out different levels and forms of reception in a case study on Shōtoku and a number of his recipients. While his philosophical reception will

from the late Meiji period onwards, but further philosophical studies remain unexplored until the postwar period, when his thoughts on language, the body, and cultivation were newly discovered. The third author, Jiun, is hardly known beyond the confines of denominational studies, and what is presumed to be his most interesting work for linguistics and philosophy remains to be edited.

While there are pre-Meiji interrelations worth studying, such as those between Jiun and Kūkai regarding Shingon, Sanskrit studies, and calligraphy, these cannot be developed in detail in the present study.[17] The Zen master Dōgen is, without a doubt, philosophically speaking, the best received Buddhist author of Japan, even beyond the names discussed here.[18] While the writings on Shōtoku, Kūkai, and Jiun offer rough sketches, the profile of Dōgen becomes more detailed up to the early Shōwa-period. In either case, the respective ideas will be treated only in relation to their reception. The complexities of the time between the postwar period and the present day will be touched upon briefly at the end.

4 The Variety of Sources: Three Pre-modern Buddhists in Modern Japanese Philosophy

Despite their writings constituting a vast body of material to draw on, the reception of Shōtoku, Kūkai, and Jiun was limited. Far from being a complete account of their reception, three criteria constrain how we choose from among their readers; those being whether they are early, prominent, and/or, somewhat idiosyncratically, promising commentators.

4.1 Shōtoku Taishi: The First Step Towards Japanese Buddhist Philosophy?

When considering Prince Shōtoku (Shōtoku Taishi 聖徳太子) (572–622), the semi-legendary regent and politician of the Asuka period, we can begin with one of his most important readers, INOUE Enryō. Being one of the first philosophers in *modern* Japan, he is among the earliest to introduce Shōtoku (in 1913) as the initial Japanese philosopher of *pre-modern* times. Even though Inoue does not explain the

be revisited below, Dennis addresses Shōtoku's wide reception by Shinran and other Kamakura Buddhists and beyond, making him a legendary figure within pre-modern Japan.

[17] Jiun is also linked to Dōgen (see Koganemaru 2009).

[18] Dōgen is another example of someone whose factual influence on Nishida demands a lot of scrutiny, since there are more references to the Sōtō-Zen Buddhist than to Rinzai and other Zen masters of the Rinzai tradition. Rinzai-Zen masters are also outnumbered by the amount of explicit references to Shinran who is the only pre-modern Buddhist to whom Nishida even devoted a single piece: *Gutoku Shinran* 愚禿親鸞. While numbers of references need evaluation and interpretation, unexpected amounts of quotes should clearly point out the importance of further study.

particular philosophical import of the new intellectual stance introduced to Japan in the *Sangyō gisho* 三経義疏—the three earliest sūtra commentaries assumed to have been written by a Japanese—he attributes the commentaries and hence the intellectual stance contained in them to Shōtoku (Inoue 1913: 2–3). In other words, the beginning of philosophy in Japan is attributed to an individual, as in the case of Thales for Western philosophy, but it is a grounding of philosophy not distinct from religion, and in the midst of the reception of a foreign tradition. While Shōtoku's importance for the institutionalization of Buddhism and the compilation of the *Seventeen-Article Constitution* is uncontested, his authorship of *Sangyō gisho* is disputed. It is, nevertheless, interesting that Buddhist scholars emphasize the commentaries' critical remarks about and decisive distinctions in content from the tradition received, because these evince at least a philosophical stance particular to the commentator. Hence, though the Buddhist scholars look for proof of Shōtoku's authorship, they show that the 'Japanization' of Buddhism through Shōtoku is based on a shift of intellectual framework.

Among the first to note this shift in ontological terms is the Buddhist scholar KAMEYA Seikei 亀谷聖馨 (1856–1930) in *Lectures on the Mind* (*Seishin kōwa* 精神講話) of 1911 in which he treats Shōtoku's view of the dharma-body (*Shōtoku taishi no hosshōkan*) as distinctive for the Japanization of Buddhism (Kameya 1911: 187–193): "Philosophically speaking, the dharma-body is the reality of the universe [*uchū no jitsuzai*], the reward and response body [*hōshin* and *ōjin*, the other two bodies of Buddha] are the ten thousand beings" (Kameya 1911: 189). According to Kameya, the step forward in tradition that Shōtoku takes is the expression of the non-duality of the phenomenal world and the underlying reality, as Kameya reads it from Shōtoku's interpretation of the Śrīmālā-sūtra, The 10,000 beings as "the body of marvelous form [*myōshiki shin*; the *rūpa-kāya* of the Buddha] is the absolute dharma-body, and therefore, there is nothing relative in the world." In other words, Shōtoku "praises the Absolute, and in all these explanations that true body, i.e. the dharma body is eternal and unchanging, it is the so-called reality of the universe" (Kameya 1911: 191).

The philosophical reading of Shōtoku culminates early in the 1930s. Even if HANAYAMA Shinshō 花山信勝 (1898–1995), who studied the three commentaries of Shōtoku in utmost detail, does not present a comprehensive philosophical theory of Shōtoku's thinking, he does, in fact, gather further evidence for Shōtoku's particular reading of the Buddhist tradition (see Mizuno 1991, 1992; Kurokami 1935; Hanayama 1933, 1936, 1963).[19] Hanayama's examination of the commentary on the *Lotus Sūtra*, the *Hokke gisho*, possibly written between 606 and 622, gathers a great deal of empirical evidence in support of Shōtoku's authorship.[20] From philological and linguistic research of the *Lotus Sūtra* commentary, he concludes that the author, presumably Shōtoku, was critical and self-critical rather than apologetically minded, since he explicitly questioned the existing Chinese commentaries, refuted

[19] The most extensive work in a Western language is Bohner (1940). There has not been a lot of philosophical research in any explicit sense since then.

[20] This authorship has been contested (see Kanaji 1985; Kamstra (1967: 371–417).

parts of them as unconvincing or simply as incomprehensible while admitting that this incomprehensibility could be, in part, due to the limits of his own intellectual capacities. Hanayama points out that Shōtoku does add philosophical ideas, in particular regarding the idea of "emptiness" (J. *kū* 空),[21] and that he tries to integrate Daoist and Confucian thought into Buddhist thought, as is more evident in the case of the *Constitution*.

Again, based on Shōtoku's conceptualization of the dharma-body, he draws the conclusion of a difference in comparison to Fayün (467–529), the author of the previously existing Chinese commentary (see Hanayama 1933: 474–475). The dharma-body as the "one fruit" that represents "the ultimate ideal" (Hanayama 1933: 473) to strive for is unlike Fayün's idea in that Fayün takes Śākyamuni as being able to reappear in the world as the savior of all beings through magical and mystical powers. While this deviates, as Hanayama points out, from the original *Lotus Sūtra's* idea of the dharma body (Hanayama 1933: 474–475), Shōtoku's conception is not only more faithful to the *Lotus Sūtra* but also free of any kind of superstition. In summary, Hanayama's Shōtoku expounds his own critical reading of the *Lotus Sūtra* and discusses its basic intellectual concepts, which in themselves are of philosophical quality. It is an individual who expounds these ideas, which overcome superstition by rational thought.[22]

4.2 Kūkai: Buddhist Philosophy of Language and Body

While in the case of Shōtoku, the philosophical relevance, the textual corpus, and the ideological implications are arguable, Kūkai has been an acknowledged Japanese philosopher since the end of the Meiji period. However, praise of him contrasts

[21] In his concluding remarks to *Hokke gisho no kenkyū*, Hanayama presents "Taishi's Buddhism as it appears in the Hokke gisho" (457–496) compiling his ideas under the headings of "The Formless [*musō*] and True Form of Reality [*jissō*]," "The Real World [*genjitsu no sekai*]" and "The Perfected Buddha-Fruit [*risō no bukka*]." First of all, as Hanayama maintains, the way Shōtoku holds the idea of emptiness (*kū*) of the Sanron school, the ineffability of the ultimate truth and, at the same time, his affirmation of the phenomenal world, allows us to see him as a precursor of Tendai Buddhism (in its doctrine of *shohō jissō*) (469). In the same affirmative stance of reality, Shōtoku aims at the eternal insistence of the dharma-body. According to Hanayama, "the dharma body is the Buddha of absolute truth and the personification of values [*kachi no jinkakuka*]" (474). In this sense Shōtoku merges the temporal and the eternal body of Buddha, based on the idea of the three bodies (474).

[22] Let me note in passing, that this debate is not represented in any detail in Nishida's, Tanabe's, or even in Watsuji's works. While Watsuji tried to determine the originality of the Japanese appropriation of Buddhism in Suiko period in terms of its aesthetic or cultural historical perspective, he leaves no more than short remarks of the importance of the early Sūtra commentaries attributed to Shōtoku (WTZ 4: 33). Even in the case of Tanabe, who brought up Shinran or Dōgen as important figures for his thought, the most common judgment prevails in the way he points out: "Shōtoku Taishi introduced the system of Mahāyāna Buddhism to the Japanese spirit" (THZ 8:17). Tanabe notes this in response to MINODA Muneki. On Tanabe and Minoda fighting about the history of Japanese philosophy and thought, see IENAGA Saburō (ISS 7: 67).

starkly with the very limited number of contributions to the factual philosophical reception of his work, which only starts in the latter half of the Shōwa period.[23]

It might be worth noting in passing that Kūkai was already referred to as a philosopher by Léon de Rosny (1837–1914) as early as 1876 (de Rosny 1876). In 1897 INOUE Tetsujirō mentions Kūkai in a footnote as an important painter, calligrapher, and writer who represents the philosophical potential of Japanese Buddhism. In the Meiji period few references to Kūkai are found in Japanese, but at least he is included in comprehensive accounts of Buddhist and Shingon philosophy by ONO Tōta, composed in 1903 and 1905 (and in 1904, a biography of Kūkai). In fact Ono treats Japanese Shingon Buddhism as synonymous with the thought of its founder Kūkai.

With regard to the orthodoxy of Nara Buddhism, Kūkai helped, with his systematization of esoteric doctrines, to bridge the gap between textual study and ritual practice. He achieved this by explaining the relation of the incantation of mantras and *dhâranīs* and other esoteric practices to the doctrines expressed in the scriptural texts. This becomes a focal point of his philosophical readings as well as the significance of bodily experience and practice pronounced in his thought. In fact, it is the body that mediates theory and practice, doctrine and ritual, thought and experience. One might say that for Kūkai the Buddhist truth is not to simply be intellectually ruminated on but to be experienced through body and practice.

Ono begins with a clear delineation of Japanese Buddhism from the Chinese tradition: while China is admittedly the origin of Shingon, Ono insists that "its perfection was entirely the achievement of our Kūkai" (Ono 1903: 272). Again, in a "good Buddhist" perspective, Shingon takes the "more middle way" as opposed to Tendai or Kegon. For Tendai, in Ono's account, would "lean over to the principle" in which all is subsumed, as is expressed in slogans such as "a chiliocosm in a single thought [J. *ichinen sanzen* 一念三千]" (Ono 1903: 273). In contrast, Kegon Buddhism would trail away into "complete interpenetration" [J. *enyū* 円融] because of its idea of the "nonobstruction among individual phenomena" [J. *jiji muge* 事々無碍] (Ono 1903: 273). Ono adds: "These [ideas] Kūkai heavily attacks from the side of logic" (Ono 1903: 273). In comparison to the Buddhism of Kūkai's time, Ono points out that Shingon was "remarkably positivistic" regarding its "logic" and "on the side of practice," it is "in touch with the common people and socially minded" (Ono 1903: 273).

As the most important content in his exposition of Kūkai's cosmology and anthropology, Ono thinks of ideas such as the "meaning of this very body" [J. *soku shin gi* 即身義] and the "the meanings of Hum" [J. *unjigi* 吽字義] (Ono 1903: 274), which are based on the idea that "matter and mind, subject and object are ultimately the reality of oneness [J. *ichinyo teki no jitsuzai* 一如的の実在]" (Ono 1903: 275), through which he argues in favor of the phenomenal world versus its underlying

[23] It is interesting to note that the Shingon sect never produced another great thinker and scholar such as its founder Kūkai, whose system of Shingon was never significantly altered. (See Yamasaki 1988: 33–41; Matsunaga and Matsunaga 1974, 1: 355–356). In contrast, see in the Tendai tradition after Saichō monk scholars (*sōgakusha* 僧学者) such as Ennin, Annen, Ryōgen and Genshin.

principle. In fact, Ono sees the value of Shingon residing in its correct view of reality, which seems more important than its reality as a religion. Hence, Ono would favor it as a scientific approach to universality (Ono 1905: 325), since it conceptualizes reality from the bottom up through the plurality of all phenomena of the "six elements" (J. *rokudai* 六大) to the "self-same reality of matter and mind" (Ono 1905: 327). Ono concludes that "the philosophy of *mikkyo* has already arrived a thousand years ago at the same position where the most advanced philosophy of today is" (Ono 1905: 327).

Unfortunately, until very much later, Ono's conviction appeared as little more than a matter of rhetoric. Similarly, in 1908, in TANIMOTO Tomeri's 谷本富 (1867–1946) reflections on Kūkai's philosophy, one reads little content but finds enormous praise of Kūkai: "Philosophy is that which unites the ten thousand teachings […] and I think our great teacher [Kūkai] was a great philosopher who possessed comprehensive knowledge" (Tanimoto 1908: 59) to achieve such a unity. These comments are set against and in addition to the importance of ethics and morality, which, even if important, are only parts of Kūkai's work (Tanimoto 1908: 60). In particular in the *Treatise on the Ten States of Mind*, the *Jūjūshinron*, the reader can find a complete "philosophical system [*tetugaku soshiki*]" (Tanimoto 1908: 62).

In general, we can say that in the Taishō and early Shōwa-period Kūkai was only mentioned in anthologies of Japanese thought, religion as well as philosophy. However, none of the big names perceived him more broadly. Thus, one can agree with Krummel's conclusion only partly: "Unfortunately Kūkai has been for the most part ignored by twentieth-century and contemporary philosophers, not only of the West but in Japan as well. This includes NISHIDA Kitarō (1870–1945), WATSUJI Tetsurō 和辻哲郎 (1889–1960), and related major Kyōto school philosophers, in spite of their interest in and influence by Zen and Kegon Buddhism" (Krummel 2011). While Krummel omits the early references to Kūkai, as pointed out above, he leaves out important figures such as IZUTSU Toshihiko and YUASA Yasuo.

To start with IZUTSU Toshihiko's 井筒俊彦 (1914–1993) article "The Logic of Semantic Articulation and Kūkai" (ITC 9: 74–105), we can find him treating Kūkai in the context of contemporary philosophy of language. As Ono did earlier, Izutsu proclaims that Kūkai is a precursor to modern and postmodern philosophy, indicating that he would go even beyond Husserl and Derrida: "But both the 'logocentrism' of the criticized Husserl and the 'dismantling [J. *kaitai*]' of the criticizing Derrida are, seen from the perspective of Shingon Mikkyō, in the end a discussion in way of the 'superficial external interpretation [J. *senryaku shaku*],' i.e, it is different from the 'profound esoterical interpretation [J. *shinpi shaku*]'" (ITC 9: 103) of language and meaning.

In a similar direction, Izutsu proceeds as a non-specialist of Shingon thought. While he sees a natural attitude within academia to re-read and misread the Western tradition for 'inspiration' (ITC 9: 75), the sources of Eastern philosophy are said to be excluded from this practice (ITC 9: 75). That is why he encourages "us Eastern people to drag our intellectual past onto the scene of the present intellectual con-

text" for the simple reason "to search for its future possibility" (ITC 9: 76). While he cautions the reader against the difficulties and complexities of Shingon thought, he sees that Shingon not only has the basic character of linguistic philosophy but that "language [J. *kotoba* コトバ] is the central axis of the whole, is the ground and the source," it is a "thought system" (ITC 9: 76). The means for Izutsu to see Shingon thought on language as such is the perspective of Humboldt and Saussure on the double articulation of meaning (ITC 9: 77). From this point he wants to approach the most fundamental Shingon idea of "being is language" [J. *sonzai ha kotoba de aru*]."

As Izutsu points out, Kūkai's Buddhist approach maintains that language is not an artificial means of human expression, but he takes "language as a process of the self linguification of the world of enlightenment" (ITC 9: 81). This, in fact, proposes an approach to language that decenters the human agent and, according to Izutsu, prefigures poststructualism.

YUASA Yasuo 湯浅泰雄 (1925–2005) considers a different aspect of Kūkai's thought accessible in his *Complete Works*. One important and compelling occasion for Yuasa's approach is found in a work of Kukai's translated into English as *The Body, Self-cultivation, and Ki-energy* (1993), in which his thinking addresses issues of language: where the body is thought of as being cultivated based on the exposition of the *Jūjūshinron*. Kūkai perfects the dharma-body theory in bringing every human being in direct contact in this world: "Going beyond this Chinese view, Kūkai says that Mahāvairocana, the absolute Dharmakāya Buddha, takes off the secret veil and expounds the *dharma* himself to the souls of each cultivator," an idea which is a "revolution in Japanese Buddhism" and of "epoch-making significance in the history of all ideas in India, China, and Japan" (Yuasa 1993: 133).

Since cultivation starts on the level of this very body, sexuality must be considered. However, since Kūkai does not provide a theoretical analysis of sexuality, "therefore, we must deal with the tantras as a systematic pragmatic approach" and this is set forth through depictions of the Buddha and mandalas which, at the same time, become visualizations of the cosmic word. Subsequently, he connects the dimensions of language, art, and body. So Yuasa says: "The central idea in Kūkai's philosophy is 'becoming a buddha in this very body' (J. *sokushin jōbutsu* 即身成仏)" (Yuasa 1993: 147). In other words, the Buddha does not only transcend ordinary sense experience, but he is realized in his over-brimming function; not only the metaphysical dimension, but the physical (153). As Yuasa alludes: "Kūkai regarded as most important the womb realm, that female principle depicted in the Mahāvairocana Sūtra. In the womb realm, Mahāvairocana is the ultimate source and nurturer of all the universe. Our existence is possible only by virtue of the power brimming over from that source" (Yuasa 1993: 153).

In relation to philosophy, Yuasa makes the important point that practice reaches an essential role for the realization of the structure of the world: "Cultivation reverses the way we understand the world in ordinary experience. It is a practice revealing this point: To understand beings merely from the common standpoint of

the self as a being-in-the-world is simply to understand them inauthentically. Thus, Kukai took the body to be more important than the mind" (153). In other words, the body in practice becomes the source for a more profound understanding of subjectivity that overcomes, breaks through and surpasses the dimension of the "subject" (J. *shutai* 主体).

4.3 Jiun Sonja: Philosophy Beyond Buddhist Calligraphy

The last of the three examples to consider here is the monk JIUN Onkō (JIUN Sonja) who became a novice under NINKO Teiki (1671–1750), a master in the Shingon Vinaya sect. This sect stressed both Shingon (Japanese tantric Buddhism) and traditional monastic discipline. As is well known, under Teiki's influence, and after a period of training in his late teens and early twenties that included Zen and further Confucian studies, Jiun went on to become one of the leading Buddhist scholars and reformers of the Tokugawa period (1603–1868).

His affiliation with the Shingon sect and his immense knowledge of Sanskrit, as well as his extensive practice of calligraphy, put him on a par with Kūkai. Inextricably linked to the Mahāyāna Buddhist understanding of ultimate reality—an understanding most fully expressed in the concept of emptiness—Jiun's universalistic vision of ethics are expounded in his "Sermons on the Ten Good Precepts."

As Watt points out "beyond encapsulating the heart of Buddhism, in Jiun's mind the *jūzen* [十善, "ten good precepts"] stand as universal guide for humankind" (Watt 1999: 353). The "ten good precepts" represent the implications that the Buddhist understanding of ultimate reality has for human conduct. While the importance of his Zen practice has been pointed out, Jiun can be seen as an example of the rationalistic tendencies apparent in eighteenth-century Japanese thought. He had scholarly debates with Confucians, examined Shintō writings, and revisited the tradition of Shingon. Despite all of this scholarly work, he nevertheless chose a writing style accessible to common people.

Jiun's work is of philosophical importance on three levels: first, his views on Buddhism, his cosmology, anthropology, and speculation; secondly, on a meta-level, his reasoning and the methods in his systematic account of Buddhist teachings within the tradition and in relation to Confucianism and Shintō; and thirdly, his usage of and theorizing about Sanskrit, the linguistic differences between Chinese and Japanese, and his relationship to Kūkai. However, as pointed out, while Jiun was held in high esteem as a reformer in Tokugawa Buddhism, for his Sanskrit studies as well as for his calligraphy, he was hardly referenced by philosophers in modern Japan for his ethical, speculative, or linguistic writings.

Nishida is no exception, since he only praised Juin's calligraphy. Moreover, there are very few extant writings on Jiun. One exception to this rule can be found in 1889: NANJŌ Bun'yū 南條文雄 (1849–1927), the well-known Buddhist scholar trained in Sanskrit and Indian philology, gathered information about Jiun's life and work in *The Story of Buddhism's Success* (J. *Butsumon risshihen* 佛門立志編). He

presents not a historical biography of Buddhist monks, scholars and other practitioners but rather a discussion of their individual characteristic engagements and thoughts from a super-sectarian viewpoint.[24]

The first attempt to bring Jiun's more intellectual features to the fore finally comes in 1937. He is brought up explicitly as a pre-modern thinker in *Discourse on the Thinkers of Modern Japan* (J. *Kinsei nihon shisōka ron* 近世日本思想家論) addressing the period from 1603 onwards. This anthology, published in *Risōsha,* was edited by none other than INOUE Tetsujirō. The part on Jiun was written by the Shingon Scholar TANAKA Kaiō 田中海応 (born 1878) who points to the difficulties in summarizing the wide-reaching intellectual engagement of Jiun, which was based on the idea of "only tast[ing] the pure Ghee [of Enlightenment]" (Tanaka 1937: 79). He identifies three areas in Jiun's "restorative thought:" the *Expounding of the Vinayana of the Right Dharma* (J. *Shōbōritsu no teishō*) and the Research in Sanskrit Studies, both on Buddhism; and the *Unden Shintō* (Tanaka 1937: 81), on Japanese thought.

While the amount of philosophical insight depicted by Tanaka is still limited and goes hardly beyond what is now available in Western languages (such as Watt 1983), its location is important and interesting, since it was published by the "guardian angel" of Japanese philosophy of that time, INOUE Tetsujirō. More important to mention regarding his philosophical reception, though, is that Jiun was included in the *Nihon tetsugaku shisō zensho* of 1955, edited by HASEGAWA Nyozekan (and others). Within the volume of Buddhist religious thought, Jiun is again being praised for his suprasecterian viewpoint (see NTSZ 9: 344) and presented with a section from his *Dharma Words on the Ten Good Precepts* (NTSZ 9: 339–358). Strangely enough, it did not have any effect on the reception of his thought in the postwar period.

Chronologically, only very few articles are relevant for an account of Jiun's postwar reception. But two of the articles put particular emphasis on his calligraphic work, as does OKUMURA Keishin (1963). He maintains that Jiun is anything but a *restaurateur* of tradition, since he was too critical. His critical spirit was rather in accord and in support of a positivistic and rational spirit of Tokugawa times similar to that put forth by ITŌ Jinsai or MOTOORI Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730–1801) (Okukumura 1963: 2). Jiun goes beyond the medieval sense of art as Okamura maintains, since Jiun's attitude is to see art as follows: "The highlights of an art work is every tree and every grass wherein the artist manifests; what is notable about an artist is in the brushwork of single points and streaks alone" (Okukumura 1963: 2). As an introduction to a set of his calligraphy, this is an important point he draws from two pertinent quotations of Jiun, yet, instead of expounding on Jiun's

[24] Nanjō 1889: 23–27, published at Tetsugaku shoin 哲学書院 (Philosophical library). One may still note in passing Jiun's appearance in *One Hundred Funny Stories* (J. *Kokkei hyakuwa* 滑稽百話, 1909) next to notes on prolific intellectuals and philosophers such as HARA Tanzan or NAKAE Chōmin. It was written by KATŌ Kyōei who cited a short poem of Jiun's (Katō 1909: 49–50).

sense of calligraphy or his stance in relation to art, Okamura goes on to explore Jiun's Shingon thought in the context of his time.

KINAMI Takuichi 木南卓一(1990) goes significantly beyond this look at Jiun's calligraphic expression. His entire program of interpretation is based on the vast amount of calligraphy left by Jiun, but he does not cover the interpretation of the calligraphy as such. He only reads those characters and lines in terms of Jiun's interpretation of tradition. He stresses that we can transcend time and place through his *dharma words* and the remnants of his calligraphy. While he reminds his reader that Jiun only based the greatest importance of the "Dharma words on the Ten Good Precepts" among his voluminous collected works, these nevertheless have the potential to speak to everyone: "The Zennist who sees them says, it's Zen, the scriptualist sees them and says it is the scriptures, the Vinayanist sees them and says, it is Vinaya" (Kinami 1990: 1). Kinami points out that these teachings are not his own, but the ones of tradition transmitted from all the Buddhas.

The universality of expression based on Kegon-like expressions is, however, not the most important aspect of this example, since Jiun's means of expression are not limited to his dharma words, as Kinami maintains (Kinami 1990: 1), but encompasses his calligraphy in Kanji, Kana, and Siddham, too. Juin practiced calligraphy all his life with the "will to protect the dharma" and he did so contrary to the Zen idea of the transcendence of all worldly means (Kinami 1990: 2). The central point here is the association of calligraphy with dharma-nature (J. *hosshō sō'ō* 法性相應), that is, the manifestation of the *dharma* in all beings. However, the condition of reading the calligraphy is also important, possibly more important than being a learned calligrapher (Kinami 1990: 3). Kinami points out that while there is the general idea of protecting the *dharma* in Jiun's artistic efforts, those words written in his calligraphy are so particular and important and differ so much from the common contexts that they deserve proper interpretation as expressions of Jiun's thought (Kinami 1990: 8).

Apart from the articles mentioned above, no philosophical analysis of Jiun's reception is available. Noteworthy, yet insignificant regarding its philosophical content, is a text written by the prominent philosopher UEYAMA Shunpei, "From Kūkai to Jiun Sonja" (J. "Kūkai kara Jiun Sonja he" in *Shinjitsujin Jiun Sonja* of 2004).[25]

[25] In regard to pre-modern Buddhist ramifications, though beyond the context of the present account, it may be worth mentioning *Jiun Sonja ni manabu* Shōbōgenzō 慈雲尊者に学ぶ『正法眼蔵』 (Koganemaru 2009), an article on the relation of Jiun and Dōgen. Finally, it might be added, that Akiyama Manabu's discovery of Jiun in relation to the thought of Huayen Buddhism can be taken as paradigmatic for the basic discourse of classical philology and the studies of antiquity (Akiyama 2008).

5 The Zen Buddhist Dōgen in Modern Philosophy

The Zen Buddhist Dōgen remains the most widely read pre-modern Japanese author in philosophy since the Meiji period until today, but, at the same time, his philosophical reception is most fiercely criticized by his own denomination, that is, by scholars of the Sōtō Zen community.[26] The dispute was caused by the pretensions of non-denominational intellectuals to pave the way for an authentic apprenticeship independent of the practice of "sitting-only" (J. *shikan taza* 只管打坐), which was taught by the Sōtō school as the core of Dōgen's Zen.

However, the predominance of a "practical" interpretation of Dōgen covers up the linguistic complexities of Dōgen's writings. In particular, only few monks were able to master the Shōbōgenzō's peculiar style in which Dōgen draws on grammar and semantics at the margins of both the Japanese and Chinese languages. For this reason, non-denominational scholars challenged or even threatened the sectarian authority of the Sōtō school. In short, it became obvious that more than basic knowledge of the Buddha's teaching and more than training in sitting meditation were required to achieve an understanding of what Dōgen expounds in the *Shōbōgenzō* 正法眼蔵.

Nevertheless, it seems wrong to maintain that Dōgen was (re-)discovered in modernity by non-denominational intellectuals, as has been proposed since the publication of *Shamon dōgen* 沙門道元 by WATSUJI Tetsurō in 1926. Rather, more than a momentary event, the discovery of the modern Dōgen is a process, which spans most of the Meiji-period.

Some of the milestones that may be mentioned, In 1885 a popular edition of the *Shōbōgenzō* edited by ŌUCHI Seiran 大内青巒 (1845–1918) was published; in 1896 Dōgen and his work were mentioned for the first time in a philosophical journal, *Tōyō Tetsugaku* 東洋哲学, in a citation of a short abstract on Dōgen by MORITA Goyū 森田悟由 (1834–1915), head of Eihei-ji temple; from 1905 onwards, the famous *Shōbōgenzō* commentator NISHIARI Bokusan 西有穆山 (1821–1910) gave his lectures at the annual *Shōbōgenzō* reading group (*genzōe* 眼蔵会); in 1911 the logician YODONO Yōjun 淀野耀淳 began a series of articles on "Dōgen's religion and philosophy" in *Tōyō tetsugaku*. Various other buddhological, historical, and philological efforts accompanying the emergence of the *Shōbōgenzō* as a text accessible to the modern reader would be necessary to mention and depict the entire process. To sum up, the Shōbōgenzō's emergence as a philosophical text exhibits, more than any other example, the history of Japanese philosophy in the making of modernity.

The following account starts with some remarks on the denominational commentaries and moves on to the philosophical reception which can be divided into the Meiji, early-Shōwa, and post-war phases.

[26] The following account is based on H. Kagamishima (1995), G. Kagamishima (1995), Dumoulin (1959), Kim (2004), and Kurebayashi et al. (1972).

5.1 The Many Faces of Dōgen and His Reception

The core dispute based on the opposition of textual and practical study of Dōgen's teaching mentioned above brings into view various groups of interpreters. Except for one, all groups maintain the importance of seated meditation, while the importance placed on Dōgen's writings varies strongly.

In the case of the so-called "Zennist" group (J. *zenjōka* 禅定家), all emphasis is put on the practical study of meditation, and hence all of Dōgen's writings are set aside, unless they serve as purely practical guidance for Zazen, or for the cloistered life in general. Another group established under the auspices of MORITA Gōyu, gave more importance to Dōgen's writings, in particular to the *Shōbōgenzō*. These "Genzōnians" (J. *genzōka* 眼蔵家) as they were known, worked in continuity with traditional commentaries since the Edo period. While they were critical of an abridged version of the *Shōbōgenzō*, which was compiled in the late 1880s (the *Shushōgi*), they strictly adhered to the practice of Zazen, claiming that the 95-chapters of the Shōbōgenzō were nothing but footnotes to "sitting only" (Kishizawa 1963: 328).[27]

As a third group, the laity-movement was strongly promoted by ŌUCHI Seiran, the "Vimalakīrti" of Meiji-Japan. While being a lay person, Ōuchi helped to compile the *Shushōgi* as a kind of catechism. Extracted from the original Shōbōgenzō text, this kind of work presupposed great linguistic and buddhological skills on his part (Ishimoto and Naberfeld 1943; Dumoulin 1959; Heine 2003).[28] However, guidance for the laity went hand in hand with rather limited resources, both in practical as well as textual study of Dōgen's teaching, and entailed some "deviation" from the "pure" standards of practical and textual study within the monastery.

Finally, the fourth group to be mentioned shifted the standards for understanding Dōgen's Zen to an even greater extent, yet took these standards further away from the practical and closer to the textual level. One may even say that the so-called "*Genzō*-researchers" (J. *genzō kenkyūka* 眼蔵研究家) dug deeper on a textual level than before, so that the "denominational studies" (J. *shūgaku* 宗学) of the Sōtō school were in fact heavily indebted to them (Wakatsuki 1986: 125–344). However, matters of belief and faith were put aside in the case of *Genzō*-researchers (cf. for an opposite example Oka 1927), especially among philosophers such as Watsuji and Tanabe, who considered the concept of truth to be the guiding light.

[27] The passage reads in Japanese 「正法眼蔵九十五巻は、只管打坐の柱脚であります」. See Bodiford (2006: 19) mentioning that the Genzōe were open to a wider audience, not only the monks of the Eiheiji.

[28] MORITA Goyū comments on the existence of a one-sided preoccupation with studies on Tendai and Kegon Buddhism and calls for lectures on the Shōbōgenzō (see Kurebayashi et al. 1972, and "*genzōe*" in ZGDJ).

5.2 *Nishiari Bokusan as the Beginning of a Critical Reading*

Before turning to the philosophical readers of Dōgen, the commentator Nishiari deserves some attention. In particular his commentary known as *Shōbōgenzō keiteki* (Nishiari 2005) is important not only for its explanation of the content of the fascicles but even more for its hermeneutic approach.[29] He distinguishes clearly between word and meaning on the textual level in order to disclose the text through a holistic approach, thereby overturning the philological word-by-word dissecting and the positivistic attitude towards the text, both characteristic of Edo period interpretation.

As Kagamishima describes Nishiari's *Keiteki*, it is a sentence-by-sentence commentary, but it starts holistically from Nishiari's own understanding of the text, not from single words and their presumed non-ambiguous meanings. That is to say, for Nishiari, interpreting the text is not simply an exercise in philology. Moreover, he takes the practice of zazen to be a way to correct the holistic approach. This interpretation is achieved not by appealing to pure standards of cognitive and scientific research alone but by way of the "real focus and real penetration" (J. *jissan jikkyū* 実参実究), which was based on "sitting only" to restrain all arbitrariness of interpretation. The aim is to reach an intellectual understanding "along the words and letters" which is coherent with insights based on physical practice (H. Kagamishima 1995: 38). In this way, hermeneutic endeavors into the *Shōbōgenzō* become existentially bound to a critical and reflective stance, which is largely complementary with a philosophical reading.

To be more specific regarding Nishiari's relation to Dōgen and the traditional commentaries, he takes both a critical stance towards traditional commentaries and, in his own account, a proper adherence to Dōgen's teachings. Indeed, Nishiari tries to revive the tradition of the *genzōka* by appealing to the commentary *Goshō* of Sen'e as the one that remains the most substantial. Furthermore, he criticizes one commentary, *Benchū* by TENKEI Denson (1648–1735) as heretic and praises another, *Sanchū* of HONKO Katsudo (1710–1773) as being the most sophisticated. Nishiari adds that the MENZAN Zuihō's 面山瑞芳 (1683–1769) commentary *Monge* is "focused too much on the literal meaning" (Weitsman et al. 2012: 17),[30] while he is scolded by others for willful interpretations.[31]

---

[29] Originally presented orally from 1905 until his death in 1910 at the *genzōe*, it was recorded by TOMIYAMA Soei and subsequently by KUREBAYASHI Kōdō in 1930. Nishiari's *Keiteki* received a negative appraisal from YASUTANI Hakuun (1996). In turn, Brian Victoria provided biographical notes on Yasutani's political engagement by Victoria (2006: 167).

[30] Nishiari revives the tradition of Shōbōgenzō commentary and places the greatest importance on a certain lineage within these commentaries since the Edo period. Kurebayashi et al. (1972) distinguish three lineages. This helps to locate Nishiari in tradition. Nishiari attempts to combine two lineages while ultimately siding with one of them (that is, the lineage of Manzan). The first line consists of Manzan, Menzan, and Banshin (not by immediate apprenticeship, but by study; they are labeled the "orthodox sectarian studies" (J. *seitōshūgaku* 正当宗学). The second line starts with Tenkei, then SHINNŌ Kūin, and finally FUYŌ Rōran; they are labeled "the heretics." The third line goes from Shigetsu through Katsudō to Zōkai.

[31] *Shōbōgenzō okikigaki* by Sen'e is included in the *Shōbōgenzō shō* by Kyōgō.

5.3 Early Philosophical Readings of Dōgen

Attempts to read Dōgen philosophically start, if somewhat timidly, quite early. We find three notable instances among those early readings: the earliest being that of INOUE Enryō 井上円了 (1858–1919) in 1893. Inoue subsumes Dōgen under the more general label of Zen Buddhism and answers questions about how the laity can make philosophical sense of Zen texts without practical realization of enlightenment. Second, we find YAMAGAMI Shōfū 山上嘯風—a representative of the denominational readership—and his attempt to re-express Dōgen's "cosmology" in a philosophical framework. The third author, YODONO Yōjun, is the first philosopher who offers a presentation of Dōgen's thought in a comprehensive way, with regard to both religion and philosophy.

5.4 Inoue Enryō and the Wording of Dōgen's Zen

Inoue brings up Dōgen in the context of his "Outline of Zen philosophy" (Inoue 1893; IES 6: 249–326), which gives a systematic account of Zen Buddhism in general. He begins with the main question of how to handle a school of Buddhism that disputes rational accounts of its principles by defying language, which is traditionally thought to be the central medium of philosophy. It is from within this basic question of how to handle the "most mysterious" school of Buddhism in philosophical terms that Inoue introduces examples from Dōgen's writings.

His approach is to qualify Buddhism as an amalgam of religion and philosophy, while the way that he treats philosophy is close to an existential practice that converges with Buddhism on a certain level. In Inoue's understanding, "truth" is a concern not only of philosophy but of Buddhism as well. The term, however, cannot be reduced to the level of intellectual abstraction: real philosophy needs to be directed at "the living spirit of the ideal" (IES 6: 278). Against a simplistic reading of a "special transmission outside the scriptures," Inoue tries to work out the basic principles that structure the idea of truth in Zen Buddhism. The specific way in which Dōgen interprets this truth is "body-mind is dropping off" (J. *shinjin datsuraku* 身心脱落), which works, on one level, as an immediate expression of Zen experience, yet, in the same stroke, re-interprets and challenges common ontological principles of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

This could come as a surprise, since Zen Buddhism plays a special role within Mahāyāna Buddhism, as outlined by Inoue, along with the trinity of intellect, emotion, and will: Zen is particular for its physically challenging practice of meditation, and therefore Inoue subsumes Zen practice under the principle of the will to realize the Buddhist path (IES 6: 291). While he claims, as pointed out, that "the school of Zen is the most mystical school in Buddhist philosophy" (IES 6: 279), he maintains that even Zen would never abolish all the sūtras and commentaries of the Mahāyāna tradition. Moreover, as he continues, principles such as "pointing directly at the

heart of men," or "to see into one's own nature and become Buddha" can be found in the main corpus of the Mahāyāna tradition (IES 6: 282). Thus Inoue reasons: "The minute [the Zen school] makes use of sūtras and commentaries, it must inevitably be grounded in principles. If commentaries are grounded in principles, why should it be impossible, to call them philosophy?" (IES 6: 282) Moreover, the respective principles such as "pointing directly at the heart of men" become visible in the midst of Zen practice, not merely somewhere in the background teachings of Zen. For this reason it becomes possible and "after all, necessary to elucidate the traces of the state of enlightenment through the *kōan* writings of the old and wise, although it is said in regard to the mysterious content of enlightenment that one may not grasp it intellectually, transmit it orally or express it in letters" (IES 6: 306).

While each *kōan* can be read as exhibiting one or another principle attributable to Mahāyāna Buddhist philosophy, there is even more to them, if seen as part of one of the famous *kōan* collections. *Kōans* can be grouped together and subsumed under recurrent principles. In other words, such grouping can provide a kind of meta-level or meta-theoretical elucidation, since it is a way to delineate specific principles on which particular *kōans* are grounded and, as a result, it allows one to determine the relationship among those principles. This meta-level is supported, not defeated, by the fact that different ways grouping can be found according to each particular school of Zen and, at times, with different teachers within the same school.

As Inoue points out: "In order to make the state of enlightenment […] known, there is the exposition of the 'Four shouts,' and the 'Four Divisions' […] in the Rinzai school. In the Sōtō school there is the well-known 'Five stands' by Tōsan and the 'Falling off of bodymind' of Dōgen" (IES 6: 307). In the same vein, Inoue cites Dōgen's term "un-thinking" from his "teaching of the balanced heart" (IES 6: 308). To summarize, Inoue calls the moment of enlightenment itself "the perishing of the finite form of heart" and the "opening up of the infinite force of will" or, in quoting Dōgen, the "solving of the great matter and dropping off of *saṃsāra*," or the "dropping off of body-mind" (IES 6: 309). There are, however, more theoretical implications put forth in such expressions, once we see that they function as more than designators of an unspeakable experience.

Not limited to their often "negative" wordings, *kōans* are related to the more complex structures that are expressed in a number of principles common to all Mahāyāna schools. Additionally, they are processed as steps on the path of enlightenment, that is, they follow up on the initial "state of enlightenment."[32] One may say that the *kōan* collections and other Zen Buddhist writings present a manual to guide the practitioner through the basic epistemological, linguistic, and ontological principles on a experiential level. Hence, they are continuous with a theoretical elucidation of "Zen Buddhist philosophy."

Particularly in the case of Dōgen, the existence of different genres of *kōan* practice helps to bridge the "irrational" gap caused by a simplistic reading of the foundational Zen slogan "not founded on words and letters" for writings such as Dōgen's *Bendōwa*, also mentioned by Inoue, provide "rational" answers within the confines

[32] Inoue gives a detailed explanations of the "steps after the enlightenment" (IES 6: 310–313).

of discursive thinking as to why one should practice Zen meditation or how it relates to other Buddhist schools. Dōgen's famous *Shōbōgenzō*, then, mediates between rational discourse and the experiential expression of *kōans*.

5.5 *Yamagami and Dōgen's Monism*

While Inoue presents Dōgen within the broader spectrum of Zen Buddhism, a few years later, more specific readings of Dōgen can be found in a journal of Buddhist studies, the Sōtō school journal *Wayūshi* 和融誌. On the occasion of two anniversaries (Dōgen's 700th birthday and 650th day since his death), two special editions were dedicated to Dōgen with notable articles of philosophical content. The second edition of 1906 encompasses "Eight views, in which we see Zen Master Dōgen,"that is, articles on Dōgen's view of the universe, human life, ethics, zazen, Buddhist precepts, the Buddha, literature, and women. Among these, YAMAGAMI Shōfū's article on Dōgen's "view of the universe" comes closest to an attempt at a denominational reading that presents Dōgen in a philosophical outlook.

In Yamagami's account, Dōgen's view combines the existential dimension of Zen with cosmo-ontological thought based on Kegon Buddhism (Yamagami 1906), and on these grounds is of philosophic importance. In particular, he presents Dōgen's thinking as a solution to a never-ending debate between monists and dualists, materialists and idealists (Yamagami 1906: 33) in which only the universe's infinite extension into time and space is left unquestioned. Yamagami also finds an answer in Dōgen to the monistic materialism of modern science that was growing stronger around the turn of the century. He sees this monistic tendency as incompatible with the Buddhist tradition, which is said to represent—predominantly—a monistic idealism. The synthesis between the two is given in the *Shōbōgenzō*, which can be read, in Yamagami's interpretation, as a "concrete monism" (Yamagami 1906: 34). Dōgen's position comes close to Spinoza's "substance" in which the material and the mental are nothing but two aspects of the same entity, yet differs from Spinoza in that this substance is dynamic and process-like. Yamagami sees proof for this reading of Dōgen in a passage taken from the fascicle *Sangai Yuishin*. Yamagami quotes:

> Therefore, the words of the Thatagata "The three worlds are only one mind" are the entire manifestation of the Thatagata, his whole life is all of this expression. The three worlds are the entire world; that does not say that the three worlds are identical to the mind. The reason is the three worlds, as bright as they may appear in all directions, are still nothing but the three worlds. You shouldn't misinterpret them as saying they were not the three worlds. In and out, beginning, middle, and end all are the three worlds. (DZZ 1: 443)

This passage offers, in Yamagami's reading, the starting point of an approach that allows Dōgen to upgrade the phenomenal world to the status of ultimate reality, to the real "substance" of the universe. In comparison to this "concrete monism," he sees only inferior positions: whether it is the European tradition since the Eleatics, or the Hindu tradition of Vedanta or the Buddhist thought of India represented by

Nāgārjuna who takes an acosmic stance (Yamagami 1906: 36–37). According to Yamagami, only in Dōgen's thinking is this one-sidedness or reduction overcome in Eastern thought. Against the partly idealistic, partly skeptical position within the Buddhist tradition, Yamagami goes on to cite from the *Muchū setsumu* fascile in support of "concrete monism" (Yamagami 1906: 37–38).

In it, Dōgen argues, as Yamagami proposes, that even dreams and illusion are manifestations of reality that can be directly experienced in, and as, the phenomenal world. Even if somewhat fragmentary, Yamagami provides, in line with Inoue, a concrete indication of where philosophical implications lie and how to work them out.

5.6 YODONO Yōjun's Dōgen Against the Zen Tradition

Finally, at the end of the Meiji period in 1911, we find the first comprehensive account of Dōgen's thought, written by the epistomologist and logician YODONO Yōjun[33] (1879–1918) in the *Tōyō tetsugaku:* On "Dōgen's religion and philosophy." This is the earliest and most complete account by a layman writing about philosophical facets while acknowledging the religious practitioner in Dōgen. From the beginning, he reasons that the two aspects of religion and philosophy can be separated only analytically.

Moreover, Yodono assumes that it is peculiar to East-Asian thought that philosophy is deeply rooted in religion, and further, that philosophical ideas are never entirely abstracted from their existential dimension. Thus, in working out a particular view of life, "the personal character of the [respective] philosopher" (Yodono 1911: 7, 13) becomes clear. Since Dōgen's work is the lifework of a religious practitioner, it is, for the same reason, not possible to understand his philosophy apart from his "view of life" or "absolved from his religious cultivation" (ibid.). The practical dimension of his view of life, therefore, gains prominence over "the perfection of the organizational system" (ibid.), because his view of life aims at a reflection of the factual conditions of life. Eventually, anthropological contemplations should enable one to "work out the actual conditions of questions of human life" (ibid.).

Yodono begins the account of Dōgen's philosophy by a determination of "what human life is" (ibid.), pointing to the Buddhist views of the transience and painfulness of life, which encourages the practitioner, in Dōgen's view, to "become an original human being" (Yodono 1911: 7, 15). The path to realization is, then, a matter of religion, as Yodono maintains. The matter of good and evil in the Buddhist context, as Yodono adds, is not determinable in absolute terms (Yodono 1911: 7, 18). Questions to be raised here belong to religion, and "in short, the overall moralistic account of Dōgen is erected upon the corner stone of his religion" (Yodono 1911: 7, 19). As Yodono begins to portray the main part of Dōgen's philosophy in

[33] The reading of his name varies: Kōjun or Yōjun. For information about Yodono, see FSC (8: 375–378).

its theoretical layout, he cautions, again, that Dōgen remains a religious practitioner. However, as such, a convincing practice of religion strives for a logical *rationale* for its efficacy: how are we capable of a "penetrating understanding" of the world and why does every human exhibit Buddha nature?

Yodono takes all declarations of Dōgen's regarding these basic questions as indicative of his philosophy. Yet, he warns us that he would not give more than a very preliminary systematization. In particular, he points out, just as Inoue did in the beginning of his outline on Zen, that he would base his account on nothing but the monk's writings; he would not and could not base his presentation on any kind of experience:

> Dōgen as Dōgen has his grounds in his religious practice, in particular in his being a practitioner of continuous exercise, of austerity, of asceticism, and of exceptionality. And yet, he needs […] to have ready a penetrating and immediate solution for universe and life. [Thus…] I have to regard all that he reveals about his understanding and his determinations as his philosophy. What I propose as Dōgen's philosophy is nothing but what he has left behind in his writings [upon which] I give a preliminary order and description. (Yodono 1911: 6: 16)

The initial step into philosophy, as Yodono points out, does not lie in belief and repentance, as in the case of religion, but in a comprehensive and existential doubt, much like Descartes' methodological cultivation (Yodono 1911: 6: 17). Doubt might be elicited by exceptional situations or individual experiences, but if truly experienced, all of daily life itself gets sucked up into doubt. Exhibiting a broad perspective on philosophy from Descartes to Zhu Xi朱熹 (1130–1200), Yodono writes:

> When I take up Dōgen's writings and read them, [I see that] he has acknowledged the great importance of doubt; and as a means of assessing the way of achieving enlightenment, it is important not only to not avoid, but to pass through doubt. This resembles what Zhu Xi pointed out: "Big doubt, big step; small doubt, small step; no doubt, no progress." Dōgen says, if a slight doubt rises in me, I should doubt everything of everyday life: "If we doubt at all, we have reason enough to doubt that the Lotus grows in the water, that the twigs carry the blossom, and that the earth dwells in the horizontal (*Kūge*)." (Yodono 1911: 6: 17–18; DZZ 2: 128)

Dōgen's notion of doubt and skepticism are not, however, restricted to an intellectual understanding but extend to his view of the human body and mind. Hence Dōgen's monism forms the base of his critique of any dualistic concept of an eternal soul (see DZZ 2: 38). Instead of clinging to ephemeral existence, the authentic attitude of a Buddhist is to accept that neither the mind nor the body is eternal. In fact, taking up a core expression of Dōgen's, Yodono maintains that existential freedom is realized in "dropping off of body-mind."

This practical task, enacted by way of religious cultivation, is based, as Yodono shows, in an ontological concept of the "mind" (J. *kokoro* 心) (Yodono 1911: 6: 20–22). Yodono describes a concrete monism based in Kegon metaphysics as Yamagami previously described. Dōgen turns away from idealist ontological statements such as "the mind is all being, all being is the mind," or epistemological statements such as "penetrating the mind, means to penetrate all being," since he reads them, as Yodono points out, as an affirmation of the phenomenal world. To Yodono,

this affirmative stance towards the phenomenal world means that Dōgen engages in philosophy, that is, that he exerts himself to develop his teachings by means of finite knowledge.

In gaining momentum over the idea of a mystical union, Dōgen defies, as Yodono points out, any stance "to cut off the path of language and to annihilate the locus of mental function" (Yodono 1911: 6: 23), that is, to leave all intellectual means of earthly life behind, and to stop doing philosophy. In a similar vein, Dōgen defies the "myth" of a "separate transmission outside the scriptures" (Yodono 1911: vol. 5, chap. 4 in reference to the fascicle *Bukkyō*), since, within a monistic worldview, an all encompassing teaching cannot be separate from the rest of reality. Hence, the intellectual study of the scriptures has its place.

6 Three Different Systematic Conceptions of Dōgen as Philosopher

By now it has become apparent that the discovery of Dōgen the philosopher predates the Taishō and early Shōwa periods, that is, Watsuji's work *Shamon Dōgen* of 1926, to which the discovery is usually granted. What has not been evident until now is that the works from the early Shōwa onwards go beyond a mere description of philosophical facets in Dōgen's writings. One may say that they achieve a philosophical interpretation of Dōgen's philosophy, since they are guided by systematic questions. This goes hand in hand with a feature that is common to all of the authors treated here: they take a strong stand in philosophy, while in the post-war period the (Western) concept of philosophy itself is questioned.

In two of the present examples, the issue of language is taken up. Watsuji brings in the Greek notion of *logos* to discuss Dōgen's term "*dōtoku*" 道得, the core concept of his interpretation. Tanabe, the second author, engages with the same term but develops the philosophical ramifications even further. Although working on a different term, a third author of that time must be mentioned, AKIYAMA Hanji秋山範二 (1893–1980), who makes room for the issue of mind (more literally "heart") at the center of his interpretation. While he sidesteps the problem of language, he continues a strategy of Inoue's by reading Dōgen's concepts in continuity with the Buddhist tradition. Akiyama will be taken up first, after which the problem of language comes back into focus when turning to Watsuji and Tanabe.

6.1 Giving Dōgen an Ontological Foundation: Akiyama Hanji's Approach

It is not easy to locate Akiyama's *A Study on Dōgen* (1935) within the Japanese philosophical landscape at the time he was writing. He is philosophically influenced by Nishida (regarding his phenomenological interpretation, see Kagamishima 40)

but also indebted practically to Nishida's opponent TANABE Hajime because of his support for the study's publication at Iwanami (see preface to Akiyama 1935). Apart from these connections, the voluminous and detailed work has an important place in Dōgen scholarship in its own right.

The line of reasoning in his work proceeds as follows: after a dense summary of Dōgen's biography, Akiyama offers a comprehensive account of where to place Dōgen in the context of other strands of thought of Dōgen's time, such as Confucianism, Daoism, the different Buddhist schools, and the Zen school. Akiyama gives this account based on explicit evidence taken from Dōgen's writings and makes it visible that his work is not limited to debates among Zen Buddhist factions but is interwoven with an intellectual discourse of his time. In particular, his thought is not trapped by a notion of a special transmission "inside" the Zen tradition.

The main thrust of approximately 300 of the 400 pages is the reconstruction of Dōgen's philosophy based on an interpretation of the notion of "mind." The work is divided into two parts under the headings "ontology" (J. *sonzairon* 存在論) and "praxeology" (J. *jissenron* 実践論). Since the variety of important themes of his thought goes well beyond what Akiyama calls "philosophy," he adds an appendix on religion, education, and economics.

As Watsuji was before him, and Tanabe after, Akiyama was aware that his reading of Dōgen contrasted starkly with the denominational approach. Moreover, in addressing Dōgen, Akiyama explicitly marks his stand within Western philosophy:

> The foundation of Dōgen's teaching lies in his religion of sitting in which Zen meditation is the Buddha dharma. […] But on one side Dōgen harbours […] utmost deep philosophical ideas. It must surely have been his intention that one tries to understand it through the intellect, was it not? In particular for people doing philosophy in Japan it is a worthwhile mission to deepen what remains of his ideas. In this book I have tried to grasp Dōgen's ideas through thinking. In its outcome I achieved, as I believe, a systematic précis of the Buddhist thought that has become prominent through Dōgen. I am nothing but a dilettante as regards Buddhism, but I am well acquainted with Western philosophy. […] I believe, that the attempt to throw new light onto Buddhist thought was successful to some degree. (Akiyama 1935: 1)

What becomes of Dōgen's notion of mind, as seen within the light of Western philosophy? This is a particularly interesting question since this term becomes the starting point and core of Akiyama's elucidation of Dōgen's ontology. The Western understanding of the concept of mind does not, however, immediately come into view, and instead is treated in an anti-substantialist context; an approach that is all-pervasive in Dōgen's writings (Akiyama 1935: 77–85). Dōgen attacks the heresy of the Senika school, which presumes that while the physical world, including one's body, is fleeting, an eternal soul resides within the body (Akiyama 1935: 77–78). Hence, in his own position, Dōgen is in line with early Buddhism and the idea of dependent co-arising (J. *engi* 縁起), which defies any kind of eternalism. On the other hand, Dōgen directs a critique at the Chan Buddhist DAHUI Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (1089–1163) who, as Akiyama reads Dōgen, promotes the annihilation of any sense of the self as consciousness (Akiyama 1935: 83).

To get a grip on Dōgen's position in positive terms, a disambiguation of his usage of "mind" is called for. Akiyama elucidates four senses of this notion. The first

sense is based on the ordinary understanding of "mind" as the various phenomena of consciousness.[34] This is the natural sense and starting point for any elucidation (Akiyama 1935: 86). Considering the multiplicity of phenomena in their own right already implies a critique of Dàhuì, since his idea of annihilation of consciousness is nothing but one such phenomenon. (Real annihilation of consciousness would mean death.) Moreover, since all phenomena of consciousness are equal, there is no way to transcend or annihilate consciousness through any such phenomena.

While the ordinary understanding of "mind" grounds the various phenomena of consciousness, it also signifies more than the individual instances of consciousness, that is, its totality (Akiyama 1935: 89). Hence, the internal structure of consciousness becomes visible: the content and act of consciousness. "Mind" signifies a totality that encompasses both act and content, that is "the phenomena of consciousness as the concrete totality" (Akiyama 1935: 89). Only on the grounds of such a concrete totality is it possible to analyze and separate mind into act and content. Thus, the multiplicity of conscious phenomena remains the starting point, while at the same time, the structure of *noesis* and *noema* become correlative poles of "mind" in its everyday sense.

Where, then, does the object have a place in relation to the mind? On the one hand, the object can be conceptualized as the object of external perception—this is the "natural" view in which the external world is opposed to phenomena of consciousness. On the other hand, based on the internal correlation of act and content of consciousness, the object becomes the content of either perception or imagination. "It is [in Akiyama's example] the tree as the object of inner perception, the being in the world of the mind" (Akiyama 1935: 90). This becomes particularly clear if one thinks of a quality such as the beauty of the tree. Beauty is certainly not an inherent attribute of the externally existing being.

However, Dōgen provides yet another sense of the notion of mind, since his analysis is based on a dualistic schema, grounded either internally as the correlation of act and content or externally as the self and the world in which it exists. In furthering this notion of mind, its ontological base becomes visible, since it is all encompassing. As Akiyama puts it, "all beings in the natural world form the mind, and further, the four elements and the five constituents form the mind, whereby the elements of being form the mind; birth and death and coming and going form the mind, whereby the transformation of being immediately forms the mind" (Akiyama 1935: 92). This is how Dōgen overcomes the dualism of ordinary mind.

Akiyama maintains, in drawing on quotations of the *Sangai yuishin* fascicle, that Dōgen "discards the dualistic opposition of the mind and unites it in the world of the one mind" (Akiyama 1935: 92). He sees in this a parallel to the idea of phenomenology, saying "that it is identical to the phenomenological stance of bracketing, but, whereas the latter stops short at 'bracketing,' Dōgen's standpoint is to negate the transcendent being and to disregard the existence of the world beyond the world of the one heart" (Akiyama 1935: 93). Thus, as Akiyama adds, "the idea of 'three worlds are only one heart' means that the entire world exhausts the one heart" (Akiyama 1935: 94).

[34] The respective expression in Dōgen's writings is "*ryochi nenkaku*" 慮知念覺.

Akiyama cautions against misreading this idea as being idealistic or spiritualistic, since the Buddha warned against such a misconception based on his understanding of "dependent co-arising" (J. *engiron* 縁起論) (Akiyama 1935: 94).[35] Hence, it is important to emphasize that the mind is not the unidirectional cause of the "external world" (Akiyama 1935: 96). Ontologically seen, mind is nothing but this one all encompassing reality. Epistemologically, it can be divided into subject and object, or inner and outer world, but this separation is motivated merely by the "necessities to understand it intellectually" (Akiyama 1935: 100). Ontologically, the world is only one.

This line of discussion relates to, but is different from the conceptual pair of *noesis* and *noema* in phenomenology, since they constitute only the essential structure of pure consciousness, whereas the conceptually opposing planes in the case of Dōgen are "the essential planes in the world of the free and natural human" (Akiyama 1935: 100), not limited to the theoretical point of view of some philosophy called phenomenology. In this respect, Dōgen's concept of "the three worlds are one mind" seems to Akiyama to be far from the artificial differentiation of Husserl's epistemology but much closer to Heidegger "who aims at an interpretation of *dasein*" (Akiyama 1935: 100). However, any such comparison is not meant to reduce Dōgen's teaching to a philosophical system.

While Akiyama does not explicitly state his indebtedness to Nishida, his use of Nishida's concept of subjectivity is possibly revealed in the present context. Akiyama rephrases the idea of mind as follows: "The act [of consciousness] […] is that which can become the ground of all consciousness by being nothing, it is the so-called subject. The content is the plane of being of consciousness that is opposite to the nothingness of the act of consciousness" (Akiyama 1935: 90). The wording of "being the ground by being nothing" is not dissimilar to Nishida's recurrent phrasings.

To summarize, Dōgen's own usage of the word "mind" is fourfold according to Akiyama's outline (Akiyama 1935: 101–104). In the first sense, "mind" is equal to the common understanding of the inner world as opposed to the external world, that is, the multiplicity of mental activities, or, more simply put, the phenomena of consciousness. Secondly, if one deepens the understanding of mind analytically, Dōgen, according to Akiyama, defines "mind" in the sense of *noesis*, that is, the act of consciousness or the subject as opposed to the object, both of which are part of consciousness. Thirdly, Dōgen equates "mind" with the *noema* as the content of consciousness. As Akiyama puts it: "It is this mind, in which one says 'mountain, river and the whole world are themselves the mind,' while watching the mountain, river and the whole world only as mountain, river and the whole world" (Akiyama 1935: 101). Finally, in the fourth sense, Dōgen takes "mind" as the ground which enables and brings into existence every single particular being, even if he aims to overcome any idealist sense of unidirectional causation of being through the mind (Akiyama 1935: 104).

[35] Akiyama gives a more detailed account of this idea based on the example of "the wind blowing" (Akiyama 1935: 94–95).

Let us sketch the remaining part of Akiyama's study. Based on his interpretation of "mind," Akiyama works out the ontological foundation of Dōgen's teaching comprising the relation of self and world in the notion of "buddha-nature." Akiyama interprets Bergson's idea of a "creative evolution" (J. *sōzōteki shinka* 創造的進化) through Nishida's phenomenological point of view, for his understanding of buddha-nature. In fact, he reads in Bergson's terminology the common determination of buddha-nature from Dōgen's quote "impermanence is Buddha-nature." This evolves further into a dialectical structure, since the transitoriness of the world as a world of becoming is realized, as Akiyama works out, from the dynamic relation of being and nothingness (Akiyama 1935: 118). Actually, it is the self that emerges from, and at the same time mediates, the dialectical structure, moving on through the contradictions internal to the ontological structure of the world (Akiyama 1935: 119). If the mind is the mediating unity of reality, going back into the mind means realizing original subjectivity. This also entails realizing *anātman* from within the fleeting world of being and nothingness, that is, of becoming.

Based on the ontological structure of becoming, Akiyama explores temporality, which in Dōgen's writing is existential time and hence bound to the self. From there he moves to the most resilient aspect of human temporality: its finite being in *samsara*. In accordance with the important idea of *karma*, Dōgen explains why finiteness of human life does not lead to nihilism, and how the traditional notion of no-self (S. *anātman*) opens up a means to affirm life. This is the turning point in his work, which transitions from his discussion of "ontology" to the part on "praxeology." This section includes discussion of "the human" and the "non-duality" of living beings and Buddha, the practice of meditation, as well as practical life activity. As can be seen from this short outline, Akiyama interprets almost every part of Dōgen's teaching, understood through the core concept of "mind," within a philosophical framework as either theoretical or practical.

6.2 The Thrust of Dōgen's Writings: Watsuji's Reading

WATSUJI Tatsurō's publication "Dōgen, the Monk" (J. *Shamon Dōgen*) is noteworthy for being one of the first attempts to engage a single author and his work as a pre-modern source of philosophy outside of the Western tradition. Perhaps without realizing it, Watsuji helped initiate a tradition of Japanese thought in which Dōgen is recognized as the cornerstone of medieval thought, opening up new horizons for philosophy and reconfirming the rich plurality of its resources. Watsuji drew attention to a notion of language within Buddhist speculation that immediately affects our common understanding of philosophy inasmuch as the approach to language he presents does not seem to fit easily into views prevalent in mainstream Western philosophy.

Also supporting this idea is the popular Zen slogan (J. *fūryū monji*, *kyōge betsuden* 不立文字、教外別伝), which, according to its literal rendering, means "a special transmission outside the scriptures, without relying on words and letters."

For now, however, I will assume that language is not confined to the kind of reductionism prevalent in propositional logic and that closer scrutiny is called for. What, then, is the main problem with language in Zen? Experience is frequently pointed to as being so rich, so unmediated, pure and dynamic, that any expression of it in language "downgrades" it to a derivative status, chaining it to previous phenomena already experienced. To be more precise, the raw phenomenality of experience in its living form is pitted against any linguistic approach that sees language as a necessary and constitutive medium of Zen and Zen experience.

The thesis I wish to propose discards the unquestioned assumption that Dōgen the Zen Buddhist, and possibly the entire Zen tradition, takes language to be no more than a necessary, but ultimately limited, means of communication. I mean to suggest, rather, that Dōgen offers an unrestrictedly positive re-evaluation of language that leads to a critique of the tradition and culminates in a new notion of language as "perfect expression" (J. *dōtoku*), a view found in the *Shōbōgenzō* fascicle of the same title. In this respect I agree in part with the results of Kim Hee-Jin's groundbreaking reading of Dōgen's conception of language and those authors who rely on his reconstruction, though my agreement rests on different grounds than theirs.

For his part, Dōgen gives a positive twist to the dilemma, declaring that "all the buddhas and patriarchs are able to perfectly express the truth." The fascicle's title, "*Dōtoku*," can be translated literally as "The ability to talk," and its contents discuss the prerequisites for a perfect expression of the truth of the Buddhist way. For example, perfect expression depends on the encounter of two people engaged in Buddhist practice, typically an accomplished master and a disciple on the brink of realizing enlightenment. The particular mode of expression used by them is as contingent as is their encounter. This means that expression is far removed from scholastic debate and independent of the confines of any particular positive or negative propositions that need to be refuted, falsified, or elaborated in detail.

We should also note that Watsuji's interpretation amounts to nothing less than a reiteration of the dynamics of perfect expression in Hegelian terms. There is no gainsaying the fact that Watsuji reads Dōgen in a somewhat eclectic, sketchy, and freely-associative manner, picking and choosing from any number of currents of thought prevalent at the time. Yet, what from a philosophical point of view may appear to be a weakness in Watsuji's approach actually highlights what is most attractive and useful in it. Perhaps the most promising approach is to peel away all the existentialist-motivated metaphysical claims and relate them to a methodology that Watsuji borrows from Dilthey's hermeneutics. Giving an account of Dōgen's idea of language does not necessarily involve the heavy burden of these metaphysical claims, especially not if read in the mode of a cultural philosophy, as Watsuji does to some extent.

Watsuji faces two main methodological objections, one of them more general, the other with a more specific concern. The first concerns his position as an "outsider" to Dōgen's Zen (J. *mongekan* 門外漢), not even a lay practitioner. This poses a problem: How can we reconcile the inner perspective of a practitioner and believer with an objective, scientific approach? The second objection involves the particular

approach Watsuji takes from his vantage point as an outsider: How is his cultural-hermeneutic method related to the inner perspective of Dōgen's thought? In Watsuji's own words:

> Firstly, is it possible that you, as someone who is foreign to Zen, understand Dōgen who emphasized particularly sitting meditation? In trying to get a grip on something sublime and profound, do you not debase and flatten out something that you have not grasped yourself ? Secondly, even if you were capable of understanding this sublimity and profundity to a certain degree, of what use is it to put the personality of such a great and religious man and his manifestation of truth in the service of a cultural-historical understanding? What does cultural-historical understanding mean if one accepts the truth of a religion…? Of what use at all is an understanding based on "secular wisdom"? (Watsuji 1998: 237–238)

Watsuji's first step in answering these objections was simply to acknowledge that there is an insider's perspective. He has no intention of arguing against what he saw as an irrefutable fact. His defense of his own approach is to present it as no less irrefutable but on different grounds. He points to the heavy volumes of Dōgen's works and asks why someone like him would leave such a body of writings behind when they were not simply writings of practical or instrumental concern, such as orders or regulations. Why would he do so, if not for the fact that he puts trust in the possibility of language to mediate and express the Buddhist truth?

> Why did Dōgen leave such a great quantity of records of his sermons behind, if his truth needs the purity of a direct transmission? Needless to say, he was confident of his ability to transmit his truth through them… The great importance of intensive sitting does not contradict its linguistic expression. (Watsuji 1998: 238)

One may say that Watsuji turns religious motivation into a philosophic one by replacing the intuitive acquisition and inward manifestation of the Buddhist truth with the endless pursuit of truth. He leaves the "possession" of truth to a few religious geniuses such as the Buddha, Nāgārjuna, or Dōgen, and criticizes contemporaneous groups of Zen Buddhists for their engagement in worldly affairs. However, the twofold truth in Watsuji's reinterpretation of Dōgen becomes clearest here as he differentiates the solution of the "one great matter" of life from its reduction to anything verbal. It is impossible to replace the practice of zazen and lived enlightenment with any explanation or articulation of its experiential content. But this does not mean that verbal expression as such is impossible. Quite to the contrary, every enlightened person is also capable of expressing the experience in symbolic fashion (Watsuji 1998: 264).

That said, the final step for Dōgen, moving from the "peripheries" of truth to its "center," entails elucidating the truth in his own conceptual terms (Watsuji 1998: 314). This is what Watsuji does in the ninth and final chapter of *Shamon Dōgen*, though he warns against expecting too much, since he has not studied the *Shōbōgenzō* in its entirety. Instead he presents Dōgen's thinking through selected examples and chooses four fascicles and their related terms to sketch out Dōgen's thinking.

The major metaphysical theme that Watsuji takes up revolves around the concept of buddha-nature (J. *busshō* 仏性) and its interpretation through generations of buddhas and patriarchs. Face-to-face transmission does not mean that there is a single and universal expression of truth. Devotion and veneration still demand a critical

appropriation of the dharma in a creative and intellectual way, even though Dōgen defends the common truth of Buddhism against any kind of plurality and against arbitrary, personal belief. In fact, it is the *Busshō* fascicle in which Dōgen combines the reinterpretation of ontological assumptions with a linguistic challenge from the Chinese verses of the Nirvana Sūtra. Watsuji takes Dōgen's notion of buddha-nature as a "universal reality" (J. *fuhen teki jitsuzai* 普遍的実在) and translates the respective neologism (J. *shitsu'u* 悉有) into German as All-sein (Watsuji 1998: 325). Watsuji's basic motivation, of course, is to overcome any hypostatizing of buddha-nature that would elevate it to the status of a transcendent substance. Buddha-nature is the plurality of existing things. It is not ontologically privileged over other particular instantiations of being.

Although conceiving of buddha-nature as Buddhist truth is made possible through transmission from an authentic teacher, Watsuji holds that Dōgen's truth is contained in a rational mode of expression that seeks to avoid any kind of mystical fallacy. As a quasi-monistic concept, All-sein becomes dynamic, Watsuji says, because Dōgen posits truth as a conceptual ingredient in the "dialogue between a buddha and a Buddha," which takes place in the act of transmission. By merging these two principles as a lived verbalization of the truth, Dōgen aims at avoiding a sclerotic degeneration while at the same time holding on to a discursive, even logical, form of truth (Watsuji 1998: 324).

Watsuji points out that there is yet another condition for the verbal and even logical expression of truth to become authentic. It is not only the meeting of two buddhas at the right time but also a correct understanding that supersedes verbal expression. This condition is met by resolve and practice, but it also requires a special kind of internalization of truth. Watsuji sees "intellectual intuition" (G. *intellektuelle Anschauung*, J. *chiteki chokkan* 知的直観) as more than just fantasy totally detached from reality (Watsuji 1998, 341). Intellectual intuition must encompass sense perception as well, and begins with empirical reality only to go beyond it. It is the capacity to grasp the meaning that is mediated in and through perception.[36]

For his part, Dōgen avoids pure philosophical speculation and delegates its expression to practice and progress in one's meetings with a teacher. However, he does not detach speculation from the writings, concepts, and means of expression embodied in the tradition. He adopts language and rational means in their entirety (Watsuji 1998: 342–3). It is his productive use of language and traditional terminology that makes Dōgen an accomplished thinker in the Buddhist tradition. All of his work is based on the reinterpretation of texts handed down over generations from the Chinese and Indian traditions, that is, he works out their authentic and underlying sense.

[36]This becomes clear in what Watsuji has to say about the encounter between the Buddha and Mahākāśyapa. He interprets the understanding of the latter as a recognition of the symbolic meaning contained in the simple gesture of holding up a flower (342). Of the many who looked on, only one understood through what he perceived.

Consequently, Watsuji arrives at Dōgen's most central concept in order to perform a philosophical appropriation of his thought:

> In talking about truth that is already expressed in the teachings of the buddhas and patriarchs, Dōgen is, in the last analysis, deploying his own thinking. By face-to-face transmission he discovers himself in the teachings of the buddhas and patriarchs. More precisely, he transforms their teachings into his own system of thought. Transmission is important element, of course, but it does not disable intellectual expression. On the contrary, transmission is a prerequisite to expression. The Buddha dharma attained in transmission is, to use a term of Dōgen's, the truth of "perfect expression": it is neither the truth of wordlessness and silence, nor is it a translogical truth. (Watsuji 1998: 343–344)

6.3 Language as the Mediation of Religion and Philosophy: Tanabe's Interpretation

In the 1930s, TANABE Hajime 田辺元 (1885–1962), the successor of Nishida at Kyoto University, worked out an interpretation of Dōgen's thinking. He began by consciously following in the footsteps of Watsuji. Like Watsuji he tried to uncover the pre-modern sources of Japanese philosophy, not in order to insulate his homeland's culture from the growing influence of modern Western culture but in order to open it up and make a contribution to a wider "world culture." Tanabe's and Watsuji's interpretation share a central focus: both concentrate on Dōgen's conviction that language, among other means of articulation, allows for "the perfect expression of Buddhist truth."

If we approach the basic question of how to treat Dōgen's thought—or at least his main work, *Shōbōgenzō*—as a whole, and in terms of its relation to philosophy— language offers a good approach here, both because language itself is a necessary, and perhaps even sufficient, means to philosophize, and because Dōgen himself is concerned with scripture and spoken words in the transmission of Buddhist truth. However, Tanabe's interpretation surpasses Watsuji's in an important way. Where Watsuji remains a cultural historian, Tanabe proves to be the rightful successor of Nishida's chair by way of his philosophical rigor. In fact, he was most probably the first prominent philosopher to carry out a metaphysical interpretation of Dōgen, which contrasts with his teacher's random allusions to Asian sources of a rather dense and systematic nature.

According to Tanabe, Dōgen's speculations in his *magnum opus*, the *Shōbōgenzō*, put forth an understanding of philosophy in many ways similar to the Western idea of *logos*. At the same time, Tanabe sees that Dōgen's work is taken to be exceptionally important in the tradition of Chinese and Japanese Zen. In other words, Tanabe suggests a metaphysical interpretation of Dōgen and demonstrates how his speculations surpass a great deal of Western or Asian philosophy and thought. Likewise, critical readers of Tanabe's suggest that this interpretation is a projection of his own strong systematic philosophical position.

As indicated in the beginning of his writing, Tanabe sees his treatment of the *Shōbōgenzō* as a philosophical masterpiece as departing from two more common approaches: the purely scientific view that takes the text simply as a historical object (for examination in fields like philology, buddhology, and so on); and the view of adherents of the Sōtō sect who hold the contents and presentation of the book in less than adequate critical veneration. As is the case with other "scriptures," it was long forbidden to print the *Shōbōgenzō*, which meant that the book remained hidden in monasteries for centuries.

Tanabe addresses both of these concerns, defending himself, first of all, against accusations from the side of the faithful. He admits to being a "man without relation to a religious sect," and states that he would "not know how the teachings of the founder Dōgen are dealt with nowadays in the Sōtō sect, or how the *Shōbōgenzō* is being interpreted" (Tanabe 1939: i–ii). How could he, as a layman and *mongekan*, read the *Shōbōgenzō* from a philosophical point of view? Would this not amount to simple "blasphemy"? For Tanabe, following Watsuji's lead, it seemed a matter of duty that he uncover a previously hidden side in Dōgen in order to "honor" him as the precursor of Japanese philosophy. This, in turn, would serve to "reinforce the general self-confidence of the Japanese towards their speculative abilities" (Tanabe 1939: i).

This, of course, is not an argument for reading Dōgen as a philosopher, but it does show what was motivating Tanabe. Another motivation, and one more closely linked to the history of philosophy, was the desire to demonstrate the significance of the *Shōbōgenzō* for modern philosophy as such and to argue that it points beyond Japan, contributing to Western philosophy as well. Tanabe points to still another aspect of his extra-confessional approach. Not only is he not an adherent of Sōtō Zen or familiar with how the sect treats Dōgen's teaching but he also lacks an experiential background in that he does not practice zazen (Tanabe 1939: ii), an apparent prerequisite for accessing the relevant dimensions of a text such as the *Shōbōgenzō*.

As for the purely scientific approach, Tanabe states at the outset that his treatise will not encompass the whole of Dōgen's work, or even the whole of the *Shōbōgenzō*. In fact, he does not even treat its ideas systematically (Tanabe 1939: iii), preferring to see his work more as a preliminary attempt open to later revision. At the same time Tanabe takes a critical stance towards his "fellow" scholar, Watsuji, insofar as the latter opts to read Dōgen from the standpoint of a historian rather than from that of a philosopher. Watsuji is correct in the sense that the *Shōbōgenzō* is a particular text composed at a particular period in Japan's past. However, it deserves to be treated, Tanabe insists, as a text of the greatest importance for modern philosophy both East and West. In his view, the text outshines its counterparts in the depth of its speculation (Tanabe 1939: iii).

What leads Tanabe towards his interpretation of the Buddhist monk? Apart from incentives which concern culture and religion in general, it is a sense for a deep-rooted wisdom in Buddhism that makes it closer to Meiji- and post Meiji everyday life than Western science. Hence in a 1936 essay entitled "Common Sense, Philosophy, and Science," Tanabe discussed Eastern thought in contrast to Western philosophy, pointing to Buddhist wisdom as a "commonsense correlative to

philosophy" insofar as its knowledge is mediated by action. In it he set the deeper wisdom of Zen in stark contrast to any kind of mysticism:

> In the same way that common sense is living knowledge, this philosophy [of Zen Buddhist wisdom] is living philosophy. The wisdom of this philosophy is not conceptually organized as a system of thought, but is, in the end, expressed in action. In Zen, a blow with the stick or a shout suffices to express the truth perfectly [*dōtoku*]. The intertwining of language [*gonji no kattō*] is only of secondary importance. (THZ 5: 203)

One notices an appreciation of the Buddhist tradition in Tanabe that is to increase in later works: this tradition seems to have a quality that is missing in modern Western science, even though the Buddhist tradition admittedly lacks an adequate conceptual framework to express this particular quality as such.

We should mention that what Tanabe has to say here about the use of the stick and the shouting differs from his future stance towards Rinzai practice. A year later, in 1937, he gave a different twist to the relation of language and the expression of truth, by re-interpreting the notions of *kattō* 葛藤, the intertwinings of language, and *dōtoku* 道徳, verbal expression perfected to voice the truth. He drew on Dōgen as a Zen monk who gave primacy of place to language, that is, to a symbolic system that reaches beyond the expressive use of the stick and shouting.

> For this reason I find it no exaggeration to call the 95th-fascicle Shōbōgenzō of Dōgen the treasure-house of dialectics in Japan. Therein the intertwining of truth is at once its perfect expression [*kattō ha sunawachi dōtoku*]. The residuum of being that Hegel's dialectics leaves is wiped out and completely turned into nothing; the transformative mediation of absolute emptiness is realized. (THZ 8: 17)

With Buddhism, the meaning of Japan's "native" thought and religion, that is, Shintō, becomes "concrete," or, in dialectical terms, it breaks through its immediacy and arrives at a state of reflection. The same holds true within the Zen tradition where immediate expression of truth through gesture—in Dōgen's work—is transformed into "reflexive expression" by language. Tanabe acknowledges that "the intertwining of truth by language" becomes "its perfect expression." In May 1939, Tanabe finally published a revised and expanded version of a lecture held in 1938 by the Iwanami publishing house, *My View on the Philosophy of the Shōbōgenzō*. Therein, Tanabe devotes chapters to the cultural and political sides of the philosophical discovery of Dōgen, as well as to key philosophical notions such as "*kyōryaku*" ("the passage of time"). However, the most important contribution is his interpretation of *dōtoku* ("the perfect expression of truth").

En route to this philosophical interpretation, Tanabe encounters Dōgen who wanted to reconcile the polar opposites of Rinzai and Shinran. Tanabe highlights Dōgen's middle position, stressing ethical deeds as the will to submit completely to this life and rational expression as the basic mode of our existence. He interprets a crucial term of Dōgen's, *genjōkōan*, as signaling the apparently insurmountable contradiction of life. Dōgen, he argues, recognizes the bounds of human reason that cannot be overcome by any critical self-assertion of the finite subject. By setting Dōgen up in a middle ground between the two other monks, Tanabe implicitly attributes to him the role of the "specific" that mediates their relationship to one another.

Turning to Tanabe's distinction between religion and philosophy, he writes that philosophy is "correlated to religion in its aim at understanding the absolute meaning of historical reality" (Tanabe 1939: 12–13), which is considered "relative." In other words, the standpoint of philosophy is set squarely within history; the only place there is to seek the absolute. The absolute is not to be located in a world beyond but in the relativity of the here and now. From a philosophical standpoint, it is never possible to reach the absolute, only perpetually to seek it. In striving, one is forever bound to the limits of human existence.

Contrary, but not contradictory to this, human finitude is overcome in religion as one lets go of reliance on one's own power and submits in an act of repentance to the absolute. It is an act of self-negation that admits one's temporal and factual inability to overcome one's finitude. At the same time, the absolute is dependent on the relative insofar as it is dependent on a spontaneous act of repentance, that is, an act of autonomous submission performed by a relative being. This relationship is not a static one; by nature it is dynamic, propelled by the momentum of negation and mutual mediation through negation between the absolute and the relative. Hence Tanabe considers Buddhism close to philosophy in the sense that it considers knowledge based on wisdom to be a means of becoming a Buddha (Tanabe 1939: 14). This seems obvious in the case of Dōgen, who left behind a massive body of written work, composed in a style that is not just enigmatic preaching but a rational and analytic attempt to explain the world in a Buddhist way. This is the basis for Tanabe's placement of Dōgen in opposition to Rinzai. As he sees it, the mediation between the relative and the absolute in the Rinzai sect is executed only expressively—for example, in using a stick or shouting loudly to arouse one to awakening. In contrast, Tanabe has this to say of Dōgen's *dōtoku*, the perfect expression of truth:

> If we take the word *dōtoku* in its literal sense as a dialogical mediation of speech, then, according to Dōgen, the truth of the Buddha is not limited to becoming aware of that truth in a sudden awakening in accord with the traditional dictum about "not relying on words and letters, pointing directly to the heart of man, seeing one's own nature and becoming Buddha." It is clear that Dōgen goes the route of philosophy in order to penetrate the dialogical dialectic thoroughly. This dialectic is carried through by questioning and answering relatives set in opposition to one another. (Tanabe 1939: 19)

Despite Tanabe's talk of relatives, qualified relatives are required to turn the give-and-take of a simple dialogue into an expression of truth. This is the task of the *bodhisattvas* (awakened beings) who remain in the human world, the realm of constant flux. *Bodhisattvas* continue in their practice of the Buddhist path even though they have already crossed over to salvation. They have experienced the extraordinary but choose to stay behind in the ordinary world in order to promote the salvation of all sentient beings. This is what Tanabe has in mind when he writes that "talk and non-talk correlate, the absolute and the relative, mediate one another" (Tanabe 1939: 19). This manifests "the discourse of philosophy that corresponds to 'going beyond Buddha'" as the ongoing practice of the way in this life. In terms of ethical work undertaken for the good of all sentient beings "religion is mediated with philosophy" (Tanabe 1939: 19–20). Tanabe writes: "As Dōgen clearly states: 'The

wonders that the Buddhas and patriarchs hold up in the air and turn around is knowledge and understanding.' Truly, his Shōbōgenzō shows the highest approximation to dialectical speculation (Tanabe 1939: 19–20).

Be that as it may, Dōgen's most marked difference from Shinran and Nichiren lies in his philosophical work, in which he "masters the Japanese language freely, enlivens logic and makes the unspoken and unexplained manifest through words and talk" (Tanabe 1939: 20). Exactly how he does this requires further investigation. The repeated use of the same simple and complex framework detailed above justifies a critical look at Tanabe's enterprise. That said, however, his conviction that Dōgen's use of language should itself be seen as a perfect expression of Buddhist truth obliges us to take a closer look at this matter as a philosophical question. In particular, we need to flesh out the picture of how language can express truth.

Tanabe's critics often return to the neglect of a number of aspects in his work, beginning with MASUNAGA Reihō 増永霊鳳 (1902–1981), who complained as early as 1939 that in Tanabe's reading of Dōgen "the domain of religion is diminished, if not replaced, by philosophy" (Masunaga 1939: 628). From the side of the faithful, this represents the core of their critique of the philosopher's reading of Dōgen. Others have argued in a similar vein. James W. Heisig quotes a student of Tanabe's: "SHIDA Shōzō traces Tanabe's route to Dōgen through Watsuji and seems to reflect the general opinion of scholars in the field that his commentaries are more a platform for his own philosophy than they are a fair appraisal of Dōgen's own views" (Heisig 2001: 324). Shida's comments should stand as a warning against an uncritical approach to Dōgen. His basic idea is that Tanabe's treatment undercuts the autonomy of religion, in effect converting all of the *Shōbōgenzō* into philosophy.

Further scrutiny will lead us to reconsider Tanabe's problematic regarding how a philosophical reading of Dōgen can, and how it cannot, be worked out. This task, the more difficult side of interpreting Dōgen and interpreting Tanabe's reading of him, remains to be carried out. It must be remarked that both Zen and Dōgen remain so influential for Tanabe's thought that it is even possible, as HIMI Kiyoshi 氷見潔 has pointed out, to read his 1946 masterpiece, *Philosophy as Metanoetics* (J. *Zangedō toshiteno tetsugaku* 懺悔道としての哲学), as a series of paradoxes, or *kōans*, guiding reason to the realization of the "fundamental and intrinsic contradictoriness of reality as such," that is, to a *genjōkōan*—an allusion to a term coined in the *Shōbōgenzō* (Himi 1990: 322). Possibly, Tanabe's reading of Dōgen is just as much philosophical to the extent that it contributes to a productive "mis"-reading of the *Shōbōgenzō*. Will it be surpassed in the post-war period?

7 Delimiting the Concept of Philosophy in Reading Dōgen

According to KIM Hee Jin's diagnosis, the post-war period, the fifth period in his account, "has marked a new maturity in Dōgen studies. […] Dōgen studies have now reached a new phase in which both parties [denominational and non-denominational] are compelled to cooperate and transform one another, in order to

contribute to the common task of furthering self-understanding in an emerging world community" (Kim 2004: 8). What does this entail for philosophers reading Dōgen?

In general we can say that ambitious approaches such as Tanabe's recede into the background, or the philosophical claim becomes less of a systematic incorporation of Dōgen's thinking or his *Shōbōgenzō*, and few people continue to talk of *the philosophy of* Dōgen and even less of Dōgen *the philosopher*. This coincides with a critique already directed against Tanabe, as indicated before. People tend, instead, to speak of the philosophical in/of Dōgen, or philosophical aspects of his work, or a philosophical stance, or philosophical reflections in Dōgen. This can, in fact, be taken as a symptom of categories such as "philosophy" and "religion" becoming more un-stable.

All criticism of Tanabe's understanding of Dōgen was not entirely public, including the criticism of his own predecessor, NISHIDA Kitarō. More importantly, Nishida's own understanding of Dōgen and the basis of his harsh critique of Tanabe are still present both in NISHITANI Keiji's 西谷啓治 writings as well as in UEDA Shizuteru's 上田閑照. In other words, Nishida, Nishitani, and Ueda are part of a prominent stream among postwar readers of Dōgen, with Nishida providing the link between the different directions taken.[37]

Following this trajectory of thinking, we will move away from an interpretation that places the philosophical and systematic approach in the foreground, in order to give space to practice and lived experiences and to explain language from a different point of view from Akiyama's implicit articulation or Watsuji and Tanabe's explicit articulation. It is noteworthy that Nishida, Nishitani, and Ueda engage in a reading of a Sōtō Zen Buddhist, although all of them adhere to Rinzai Zen practice.

While Tanabe's explanations of Dōgen culminate in an abstract understanding of "*genjōkōan*," which he interprets as the universalized expression of contradictory reality, Nishida emphasizes the "realizational" foundation of Dōgen's teaching: in other words, "religious practice." He starts from the "Zen meditation of dropping off body and mind" (NKZ 8: 512) and rephrases the well-known passage from the *Genjōkōan*, saying that to learn the Buddha way is to learn the self, to learn the self is to forget the self, and to verify the self by the 10,000 things coming forth (NKZ 8: 513).

[37] During the period from 1945 to 2012 the variety of continuous efforts to read Dōgen philosophically almost outnumbers any categorical system. Let us simplify the situation by distinguishing the Kyoto philosophers from the rest of the readings of Dōgen. Kim (2004) mentions such works as TAKEUCHI Michio's *Dōgen* (1962) and TAKAHASHI Masanobu's *Dōgen no jissen tetsugaku kōzō* (*The Structure of Dōgen's Practical Philosophy*) (1967). Kim rightly points to the importance of the "intensified efforts to place Dōgen in the historical, social, and cultural contexts in which his thought was formed, rather than to study his thought in the abstract although philosophical treatments of Dōgen still continue" (2004: 8). In his reassessment of the field in 2004, he adds, for examples, NISHITANI Keiji's *Religion and Nothingness*, Masao Abe's *A Study of Dōgen*: *His Philosophy and Religion*, or works by T. P. Kasulis, Joan Stambaugh, Steven Heine, and Carl Olson as representative works of a philosophical reading of Dōgen. From the side of works published in Japanese, authors such as TAMAKI Kōshirō, KARAKI Junzō, TERADA Tōru, KASUGA Yuhō, MORIMOTO Kazuo, and SUGIO Gen'yū should be added.

The way Nishida makes use of Dōgen's texts is not hermeneutic, since he simply parallels his own thinking with his understanding of Dōgen's worldview, for example, Dōgen's expression of *shinjin datsuraku* ("dropping off body and mind") with his own notion of the "self-identity of absolute contradictory opposites" (J. *zettai mujunteki jikodōitsu* 絶対矛盾的自己同一). Rather than providing elaborate interpretations, Nishida leaves the reader with quotations and paraphrasings of Dōgen's texts that function as illustrations of his own more technical expressions. More precisely, the citations from the *Genjōkōan* and other texts are illustrative only to people who already have an understanding of either Nishida or Dōgen or both, since the phrases of neither of them are self-evidently intelligible from the given context.

Hence, one may maintain that, seen from the side of Nishida's philosophical discourse, the quotations serve as allusions, and as such they reach beyond the text and refer to the practical or experiential level of Dōgen's teaching (Müller 2013). In fact, it seems to be the case with Nishida, as opposed to Tanabe, that he does not take Dōgen's writings as intrinsically philosophical, and hence the realm of philosophy in Nishida's understanding is not entirely definite. Instead, he seems to acknowledge the multifaceted experience of life that includes science, morality, art, and religion all constituting the whole of reality. At the same time, presenting religious texts within philosophical discourse serves as a reminder of the realizational nature of all activities, the intellectual pursuit of philosophy included.

While, for Nishida, Buddhism always remains in the background, even if to some degree serving as an extra-textual source of basic intuitions of his philosophy, he does not adopt any particular concept, neither from Dōgen nor from any other Buddhist authors.

By contrast, in *Religion and Nothingness* (J. *Shūkyō wa nanika* 宗教は何か) (Nishitani 1982),[38] to ground his philosophy, NISHITANI Keiji appeals explicitly to Buddhist sources in order to appropriate particular expressions and notions into philosophical coinages. Dōgen is brought up here in particular in the fifth chapter on emptiness and time in regard to Dōgen's notion of death and practice of *samadhi*.

Although Nishitani makes use of these notions more extensively and more argumentatively than Nishida does, he is still close to Nishida in the way he introduces Dōgen into the text. One of the earlier, but somewhat random occurrences of a quote from Dōgen's texts, comes up at the very end of the fourth chapter after a long discussion of Nishitani's core idea of "absolute this-worldliness." In fact, at the point where the reader is willing to adopt his idea, Nishitani himself questions the entire reasoning leading to the idea (Nishitani 1982: 107). Similar to Nishida, he uses the

[38] *Religion and Nothingness* is the English translation of *Shūkyō to ha naninka* (*What is Religion?*). Dōgen is probably the most important source drawn on in this text. In terms of Dōgen there is a second work important to mention: Nishitani's lectures on the *Shōbōgenzō* (*Shōbōgenzō kōwa* 正法眼蔵講話), in which he enacts a reading of and introduction to Dōgen's *opus magnum*. The lectures were held at the "International Research Institute for Japanese Studies" (Nishinomiya) from 1965 to 1978, and they first appeared in print in the Christian journal "Kyōdai" from 1966 to 1979. They were finally reissued in four volumes by CHIKUMA Shobō from 1987 to 1989, and later in 1991 included in Nishitani's collected works as vols. 22 and 23. These lectures cannot be fully considered here, but the author prepared selected translations and commentary (Müller 2016).

quote from the *Genjōkōan* evocatively and allusively and simply states that "the problem [of absolute this-worldliness] is also posed by the famous words of Dōgen's Genjōkōan" (ibid.). Nishitani is then quick to quote MUSŌ Kokushi 夢窓国師 (1275–1351), a Rinzai Master, maintaining that this second quote would express the same as Dōgen's quote.

Without further explanation or interpretation of these quotes through Nishitani, they appear to the unprepared reader as entirely arbitrary examples. In fact, these quotes are introduced abruptly and discontinuously with the preceding form of discourse, the authority the patriarch's writings induce does not come by way of logical argument. It is rather an extra-textual allusion. In other words, this authority comes from an insight based on lived experience accessible only to those familiar with Buddhist practice and texts. Further scrutiny is necessary to determine in which way these allusions function on a rhetorical and on an argumentative level.

Nevertheless, these Buddhist writings, in particular Dōgen's, contain quasi-terminological expressions that Nishitani imports into philosophical discourse, and, by so doing, he bridges rhetoric and philosophical argumentation. Through this shift from a Buddhist to a philosophical text, Dōgen's expressions obtain a new meaning derived from neither their original source text nor their new target context, that is, Nishitani's writings. In other words, Nishitani generates new sources of meaning.

But what is the explanation for the emergence of new meaning, which in *Religion and Nothingness* finds its place within shifts from rhetorical to argumentative usage of Buddhist expressions? There is no obvious answer to this question, since Nishitani does not provide a coherent outline of Dōgen's thought, which would help explain his adaptation of single expressions, neither does he provide a systematization of Mahāyāna doctrines nor a close reading or elaboration of specific texts. Looking at usage in *Religion and Nothingness,* one should add that Nishitani avoids imposing a preconceived "philosophical" meaning onto Dōgen's expression. Rather, he opens up a hermeneutic space between pre-modern expressions and modern philosophical terminology.

The common denominator between Buddhist sources and Nishitani's discourse is an existential stance. Appealing to this stance, Nishitani asks, "What is religion?" He does so not to answer this question in the scientific fashion of religious studies but in order to lead the reader into a discourse that precedes both the commitment to a particular religion as well as the scientific positivism that grounds modern common sense. Addressing such a reflexive ground within the subject, posing the question of what religion is, Nishitani introduces the reader to more general Buddhist terms such as nothingness and emptiness, and, further, to particular expressions of Dōgen's. Dōgen's writings serve, in *Religion and Nothingness,* as a discursive source in between scientific and poetic language. While Nishitani bridges Zen-Buddhist religion and philosophical discourse, he questions the philosophical tradition based on textual sources from the West, through the writings of Zen masters such as Dōgen.

UEDA Shizuteru furthers this questioning of what religion *and* philosophy are, by developing a reading of Dōgen beyond the limitations of the denominational approach, on the one hand, and the philosophical approach of Watsuji and Tanabe,

on the other. As in the case of Nishida and Nishitani, he raises the existential theme of meditational practice in the face of death and impermanence. From this position he asks how to place Dōgen in the field of religion and philosophy, practice and theory, lived experience and linguistic expression.

His careful commentary on fascicles such as the *Genjōkōan* (Ueda 1995) is neither—as in the case of Nishida—framed by his own philosophy, nor—as in the case of Nishitani—based on a philosophical appropriation of Buddhist terms. Moreover, in a critique of Tanabe and Watsuji, he cautions that an interpretation of Dōgen's quasi terminological expression *dōtoku*, that is, "perfect expression of truth," must still consider the relation to practice. The same is true for Dōgen's critique of the 'speechlessness' of the Zen tradition as indicated by the Zen *credo* of *furyū monji*, that is, a transmission of the Buddhist teaching not founded on words and letters (that is, the scholastic writings of the Buddhist tradition).

As Ueda points out, the *Shōbōgenzō* must be interpreted through the unspoken, which is 'perfectly expressed' in the text (Ueda 1995: 173–174). More precisely, it is the outside of the text that speaks in the unspoken, as a non-text, that is, the relation of the text to its "outside," *zazen*, serves as the source of the text itself. This explains Ueda's choice of writings: he presents a translation of the *Fukan zazengi* (and variants), the *Bendōwa*, the *Shōbōgenzō Genjōkōan* (and at the end of the commentary, the supplemental fascicle *Shōji*). In other words, he places emphasis on the early writings, which are more practical and introductory than the more sophisticated "philosophical" writings such as *Busshō*.

The rationale is obviously to show how the two poles of Dōgen's thought are connected: his strong adherence to the strict practice of *zazen*, on the one hand, and his remarkable writings that flow from a source of deep religious insight, on the other: "These three [writings] are everlasting documents of the Buddha-Dharma of the right transmission that Dōgen newly established in Japan" (Ueda 1995: 98).

Ueda then sums up the relation between the three writings: *Fukan zazangi* provides the right principles for the practice of *zazen*, *Bendōwa* explains why *zazen* is the right entrance to the Buddha-dharma, and the *Genjōkōan* is part of those writings in which "the self-fulfilling *samadhi*, that is *zazen*, has become the words in the 'between [*aida*]' of self and other as the self-enlightenment and enlightenment of others for 'the salvation of all living beings [*kuhō gushō*]'" (Ueda 1995: 98). He adds, that the *Genjōkōan* text "sketches the world that opens up on the basis of and, again, through *zazen*" (Ueda 1995: 99). In short, only in the third text are words of intrinsic value.

Relating Dōgen's writings to the practice of *zazen* provides the base for Ueda to pursue the question "why was the *Shōbōgenzō* written" at all (Ueda 1995, 218)? In his answer he repeats his critique of both denominational and philosophical readings of Dōgen. Usually not the practical, but only the intellectual aspect of Buddhism is taken into account: Buddhism is a religion of wisdom, and so is Dōgen's teaching of Zen. Hence, Dōgen wrote the *Shōbōgenzō*.

But Ueda reproaches such reasoning on two points: all other schools of the Buddhist tradition left writings behind and thus an answer to the question needs a more specific determination of Dōgen's particular text (Ueda 1995: 209). More

importantly, though, regarding Buddha Śākyamuni himself, it is not the case that Dōgen chose to abolish meditation practice even after enlightenment or after he began teaching: his teachings remain grounded in *zazen* as their source. Thus *zazen* itself is the practice of a Buddhism of wisdom and complementary to writings expressing this wisdom to others.

In Ueda's response to the initial question why the *Shōbōgenzō* was written, the relation of wisdom and meditational practice is dialectical: Wisdom is dialectically mediated through *zazen* as the radical negation of all thought. Or, again, linguistic articulation is thought to be intrinsic to sitting meditation by its very negation of language. Thus, Ueda emphasizes the importance of the relation of "text and non-text" (174) from within Dōgen's own writings, as expressed in the *Dōtoku* fascicle (ibid.). His final answer is as follows:

> The fact of intensive sitting (*shikan taza to iu koto* [事]) is the word of intensive sitting (*shikan taza to iu koto* [言]), but in between thing and word there is a thorough negation [*tettei teki hiteisei*]. In the fashion of this being echoed, this dynamism as such becomes investigated on the plane of original thought [*genshisō*] in which intensive sitting comes into existence as already being such a word. There lies the original reason why the SBGZ was written. (Ueda 1995: 222)

8 Japanese Philosophy in the Making

To return to the question of the present article: What does it mean include a pre-modern author in modern Japanese philosophy in light of Ueda's reading of Dōgen? His reading invites us to challenge the "traditional" way of doing philosophy (and the adherence to a particular religion), since he provides a new understanding of the relation of wisdom and meditational practice as a performative intertwining of speech and silence. Hence, Ueda's reception of Dōgen can contribute to shifting the modern concept of philosophy in the global horizon of our times. This implies going beyond both the preconceived European mainstream and its deviant forms and to navigate through both relativism and universalism: the definition of philosophy is not a point of departure, but rather a task, a project in the making.[39]

Regarding Dōgen, one may differentiate two kinds of readings: one that remains within the confines of the Western tradition, and one that radically questions that tradition. As already indicated, Ueda, Nishitani, and Nishida belong to the latter, whereas Tanabe, Watsuji, and Akiyama belong to the former. If one sides with the Nishida, Nishitani and Ueda camp, one may want to question the actual source of reception and extend it beyond the regular textual corpus. If one prefers remaining 'half-way' in between text and Zen, one may, for example, consider the practice of calligraphy. In fact, it seems to be reasonable to take Nishida as reflecting "Japanese culture" in a holistic fashion, in which case culture should be conceived of in all its

[39] Case studies for this claim are Theunissen's (2000) appeal to Pindar and Jullien's (2002) discussion of Chinese philosophy vis-à-vis Martin Heidegger (1889–1976).

material manifestations. Widening the textual reception helps to bring into the picture the reception of the other authors mentioned in this overview: Jiun, Kūkai and even Shōtoku, all of whom encourage a view beyond the most common picture of pre-modern Buddhist sources of philosophy, as well as their sources of reception: all of them left behind calligraphy and poetry just as Nishida did. And yet, regardless of the extension of forms of reception and the cultural differences implied by them, it is essential to remember the importance of logic. In fact, since the very beginning of the Buddhist tradition in Japan, apart from sūtras and meditation practices, the Buddhist tradition of logic (J. *immyō*) has been transmitted to Japan.[40]

If one speaks of Japanese philosophy *in the making*, then it is a making through the reception of tradition. An account of this reception helps to avoid speculative dead-ends, even if it cannot and shall not replace speculative philosophy. Moreover, actively and reflectively defining the history of Japanese philosophy is by itself a philosophical endeavor, always leaning at the edge of a not yet mainstream tradition.

Works Cited

Abbreviations

DZZ: *Dōgen zenji zenshū* 『道元禅師全集』. 7 vols. Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1988–1993.
FSC: *Funyama shin'ichi chosakushū* 『舩山信一著作集』. 10 vols. Tokyo: Kobushi Shobō, 1998–1999.
IES: *Inoue enryō senshū* 『井上円了選集』. 25 vols. Tokyo: Tōyō Daigaku, 1987–2004.
ISS: *Ienaga saburō shū* 『家永三郎集』. 16 vols. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997–1999.
ITC: *Izutsu toshihiko chosaku shū* 『井筒俊彦著作集』. 12 vols. Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1991–1993.
KSZ: *Kuki shūzō zenshū* 『九鬼周造全集.』 11 vols. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1980–1982.
NKZ: *Nishida kitarō zenshū shinpan* 『西田幾多郎全集新版』. 24 vols. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2002–2009.
SZ: *Shinran zenshū* 『親鸞全集』. 4 vols. Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1985–1987.
THZ: *Tanabe hajime zenshū* 『田辺元全集』. 15 vols. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1963–1964.
WTZ: *Watsuji tetsurō zenshū* 『和辻哲郎全集』. 20 vols. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1961–1978.
YYZ: *Yuasa yasuo zenshū* 『湯浅泰雄全集』. 17 vols. Tokyo: Hakua Shobō, 1999–2013.
ZGDJ: *Zengaku daijiten* 『禅学大辞典』. 2nd edition. Tokyo: Taishūkan Shoten, 1985.

Other Sources

Akiyama, Hanji 秋山範二. 1935. *Dōgen no kenkyū* 『道元の研究』. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
Akiyama, Manabu 秋山学範二. 2008. Jiun to kegon shisō. Koten kodaigaku kisoron no tame ni 「慈雲と華厳思想—古典古代学基礎論のために」. *Koten kodaigaku* 『古典古代学』 1: 1–27.

[40] Paul elaborates on this claim (Paul 1993: 164–195).

Bloom, Alfred. 2004. *Living in Amida's Universal Vow: Essays in Shin Buddhism*. Bloomington: World Wisdom.
Bodiford, William M. 2006. Remembering Dogen: Eiheiji and Dogen Hagiography. *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 32 (1): 1–21.
Bohner, Hermann. 1940. *Shōtoku Taishi*. Tokyo: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens.
de Rosny, Léon. 1876. *Zitu-Go Kyau – Dy-Zi Kyau: L'Enseignement De La Vérité: Ouvrage Du Philosophe Kôbaudaïsi, Et L'Enseignement De La Jeunesse*. Paris: Impr. de la Revue orientale et américaine.
Dennis, Mark. 2011. Rethinking Premodern Japanese Buddhist Texts. A Case Study of Prince Shōtoku's Sangyō-Gisho. *Relegere: Studies in Religion and Reception* 1 (1): 13–35.
Dumoulin, Heinrich. 1959. Das Buch Genjōkōan aus dem Shōbōgenzō des Zen-Meisters Dōgen. *Monumenta Nipponica* 15 (3–4): 217–232.
Enryō, Inoue. 1893. *Zenshū tetsugaku joron*. Tōkyō: Tetsugaku Shoin.
Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 2004. *Truth and Method*. Ed. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall. London: Continuum.
Godart, Gerard Clinton. 2004. Tracing the Circle of Truth: Inoue Enryō on the History of Philosophy and Buddhism. *The Eastern Buddhist* 36: 106–133.
Hanayama, Shinshō 花山信勝. 1933. *Hokke gisho no kenkyū* 『法華義疏の研究』. Toyko: Tōyō Bunko.
———. 1936. *Shōtoku taishi to nihon bunka* 『聖徳太子と日本文化』. Tokyo: Naikaku Insatsu Kyoku.
———. 1963. Prince Shōtoku and Japanese Buddhism. *Studies in Japanese Philosophy* 4: 23–48.
Heine, Steven. 2003. Abbreviation or Aberration: The Role of the Shushōgi in Modern Sōtō Zen Buddhism. In *Buddhism in the Modern World: Adaptations of an Ancient Tradition*, ed. Charles S. Prebish. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Heisig, J.W., T.P. Kasulis, and J.C. Maraldo, eds. 2011. *Japanese Philosophy: A Sourcebook*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
Himi, Kiyoshi 氷見潔. 1990. *Tanabe tetsugaku kenkyū: Shūkyō tetsugaku no kanten kara* 『田辺哲学研究—宗教哲学の観点から』. Tokyo: Hokuju Shuppan.
Ikeda, Eishun 池田英俊. 1976. *Meiji no bukkyō. Sono kōdō to shisō* 『明治の仏教—その行動と思想』. Tokyo: Hyōronsha.
Inoue, Tetsujirō 井上哲次郎. 1897. *Kurze Übersicht über die Entwicklung der philosophischen Ideen in Japan*. Trans. August Gramatzky. Berlin: Reichsdruckerei.
Inoue, Enryō 井上圓了. 1913. *Tetsukai ichibetsu* 『哲界一瞥』. Tokyo: Kokumin Dōtoku Fukyū Kai.
Ishimoto, Kiyomatsu, and P. Emil Naberfeld. 1943. Shushōgi. Eine Zenschrift Für Laien. *Monumenta Nipponica* 6 (1–2): 355–369.
Jauß, Hans Robert. 1970. Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory. *New Literary History* 2: 7–37.
Jullien, François. 2002. *Der Umweg über China*. Berlin: Merve.
Kagamishima, Genryū 鏡島元隆. 1995. Dōgen zenji kenkyū no kaiko to tenbō 「道元禅師研究の回顧と展望」. In *Dōgen shisō no gendaiteki kadai* 『道元思想の現代的課題』, ed. Rikizan Ishikawa 石川力山 and Ei'nin Kumamoto 熊本英人, 37–54. Kyōto: Tōeisha.
Kagamishima, Hiroyuki 鏡島寛之. 1995. Dōgen zenji kenkyū no dōkō kaiko 「道元禅師研究の動向・回顧」. *Dōgen shisō no gendaiteki kadai* 『道元思想の現代的課題』, ed. Rikizan Ishikawa 石川力山 and Ei'nin Kumamoto 熊本英人, 3–36. Kyōto: Tōeisha.
Kameya, Seikei 亀谷聖馨. 1911. *Seishin kōwa* 『精神講話』. Tokyo: Maekawa Bun'eikaku.
Kamstra, J.H. 1967. *Encounter or Syncretism: The Initial Growth of Japanese Buddhism*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.
Kanaji, Isamu. 1985. Three Stages in Shōtoku Taishi's Acceptance of Buddhism. *Acta Asiatica* 47: 31–47.
Katō, Kyōei 加藤教栄. 1909. *Kokkei hyakuwa* 『滑稽百話』. Tokyo: Bungaku Dōshikai.

Kim, Hee-Jin. 2004. *Eihei Dōgen: Mystical Realist*. 3rd ed. Albany: Wisdom Publications.
Kinami, Takuichi 木南卓一. 1990. Jiun sonja. Hisseki, shōgai, shisō 「慈雲尊者—筆跡・生涯・思想」. *Bulletin of Tezukayama University* 217: 1–40.
Kishizawa, Ian 岸澤惟安. 1963. Kōchū no nochi ni sho su 「校注正法眼蔵ののちに書す」. In *Shōbōgenzō gekan* 『正法眼蔵下巻』, ed. Etō Sokuō 衛藤即応, 323–329. Tokyo: Iwanami.
Kiyotaki, Chiryū 清滝知竜. 1907. *Gakusha yori mitaru kōbō daishi* 『学者より観たる弘法大師』. Kyoto: Rokudai Shinposha.
Koganemaru, Taisen 小金丸泰仙. 2009. *Jiun sonja ni manabu shōbōgenzō* 『慈雲尊者に学ぶ正法眼蔵』. Tokyo: Daihōrinkaku.
Kopf, Gereon. 2005. Critical Comments on Nishida's Use of Chinese Buddhism. *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 32 (2): 313–329.
Krummel, John. 2011. Kūkai. In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/kukai/.
Kurebayashi, Kōdō 榑林皓堂, Gakusui Nagahisa 永久岳水, and Shōkin Furuta 古田紹欽. 1972. Genzōka to genzō kenkyūka 「眼蔵家と眼蔵研究家」. In *Shōbōgenzō zenkō* 『正法眼蔵全講』, ed. Ian Kishizawa 岸澤惟安, 1–3. Geppō 月報. Tokyo: Daihōrinkaku.
Kurokami, Shōichirō 黒上正一郎. 1935. *Shōtoku taishi no shinkō shisō* 『聖徳太子の信仰思想と日本文化創業』. Tokyo: Daiichi Koto Gakko Shoshinkai.
Maraldo, John C. 1998. Buddhist Philosophy: Japanese. In *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Craig. London: Routledge.
———. 2010. Nishida Kitaro. In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nishida-kitaro/.
Matsubara, Kan 松原寛. 1935. *Shinran no tetsugaku* 『親鸞の哲学』. Tokyo: Monasu.
Masunaga, Reihō 増永霊鳳. 1939. Tanabe hajime hakase cho shōbōgenzō no tetsugaku shikan 「田辺元博士著正法眼蔵の哲学私観」. *Shūkyō Kenkyū* 『宗教研究』 3: 616–630.
Matsunaga, Daigan, and Alicia Matsunaga. 1974. *Foundation of Japanese Buddhism*. Los Angeles: Buddhist Books International.
Matsuoka, Shigeo 松岡茂生. 2009. *Shinran shūkyō tetsugaku no kenkyū* 『親鸞宗教哲学の研究』. Nagoya: Maruzen Nagoya Shuppan Sabisu Senta.
Miki, Kiyoshi 三木清. 1999. *Pasukaru, Shinran* 『パスカル・親鸞』. Kyoto: Tōeisha.
Mizuno, Kōgen. 1991. *Buddhist Sūtras: Origin, Development, Transmission*. 4th ed. Tokyo: Kōsei Publishing.
———. 1992. *The Beginnings of Buddhism*. 5th ed. Tokyo: Kōsei Publishing.
Müller, Ralf. 2013. 'Dōgen spricht auch von…'. Zitate des Zen-Patriarchen in Nishidas Philosophie. In *Kitarō Nishida in der Philosophie des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Rolf Elberfeld and Yoko Arisaka. Freiburg: Alber-Verlag.
———. 2016. *Nishitani's Reading of Dōgen's Shōbōgenzō* (manuscript).
Nanjō, Bun'yū 南條文雄. 1889. *Butsumon risshi hen* 『佛門立志編』. Tokyo: Tetsugaku Shoin.
Nishiari, Bokusan. 2005. *Shōbōgenzō keiteki* 『正法眼蔵啓迪』, 3 vols. Tokyo: Daihōrinkaku.
Nishitani, Keiji. 1982. *Religion and Nothingness*. Trans. Jan van Bragt. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Oka, Sōtan 丘宗潭. 1927. *Zen no shinkō* 『禅の信仰』. Tokyo: Kōmeisha.
Okamura, Keishin 岡村圭真. 1963. Jiun no shōgai to shisō 「慈雲の生涯と思想」. *Bokubi* 『墨美』 127: 2–11.
Ono, Tōta 小野藤太. 1903. *Nihon bukkyō tetsugaku* 『日本仏教哲学』. Tokyo: Bunmeidō.
———. 1904. *Kōbō daishi den* 『弘法大師伝』. Tokyo: Bunmeisha.
———. 1905. *Shingon Tetsugaku* 『真言哲学』. Tokyo: Shūkyō Kenkyūkai.
Paul, Gregor. 1993. *Philosophie in Japan: Von den Anfängen bis zur Heian-Zeit. Eine Kritische Untersuchung*. München: Iudicium.
———. 2001. Buddhist Philosophy in Japan, Post-Meiji. In *Encyclopedia of Asian Philosophy*, ed. Oliver Leaman, 89–95. London: Routledge.
Saitō, Takako. 2010. In the Search of the Absolute. Kuki Shūzō and Shinran. In *Classical Japanese Philosophy*, ed. James W. Heisig, 232–246. Nanzan: Nagoya.

Stone, Jacqueline I. 2003. *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
Takeuchi, Yoshinori 武内義範. 1941. *Kyōgyō shinshō no tetsugaku* 『教行信証の哲学』. Tokyo: Kōbundō.
Tanabe, Hajime 田辺元. 1939. *Shōbōgenzō no tetsugaku shikan* 『正法眼蔵の哲学私観』. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
Tanaka, Kaiō 田中海應. 1937. Jiun sonja no shisō 「慈雲尊者の思想」. In *Kinsei nihon shisōka ron* 『近世日本思想家論』, ed. Tetsujirō Inoue 井上哲次郎, 79–93. Tokyo: Risōsha.
Tanimoto, Tomeri 谷本富. 1908. *Nihon bunmeishi jō ni okeru kōbō daishi* 日本文明史上における弘法大師. Tokyo: Rokumeikan.
Terada, Yakichi 寺田弥吉. 1935. *Shinran no tetsugaku* 『親鸞の哲学』. Tokyo: Kensetsusha.
Theunissen, Michael. 2000. *Pindar: Menschenlos und Wende der Zeit*. Hamburg: C. H. Beck Verlag.
Tuck, Andrew P. 1990. *Comparative Philosophy and the Philosophy of Scholarship: On the Western Interpretation of Nāgārjuna*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Ueda, Shizuteru. 1995. Kaisetsu [commentary]. In *Daijō butten* 『大乗 仏典 23: Dōgen 道元』, ed. Shizuteru Ueda and Seizan Yanagida, 93–255. Tōkyō: Chūō kōron sha 中央公論社.
Ueyama, Shunpei 上山春平. 2004. *Shinjitsu no hito jiun sonja* 『真実の人慈雲尊者』. Tokyo: Daihōrinkaku.
Victoria, Brian Daizen. 2006. *Zen at War*. 2nd ed. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
Wakatsuki, Shōgo 若月正吾. 1986. *Dōgen zenji to sono shūhen* 『道元禅師とその周辺』. Tokyo: Daitō shuppan.
Watt, Paul B. 1983. *Jiun Sonja (1718–1804). Life and Thought*. Ann Arbor: Michigan.
———. 1999. Jiun Sonja. In *Buddhist Spirituality: Later China, Korea, Japan, and the Modern World*, ed. Takeuchi Yoshinori, 348–358.
Watsuji, Tetsurō. 1998. Shamon dōgen [The Buddhist Dōgen]. In *Nihon seishinshi kenkyū*. Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten 岩波書店.
Weitsman, Mel, Michael Wenger, and Shōhaku Okumura, eds. 2012. *Dōgen's Genjō Kōan: Three Commentaries*. Berkeley: Counterpoint.
Yamagami, Shōfū 山上嘯風. 1906. Dōgen zenji no uchūkan 「道元禅師の宇宙観」. *Wayūshi* 『和融社』 10: 32–39.
Yamasaki, Taikō. 1988. *Shingon: Japanese Esoteric Buddhism*. Boston: Shambhala.
Yasutani, Haku'un. 1996. *Flowers Fall: A Commentary of Dōgen's Genjōkōan*. Boston: Shambhala.
Yodono, Yōjun 淀野耀淳. 1911. Dōgen no shūkyō oyobi tetsugaku 「道元の宗教及び哲学」. *Tōyō tetsugaku* 『東洋哲学』 18(3): 1–9, (4): 16–29, (5): 15–29, (6): 16–25, (7): 13–23.
Yuasa, Yasuo. 1993. *The Body, Self-Cultivation, and Ki-Energy*. New York: SUNY.
Yuien 唯円. 1996. *Tannishō: Passages Deploring Deviations of Faith*. Trans. Shōjun Bandō and Harold Stewart. Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research.

Ralf Müller is currently a research fellow at the Institute for Philosophy located in the University of Hildesheim (Germany). His research interests involve philosophy of language and culture, particularly intercultural philosophy following Ernst Cassirer. In addition, he studies regional philosophies including pre-modern Buddhist and modern Japanese philosophy. After completing a doctoral dissertation on "Dōgen's language thinking: Systematic perspectives from history and the theory of symbols" at Humboldt University (Berlin, Germany) and postdoctoral studies for two years at Kyoto University (Japan), he has become the principal investigator of the research project "Translating Philosophy in/to Japan" ("Übersetzung von Philosophie nach Japan in kulturphilosophischer Perspektive") and is also the founding member of the Research Network "Morphology as Scientific Paradigm" (both funded by the German Research Council, DFG). He has published in various languages on themes such as "The Discovery of Language in Zen: Inoue Enryō's Prolegomena on the Philosophy of Zen School of 1893" or "The Becoming of Form and the Formlessness of Form: Contributions to the Philosophy of Life by Ernst Cassirer and Nishida Kitarō." For details see www.ralfmueller.eu.