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REVIEW ARTICLE

A Day in the Life

Two Recent Works on Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō* "Gyōji" [Sustained Practice] Fascicle

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Ishii Shūdō 石井修道, *Shōbōgenzō [Gyōji] ni manabu* 正法眼蔵「行持」に学ぶ. Kyoto: Zen Bunka Kenkyūjō, 2007. 620 pp. ¥2,300, paper. ISBN 978-4-88182-219–7.

Yasuraoka Kōsaku 安良岡康作 trans., *Shōbōgenzō [Gyōji] jō* 正法眼蔵「行持」上. Tokyo: Kodansha, 2002. 455 pp. ¥1,300, paper [hereafter I]. ISBN 4-06-159528-8; *Shōbōgenzō [Gyōji] ge* 正法眼蔵「行持」下. Tokyo: Kodansha, 2002. 446 pp. ¥1,300, paper [hereafter II]. ISBN 4-06-159529-6.

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> In a hundred thousand kalpas encompassing the cycles of life and death, a single day of sustained practice is a bright pearl in a topknot or an ancient mirror that lives and dies in conjunction [with buddhas], and is a joyous day reflecting the joyful effort of sustained practice itself.
>
> (DZZ I, 162)

For nearly two decades, studies of Dōgen 道元 in the Japanese academy have been dominated by topics other than what is generally considered the major area of inquiry, his masterwork, the *Shōbōgenzō* 正法眼蔵. Because the *Shōbōgenzō* had received so much coverage over the years, it was high time to dwell on other issues, and just about every theme related to Dōgen's writings and the history of his life and times, as well as the overall spread of the Sōtō Zen sect, has received considerable attention except the topic everyone tends to expect. Therefore, the two works under review dealing with the distinctive *Shōbōgenzō* "Gyōji" 行持 fascicle reflect in complementary ways a return to "rice-and-soy-sauce" Dōgen issues. These include a two-volume modern Japanese translation with commentary by literary critic Yasuraoka Kōsaku, and a detailed examination of the fascicle's contents by the noted scholar of Zen history Ishii Shūdō, who has published extensively on Dōgen and who was inspired by Yasuraoka's work released a few years earlier.[1]

Before taking a closer look at the Ishii and Yasuraoka books, I will put in context some of the above remarks regarding recent trends in the field of Dōgen studies. First, indicating that *Shōbōgenzō* has been neglected may seem counterintuitive given the number of recent works using this term in the title. What I mean to suggest is that the seventy-five-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō*, long considered the standard edition since the fourteenth-century commentary by Senne and Kyōgo, the *Goshō* 御抄, has been relatively overlooked. However, other versions that help comprise the comprehensive ninety-five- (or ninety-six-) fascicle edition of the *Shōbōgenzō*, especially the alternative twelve-fascicle and sixty-fascicle texts, have been explored extensively in recent years. Also receiving attention are a couple of prominent works composed in the mid-1230s at Kōshōji 興聖寺 near Kyoto using the same term in the title, the *Mana Shōbōgenzō* 漢字正法眼蔵 (or *Shōbōgenzō sanbyakusoku* 正法眼蔵三百側), a collection of three hundred kōan cases without commentary, and the *Shōbōgenzō zuimonki* 正法眼蔵隋聞記, a record of informal sermons.

1. Another example of a study of "Gyōji" is Itō 2003.

A focus on the twelve-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō* was largely instigated by the Critical Buddhism (*hihan Bukkyō* 批判仏教) emphasis on the contemporary social and political problems of discrimination and nationalism. Critical Buddhism has portrayed this text created late in Dōgen's life as being more truly representative of the master's thought on causality and morality than the earlier seventy-five-fascicle edition. This focus helped lead to a reawakening of interest in other later works, especially the *Eihei kōroku* 永平広録 collection of *kanbun* sermons and the *Eihei shingi* 永平清規 collection of monastic rules writings, both of which were formed largely in the 1240s at Eiheiji 永平寺 in Echizen. Additional scholarly trends stress a wide variety of social and historical issues in the development of Sōtō Zen. These range from the "third-generation controversy" (*sandai sōron* 三代相論) about succession to the assimilation of popular religiosity, including the avatar (*gongen* 権現) of Hakusan 白山 and other local deities and rites, as well as the role of various genres of late medieval kōan commentarial writings, such as *shōmono* 抄物 and *kirigami* 切紙 writings. While examinations of the seventy-five-fascicle text never abated, and there have been whole books written on a single fascicle (generally from a homiletic or dharma-talk rather than a scholarly perspective), it is noteworthy to see the rigorous and illuminating historical and textual analysis of "Gyōji" produced by Yasuraoka and Ishii.

"Gyōji" is one of several *Shōbōgenzō* fascicles that are unique in varying ways. The majority of fascicles focus on Mahayana Buddhist doctrines explicated in terms of Zen kōan literature, which Dōgen often radically reinterprets, and the "Gyōji" fascicle contains some of this element, especially in the opening passage (paragraphs one to five, in addition to nineteen, twenty, and forty two, as in Appendix 1 below based on Ishii 2007, 16–18). This passage is a philosophical discourse on the meaning of practice related to time, metaphysics, and ethics. For the most part, the fascicle provides a hagiographical discussion of thirty-five patriarchs in the Zen lineage from Indian Buddhist figures Shakyamuni (1), Mahakasyapa (2), and Parsva (3) to first Chinese patriarch Bodhidharma (25) and numerous Chan leaders culminating in Caodong (Jp. Sōtō 曹洞) master Furong Daokai 芙蓉道楷 (32) and, of course, Dōgen's mentor Tiantong Rujing 天童如浄 (35).[2]

The main portion of the fascicle is much closer to transmission of the lamp style texts than any other work in Dōgen's corpus, much like the *Denkōroku* 伝光

2. The first English translation nearly four decades ago consists of just this brief portion, giving readers the misimpression that "Gyōji" was largely a doctrinal rather than hagiographical work; in de Bary 1969, 369–71. An early translation titled "Continuous Practice" consisting of part one of the text only (although this is not mentioned by the translator) first appeared in Cook 1978, 175–204. Among the complete translations is the following one titled "[Pure] Conduct and Observance [of Precepts]" that includes very helpful annotations although the overall phrasing

録 by Keizan 瑩山, and reflects his particular interest in highlighting the importance of *zazen* 坐禅 or sitting meditation.[3] However, "Gyōji" is not a text that advocates "just sitting" (*shikan taza* 只管打座) in a way that is akin to the *Fukanzazengi* 普勧坐禅儀 or *Shōbōgenzō* "Zazengi" 坐禅儀, which both offer specific admonitions and instructions on how to meditate.

Instead, as Yasuraoka and Ishii both show, "Gyōji" expresses a broad vision of how strict adherence to various forms of discipline underlies and is the necessary condition for meditation. The forms of discipline include the austerities of the twelve *dhuta* practices (Jp. *zuda* 頭陀 or *zudagyō* 頭陀行) or a commitment to spiritual independence and integrity while living in thatched huts on remote peaks to abandon worldly temptations, as frequently evidenced through the supernatural power to overcome indigenous spirits. To cite a couple of examples, Dōgen praises Mahakasyapa not for receiving Sakyamuni's flower as in the prototypical Zen narrative, but for being an extraordinary representative of *dhuta*-based asceticism, as portrayed in early Buddhist literature. He sums up the merit of several masters such as Jingqing Daofu (9), Sanping Yichong (10), and Changqing Daan (11) based on their supranormal skill in being able to dispense with the need to be served food or to be seen by local gods.

The term *gyōji* 行持 can be translated in various ways, but the first kanji *gyō* 行 indicates the discipline of practice and the second kanji *ji* 持 suggests maintaining the resolve for the unrelenting continuation of this effort or exertion extended over a prolonged period. Practice in this sense is a broader category of training than *zazen*, although the two terms are inseparable in that, as Ishii explained to me during an office interview (June 2007), *gyōji* is an attitude or state of mind of supreme dedication driving the commitment to ongoing meditation. In philosophical passages, Dōgen depicts *gyōji* as a cosmic power that upholds buddhas and beings, life and death, and right and wrong in each and every moment. It is an all-encompassing principle that embraces its opposite in that "since all activity is a manifestation of dedicated practice, to attempt to avoid dedicated practice is an impossible evasion, for the attempt itself is a form of dedicated practice" (DZZ I: 146).

As also discussed in *Bendōwa* 弁道話, Dōgen emphasizes the unity of practice and attainment (*shushō ittō* 修証一等) here-and-now. The assertion that "a single

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is rather awkward: Nishijima and Cross 1996, 129–52 (part one) and 153–84 (part two). One way of counting the themes in the 96-fascicle Shōbōgenzō is 42 fascicles on philosophy, 22 on practice, 14 on doctrine, 10 on rules, 4 on tradition, and 4 on ethics; see http://www.numenware.com/index.php?id=523.

3. Other anomalous fascicles that stress practice over doctrine include Shisho 嗣書, which deals with Dōgen's experiences in viewing transmission certificates during his travels in China, and Senmen 洗面 and Senjō 洗浄, which both focus on monks' everyday behavior, such as washing and cleaning, thereby making these texts seem appropriate for inclusion in the *Eihei shingi*.

day of sustained practice is worth more than many lives lasting vast kalpas" has a resonance with the discourse on the temporality of enlightenment in the *Uji* 有時 fascicle as well as in the short exhortative text, *Gakudōyōjinshū* 学道用心集. Dōgen's overall *carpe diem*-oriented reading of the lives of the patriarchs sends a clear message that an attitude of dedication affirmed through continuous practice in the eternal present moment during this fleeting, fragile life is a superior avenue for attaining the dharma than conventional behavior, such as following external guidelines for conduct such as the precepts or monastic institutional regulations. While transcending the path of conventional activity, Dōgen's approach also avoids the pitfall of ethical antinomianism.

Divisions and Methods

Shōbōgenzō "Gyōji" is divided into two parts, with the first part containing masters one to twenty-four and the second part masters twenty-five to thirty -five. The two parts are counted as a single fascicle in most editions, including the seventy-five-fascicle text (where it is no. sixteen), the twenty-eight-fascicle text (no. sixteen), and the ninety-five-fascicle text (no. thirty), but in the sixty-fascicle text it is counted as two separate units (nos. sixteen and seventeen). As YASURAOKA shows, there are thirteen main editions originally held in various temples, including four editions of the seventy-five-fascicle text version, two editions of the sixty-fascicle text version, and one edition of the ninety-five-fascicle text version. In addition, there are two editions of an eighty-three-fascicle version and one each of eighty-four-fascicle, seventy-eight-fascicle, ninety-six-fascicle, and eighty-nine-fascicle text versions (II, 436–437). According to the colophon, the text was composed on 1.5.1242 and edited by Ejō on 1.18.1243. During 1242, Dōgen composed sixteen fascicles, his most productive period except for 1243, which was the year of his move from Kyoto to Echizen when twenty-two fascicles were composed, eighteen in mountain retreats. Perhaps he was inspired by the enlistment at his temple of a group of followers from the proscribed *Daruma-shū* 達磨宗 in 1241, and by receiving a copy of the recorded sayings of his Chinese mentor on 8.5.1245 that, by the Edo period, came to be known as the *Rujing yulu* (Jp. *Nyojō goroku* 如浄語録).

Dōgen's teacher receives the most attention and praise in three culminating paragraphs of "Gyōji," which presages three fascicles written in the last two months of 1243 at an Echizen hermitage that are almost entirely based on Rujing citations (*Bustsudō* 仏道, *Ganzei* 眼睛, and *Kajō* 家常). While most of the other masters are treated in a single paragraph of varying length, Bodhidharma also gets three paragraphs and second patriarch, Huike, along with Furong Daokai get two each. Ishii notes that the attention given to the latter, who was known for his fierce spirit of autonomy in declining an offer of the imperial robe and who

figures prominently in the *Sansuikyō* 山水経 fascicle, is significant in that he represents an important link in the Chinese Chan Caodong lineage.

A key question concerns the relation between the two divisions of "Gyōji." One characteristic in both parts of the text is that, while chronological sequence is generally followed, there are some notable exceptions such as Huangbo (22) appearing after his disciple Linji (21), and Mazu who is included in both parts (5 and 33) appearing after Furong in the second division. Because of ambiguities and inconsistencies in the traditional dating of events, the history of the formation of "Gyōji" is difficult to determine. Ishii speculates for reasons internal to the text that the second part was actually composed before the first. Ishii feels that the second division's introductory discussion of bringing the dharma to the "remote outpost" of Japan (as Bodhidharma courageously brought it to China), as well as its emphasis on the Caodong lineage—Shitou (27), Furong, and Rujing—indicate that this was the initial draft. Subsequently, Ishii argues, Dōgen decided to provide additional background as well as praise and commentary for a wider variety of masters without regard to lineage, and he also probably felt that prominent Song dynasty Caodong master Hongzhi 宏智 (15), a second-generation successor to Furong, was neglected and needed to be included. Ishii points out that Dōgen for the most part avoids the sectarian partisanship that affects some of his discourse from this stage of his career when he was highly critical in numerous fascicles of rival lineages. Dōgen gives relatively equal weight to all factions of Chan, yet in the discussion of Linji, who is praised here, he criticizes Deshan as an inferior mind who "could not be Linji's equal."

The approaches of Yasuraoka and Ishii are overlapping yet complementary in that they use Dōgen's writings as a window by which to view the flow of textual predecessors, antecedents, influences, and parallels. Yasuraoka naturally focuses on Japanese literary and linguistic elements and Ishii on Chan texts that Dōgen had studied in China and was importing and introducing to his native country. Both scholars highlight the impact of the Lotus Sutra and the seminal transmission of the lamp text, the *Keitoku dentōroku*/*Jingde chuandeng lu* 景徳伝灯録, the source text for many of the anecdotes of the patriarchs, in addition to Chinese sources like Zhuangzi, but for the most part pursue different directions. Yasuraoka's opening statement in the preface to the first volume is the disclaimer, "I am not a Buddhist studies scholar. I am not a religious studies scholar. I am not a Zen Buddhist practitioner" (1, 3). Influenced by mentor Nishio Minoru 西尾 実 who wrote a frequently cited book dealing with Dōgen and Zeami, in looking for influences on Dōgen, Yasuraoka explores such writings as *Hōjōki* 方丈記 by Chōmei 長明 and the *Heike monogatari* 平家物語, as well as concepts such as *yūgen* 幽玄 (mysterious depth). Of particular interest in Yasuraoka's approach is his linguistics expertise in identifying in passage after passage throughout the fascicle the innovative ways that Dōgen transforms

Chan's Chinese literary style into Japanese vernacular. It is well known that one of Dōgen's main skills was in adapting the Chan sources to particular Japanese pronunciation and syntax patterns, and Yasuraoka does an outstanding job in documenting and explicating the complex linguistic process evident in this text.

Ishii's strength lies in identifying the Chan sources from among the transmission of the lamp, kōan collection, and recorded sayings records for Dōgen's citations. He says in the postscript (597–598) that undertaking this study gave him the opportunity to explore Song sources, such as his book on the *Mana Shōbōgenzō* (1988) two decades before, similarly derived from a lecture series and released by the same publisher focused on Tang dynasty masters. In considering the roots of Dōgen's notion of *gyōji dōkan* 道環 (unbroken, continuing practice) Ishii turns to Buddhist sources such as *Shōyōroku*/*Congrong lu* 従容録 on case 77, "Yangshan's Swastika" (Ishii 2007, 22–23).[4] In this kōan record, a rival monk draws a circle around Yangshan's mystic symbol and Hongzhi's verse comments, "The void of the circle of the Way is never filled" (T48.204c). Ishii further shows affinities between "Gyōji" and other Dōgen texts that treat similar topics regarding philosophy and practice, such as *Shōbōgenzō zuimonki* and *Eihei kōroku*. In addition, he deals with the modern Sōtō compilation that targets a lay audience based on passages selected from the *Shōbōgenzō*, the *Shushōgi* 修証記, which contains three consecutive sentences from the "Gyōji" fascicle near the end of the final (fifth) section. Ishii's discussion of Linji includes a section titled *Linji hihan* ("critique of Linji" 臨済批判, Ishii 2007, 252–58) because he relates the passages in "Gyōji" to other Dōgen writings that criticize Linji as well as additional masters in rival lineages.

Whither Dōgen Studies?

In a way, "Gyōji" is a unique fascicle because it deals with so many different Chan masters, but at the same time, it shows the trend found in different ways throughout the *Shōbōgenzō* to reference directly or indirectly and to interpret creatively a tremendous diversity of sources. The remarkable richness of Dōgen's writings is the way they open to multiple texts and perspectives from Sino-Japanese Buddhist literature. The towering achievement of Yasuraoka and Ishii in viewing the extraordinary intertextuality of Dōgen's work with Chinese Chan and Japanese literary citations and allusions, as well as the extensive intratextual function within Dōgen's corpus, ironically reveals just how much more there is to accomplish in exploring fully the depth of the various textual connections. Even with all of the stellar scholarship of the past decades, the surface is

4. See also Ishii 1987 for a study of Song Chan Buddhism.

barely scratched. The excellence of the Yasuraoka and Ishii books in treating just one fascicle becomes an injunction for all parties to make the sustained effort day by day to ensure that other dimensions of these texts be further explored, in order to continue to advance the field of *Dōgen kenkyū* ("Dōgen Studies").

Appendix. shōbōgenzō "gyōji" ("sustained practice")

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*In DZZ I, 145–201

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ABBREVIATION

DZZ *Dōgen zenji zenshū* 道元禅師全集, Vol. I, ed. KAWAMURA Kōdō 河村孝道. Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1991.

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