Studies in Japanese Literature and Culture 3 (March 2020) 1–22

Dōgen's Religious Discourse and *Hieroglossia*

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Introduction

There are at least two difficulties for a correct understanding of this article.[1] The first one, clearly, is the precise meaning of the cryptic word "*hieroglossia*,"[2] a term surely opaque to anybody who comes across it for the first time. It is a word that I partially coined myself,[3] and my only hope is that the pedantic temerity of this neologism will not obscure the fact that the underlying reality it tries to evoke is sufficiently interesting for such a coinage to be not only forgiven, but also used as a workable concept.

The second difficulty is the choice I made to focus on the writings of Dōgen 道元 (1200–1253). I do realize how impudent it is for someone who has mainly studied the teachings of Tendai 天台 Buddhism, Japanese Buddhist poetry (particularly on the *Lotus Sutra*), and scholastic Buddhist debates (*rongi* 論義) to address as towering a figure of Japanese Buddhism as Dōgen-*zenji*, who cannot be approached without a life of study. He who perpetrates such a deed will embody perfectly a famous line from an old French movie: "You can know a fool by the fact that he would dare anything."

Therefore, before entering upon the main topic, I deem it to be both a courtesy and a duty to explain these two points.

1. *Hieroglossia*

a. Attempt at a Definition

I shall start with an explanation of "*hieroglossia*." A literal analysis of the word's

[1] But first of all, I would like to express my warmest thanks to my colleagues at the National Institute of Japanese Literature—an institution to which I have been very much indebted for a long time—for giving me so kindly a unique opportunity to express my views before an audience of specialists far more knowledgeable than I am in matters concerning Dōgen.

[2] I proposed two possible Japanese translations: *seigo-ron* 聖語論 or *seigo-sei* 聖語制, either of which should also be viable in Chinese. The former translation is perhaps clearer.

[3] It derives directly from an adjective in Ancient Greek. The substantive *hieroglossia* has been already used, in 1975, by a scholar in sociolinguistics, Conrad M. B. Brann (1925–2014), albeit in quite a different sense. See my *La hiéroglossie japonaise* (Paris: Collège de France/Fayard, 2012), p. 61, n.1.

Greek roots would give something like "a (theory) of sacred language"—a Sino-Japanese translation like *seigo-ron* 聖語論 would make this sense even more explicit—but to avoid any misunderstanding, it is necessary to point out, from the start, that I do not intend by any means to assert that there exists anything that could be called a "sacred tongue" in its very essence. Rather, in coining this new word, I hoped to describe a remarkable phenomenon in linguistic and cultural history that has taken place in various cultures, starting in Mesopotamia more than four thousand years ago and spreading to both ends of Eurasia. It is simply a useful term that had previously been missing in philological studies,[4] and it certainly does not purport to assert that some languages—for instance Sanskrit, Latin, Tibetan, etc.—are superior to others (which could be called "vulgar" or "vernacular" as compared to the former).

In other words, what I call *hieroglossia* is similar in many ways to the "cosmopolitan language" (world language, supranational language) proposed by the American Indianist Sheldon Pollock.[5] But in spite of this surface similarity, there is a fundamental difference in that Prof. Pollock seems to limit the developmental logic of supranational languages to the political and economic dimensions. I would like, on the other hand, to emphasize that within the framework of *hieroglossia*, the main dynamic force is religion itself. Here "religion" is to be taken not, in a strict sense, as referring to a set of beliefs and practices formally transmitted, but rather as indicating some broader dimension, beyond the scope of human activity, to which is attributed the origin and development of the language that will be at the center of a given *hieroglossia*.

b. Some Examples

In order not to sound too abstract, I will give here two concrete and contrasting examples of *hieroglossia*.

I will start with Arabic as an almost ideal example of a set of linguistic relationships centered on one language. A quick search on the internet shows that there are currently in total 26 countries that recognize Arabic as their official language. From that point of view, the role of Arabic as a tool for exchange between modern nations fits perfectly with the concept of a "cosmopolitan language." Yet if we take into account those regions of Eurasia from Albania to Indonesia to which Islam and the Arabic Koran have spread over the centuries, it far exceeds the number of countries where Arabic is an official language. Across Turkey and Iran, Central Asia, all the way to Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Indonesia, Arabic is a sacred language studied in religious schools and used in daily rituals. It has also been the basis for most of the abstract lexicon of theology,

[4] By "philology" here, I mean what in Japanese would be called *gengo bunka shi* 言語文化史, a term for which I can find no satisfying equivalent in English or French.

[5] See Sheldon Pollock's master-work *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

philosophy, art, and literature—that is, for culture in its broadest meaning—in all the accompanying vernaculars of those parts of the world, which have now themselves become national languages. If we take the example of Moghul India, Arabic was the sacred language, and Persian the cosmopolitan language. Persian was moreover imbued with Arabic vocabulary, which through it spread to Urdu. Between Arabic, Persian, and Urdu, we thus have an exemplary case of a hieroglossic relationship.

On the other hand, another look at the internet will show that there are as many as 29 countries in the world that use French as an official language, more even than the number of Arabic-speaking countries, yet as far as I know, there is no place in the world where French would be considered a sacred language—at least outside the heads of a few members of the *Académie française*. Latin instead held this role until recently.

It is to be emphasized also, and this will be my second example, that in contrast to a "cosmopolitan language," *hieroglossia* occurs not necessarily only between a number of different languages, but can be shown to exist as well within a single language over the course of its historical development. A typical example of such "internal *hieroglossia*" is Armenian.

Classical Armenian (*Grabar*), which was born in the fifth century A.D. with the Armenian translation of the Bible, was used as a written literary language not only in the liturgy of the Armenian Church, but also in writings by Armenian theologians, philosophers, and poets up to the end of the nineteenth century. Around the beginning of the eighteenth century, a large movement to modernize (i.e. Europeanize) Armenian culture was started by the monks of the Mekhitarist Order in Venice and Vienna, who over almost two centuries of tremendous industry developed a corpus of translations from European languages and linguistic tools for the expression of a modernized worldview, all of which paved the way for the development of the Modern Armenian language in its western and eastern forms.

Here we cannot speak of a "cosmopolitan language," as the hieroglossic relationship that developed within Armenian culture was one between the revived classical language and the modern vernaculars, and it was centered on the prestige of the Grabar translation of the Bible.[6]

It would not be incongruous to compare the literary status of Grabar Armenian to that of Classical Japanese within Japanese cultural history, all the more so because the replacement of the classical language by the modern one took place at around the same time.

So let us insist again on the fact that the "sacred language" implied by the word *hieroglossia* does not mean that there exists a language intrinsically, essentially, or ontologically sacred—i.e. one superior when compared against others. It simply

[6] See for instance Karekin Sarkissian, *A Brief Introduction to Armenian Christian Literature* (Bergenfield: Michael Barour Publications, 1960).

aims at describing the multi-layered relationship existing between a set of several languages that may or may not belong to the same cultural area, or even such a relationship within a given language. In a hieroglossic relationship, a number of vernacular (or "vulgar"[7]) languages are gathered around a linguistic center and model, a model language which can be called sacred, sapiential, or referential, and which supplies "true" meanings to its surrounding "vulgar" languages. Although I will avoid as far as possible the use of these words here, within the frame of *hieroglossia* I call the "sacred" or "referential" language *hierogloss* and the related "vulgar" language *laogloss* or "language of the people" (nothing to do with Laotian, as some readers have misunderstood the word).

But the process does not stop here. It is indeed a phenomenon common to most hieroglossic complexes that the vulgar language will strive to gradually ascend to the level of the sacred language over the course of history.[8] The vernaculars, originally established as written languages for purposes of commentary and preaching on those texts and teachings transmitted in the referential languages, gradually acquire for themselves or adorn themselves with a part of the latter's sacredness, falling into what we may call a kind of competitive relationship with the *hieroglosses*. To give a short and simple example I have often quoted before, one taken from the Japanese-Chinese *sprachbund*, which I will deal with below: through the regular rendering of the Chinese compound *myōhō* 妙法 ("sublime law") by the Japanese locution *minori* 御法 in Japanese Buddhist poems (*shakkyōka* 釈教歌), a semantic link was created in Japanese (but not in Chinese) with the word *minori* 実り, meaning "fruit" or "harvest," but also signifying "reality" or "truth," given the use of the character *jitsu* with that sense in Buddhist dogmatics, especially in Tendai teachings where it refers to the reality of the *Lotus Sutra*'s teaching—as opposed to the provisional nature (*gon* 権) of those teachings found in previous sutras. Thus the Japanese-language rendering adds to the Chinese original an important shade of meaning it did not possess before, though that very addition, albeit in Japanese, is itself fully understandable only by reference to Chinese.

Thus to consider only the "laoglossic" expressions—whether in a religious context or not—without reference to the *hierogloss* they derive from, is to expose oneself to many misunderstandings, or at least to only partial understandings.

As, I hope, the previous examples have shown, the foundations of the hieroglossic relationship are mostly religious at the start, or in some cultural areas philosophical (as in the Greek-Latin case), most often beginning with the translation of sacred scriptures.

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[7] "Vulgar" being taken in the old sense of "vernacular," with the nuance of "distinct from the Latin language" that was the higher religious and literary means of expression in medieval and Renaissance Europe.

[8] A part of this process is analyzed in Victor Mair's seminal article, "Buddhism and the Rise of the Written Vernacular in East Asia: The Making of National Languages," in *The Journal of Asian Studies* 53:3 (Aug. 1994), pp. 707–751.

Having now very briefly outlined what I mean by *hieroglossia*, we must naturally come to ask ourselves how far it applies to the language situation in Japan.

c. *Hieroglossia* in Japan

Needless to say, the hieroglossic system of Japan is expressed by the relationship between written classical Chinese (*kanbun* 漢文) and written Classical Japanese (*wabun* 和文/*bungo* 文語), the dyad known from very early times as *wa-kan* 和漢.[9] The dual-language structure implied by this locution must be recognized as the most productive and active force in Japanese cultural history. Yet it must be said that the religious element underpinning this hieroglossic relationship has not been sufficiently acknowledged or analyzed amid the growing academic interest in this phenomenon. If we compare it to closely similar cultural situations in what I call the *Sinoglossic* sphere,[10] mainly Korea and Vietnam—although there are many more such cases among what are now called Chinese "cultural minorities"—the main characteristic of the Japanese situation is that at a very early stage it developed a sophisticated literary process intent on bringing the Japanese language to the same level of prestige as the Chinese model language, long before the influence of Western "modernity" exported to Asia its ideas on "national languages." Throughout this process, Buddhism played a central role, and not Buddhism in general but specifically that current within Japanese Buddhism characterized in modern terms as "assimilation of *kami* and buddhas" (*shinbutsu-shūgō* 神仏習合), and in ancient times encapsulated by the locution *honji-suijaku* 本地垂迹, or "vestigial manifestations of fundamental states." We can almost follow step by step how closely the process of assimilating Japanese deities to Buddhist entities corresponds to the growing parity of the regional language (*kokugo* 国語) with the referential language.

In that long and elaborate linguistic process, a decisive part was played by what was over the centuries built up through the efforts of literati as the most Japanese of literary genres. This was the "Japanese poem" or *waka* 和歌, and within *waka*, the subgenre that came to be known as *shakkyōka*, or "Japanese Buddhist poetry," which mediated as an exegetical tool (let us not forget that *shaku* 釈 is not only the first character of Śākyamuni's name in Chinese, but also itself means "explain" or "comment") between the Chinese-language Scriptures and the integration into Japanese of Buddhist teachings.

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[9] See for instance of late from Ivo Smits, "La dynamique sino-japonaise (*wakan*) à l'époque de Heian," trans. Alban Gautier, *Médiévales* 72 (Spring 2017). Available on: journals.openedition.org.

[10] Within the general category of *hieroglossia*, what I call *Sinoglossia* corresponds to the Japanese locution "cultural area of written Siniticy," *kanbun bunka ken* 漢文文化圏, the corresponding adjective being *Sinoglossic*.

2. Dōgen and the Japanese Language

This lengthy preamble about *hieroglossia* was no doubt necessary. And now we must come to the reason why, as little versed as I am in Dōgen lore and Zen studies in general, I was bold enough to make him the subject of one of my courses at the Collège de France under the title "Zen Between Two Tongues."

My prime motivation was the research I did when I had to prepare my inaugural lecture at the Collège de France in February 2012. This very ritualized first lecture is a rare chance, given to a newly appointed faculty member, to introduce to a large audience a comprehensive *aperçu* of his aims and method. I was looking a little haphazardly through a variety of materials that would be both to the point and also not too recondite when I remembered Kawabata Yasunari's 川端康成 famous Nobel Lecture of December 1968: "Utsukushii Nihon no watashi" 美しい日本の私, translated by Edward Seidensticker as "Japan the Beautiful and Myself."[11] It was actually a mention made by Didier Davin in his dissertation on Ikkyū 一休, referring to the importance Kawabata had attributed to the monk in his acceptance speech, that had inspired me to read it again after many years. And there, so to speak, the scales fell from my eyes when I discovered the close links that the Japanese modern novelist had drawn between Buddhism and the aesthetics of the Japanese language. Kawabata's concrete demonstration starts very abruptly with a direct quotation—absent any commentary—of Dōgen-*zenji*'s famous poem:

> 春は花夏ほととぎす秋は月冬雪さえてすずしかりけり

> Flowers in the spring, the cuckoo in summer, the moon in autumn,
> and in winter the snow, so clear and cold.[12]

To make matters more difficult, Kawabata simply gives the mysterious title *Honrai no menmoku* 本来の面目 (for which I use the translation "The Original Face") without any explanation. It must have been quite a challenge for Seidensticker to translate it, as he seems to vacillate between two alternatives: "Innate Spirit" (p.74) and "Innate Reality" (p.41). For the fact is that Kawabata, in his carefully structured speech, both begins and just as abruptly also ends on the same Dōgen poem, with the laconic conclusion: "Dōgen's poem on the four seasons is also entitled "The Original Face," but while he sings the beauty of the four seasons, it is actually imbued with Zen."[13]

There are many quotations from Zen sources in Kawabata's rich and dense oration, but what can be seen as the apex of an actually quite elaborate

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[11] Both versions can be found in *Utsukushii Nihon no watashi: sono josetsu* 美しい日本の私：その序説 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1969).

[12] In the main I follow Seidensticker's translation, with some changes. Ibid., p. 6.

[13] 道元の四季の歌も「本来の面目」と題されてをりますが、四季の美を歌ひながら、実は強く禅に通じたものでせう. Ibid., p. 36.

demonstration comes, towards the end, in a passage from the *Life of Myōe* (Myōe-den 明恵伝), written by that monk's disciple Kikai 喜海 (1178–1251), relating an extraordinary dialogue between Myōe 明恵 (1173–1252) and the great poet Saigyō (1118–1190) in which the latter reveals the profound meaning of his poetry. After enumerating as signs of the four seasons the same words that will later be used in Dōgen's own poem, Saigyō goes on to say: "Are not all the words and sentences ever pronounced indeed 'words-of-truth' [*shingon* 真言, i.e. "mantra"]? . . . And those poems are the true form of the Thus Come One."[14]

In other words *waka* (Japanese poetry) are effectively *shingon,* or *mantra*—an idea that will later come to be expressed in the well-known formulation *waka soku darani* 和歌即陀羅尼. And obviously, for Kawabata, the term "true form of the Thus Come One" (*nyorai no shin no gyōtai* 如来の真の形体) in Kikai's work is equivalent to Dōgen's "The Original Face" (*honrai no menmoku*). Kawabata takes Esoteric Buddhism (*mikkyō* 密教) and Zen together as the ontological basis of *waka* poetry.

Going a step further, the "beautiful Japan" that Kawabata endeavors to explain to the world is not the beauty of the Japanese landscape and nature, but the beauty of traditional Japanese culture. For him, however, this culture is not centered formally on the *Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari* 源氏物語), although he duly considers it to be "the highest pinnacle of Japanese literature," but on the Japanese language itself, the *yamato-kotoba* as displayed in *waka* poetry.

In my eyes, Kawabata achieved a very convincing demonstration, appealing not only to Dōgen and Zen Buddhism, but also to Myōe-*shōnin*, Kegon 華厳, and Esoteric teachings, and showed it to be in the Japanese language that the basis of Japanese beauty resides. Yet very few people, inside or outside of Japan, seem to have understood his ideas. For myself at least, it was a decisive inspiration for coming back to Dōgen, on whom I had lectured for one or two years long ago.

3. Dōgen and *Hieroglossia*

How are we to think about the relationship between Dōgen-*zenji* and *hieroglossia*? And what need is there, one could ask more shrewdly, to attempt such a reflection? The answer to this question is apparent from the structure of Dōgen's work and from his linguistic universe, which revolutionized Japanese *hieroglossia*.[15] Up to Dōgen's time, we can regard the *wa-kan* relationship as being bidimensional. The hieroglossic network was limited to written classical Chinese (*kanbun*, corresponding to Chinese *wenyan* 文言) for the *kan* part, and classical

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[14] 読み出すところの言句は皆これ真言にあらずや（中略）この歌即ち如来の真の形体なり. Ibid., p. 35.

[15] One should evoke here Terada Tōru 寺田透 and his book, *Dōgen no gengo-uchū* 道元の言語宇宙 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1974), which offers a unique approach to Dōgen from the standpoint of taking language to be a central element of his *oeuvre*. "Linguistic universe" or "language world" here is my translation of Terada's *gengo-uchū*.

Japanese (*wabun* 和文) for the *wa* part. For Japan as well as for the continent, *kanbun* was exclusively a written language, and within Japan, even its oral realization was purely in classical Japanese. Transmitted by means of education, it was never used as a spoken language. This literary education was based on a relatively limited corpus, mainly consisting of the Five Classics, the *Literary Anthology* (*Wen xuan* 文選), the *Historical Memoirs* (*Shiji* 史記), etc., a corpus that had become the common heritage of the whole Sinoglossic sphere. It would not be an overstatement to say that there is as much distance between classical written Chinese and the many varieties of spoken Chinese (*zokugo* 俗語 or *hakuwa* 白話) as between *kanbun* and Japanese itself.

In such a bi-dimensional linguistic—or stylistic—context, if we compare him to his predecessor Eisai 栄西 (1141–1215), who had transmitted Rinzai 臨済 Buddhism to Japan a generation earlier, the linguistic innovation that Dōgen brought about is remarkable indeed. While Eisai's classical Chinese style is quite orthodox, Dōgen introduces a revolutionary element into Sino-Japanese, by making use in his own "writings" of the sort of colloquial or semi-colloquial Chinese (*zokugo*) so conspicuous in Chinese Chan sources and materials from the Tang dynasty on, especially those of the Song dynasty.

To be sure, a form of colloquial Chinese had been used already in translations of Indic Buddhist texts from earliest times, creating thus a kind of Chinese Buddhist idiolect, as Professor Stefano Zacchetti recently stated,[16] one clearly distinct from classical Chinese, and duly utilized also in Buddhist texts written in Chinese by Japanese clerics. This "Buddhistic" Chinese, however, is in no way to be compared to the wholly alien style of the *goroku* 語録 literature, where both grammar and vocabulary are quite different from classical literary style, making the genre thus almost unintelligible without special study to a reader trained only in *kanbun*. One is therefore reasonably led to ask oneself what kind of reader Dōgen had in mind when he introduced to Japan such an exotic style. Or was his intent rather to use it only as an idiolect? Yet in that case, why use it in his teachings?

Here I would risk a comparison with Dōgen's illustrious Buddhist predecessors. Ever since Saichō 最澄 (767–822) and Kūkai's 空海 (774–835) time at the beginning of the ninth century, Japanese monks going to China in search of the Dharma had often brought back home many religious and cultural rarities that would enhance their prestige in their own country (*shōraimotsu* 将来物). Such objects—be they books, Buddhist images, liturgical tools, etc.—were moreover tokens to help establish in Japan the new Buddhist schools whose doctrines these monks were also bringing back.

The case of Kūkai is especially interesting, as he brought back not only teachings and rituals, but also, so to speak, a new philological legitimacy—which he

[16] At the Paris Symposium "Hiéroglossie IV: La sinoglossie" (held in June 2019), to be published in the future.

displayed in great literary works such as his *Bunkyō hifu ron* 文鏡秘府論, which he used for teaching Japanese literati the more subtle aspects of Chinese poetics. He thus established his place in Japanese cultural history as a master not only of Esoteric Buddhist teachings but also of the Chinese language, a position that was considerably enhanced by his theoretical works in what we may call language philosophy. It should be emphasized, too, that Kūkai's vast religious and literary output was exclusively in Chinese and that he never took any account of the Japanese language in his deep reflections on mystical language, though his later Heian and Kamakura commentators would do that for him.

In a sense, though this is a connection rarely made from this point of view, Dōgen can be seen as an emulator of Kūkai in his role as linguistic innovator, the difference between them being that Dōgen was much more radical in his impact. We can illustrate this by a telling example: the Sōtō 曹洞 Zen that he transmitted to Japan from Song China has been characterized by the practice of "sitting meditation," or *zazen*, in opposition to Rinzai as the bastion of *kōan*. But *zazen* is by no means an exclusively Zen technical term, appearing already in the *Lotus Sutra* several times.[17] What is, however, distinctive is that Dōgen exhorts people to this practice with the slogan *shikan taza* 只管打坐 ("single-mindedly just sitting"), which has a distinctive Chinese colloquial flavor and cannot be understood from a knowledge of *kanbun* alone. The fact is that Dōgen added a new dimension to the bi-dimensional *wa-kan* relationship by giving to colloquial (or pseudo-colloquial) Chinese, or *zokugo*, a religious status previously unknown to it, developing thereby a three-tiered hieroglossic network.

Before him, Japanese monks able to speak Chinese fluently were few. We may mention among these Saichō's disciple and successor Gishin 義真 (781–833), who acted as his interpreter in China; or Ennin 円仁 (794–864), who having stayed almost ten years in China, acquired a working knowledge of the colloquial that allowed him to describe the continental society of his time, though language at that level does not appear in his memoirs. In contrast to the high renown that Kūkai acquired through his unique knowledge of literary Chinese, a mastery of the Chinese colloquial was not appreciated in erudite Japanese circles, where it was considered merely an artisanal skill.

Dōgen's attitude to the Chinese vernacular was radically different: he chose it as a tool for practicing and teaching. We must first emphasize that together with his use of Chinese colloquial speech, Dōgen was also an innovator for his time in his promotion of the Japanese language as a tool for explicating Buddhism. One could say that he was preceded in that movement by the Tendai scholiast and hierarch Jien 慈円 (1155–1225), especially with his best-known work, *An Essay on History* (*Gukanshō* 愚管抄). Nonetheless it is clear, if we read the reasons given by Jien for choosing to write in Japanese rather than in *kanbun*, that he did thus in

[17] Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡邊海旭 et al., eds., *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大蔵経 (Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1932), vol. 9, pp. 37b, 45c, 49b.

order to be understood by less sophisticated people—possibly the newly-emergent rulers of Japan at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Jien was undoubtedly a master of the Japanese language, but for him its ontological value was to be found in *waka* poetry, not in expository prose.

In contrast to Jien, Dōgen, although he never wrote specifically about his views regarding the Japanese language, made full use of the vernacular (of course in its classical form—contemporary Japanese as actually spoken was not put into writing until the sixteenth century) for the purpose of propagating his teachings, though he did not use it exclusively. Unlike Jien's *Gukanshō*, or even the *Tannishō* 歎異抄 by Shinran 親鸞 (1173–1262)—which can be seen as the third main Buddhist work written in Japanese during this period—Dōgen's masterwork, the *Shōbō genzō* 正法眼蔵 (collected sermons from 1231 to 1253), presents the sort of stylistic novelty that marks it as an epoch-making monument, which I can only compare in linguistic importance, albeit in a totally different genre and with a totally different literary afterlife, to the *Tale of Genji*. While Jien was aware of the novelty of his attempt to write in Japanese about Buddhist matters and history, we do not find any statement by Dōgen regarding his style, though he was no doubt conscious of his own audacity in introducing into the Japanese language a new form of Chinese.

Coming back to Japan after four years of study and practice in Song China (1223–1227), Dōgen around 1233 began preaching the sermons that would be collected in the *Shōbō genzō*, throughout which he employed a unique blend of Japanese together with words and expressions drawn from spoken Chinese, or from the pseudo-colloquial that had become the characteristic style of Chan sources. This was merely ten years after Jien's *An Essay on History*. Dōgen made use of this new Chinese style in his sermons, in the same way that Japanese clerics preceding him, Jien very much included, had themselves made use of *kanbun* locutions. And in the same way that familiar *kanbun* locutions when employed within Japanese texts had been tokens or symbols of a scriptural authority, linking Jien's new reflections to orthodox Tendai dogmatics, so too did Dōgen's liberal and theretofore unheard-of sprinkling of Chinese vernacular and pseudo-vernacular (*zokugo*) Chinese locutions serve themselves as linguistic markers of the new teachings he hoped to bring to Japan—and of his own legitimacy as their bearer. At first glance, there seems to be no connection between the language worlds of these two Buddhist clerics and thinkers, but was there really no link between them?

I would venture to advance that there was indeed a connection, and that this was none other than Tendai doctrine itself. Although the matter has practically never been investigated from the standpoint of language, I would like to make such an attempt here. After entering religious life at the foot of Mount Hiei under the influence of his uncle Ryōkan 良観, who was a Tendai monk, Dōgen received the tonsure at the age of thirteen after some years of practice at Yokawa 横川 under Kōen 公円 (1168−1235), who was then patriarch (*zasu* 座主) of the Tendai School—precisely in the very year (1213) during which Dōgen's own

distant Kujō-clan 九条 relative, Jien, was also appointed twice to that same ecclesiastical post. Such a rapid turnover of abbots at Enryaku-ji Temple 延暦寺 is tellingly indicative of the various internal disturbances caused by the political turmoil of the time. However, it would be very hard to deny the possibility, and even the high probability, that Dōgen received direct guidance in *waka* poetry from Jien, who in Buddhist poetry (*shakkyōka*) was the luminary of his time.

This could be viewed at first as a flight of speculative imagination, but these were decisively formative years for Dōgen, who underwent training with both the "Mountain Gate" (*sanmon* 山門) and "Temple Gate" (*jimon* 寺門) branches of the Tendai school—rivals at the time. From the second of these, another of his relatives, the Monastic Prefect Kōin 公胤僧都 (1145–1216), redirected him toward Kennin-ji Temple 建仁寺, and to the Zen of Eisai. Although Dōgen's time spent studying Tendai Buddhist doctrine and practice was relatively short, it must have left a deep imprint on the young boy's mind. It should therefore not be presumed a baseless pursuit to look for any possible influence Jien may have had on Dōgen, especially in the matter of language.

The best thing would be to take up a concrete example of this possible impact. A well-known locution describes in four words the characteristics of Mount Hiei 比叡, the center of the Tendai school, and its main monastery Enryaku-ji: *kan-shitsu ron-hin* 寒湿論貧—"cold and wet, debate and poverty." This emblematic proverb points to the practice of scholastic debate, or *rongi* 論義, as being the religious exercise *par excellence* of the Tendai school, as natural and innate of an attribute as the monastery's own climate and social penury. To be an apprentice in the School was to receive training from an early age in the practice of debate, which allowed students to deepen their understanding of the most abstruse tenets of Tendai teachings. Young Dōgen could not have remained unaffected by such a fundamental training. It is therefore interesting to find in the sixty-fifth "case" (*kosoku* 古則) among the ninety collected in volume 9 of *Eihei kōroku* 永平広録, the following famous Chinese "enigma" (*kōan* 公案):

> An earthworm is cut into two parts, and the two heads writhe together; yet it is unclear within which of the heads the Buddha-nature is found.[18]

After a quatrain by the ninth-century Chan master Changsha Jingcen 長沙景岑, the *Kōroku* gives a poem by Dōgen of which we need only quote the first line here:

> Trying to debate the Buddha-nature, the two heads are writhing.[19]

Impossible to ignore here is the light satiric touch in the comparison between the squirming parts of the earthworm and the bald heads of Tendai scholiasts engaged in heated debate about one of the most important topics (*rondai* 論題)

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[18] 蚯蚓斬為両段，両頭倶動，未審，仏性在阿那箇頭. Text in Kagamishima Genryū 鏡島元隆 et al., eds., *Dōgen Zenji zenshū* 道元禅師全集 (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1999–2013), vol. 12, p. 303.

[19] 欲論仏性両頭動. Ibid.

in their school's disputation repertory, the Buddha-nature; yet equally salient here is the impression that such debates seem to have made on a youthful Dōgen's memory. It is probable that only in Japan could this allusion have been understood in its full range. There are other traces besides of the influence of such *rongi* in Dōgen's work, but we must leave them now for another occasion.

Two other fundamental Tendai doctrines must here be presented before going any further into Dōgen's poetry.

The first is that of *kyōsō hanjaku* 教相判釈 (usually abbreviated into *kyōhan* 教判 or *hangyō* 判教) the principle of "critical classification of doctrines," which consists in dividing up the teachings preached by the Buddha over the course of his lifetime into five periods and eight doctrines (*goji hakkyō* 五時八教), at the apex of which is the final, or almost final, revelation of the *Lotus Sutra*. This first tenet secures the supreme place of that sutra in Tendai dogmatics. The second tenet pertains to the exegetical method of the School and is closely linked to the first: it is the doctrine of "four-fold exegesis" (*shishaku-hō* 四釈法), which postulates that any Buddhist scripture, and more specifically the *Lotus Sutra*, should be understood according to four ascending levels of reading.[20] We shall only consider here the fourth level, that of *kanjin-shaku* 観心釈, or "exegesis by contemplating the mind," which consists of observing within one's own mind the effect induced by a reading of scripture. I have shown elsewhere that, especially in Jien's explicative poetry on the *Lotus Sutra*, the notion of *kanjin-shaku* is the underlying *raison d'être* of the subgenre known as *hōmonka* 法文歌 or "scriptural poetry."

The predominant position of the *Lotus Sutra* in Japanese culture, independent of any sectarian divisions, meant that, unlike in the Chinese Chan tradition, the Rinzai and Sōtō schools never stopped studying it. This is most conspicuous in Dōgen's *Shōbō genzō*, which can be said to be suffused with quotations from the *Lotus Sutra*.

4. The *Lotus Sutra* in Dōgen's Poetry

Here, however, I would like to examine some examples of the influence of the *Lotus Sutra* and its traditional Tendai exegesis on Dōgen, from that collection of sixty-nine *waka* poems attributed to him known as the *Sanshō-dōei* 傘松道詠, or "*Sanshō* Poems on the Way" (*Sanshō* being a name for the site of Dōgen's Eihei-ji 永平寺 Temple). The collection itself was published only in the eighteenth century, but an important number of the poems therein were already included in a fifteenth-century biographical work on Dōgen, the *Kenzeiki* 建撕記, albeit with slight textual divergences. It is difficult to vouch for the authenticity of all its poems, which are reported to have been composed by the Master between 1245

[20] These are: (a) *innen-jaku* 因縁釈, (b) *yakkyō-shaku* 約教釈, (c) *honjaku-shaku* 本迹釈, and (d) *kanjin-shaku* 観心釈.

and 1253, the year of his death. Nonetheless, as we will see, some of them are so surprising from the brush of a Zen monk, yet so typical of a Tendai scholiast, that their very doctrinal discrepancy may be seen as some token of their authenticity. It is particularly worthwhile to pay attention to a short series of five poems put together under the heading "Praise of the Lotus Sutra" (*Ei-Hokekyō* 詠法華経), as they are surprisingly close, coming from a Zen master, to the most basic Tendai dogmatics. For instance, here is poem 30:

四つの馬三つの車にのらぬひとまことの道をいかで知らまし

Those who have never ridden the four horses or the three carts,
How would they ever know the way of reality?[21]

This verse is typical of the *shakkyōka* genre and is built entirely on the "doctrinal classification" principle of the Tendai school: the "four horses" is a metaphor coming from the *Agon-gyō* 阿含経 (*Āgama* corpus) and refers to the "teaching of the Three Baskets" (*sanzōkyō* 三蔵教) as the first and lowest of the Four Teachings, at the time a synonym for the Lesser Vehicle 小乗 (and the verb *noru* 乗る, "ride," as currently written with the same character *jō* 乗 of course strengthens the allusion). The reference is equally obvious in the case of the "three carts," which refers, needless to say, to the famous parable in chapter 3 (*Hiyu-hon* 譬喩品) of the *Lotus Sutra* about the Three Vehicles being superseded by the transcendental *Lotus* teaching. This latter is the teaching here called "a teaching of reality," or *makoto*, currently written in that sense with the character *jitsu* 実, or *minori*, as we have seen already. It is therefore the *Lotus Sutra* itself. The locution *makoto no michi* had already been used by Jien frequently in his own Buddhist poetry with the same meaning.[22] Thus, in this simply-worded *shakkyōka* that Jien himself might well have written, Dōgen reiterates the Tendai dogma of the four teachings ascending from the "teaching of the Three Baskets" (*zō* 蔵)—here represented by the *Āgama* corpus—to the ultimate truth (*en* 円) of the *Lotus Sutra*, in conformity with Tendai doctrinal summaries. The poem is much more a Tendai than a Zen verse.

It is indeed a piece so imbued with Tendai teachings that one would be entitled to suppose Dōgen had composed it well before the year 1245 (to which ostensibly the earliest poems in the collection are dated), and that here we might well possess some trace of his more youthful, and ingenuous years as a poet. This, were it not for the fact that the ninth book of his *Shōbō genzō* has the very locution "Four Horses" (*shime* 四馬) as its title, making it difficult to dismiss out of hand the possibility of a later date, and the intriguing vista such a date would open on a mature Dōgen's real position regarding Tendai teachings.

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[21] Poem 30. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 et al., eds., *Shakkyō kaei zenshū* 釈教歌詠全集 (Osaka: Tōhō Shuppan, 1978), vol. 2, p. 170.

[22] See my *La Centurie du Lotus* (Paris: Collège de France - Institut des Hautes Études Japonaises, 2008), particularly the glossary, s.v. "*makoto*" and "*makoto no michi*."

The same deep and uncomplicated devotion felt by Dōgen toward the *Lotus Sutra* is expressed in poem 26, the first of the five:

夜もすがら終日になすのりのみちみなこの經のこゑとこゝろと

All night long, and all day practicing the way of the Law,
everything becomes the sound and the meaning of this sutra.[23]

We will find the same idea below in two other poems in this series, thus establishing a coherence in the presentation of the *Lotus Sutra* within Dōgen's Japanese poetry, in which the presence of the true Law (*shōbō* 正法) within the sutra is strongly emphasized. It would be natural to think that such poems were composed by Dōgen when he was still a teenage apprentice on Mount Hiei, but we have in volume 10 of the *Eihei kōroku* a series of fifteen poems on solitary life in the mountains (*sankyo jūgoshu* 山居十五首) which likewise reflects a very close devotion to the sutra:

幾悅山居尤寂寞　因斯常讀法花經　專精樹下何憎愛　妬矣秋深夜雨聲

How I enjoy the solitude of my mountain dwelling!
It allows me to read ceaselessly the *Lotus Sutra*.
Single-mindedly under the trees, what then of love or hate?
How I envy the sound of nightly rain in the deep of autumn![24]

The beginning of the third line, "single-mindedly under the trees" is a quotation mixing together two sentences from chapter 19 of the *Lotus Sutra*, where the locution *zazen* occurs as well,[25] as was noted previously, though linked there to the practice of reciting the sutra and not to the practice of Sōtō Zen. And the last line means that the poet would like to read the scripture with as persistent a regularity as the rain in autumn. It is thus obvious that Dōgen's devotion was not limited to his younger years and that it appears in his Chinese-language writings as well.

Another *waka* (poem 28) displays the idea of the universality of the *Lotus* teaching within the profane world:

此経のこゝろを得れば世の中のうりかふ声ものりを説くなり

For those who have acquired the meaning of that Scripture,
even the world's voices of buying and selling actually preach the Law.[26]

All mundane activities are to be seen as preachings of the Dharma in the eyes of those who have attained a real understanding of the *Lotus Sutra*. Two further poems in the series directly allude to the important Tendai dogma of "preaching of the Law by the inanimate" (*mujō-seppō* 無情説法). The first of these (poem 27)

[23] Poem 26. *Shakkyō kaei zenshū* (op. cit.), p. 199.
[24] Text in *Dōgen Zenji zenshū* (op. cit.), vol. 13, p. 215.
[25] 及読誦経法，或在林樹下，專精而坐禅. *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (op. cit.), vol. 9, p. 49b.
[26] Poem 28. *Shakkyō kaei zenshū* (op. cit.), p. 169.

puts animals and inanimate nature together in such preachings of the *Lotus Sutra*:

> 渓のひゞき嶺に鳴くましらたえだえにたゞこの経をと説くとこそきけ
>
> The echo in the valley, the monkey crying on the peak—though haltingly,
> as I hear them, they do but preach this Scripture.[27]

Occurring after this, a second verse (poem 29) suppresses the animate half to concentrate on the inanimate:

> みねの色たにのひゞきもみななから我が釈迦牟尼のこゑと姿と
>
> Figures of the mountains, echoes in the valleys, all as they are
> are but the voice and aspect of our lord Śākyamuni.[28]

The relationship between this poem and the one about the "Original Face" (*honrai no menmoku*) is obvious, as is also the link with Jien's *shakkyōka*, where the words *koe* 声 and *kotoba* 言葉 (or *koto no ha*) occur together.[29] This link with Jien's poetry is moreover an important preliminary to pieces by Dōgen on *mujō-seppō*, one that helps us understand Dōgen's own relationship to Tendai dogmatics.

It is thus all the more surprising, from such a point of view, to find in sermon 46 of the *Shōbō genzō* the following words about the preaching of the Law by the inanimate: "To understand, as simpletons do, the rustling of trees or the falling of leaves as the preaching of the Law by the inanimate, is unworthy of a student of Buddhism [. . .] Thus to understand plants and stones as the inanimate shows imperfect doctrine."[30]

From such a passage it would seem clear that Dōgen must have held Jien's poetry, where such an understanding of the *mujō-seppō* dogma is abundantly illustrated, to be simplistic. But what about his own *waka* poetry, where we note the same doctrine's presence with our own eyes, unless we choose to disregard that poetry as spurious? Yet there is no need to impute to him such a contradiction in poetical statements. We can simply infer that Dōgen as a *waka* poet did not feel obliged to follow the same path of thought as in his sermons, and that he was only yielding to the prevailing poetical discourse as delineated by Jien.

5. Dōgen and Jien

And it is in the light of that Tendai poetic discourse that we must pay attention to the importance of the term for "word"—*kotoba* or *koto no ha*—within the

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[27] Poem 27. Ibid.

[28] Poem 29. Ibid.

[29] Cf. for instance poem 40 in *La Centurie du Lotus* (op. cit.), p. 61.

[30] 愚人おもはくは、樹林の鳴条する、葉花の開落するを無情説法と認ずるは、学仏法の漢にあらず（中略）しかあるを、草木瓦礫を認じて無情とするは不遍学なり. Mizuno Yaoko 水野弥穂子, ed., *Shōbō genzō* 正法眼蔵 (Iwanami Bunko, 1999), vol. 3, pp. 58–59.

poems of the *Sanshō dōei*. That importance is made explicit from the first poem in the collection:

ながつきの紅葉の上にゆきふりぬ見るひとたれか言の葉のなき

In the Ninth Month the snow fell on the maple leaves—
of those who contemplate it, who would lack for words?[31]

It must be noted that here the *Kenzeiki* version presents a slight divergence, the last line reading instead: "who would not compose poetry?" (*uta wo yomazaran*).[32] The existence of such a variant only emphasizes the near synonymy between *uta* (poem) and *kotoba* (word/language), as the Japanese poem is considered to be the mode of expression *par excellence* of the *kotoba,* which is also none other than the Japanese language itself, an idea already visible in the Japanese preface to the *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (905) and with greater force later reiterated by Jien. Moreover, this relationship between *uta* and *kotoba* on one side, and the snow (*yuki* 雪) on the other, as the condition for the former's very production, perfectly illustrates the meaning of the poem "*Honrai no menmoku*" or "Original Face."

The same idea is latent in poem 53 of the *Sanshō dōei* collection, together there with the idea of the preaching of the inanimate:

はるかぜに我が言の葉のちりけるを花の歌とや人のみるらん

Dispersed are my words in the spring breeze,
will people see them as poems of flowers?[33]

Here too, the language points clearly to the link between poetry, the contemplation of nature, and meditation on the Buddha's words. Irresistibly this idea makes us think of a poem by Jien written under the heading "*Nyoze gamon*" 如是我聞, the initial sentence of the *Lotus Sutra* (and of all other sutras as well):

いはし水は今いふ人のことの葉のさなからうかふなかれなりけり

Mute waters of Iwashimizu, the words of the One now speaking
are indeed but leaves that float thus down the stream.[34]

In the light of his predecessor Jien's Buddhist poetry, Dōgen's own use of *kotoba* takes on an importance fully concordant with the kind of complex linguistic process we can perceive in the stylistic and linguistic circumvolutions of his *magnum opus*, the *Shōbō genzō*. It is true that a number of Dōgen scholars have cast doubt on the authenticity of the *Sanshō dōei*, but any recognition of

[31] *Shakkyō kaei zenshū* (op. cit.), p. 161.

[32] 長月ノ紅葉ノ上ニ雪フリヌ見ン人誰カ歌ヲヨマサラン. Kawamura Kōdō 河村孝道, ed., *Shohon taikō: Eihei kaizan Dōgen Zenji gyōjō, Kenzeiki* 諸本対校：永平開山道元禅師行状・建撕記 (Tokyo: Taishūkan, 1975), p. 87.

[33] *Shakkyō kaei zenshū* (op. cit.), p. 175.

[34] See *Centurie* (op. cit.), p. 6.

the work's spuriousness would only displace the problem further into the Japanese Sōtō tradition and its perceptions of the role of *kotoba* in the Master's thought.

We can, moreover, find evidence of the importance of *kotoba* for Dōgen himself, encrypted into his Chinese language poetry. Let us quote here the entirety of the verse about the earthworm:

欲論仏性両頭動　風火散時全体寒　生死従来無定主　等閑莫説此言端

Trying to debate the Buddha-nature, the two heads are writhing.
When wind and fire disperse, the whole body is cold.
There has never been a subject to experience birth or death,
So do not prattle idly about these words.[35]

The last two characters of the original poem, forming together a Sino-Japanese compound read *gontan* 言端 by "phonetic reading" or *ondoku* 音読, can also be read *kotoba* by "explicative reading" or *kundoku* 訓読. Yet the rules for reading *kanshi* 漢詩, or Sino-Japanese poetry, would require the word to be here orally pronounced as *gontan*, or even as *gentan*, but surely not as *kotoba*. It can only be in the poet's mind that this Japanese reading was carefully hidden, though by comparing this line with Dōgen's poetry in Japanese, we may safely assume that such was indeed what he had in mind.

6. A Reexamination of "*shinjin datsuraku*"

Such a trans-linguistic overlaying of *gontan* and *kotoba* may provide a hint for explaining another famously cryptic utterance of the Master, and for detecting, so to speak, *hieroglossia* in the making. In principle, the direction of hieroglossic influence would mainly be from the "sacred tongue" to the "vulgar tongue," from the "*hierogloss*" to the "*laogloss*." Yet it may happen that an idea or concept born within the "vulgar language" needs to be transposed into the realm of the "sacred language" in order to gain authority and circulation. If this sounds too abstract, let us give Dōgen's most famous saying as an example.

As is well-known, Dōgen-*zenji* entered Song China in 1225, attained *satori* 悟り (enlightenment) under the guidance of Rujing 如浄, abbot of the Jingde Temple 景徳寺, and then returned to Japan, bringing back with him what he presented as a new practice founded on that enlightenment, which was also proof of his legitimacy as bearer to Japan of the lineage of the Sōtō school. This legitimacy was emphasized by his second-generation disciple Keizan 瑩山 (1268–1325) in his *Denkōroku* 伝光録, a history of the transmission of Zen teaching from India to Japan. The saying that triggered Dōgen's *satori*, needless to say, was Rujing's utterance: "casting off body and mind" (*shinjin datsuraku* 身心脱落). According to Keizan's narration, Dōgen suddenly achieved "great enlightenment" (*daigo* 大悟)

[35] *Dōgen Zenji zenshū* (op. cit.), vol. 12, p. 303.

immediately upon hearing Rujing's words during a sermon. This utterance is considered to be a *kōan*, an enigma which not only led Dōgen to his own *satori* but also legitimated his place as the fifty-first master of the Sōtō lineage, which went back to the Buddha Śākyamuni, and as moreover the first Japanese patriarch of that lineage.

There have been not a few discussions about not only the meaning, but indeed even the factuality of Rujing's words, as it has been pointed out that such an expression in its entirely can be found nowhere in that master's works, nor indeed in Chinese texts more generally. This conspicuous absence has led some scholars to suppose that Dōgen simply misunderstood Rujing's Chinese, interpreting in his own way a slightly different sentence. Although it has been said of late that a Chinese source has at last been found, I would like to suggest here a completely different possibility for the origin of what is still an enigma indeed.

Some years before Dōgen's lifetime the famous wandering hermit (*hijiri* 聖) and poet Saigyō, who besides leaving behind a considerable poetical corpus (collected in the *Sankashū* 山家集) came to feature also as protagonist in a number of deeply interesting Buddhist narrative collections of the thirteenth century, *inter alia* the *Saigyō monogatari* 西行物語 and the *Senjūshō* 撰集抄, wherein a number of his own poems and teachings are inserted between tales of the religious and the supernatural. We find in these a surprisingly frequent use of the Japanese expression "discard the body"—*mi wo sutsu* 身を捨つ[36]—for instance in the *Sankashū*:

> 惜しからぬ身を捨てやらで経る程に長き闇にや又迷ひなん
>
> As long as I go on unable to discard fully a body I care nothing for,
> shall I wander ever further in perpetual dark?[37]

There are other poems as well, but I will quote the following, not from Saigyō's own poetry collection but from the *Saigyō monogatari*:

> 世[身]を捨つる人はまことに捨つるかは捨てぬひとをぞ捨つるなりけれ
>
> He who discards the world (var.: the body), in truth is that what he discards?
> Rather, what is discarded is he who would not discard.[38]

But especially worthy of note in this context is an episode in book 1 of the *Senjūshō*, where a Tendai monk by the name of Zōga 僧賀, harboring doubts about the efficacy of Tendai practice, goes in pilgrimage to the Ise shrine, where a deity blesses him with a revelation (*jigen* 示現) in these words:

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[36] It is to be noted that although this is a straightforward Japanese reading (*kundoku*) of the Chinese locution *shashin* 捨身 found frequently in Buddhist texts, as in the episode of the Bodhisattva offering his body to feed the tigress (e.g., 捨身飼虎), in Japanese the locution is mainly used in a figurative sense.

[37] *Sankashū* 山家集 738 (Iwanami Bunko, 1983), p. 115.

[38] Poem 137. Kubota Jun 久保田淳 and Yoshino Tomomi 吉野朋美, eds., *Saigyō zenkashū* 西行全歌集 (Iwanami Bunko, 2013), p. 409. For the variant 身を捨つる, see p. 462.

道心を発さんと思はば、此身を身とな思そ。

If you want to produce the Bodhi-mind, do not think of this body as a body.[39]

The interesting part, that directly relating to our main subject, is how Zōga reacts upon hearing this revelation: he takes off all his clothes and goes out naked into a new life. Here it is evident that the expression "to discard the body" refers not to the physical body of the flesh, but rather to the status expressed by the clothes, and that therefore this "body" is a synonym of *myōri* 名利—wealth and social reputation.

There is an echo of this moral in book 6 of the *Senjūshō*, where in this case it is a noble courtier (*kuge* 公家) receiving a revelation, from the deity Kasuga *myōjin* 春日明神:

この文の詮には、たゞ心をも心とてなとめそといへる趣とやらん。

The point of this text is the idea that you should not fixate on your mind as mind.[40]

Both utterances put together reflect an idea current from Saigyō onward: "the discarding of body and mind." Yet these examples, to which we could add many others taken from the same texts, demonstrate that the expression was taken in a very typically Japanese sense, wherein "body" refers more to one's social status than to one's physical body.

And we find in the commentary by Keizan in the *Denkōroku* two very interesting glosses, separated by a few pages, on the same locution *shinjin-datsuraku*: the second of these two is a regular *kundoku* reading: "*shinjin mo nuke-otsu*" 身心モヌケオツ[41] (even the body and mind slip and fall away), but the first is an adaptation, based on the locutions we have seen to be current in use in poetry and narrative from Saigyō onward: "*mi wo sute kokoro wo hanaru beshi*" 身ヲステ心ヲハナルベシ[42] (one is to discard body and withdraw from mind).

This brings us to an unexpected conclusion: the search for the source of that foundational formulation *shinjin datsuraku,* instead of taking us ever deeper into an elusive quest through Chinese texts, leads us rather to the contemporary language of Japanese vernacular Buddhism and to *kotoba*, to the expressive mode of *waka* poetry. Dōgen has simply endowed the vernacular with the more respectable-seeming syntax and vocabulary of Chinese, in order to reimport it into Japanese Buddhism, adorned now with a new hieroglossic respectability.

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[39] Kojima Takayuki 小島孝之 and Asami Kazuhiko 浅見和彦, eds., *Senjūshō* (Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1985), p. 8.

[40] Ibid., p. 177.

[41] *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (op. cit.), vol. 82, p. 408c.

[42] Ibid., vol. 82, p. 408a.

Conclusion

I have several times witnessed during the year I spent delving into Dōgen's language-world at the Collège de France a most gratifying reaction from several students and listeners who had had for the first time a direct encounter with Dōgen's texts. They told me that they had actually felt they were dealing with an exceptional personality, and truly extraordinary thought. Such feelings are doubtless not evidence for the objective existence of such qualities, but they also cannot be simply dismissed. Judging from further exchanges of views with those students, it seems clear that the main cause of this attraction is none other than Dōgen's language itself, an unclassifiable literary phenomenon that was not to be imitated for centuries, although the Chinese Chan vulgar style he relied upon has been in continuous use up to the present day in China and can, for example, be found in Xuyun's 虚雲 sermons in the twentieth century. The greatest originality in Dōgen's masterly handling of this Chinese *zokugo* is that he succeeded in inverting, so to speak, the telltale signs of that Chinese style: while in China it was intended to be close to the colloquial and thus distinguish itself from the artificial flavor of a literary Chinese Buddhist style, when transferred into Japanese text, it became a true *hierogloss*, that is, a language marking the religious character of its enunciations. One can even say it became a cryptolect insulating Sōtō Zen from the rest of the Buddhist world in Japan. While classical Chinese had already possessed a high hieroglossic status in the *wa-kan* relationship, the Chinese *zokugo* as cleverly handled by Dōgen added a new dimension from the Chinese language to the Japanese language-world. By doing this, Dōgen went farther than Jien in achieving the sacralization of Japanese as a Buddhist language. Jien concentrated all his literary power on the *waka* as a language-act parallel to the Chinese poem (*kanshi*), but did not seem to think too much of Japanese writing in prose. Dōgen heightened Japanese prose to the level of a religious language in its own right, through the introduction to Japan of a theretofore unknown aspect of the Chinese language. His Japanese style is immediately identifiable, if not readily understandable, and we may rightfully ask ourselves who among his listeners and disciples could have understood his oral utterances. Similarly with the wholly Chinese-language sermons of the *Eihei-kōroku*, we may wonder whether they were read aloud in Japanese or in Chinese, and, if the latter was the case, whether his Japanese disciples were able to understand him, and whether his Chinese followers could have understood his Japanese accent. Nor do we know whether the *zokugo* in the sermons of the *Shōbō genzō* were pronounced in Japanese or in Chinese, in phonetic or in explicative reading. What is certain is the role that he conferred upon Chinese *zokugo* within Japanese, in order to bring his own language to the religiously expressive level of Chinese Chan literature. And we can see in his poetic compositions in Japanese, all imbued with Jien's influence when it comes to *shakkyōka* about the *Lotus Sutra*, that he was also fully aware of the importance of *kotoba* as the basis of religious experience and

religious expression. It is therefore a fascinating study to investigate in detail the hieroglossic triangle delineated by Dōgen between classical Chinese, Chinese *zokugo*, and Japanese. None of the vertices of that triangle can be understood without considering the other two.[43]

[43] All my thanks to Dr. Jeffrey Knott for correcting my poor English and checking the quotations and the translations, and also my most heartfelt gratitude to my young colleague Dr. Didier Davin, for endeavouring to make out of my hasty draft a text that would somewhat better bear the reading of more exigent readers.

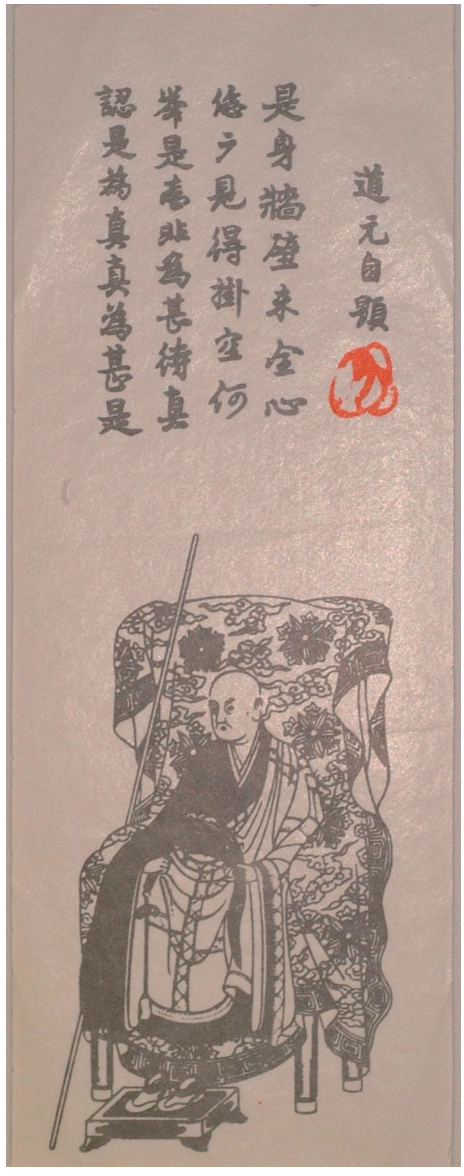

Figure 1. An *ofuda* お札 picturing Dōgen. (Collège de France, Bernard Frank Collection).
http://ofuda.crcao.fr/ofuda/F-13-09