

Article

Zen Philosophy of Mindfulness: *Nen* 念 according to Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō*

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to holistically comprehend the concept of *nen* 念 in the Zen philosophy of Dōgen (道元 1200–1253), which is one of the origins of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, in relation to his principal concepts. This article specifically investigates its usages in his masterpiece, *Treasury of the True Dharma Eye (Shōbōgenzō 正法眼藏)*, according to each step of the threefold wisdom (*san-e* 三慧); for mindfulness is a common thread among them and he presents the concept of “*monshishū-shō* 聞思修證”, of which *shō* 證 stands for “awakening”. It is revealed that Dōgen considers “study” (*mon* 聞) and “reflection” (*shi* 思) to be essential on the Buddhist path, as well as “practice” (*shū* 修), and that *nen* 念 in Dōgen’s philosophy is the self beyond the sense of body-mind or time, which can be attained after long cultivation. Also, the connections among *nen* 念 and his critical concepts such as “just sitting” (*shikan taza* 只管打坐), “dropping off body-mind” (*shinjin datsuraku* 身心脱落), and “oneness of practice and awakening” (*shūshō ittō* 修證一等) are elucidated.

Keywords: Zen; mindfulness; Dōgen; *Shōbōgenzō*; threefold wisdom



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1. Introduction

The concept of “mindfulness” (Pāli: *sati*, Sanskrit: *smṛti*, Chinese: *nian* 念, Japanese: *nen* 念) has been gathering more and more attention in diverse fields year by year. Along with this trend of the mindfulness movement, many studies have addressed and explained its origin and history so far. It should be noted in this context that Jon Kabat-Zinn, who has played a significant role in initiating and accelerating this movement by establishing Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), often states that one of the sources of his method derives from the Sōtō School (*sōtō shū* 曹洞宗) of Zen founded by Dōgen (道元 1200–1253) (Kabat-Zinn 2011, p. 289)¹.

On the other hand, Fujita Isshō (藤田一照 1954-), the former Head Director of the Sōtō Zen Buddhism International Center, states his concern over this mindfulness movement and points out the potential of the tradition of Japanese Zen philosophy as below (Fujita 2014, p. 1). Please note that the author translated all the Japanese texts in this paper, including Dōgen’s original texts, into English.

アメリカのマインドフルネスはもともとは仏教のコンセプトであるサティ (パーリ語) 由来するものだが、「現在の瞬間に対する、判断を入れない注意のスキル」としてあまりにも仏教の文脈から切り離され、世俗化・メソッド化されてしまったために、サティが本来持っていた広がりや深さが失われているように思われる。たとえばそれは「思い出す」という重要な働きや、戒や他の修行法との密接な関連性であり、主客二元を超えた無我行への深まりの方向性である。日本が今後マインドフルネス・ムーブメントに貢献できるとすれば、あらためてマインドフルネスを仏教の中にもととしてとらえなおし、より広がりや深さを備えた新しいマインドフルネスとして更新していくことではないだろうか。

Mindfulness in the U.S. is derived originally from the Buddhist concept *sati* (Pāli). It seems that the width and the depth of *sati* have been lost because it got separated

far away from the context of Buddhism when it was secularized and defined as “skill of paying attention to the very present moment non-judgmentally”. For example, that is the significant function of “recalling”, its close connections with precepts or other forms of training, or the attitude towards the depth of the state of no-self beyond the dichotomy of subject and object. If there is a way for Japan to contribute to the mindfulness movement from now on, it might be to put mindfulness back into Buddhism and then grasp it again and to update it as new mindfulness with further width and depth.

Indeed, few studies have focused on the original usages of *nen* 念 in Dōgen. To be more precise, there certainly exist studies that dig into *nian/nen* 念, or mindfulness, from the perspectives of: (1) the emergence of Chan in the medieval period and its meditation techniques (Sharf 2014); (2) the difference in the interpretations of *nian* 念 between the Northern and Southern Schools of Chan Buddhism (Rošker 2016); (3) the history of the spread of so-called secular mindfulness-based interventions, not the origin of the concept itself, in modern Japan (Fujii 2017); (4) a very brief and general overview of the usage of the Chinese character of *nen* 念 in the Zen tradition without specific references to the works of Zen masters (Koga 1973). While Chihara Tadashi (荻原正 1949-) refers to several passages of Dōgen with *nen* 念 to argue that *zazen* in Dōgen should be regarded as “mindlessness” rather than “mindfulness” (Chihara 2018, 2019), the focus of these studies is put not on the concept of *nen* 念 itself but on the comparison between *zazen* according to Dōgen and the method of meditation in mindfulness-based interventions, which, according to him, puts a higher priority on awareness. There is still much room for directly and holistically addressing and revealing the width and depth of this concept itself and its position in Dōgen’s philosophy, with further reference to Dōgen’s original texts.

Therefore, based on these points, this paper sheds light specifically on the significances of *nen* 念 in *Treasury of the True Dharma Eye* (*Shōbōgenzō* 正法眼藏, hereafter SBGZ), the masterpiece of Dōgen, who has been considered as “the first writer to use the Japanese language in a truly philosophical way” (Kasulis 1978, p. 357), to reveal how he ponders and uses the concept of *nen* 念 and its compounds. In other words, this paper aims to present new insights into the traditional interpretations of Dōgen’s philosophy from the perspective of *nen* 念, or mindfulness, and related concepts, believing that this approach can offer us an opportunity to comprehend the width and the depth of Dōgen’s philosophy further, which is very often interpreted within the category of paradox (Garfield and Priest 2021, p. 122)².

This paper first briefly reviews, in Section 2, the history of the journey of the concept of “mindfulness”, from *sati* in Pāli and *smṛti* in Sanskrit, to *nen* 念 in Japanese, by way of *nian* 念 in Chinese, and then gives an overview of the various significances of *nen* 念 in the tradition of Japanese Buddhism with reference to *The Great Dictionary of Buddhist Terms* (*Bukkyōgo-daijiten* 佛教語大辭典) (Nakamura 1975) compiled by Nakamura Hajime (中村元 1912–1999) to digest the width of *nen* 念.

Then, Section 3 specifically investigates several compounds of *nen* 念 in SBGZ and classifies them according to each step of the “threefold wisdom” (*san-e* 三慧), the components of which are “study” (*mon* 聞), “reflection” (*shi* 思), and “practice” (*shū* 修); for “mindfulness plays a critical role at each of these three levels, and may actually be considered as the common thread linking them” (Deroche 2021, p. 20).

It is also remarkable that Dōgen directly uses the term “*monshishū* 聞思修” two times in SBGZ, and both appear in one passage; the former one appears in the form of “*monshishū-shō* 聞思修證”, of which the last Chinese character, *shō* 證, stands for “awakening”. Dōgen, when explaining one of the eight means towards awakening, uses this term as follows, as follows (Dōgen 道元 2004–2005, vol. 7, p. 273):

七者修智慧。起聞思修證爲智慧。³

The seventh means to awakening is attaining wisdom. Wisdom is the realization of “study” (*mon* 聞), “reflection” (*shi* 思), “practice” (*shū* 修), and “awakening” (*shō* 證).

On the other hand, Dōgen also directly quotes a passage from *The Sūtra of Buddha’s Last Instruction*, which includes the term *monshishū-e* 聞思修慧 (Ibid.); in Japanese, *e* 慧 means “wisdom”, and thus the term itself refers to wisdom obtained in each step of *monshishū* 聞思修. Therefore, it is naturally assumed that Dōgen knows the primary form of this concept, which is “study-reflection-practice” (*monshishū* 聞思修), and then uses “*monshishū-shō* 聞思修證” on purpose.

Based on this perspective, Section 4 introduces and addresses three critical concepts in Dogen’s philosophy, interpreting the concept of *nen* 念 in relation to them: “oneness of practice and awakening” (*shūshō ittō* 修證一等), “just sitting” (*shikan taza* 只管打坐), and “dropping off body-mind” (*shinjin datsuraku* 身心脱落). In this way, by comprehending the concept of *nen* 念 within the context of Dōgen’s exposition of the entire path, this part eventually aims, in Fujita’s terms quoted above, to “update it as new mindfulness with further width and depth.”

2. *Nen* 念 in the Traditions of Japanese Buddhism after *Smṛti* and *Nian* 念

2.1. *Nian* 念 and Mindfulness

It is generally admitted that Rhys Davids (1843–1922) was the first person who translated the Buddhist term *sati* into the English term “mindfulness” in the late 19th century (Brown et al. 2015, p. 9)⁴. More than 100 years later, mainly in the early 21st century, Japan gradually imported the English term and MBSR from the United States (Fujii 2017, pp. 69–71)⁵.

Originally, mindfulness, when turning to its early definitions as a mental faculty, is related to “the ability to remember what has been done or said long ago”, while there is another definition that “outlines its actual application” (Anālayo 2019, p. 12)⁶. Also, the etymology of the word *sati* derives from the Old Indic word *smṛti*: “remembrance”, and “memory” (Levman 2017, p. 122)⁷. We can, in fact, find the usages of *sati* that are related to “memory” in the early Buddhist scriptures (Anālayo 2010, p. 46)⁸.

As is well known, in China, the word *smṛti* had been mainly translated by the Chinese character 念. We can find the original meaning of *nian* 念, which is similar to the ones mentioned above, in *Shuō Wén Jiě Zì* (Chinese: 说文解字), the oldest Chinese dictionary, edited in 100 CE as follows (Rošker 2016, p. 44):

念: 常思也。從心今聲。

Nian: Have in mind, constantly think of someone or something. Compiled from the heart-mind and the present.

Buddhist scriptures were translated into Chinese mainly from the middle of the second century to the early ninth century and from the end of the tenth century to the early eleventh century (Funayama 2013, p. 48). During the period, Kumārajīva (鳩摩羅什 344–413) and Xuanzang (玄奘 602–664), who are both “the representative translators of Buddhist scriptures” (Ibid., p. 21), and other Buddhist monks contributed to the spread of Buddhism in China. It is naturally assumed that within this process the Sanskrit term *smṛti* came to be translated into the Chinese term *nian* 念, the original significances of which were explained earlier.

Also, there has historically been another main significance of *nian* 念 in *Guang yun* (Chinese: 廣韻), the Chinese retheme dictionary compiled in the early eleventh century as below (Rošker 2016, p. 44):

念: 思也。又姓西魏太傅念賢。

Nian: Think of, think. Also the pronunciation of the surname Xian.

Namely, just as Rošker articulates, it is certain that “the word *nian* was obviously understood (and used) in the sense ‘to have (something or someone)’ or ‘to remember’”. (Ibid., p. 45).

2.2. *Nen* 念 in the Traditions of Japanese Buddhism

It is said that Buddhism became rooted in Japan from India by way of China and the Korean Peninsula in the sixth century. Since then, Buddhist monks and government officials who studied in China played significant roles in its diffusion. In the Kamakura period (1185–1333), several Japanese original Buddhist schools were established, and in the meantime, Japanese Zen schools were formed based on Chinese Chan schools⁹.

According to *The Great Dictionary of Buddhist Terms*, *nen* 念 in the Japanese Buddhism tradition has had 16 significances as general usages (Nakamura 1975, pp. 1078–79). Herein, I would like to briefly explain them in English as follows:

- i. Remembering. Memorizing. The function of memory. Functions of memorizing and keeping an object in mind. The mental function of memorizing and keeping something in mind. Recollection. Recalling and thinking back to the past.
[P] *sati*, [S] *smṛti*, [S] *smṛti*, [S] *ālambana-asampramoṣa*, [S] *smaraṇa*, [S] *saṃ-√smṛ*
- ii. Focusing on something. One of the virtues.
[P] *sati*
- iii. Saying something into oneself (often without speaking out).
[S] *manasi-kāra*, [P] *samanāhāro hoti*
- iv. Conceiving.
[P] *so evaṃ pajānāti*, [P] *cetaso parivitatka*, [S] *atarkika*, [P] *dhammavicaya* (one of *satta bojjhaṅgā*)
- v. Wisdom that is observing.
- vi. Correcting one’s thoughts in mind.
- vii. Function of memory as one of *mahā-bhūmika dharma*.
[S] *smṛti*
- viii. In *Vijñānavāda*, memory as one of five mental factors of *vibhāvanā*. Not losing or forgetting something acquired.
[S] *smṛti*, [T] *dran(pa)*
- ix. The function of intention.
[P] *cetanā*
- x. Mind.
[P] *manas*
- xi. Feelings. Mind longing for something.
[S] *citta*
- xii. Delusion
- xiii. An ultimately short moment. [S] *kṣaṇa*
- xiv. *Nenbutsu* 念仏
[S] *buddhānusmṛti*.
- xv. Enduring.
- xvi. Secondary scriptures in Brahmanism, compared to [S] *Śruti*, the revealed texts.

As shown above, even only in the traditions of Japanese Buddhism, the significances of *nen* 念 are highly diverse. Apparently, the scope of the concept of *nen* 念 seems to include the following four categories: *smṛti/sati*-related ones, *citta/manas*-related ones, *kṣaṇa*-related ones, and others. It is true that some seem to be original Japanese ones, some seem to be overlapped with each other, and some cannot necessarily be explained in accordance with a specific Sanskrit or Pāli term. We must not simply assume that the concept of *nen* 念 in the traditions of Japanese Buddhism corresponds equally to terms or concepts such as *sati*, *smṛti*, mindfulness, or others. This is why we must take a closer look at the actual contexts in which *nen* 念 is used and at the worldview or philosophy of the author, which is Dōgen in this paper.

3. *Nen* 念 in SBGZ, according to Each Step of the Threefold Wisdom

This chapter specifically reviews the various usages of *nen* 念 in SBGZ in accordance with each step of the “threefold wisdom” (*san-e* 三慧): “study” (*mon* 聞), “reflection” (*shi* 思), and “practice” (*shū* 修); for, as mentioned in the introduction, not only is mindfulness deeply connected with all these steps of the threefold wisdom, but Dōgen’s original concept of *monshishū-shō* 聞思修證, of which “*shō* 證” means “awakening”, can also play a significant role when we try to comprehend his philosophy and worldview holistically along with one of his main teachings, “oneness of practice and awakening” (*shūshō ittō* 修證一等), as is argued in detail in the next chapter.

Before addressing SBGZ, I would like to share its overview briefly. Originally, as a general term, *Shōbōgenzō* 正法眼藏 means “the correct way of observing the world or the truth in awakening” (Nakamura 1975, p. 704). Dōgen spent over 20 years until the year of his death, writing this masterpiece. He aimed to diffuse the correct teachings of Buddha not only among Buddhist monks but also among lay people. This is why he wrote SBGZ not only with Chinese characters, which had been the standard among Buddhist monks until that time, but also in combination with Japanese kana characters. While there have been arguments about the range of SBGZ as separate versions with different numbers of fascicles, this study addresses *Bendōwa* 辨道話, the older 75-fascicle, and the later 12-fascicle version, as Mizuno Yaoko (水野 弥穂子 1921–2010) edited it (Dōgen 道元 1990–1993, vol. 4, p. 509). In these fascicles of SBGZ, there appear 42 usages of *nen* 念 in the forms of compounds with other Chinese characters.

From now on, I would like to take a closer look at the actual usages of *nen* 念 in accordance with the threefold-wisdom framework. Upon selecting them, I referred to the existing framework that succeeded in organizing each step of the threefold wisdom in relation to the epistemic sources and cognitive faculties (Deroche 2021, p. 29): (1) “study”, tradition, and memory; (2) “reflection”, reason, and judgment; (3) “cultivation”, intuition, and attention.

The interpretation offered in this paper is weaved mainly based on the semantic context in which the term is used, according to the modern Japanese translations with commentaries by Masutani Fumio (増谷 文雄 1902–1987) (Dōgen 道元 2004–2005), as well as on *The Great Dictionary of Buddhist Terms* and the commentaries written by Mizuno (Dōgen 道元 1990–1993). The original Japanese texts of Dōgen are also cited from this series of Masutani, and they have been translated into English by the author with reference to the existing English translations (Dōgen 道元 1975–1983, 2021), the modern Japanese translation and commentary by Masutani, and the commentary by Mizuno.

3.1. “Study” and *Nen* 念 in SBGZ: The Teachings and Traditions Buddhist Monks Should Keep in Mind

This group includes not only the teachings or traditional rules that a Buddhist monk should always keep in mind but also the first thought of starting life as a renouncer and *bodhisattva*, as well as the attitude to be observed in life as such; for a person becomes a Buddhist monk, being affected by the memory or recollection of the Buddhist tradition, or teachings that the one has listened to before.

A good example of the latter is *shoichi nen* 初一念, which directly means “the first thought” of renouncing a secular life and becoming a Buddhist monk. *Sho* 初 represents “first”, and *ichi* 一 refers to “one”, and thus, *shoichi nen* 初一念 means the thought at the start of life as a Buddhist monk. Dōgen explains, in the following passage (Dōgen 道元 2004–2005, vol. 3, p. 237), the essence of Buddhism lies in *shoichi nen* 初一念 as well as in the ultimate state of awakening (*kukyō-i* 究竟位), while he also argues, in his typical paradoxical way (Garfield and Priest 2021), awakening or the truth does exist but, at the same time, does not; therefore, the essence of Buddhism, awakening, or the truth cannot be attained or grasped:

しるべし、佛法は初一念にも大意あり、究竟位にも大意あり。その大意は不得なり。發心修行取證はなきにあらざ、不得なり。その大意は不知なり。修證は

無にあらざ、修證は有にあらざ、不知なり、不得なり。またその大意は、不得不知なり。聖諦修證なきにあらざ、不得不知なり。聖諦修證あるにあらざ、不得不知なり

You should understand that the essence of Buddhism lies in **the first thought of starting life as a Buddhist monk** as well as the ultimate state of awakening. You cannot attain the essence. Although there exists (the steps of) this determination, practice, and awakening, you cannot attain the essence. The essence cannot be grasped. Practice-awakening is not nothingness; it is not existence, it cannot be grasped, and it cannot be attained. And the essence cannot be grasped or attained. Although there exist Noble truths and practice-awakening, they cannot be grasped or attained. There do not exist Noble truths and practice-awakening, and they cannot be grasped or attained.

Another compound of *nen* 念 is used to refer to the attitude and mindset as a Buddhist monk after starting a new life as a renouncer: *dōnen* 道念, which means “the mind to pursue the path to awakening”. *Dō* 道 generally represents “a path”, and it often specifically means “the path to awakening” in the tradition of Buddhism in Japan. Dōgen clearly mentions that he is writing *Bendōwa* (辨道話), one of the most famous fascicles for a person with this *dōnen* 道念 (Dōgen 道元 2004–2005, vol. 8, p. 266):

(...) しばらく雲遊萍寄して、まさに先哲の風をきこえむとす。ただし、おのずから名利にかかはらず、道念をさきとせん眞實の參學あらむか。いたづらに邪師にまどはされて、みだりに正解をおほひ、むなしく自狂にゑうて、ひさしく迷にしづまん。(...) これをあはれむゆゑに、まのあたり大宋國にして禪林の風規を見聞し、知識の玄旨を稟持せしを、しるしあつめて、參學閑道の人にのこして、佛家の正法をしらしめんとす。これ眞訣ならむかも。

(...) I was aiming to leave myself free from everything like a drifting cloud and just listen to the winds of the legacy of ancient wisdom. However, even a person who, regardless of fame or profit, aspires after a genuine study based on **the mind to pursue the path to awakening** is to be taught incorrectly by a wrong mentor, to lose correct interpretations of Buddhism teachings, to be self-satisfied in vain, and to be lost for a long time. (...) As I feel pity for this, I gather and articulate the atmosphere and rules of the Zen tradition that I saw and listened to in the Song dynasty and the essence of knowledge that I was given and have maintained, in order to leave these for the people studying Buddhism as renouncers and let them grasp the true Dharma of Buddhism. I believe these must be the genuine essence of Buddhism.

We can clearly see in the passage above that Dōgen believes “study”, the first step of the threefold wisdom, is also very important as well as “practice”, the importance of which is emphasized very often in Dōgen’s philosophy, and that this is why he writes SBGZ for people with *dōnen* 道念: to enable them to study Buddhism correctly.

Meanwhile, other compounds of *nen* 念 are also used more directly in the context related to what I mentioned at the beginning of this subsection: to explain and emphasize the importance of studying and memorizing the traditional teachings or rules of Buddhism. A typical example is *okunen* 憶念, which means “remembering or keeping something in mind all the time”. *Oku* 憶 represents “memory”, “remembrance”, or “recalling something”. Dōgen mentions that Śākyamuni Buddha told Samantabhadra the importance of keeping *sūtra* correctly in mind as below (Dōgen 道元 2004–2005, vol. 6, p. 88):

釈迦牟尼佛、告普賢菩薩言、若有受持誦誦正憶念修習書寫是法華經者、當知是人則見釈迦牟尼仏如從仏口聞此經典¹⁰。

Śākyamuni Buddha told Samantabhadra “If one receives and maintains this *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra*, reads it aloud, **remembers it in mind all the time correctly**, practices it, and transcribes it, you should just know that this person then sees Buddha just as if listening to this *Sūtra* from the mouth of Buddha”.

It is also intriguing that, in this passage in which Dōgen directly cites the words of Śākyamuni Buddha from the *sūtra*, which explains the importance of “remembering”, the fruit of various efforts as a Buddhist monk is described with the term “listening” (*mon* 聞), the very first step of the threefold wisdom (*monshishū* 聞思修).

While it is widely known that Dōgen emphasizes the importance of practice (of *zazen*) with the term “just sitting” (*shikan taza* 只管打坐), Dōgen, as we have seen so far in this subsection with several examples, also recognizes and actually teaches the importance of “study”: remembering the traditional teachings correctly and referring to them accordingly. Additionally, as the following subsection argues, “reflection” is also regarded as an important quality.

3.2. “Reflection” and *Nen* 念 in SBGZ: Mental Traps to Be Avoided

A typical usage of this group is something related to self-reflection; for example, *jinen* 自念 means “reflecting on oneself” or “self-reflection”, of which 自 represents “oneself” or “by oneself”. This term appears in an anecdote of a Buddhist monk. The monk, who had been born into a royal family but then aimed to renounce it, was reflecting on himself (*jinen* 自念), and on how he would be able to live a genuine life as a Buddhist monk, regardless of his origin. Dōgen admires this monk in that he lastly managed to renounce his royal pedigree after long and profound 自念 as follows (Dōgen 道元 2004–2005, vol. 7, p. 371):

父母固止之。遂終日不食。乃許其在家出家、號僧伽難提、復命沙門禪利多、爲之師。積十九載、未嘗退倦。尊者每自念言、身居王宮、胡爲出家。¹¹

His parents held back this (his becoming a Buddhist monk) firmly. Then, he did not eat anything all day long. Therefore, they permitted him to become a Buddhist monk at their home. They named him Samghanandi, and ordered the Śramaṇa Dhyanalita to become his mentor. Nineteen years after, he did not get fed up. He always **reflected on himself** and said to himself, “I am living in a royal palace. How can I regard this as a renouncer’s life?”

While the term *jinen* 自念 above is used in the specific anecdote, Dōgen also uses other compounds of *nen* 念 when explaining the general attitude as a Buddhist monk. A good example of this is *shiryō nentaku* 思量念度: “thinking and assuming various things at the mercy of mental functions”. *Shi* 思 represents “thinking”, *ryō* 量 refers to “assuming” or “imagining”, *taku* 度 means “passing through” or “wandering”, which means the same as the Chinese character 渡, and thus *nentaku* 念度 stands for “mind-wandering”. In the passage below, Dōgen teaches that spending time for only *shiryō nentaku* 思量念度 will not lead a Buddhist monk to awakening (Dōgen 道元 2004–2005, vol. 8, p. 282):

又、讀經念佛等のつとめにうるところの功德を、なんぢしるやいなや。ただしたをうごかし、こゑをあぐるを、佛事功德とおもへる、いとはかなし。佛法に擬するにうたたとほく、いよいよはるかなり。又、經書をひらくことは、ほとけ頓漸修行の儀則ををしへおけるを、あきらめしり、教のごとく修行すれば、かならず證をとらしめむとなり。いたづらに思量念度をつひやして、菩提をうる功德に擬せんとにはあらぬなり。

Also, do you know or not what the virtue you can attain is through devoting yourself to reading *sūtra* aloud and remembering Buddha. It is very superficial to regard just moving your tongue and reading *sūtra* aloud as Buddhist practice and to believe you can attain virtue through this. These are very far from the essence of Buddhism. Also, studying *sūtra* is clarifying and grasping the teachings of Buddha about rules towards both sudden awakening and gradual awakening, and if you practice just based on the teachings you will surely attain awakening. It is not a correct way to regard **thinking and assuming various things at the mercy of your mental functions** in vain as the virtue leading to attaining *bodhi*.

Dōgen here again mentions, as we reviewed in the last subsection, the importance of studying the correct teachings of Buddha and the traditional rules when a Buddhist monk

practices in order to attain awakening, and he then warns that a Buddhist monk should avoid just thinking and assuming various things at the mercy of one's mental functions. Actually, Dōgen often uses compounds of *nen* 念 to explain the mental state to be avoided in this way. We can see this clearly from the following passage that contains the compound *tannen* 但念, which means "thinking about just one thing". *Tan* 但 represents "only". Dōgen criticizes Buddhist monks who do not study and contemplate the teachings of Buddha by implying that they are just like animals, only thinking about waterweeds to eat (Dōgen 道元 2004–2005, vol. 3, pp. 34–35):

しばらく工夫すべし、この四生衆類のなかに、生はありて死なきものあるべしや。又、死のみ單傳にして、生を單傳せざるありや。單生單死の類の有無、かならず參學すべし。わづかに無生の言句をききてあきらむることなく、身心の工夫をさしおくがごとくするものあり。これ愚鈍のはなはだしきなり。(…)いたづらに水草の但念なるがゆゑなり。

You should contemplate for a while whether there is even just one that has birth but not death among these four types of living things (all types of living things), or, whether there is one that you hear only about its death but do not about its birth. You have to study whether this is the case or not, for sure. Some people do not clarify the significance of teachings about no-birth or pause digging into this question through exerting their body and mind. This is such a stupid case. (...). This is because they are **just thinking about** their waterweeds in vain.

It is clear that Dōgen here uses the term *tannen* 但念 in a negative context as he uses *shiryō nentaku* 思量念度 in this passage: to criticize those who just think about their daily lives or routines including food, without contemplating by themselves essential questions that can be naturally derived from Buddhism teachings, which is a matter of life and death here.

It is also worth exploring Dōgen's use of the terms *janen* 邪念 and *inen* 異念. *Janen* 邪念 means "a disturbing thought or image", of which *ja* 邪 usually represents "wicked", but can also mean "wrong". Dōgen teaches that it is a wrong thought for Buddhist monks to want to be praised for their efforts and that a Buddhist monk should try not to be known for one's own efforts but instead practice to avoid delusion (Dōgen 道元 2004–2005, vol. 1, p. 201).

いまの人は、實をもとむることまれなるによりて、身に行なく、こころにさとりなくとも、他人のほむることありて、行解相應せりといはん人をもとむるがごとし。迷中又迷、すなはちこれなり。この邪念、すみやかに抛捨すべし。

Since it is rare for people today to seek for the truth, it is as if they want to be praised as a person whose practice and understandings correspond entirely, even if they do not practice physically or attain awakening in their mind. That is, they are lost within delusion. You should throw away this **disturbing thought**.

Also, *inen* 異念, "a disturbed mind", refers to a similar thing. *I* 異 represents "strange" or "different from the standard or the correct thing". Thus, *inen* 異念 means "a wrong thought far away from the correct state". This term appears in the anecdote of a man who found himself having *inen* 異念 when rebuked by others, even after having thought he had become arhat. Dōgen teaches the importance of reflecting on oneself as the man did (Dōgen 道元 2004–2005, vol. 8, p. 143).

曾聞、有人自謂成佛。待天不曉、謂爲魔障。曉已不見梵王請說、自知非佛。自謂是阿羅漢。又被他人罵之、心生異念、自知非是阿羅漢。乃謂是第三果也。又見女人起欲想、知非聖人。此亦良由知教相故、乃如是也。それ佛法をしれるは、かくのごとくみづからが非を覺知し、はやくそのあやまりをなげすつ。しらざるともからは、一生むなしく愚蒙のなかにあり。生より生を受くるも、またかくのごとくなるべし。

I have heard one story. A person thought he had become Buddha. But the sun did not rise, although he waited for a long time. Then he knew this was due to a devil. Brahma did not appear to pray for preaching at dawn, and he thought he had not become Buddha but Arhat. Then his mind produced **a wrong thought** when he was rebuked, and he knew he had not become Arhat. Then he thought his state was the third one. However, when he was aroused by seeing a woman, he knew he was not a saint. He realized it by himself as he knew the teachings of Buddha. That is, attaining Dharma is perceiving one's own drawbacks by oneself like this and throw them away promptly. Those who do not know (the teachings of Buddha) would be in ignorance for a lifetime in vain. Even after receiving birth after birth, life would be just like this again.

So, as we have seen in this subsection so far, Dōgen indeed teaches the importance of, as well as that of “study” reviewed in the last subsection, “reflection”, which is the attitude to reflect on oneself without becoming trapped by a wrong thought, or by mental functions that lead one to dispersed awareness in vain.

3.3. “Practice” and Nen 念 in SBGZ: Towards Awakening through Zazen

This group includes the terms that explain the attitudes on cultivating oneself as a Buddhist monk after studying the traditional teachings and rules and contemplating and digesting them at the deepest level. A good example is *nenbutsu* 念仏, which refers to *buddhānusmṛti* in Sanskrit. In Dōgen, this term very often appears in the form of *dokkyō nenbutsu* 読経念仏, which means “reading *sūtra* aloud and recollecting the Buddha”. *Dok(u)* 読 represents “reading (aloud, in many cases)”, and *kyō* 経 refers to “*sūtra*”. As shown in the explanation of *shiryō nentaku* 思量念度 in the last subsection, Dōgen emphasizes that one can attain the virtue if one practices *dokkyō nenbutsu* 読経念仏, correctly based on studying and clarifying *sūtra*.

On the other hand, Dōgen also directly teaches the importance of “just sitting” (*shikan taza* 只管打坐), as follows (Dōgen 道元 2004–2005, vol. 8, p. 271):

宗門の正傳にいはいく、この單傳正直の佛法は、最上のなかに最上なり、參見知識のはじめより、さらに燒香禮拜念佛修懺看經をもちみず、ただし打坐して身心脱落することをえよ。

The correct tradition of our school says: “This Dharma, succeeded directly and correctly since Buddha, is the best among the best. Immediately after grasping the true knowledge, do not practice purification (burning incense), praying, remembering Buddha, confessing, or reading *sūtra*. **Just do zazen** and reach the state of dropping off body-mind”.

Apparently, in the passage above, Dōgen denies the meanings of any forms of “practice” aside from doing *zazen*. However, as we have seen so far in accordance with the threefold-wisdom model, it is evident that Dōgen recognizes and thus actually explains the high importance of studying the traditional teachings and rules correctly and reflecting upon them by oneself before “practice”.

Herein, his original philosophy of “oneness of practice and awakening” (*shūshō ittō* 修證一等) helps us to digest this paradox. According to Dōgen, “practice” itself is awakening, and vice versa: genuine “practice” (of *zazen*) necessarily leads a Buddhist monk to awakening, that is, what he calls the state of “dropping off body-mind” (*shinjin datsuraku* 身心脱落), and conversely, *zazen* that does not lead a monk to awakening is not genuine “practice”. This vital point is the foundation of *monshishū-shō* 聞思修證, and the connections among these concepts are to be argued in detail in Section 4.

In relation to Dōgen’s concept of awakening described above, the concept of *ichinen* 一念 is essential. While the compounds of *nen* 念 shown in this chapter so far should be regarded, of course not wholly, as Chinese terms connected to *sati*, *smṛti*, or other related terms, those of *ichinen* 一念 should be understood as related to *kṣaṇa*. *Ichi* — generally represents “one” or “only”, and *nen* 念 here means “an instant”. Then, *ichinen* 一念 in

Dōgen means an ultimately short instant of this present moment. We can directly see Dōgen's worldview in these compounds: the following usage of *ichinen ninen* 一念二念, which means "moment by moment", or simply "every extremely short instant", as 二 means "second" or "following", is a good example (Dōgen 道元 2004–2005, vol. 4, p. 174):

一念二念は一山河大地なり、二山河大地なり。山河大地等、これ有無にあらざれば大小にあらざ、得不得にあらざ、識不識にあらざ、通不通にあらざ、悟不悟に變ぜず。

Moment by moment, there exists one mountain-river-earth and two (or all) mountains-rivers-earths. Mountains-rivers-earths-others are not existence or nothingness, big or small, attained or not, grasped or not, or connected or not. This would not change even before and after awakening.

As described in the passage above, in Dōgen's worldview, everything is in every ultimately short instant. He also explains this truth from another angle with the term *ichinen fushō* 一念不生. *Fu* 不 represents "not", and *shō* 生 means "emergence", and thus *fushō* 不生 stands for "unborn" and thus "deathless"; Buddha nature is not born and will not die. It is what transcends *saṃsāra* (*rin-ne* 輪廻), the blind succession of births and deaths. Therefore, *ichinen fushō* 一念不生 means "the truth that *ichinen* 一念, an ultimately short instant, which contains eternity or everything, is unborn". Dōgen explains this as follows (Dōgen 道元 2004–2005, vol. 4, p. 321):

念念一一なり。これはかならず不生なり、これ全體全現なり。このゆゑに一念不生と道取す。

Every single moment is one thing. Every single moment is necessarily eternal and absolute, and everything appears entirely in every single moment. Therefore, I have grasped **the truth that an ultimately short instant is unborn**.

While Dōgen's emphasis on "practice" is broadly known especially with his main teaching of "just sitting" (*shikan taza* 只管打坐), we can certainly grasp his worldview more deeply by shedding light on the concept of *ichinen* 一念, as we have reviewed in this subsection: through "practice" of genuine *zazen* after "study" and "reflection", one can transcend the sense of time and comprehend the truth that everything exists in *ichinen* 一念.

Also, this worldview around *ichinen* 一念 is closely connected with Dōgen's key concepts of "oneness of practice and awakening" (*shūshō ittō* 修證一等) and "dropping off body-mind" (*shinjin datsuraku* 身心脱落). The coming chapter digs into these concepts to reveal the connections among them and the position of the concept of *nen* 念 according to Dōgen.

4. Nen 念, "Oneness of Practice and Awakening", "Just Sitting", and "Dropping off Body-Mind"

As we reviewed in the introduction, Dōgen presents the concept of "*monshishū-shō* 聞思修證", although he knows its basic form: "*monshishū* 聞思修". He actually mentions the basic form as "*monshishū-e* 聞思修慧", citing a passage directly from *The Sūtra of Buddha's Last Instruction*. *Shō* 證, the Chinese character added to the basic form, means "awakening", and thus, it is obvious that this concept is deeply connected with his basic philosophy: "oneness of practice and awakening" (*shūshō ittō* 修證一等).

Also in this context, it seems that his two famous teachings, "just sitting" (*shikan taza* 只管打坐) and "dropping off body-mind" (*shinjin datsuraku* 身心脱落), have strong ties, respectively, with "practice" (*shū* 修) or with "awakening" (*shō* 證), or with both.

Therefore, this chapter aims to investigate these terms closely and reveal the connections among them and the concept of *nen* 念, and to comprehend its position within the overall worldview and philosophy of Dōgen.

Firstly, when it comes to "oneness of practice and awakening" (*shūshō ittō* 修證一等), of which *ichi* 一 represents "one(ness)" and *tō* 等 refers to "equal(ness)" or "same(ness)",

this concept is directly explained by Dōgen as follows (Dōgen 道元 2004–2005, vol. 8, p. 299):

それ、修證は一つにあらずとおもへる、すなはち外道の見なり。佛法には修證これ一等なり。

That is, if you believe that **practice and awakening are not one thing**, that is a heretical comprehension. In Buddhism, practice and awakening are one thing.

The passage above shows the reason why Dōgen uses the term “*monshishū-shō* 聞思修證”; in his philosophy, “awakening” (*shō* 證) and the third step of the threefold-wisdom, practice (*shū* 修), are one thing and are thus not separatable (Davis 2019, p. 206¹²; Tsunoda 1995, pp. 127–28¹³). Here we can see the reason why he emphasizes again and again the importance of the practice of *zazen*: as is broadly known, Dōgen teaches that one should devote all of oneself to the practice of *zazen* with the term *shikan taza* 祇管打坐/只管打坐, which is generally translated into “just sitting”. *Shi* 祇 or 只 represents “just” or “only”, *kan* 管 usually refers to “a tube”, but sometimes “narrowly” as in this term, *ta* 打 means “striking something”, but here adds the nuance of “doing something firmly”, and *za* 坐 represents “being seated”.

The term “just sitting” (*shikan taza* 祇管打坐) is quite often used with the concept of “dropping off body-mind” (*shinjin datsuraku* 身心脱落 or *datsuraku shinjin* 脱落身心) (Dōgen 道元 2004–2005, vol. 5, p. 208¹⁴; vol. 6, pp. 135¹⁵, 259¹⁶, 346¹⁷; vol. 8, p. 275¹⁸). This term represents the ultimate state of “awakening” in Dōgen’s philosophy, of which *shin* 身 means “body”, *jin* 心 refers to “mind”, *datsu* 脱/脫 represents “escaping” or “leaving”, and *raku* 落 stands for “falling out”. Dōgen directly explains this term and “just sitting” (*shikan taza* 祇管打坐) in one passage as below (Dōgen 道元 2004–2005, vol. 6, p. 259):

弄精魂とは、祇管打坐、脱落身心なり。佛祖となり祖となるを精弄魂といふ、著衣喫飯を弄精魂といふなり。

Devoting all of oneself to practice (*rōshōkon* 弄精魂) is just sitting (*shikan taza* 祇管打坐), and is dropping off body-mind (*datsuraku shinjin* 脱落身心). Becoming Buddha is devoting all of oneself to practice (*rōshōkon* 弄精魂), and wearing clothes and eating food is (also) devoting all of oneself to practice (*rōshōkon* 弄精魂).

Also in addition to the passage above, Dōgen mentions the concept of “dropping off body-mind” (*shinjin datsuraku* 身心脱落) in a paradoxical but thus highly implicative way as follows (Ibid., p. 346):

(...) 心の打坐あり、身の打坐とおなじからず。身の打坐あり、心の打坐とおなじからず。身心脱落の打坐あり、身心脱落の打坐とおなじからず。得恁麼ならん、佛祖の行解相應なり。(…)

(...) there is the *zazen* of mind, which is not the same as the *zazen* of body. There is the *zazen* of body, which is not the same as the *zazen* of mind. There is the *zazen* of **dropping off body-mind**, which is not the same as the *zazen* of **dropping off body-mind**. But if one has already attained the state like this, the practice and the theory that Buddha teaches would completely correspond to each other. (...)

While there is an argument that “just sitting” (*shikan taza* 祇管打坐) merely means “focus on *zazen* completely while doing it” and does not emphasize the importance of *zazen* itself (Putney 1996, p. 527¹⁹), it is obvious that Dōgen puts a very high priority on the practice of *zazen* itself judging from the actual contexts above, in which the two terms of “just sitting” (*shikan taza* 祇管打坐) and “dropping off body-mind” (*shinjin datsuraku* 身心脱落) are used together.

So, from now on, I would like to argue that reviewing the usages of *nen* 念 in SBGZ in light of the connections among the three concepts reviewed so far in this chapter, “oneness of practice and awakening” (*shūshō ittō* 修證一等), “just sitting” (*shikan taza* 祇管打坐), and

“dropping off body-mind” (*shinjin datsuraku* 身心脱落), enables us to holistically deepen our comprehensions of Dōgen’s philosophy and worldview.

Dōgen directly describes the nature of *nen* 念 when he explains the five faculties (Pali: *pañc’ indriyāni*) in the fascicle of “Thirty-seven Factors of Awakening” (*Sanjūshichihon bodai bunpō* 三十七品菩提分法) as below (Dōgen 道元 2004–2005, vol. 6, p. 387):

摸索當の自己、これ念なり。有身のときの念あり、無心のときも念あり。有心の念あり、無身の念あり。

The self that one finally finds after long seeking for is mindfulness (*nen* 念). Mindfulness (*nen* 念) exists when body exists, and mindfulness (*nen* 念) also exists in (the state of) no-mind. Mindfulness (*nen* 念) exists when mind exists, and mindfulness (*nen* 念) also exists in (the state of) no-body.

According to the passage above, mindfulness (*nen* 念) is the self that exists beyond the existence/nonexistence of the body/mind. This can be understood as the very state of “dropping off body-mind” (*shinjin datsuraku* 身心脱落), which is to be pursued through the practice of *zazen*.

Then, after the passage above, Dōgen explains what the correct mindfulness (*shōnen* 正念) is in the same fascicle as follows (Ibid., p. 433):

正念道支は、被自瞞の八九成なり。念よりさらに發智すると學するは捨父逃逝なり。念中發智と學するは、纏縛之甚なり。無念はこれ正念といふは外道なり。また地水火風の精靈を念とすべからず、心意識の顛倒を念と稱せず。まさに汝得吾皮肉骨髓、すなはち正念道支なり。

The branch of the path to **the correct mindfulness** is to be eighty/ninety-percent attained while being deceived by oneself. Studying that wisdom emerges from mindfulness (*nen* 念) again is (a wrong idea just like) abandoning one’s father and running away (from a threat). Studying that wisdom emerges within mindfulness (*nen* 念) is an extremely prejudiced idea. Regarding the state of no-mind (*munen* 無念) as correct mindfulness is a heresy. Also, you must not regard spirits of earth, water, fire, and wind as mindfulness (*nen* 念), and must not call the state of mind and consciousness with the wrong comprehension about the truth (*tentō* 顛倒) mindfulness (*nen* 念). (Just as Bodhidharma told his four disciples), when one attains my skin, muscle, bone, and marrow (*hiniku kotsuzui* 皮肉骨髓), that is the correct mindfulness.

According to Masutani’s interpretation of this passage, *nen* 念 and wisdom are one thing (Ibid., pp. 434–35²⁰). This is persuasive because Dōgen here denies that “wisdom emerges from mindfulness (*nen* 念) again”; the Japanese term in the original text (*sarani* さらに) generally means “further” or “more”, and it should here be interpreted as “again”. That is, “*nen* 念 is wisdom and wisdom is *nen* 念” (Ibid.), which can be ensured by the last sentence in the passage above: the words of *nyotokugo hiniku kotsuzui* 汝得吾皮肉骨髓, which is quoted from the episode of Bodhidharma right before leaving China for India. He told his four main disciples that each of them attained one of his four body parts (skin, muscle, bone, and marrow), which are, of course, the metaphors of the essence of his Zen teaching, after long practice (Dōgen 道元 1990–1993, vol. 1, p. 73²¹). There is no superiority or inferiority among these four parts (Hareyama 1997, p. 93²²), and for Dōgen, the correct mindfulness is the state with all these essences, or, in other words, with wisdom or *nen* 念.

Importantly, this state can be “eighty or ninety percent attained while being deceived by oneself” according to the passage above. That is, one cannot reach this state dependent on one’s own mental functions or intention; rather, one reaches the state without realizing it and can know this attainment only when one has already done so. Mizuno briefly explains the teaching in the commentary on this first sentence of the passage: “you are the only one who can cultivate yourself” (Dōgen 道元 1990–1993, vol. 3, p. 308). Wisdom or *nen* 念 is not something to be attained on one’s purpose, and thus, the only thing one can do is devoting all of oneself to cultivation. This coincides with the passage in which

Dōgen directly describes *nen* 念: “The self that one finally finds after long seeking for its mindfulness (*nen* 念)” (Dōgen 道元 2004–2005, vol. 6, p. 387).

Herein, I would like to recapitulate the overall picture as shown in the figure below, reflecting the perspective of the framework that succeeded in connecting the threefold wisdom, the epistemic sources, and the cognitive faculties (Deroche 2021, p. 29), and what I argued over the usages of *nen* 念 in accordance with each step of the threefold wisdom in the last chapter. As shown in Figure 1, rereading SBGZ from the perspective of *nen* 念 has enabled us to comprehend Dōgen’s worldview and philosophy, such as “just sitting” (*shikan taza* 只管打坐), “dropping off body-mind” (*shinjin datsuraku* 身心脱落), and “oneness of practice and awakening” (*shūshō ittō* 修證一等). In the meantime, the concept of *nen* 念, or mindfulness, in Dōgen, is positioned in relation to these concepts.

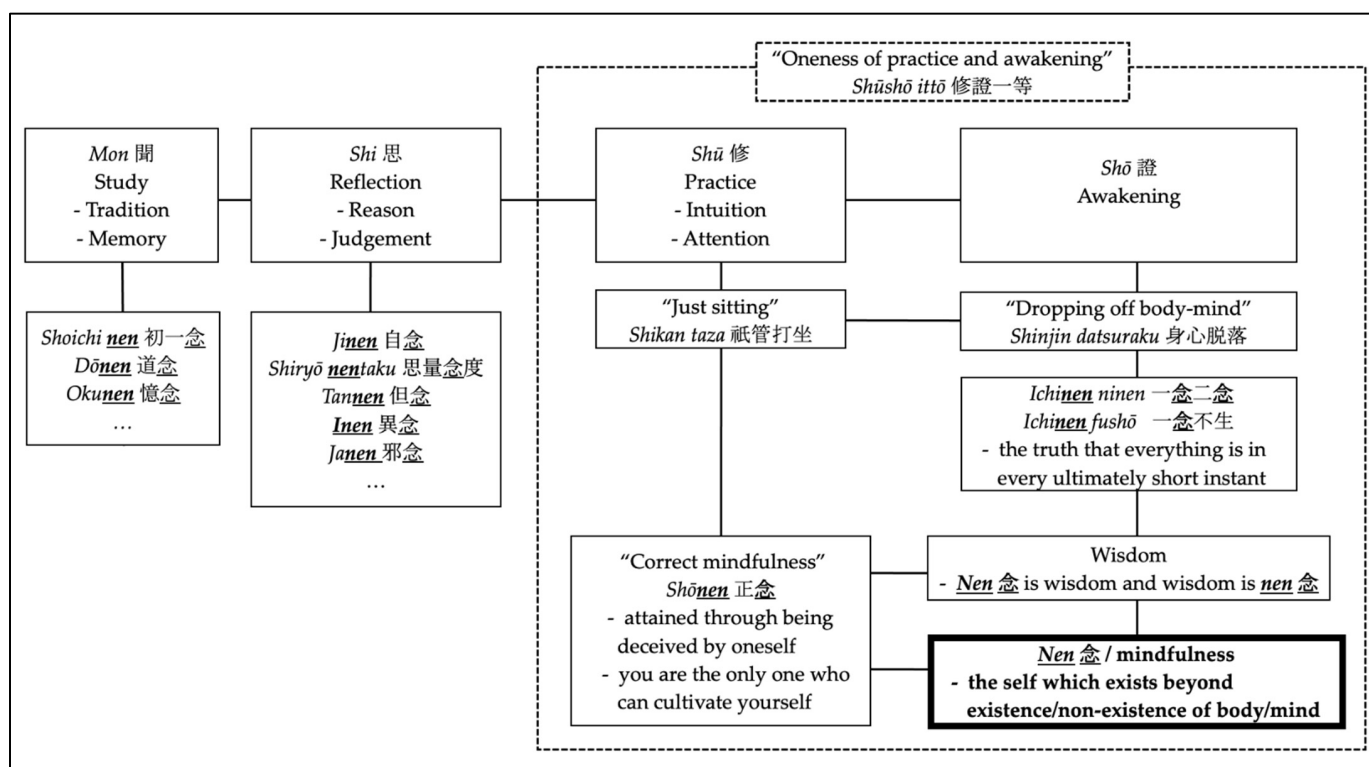


Figure 1. The overall picture of threefold wisdom, *nen* 念, and key concepts in SBGZ.

5. Conclusions

This paper attempted to reread Dōgen’s masterpiece SBGZ from the perspective of *nen* 念, or mindfulness, which is one of the origins of contemporary mindfulness-based interventions, in order to comprehend its significances and position in Dōgen’s philosophy and worldview with further width and depth as Fujita Isshō points out.

While the original meanings of the Sanskrit word *smṛti* include “remembrance” and “memory” according to *The Great Dictionary of Buddhist Terms*, the significances of *nen* 念 in the tradition of Japanese Buddhism are so diverse that we must not assume that the concept can be simply interpreted as or translated into *smṛti/sati*-related terms, *citta/manas*-related ones, or others. This is why this study investigated the usages of the compounds of *nen* 念 in the actual contexts, especially in accordance with each step of threefold wisdom; for mindfulness is the common thread linking them and Dōgen represents the concept of *monshishū-shō* 聞思修證.

Although it is widely known that Dōgen puts a high priority on “practice”, the third step of threefold wisdom, just as represented by his famous teaching of “just sitting” (*shikan taza* 只管打坐), it was shown that he also regards the former two steps, “study” and “reflection”, as essential qualities. For instance, he clearly states that he was writing

Bendōwa 辨道話 for Buddhist monks with *dōnen* 道念 to study the Buddhism tradition correctly, admires a Buddhist monk with self-reflection (*jinen* 自念), and warns not to be trapped by a disturbing thought (*janen* 邪念). Also, we reviewed Dōgen’s worldview that one in the state of “awakening” can comprehend the truth that an ultimately short instant contains eternity and everything, by shedding light on the usages of the compounds of *ichinen* 一念, the Sanskrit equivalent of which is not *smṛti* but *kṣāṇa*.

In the passages of *Shōbōgenzō* that we have seen, Dōgen describes the ultimate state, or “awakening” (*shō* 證), in other direct words as “dropping off body-mind” (*shinjin datsuraku* 身心脱落). By addressing his original texts in detail, it was revealed that this state is nothing but *nen* 念 in Dōgen, which is “the self that one finally finds after long seeking for” that exists beyond the existence/nonexistence of the body/mind. Also, we addressed his worldview that “*nen* 念 is wisdom and wisdom is *nen* 念”. In relation to this, we reviewed that, “practice” and “awakening” are one thing and are thus inseparable in his philosophy as represented by his “oneness of practice and awakening” (*shūshō ittō* 修證一等), and this is why he emphasizes the importance of the practice of “just sitting” (*shikan taza* 只管打坐) and presents the concept of “*monshishū-shō* 聞思修證”.

As a whole, it is revealed that the concept of *nen* 念 in Dōgen’s philosophy is not limited by the original meanings of the Sanskrit word *smṛti* that are related to “remembrance” and “memory”; remarkably, the concept is often used to teach the importance of “practice” towards the state of “awakening”, or in other words, “dropping off body-mind” (*shinjin datsuraku* 身心脱落). In this context, it should be remembered that he explains that *nen* 念 is the self beyond the sense of body-mind or time, which can be attained after long cultivation. This uniqueness should deserve special attention when we try to contemplate “mindfulness” in today’s society.

Just as Fujita implies, we certainly saw that Dōgen’s philosophy, such as “dropping off body-mind” (*shinjin datsuraku* 身心脱落), “oneness of practice and awakening” (*shūshō ittō* 修證一等), and *nen* 念, represent the very attitude of being beyond dichotomy (Davis 2019, p. 208²³). After this study digging into the concept of *nen* 念 in Dōgen’s *Shōbōgenzō*, there will be further research directly addressing the affinity and similarity between this attitude and the philosophers of the Kyōto school ranging from Nishida Kitarō (西田 幾多郎 1870–1945), the founder of the school who coincided with and expanded Dōgen’s philosophy (Kopf 2012, p. xiii²⁴), to others such as Watsuji Teturō (和辻 哲郎 1889–1960) or Keiji Nishitani (西谷 啓治 1900–1990) (Heisig et al. 2011, p. 142²⁵), which are typically represented by the following passage of Hisamatsu Shinnichi (久松 真一 1889–1980) (Hisamatsu 2003, pp. 225–26), who is also famous as a master of the Japanese tea ceremony (*sadō* 茶道) with practical experience for over 40 years:

諸藝にしましても、よく藝に成り切れというようなことをいいます。剣道、柔道にしましても、スポーツにしましても、本当に上達するためには成り切れなければならない。お茶の方でもお茶になり切ることかお茶の道に達することの大事な条件でもあり、お茶のなかに入り込んでいるということの大事な条件でもあるわけです。以上のことから、「主客合一」ということの意味の見当がおつきだろろうと思います。

When it comes to any form of Japanese traditional arts (*gei* 藝), it is often said that one must become an art thoroughly. When it comes to Japanese fencing (*kendō* 剣道), Judō (柔道), or other sports, one must become an art thoroughly in order to progress genuinely. In Japanese Tea ceremony, it is an important condition to become tea thoroughly, for attaining the ultimate path of Japanese Tea ceremony; integrating (oneself) into tea is an important condition for that (ultimate path). From the above, you may grasp the meaning of “the unification of subject and object phenomena” (*shukyaku gōitsu* 主客合一).

Also, it is known that philosophers outside the school, including Izutsu Toshihiko (井筒 俊彦 1914–1993) and Yuasa Yasuo (湯浅 康雄 1925–2005) in fact paid special attention to this state (Ibid., pp. 913²⁶, 142²⁷). There should still be much room for integrating this

etymology of Zen philosophy into today's mindfulness in order to give "further width and depth" to it; for, just as Izutsu directly argues when addressing Dōgen's philosophy, "zazen is the only or otherwise the best potential to reach the unification of body-mind" (Izutsu 2014, p. 42²⁸), which should be the very state of awakening (*shō 證*), or *nen 念*, in Dōgen's philosophy.

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Notes

- 1 Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn recollects the origin of MBSR in the article entitled "Some reflections on the origins of MBSR the skillful means, and the trouble with maps" as follows: "The early papers on MBSR cited not just its Theravada roots (Kornfield 1977; Nyanaponika 1962), but also its Mahayana roots within both the *Soto* (Suzuki 1970) and Rinzai (Kapleau 1965) Zen traditions (and by lineage, the earlier Chinese and Korean streams), as well as certain currents from the yogic traditions (Thakar 1977) including Vedanta (Nisargadatta 1973), and the teachings of J Krishnamurti (Krishnamurti 1969, 1979) and Ramana Maharshi (Maharshi 1959). My own primary Zen teacher, Seung Sahn, was Korean, and taught both *Soto* and Rinzai approaches, including the broad use and value of *koans* and *koan*-based 'Dharma combat' exchanges between teacher and student (Seung Sahn 1976)".
- 2 This succeeded in articulating the nature of Dōgen's paradox as follows: "Dōgen, unlike Laozi, Zhuangzi, or even his Chinese Buddhist predecessors, argues that not only is reality inconsistent, issuing in paradoxes of ontology, and not only is it impossible to characterize reality discursively, leading to paradoxes of expressibility, but that our experience itself is paradoxical".
- 3 Following this passage, Dōgen directly quotes Chapter 15 of *The Sūtra of Buddha's Last Instruction* (*Butsu yuikyō gyō 仏遺教経*): 汝等比丘 若有智慧 則無貪著 常自省察 不令有失 是則於我法中 能得解脫 若不爾者 既非道人 又非白衣 無所名也。 夫智慧者 則是度老病死海 堅牢船也 亦是無明闇黑 大明燈也 一切痛苦之良藥也 伐煩惱樹之利斧也 是故汝等 當以聞思修慧 而自增益 若人有智慧之照 雖是肉眼 而是明見人也 是為智慧。
- 4 "It seems to have been T. W. Rhys Davids (1881), one of the pioneers of the Western study of Pāli texts, who first translated the Buddhist technical term *sati* by the English word mindfulness".
- 5 This article historically explains how MBSR has played a significant role in diffusing the concept of mindfulness (Japanese: マインドフルネス) in Japan: a variety of religious traditions and medical approaches were gradually integrated into what is called マインドフルネス today. On the other hand, we should be careful about the usage of this *katakana* マインドフルネス; Deroche (2018) explains this point as follows: "In Japan (and elsewhere as well), we shall avoid talking about "mindfulness" in *katakana* マインドフルネス by implying the sense of a new tradition or method, as opposed to traditional Buddhism. The reason is that "mindfulness" is the now commonly accepted English translation for the Pāli *sati*. It refers thus to a core term for all Buddhist traditions, including for Japanese Buddhism (following the classical Chinese *nian/nen 念*, which translated –among different terms– the Sanskrit *smṛti*, equivalent of the Pāli *sati*). So if by mindfulness in *katakana* マインドフルネス, we intend to refer to scientific and secularized programs, we shall then be more explicit, and refer to them as 'mindfulness-based interventions,' and as much as possible try to specify which protocol, since there are now many".
- 6 "The need to supplement a particular definition of mindfulness with an exploration of its actual function requires shifting from the question 'What is mindfulness?' to 'What does mindfulness do?'. The need for such a shift can be illustrated by turning to early Buddhist definitions of mindfulness as a mental faculty (Pāli *indriya*, Sanskrit *indriya*, Chinese 根, Tibetan *dbang po*). One of these definitions relates mindfulness to the ability to remember what has been done or said long ago. Another definition mentions the four establishments of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*, *smṛtyupasthāna*, 念處, *dran pa nye bar gzhaḡ pa*). Thus, the first definition describes a quality of mindfulness; the second outlines its actual application".
- 7 "It is quite common today for the word *sati* to be translated as 'mindfulness', despite the fact that its pedigree derives from the Old Indic (OI) word *smṛti*, 'remembrance', 'memory', 'the whole body of sacred tradition or what is remembered by human teachers (distinguished from *śruti*, or what is directly heard) (MW)".
- 8 The author offers some examples, such as *sati pamuṭṭhā* in *Majjhima Nikāya* I 329, meaning "forgotten", and *sati udapādi* in *Dīgha Nikāya* I 180, meaning "remembering".
- 9 For further reference, see *Nihon Bukkyō Shi* 日本仏教史 (*History of Buddhism in Japan*) (Minowa 2015).
- 10 Dōgen directly cites this teaching of Śākyamuni Buddha from Chapter 28 of *Hokke kyō* 法華經 (*Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra*): "Encouragement of Samantabhadra".

- 11 Dōgen directly cites this passage from *Keitoku dentō roku* 景德傳燈錄 (*The Jingde Record of the Transmission of the Lamp*), vol. 2.
- 12 “Dōgen speaks of this ‘forgetting’ most radically in terms of his own enlightenment experience of ‘dropping off the body-mind’ (*shinjin-datsuraku* 信心脱落). Note that Dōgen does not speak dualistically of freeing the mind from the body. In fact, he explicitly rejects the mind–body dualism of the so-called Senika heresy and speaks of the ‘oneness of body-mind’ (*shinjin ichinyo* 身心一如) along with the nonduality of the ‘one mind’ with the entire cosmos”. Please note that “信心脱落” should actually be written as “身心脱落” based on Dōgen’s original texts, just as in this paper.
- 13 修行(坐禪)と証(身心脱落)はひとつであり、(...) 修行のところに証が現れており、修行の他に証はない、と言えるのである。“Practice (*zazen*) and enlightenment (dropping off body-mind) is one thing, (...), it can be said that enlightenment is to be embodied in practice, and there is no enlightenment other than practice”.
- 14 祇管打坐、辨道功夫、身心脱落。“Just sitting, devoting all of yourself to Buddhism and contemplating, and then (you will reach the state of) dropping off body-mind”.
- 15 遍參はただ祇管打坐、身心脱落なり。“Traveling to study Buddhism is nothing but just sitting, and thus dropping off body-mind”.
- 16 たとひ春風ふかく桃花をにくむとも、桃花おちて身心脱落せん。“Even if you detest a peach blossom in a embracing spring wind, you will attain dropping off body-mind after it falls”.
- 17 See the second quoted passage in p. 12.
- 18 See the first quoted passage in p. 10.
- 19 Putney explains as follows: “(...), *shikan taza* is not ‘just sitting in meditation to the exclusion of other Buddhist practice,’ but rather ‘when meditating throw your whole ‘self,’ body and mind, into Zazen”.
- 20 念が智であり、智が念なのである。“*Nen* 念 is wisdom, and wisdom is *nen* 念”.
- 21 Mizuno explains this concept of *nyotokugo hiniku kotsuzui* 汝得吾皮肉骨髓 in the commentary as follows: 汝と呼ばれる誰もが、達磨と同じ皮肉骨髓を自己としている。“Everyone who is called thou forms the self with the same body parts of Bodhidharma”. This means that everyone has the potential to attain the awakening as Bodhidharma did, for everyone has the same body parts as Bodhidharma; therefore, the only thing one should do towards awakening is devoting all of oneself to self-cultivation and practice.
- 22 仏法の前では四人は等価値なる存在ではなかろうか。“It seems that the four are just equal existences in front of dharma, doesn’t it?”.
- 23 See Footnote 12.
- 24 “Nishida develops a philosophical system and, more concretely, a philosophy of self which is not only based on Zen notions such as *satori*, ‘no-self’ (Jap.: *muga*), ‘no-mind’ (Jap.: *mushin*), etc. but, furthermore, either coincides with or expands on Dōgen’s notions of selfhood, alterity, continuity, and temporality”.
- 25 “In Japanese philosophy of the twentieth century Dōgen seemed finally to have found his audience. Several major thinkers such as Watsuji Tetsurō, Tanabe Hajime, Nishitani Keiji, Ueda Shizuteru, and Yuasa Yasuo wrote significant works about Dōgen, citing him as a major philosopher of premodern Japan”.
- 26 “Although his principal reference points are Linji and Dōgen, he draws on numerous Chinese and Japanese Zen writings to offer an overview of Zen philosophy that includes its epistemology, ontology, linguistic theory, and aesthetics”.
- 27 See Footnote 22.
- 28 純粹で絶対的な主体性の状態にある自己を実現するためには、単にそれを“知る”代わりに、それに“なる”ことが必要なのである。しかし、これに達するためには、“身心”が前述の同元の表現が示すように“脱落”しなければならない。“坐禪”は、禪が考えているように、まず“身心”の統一へと達し、それから統一そのものが“脱落”するところへと達するための、唯一の、あるいはそうでなければ最良の可能性なのである。“In order to realize the self in a state of pure and absolute subjectivity, it is necessary ‘becoming’ it, instead of merely ‘comprehending’ it. But, in order to reach this state, the ‘body-mind’ must—as the above-mentioned expression of Dogen indicates—“drop off”. ‘Zazen,’ as Zen philosophy sees it, is the only or otherwise the best possibility to reach the unification of body-mind first, and then the ‘dropping off’ of this unification itself”.

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