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Dōgen Casts Off “What”: An Analysis of *Shinjin Datsuraku*

by Steven Heine

I. The Significance of the Doctrine

Perhaps the single most compelling and characteristic doctrine in Dōgen’s^a philosophy of Zen is *shinjin datsuraku*^b, or “casting off body-mind.” *Shinjin datsuraku* is significant for two inter-related reasons. First, it is the expression used on the occasion of Dōgen’s enlightenment experience, achieved under the guidance of master Ju-ching^{c1}. According to the major biographical sources, including *Kenzeiki*^d, Ju-ching chided the monk sitting next to Dōgen, who had fallen asleep during a prolonged and intensive meditation session, “To study Zen is to cast off body-mind. Why are you engaged in singleminded seated (*za*)^e slumber rather than single-minded seated meditation (*zazen*)^f?” Upon hearing this reprimand, Dōgen attained a “great awakening” (*daigo*)^g from his previous doubts concerning the relation between meditation and enlightenment.² He later entered Ju-ching’s quarters and burned incense, reporting, “I have come because body-mind is cast off.” Ju-ching responded approvingly, “Body-mind is cast off (*shinjin datsuraku*); cast off body-mind (*datsuraku shinjin*)^h.” When Dōgen cautioned, “Do not grant the Seal [of transmission] indiscriminately,” Ju-ching replied, “Cast off casting off (*datsuraku datsuraku*)ⁱ!” Thus, *shinjin datsuraku* marks not only Dōgen’s personal satori, but constitutes the basis and substance of the transmission of the Dharma between Chinese mentor and Japanese disciple. The phrase is particularly noteworthy in this exchange because it is manipulated by Ju-ching through inversion and tautology to represent command and foreshadowing, description and inquiry, evaluation and challenge.

Shinjin datsuraku is also distinctive in how frequently and pervasively it appears in the major writings by and about Dōgen.³ Unlike many of Dōgen's other central doctrines, such as *genjōkōan*^j (spontaneous realization), *uji*^k (being-time), and *mujō-busshō*^l (impermanence-of-Buddha-nature), whose use is generally limited to the fascicle of the *Shōbōgenzō*^m in which they are introduced, *shinjin datsuraku* plays a key role throughout much of the *Shōbōgenzō* as well as in the admonition of *Fukanzazengi*ⁿ, the autobiographical reminiscences of *Hōkyōki*^o, and the sermons of *Shōbōgenzō Zuimonki*^p, in addition to the biographies of Dōgen.⁴ Furthermore, each of the terms is often used separately: the non-duality of body and mind is expressed through notions such as *shinjin ichinyō*^q (oneness of body-mind), *shinjingakudō*^r (learning the Way through body-mind), and *shinjin o koshite*^s (unifying the body-mind); *datsuraku* appears in the sense of renunciation (*suteru*)^t and detachment (*shukke*)^u.

The term *shinjin datsuraku* consists of two compound words linked together as a predicate clause (without a specified subject, even when not used as a command). Each word presents a variety of issues in translation and interpretation. *Datsuraku*, which refers to the moment of spiritual release or liberation, suggests an activity that is at once passive or effortless and purposeful or determined. What role does individual decision play at this occasion? Is *datsuraku* instantaneous or perpetual, brought about by independent resolution or an interdependent illuminative power? Also, how is it related to Dōgen's emphasis on continuous *zazen* activity (*gyōji*)^v as the unity of practice and realization?

Although the meaning of *shinjin* seems to be more direct, an intriguing challenge to the authenticity of the term in Dōgen's dialogue with Ju-ching suggested by modern scholarship has raised numerous questions about the significance of this compound word. In the study of Dōgen's spiritual and philosophical background and development, *Kobutso no manebi*^{w5}, Takasaki Jikidō^x has speculated, on textual, linguistic, and ideological grounds, that Ju-ching did not actually utter "cast off body-mind," but rather "cast off the dust from the mind." The latter phrase, pronounced the same as the first in Japanese though differently in Chinese, may express a dichotomy of subject/object, purity/defilement—and thus a clinging to substantialism—

out of character with the way *shinjin datsuraku* is otherwise portrayed in Dōgen's thought. According to Takasaki, Dōgen either misheard or intentionally and creatively misconstrued—in order to correct—Ju-ching's expression, in a manner consistent with his deliberate rereading and rewriting of Mahāyāna scriptures and Zen epistles, particularly in the "Busshō"^y fascicle of the *Shōbōgenzō*.⁶

Takasaki's findings have been disputed by Sōtō scholar Kurebayashi Kōdō²⁷. Yet, his arguments force a reassessment of Dōgen's relation to Ju-ching and of his own approach to Zen theory and practice: What is Dōgen casting off? Is it different than what Ju-ching advises? An examination of different uses of *shinjin datsuraku* in Dōgen's works will be undertaken here to attempt to resolve the controversy, and to uncover the significance of this fundamental doctrine in terms of its essentially non-substantive basis.

II. The Meaning of Datsuraku

Datsuraku is a compound of *datsu* (also pronounced *nukeru*), which means "to remove, escape, extract," and *raku* (or *ochiru*), "to fall, scatter, fade." *Raku* implies a passive occurrence that "happens to" someone or something, as in the scattering of leaves by the breeze or the fading of light at dusk. *Datsu* seems to be the more outwardly active term, though it refers to the distinctive occasion of the withdrawal from, omission or termination of activity: it is the act of ending activity. Yet, the ceasing of action suggested by *datsu* is the consequence of a more deliberate decision than the surrender or acquiescence of *raku*.

In modern Japanese, the compound *datsuraku* means "to molt or shed." Though not generally used in everyday conversation, *datsuraku* frequently appears in technical works as "deciduous." Apparently based on this evidence, T.P. Kasulis translates *shinjin datsuraku* as "the molting of body-mind,"⁸ a highly suggestive rendering, though somewhat awkward in the context of Dōgen's creative expression. The use of "molting" has two distinct advantages. It connotes the spiritual loosening and dissolution of rigid and lifeless material (i.e., the self or ego)—as in the natural process of discarding skin, teeth or hair—in order

to disclose a regenerated and unencumbered layer below (one's original countenance).⁹ Also, "molting" is not a singular but perpetually repeated occurrence, which implies that *datsuraku* "is renewed and revitalized at each instant; enlightenment is a continuous process, not a single event."¹⁰

The difficulty with the use of "molting," however, is that it sounds like an event that takes place of its own accord on a seasonal or cyclical basis. The subject participates only as an object that has been acted upon without control or even a genuine contribution of its own. Yet, in *Hōkyōki* Dōgen quotes Ju-ching as saying: "To cast off body-mind is to sit in singleminded meditation (*zazen*). When practicing singleminded seated meditation, the five desires dissolve, and the five defilements are removed."¹¹ As *zazen*, *datsuraku* requires determination, resolution, and utmost concentration. It is not an automatic act or an involuntary response to stimuli, but lies at the very ground of decision-making.¹² Thus, molting probably does not capture the appropriate sense of effortlessness or spontaneity. Renderings such as "dropping," "dropping off," "falling," or "falling away" also seem to put too much emphasis on passivity. "Renunciation" and "detachment" may have a negative connotation in the sense of "turning away from," and like "freedom" or "liberation," are too literal, failing to convey the symbolic and poetic quality of the expression. "Shedding" may be a more suitable translation; it retains the naturalistic and organic overtones of molting, yet implies a purposeful occurrence, as in the shedding of clothes or tears.

The phrase "casting off" suggests an activity characterized by decisiveness and dedication beyond the automatic nature of molting or the ordinariness of shedding. Yet, even this rendering must be qualified, because the decision of *datsuraku* is one of discarding, its impact is a matter of release, and its immediacy lies in unburdening. As Ju-ching indicates, *datsuraku* does not result in the attainment of a new state (such as enlightenment or Buddhahood), but the removal of ignorance and attachment. It is the act not of maintaining or acquiring but of letting go. Therefore, "letting cast off" may be the most precise, if somewhat stilted translation.

Datsuraku thus recalls Heidegger's notion of *Gelassenheit*, which literally means "letting-ness," and is generally translated

as the “releasement” of the will to will as well as the will to not-will. *Gelassenheit* non-obstructively allows the unfolding of beings in the interplay of their opening and closing, presence and concealment. Similarly, *datsuraku* is the decision to abandon or forego decision, the meeting point of purposefulness and effortlessness through the mutual reciprocity of one’s own power (*jiriki*)^{aa} and the power of others (*tariki*)^{bb}. *Datsuraku* is not defined in terms of cause and effect, or rather it represents the occasion in which initiation and consequence merge.

To speak of other-power in the context of *datsuraku* does not necessarily imply an act of faith or surrender.¹³ As the term *Gelassenheit* suggests, it is possible to release will neither in deference to a greater will nor through the mere negation of will; not-willing is cast aside along with willing. To see *datsuraku* in terms of the convergence of own-power and other-power highlights the inseparability of independent effort and the interdependence of determinative factors at the moment of activity. As Dōgen explains in *Genjōkōan*, the “other” factors are not entities external to oneself, but non-objectifiable conditions always intimately related to the self which compel a relinquishment of fixations or attachments:

To study the Buddha Way is to study oneself. To study oneself is to forget oneself. To forget oneself is to be authenticated through all experiential factors. To be authenticated through all experiential factors is to cast off body-mind of oneself as well as body-mind of others . . .

When man first seeks the Dharma [outside of oneself], he drifts far away from its location. But when the Dharma has been received by authentic transmission, the original person is immediately realized.¹⁴

According to this passage, the Dharma is based on self-realization, which in turn involves self-forgetfulness or the penetration of all other phenomena. The self discovers what it is only by losing itself to elements which are a reflective manifestation of the self; and as such those elements must be cast off of body-mind by the same effort which lets one’s own body-mind fall away. On the one hand, it is delusory to seek the Dharma within because the self must be eradicated. Yet, true realization is noth-

ing other than the emergence of the original person who embraces the illuminative interplay of self and other.

The interrelatedness of own-power and other-power is reinforced by Dōgen's assertion that *zazen* is not a particular event, but the "supreme activity of continuous practice" (*mujō no gyōji*)^{cc}, "which is neither self-generated nor generated by others . . . [yet] upholds and sustains myself and all beings throughout the universe."¹⁵ Continuous practice is the eminently creative force, dependent at once upon the selfless yet resolute exertion of the individual, which lies at the basis of and determines the universal context of activity, and upon the influence of all beings, which constitute the integrated collectivity of independent deeds.

Beyond will and not-will, self and other, independence and interdependence, *datsuraku* is the power of the emergence of phenomena and the discarding of purpose or direction, or the abandonment of a causal or teleological perspective. Is it contradictory for an occurrence to be both the basis and the dissolution of creativity, a decisive activity that is effort-free? This apparent dilemma can be resolved by orienting the question of "how" *datsuraku* takes place in terms of "when" it occurs. That is, the conceptual structure of *datsuraku* rests on a temporal foundation encompassing the coexistence of arising and desisting; its nonsubstantive nature is based on the fluidity and dynamism of impermanence.

The continuity (*ji*) of continuous practice is neither endless time or timelessness nor an eternity superimposed on the current moment or a supratemporal realm arriving in time. Rather, Dōgen writes, "The Way which is called 'now' (*ima*)^{dd} does not precede continuous practice: 'now' is the spontaneous realization of continuous practice (*gyōji genjō*)^{ee}."¹⁶ The continuous practice of *datsuraku* is the perpetual renewal of the impermanent process of arising-desisting or of the interpenetration of life and death in each non-substantive instance of "now." From the standpoint of the here-and-now, aging and dying, destruction and dispersal, rejection and denial—or the discarding of casting off—do not indicate a negative condition in contrast to the supposed constancy of a permanent happenstance. The dissolution of creativity is coterminous with the ever-renewable and selfless possibilities of the creative moment. It is by virtue of the spontaneity of "now" that continuity occurs, and because

of its perpetual regeneration that the immediacy of emergence and dispersal arises.

To illustrate the interrelation between the occurrence of dissolution and the decision of letting go as manifestations of the impermanent and non-substantive moment, Dōgen makes a provocative verbal association or word-play between “falling” (*raku* or *ochiru*) and “casting off” (*datsuraku*) in his commentary on a statement by Ju-ching. According to Ju-ching’s own reinterpretation of the traditional significance of a noted Zen poem, the realization of *datsuraku* is not an elimination of transiency but genuine accord with it. “[Zen master] Reiuin,” he says, “attained enlightenment when he saw the peach blossoms in bloom, but I attained it when I saw them falling.”¹⁷ Dōgen indicates that the actual event of falling is nothing other than a manifestation of casting off, by writing: “Although the spring breeze opposes the peach blossoms, in falling (*ochite*) they achieve the casting off of the body-mind of the peach blossoms.” The scattering blossom is at once a literal display of *raku* and a symbolic representation of *datsuraku*. As the flower drops away it sheds itself of life, and spiritually casts aside the distinction of life and death to realize the temporal basis of action.

Datsuraku understood as the continuous practice of *zazen* is this activity itself, the supreme activity of creative dissolution, which is a movement that always breaks through its boundaries, not as a rupture, but by means of the inexorable dynamism of the self-generating process. The convergence of the decision/dispersal of *datsuraku* straddles and supersedes the tenuous borders of now and then, present and future, by being rooted in the actuality of life yet simultaneously standing out through anticipation of death. In negating itself, it attains what it is; the subject is lost in the temporal unity of action by letting go of that which the interdependent factors are causing to fall away.

III. Questions Concerning Shinjin

An examination of the “how” and “when” of *datsuraku* discloses an impermanent process deliberately chosen yet spontaneously realized through activity at once independent of and interdependent with the exertions of all phenomena. The next

key question concerning the doctrine of *shinjin datsuraku* is, “what” is cast off? Is *shinjin* the object, an entity or combination of entities, that is shed? Or is it, as Ju-ching’s inversion of the phrase in the original dialogue with Dōgen suggests, actually the subject which is performing the act? Ju-ching seems to be implying that body-mind both has been cast off and is doing the casting. Perhaps he is pointing to a perspective whereby subject and object, question and answer as well as “is” and “ought,” admonition and description, tend to converge.¹⁸ On the other hand, if it is understood from most usages of the term that *shinjin* is the object, then where is it cast to, and what is the remainder or substratum left? If *shinjin* is hypostatized as a substantive object ontically disposed of rather than ontologically disclosed, the fundamental dynamism of the doctrine may be defeated.

Shinjin literally signifies “body and mind.” But, as Kasulis points out, since Dōgen frequently expresses the non-duality of mind/matter, physical/spiritual, subject/object in notions such as *shinjin ichinyo* (oneness of body-mind), the rendering “body-mind” better suggests a unified and holistic phenomenon. Dōgen’s view of *shinjin* recalls the basic Buddhist analysis of human existence in terms of a psycho-physical unity of form (*rūpa*) and the designations (*nāma*) of consciousness (*vijñāna*) as a phenomenological field (*dhātu*) for the interaction of sense organs and sense objects. Yet, if *shinjin* is generally affirmed by Dōgen as the vehicle of realization, in what sense is it to be cast off; what is the basis and consequence of discarding it?

Difficulties in interpreting *shinjin* are compounded by a consideration of Takasaki’s claim that Dōgen altered Ju-ching’s utterance precisely to rid from it any trace of objectification or hypostatization. If Takasaki is correct, then Dōgen’s term “body-mind” must be understood in contrast to Ju-ching’s “dust from the mind.” An analysis of Takasaki’s argument is essential for a clarification of the meaning of *shinjin*.

According to Takasaki, it is highly unlikely that Ju-ching ever used “body-mind” (Chinese, *shen-hsin*)^{ff}, but quite probable that he said dust from the mind” (Ch., *hsin-ch’en*)^{gg}. Few sources are available for Ju-ching’s own thought outside the context of Dōgen’s reporting and commentary, but the latter term does appear one time in his recorded sayings (*goroku*)^{hh}. “Dust from

the mind” also is used in other Zen texts of the time. On the other hand, “body-mind” is used by no one but Dōgen; no other disciple of Ju-ching or Zen thinker in China or Japan has mentioned this term. Furthermore, when Dōgen’s collected sayings, *Eihei Koroku*ⁱⁱ, was taken to China by his disciple Giin^{jj} several decades after his death, the expression was changed to *hsin-ch’en*, apparently to conform to the interpretation of Ju-ching’s doctrine then shared by his followers.

Takasaki conjectures that the discrepancy is due to the fact that Dōgen must have had a “tremendous misconception,” substituting “body” for “dust,” homophones (*jin*) in Japanese. Dōgen may have misheard the term due to a lack of full comprehension of Chinese, intuitively misrepresented it, or purposefully changed it. In any case, the result is a constructive and meaningful criticism of Ju-ching’s approach to Zen training. The original phrase (“dust from the mind”) seems to suggest a duality of the purity of the mind and the defilement of dust, and thus a subtle clinging to the notion of a fixated self. For an entity to retain the gathering of dust, it must be stable and therefore substantive. Since this conception is not in accord with impermanence, it prohibits an authentic involvement in the process of casting off. Dōgen’s phrasing, however, eliminates any possible separation between non-objectifiable phenomena, highlighting the integration of practice and realization grounded in the continuing dynamism of *datsuraku*.¹⁹

Takasaki’s textual argument rests on two basic ideological implications concerning the character of Dōgen’s Zen:

1. Dōgen’s creativity of expression—Dōgen is noted for his creative or innovative use of language in recasting both everyday expressions and Buddhist scriptures through verbal associations, homonym conceit, punning, etc. Examples include: his word-play on the term *uji*, which in conversation means “sometimes,” but which he interprets as the primordial unity of “being (*u*)-time (*ji*)”; and his rewriting of the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* pronouncement that “all beings have the Buddha-nature” as “whole-being-Buddha-nature,” based on the dual meaning of *u*^{kk} as “to have” and “to be.”
2. His independent spirit—Dōgen has not only revised the sūtras, but criticized many of the illustrious Zen masters, including the sixth patriarch, Hui-neng, for the substantialist overtones

in the doctrine of *kenshō*¹¹ (seeing into [one's own-]nature), and Rinzai, for an over-reliance on *kōan*-introspection. Although Dōgen generally seems to be as respectful of Ju-ching as he is of Śākyamuni, it would not be surprising for him to expose and refute what he considers a philosophical misjudgement in the saying of his teacher.

Kurebayashi, however, challenges Takasaki's claim about the authenticity of *shinjin* on philological and philosophical grounds. Although he concedes that initially Takasaki's arguments appear to be persuasive, Kurebayashi contends that on closer examination they begin to unwind. From Takasaki's standpoint, it seems that Dōgen mistook the word "body"—either naively, intuitively, or deliberately—for "dust" because both are pronounced *jin* in Japanese. But Kurebayashi points out that this linguistic confusion could not have occurred in the original dialogue with Ju-ching, for two reasons. First, if an error actually was made it was not the mistake that Takasaki assumes, because "body" is usually pronounced *shin*. Although the pronunciation of *shin* is changed to *jin* when it appears as the second word of a compound, "body" is not second in this instance. Rather, it is "mind," also pronounced *shin*, that comes second and is changed to *jin*. Thus, Dōgen could not have substituted "body" for "dust." Second, Dōgen's supposed error was made not in Japanese conversation, but in a Chinese dialogue with Ju-ching, who was not conversant in Japanese. So, Dōgen would not have been mistaking one *jin* (or *shin*)—"body" for another *jin*—"dust"—but *shen* ("body") for *ch'en* ("dust"). These appear in reversed order in the two expressions—*shen* is first in "body-mind" and *ch'en* is second in "dust from the mind." The mistake Takasaki describes is even more unlikely when it is considered that the words from the two expressions that sound alike in Chinese are both "mind" (*hsin*), which Dōgen hears correctly despite the reversal of their order.

The analysis of Takasaki's linguistic claim by Kurebayashi demonstrates that Dōgen probably did not simply undergo a mishearing of whatever Ju-ching said. But the question remains, did Dōgen deliberately misrepresent or alter the expression to suit his view? This issue involves a philosophical evaluation of the relationship between Dōgen and Ju-ching concerning the nature and practice of *zazen* and the transmission of the Dharma.

Whereas Takasaki attempts to highlight the uniqueness or originality of Dōgen's thought, Kurebayashi denies any inconsistency between Dōgen and Ju-ching. On the one hand, Kurebayashi's stance must be viewed somewhat critically because, as a modern sectarian scholar, he is eager to show a continuity of approach taken over by the founder of Sōtō Zen in Japan from his Chinese mentor.

Yet, it must also be recognized that even if one concedes that Ju-ching uttered *hsin-ch'en*, as Takasaki argues, his expression may not have conveyed a standpoint any different than Dōgen's *shen-hsin*. *Hsin-ch'en* does not necessarily imply "dust from the mind"—it is not that dust is an obstacle to the purity of mind, but that both mind and dust, if objectified, are removed by *zazen*. Or, it could mean "mind-dust" as a synonym for the attachments of the five desires and five defilements that Ju-ching asserts must be discarded. Thus, *hsin-ch'en* does not suggest a substantialist standpoint. Conversely, for the sake of argument, even the phrase *shen-hsin* could be interpreted as an hypostatization if "body-mind" represents an entity thrown away. Kurebayashi concludes that, "The issue of whether it is '*hsin-ch'en* (mind-dust) or *shen-hsin* (body-mind)' does not pertain to the establishment of the basis of the religious standpoint."²⁰ The validity or authenticity of either term depends on the non-substantive perspective underlying and interpreting the expression, and not on the particular words themselves.

IV. "What" is Cast Off: Casting Off "What"

The impact of Kurebayashi's refutation of Takasaki's speculation concerning *shinjin* is to relativize the distinctions between "body-mind" and "mind-dust," and to refocus the significance of the doctrine in terms of *datsuraku*. That is, a clarification of the meaning of *shinjin* seems to result in a non-clarification: it does not matter what is meant by the term *shinjin*, or whether it conflicts with Ju-ching's utterance, if the essential dynamism of *datsuraku* is properly understood. Yet the question remains, is half of the expression irrelevant? What, exactly, is being cast off?

One approach to resolving this issue is to determine how

Dōgen himself might deal with the question of the content of the process or the object determined by the subjective act. A key passage in the “Busshō” fascicle, centering on the use of the term *datsuraku*, sheds light on the topic. Here, Dōgen comments on a traditional Zen dialogue in which the fourth patriarch asks the fifth patriarch, “What is your name?” Dōgen’s interpretation of the significance of the word “what” in this context suggests a striking parallel to the question, “What is cast off?,” and thus serves as a philosophical guideline for understanding his perspective.

In the beginning of the source dialogue, the fifth patriarch replies to the question, “What is your name?,” by saying, “I have (*u*) a name (*shō*)^{mm}, but it is not an ordinary name.” Dōgen’s commentary is largely based on word plays made on the homonym *u*, which means both “to have” and “to be,” and the homophone *shō*, the identical pronunciation of two different characters which mean “name” and “nature.” “That is,” Dōgen writes of the dialogue, “being (*u*) itself is the name (*shō*) [or nature (also *shō*)], which is not an ordinary name. [Having] an ordinary name is not this [sense of] being [as name].”²¹

This dialogue and commentary can be rewritten in light of the question, “What is cast off?,” or “What have you cast off?” The answer would be: “I have cast off, but it is not an ordinary casting off.” The commentary: “Being itself is casting off, which is not an ordinary casting off (in the sense of discarding or eliminating an entity), and ordinary casting off is not this sense of being as casting off.” Thus, casting off is being itself, if not objectified, though not in the ordinary sense of either having or letting go of a particular entity.

To further explore Dōgen’s approach to the matter of “what,” the remainder of the passage from “Busshō” will be cited, and then followed by a philosophical rewriting. The passage reads:

The fourth patriarch said, “What is this name (*ze ka shō*)^{mm}?,” which means that whatever it is (*ka*) is this [name], and this [name] is whatever it is . . .

The fifth patriarch said: “This [name] is Buddha[-nature] (*ze butsu shō*)^{mm},” . . . Because it is whatever it is, it is [called] Buddha

(*butsu*) . . . Therefore, although this [name] is whatever it is (*ka*) and is thus Buddha (*butsu*), if these [prefixes] are cast off (*dat-suraku*) and fully penetrated, this [name] is nothing other than the name (*shō*).²²

According to Dōgen's commentary, "What is the name?" as a question becomes its own answer; the name is "what" or whatever it is. To say "what," from one perspective delimits the name, but it also liberates naming from partiality by virtue of its whatness or nature. Similarly, the designation "Buddha" both restricts the name, as a particular word, and releases it to be the equivalent of the unobstructed freedom of Buddha-nature. But question and answer are both relative to the nature of name. When question (*ka*) and answer (*butsu*) are cast off in the literal sense of being left out of the dialogue, name is truly cast off to realize its nature beyond the limitations of specific designations.

The passage can now be rewritten to demonstrate the philosophical consistency underlying Dōgen's approach to "what":

What is this casting off?, which means that,
Whatever it is is cast off, it is the casting off of whatever it is.

It is casting off body-mind (or mind-dust), that is,
Because it is whatever it is, it is casting off body-mind (or mind-dust). Although the casting off is whatever it is, and is thus body-mind (or mind-dust—a holistic phenomenon corresponding to Buddha-nature), if these limiting prefixes—"what" as question and "body-mind" (or "mind-dust") as answer—are cast off of objectification or hypostatization, then casting off is nothing other than casting off.

Thus, the resolution of the question " 'What' is cast off?," is its own answer, "Casting off 'what,' " for which the word "what" has two meanings. On one level, it suggests that whatever the name is, is the name—or the nature of name—as a unity of question and answer. The being of casting off is nothing other than the perpetual process of casting off, which is its own content regardless of whether it happens to be called "body-mind" or "mind-dust." "Casting off 'what' " also means casting off the inquiry. If any name is hypostatized, the essential non-substan-

tive dynamism of casting off is lost. While “what” answers “what?,” ultimately neither question nor answer pertains to *datsuraku*.

This second level of meaning returns the significance of the doctrine to the tautology pronounced by Ju-ching in the original dialogue with Dōgen: “Cast off casting off (*datsuraku datsuraku*)!” “Casting off ‘what’ ” thus means that even casting off, if objectified, must itself be cast off through the creative dissolution of casting off. The continuous practice of *datsuraku* is a never-ending struggle to realize what it is by terminating itself.

The tautologically evoked experience of “casting off casting off” is symbolically expressed in the following waka by Dōgen, which captures the effortless dedication of *datsuraku*. The key phrase in the poem is *sute obune*^{PP} (“drifting boat”). In Japanese Court poetry, *sute obune* conventionally signifies loneliness or alienation in an impersonal world, but it is transformed here into a symbol for the strength, detachment, and dedication of enlightenment. Because the verb *suteru* (lit. “to be cast out” or “to renounce”) is frequently used by Dōgen interchangeably with *datsuraku*, the expression *sute obune* may be interpreted as representing “casting off ‘what’ ”.²³

Shōbōgenzō

*Treasury of the true Dharma-eye*²⁴

<i>Nami mo hiki</i>	In the heart of the night,
<i>Kaze mo tsunaganu</i>	The moonlight framing
<i>Sute obune</i>	A small boat, drifting:
<i>Tsuki koso yawa no</i>	Tossed not by the waves
<i>Sakai nari keri.</i>	Nor swayed by the breeze.

The “drifting boat” (lit., “small boat that has been cast out”) is not at the mercy of the elements, but appears thoroughly undisturbed by the “waves” (symbolizing objects of attachment) and the “breeze” (ignorance and desire). The illumination by the “moon” has both connotations from the poetic tradition, in which it represents an object of longing and the source of comfort in times of turmoil and grief, and Buddhist implications, as the symbol of the universal manifestations of the compassion and wisdom of the Buddha-nature.

The moon deepens the meaning of the resolute detachment or casting off of the boat. The boat is cut off from the harbor, but because it falls within the pervasiveness of the moon's glow, it is not lost, but protected by the compassionate Buddha-nature. Yet, in contrast to the moon, the boat is not totally aloof from the world of variability; it remains involved, at once aimless in its solitude and purposeful in its disciplined response to change. The single phenomenon of the drifting boat—perpetually casting off casting off (*datsuraku datsuraku*)—at once shares the overview and illuminative remoteness of the moonlight, and partakes of the world into which it has been cast out, yet has learned to cast off.

NOTES

1. Although the expression *shinjin datsuraku* is universally used in Dôgen's biographies, some controversy surrounds the exact phrasing of the dialogue with Ju-ching at the time of Dôgen's enlightenment. The version presented here appears in the 1538 Meishû⁹⁴ edition of the *Kenzeiki* (written in 1470), which is the oldest text available for what is generally considered the most complete and reliable of the dozen or so traditional biographical sources. The authenticity of the Meishû version is supported in that it corresponds to the version of *Eiheiji sanso gyôgo-ki*⁹⁵ (early 14th century), another early and dependable authority for biographical studies. There is a slight difference, however, with the Menzan⁹⁶ text (1738), which is actually the latest edition of the *Kenzeiki*, though the one frequently followed by modern Japanese scholars until the recent discovery of older manuscripts, including the Meishû and others, has challenged the accuracy of the Menzan. The discrepancy in this case is in the last line, which appears in the Menzan as "cast off body-mind" (*shinjin datsuraku*) rather than the "cast off casting off" (*datsuraku datsuraku*) of the Meishû. For the critical edition comparing the different manuscripts of *Kenzeiki*, see: Kawamura Kôdô, *Eihei haizan Dôgen zenji gyôjo—Kenzeiki* (Tokyo: Daishûkan shoten, 1975). For an English-language discussion of biographical sources for Dôgen, see: Takashi James Kodera, *Dôgen's Formative Years in China* (Boulder: Prajña Press, 1980).

2. Dôgen's "doubt," which according to *Kenzeiki* led to his pilgrimage to China and training with Ju-ching, involved reconciling the Japanese Tendai doctrine of original enlightenment (*hongaku*)⁹⁷ with the traditional Buddhist imperative for sustained meditation. The uncertainty is expressed in *Fukan-zazengi*, the first work written on Dôgen's return to Japan in 1227: "Originally the Way is complete and all-pervasive. How does it depend on practice and realization?" In Ôkubo Dôshû, ed., *Dôgen zenji zenshû* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobô, 1969 and 1970), vol. II, p. 3.

3. The centrality of *shinjin datsuraku* is expressed by Ju-ching: "To study Zen is to cast off body-mind. It is not burning incense, worship, recitation of Amida's name, repentance, or reading sutras, but the singleminded practice of *zazen*-only." Ju-ching's standpoint, recorded by Dōgen in *Hōkyōki* is also repeated by Dōgen in "Bendōwa."¹⁰⁰ And, as Hee-jin Kim notes, "The central religious and philosophical idea of Ju-ching's *zazen*-only was the 'body-mind cast off'—the phrase repeated by Dōgen tirelessly throughout his works." See Kim, *Dōgen Kigen—Mystical Realist* (Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 1975), p. 40.

4. *Hōkyōki*, Dōgen's account of the teachings of and his conversations with Ju-ching, written in 1226 (but discovered posthumously), marks the first appearance of the term in Dōgen's collected writings. In *Shōbōgenzō Zuimonki*, the verb *suteru* ("to be cast out" or "to renounce") is used interchangeably with *datsuraku*.

5. Takasaki Jikidō with Umehara Takeshi, *Kobutsu no manebi* (Tokyo: Kodokawa shoten, 1969), pp. 59–52, 190–193. Takasaki's arguments have been sympathetically reported in many Japanese works as well as in at least two of the major English-language accounts of Dōgen's thought: Daigan and Alicia Matsunaga, *Foundations of Japanese Buddhism* (Los Angeles-Tokyo: Buddhist Books International, 1976), pp. 238–239; Kodera, pp. 106–107.

6. For a discussion of the temporal foundations of Dōgen's creative rewriting of scripture, see this author's "Temporality of hermeneutics in Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō*," *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 33, no. 2 (April, 1983), pp. 139–147.

7. Kurebayashi Kōdō, *Dōgen zen no honrui* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1978), pp. 58–69.

8. T.P. Kasulis, *Zen Action, Zen Person* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1980).

9. As Dōgen writes in *Fukanzazengi*, "[In *zazen*] body-mind are cast off naturally (*jinen*)"¹⁰¹ and the original countenance (*honrai memmoku*)"¹⁰² is realized." *Jinen* literally means "in and of itself"; it can be used either in the philosophical sense of the unity and breadth of nature or in the ordinary sense of an automatic reaction.

10. Kasulis, p. 91.

11. Dōgen, *Hōkyōki*, in Ōkubo, vol. II, p. 337.

12. Dōgen stresses the efficaciousness of decisive exertion in the "Uji" fascicle: "The being-time of every single thing in the [heavenly] world and the [earthly] world are all in all the spontaneous manifestation and the passage of my utmost exertion." In *Shōbōgenzō*, ed. by Terada Tōru and Mizuno Yaoko (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1970 and 1972), vol. I, p. 259.

13. Although a convergence of own-power and other-power seems to be apparent in Dōgen's philosophy of Zen, it is probably far too strong to assert, as Francis Cook does in the chapter "The Importance of Faith," that "... Dōgen's Zen is not really the Buddhism of self power (*jiriki*), [but] as Pure Land Buddhists say, it is the Buddhism of other power (*tariki*)." Cook's interpretation seems to be based not so much on Dōgen Zen as on the approach of Keizan, affectionately known as the "second patriarch" of the Sōtō sect. Keizan

was largely responsible for making Sôtō a mass movement in the medieval period through an eclecticism combining elements of Pure Land worship and Shinto practice. See Cook, *How to Raise an Ox* (Los Angeles: Center Publications, 1978), p. 28.

For further discussion of the role of faith in Dōgen, see Nakamura Hajime, *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples* (Honolulu: East-West Press, 1964), pp. 452–458. The closest Dōgen seems to come to an other-power standpoint is the following passage from the “Shōji”^{xx} fascicle, apparently written for a Pure Land audience: “When we let go and forget [synonymous with *datsuraku*] our bodies and our minds, abandon ourselves to the domain of the Buddha and let the activity come forth from his behalf, yielding to this without expending either effort or thought, that is release from life and death and the attainment of Buddha-[hood].” In Ōkubo, vol. I, p. 779.

14. Dōgen, *Shōbōgenzō*, “Genjōkōan,” vol. I, p. 36.

15. *Ibid.*, “Gyōji,” vol. I, p. 165.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 166.

17. *Ibid.*, “Udonge,”^{yy} vol. II, p. 218.

18. The distinction between subject and object is blurred because the expression is almost always written without the particle *wo* between *shinjin* and *datsuraku*; *wo* is the grammatical signpost that the preceding word is the object of the subsequent verb. The main exception to this—when *wo* is included—is the passage from “Genjōkōan” cited above.

19. The controversy as presented by Takasaki seems a remarkable parallel to the famous tale of sixth patriarch Hui-neng’s poetic critique of the Shen-hsiu, whose *gatha* asserts that the mind is a bright mirror upon which dust collects and is removed. Hui-neng’s verse negates both the mirror and the dust in accord with thoroughgoing non-substantiality.

20. Kurebayashi, p. 65.

21. Dōgen, *Shōbōgenzō*, “Busshō,” pp. 50–51.

22. *Ibid.*

23. According to the main modern commentary on Dōgen’s waka collection, by Ōba Nanboku, *sute obune* is a symbol of *shinjin datsuraku*. See Ōba, *Dōgen zenji waka-shū shin-shaku* (Tokyo: Nakayama shobō, 1972), p. 149.

24. The verse, as part of Dōgen’s waka collection originally included in *Kenzeiki*, is in Kawamura, p. 89. This waka was one of a group of twelve poems written on Buddhist doctrinal topics in 1247 at the request of Hōjō Tokiyori’s wife. Because Dōgen had been called by the Hōjō to preach his approach to Zen in Kamakura, then the center of the rival Rinzai Five Mountain (*gozan*)^{zz} monastic institution, the image of the “drifting boat” may symbolize Dōgen’s personal feelings of solitude beyond loneliness or isolation during this daring mission.

Kanji

a.	道元	aa.	色心
b.	身心脱落	bb.	地心
c.	知冲	cc.	無上分行持
d.	雄辨記	dd.	今
e.	坐	ee.	行持現成
f.	坐禪	ff.	身心
g.	大悟	gg.	心摩
h.	脱落身心	hh.	語全集
i.	脱落脱落	ii.	水心全集
j.	現成公持	jj.	善尹
k.	有時	kk.	有
l.	無家	ll.	貝性
m.	正法眼藏	mm.	姓(n-mo)性(notie)
n.	妄動坐禪記	nn.	是何性
o.	繁慶記	oo.	是公性
p.	正法眼藏附記	pp.	捨心公持
q.	身心一如	qq.	明心
r.	身心寫道	rr.	心(平)三和行業記
s.	身心地筆記	ss.	直山
t.	捨	tt.	平學
u.	出家	uu.	對道誌
v.	行持	vv.	自然
w.	古仙(まね心)	ww.	木天目
x.	高峰直道	xx.	生死
y.	弘性	yy.	優曇華
z.	竹林隱室	zz.	五山