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Karma in Theodicy

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The study of religion explicates fascinating aspects of human history. From the past through the present to future times, in every area of human history a person's religious views provide his or her specific world view: How to consider the meaning of life or world. In a sense, suffering has come up as one of major problems in religion. This is because how a group of people finds release from suffering explains the specific aspect of each religious tradition.

With the above as a basis, theodicy was set not as God's justice in the Judeo-Christian tradition but as a broad term in order to examine a concept of suffering within all religious traditions. The discussion of theodicy followed from Buddhist basic concept through Mahayana Buddhism and Chinese Ch'an Buddhism to Dogen. Each specific case above was examined to show that how each of them dealt with theodicy. The agenda of discussion was how humans manage suffering. Explicating theodicy is shown not only as a Judeo-Christian consideration but also as a universal problem of human life.
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Joji Watanabe
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Karma in theodicy

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

General Framework

The aim of this paper is to explicate Dogen’s analysis of and solution to the theodicy problem. Dogen (1200-1253), a medieval Japanese Buddhist, is regarded as a founder of the Soto school of Zen Buddhism in Japan. I will employ theodicy as a key concept in explicating his thought in order to avoid giving a purely Soto interpretation. In other words, I will attempt to analyze Dogen from outside the Soto tradition.

But the term "theodicy" is itself problematic. In general, the term theodicy is thought to be a vindication of God’s justice. It usually defines how it is possible to continue to believe in an absolute transcendent God while encountering suffering. But this view, as sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920) clearly saw, is too narrow to make it applicable to religion outside the Judeo-Christian tradition and some would even say that it is too narrow for aspects of the western tradition as well. Max Weber saw that the Buddhist cognitive framework was characterized by karma, which makes up the vast variety of individual
destinies. By focusing on karma, Max Weber argued that the concept of theodicy developed as follows:

...the more the development tends toward the conception of a transcendent unitary god who is universal, the more there arises the problem of how the extraordinary power of such a god may be reconciled with the imperfection of the world that he has created and rules over.¹

For him, as indicated above, this view was too narrow. And, he says that Buddhism has "the most radical solution of the problem of theodicy."² Defining theodicy as a religious response to the problem of suffering without implicating a transcendent God makes it possible to deal with religious traditions such as Buddhism and show that they have their own solutions for the theodicy problem.

By dealing with the theodicy problem in Buddhist terms, I believe that Weber is the first scholar who viewed theodicy in a broad sense. In this regard, his primary focus on the theodicy problem is the world's imperfection. Weber mentions three types of solutions for the theodicy problem: Predestination, dualism, and karma. For Weber, karma is "the most complete formal solution to the problem of theodicy" and is a "universal mechanism of retribution."³

² Ibid, p. 147.
The concept of karma refers to the fate of the human condition and depends upon a system of ethical order that consists of either merit or demerit. This system maintains the belief in the transmigration of souls, which, as Weber mentioned, is a radical solution to the theodicy problem. In this paper, I focus on the concept of karma as well as causality, both of which are central to Buddhism. I will use the term "theodicy problem," therefore, in its broadest sense to refer to the human condition (e.g., suffering) and to its religious solution. This will make it possible to show that not only the Judeo-Christian tradition but also other religions deal with the problem of suffering. From this more comparative point of view, I argue that in a Buddhist sense, "suffering derives from the operation of the automatic law of moral retribution known as karman [karma] working in conjunction with a process of reincarnation."

In this context, there is no sense of an absolute transcendent God who rules over the universe such as in Judeo-Christian beliefs. More precisely, Buddhism does not admit that an absolute transcendent being gets involved in or controls the process of suffering. Instead it holds that suffering is the causal product of one's own ego and

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deeds. It is noteworthy that the concept of bodhi-sattvas (e.g., Avalokitesvara who is a manifestation of bodhi-sattva) and buddhas (e.g., Amitabha who is a manifestation of Gotama the Buddha) might appear to be something like the concept of God in the Judeo-Christian tradition. However, in broad Buddhist terms bodhi-sattvas and buddhas are not absolute transcendent agents but rather superhuman agents capable of aiding one to overcome human suffering. William's (1989) notion is that the concept of agents was available and willing to relate to human beings and the idea of agents was constructed during the development of Mahayana devotionalism. In the development of Mahayana Buddhism, Gotama the Buddha's superior qualities and cultivation of mentality are combined with practical and theoretical experience of the recollections of buddhas and powerful, compassionate bodhi-sattvas. This encourages people to emulate the Buddha.

A further implication of this study is that every kind of suffering has a cause so that there is no innocent victim. Instead of being innocent victims, human beings should be held to account for their previous conduct. To sum up, an explanation of worldly suffering afforded by karma characterizes the Buddhist attitude toward the theodicy problem. In this sense, Buddhism promises the

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possibility of the annihilation of anxiety, and the possibility of finding release from suffering for sentient beings overwhelmed by the theodicy problem. In the strictest sense, Buddhist belief in karma allows little room for superhuman agents either to release human beings from suffering or to respond to the suffering that occurs. From this point, Buddhist theodicy could be conceived as pointing to an eternal and cyclical process of the cause–effect relationship. Deities do not have any role in the creation of suffering. Therefore, karma is not equivalent to God's punishment or mercy in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Rather, it is a fundamental law of causality.

With these concepts as a basis, I will discuss Dogen's approach to Zen and its particular applications as a solution to the theodicy problem defined in these more general terms. Dogen's particular views will be analyzed about alleviating human suffering.
CHAPTER II

TRANSITION OF THE THEODICY PROBLEM IN BUDDHISM

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to analyze the transition of the teachings of Buddha from traditional Buddhism through Mahayana Buddhism and Ch'an Buddhism in China. Dealing with this transition shows a solution to the human condition (e.g., suffering) in each tradition. However, the focus here is not merely on the historical aspect of Buddhism but on the transformation of teaching. Especially, the theodicy problem is seen as the main topic. This analysis will be a key to understanding Dogen's approach to Buddhism in the next chapter. Knowing the teachings of Buddha might be helpful to gain insight into a characteristic example of Dogen's understanding of Buddhism. Although Dogen achieved enlightenment, Dogen was not Gotama. The point here is that the teaching of Buddha was passed on to Dogen and is reflected in his way of teaching. As already mentioned, the term of theodicy can be employed in Buddhism according to Weber who argued that theodicy "made the world and the vast variety of individual destinies rational and
acceptable.\textsuperscript{6} In addition, Lafleur's (1983) consideration of theodicy will be guidance in this paper. Lafleur claims that destiny is rational. In other words, the theodicy problem is viewed as karmic reward or retribution. Therefore, destiny is acceptable. With the above as a basis, how it is rational and acceptable to understand the human condition (e.g., suffering) as corresponding to human attitude is considered with the theodicy problem in this paper.

Explication of the transition process will show how Buddhist tradition came to Dogen, which is important in grasping Dogen's understanding of Buddhism. Dogen was a Zen master. Zen Buddhism in Japan came from Ch'an schools in China which belong to Mahayana Buddhism. Mahayana Buddhism arose from traditional Buddhism. Although each tradition claims different ideas to solve the theodicy problem, each of them is connected as representing the teachings of Buddha. Each tradition corresponds to its own epoch and people. The places in which Buddhism settled are different from its origination. People who understand Buddhism change as well. However, religion as a dynamic and living phenomenon develops in each age. The essence of religion has handed over from generation to generation. Religious tradition does not stay back in the past but

\textsuperscript{6} Lafleur, W. R. 1983. p. 27.
represents a matter of living experience. It might be said that the energy of religion is to encourage humans to rethink their experience. Therefore, considering transition is to grasp something very important about religion as well.

Before explicating Dogen as a Zen master in the next chapter, it is necessary to briefly analyze traditional Buddhist thought. Therefore, in this chapter, specifically, how Buddhism is religion is explained through the process of transition in dealing with the theodicy problem.

Traditional Buddhist Thoughts

The meaning of traditional Buddhism of this section is practices preceding Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism in India. Therefore, in this paper, traditional Buddhism refers to the basic concept of Gotama. Noteworthy, the basic concept of Gotama is not grasped as a timeless theory or an eternal document but a standpoint of Buddhism.

Buddhism means the teachings of Buddha. However, it is misunderstood that Buddhism refers to only a historical person, Gotama, just as Christianity is not only Jesus. This is because some monks achieved enlightenment through the teaching of Gotama but some of them were enlightened by Gotama's disciples. "buddha," in this context, is a person
who is enlightened. In other words, Buddhism is a manifesta-
tion of dharma by enlightened masters. The question of
what is Gotama's basic teaching has several answers: The
Four Holy Truths, the Eightfold path, the middle way, and
non-self. However, these teachings are systematized
through causality or paticca samuppada. According to
Majihima Nikaya, "Whoever sees paticca samuppada sees the
dhamma [doctrine or teaching], whoever sees the dhamma sees
paticca samuppada." In this sense, the solution to cause
and effect is a main focus of Buddhist teaching in any
case.

For Buddhism, paticca samuppada is viewed as a dynamic
interaction of mutually conditioning events of all phenome-
na. In this regard, paticca samuppada is defined as the
interrelation of cause and effect. Without cause, there is
no effect. However, this does not mean that it is neces-
sary to determine "the first cause" which sets events in
motion. In Buddhism, in particular, mutually conditioning
events have no prime cause but are dependent co-arising.
A cause is multiple and mutually affecting so that no
effect is predetermined. Thus, Buddhist teaching about
nature is positioned between determinism and indetermina-
cy. It is called the middle way which can be traced to
the idea of avoiding two extreme ways, such as indulging in

sensual pleasures and mortifying the flesh as asceticism.

In the doctrine of *paticca samuppada*, cause is not seen as a potential of power inherent in an agent but as a function of relationship. Grasping the co-arising is to know the process of phenomena or human condition. It is to know how events happen, how events transfer, and how change occurs. The process of the human condition, in Buddhist terms, is well-known as the wheel of life or twelve preconditions. These twelve elements are ignorance, volition or karmic formations, consciousness recognition, name (form), the sixfold senses, contact, feeling, craving, becoming, birth, and death. These conditions are linked to each other and make a wheel-like suffering, *dukhha*.

Often, ignorance is mistaken for the first cause of the twelve preconditions. However, there is no first cause in Buddhism. Unlike the "Unmoved Mover" as first cause in the Aristotelian tradition, first cause cannot be attributed to the concept of ignorance or *avijja* in Buddhism. Aristotle’s delineation of Unmoved Mover is not Being but logical or rational sense of phenomena. In this sense, his view is similar to Buddhists' causation because buddha did not refer to a superhuman being as a fundamental cause.\(^8\) For Aristotle, causality is based on the idea of "nothing comes from nothing or all that is must pre-exist in its

\(^8\) Kalupahana, D. J. 1975. p. 11.
cause.\textsuperscript{9} Therefore, it is necessary to assume an Unmoved Mover as a rational reason of empirical world. In other words, change derives from stability (Unmoved Mover) which is primary. With this in view, Aristotle's point might be seen as the linear or one-way causality. Buddha's recognition of causality is presented as positive and negative (i.e., while a good cause brings about a good effect, a bad cause yields a bad effect). His point is that whatever occurs, its effect will arise and whatever ceases, its effect will become extinct. In short, even when one condition of the twelve preconditions ceases, the wheel of life is cut out. In this regard, Buddhist causality is seen as the same idea as the Aristotelian tradition; nothing comes from nothing.

In Buddhism, even just one condition is primary because it controls the whole condition just as in Aristotelian thought the Unmoved Mover controls the whole condition. However, for Buddha, suffering is not a linear condition like the Aristotelian concept but a cyclical or co-arising condition. Therefore, it is misunderstood that ignorance is the first cause of suffering or duhkha. However, ignorance should be grasped as a condition of duhkha itself.\textsuperscript{10} In other words, realizing the twelve

\textsuperscript{9} Macy, J. 1991. p. 11.

\textsuperscript{10} Kalupahana, D. J. 1975. p. 97.
preconditions is not to explicate the first cause but to delineate conditions of suffering.\textsuperscript{11} In \textit{Sutta-Nipata} (III, Mahavagga; 12), Buddha mentioned sixteen conditions of suffering.\textsuperscript{12}

Realizing the conditions of suffering is the starting point of the Four Holy Truths: (1) what is suffering, (2) what is the source of suffering, (3) what is the cessation of suffering, and (4) what is the path to cease suffering. The fourth is called the Eightfold Path: Right views, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. In this regard, the Four Holy Truths stand for leading one to religious practice from the theory. In the meanwhile, practice is sustained and given meaning by theory as well. It is noteworthy that the Buddhist teaching method is called the middle way. As already mentioned, avoiding two extreme ways is Gotama's personal experience. Sensual indulgence is one extreme and mortification is the other. "The Tathagata [person who is enlightened] had avoided these extremes and so had discovered the Middle Way, which leads to enlightenment and \textit{nirvana}. This Middle Way is the Eightfold Path."\textsuperscript{13} In


\textsuperscript{12} See \textit{The sacred books of the East} (1881/1965).

In this sense, Buddhism defines the human being as an organic entity in which both physical and psychic factors are integrated.\textsuperscript{14}

However, the concept of causality does not have its origin in Buddhism but in the world view at the time of Buddha. Now let's explicate the non-Buddhist concept of causality to identify significant causality in Buddhist terms.

Causality in pre-Buddhist India including both the Vedic and non-Vedic might be seen as unidirectional or linear causality. According to Macy, in the Vedic view of causality, own power and self-causation make the effect pre-exist, as representing the potential inherent in the cause. This presupposition renders a distinction between substance and attribute. In this sense, the Vedantic and Upanisadic thinkers see substance as illusion while Buddha saw substance as real. What is real for Vedantic thinkers? They conceive of changeless pure spirit which has self-cause and self-determined as real. It is called Brahman.\textsuperscript{15}

It is concerned with a world-creator as well as atman or self. In this view, change and evolution require the concept of Brahman. Therefore, phenomena are seen as

\textsuperscript{14} Robinson, R. H. & Johnson, W. L. 1982. p. 11.

The tradition of Yoga is seen as against linearity. Yogic causality presents a reverse movement from effect to cause, from many to one, and from phenomenality to essence. Yet, this view is still unidirectional. This is because each situation or occasion, for a yogic, is seen as undone. In other words, changing phenomena are not seen as continuous movement from one stage to the next but as a never-ending process.

Non-Vedantic traditions have two indications. One is materialist determinism, and the other is accidentalism. Both of them have a similar aspect which is that no causal role is involved between souls and the world. Consequently, Buddhism denies the above theories for three reasons: (1) karmic determinists are denied due to what one did in the past, (2) the theistic determinists are denied due to creation by God, and (3) the indeterminists are denied due to no causal role. In this regard, Buddhist causality represents a radical solution between past and future, one and many, and producer and product. Even a reverse movement (i.e., one to many and many to one) is able to be explained. This is because, in Buddhist terms, a subject

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has two aspects, namely, cause and effect. For example, B is a result of A. In the meanwhile, B is a cause of C as well. This process is called *paticca samuppada*, or dependent co-arising. So far as observed, it might be said that Buddhist terms of causality are "mutual causality."\(^{19}\)

When Considering *paticca samuppada*, the concept of anatman or non-self should not be forgotten. Anatman plays a very important part in *paticca samuppada*. In other words, without anatman *paticca samuppada* is not defined. However, anatman (non-self) is not against atman (self) but rejects atman as eternal. In "mutual causality," there is no eternal or absolute substance. "Absolute," in this sense, means an eternal substance which never changes. That is, cause and effect is not necessary in the view of absoluteness. If an absolute self exists, mutual causality will not make sense at all. On the contrary, it might be said that pre-Buddhist (Upanisadic) thinkers believe in the concept of atman as an eternal self or existence, which never changes nor moves but produces phenomena. Therefore, atman is often seen as Brahman or the Creator. When Atman is seen as subjective, it is called self. On the other hand, when atman is seen as objective, it is called Brahman.\(^{20}\) In any case, Upanisadic thinkers are convinced

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that one pure subject is the basis of many phenomena. "Many" refer and belong to one pure subject, atman. In this doctrine, the process of "from one to many" maintains in principle. On the contrary, non-Vedantic thinkers reject all Upanisadic authorities just like Buddhists. Instead, non-Vedantic thinkers emphasize non-morality, determinism, relativism, mortification and materialism to explain phenomena.

In Buddhism, form, name, feeling, conception, and dispositions are impermanent and thus are phenomena of suffering. This exposition does not mean to extinguish self but liberate the self as non-ego in order to see phenomena as impermanent. The concept of anatman holds that whatever is an event to arising is also an event to cessation.²¹ Anatman means that there are no ultimate subjects or eternal existences in the empirical world. Buddha himself avoided answers for metaphysical questions.²² Although Buddha considered events only at the empirical level because humans cannot experience eternal or infinite objects, he never denied the existence of the soul. For Gotama, the soul was grasped as one's personality. Therefore, the existence of the soul was not viewed as eternal. By this, anatman also holds that there is no

²² Mizuno, K. 1981. p. 146.
"eternal self or soul" in the phenomenal world.

Further explication leads to the conclusion that an individual or a personality is logically admitted as a karmic movement. With this in view, the Buddhist term *atman* is manifestation of the human being. To be more precise, *atman* is considered as carrying one’s personality. Buddha said, "Abide with oneself [*atman*] as an island, with oneself as a Refuge. Abide with the Dhamma as an island, with the Dhamma as a Refuge. Seek no external refuge" (Parinibbana Sutta).\(^{23}\) *Atman* in Buddhism is not a metaphysical subject which responds to an eternal substance. The Dhammapada says, "Self [*atman*] is the lord of self, who else could be the lord? With self well subdued, a man finds a lord difficult to find" (160). Therefore, Buddhism does not deny *atman* but holds it as a personality in each individual.

Examining the theodicy problem by Gotama’s basic teaching, it might be said that traditional Buddhism attempted to solve suffering by emphasizing causality on a theoretical level and the Eightfold Path on a practical level. In observing the principles of morality, it is noteworthy that Buddhist consideration is not only with humans but also with all sentient beings. Thera’s (1966) analysis says that "in Buddhism there is no one to reward

\(^{23}\) Thera, N. 1966. p. 18.
or punish. Pain or happiness are the inevitable results of one's actions. The question of incurring the pleasure or displeasure of God does not enter the mind of a Buddhist." In this regard, it should be mentioned that no external transcendent agent plays any part whatsoever in the solution of the theodicy problem in basic Gotama's teaching. However, it does not mean that Gotama denied superhuman agents. It might be explained that Gotama respected superhuman agents but did not depend on them. Therefore, release, for him, is not bestowed by deity but by karmic causality. Since emancipation from duhkha (suffering) is not granted by deity, there must be spontaneous religious action taking place. In Sutta-Nipata, Gotama says that "do not ask about descent, but ask about conduct" (462). "Not by birth is one a Brahmana, nor is one by birth no Brahmana; by work (kammana) one is a Brahmana, by work one is no Brahmana" (650).

Gotama strongly believed that certain practices ameliorate suffering. This is because the condition of practice accompanies paticca samuppada. It means that practice as


a cause makes an effect. In this sense, Gotama did not see that superhuman agents control the causality although he accepts the idea of agent who is beyond humans. Whether theodicy makes individual destinies rational and acceptable depends on paticca samuppada. For Gotama, causality is the world view; therefore, even superhuman agents are subject to it. In other words, superhuman agents do not monopolize the theodicy problem but play an important part in it. Karma comes from one’s deeds which influences one’s future times. On the other hand, because of one’s deeds one can cut off karma. Therefore, in karmic world view, there is no innocent victim. This is the solution to the theodicy problem in traditional Buddhist terms.

The Concept of Mahayana Buddhism

This essay focuses on how the concept of traditional Buddhism is transferred to the Mahayana Buddhist tradition. The transition here is how Mahayana Buddhism employed the concept of transcendent agents (e.g., Avalokitesvara as a manifestation of bodhi-sattva and Amitabha as a manifestation of the Buddha), which did not serve as a savior in traditional Buddhism, to solve the theodicy problem. In Indian Buddhism, a reform movement arose during the two centuries from 100 B.C.E. to 100 C.E. Reformers called themselves "Mahayana Buddhists." Mahayana means the great
or big Vehicle in contrast to the Theravada or elder sect. Mahayana Buddhists gave the name of "Hinayana," which means inferior vehicle, to Theravada Buddhists. It has been said that Mahayana Buddhism arose within the Mahasanghika sect which disagreed with the Theravada sect. The reason for this schism is different interpretations of theory and precepts. Mahayana Buddhists argued that Theravada monks forgot salvation and propagation by indulging themselves in metaphysical studies.

What Mahayana Buddhists sought was to reform the formalities in which lay people were initiated into Buddhism. The Mahayana Buddhist accusation of formalism is that Theravada Buddhism as explicated by metaphysical questions was too difficult and profound to be understood by lay people. For reformers, Theravada Buddhism focused more on personal enlightenment first than on teaching lay people. Mahayana monks blamed Theravada monks for self-righteousness and poor relations with society. This view implies that Buddhist authority emphasizes the value of monastic life. It means that family life is not considered to achieve the highest stage. Mahayana Buddhism rejected this opinion. Of course, Mahayana Buddhism focuses on personal enlightenment as well. But personal enlightenment, for them, means to help people as well as oneself.

Helping others is to edify oneself, that is, achieving personal enlightenment.

The above mentioned does not show that Theravada monks are without enlightenment. For them, personal enlightenment is to achieve the level of arhat. Just as one who does not know what to do cannot be a leader, so a monk who does not achieve enlightenment cannot initiate others. Therefore, Theravada monks focused more on personal enlightenment first. However, by the time of arising Mahayana Buddhism, their emphasis on personal enlightenment made the monks too conventional and self-righteous to initiate others. Therefore, Mahayana Buddhism blamed Theravada Buddhism for formalism.

Theravada Buddhism holds three collections which are known as pitakas. Each collection is sutras or discourse, vinaya or monastic discipline, and abhidhamma or theory. On the contrary, Mahayana Buddhism rejected the authority of the Theravada school and published their own authoritative texts. Robinson and Johnson’s (1982) analysis says:

> The composition of Mahayana Sutras continued from 100 B.C.E., until 400 C.E., reflecting changes in doctrine and religious life, regional and sectarian differences, and sociocultural factors, some of which can be identified from the evidence of the Sutras themselves. There are no firsthand historical sources on this literature and the movement that produced it.  

Mahayana Buddhists were convinced that their sutras were

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presented as having been taught by Gotama himself in which their writings carried on the Buddha's true message.\textsuperscript{28}

The above are brief observations of the schism. Now let's consider the significance of Mahayana Buddhism focusing on how it separated from the Theravada sect by absorbing the concept of causality or non-self. In this sense, there are two aspects. One is different practice and the other is theoretical development. Mahayana Buddhists were not satisfied with the Eightfold Path though they agree with the Four Holy Truths. As already seen, the Eightfold Path arose within the Four Holy Truths. However, Mahayana Buddhists felt that the Eightfold Path is good enough for oneself to achieve enlightenment but is not good enough for helping others. They set forth the six prajna or six practices known as the perfection of giving, observing the precepts, patience, striving, meditation, and wisdom. In contrasting the Eightfold Path to the six practices, right views and intention correspond to wisdom, right speech, action, and livelihood to observing the precepts, right effort to striving, and right mindfulness and concentration correspond to meditation. In addition, Mahayana Buddhists set two other practices (i.e., giving and patience), which cannot be found in the Eightfold Path,

\textsuperscript{28} Mizuno, K. 1972. p. 28.
Mahayana Buddhists made their own canon and set six of these practices as their own principles. What do these reform movements imply? Mahayana Buddhism focused on release from suffering for every sentient being as their enlightenment. This concept explains helping others as well as oneself. In Mahayana terms, people who engage in buddha-nature are called bodhi-sattva, which is seen as an transcendental agent, for example, Avalokitesvara in latter times. On the contrary, Theravada Buddhists lead themselves to personal enlightenment first before helping others. They are called arhat. For Theravada Buddhists, although people who achieve enlightenment are called arhat, their enlightenment is different from Gotama. In Theravada Buddhism, bodhi-sattva indicates only Gotama the Buddha. Reformers broke through this idea and extended the concept of bodhi-sattva in which each person embraces buddha-nature. It means people are bodhi-sattvas, who will be a buddha.

In the time of Mahayana Buddhism, the concept of bodhi-sattva became having the attributes of a transcendental God who helps alleviate human suffering. In this sense, buddha-nature is seen as a potentiality "by which

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one becomes a buddha, the perfect man."31 This idea is called tathagatagarbha.

From these views, it is admitted that Mahayana Buddhism seems to make attainable enlightenment for lay people unlike traditional Buddhism. In this context, the transition from traditional Buddhism to Mahayana Buddhism is that while traditional Buddhism (the basic Gotama's concept) refers to paticca samuppada, Mahayana Buddhism refers to sunyata or emptiness to explain causality. It might be said that paticca samuppada was transferred as sunyata in Mahayana terms. The most elaborated theory was completed by Nagarjuna (Circa 150-250 C.E.). There are three aspects of sunyata: (1) existing through its own power rather than of another, (2) possessing an invariant and inalienable mark, (3) having an immutable essence.32 The concept of sunyata is one of the key characteristics of Mahayana Buddhism. Nagarjuna, who is regarded as the founder of the Madhyamika school, explains why he advocated emptiness:

If emptiness were real-in-itself, then things would not be empty, and my [Nagarjuna] system would be baseless. But emptiness, too, is empty. My system is without foundation, because nothing has any ultimate resting place. But the claim "all things are empty" is with me not an absolute claim on which to build a systematic philosophy; it expresses the highest truth

only if one does not assume that it expresses some "thing" called "emptiness" having own-being (svabhava). 33

To be specific in this scope, it is possible to say that the transition occurred from traditional Buddhism to Mahayana Buddhism. That can be proved as Mahayana Buddhism employed the concept of sunyata. However, it should not be understood that Mahayana Buddhism invented a theory of sunyata, as an alternative to paticca samuppada. Although causality is the basic concept of Buddhism in general, explanation and description of causality take different ways. Therefore, sunyata should be considered as a depiction of karmic causality in Mahayana terms.

Sunyata does not mean that there is no existence. Rather, sunyata indicates that all phenomena are transient. Theoretically, sunyata defines nihsvabhava which means impermanence. Physically or sociologically, there is nothing retained. Each person or society is always connected by time, place, and occasion. It means that phenomena represent correlation (i.e., the cause-effect relationship). Because of sunyata, each occasion is changed by circumstances. There is no eternal essence in phenomenal world. Sunyata (emptiness) means, for them, that nothing is stationary. By considering sunyata, Mahayana Buddhism defined karmic causality; because of

emptiness, phenomena are possible to change from one another. Williams (1989) quotes from Nagarujuna's writing:

The origination of inherent existence from causes and conditions is illogical, since inherent existence originated from causes and conditions would thereby become contingent. How could there be contingent inherent existence, for inherent existence is not contingent, nor is it dependent on another being.\(^3\)\(^4\)

The claim here is that whether entities originate depends on cause and effect and, therefore, they lack inherent existence. Because of this they are empty; cause and effect are generative.

On a personal level, sunyata means to suppress ego-self or selfishness. Therefore, a person who is in sunyata does not have personal desire, fear, hesitation, flattery, boasting, contempt, anger, jealousy, and envy. In this sense, sunyata represents "the condition that cannot be comprehended by discriminative thought (prapanca)."\(^3\)\(^5\)

Based on sunyata, one can always consider others just like oneself. With this in view, sunyata can be regarded as mercy which is not only for human beings but also for all sentient beings. Therefore, for Mahayana Buddhism, knowing sunyata is to analyze phenomena as they are. In this sense, sunyata is nothing other than causality in the traditional Buddhism term. On a practical level, sunyata

\(^3\) Williams, P. 1989. p. 60.

\(^4\) Williams, P. 1989. p. 60.

is seen as anatman. This is because when one drops one's selfishness, one does not discriminate between one and others.

Additionally, Mahayana Buddhism admits soul not as an eternal existence but as a manifestation of karma. Soul is a subjective matter changed by experience or karma. For example, good karma such as helping others makes a good soul and bad karma such as stealing makes a bad soul. The essence of soul is not stationary but continual.\textsuperscript{36} It seems that Mahayana Buddhism rationally explains the status of soul employing sunyata as well.

There might be, at least, three significant aspects which summarize the transition from traditional Buddhism to Mahayana Buddhism. First, by considering release, Mahayana Buddhism has explicated the concept of transcendental agents to be symbols of belief for lay people. Second, sunyata took the place of anatman and causality to explain the teachings of Buddha. And, finally, Mahayana Buddhism emphasizes practical aspect rather than theory. Its practical aspect is seen as the bodhi-sattva way which enlightens others. Or even more, theoretically, Mahayana Buddhism inherits causality and explains it as sunyata. Practically, using the concept of superhuman agent attracts many lay people to engage in religious practice. The

\textsuperscript{36} Mizuno, K. 1972. p. 149.
relationship between sunvata and superhuman agents is seen as evidence of karmic causality. For example, one can improve one's behavior; for even a bad man, it is possible to change his fate because of sunvata. There is no eternal bad behavior and fate. They relatively occur depending on situation. This view is the same as traditional Buddhism; however, Mahayana Buddhism put the concept of superhuman agents between karmic causality and practice so that agents support or encourage one to engage in certain religious practices. Noteworthy, superhuman agents do not appear first to help one who is suffering but one's total inclination toward deities invokes them; one's religious action is first, superhuman agents are second. They will be one's savior when one totally forgets egocentricity. This is the state of emptiness. By this, Mahayana Buddhism justifies a mutual relation between karmic causality and superhuman agents.

While traditional Buddhism limited subjects in only the phenomenal world to solve the theodicy problem, it might be said that Mahayana Buddhism employed the idea of transcendence for a solution to the theodicy problem. In traditional Buddhism, causality plays a role in the world. Transcendental experience is seen as metaphysical which is not experienced by humans. Therefore, transcendence has been seen as meaningless and helpless. On the contrary,
Mahayana Buddhism accepts transcendental concept (i.e., bodhi-sattvas and buddhas) for salvation. However, it does not mean to employ an eternal existence. For Mahayana Buddhism, transcendental agents are symbols of dharma in which humans find salvation. Whereas Traditional Buddhism focused on nirvana as the highest religious goal which one can achieve only by practice and separation from family-life, Mahayana Buddhism, rather, set salvation as a religious goal. In other words, Mahayana Buddhism opened nirvana, which used to be only for practitioners, to lay people. Because of sunyata, household and monastic life are not considered different from each other.

Although superhuman agents do not cancel the karmic results of earlier actions, they are ideal or conceptual saviors who let one rationally and acceptably understand suffering. Therefore, climbing up the ladder of transmigration depends on attitude of the individual. By the above, in the Mahayana concept, the theodicy problem will be solved by certain practice (e.g., six prajna) in daily life.

Ch’an and Its Solution to the Theodicy Problem

In the final section of this chapter, we view how Ch’an Buddhism analyzes the theodicy problem and attempts to solve it. "Ch’an" as meditation was not an unusual
practice but an ordinary practice for Buddhists in India. Therefore, no practitioners thought to claim meditation as an independent school of Buddhism in India. Analysis of this issue involves discussion of why the Ch’an school arose in China and Ch’an’s remarkable aspects which cannot be found in Mahayana Buddhism. With this in view, the basic concept of Chinese Ch’an (Ja., Zen) Buddhism will be made the main consideration in this essay. In doing so, let’s consider the origin of Ch’an first in which the key concept of Ch’an will be found.

The word "Ch’an" corresponds to the word dhvana in Sanskrit and jhana in Pali. When the word jhana reached China, the Chinese dropped the final syllable and called it jhan as Ch’an. Finally, in Japan, the Japanese called it Zen.37 The meaning of jhana or dhvana is concentration or meditative trance. In this sense, the word yoga also became used for meditation from the forth to third centuries B.C.. Furthermore, meditative practice might be traced back to the Harappa period in the Indus Valley (2500 B.C.-1800 B.C.).38 It means that the origin of meditation does not date back to Brahmanism but is found in ascetic wanderer sects of ancient India.

As briefly observed, in a broad term, origination of

meditation in India may be considered to have occurred before Vedantic period. On the contrary, more precisely, specific term dhyana (meditative trance) in Buddhism should correspond to Gotama. This is because before Gotama the Buddha the meaning of meditation was different. Buddha carefully observed and experienced Upanisadic yoga as well as wonderer (sramana) yoga. Buddha developed yoga meditation, taking it from techniques of tranquility to observation of phenomena (e.g., suffering). In other words, he found not only concentration of the mind but also enlightenment.

The claim here is that Ch’an Buddhism did not use meditative trance as a means to an end in contrast to traditional Buddhist terms. However, as the transition from traditional Buddhism to Mahayana Buddhism is regarded as transformation from causality to sunyata, so the transition from Mahayana Buddhism to Ch’an Buddhism can be seen as an explication of sunyata by practicing meditation. It should be understood that the transition is not seen as invention but as inheritance. A traditional Buddhist concept (e.g., causality) passed over to Mahayana Buddhism as sunyata. And then, both causality and sunyata were handed down to Ch’an Buddhism. In this sense, how the teaching of Buddha is grasped initiates transition. Therefore, the essence of Gotama’s teaching continuously
exists as a transformation in each form.

So far as observed, it is clear that Buddha did not invent dhvana but improved on the former meditative form of yoga. Therefore, as a technical term, Ch'an is not always the same meaning as yoga. Although both Ch'an and yoga are forms of meditation, they have different aims. While yoga stipulates that practitioners unite with Brahman, or the only reality, Ch'an does not require unity with any superhuman agents. On the other hand, both Ch'an and yoga are employed to realize the highest religious stage. In this regard, Ch'an does not reject yoga but develops yoga from cessation into observation. In addition, Theravada Buddhism used meditative trance as a technique to achieve the stage of arhat. For Theravada monks, meditation is necessary, just like Gotama was enlightened through meditation. In fact, meditation is a common aspect of Buddhism in general. This is because concentration of mind is the usual method in order for seeking causality. Therefore, Theravada Buddhism employed meditation but did not separate it as an independent school.

When Gotama practiced before he achieved enlightenment, it has been said that Gotama had guidance from two teachers. Arada Kalama is the one who led Gotama to "attainment of the state of nothing at all." The other teacher Udraka Ramaputa taught the stage of "attainment of
Although Gotama mastered these two forms of meditation, he was not satisfied and abandoned them. The reason is that the two teachings are ultimately considered deep concentration or samadhi only. Gotama realized that deep samadhi alone was not good enough for seeking emancipation. Gotama grasped suffering as a universal problem for humans. Therefore, Gotama did not think that the solution to the theodicy problem was contemplative identification of the soul unifying with the world spirit just like the Upanisads, nor did he believe it was spiritual experience starving out impurities by asceticism just like the Jains. This is because both practices hoped to achieve separation of body and mind. In this sense, both practices saw body as an obstacle. Therefore, the highest religious state can only be achieved in the afterlife according to these practices.

For Gotama, finding a solution for the theodicy problem during his lifetime was the ultimate experience. As already mentioned, Gotama attempted to solve the theodicy problem dealing with karmic causality, which involves humans in the center. Therefore, he abandoned the form of wanderer and mortification yoga which were considered not to agree with the daily life of ordinary people. Unlike the two former teachers, Gotama avoided a dualistic view (e.g., body and mind) and established oneness of body.
and mind to achieve enlightenment during the life time.

What Gotama developed was his meditation which is known in later Hinduism as raja-yoga.\(^ {39} \) The Awakening of Faith says:

> These two methods of meditation, i.e., samatha (Ch., chin) and vipasvana (Ch., kuan), singly and also as a pair, appear in the scriptures of old Pali sources. Much discussion of them is to be found in the sutras and commentaries. Explanations differ, but the basic notion that samatha implies "tranquilization, stabilization, cessation, etc.,” and that vipasvana implies "discerning, clear observation, distinct perception, etc.,” remains unchallenged.\(^ {40} \)

Although dhvana was born in India, it was systematized in China and then it was called Ch’an. The fact is that meditative trance went through many changes and vicissitudes. Therefore, the word "Ch’an" indicates many meanings (i.e., meditation, cessation, and samadhi or concentration and meditation). In this regard, Ch’an is not limited to one specific concept but admitted complex meaning in order to grasp the whole picture.

The sight will now be turned to the significance of Ch’an. Historically speaking, meditation school was not an independent school in Indian Buddhism as well as in early Chinese Buddhism as already seen. More precisely, there was no sectarianism at all until Buddhism was organized in China. For early Chinese Buddhists, Theravada and Mahayana


\(^ {40} \) See The awaking of faith. 1967. p. 95.
Buddhism in India were not so much different schools of Buddhism as they were different interpretations of it.\textsuperscript{41} Technically, Buddhist schools (e.g., Tien-t’ai and Pure Land) arose in China, not in India. The Ch’an school is one of them. Buddhism itself was brought to China between the period of 100 B.C. and 100 A.D. Meditation was known during the Late Han Dynasty (25-220). At this time, meditation was treated as a practice of Buddhism. In early Chinese Buddhism, Buddhist scholars engaged in translation of \textit{sutras} from India. At the beginning, Chinese Buddhists did not differentiate Theravada and Mahayana \textit{sutras}. They accepted all \textit{sutras} as the words of Buddha. However, they came to realize that the commentaries of \textit{sutras} often contradicted one another. As translations accumulated, Buddhist scholars came to categorize the \textit{sutras}. Their contributions focused on which \textit{sutras} explained Buddha’s true words. Eventually, scholars or priests who believed in the same \textit{sutras} organized their school or sect. Robinson and Johnson (1982) explain that:

The Buddha uses skillful means and preaches different doctrines to suit the conditions of his audience, and each \textit{Sutra} was delivered at a particular point in Shakyamuni's career. This provided the basis for the Chinese method of organizing the apparently contradictory teachings. The method was to divide the teaching of the \textit{Sutras} by taking one or a group of

\textsuperscript{41} Watanabe, S. 1980. p. 137.
similar texts as the most important.\textsuperscript{42} In short, schism in Chinese Buddhism is characterized by organizations which hold the same text but interpret it differently.

In contrast to this statement, the Ch’an school is quite different. Ch’an school was not organized depending on \textit{sutras} or texts. There is no dependence on \textit{sutras}. That is just what makes a Ch’an school a Ch’an school. In this sense, it has been said that Ch’an as an independent school arose in the late eighth century.\textsuperscript{43} Although Ch’an was known in early Chinese Buddhism, signs of Ch’an "school" could be traced back to Bodhidharma. Bodhidharma (d. 528) reached China in 470. He taught meditation not as merely religious exercise but as experience of \textit{sunyata} or emptiness. However, it does not mean that Bodhidharma should be regarded as the founder of Ch’an school. This is because he and his disciple depended on \textit{Lankavatara sutra}.\textsuperscript{44} Although Bodhidharma was not the founder of Ch’an school, his devotion was a steppingstone to later development of Ch’an Buddhism. It is noteworthy that meditation was not only for Ch’an school, which it was called in later days, but a necessary practice for all Buddhists in China.

\textsuperscript{43} Tagami, T. 1983. p. 136.
\textsuperscript{44} Robinson, R. H. & Johnson, W. L. 1982. p. 176.
Even Pure Land Buddhists attempted to perform **Nembutsu** or invocation achieved through practicing meditation. However, the concept of meditation changed after Bodhidharma. Meditation was no longer just a means to enlightenment.

During the late part of the T'ang Dynasty (618-907), the five schools of Lin-chi, Kuei-yang, Ts’ao-tung, Yun-men, and Fa-yen were born. The Lin-chi School divided into two sects: Huang-lung and Yang-ch’i. They are called the Five Houses and seven schools, which were organized during the Sung Dynasty (960-1279). Each school was initiated not by dogmatic difference but by their masters’ individual character. This fact, however, points out a central idea of Ch’an, that transmission does not depend on texts or words. The masters’ own vivid talk and actions were thought directly connected with Gotama’s teaching. In addition to texts, Ch’an schools started to collect their master’s analects or sayings (Ja., goroku). In this sense, it is clear that "no dependence of words" did not originate in Indian Buddhism but in Chinese Buddhism. That is, Ch’an Buddhism took deep root in Chinese culture.

By adapting to Chinese culture, Ch’an’s monastic life changed from a begging life to a self-supporting life. The requirement of manual labor became the way of buddha. **The**

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exercise counteracted the lethargy and depression that can come from sitting in meditation. Also, hoeing the fields and picking tea leaves were performed mindfully as part of day-and-night meditation.\textsuperscript{46} Unlike Buddhism in India which prohibited the monks' manual labor in order to prevent attachment for their products, self-supporting movement made the monks less dependent on donors. Eventually, Chinese Ch'\textquoteright an Buddhism has held that "one day no work, one day no food." This concept is not found in Indian Buddhism at all. Therefore, it might be said that the arising Ch'\textquoteright an schools developed meditative trance to fit into pragmatic Chinese culture.\textsuperscript{47} Therefore, it might be said that the Indian concept of \textit{dhyana} was reinterpreted by the Chinese, and then, "Ch'\textquoteright an Buddhism" was organized in China.

With the above as a basis, the sight will now be turned to the theodicy problem. Chinese Ch'\textquoteright an Buddhism proposes that having the experience, not knowing the words, is the solution to the theodicy problem. The contemplative practice stresses natural phenomena as the manifestations of dharma (truth). All phenomena stand in stark contrast to one another. That is, each moment and even a single happening discloses buddha-nature. The recognition of the

\textsuperscript{46} Robinson, R. H. & Johnson, W. L. 1982. p. 182.

\textsuperscript{47} Tagami, T. 1983. p. 154.
above is the solution to the theodicy problem. However, it
does not mean to merely accept phenomena as they are. For
Ch’an Buddhism, to accept phenomena is to break through
differentiation between subject and object. In other
words, observing matter as an object is suffering. In this
sense, the solution to the theodicy problem is to overcome
duality. For Ch’an Buddhism, the duality is seen as
discrimination between subject and object. Ch’an in
particular says that when one sees a tree, the tree also
sees you. This perspective represents discarding Selfish­
ness. Noteworthy, elimination of selfishness is not the
same as killing the personality. According to Izutsu (1977):

In order to see in a single flower a manifestation of
the metaphysical unity of all the so-called objects
but including even the observing subject, the empiri­
cal ego must have undergone a total transformation, a
complete nullification of itself—death to its own
self, and rebirth on a totally different dimension of
consciousness. 48

By this, it can be said that discarding selfishness means
to realize self itself. In this sense, the theodicy
problem will be solved when one realizes the self as
individual who exists at this place and at this moment.
That is, Ch’an does not delve into supra-psychology through
practicing meditation. For Ch’an Buddhism, it has been
said that one’s realization or self-consciousness does not

involve dualistic perspective. The claim here is that when one accepts phenomena as they are, one can avoid a dualistic position. Therefore, discarding selfishness is also explained as acceptance of phenomena as they are. To accept phenomena is to realize good as good or bad as bad. Good and bad are not against each other but a single pair. Avoiding a dualistic view is not to make any opposition. Understanding those delineations is to apprehend the basic theory of Ch' an Buddhism.

In short, The Ch' an school aims to grasp meditation as prajna (wisdom). That is, sunyata or emptiness is significant, which traces back to Bodhidharma.\(^49\) Meditation experiences sunyata. In other words, adapting Yamaguchi's (1982) definition of sunyata,\(^50\) Ch' an apprehends the condition which is not comprehended by discriminative thought. Because of sunyata, there is neither form nor name. According to this statement, even an ignorant person can be enlightened. There is no distinction between ignorance and intellect. In other words, enlightenment is not separated from ordinary or daily life.

Ch' an is rigorously dynamic so that Ch' an monks does not seek absolute reality toward Buddhist scriptural and ritual traditions. For example, in the Ch' an saying "one


\(^{50}\) See p. 25.
day no work, one day no food" explains that practice is crucial. From this point, the solution of the theodicy problem directly responds to ordinary occasions. Ch'an focuses upon this fact as buddha-nature. In this context, Chinese Ch'an monks grasped vipasyana (Ch., kuan) as a manifestation of daily life. This is because, for them, vipasyana (clear observation) is not seen as a concept but as something concrete. The embodiment of vipasyana should be used for helping others. In other words, family-life is the place for salvation. Therefore, Ch'an monks discovered that ordinary situations (e.g., cooking, eating, digging, planting, or chopping wood) could engender profound spiritual insights.52

In contrast to Mahayana Buddhism, Ch'an Buddhism attempts to solve the theodicy problem with action itself. It means that an explanation of Ch'an is in "pictorial language."53 In other words, "experience is language." This is because no two persons can feel the same. Therefore, the solution of the theodicy problem refers not to words but to acting out of daily life. In this sense, Ch'an focused on reality as the empirical dimension of existence. More precisely, unlike Mahayana Buddhism which

51 See p. 34.


lets one associate with specific practices (e.g., six prajna) in order to solve the theodicy problem, Ch’an Buddhism concentrates on one’s action itself as a manifestation of buddha-nature. Ch’an broke through the form of practice to embrace each individual. In Ch’an Buddhism, human beings are the basis for all experience. With this in view, one’s experience is buddha-nature.

For Ch’an Buddhism, therefore, experience at this very place and moment are crucial for the theodicy problem. Based on sunyata or emptiness, one’s own experience can transform all phenomena. In other words, the practice of sunyata overcomes the dichotomy between the observer and the observed or subject and object, which is considered as the solution to the theodicy problem. In addition, sunyata itself is just a concept, but practice of sunyata should not be integrated with the existential level. This is because the practice of sunyata means to practice meditation. For the Ch’an school, a concept of sunyata should be embodied. When the concept of sunyata is actualized, it becomes Ch’an. Therefore, the practice of meditation is not existential but rather empirical and needs the participation of each individual. It directly involves humans into acting out of religion.

For Chinese Ch’an Buddhism in particular, concept of meditation should be held in everyday life. For example,
a certain place, time, and occasion require a certain attitude. Like this, keeping a certain manner is nothing but the practice of meditation. Therefore, the practice of sunyata reflects on daily life. In this context, life itself is sunyata. From this, the solution to the theodicy problem is grasped as practice individual based on the concept of sunyata.
CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF DOGEN’S SOLUTION TO THE THEODICY PROBLEM

Introduction

The previous chapter set out the historical progression of the theodicy problem from traditional Buddhism through Mahayana Buddhism to Chinese Ch’an Buddhism. This historical progression deals with how each tradition attempted to solve human suffering. This progression leads to Dogen’s way of thinking as well. This is because “Zen [dhyana] was born in India, was systematized and developed [as Ch’an] in China.”

Therefore, analyzing origination of Ch’an helps to understand Dogen’s standard of Zen. Otherwise, Dogen’s studies will be a narrow view. In this sense, the previous section is seen as a prelude for Dogen’s studies.

The Dogen’s studies of this chapter will be focused on how Dogen attempted to solve human suffering, that is, the theodicy problem. With this in view, the historical progression will be contrasted with Dogen’s understanding or reinterpretation of Buddhism. Before setting out the Dogen’s studies, it is necessary to introduce Dogen

briefly. Dogen Kigen was born in A.D. 1200 in Kyoto. Dogen's father died when he was three and his mother died when he was eight. It has been said that Dogen felt the impermanence of the world and decided to be a monk. When he was thirteen, he went to Mt. Hiei, the great center of Buddhist studies. In 1223, Dogen went to China to study the true dharma. After he had received enlightenment under the guidance of Juching, he left for Japan in 1227. Although Dogen had an animated way of teaching, his style did not suit formal Buddhism. He gave up preaching in Kyoto and went to the country side. Finally, he rebuilt a temple and called it Eihei-ji in 1246. Dogen died of a disease at fifty-three in 1253.

Japanese Buddhism had been developing for more than six hundred years before Dogen. Magic prayers and ceremonies were characteristics of Japanese Buddhism in medieval times. Major monasteries had units of armed monks to engage in combat so that they were a force of political influence. In these times, people as well as monks believed that this was the age of decline of the dharma. This meant that only the teaching existed and it was not practiced and there was no enlightenment. Therefore, the reform movement of the medieval age rejected or rethought of formal Buddhism. Dogen was one of reformers who attempted to declare the true nature of Buddhism.
Three Aspects of Dogen's Religious Expressions

According to sociologist of religion Joachim Wach, there are three spiritual dimensions to express religious experience. Namely, theoretical, practical, and sociological expressions form an outline of theory of religious experience. In the first, theoretical expression is doctrine, creeds, commandments and other statements of religious theory. In the second, practical expression means ritual, prayer, meditation and other acting out of religion. Finally, sociological expression implies churches, monasteries, temples, and other congregations of religious activities. An analysis of Dogen on the basis of Wach's three categories leads to Dogen's outline of religious experience. Now let's consider a few of the most essential features of Dogen within theory, practice, and sociological organization.

Dogen is a founder of the Soto school of Zen Buddhism in Japan, as already mentioned, yet more than this, he is considered one of the most prominent thinkers in Japanese intellectual history. Even in a long history of the Zen (and Ch'an) tradition in Japan and China, Dogen's thought is unparalleled in depth and insight. In a word, his attitude toward Buddhism is characterized by emphasis on

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"zazen or seated mediation. It is called shikantaza or just sitting. In this sense, Dogen's mention of just sitting is often misunderstood as the exclusion of any dogmatic or theoretical doctrines. Although just sitting itself is a somatic action, Dogen realized profound intelligence in it; zazen is Dogen's essence. Therefore, analyzing shikantaza is to explicate Dogen's understanding of Buddhism.

Dogen's theoretical aspect is not separated from the practical aspect. This is because his emphasis is shikantaza or just sitting. The condition of seated meditation is his theory as well as practice. In a sense, it is understood that unlike the Judeo-Christian tradition Dogen did not separate body and soul. His policy of shikantaza (zazen) is practiced without expecting any reward, even enlightenment. Dogen said that "It is just being yourself right now, right here." For him, just sitting itself is buddha-nature. Therefore, he could find the true dharma in any age. Based on his thinking, he believed that humans are already buddhas. Thus, each individuals can embrace religious practice daily. On the other hand, some may wonder that if that is so, why have people suffered though they are buddhas. Dogen's answer is that "although buddha-nature is in each person, it is not actualized without

practice, and it is not experienced without realization." In this case, Dogen set practice not as method to achieve enlightenment but as experience to realize buddha-nature. This concept is contrasted to Pure Land Buddhism. While facing desperate situations in medieval times, belief in Amitabha, the Savior buddha who promised to lead one to the heaven or Pure Land strongly influenced Japanese society. Recitation of Amitabha’s name was represented as an important practice in order to compensate for the decline of the age of dharma. For Pure Land Buddhism, humans cannot help themselves. The only way to salvation is to long for Amitabha. For them, salvation depends on a transcendental agent beyond humans. In this sense, it might be said that the idea of depending on Amitabha stands for human weakness. On the contrary, Dogen thought that salvation is not granted to one. He focused on the buddha-nature of humans. Therefore, he rejected the notions of declining age and human weakness. Dogen emphasized that one should not be pessimistic about ignorance and low intellect. For Dogen, the realization of buddha-nature is zazen. He did not take refuge in transcendental agents but faced human nature as buddha-nature. In the medieval age, most reformers believed in the age of decline of the dharma. Dogen, however, rejected this idea. Although he

58 Shobogenzo [SG]: Bendowa.
admitted the decline of morality at that time, Dogen thought that release should not be accompanied by human needs (e.g., fame, honor, and money). For him, if one seeks release as one seeks a material need, release from suffering will be expediency. This is not the true dharma for Dogen. Until one realizes that one has buddha-nature, there is no release. Practically, the buddha-nature is realized by six prajna: Giving, observing the percepts, patience, striving, meditation, and wisdom. However, they should not be seen as the method for release, but each condition is in buddha-nature and is, therefore, what Dogen called "instantaneous enlightenment." His meaning of "instantaneous enlightenment" is not to stop practice after achieving enlightenment. For him, buddha-nature is not actualized without practice, and it is not experienced without realization. Even when one achieves enlightenment, one should spontaneously practice six prajna. In this sense, for Dogen, the religious goal is not to achieve enlightenment but to help every sentient being. Therefore, there is no end of practice.

In the sociological aspect (i.e., community), Dogen searched for community in monastic life while Pure Land Buddhists found communal life as a religious congregation. It is possible to say that Dogen thought that the monastery was a place for training, which was used to make religious
leaders who took care of ordinary people in order to enlighten them.

An analysis indicates that Dogen's outline has two aspects: (1) for lay people, and (2) for practitioners. For lay people, Dogen says that one can find buddha-nature in one's daily life. For practitioners, Dogen emphasizes that zazen or seated meditation is only the way to realize buddha-nature though he mentions that daily life itself represents buddha-nature. In both cases, Dogen attempted to deliver one from suffering based on the idea that humans are already buddhas.

Generation and Extinction of Dualism

Based on previous essays which outline Dogen's attitude toward Buddhism, let's consider his view of human suffering. In this sense, Dogen's approach to dualism will be the aim. Lafleur (1983) says:

Dogen felt that there was something wrong in the usual distinction between ends and means in talking about relationship between enlightenment and the discipline or practice needed to reach enlightenment. He disliked the way this implicitly subordinated practice to attainment and made the former into no more than a means to a goal conceived of as apart from that means. He concluded that the practice a Buddhist engages in— for him this was seated meditation—is itself the reality of enlightenment. A person doing zazen is not doing it as a means or strategy to get something or somewhere else, that is, to a condition in which the need for practice has been eliminated. Dogen wanted to collapse the means-versus-ends distinction and thus
fortify the value and meaning of practice. This statement implies that a distinctive mind generates illusion and, overcoming discrimination between subject and object, leads to buddha-nature. A further implication is that Dogen focused on practice, that is, acting out of religion so that he breaks through ordinary understanding which is based on opposition between subject and object, self and other, or good and bad.

According to Dogen in particular, overcoming a dualistic view is called shusho-itto (oneness of practice and attainment), shinjin-datsuraku (the casting off of body and mind), and mujo-bussho (impermanence-buddha-nature). However, they are simplified as gyobutsu or practice of buddha-way. For him, gyobutsu does not deal with opposition of subject and object but is embodied by just practice. More precisely, practice is comprised by three matters: (1) practicing buddha, (2) practice of buddha, and (3) practice as buddha. In this sense, Dogen grasped that "intellectual recognition is based on discriminatory concepts: Self and other, large and small, good and bad." However, for Dogen, gyobutsu does not address dealing with worldly benefits (e.g., money and fame) but says that one should avoid living in abundance and sensual indulgence.


In other words, acting out of religion does not focus on one's self-contentment. Dogen says:

A master of old cut off his arm and another cut off his fingers. These are excellent models from China. Long ago Shakyamuni Buddha abandoned his home and left his country. This is an excellent precedent for practicing the way. People of the present say you should practice what is easy to practice. These words are quite mistaken. They are not at all in accord with the buddha way. If this alone is what you regard as practice, then even lying down will be wearisome. If you find one thing wearisome, you will find everything wearisome. It is obvious that people who are fond of easy practice are not capable of the way.61

In short, people who substitute an easy way for practice are wrong from the beginning. That is, if an individual does not show discipline in practice, he or she will not achieve the way of buddha. In this sense, it might be said in modern times that people who are filled with self-delusion will be too lazy to work. This is because they are overawed by the difference between reality and their dream. Finally, they will exchange dream for reality and be lazy on their duty and not do what they should do. For Dogen, gyobutsu is not what one's preference is regarding practice but following the way of buddha. Dogen believed that one should not question prescribed practice, but be totally obedient to the master. With this in view, one has no chance to use one's intellectual recognition. That is, there is no dualism; for Dogen, intellectual recognition was dualism.

61 See Moon in a dewdrop. 1985; Gakudoyojinshu
As already mentioned, during the life time of Dogen, many believed in the decline of the age of dharma. This idea is one of three stages of dharma. The period of five hundred years after the Gotama's death is called genuine dharma. Texts, practice, and enlightenment exist at that time. The next stage is imitation dharma. This period is one thousand years. Texts and practice exist but there is no enlightenment. The final stage is called degenerate dharma which is ten thousand years. At this time, only texts exist but there is no practice and no enlightenment at all. There are different opinions about the years; however, this idea obviously shows the decadence of Japanese Buddhism. In the decadent stage, people find it almost impossible to achieve their enlightenment. Therefore, they practice what is easy to practice. This statement is totally against the way of buddha. For Dogen, the idea of three-stage of dharma is nothing more than dualism. Dogen overcame this decadent idea by striving for gyobutsu.

In terms of gyobutsu which is the solution to dualistic confusions, Dogen declared that gyobutsu refers to inherent enlightened nature. However, it does not mean selfish concerns or egocentric efforts. From this, Dogen's idea of gyobutsu does not refer to progress, development, nor retrogression but is explained as continuity. It
should not be grasped by sublimation nor decadence. More precisely, unlike the Aristotelian tradition which believed in moving a cosmic process toward perfection from a lower level, Dogen did not see practice as developing from a lower to a higher level. Since each condition, whether short or long, good or bad, or complete or incomplete is what it is, each condition is given an absolute meaning. An analysis of Dogen's solution to dualism is clearly found in the idea of continuous world view. It means, for Dogen, that practice has gone through the hardships of life and been manifested by each individual. Handing down the way of buddha, it is necessary for a master to request the novice to strive. In this sense, the relationship between a novice and a senior or a master and a disciple is filled with hard intention as well as mercy in the duty. There must be total obedience on the part of the novice to preserve continuity of practice. In other words, one must discard and suppress one's egocentricity so that practice is completely handed down from masters to disciples. It is noteworthy that Dogen believed in the seven buddhas which includes six legendary buddhas from the immeasurable past plus Gotama. Although Buddhism stands for the teaching of Gotama, Dogen accepted this legend so that he believes in Buddhism not as Gotama's own creation. In other words,

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Buddhism is not created by Gotama but a manifestation of dharma. However, adopting the seven buddhas is not to depend on superhuman agents. Believing the seven buddhas gives a power to transmission of dharma. Therefore, dharma has been handed down from the seven buddhas to their disciples. In this sense, even Gotama is one of them who manifested dharma. The point that Dogen declared is that dharma was not invented by Gotama. For Dogen, human's intellectual recognition is not perfect as they think.

Even though Gotama is regarded as an enlightened person, doctrine came not from his own knowledge but from the faith inspired in him to realize or actualize the truth, dharma. Dogen, therefore, strongly believed in the legend of the seven buddhas so that he finds the basis of belief. For Dogen, authenticity is based on the belief that the dharma, transmitted through the seven buddhas to Mahakashyapa, is inherited by generations of Indian masters through Bodhidharma and then by Chinese masters until it reaches Dogen himself.\(^6^3\) He called himself the dharma transmitter **Shamon Dogen** (monk Dogen) who went to China. The authentic dharma is directly transmitted from buddhas to buddhas.\(^6^4\) Dogen's understanding of the extinction of dualism is accomplished in the inheritance of certain

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\(^6^3\) See *Moon in a dewdrop*. 1985. p. 22.

practices (e.g., zazen). By this, practice has been passed down from generation to generation. Practice is embodied by one. And, then one is a buddha within practice. That is called gyobutsu. However, gyobutsu is not understood as self-manifestation but as the inherent enlightened nature in each person. As reiterated, gyobutsu is based on practice of inheritance which stresses dropping off one’s own discretion. This is Dogen’s key point to overcome dualism. For him, intellectual recognition produces a dualistic view, and its extinction deals with gyobutsu. This is because gyobutsu is carried out not by egoism but by spontaneous religious actions lead by buddhas. Therefore, gyobutsu is buddha-nature.

Continuity as Buddha-Nature; Gyoji

The previous section concludes that gyobutsu is the solution to dualism. The idea of gyobutsu is accomplished through practice, which is performed by the individual. It analyzed the relationship between one and one’s continuous practice. With this in view as a basis, let’s set out to discuss the term continuity. This is the attempt to reveal an aspect of Dogen’s solution to the theodicy problem. To be specific in its scope, this section will be confined to gyoji or activity-unremitting.

For Dogen, as a matter of fact, overcoming the
dualistic thinking is a solution to the theodicy problem. In this sense, how Dogen described the individual is a key point. Dogen says:

[Because of] buddhas' and ancestors' activity-unremitting [gyoji], our activity-unremitting is realized and our great Way reaches far and wide, because of our activity-unremitting, buddhas' activity-unremitting is realized and buddhas' great Way reaches far and wide. Because of our activity-unremitting, the ring of the Way is possessed of its power; as a consequence, every single buddha, every single ancestor, abides as buddha, surpasses a buddha, thinks as a buddha, and actualizes himself/herself as a buddha, never being interrupted.  

This breaks through two ordinary concepts. First of all, as already mentioned, gyobutsu is necessary to obey the orders of buddha way. In this context, some may wonder that obeying masters does not need an individual will but is rather blind obedience. Second, undergoing inheritance of buddha way as a meaningless ritual, without individual engagement, ends up as formalism. It has been said that one who has a good speech but no character does not take leadership. How does blind obedience initiate others? These suspicions arise due to lack of understanding of gyoji. For Dogen, acting out of religion shows one's personality. In this sense, even the same practice has different meaning for each individual. That is, it is nothing less than holding in high respect individuality. Furthermore, gyoji stands for handing down thought or

65 SG; Gyoji
practice. Without continuity, thought or practice is not being called gyoji. In this sense, gyoji is viewed as inheritance. On the contrary, fashion, which suddenly occurs, does not have the sense of inheritance. Even if it attracts many people, fashion is seen as short-lived. An event which accidentally appears is not called inheritance.

The matter of gyoji (activity-unremitting) is embodied by its passing over from generation to generation. Therefore, for Dogen, the practice of buddha does not occur in blind obedience but should accompany one's character or ability. In this sense, it is necessary to describe Dogen's concept of inheritance as gyoji briefly. Simply said, Dogen's term of inheritance is different from history.6

History stands for the word of historia in Greek. Its origin is "search" or "looking for." In this context, the term history indicates to search for a logical connection between events. Many things happened, however, not all of them are left as a history. History is looking for consistency or systematic relation through the events. Therefore, it might be said that history is searching for one thread from many events to connect with events as one coherence. In this assumption, history starts at "many." On the contrary, inheritance means to hand over one matter or thought from generation to generation. Unlike history,

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inheritance starts at "one" and ends up with "one."
Whatever the similar implication between history and
inheritance might be, in context they differ from one
other. The standpoint here is that Dogen's view of
Buddhist tradition does not deal with "searching" but
rather "handing down." With this in view, the reason
Dogen's denied calling his followers "Zen school" is
understood. Dogen says:

Who has used the name "Zen sect"? No buddha or
patriarch spoke of a "Zen sect." You should realize
it is a devil that speaks of "Zen sect." Those who
pronounce a devil's appellation must be confederates
of the devil, not children of the Buddha.67

For Dogen, as already mentioned, tradition is initiated not
only by a historical process of development, progress, or
decadence but also by inheritance. Taking this approach
leads to the question of why the concept of inheritance is
important for him. What Dogen found is not originality of
Buddhism but inheritance of dharma. However, it is a
misunderstanding to think that Dogen grasped inheritance as
eternal. Therefore, how inheritance is held is a crucial
point. The result is that the attention here will be
turned to gyoji.

According to the first quotation in this section, the
practice of buddha-nature is actualized and continued by
the practice of each individual. This endless condition of

67 SG: Butsudo
practice is called gyōji, through which occurs inheritance of dharma. However, when this inheritance is actualized in an organization and a system, gyōji will be a mimicking and chasing after buddhas and ancestors. That is no longer called spontaneous practice, but formalism. Therefore, without individual will gyōji tends to be inert. In this sense:

One may try to put aside activity-unremitting [gyōji] in order to conceal the delusive thought of escaping from activity-unremitting, but this putting aside of activity-unremitting is itself [a form of] activity-unremitting.  

Dogen continuously says, "Because of our activity-unremitting, buddhas' activity-unremitting is realized and buddhas' great Way reaches far and wide." Unless one experiences practice of buddha way, buddhas' gyōji is not actualized as buddha-nature. That is, gyōji is not faraway from one and not existential. Because one's acting out of religion makes concrete buddha-nature, one and buddhas are connected with gyōji. What Dogen claimed here is that buddhas' gyōji is viewed as inheritance of buddha-nature, and one's gyōji makes a buddha a buddha. This is a reason why Dogen refused blind obedience to tradition.

Furthermore, his claim is not only in monastic life but also in family-life. When gyōji is actualized by one, buddha-nature makes concrete salvation in daily life. This

68 SG: Gyoji

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idea refers to Mahayana doctrine, that is, "a rejection of any bifurcation of the holy and the profane." This means that there is no distinction between buddha-nature and daily life. In a very important sense, Dogen set aside gyoji with the condition of sunyata or emptiness. If gyoji were an eternal substance, it would be conventional practice. However, gyoji is actualized in the condition of sunyata. Therefore, individual responsibility and deeds at times are presented as continuous practice of buddha-nature, that is, gyoji. In other words, gyoji is no more than a manifestation of bodhi-sattva way. The classic Mahayana account of the bodhi-sattva figure says:

The bodhisattva recognizes the phenomenal world as empty, without abiding entities, and therefore worthy of being forsaken for nirvana; nevertheless, in order to rescue others, he returns to the world of samsara [realm of transmigration].

Since gyoji is viewed as bodhi-sattva way, one's gyoji is not comprehended as a means to an end, just like grasping bodhi-sattva way as a means to an accomplishment of salvation is wrong. The core idea is that both of them avoid falling into dualistic recognition (e.g., means and ends). This is because gyoji and bodhi-sattva way focus on condition. They should not be seen as therapy which is a means to wellness. Unlike therapy which will be unneces-

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70 Ibid, p. 93.
sary after achieving a certain goal, gyoji is endless practice. Although one achieves enlightenment, one should continuously practice gyoji. Therefore, gyoji should be spontaneously manifested in the condition of inheritance.

The explication of gyoji leads to the significant consideration of the theodicy problem. The attitude of gyoji toward the theodicy problem is surmised as the following. On the one hand, in the view of gyoji, the theodicy problem is considered part of the here and now. This is because gyoji, which is a practice of buddha-nature, attempts to solve the theodicy problem in each moment. On the other hand, since gyoji is endless, so is the theodicy problem. It means that the theodicy problem goes along with gyoji. The theodicy problem is dealt with by endless practice gyoji. In other words, the term theodicy is regarded not as eternal suffering which should be eliminated but as a condition of suffering. According to the Mahayana account, that "beings appear and pass away according to their karma."71 What is essential in this manner is that as karmic causality on one side concerns where on the wheel of life each individual will be reborn, on another side it concerns release from suffering which is found in the process of karmic causality itself. Karmic causality includes a teaching of the antidote to duhkha

(suffering). By considering basic Mahayana concepts, it might be concluded that the solution to the theodicy problem is in "theodicy." In other words, not avoiding suffering but facing up to it. In this context, the theodicy problem accounts for a universal consideration of human suffering.

Taking account of gyoji, how one faces and endures reality, not escapes from it, is a key point of the solution to the theodicy problem. Practically, Dogen emphasized four practices: Giving, kind speech, beneficial action, and cooperation.\textsuperscript{72}

The Concept of Time and Space in Dogen

The previous two sections (gyobutsu and gyoji) show the meaning of one's practice. In this sense, even a single act of religious practice connects humans with buddhas. The reason is that practice accompanying inheritance actualizes buddha-nature. Both gyobutsu and gyoji are accomplished based on one's practice and its inheritance. Although practice itself is not inherent, one's continuous practice embodies inheritance. The scope of this exploration will thus suggest aspects of time and space. By considering practice which requires time and space, realization of them leads to the solution of the

\textsuperscript{72} SG: Bodaisattashishoho
theodicy problem. The aim of this section is to explicate the relationship between time and space. Implicit in this motif will thus be uji or being-time in particular.

Dogen's view of time and space cannot be grasped apart from buddha-nature (gyobutsu) and continuous practice (gyojo). In this sense, the previous sections will give help in understanding this section. Dogen says, "This Dharma is amply present in every person, but unless one practices, it is not manifested; unless there is realization it is not attained." Although Dogen viewed phenomena as buddha-nature, the buddha-nature was not actualized without one's spontaneous practice. Even if one objects that escaping from one's duty is also a phenomenon, one is still in buddha-nature. Therefore, one should never be remiss in practice even for a moment. One should suppress laziness and selfishness in order to actualize buddha-nature. To be specific in its scope, Dogen stressed the evanescence and instability of the world. Nothing is eternally abiding. This positive explanation presents that one should not trifle with one's time. That is the reason why practice here and now is crucial. From this account, Dogen's standpoint of time and space might be stated as impermanent world or mujo. Adapting Lafleur's (1983) careful observation, let's consider Dogen's sense of mujo

\[73 \text{SG; Bendowa}\]
before explicating uii. This chapter will therefore proceed in two stages (i.e., mujo and uii).

From the latter half of the twelfth century, the concept of mujo had primary influence. Lafleur says:

Mujo was conceived of not only as impermanence— that is, as a temporal category— but also as instability, a spatial one. ... It is no longer limited to the more or less predictable sequence of the seasons; through earthquake, flood, and fire, impermanence/instability takes a totally unpredictable route.74

Dogen was one of those who was filled with the sense of mujo. For him, to realize buddha-nature is to face up to reality. Dogen, therefore, found the evanescence of the world. He stressed changing phenomena, just like the Aristotelian tradition. However, unlike the Aristotelian tradition, Dogen concluded that phenomena are impermanent. Nothing remains or abides forever. On the contrary, the Aristotelian tradition which gave attention to the empirical world of experience allowed reality to change. That is, new things are always coming up. Yet it still assumed that some external agent, which is stability or permanence, was primary. Therefore, they concluded that phenomena were permanent; phenomena should be accounted for as derivative from permanence. Although both traditions have the same starting point, that is, "changing phenomena," their conclusions are different. In this context, it might be

implied that Dogen stressed the dynamic process as whole, by contrast, the Aristotelian tradition focussed on the world in terms of substance as whole.

The basis of medieval Japanese Buddhism, that is, Mahayana Buddhist perspective, is Tendai Makashikan and Lotus Sutra. As a matter of fact, the concept of mujo is made sophisticated by Tendai thought, for examples Makashikan by Chinese thinker Chih-i (538–597) and the Lotus Sutra which is the foundation of the Tendai school. Then, the concept of mujo played a central part of religion as well as thought through the Heian period (794–1191) and the Kamakura (1192–1333) to the Muromachi period (1334–1573). Eventually, it had developed as an aesthetic quality or yugen in medieval Japanese literary rhetoric. The basis of mujo is the framework of transmigration or rokudo (six worlds: Gods, humans, asuras or fighting spirits, animals, hungry ghosts, and creatures of hell) which is regarded as "new intellectual strategies and dialectics in East Asian Buddhism." The emphasis on evanescence leads to facing reality, especially birth and death. Because of mujo (impermanence), the birth and death problem or transmigration appear as reality in daily life. For Dogen, mujo does not dwell in a nihilistic stage but shows a dynamic explanation of phenomena.

Taken from the preceding analysis of mujo, let's examine Dogen's poem. He writes:

Flowers in spring
cuckoos in summer
moon in autumn
snow in winter
serene and cool.76

This poem is titled Honrai no memmoku or Original Face which does not merely suggest the traditional literary aesthetics but regards the realization of "being free from the conventional attributes of things."77 Although Dogen here used the most common images of the Japanese four seasons, he attempted to break through ordinary understanding (e.g., distinction between the general and the particular or subject and object). This consideration could be traced back to Makashikan. The term shikan is a translation of two sanskrit terms, samatha (shi) and vipasyana (kan) as already mentioned. In short, the aspect of shikan could be rendered as calm and contemplation. What the term shikan brings is a rejection and refutation of ontological dualism. In other words, when one calms down the mind and contemplates phenomena, one can no longer find an eternal substance as essence which is impervious to alteration. Therefore, no beings exist without depending on all other things. In a very important sense, shikan insists that the

77 Ibid, p. 20.
subject of observation is not concerned as separated from its objects. Lafleur remarks as follows:

This insistence on "radical nondualism" (funi) is very strong in Tendai and makes it fundamentally different from the majority of the philosophies and religious practices that have had their origin in the West. With this in view, Dogen's poem has a dimension of ontological egalitarianism. This idea, for Dogen, is sustained by the doctrine of emptiness. That all phenomena are emptiness does not acknowledge existential nihilism but emphasizes that entities change as they are. This is because Dogen was aware of changing phenomena as buddha-nature. Based on emptiness, phenomena should change their forms. In this sense, there is no initiative of aseity, "the status of being unconditioned and beyond influence or causation by any other thing." Tendai school in particular discusses it as three stages or santai doctrine. Briefly stated, there are ku (the void), ke (the provisional), and chu (the middle) stages. Regarding phenomena as ku tends to the danger of reification. To avoid reifying is to affirm the reality as ke. Finally, the establishment of reality accurately links ku and ke by the concept of chu which is not merely a position of midway but the recognition of equalized tension in both stages. The point here is that the santai, which is the doctrine of emptiness

79 Ibid, p. 92.
explains no bifurcation of sacred and secular; there is no enlightenment without the worldly passions (*bonno soku bodai*). With this as a basis, Dogen's poem contributes not by using any particular objects or ideas but by rejecting symbolism in order to explicate natural phenomena as buddha-nature.

The fundamental aspect of Dogen's verse is the negation of confrontational relationship between an event outside Dogen and inside himself as the observed and observer. Lafleur mentions that "what had been the locus of the observed now becomes that of observer, and the original subject becomes an object." Taking this approach, confrontational relationship between perceiver and perceived becomes unified in order to disclose the fundamental interdependence of the two. Dogen's poem of absorption into rejection to symbolism not only composes nature and mind or subject and object but also brings them as the same dimension. What is clear, then, is that Dogen's world of deep religious discourse is rendered as *mujo* or impermanence. The evocation of *mujo* enfolds within all phenomena not as tragic but as ultimately acceptable realization, that is, buddha-nature. It is worthy to note that Dogen's verse should not be seen as means to an end. Unlike the Platonic allegory, which is seen as an hierar-

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chical mode of thought that implies changing degree from lower to higher, Dogen's verse is in no way subordinate to what it explains. Although his verse might be seen a parable (hoben), the illustration is not a means to an end but an experience of the mode itself. This accounts for the equivocal between inside and outside the speech. There is no distinction between them. By this, it is clear that Dogen attempted to deny ordinary understanding which attributes more weight to the inside rather than to the superficial.

The recognition of this formulation leads to fundamental nonhierarchy or absence of discrimination. What needs to be understood in this, however, is that Dogen attempted to explain gentle melancholy (monono aware) based on the emancipation of conventional relationship (e.g., subject and object). This is because mujo serves as a necessary part of individual existence and all other things in order to realize "the way things are." Mujo explicates realization of self. In other words, to realize mujo is nothing but to stare at birth and death.

With the above as a basis, simply said, uji or being-time expresses existence of all phenomena. The empirical world is full of mujo. That is the reason perceptual action is expressed in the uji. Therefore, uji encompasses

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changes of time and space. Dogen says:

"Being-time" means that time is being; i.e., "time is existence, existence is time." The shape of a Buddha statue is time. Time is the radiant nature of each moment; it is momental everyday time in the present.\textsuperscript{82}

Dogen did not discuss time as an existential concept but focused on being-time as a practical and religious issue. The realization of being-time as closely related to daily life is necessary to grasp phenomena as \textit{mujo}. This implication shows that one does not waste time but delightfully engages in what one should do in each moment because of impermanence. For Dogen, that is the relationship between \textit{mujo} or impermanence and \textit{uji}. What he found is that each moment is existence. Existence is being-time as well. It shows that whether one realizes it or not, one takes up time and space on all occasions. In other words, one experiences both time and space as existence. Dogen's careful observations on the concept of time represent nondualism. Time and space are not two different entities but are inseparably interconnected in human existence.

As noted above, \textit{uji} must be realized from the standpoint of \textit{mujo}. In this sense, Dogen's realization in particular explains:

Once firewood is reduced to ashes, it cannot return to firewood; but we should not think of ashes as the potential state of firewood or vice-versa. Ash is

\textsuperscript{82} SG; Uji
completely ash and firewood is firewood. They have their own past, future, and independent existence. Similarly, when human beings die, they cannot return to life; but in Buddhist teaching we never say life changes into death...Likewise, death cannot change into life....Life and death have absolute existence, like the relationship of winter and spring.\textsuperscript{83}

This statement above reflects not fleeting time but nondualism. For Dogen, time does not merely fly but connects each moment and event. If time is just flying away, there should be separation between time and space. Instead of flying, Dogen used the term kvoryaku, which means passageless-passage.\textsuperscript{84} He says:

There is movement [kvoryaku] of time in the sense of moving from today to tomorrow, from today to yesterday, from yesterday to today, from today to today, from tomorrow to tomorrow. This movement is the characteristic of time and the past and present cannot be duplicated [i.e., independent and not overlapping].\textsuperscript{85}

What is clear is that Dogen considered humans getting involved in the center of spontaneous manifestation (genjo). To be more precise, one’s future and past are experienced in one’s present existence. One can think of tomorrow and yesterday here and now in the present. Furthermore, all things exist in oneself. In the meanwhile, every entity in the world is time. For Dogen, the principle is that each single object is connected to the

\textsuperscript{83} \textit{SG}; Genjokoan
\textsuperscript{84} Abe, M. 1992. p. 85.
\textsuperscript{85} \textit{SG}; Uji
entire world so that knowledge of one is knowledge of all.

The very process of recognizing this principle insists that Dogen held a balanced, flexible understanding of theodicy. This is because his overcoming the theodicy problem is based on nondualism. He did not think that being was a stable concept. Ordinary understanding shows that time is passing and does not realize the other aspect of time which is not passing. For him, "to realize this is to comprehend being; not to realize this is also being [Both realization and ignorance are contained in being-time]." Once Dogen realized that phenomena are buddha-nature, he even admitted ignorance as one aspect of being-time. Unenlightened people convince themselves that there is no possible kind of buddha-nature within themselves. Dogen held such a limited view as part of being-time. Paradoxically, if being-time has not come yet in an unenlightened moment, the ideas of the wisdom and detachment will be viewed for what they are. That is, enlightenment is seen as tentative, delusive or temporal. However, there is no slight gap between being-time and events. Therefore, to realize being-time is to understand that not-coming has not come yet. "Not-coming" is not an unperfect-ed event in contrast to "coming" but rather "coming or not-

86 SG; Uji
coming should only be thought of as coming or not-coming." The explication in this context is designed like that of the Tendai school; Dogen held that there was no bifurcation between ignorance and enlightenment. But unlike the Tendai school, Dogen sustained oneness of ignorance and enlightenment based on the concept of time. Both entities (i.e., ignorance and enlightenment) are in *uji* (being-time). Dogen addressed this "there is no time that is not the fullness of time." Although humans are in *uji*, unenlightened people do not realize it. They cannot think of confusion as one of the true aspects of human beings. However, confusion is an aspect of buddha-nature. Since each moment fully manifests itself, *uji* is the buddha-nature, and the buddha-nature is *uji*. A moment is existence itself.

Dogen and the Theodicy Problem

So far as Dogen’s principle were analyzed, his conceptual recognition includes that one’s single moment relates to buddha-nature. That is why one should engage oneself in religious practice in order to realize the birth and death problem. In this statement, a clear sense of relationship between time and space is fully realized with

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87 SG; Uji

one's spontaneous practices which motivate to actualize
buddha-nature. For Dogen, practices embody buddha-nature
and buddha-nature sustains practices. However, this
approach would be to ask what is a religious practice for
Dogen in particular. Considering the question, Dogen says:

Even if you sit for only a moment in jijuyu samadhi
[the consummation of spiritual experiences, self-
fulfillment] the Buddha-mind seal is imprinted in your
body, mind, and words; simultaneously, the entire
phenomenal world is also imprinted with the Buddha-
mind seal—all space is enlightenment.89

To see the wider picture of this phrase, Dogen's religious
basis will appear. The foundation of his views of time and
space profoundly interacts with zazen. Considering this,
in the final analysis, the explication of this section will
reveal Dogen's conceptual framework and practical founda-
tion. In response to this approach, the picture of Dogen
and the theodicy problem will clearly appear.

By analyzing Dogen's technical terms (e.g., gyobutsu,
gyoji, mujo, and uji), karmic causality is crucial.
Although karma is significant not only for Dogen in
particular but also for Buddhism in general, Dogen attempt-
ed to describe it according to his interpretation. Karma
is regarded as "anterior acts pushed every kind of being up
and down the ladder of the universe."90 The birth and

89 SG; Bendowa

death problem or transmigration in a Buddhist term is called rokudo (six worlds). Thus, how one grasps karma is the most crucial point in escaping escape from rokudo. However, it does not mean to avoid karma but to actualize it. Realization of the birth and death problem insists on emancipation from karma.

Because karma designs the world of samsara (never ending existences), even divine dimension does not escape from karma. This statement is open to question what practice Dogen prescribed in particular to emancipate oneself from karma. Dogen emphasized zazen to reveal the karmic causality. It means that Dogen represented zazen as a way to cut off karma. In contrast to Dogen's viewpoint, Pure Land Buddhism in Japan focused on rebirth into divine dimension, called Pure Land paradise. In Pure Land paradise, people "need never again be reborn in any of the rokudo, having been pulled out of them through the divine power of Amida Buddha." In this belief, chanting the nembutsu (invocation) in the final moment of a person's life is exceptionally important to separate from karma. As Dogen purely focused on zazen, the concept of zazen (meditation) became different from Chinese Ch' an Buddhism in general. Whereas Chinese Ch' an Buddhism stressed enlightenment and treated meditation as one of the daily

phenomena, Dogen stressed zazen and grasped satori (enlightenment) as a subordinate matter. In other words, Dogen did not make an issue of how it is possible to attain satori. This is because seeking satori is nonsense for him. Dogen’s standpoint, as already mentioned, is that humans are already buddhas. What is clear, then, is that satori is not an end of practice but a starting point of practice; practice is not a means to satori. This phrase shows oneness of practice and attainment. Dogen explained what attainment is not in terms of conceptual recognition but in terms of practical representation, that is, zazen. This specific term is called gedatsu or freedom from samsara and karma. Attaining gedatsu is not seeking gedatsu but just sitting (shikantaza). In zazen, there is no bifurcation of ignorance and satori. Dogen strongly believed that zazen is non-doing. "It is nothing but the true form of the Self. Apart from sitting, there is nothing to seek as the Buddha-dharma." By this, satori is neither mystical experience nor instantaneous event. For Dogen, satori is free from satori itself. That is, the emancipation from ordinary recognition (e.g., good or bad, enlightenment or ignorance) appears when one practices zazen. In this sense, it might be said that seeking satori itself is confusion. Therefore, it should be considered

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92 See Shobogenzo-Zuimonki. 1987. 2;22.
that Dogen's teaching explicates the solution of karma based on gvo (practice).

The emphasis on gvo is a solution to the dualism (e.g., subject and object). Subject does not exist without object and neither does object without subject. However, it is wrong to see them as the same matter; subject is not object and object is not subject either. Overcoming the confrontation and avoiding the dualism is only seen in terms of contradiction. In this stage, consideration tends toward neither subject nor object. It is called the middle way or chudo. In the middle way, contradiction is not seen as confrontation or equivalence but grasped as contradiction itself. For Dogen, contradiction cannot be analyzed by conceptual framework. Only gvo is the solution to the contradiction. On the contrary, analysis of contradiction in conceptual framework might develop terminology, which tends to wander about in an existential dimension. Because of this, Dogen avoided intellectual understanding. In this sense, Dogen represented one of the fundamental Zen mottos: No dependence on words. Apparently, emphasis on gvo explains that special transmission comes from outside doctrines. However, Dogen believed that there is no truth without sutras. For him, finding the truth outside sutras is to claim originality which Dogen strongly denied. He intently devoted himself to inheriting dharma (doctrine or
teaching) from successive buddhas. However, understanding *sutras* is not duplication of words but individual reinterpretation and criticism about forerunners' saying. Although Dogen rejected originality, transmission was possible only when an individual followed the tradition based on one's reinterpretation. Paradoxically, only "originality" (individual practice) breaks through ordinary understanding and formalism. In a sense, Dogen's attitude was that only through "originality," individual experience, was transmission possible. Therefore, Zen practitioners have stressed direct experience as practice. In this attitude, "no dependence on words" is still half-hidden. Unlike Chinese Ch' an practitioners, Dogen harmonized practice and intellect based on respect for each individual. Dogen's term of originality is represented by *qyobutsu* and *qyoji,* but the emphasis on *gyo* should be regarded as casting off selfishness. With this suggested, Dogen found attainment through practice without denying words. That is, oneness of practice and attainment is accomplished only by stressing *gyo.*

In oneness of practice and attainment, karma is not viewed as objective truth. For Dogen, if one seeks the objective truth, one will never achieve the truth. This is because one still seeks the truth outside oneself. In contrast to, the realization of oneself is to find the
self, neither outside nor inside. Dogen says:

To learn the Buddhist Way is to learn about oneself. To learn about oneself is to forget oneself. To forget oneself is to perceive oneself as all things. To realize this is to cast off the body and mind of self and others. When you have reached this stage you will be detached even from enlightenment but will practice it continually without thinking about it.93

Discarding selfishness or ego-self is no more than encountering the true self. For Dogen, the true self is not adapted to circumstance but responds to universal identity. In a sense, Dogen’s idea seems too idealistic. However, at the time of Dogen many reform movements adapted "dharma" for the times. Dogen thought that if one had sought the truth accompanying one’s circumstance, one’s reality would have tended to expediency and materialism. The more one seeks one’s needs, the more one has desires. On the contrary, Dogen’s idea of reality was finding acceptance for all ages and humans. This statement implies that one will not choose the truth fitting for oneself nor choose a truth reflecting the times. Dogen insisted that man should not confuse dharma with expediency.

It is worth noting that Dogen’s teaching is not directed toward ideas although it starts with ideas. This is because attainment is not outside of oneself; humans are already buddhas. In this sense, humans are emancipated from karma while they are abiding in karma. Taking this

93 SG; Genjokoan
into account, the very beginning of the solution to the theodicy problem, for Dogen, is realizing and accepting the theodicy of karma.

In conclusion, the relationship between conceptual framework and practical foundation presents oneness of practice and attainment. Engaging gyo (practice) is to discard selfishness. Dogen in particular says that gyo means zazen. In zazen, Dogen found oneness of body and mind, called shinjin-ichinvo. This statement explicates how it is possible for humans to believe their lives as rational when they encounter suffering in life, aging, sickness, and death. This is nothing but realization of the true self. For Dogen, finding the true self is to watch one's step. It means that without this moment there is no past and future. A moment is life itself. The realization of time as existence and existence as time breaks through dualism and discrimination. By considering the meaning of time and space, Dogen's world view might be explained as the theodicy of karma. In short, to realize the significance of each moment is to realize the self. To realize the self is to discard ego-self and selfishness. To discard ego-self is to take care of a moment. Therefore, Dogen denied "potentiality." The buddha-nature is not like seeds; it is wrong to understand that sometime in the future one will be a buddha. The result is that a
living being itself manifests the solution to the theodicy of karma. This means that neither does man make an effort at cutting off the causality nor does man run away from the causality. It says that man should actualize karmic causality; accepting karma is to cut off the causality. In other words, ceasing karmic causality is found in karma itself.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Writing a paper is like a pilgrimage. Once one starts on a pilgrimage, one should come full circle. Now we should turn back to the starting point in order to see the whole picture. In other words, a conclusion is a statement which should resolve the problem that was raised. In the introductory chapter, I mentioned that analyzing theodicy in a broad sense opens the gate for exploring human conditions such as suffering in Eastern terms. What is then clear is that the term theodicy does not mean merely "God’s justice" but is a category for analyzing human suffering. This approach leads to a statement of how human suffering and anxiety, as well as fear of birth, aging, sickness, and death are rationally accepted. To be specific in its scope, the usage of the term theodicy is nothing but a way of looking at the world and events based on the acting out of religion. Furthermore, focusing on theodicy leads one to a fascinating aspect of human behavior: How individuals deal with suffering.

The preceding sketches attempt to explicate the relationship between religion and theodicy. Analyzing the relationship between them offers an explicit point for
examining religious practice in this paper. In other words, the theodicy problem reveals a specific aspect of religious ideas. Therefore, theodicy is set up as a category which fits all religious traditions. By contrast, the question, "Does a group of people believe in God?" is not always appropriate for the study of religion in general. This is because the question selects in advance those people who can answer this question affirmatively. In this sense, a topic decides the character of discussion. Earhart (1993) claims:

In the study of religion, it is essential to recognize the difference between experiencing one's personal faith or practice of religion and exploring one or more religions traditions other than one's own....In other words, we cannot assume that the specific features of our own religious tradition are the same as the specific features of other cultures; the characteristics of one religious heritage do not define the generic character of all religion.94

The scope of this statement suggests the following principle; in the academic study of religion it is necessary to explicate two points of view at the same time, that is, a general term and a specific one. Religion, in this sense, is the broad term. On the other hand, theodicy is the specific term.

On the basis of this statement, we can say that theodicy is one of many aspects of religious concepts. In a sense, the conjunction between religion and theodicy

could be seen as humans dealing with suffering based on religious life. The recognition of this concept also responds to Wach's agenda. That is, theodicy relates to the spiritual dimension of theoretical expression in religion. In this context, how people deal with the human condition (e.g., suffering) in a logical and rational way is the main issue of theoretical expression. In other words, such conceptions of the spiritual dimension possess many possibilities for releasing one's anxiety and fear of birth, aging, sickness, and death. The recognition of the given phenomena as reality does not always require focus on the relationship between a Lord and human beings as in the Judeo-Christian tradition. The importance of theodicy is not limited to concepts based on the Western theism, but extends more widely to a general conceptual scheme of humanity as a whole. In other words, finding the resolution to the theodicy problem only through "God" is a very narrow point of view. However, a broader view of theodicy does not mean that we avoid or eliminate concern for superhuman agents. In any religious stance, there should be a spiritual dimension which might be explained more by tacit understanding than by intellectual approach. Average people are aware of divine presence which often plays a large role in human concepts of religious practices. The

95 See p. 46.
concept of theodicy then appears to spark very concrete actions in human society. Implicit in this motif is that theodicy is a conceptual positive power in which humans can involve themselves in a religious center with actions. This means that theodicy is a concept of symbolic transformation which springs from an intuitive human need.

In the discussion of theodicy as a theoretical aspect of religion, the role spiritual agents play is a key point in identifying the specific nature of each religion. In other words, only by looking at the significance of divinity can the concept of theodicy be complete. It is very important that, in order to include all religious traditions, spirituality is not seen simply as the Western God but is seen more generally as an ineffable phenomenon. By this, it might be said that each individual manifests his or her view of theodicy. In a sense, the concept of theodicy might be accepted as religious view of life. This is not an exaggeration. Theodicy as a theory of religion dealing with how to manage suffering is direct power that is not implicated in economical and generative human need. Because of theodicy relating to release from suffering, it is a different stance from a direct, practical, and biological purpose. Theodicy does not respond to human needs in general (e.g., fame and material). Yet, a conceptual scheme of theodicy makes humans overlay their
daily actions (e.g., eating and greeting) with a religious stance. That is why explicating theodicy leads to an understanding of the specific character of religion.

Theodicy is not an action but a concept. The interesting thing, however, is that theodicy deals with humanity by means of symbolizing a great conceptual scheme. In a sense, theodicy is seen as the background of symbolic representation. This is because observing how to manage suffering holds semantic stances in each religious system, just as linguistic explanation reveals meaning in each religious systems. Therefore, the resolution to the theodicy problem itself shows what a particular religion is like. What must be understood in this, however, is that grasping theodicy does not require special kinds of knowledge. In the light of the fact that viewing theodicy as a theoretical aspect of religion allows room to examine theodicy outside of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Focus on theodicy contains a rich lode of facts; the theoretical character of any religion is shown through theodicy.

The preceding analysis presented explicit views of theodicy. The significance of this observation implies the relationship between theodicy and Buddhism as well. What is essential in this consideration is that theodicy is not always concerned with "God's justice." Therefore, even in Buddhist terms, theodicy can be accepted as a theoretical
expression in Buddhism. As a matter of fact, the discussion of theodicy first developed within the Judeo-Christian tradition, which renders suffering and anxiety as conditions in which humans turn to God for help, yet a wider picture, theodicy is a theoretical aspect of religion. In the encounter with suffering, the human reaction to suffering is the whole story of theodicy. Although Buddhism does not espouse the relationship between the Lord and creature, Buddhism has a resolution to suffering. Therefore, it is possible to reflect on theodicy as theoretical expression within Buddhism. In a sense, the significance of theodicy for Buddhism is seen in the way Buddhism deals with suffering. The core idea is that Buddhism provides answers about the human condition, especially suffering. Analyzing theodicy in Buddhist terms will reveal features of Buddhism in particular.

According to the above line of argument, it is clear that Buddhism does not have to deal with "God's justice" in order to emancipate people from suffering. By focusing on the release of humans from suffering, the Buddhist notion of theodicy highlights karma as the main consideration in Buddhism. Although there are several variations in the Buddhist answer to suffering, let's concentrate on karma as a classical and basic conceptual scheme in order to include Buddhism in general. Knowing karma is essential for
"individual" release or enlightenment. That is, Buddhism in general says that emancipation from samsara (the wheel of life or suffering) plays a very important role in release. This implies that karmic causality is comprehended as the main theory of Buddhism. The consideration of suffering is included in the emphasis on karmic causality. Therefore, analyzing karmic causality is nothing but embracing a resolution to how humans accept suffering as rational and logical. The question of how Buddhism deals with theodicy, then, could replace the question about is karmic causality of Buddhism in particular.

The Buddhist central conception, karmic causality, is seen as a worldly phenomenon. In other words, the empirical world is created by karmic causality. This conceptual framework apparently is understood as a cause and effect relationship, yet Buddhism does not reject the existence and intervention of superhuman agents. Therefore, focusing on the significance of divine beings in karmic causality especially contributes to the understanding of theodicy in Buddhism.

Based on karmic causality, Buddhist cosmology is explained as rokudo (six worlds). As already claimed, dealing with divine beings is not separate from religious phenomena. In Buddhism, divine beings are one dimension of

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96 See p. 66.
rokudo. Divine beings are the first of six dimensions. However, the divine dimension does not indicate the emancipation from suffering but is still considered a part of suffering. Since Buddhist cosmology says that even a divine dimension is part of the wheel of life, divine beings cannot be grasped as saviors in Western terms. Nor are they seen as creators. However, divine beings are not just symbols of local worship, but they also entice people. In Buddhism, transmigration through rokudo takes the utmost seriousness. Cutting off karma is the only emancipation from transmigration. However, the concept of karma is accumulation of deeds not only in past lives but also in the continuum from the past to the present life. Therefore, people who want release from karma should answer for deeds from the past. But how? The answer is obviously to appeal to divine beings which are able to lighten the force of deeds in past lives and influence potential deeds in the future. Although the divine dimension is a part of the wheel of life, divine beings including deities and manifestations of Buddha respond as helpers to people to release them from transmigration and suffering. By carefully observing the above, Buddhist theodicy depends on karmic causality rather than the intervention of divine beings as in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Although recognizing divine beings as an ineffable sense which helps human
anxiety, the Buddhist role of divinity is not seen in the same way as in the Judeo-Christian situation. Instead, Buddhist theodicy deals with karma. Because of karma, humans solve their suffering. The emancipation from suffering is to be found in the process of karmic causality itself. In other words, human efforts reward and encourage their faith.

Having established that in Buddhist theodicy karma is the main concept of world view, such as how to consider the meaning of life and world, we move to a more specific level. I arbitrarily chose Dogen as one of candidates who gave the resolution to the theodicy problem. Karma is the general theory in Buddhism, therefore, the transition from Buddhist theodicy to Dogen’s solution of suffering is how Dogen looked at karma in his own theory. The focus on karma is a bridge between theodicy and Dogen’s concept of release from suffering and anxiety. Dogen’s understanding or reinterpretation of Buddhism is unique. However, it does not mean that Dogen promoted his theory as one school in Buddhism. But, when seeing his theory through views of tradition in transition and transition in tradition, Dogen’s significant aspects will be clear. In other words, we observe how Buddhist general theory, karma, is transformed and permeated into Dogen.

According to the Buddhist theodicy, humans will be
free from suffering only after cutting off karma. Although Dogen followed this system, his approach is totally opposite. That is, humans are already buddhas, therefore, they can engage in religious practice in order to cut off karma. In Buddhist general terms, how humans achieve enlightenment is the primary question. On the contrary, this question is nonsense for Dogen. Because humans are already buddhas, Dogen paid less attention to what is enlightenment. Because human faith depends on karmic causality, Dogen did not expect that the deities help human suffering. What is then clear is that Dogen grasped theodicy not only as concept but also as practice. That is, the conceptual scheme alone is not sufficient to solve the theodicy problem. Dogen did not separate concept from practice. For him, concept and practice are not different matters but a single fact with two different aspects; a concept is the basis of practice and practice embodies what a concept says. For Dogen, a solution of suffering in a conceptual scheme occurs on the existential level, which never solves actual experience of anxiety. Without practice there is no solution to suffering. In a sense, theodicy as theoretical explanation of experience should be seen in terms of practical expression.

However, his term "practice" should not be understood as a means to achieve enlightenment. Because humans are
already enlightened, Dogen denied practice as a means to that end. In fact, Dogen could say that when one practices in order to achieve enlightenment, one is still attached to the concept of "enlightenment." Once one sets out to realize enlightenment, one should not even think of cutting off karma. This is because practice itself manifests enlightenment. There is no need for any extra "doing" except to practice. In Dogen's terms, practice as such itself is an end in itself. That is, non-seeking is important in the manner of practice. One should practice without even seeking after the completion of enlightenment as the result. This attitude is called non-seeking which is a principle of practice. However, it is misunderstood that non-seeking means to abandon enlightenment. On the contrary, non-seeking is an exhaustive negation of egoism. It is worthy to note that although Dogen demanded that suffering never be solved on a conceptual level, he did not deny a cognitive approach. If there is no cognitive approach, such as considering how humans achieve enlightenment, then people just spend their whole lives doing good and bad according to their egocentric actions. Without a cognitive approach there is no motivation to inspire one into religious life. What Dogen denied is not intelligence but ego-self. Therefore, Dogen concluded that only practice completes negation of ego-self which is the stage
of non-seeking. In a sense, what is practice for Dogen?

The answer is that practice is just sitting, zazen. Zazen is crucial for Dogen. Zazen itself is the practice of non-seeking. It is nothing but the true form of enlightenment. Apart from zazen, there is no truth. Dogen concentrated on zazen as cutting off karma which means the resolution to theodicy. However, zazen should not be grasped as seeking to become a buddha; rather, sitting itself is cutting off karma. Therefore, the tie of karma is not cut after practice. Nor does practice bring the goal of enlightenment when practice is completed. Although every human is already a buddha, without practice one cannot actualize enlightenment. Whether one becomes a buddha or not does not depend on "potentiality" but on practice. For Dogen, one will not be a buddha in the future. Dogen concluded that in the moment of practice one is a buddha; practice itself is the solution of suffering. This consideration, for Dogen in particular, equates oneness of practice and attainment. This is because, unlike the Judeo-Christian tradition, Dogen grasped mind and body as a unified pair, and therefore conceptual expression (theodicy) is solved with practical expression (zazen). For this reason, without zazen there is no solution of the theodicy problem.

What I have brought up for consideration as horizontal
transition is a view of how each tradition manages the
theodicy problem, from Buddhist basic concept through
Mahayana Buddhism and Ch'an to Dogen. How the specific
religious system explains theodicy is shown in horizontal
transition. In a sense, theodicy which starts with
conceptual expression ends up with practical expression in
Dogen's terms. This approach, according to Earhart who
prescribed focusing on two points of view at the same time,
renders help finding the other view. That is, vertical
transition as the agenda or axis of this paper shows
theodicy in religion. In vertical transition, how humans
manage suffering is crucial. If we view theodicy within
religion, theodicy as a conceptual expression of religion
is seen as an idea about suffering. This is because Dogen
gave a solution of theodicy concerned with practical
expression. By this account, not only in Western terms but
also in Eastern terms the theodicy problem is concerned
with religious lives. In vertical transition, theodicy as
a religious problem is viewed not with how to avoid
suffering but with how to contemplate pain of birth, aging,
sickness, and death, or how to help other's suffering. The
principle here is making the insufferable, sufferable.
This paper does not presume to discover a universal formula
for the resolution to the theodicy problem, but indicates
that humans make a valiant effort to face up to suffering
through their religious lives. In this light, theodicy shows as a motivation for humans. As they encounter suffering, religions do not teach humans escape from reality. On the contrary, religion through theodicy seriously investigates fundamental truth. Theodicy explicates moral orientation as well.

Observing suffering as common human fate, theodicy can be assumed as a part of the human condition. One reflects upon suffering in terms of religious cosmology in which one’s personal suffering is seen to have significant religious meaning. Therefore, theodicy should not be concerned with existential problems. For example, even if one has a clear notion of the cause and effect that led to suffering, one often suffers under the situation. One suffers because one exists in the empirical world. By this account, theodicy gets humans involved in actual phenomena. Therefore, theodicy is a universal aspect of religion in which each individual finds a meaningful life through consideration of suffering.

In the final analysis, theodicy is mainly concerned with religious systems. In other words, how the specific religion attempts to solve suffering shows its unique system and consideration of cosmology. Since suffering is human nature, focusing on theodicy reveals a universal human activity: Making life meaningful. Theodicy always
addresses how humans deal with suffering. In a sense, the theodicy problem is a universal concern for human life.
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