

Article

Forgetting in Dōgen

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Abstract

This paper examines the philosophical and ethical significance of “forgetting” in Dōgen’s thought. It argues that the deepest form of forgetting—“forgetting oneself”—is not a psychological loss but a transformative practice through which a self-centered mode of existence is relinquished, allowing access to a multi-dimensional world in which beings appear across different ontological and normative domains. The paper first distinguishes three modes of forgetting articulated in Dōgen’s writings, focusing on forgetting oneself as the pivotal moment that discloses the structure of such domains. It then clarifies this mode through a close reading of *Genjōkōan*, showing that Dōgen’s account neither collapses into monism nor into nihilistic negation, but instead articulates a mode of existence in which the self is verified by the myriad dharmas. Building on this analysis, the paper situates forgetting within an ethical context. While human life is shaped by particular moral norms, Dōgen’s thought reveals that each body-and-mind simultaneously participates in multiple physical, biological, and value-structured domains. Ethical responsiveness, on this view, does not arise from the application of fixed moral principles but from the capacity to perceive and respond to such plural domains through the practice of forgetting oneself. A comparative discussion with Zhuangzi and Nietzsche further clarifies this point by contrast, highlighting the distinctive ethical reach of Dōgen’s conception of forgetting.

Keywords: Dōgen; forgetting; insentient beings; ethics; multi-dimensional world; *Shōbōgenzō*; Buddhist philosophy; *Genjōkōan*

1. Introduction

This paper, written as part of the collective project “Soteriological and Ethical Dimensions of Forgetting in Asian Thought,” explores how Dōgen’s notion of “forgetting” relates to questions arising within the ethical dimension of modern thought. The discussion proceeds in three steps.

In section One, as a preliminary step toward clarifying the distinctive workings of “forgetting” in Dōgen, I examine how the term *wasuru* (わする, “to forget”) is employed in the seventy-five-fascicle edition of the *Shōbōgenzō* (正法眼藏, Treasury of the True Dharma Eye, Dōgen 2023), which Dōgen himself compiled. The first aim of this inquiry is to show that “forgetting,” for Dōgen, possesses multiple modes of existence, and that among them there is an ethical imperative—one that carries a universal value for all seekers of knowledge or of the Way, whether East or West: the injunction “do not forget.”¹ The second aim is to clarify Dōgen’s further insight that, despite this ethical dimension, “forgetting” must ultimately be affirmed as the act that opens access to the true reality of the world and of phenomena.

Section Two examines the place and function of “forgetting,” in this ultimate sense, within the wider structure of Dōgen’s Buddha-Dharma—focusing especially on the phrase



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“to forget the self” (*jiko o wasururu*) in the *Genjōkōan* (現成公案, “The Realized Kōan”) fascicle, and considering how Dōgen’s early thought, as seen in *Fukanzazengi*² (普勸坐禪儀, “Universally Recommended Instructions for Zazen”; see Bielefeldt 1988) and *Bendōwa* (辨道話, “On the Endeavor of the Way”)³, deepened and transformed in the seventy-five-fascicle corpus.

The final section turns to the ethical implications of this analysis by examining how “forgetting oneself” operates within concrete situations in which good and evil are at stake. Focusing on Dōgen’s fascicle *Shōaku Makusa* (“Do No Evil”), it shows that ethical practice is not grounded in fixed moral principles, but unfolds through a transformation in how one’s body-and-mind is situated across multiple domains⁴. By contrasting this structure with the notions of forgetting found in Zhuangzi and Nietzsche, the section clarifies what is distinctive about Dōgen’s understanding of ethical responsiveness.

2. The Modes of Forgetting in the Seventy-Five-Fascicle *Shōbōgenzō*

2.1. The First Mode of Forgetting

When one surveys the seventy-five-fascicle edition as a whole, one finds numerous passages that make reference to forgetting. A closer examination reveals that most of these instances treat forgetting in a negative light.⁵ In particular, the fascicle *Gyōji* (行持, “Continuous Practice”) contains more examples of *wasuru* (“to forget”) than any other fascicle in the corpus—twelve occurrences in total. Although it is unnecessary here to enumerate every occurrence, it is clear, even when the examples are not directly related to monastic practice, that in every context the term *wasuru* carries a negative meaning. This shows that, for Dōgen, forgetting is fundamentally regarded as something to be admonished and guarded against.

Here I shall take up a representative instance and consider how the term is employed. In *Gyōji*, which recounts the exemplary practices of thirty-four Buddhas and ancestors, one particularly striking use of the term appears in the story of the Second Ancestor Huike (慧可 *Eka*), who endured great hardship seeking entrance to Bodhidharma’s chamber. On a snowy night, denied entry, he stood motionless before the gate and cried out:

When the ancients sought the Way, they pummeled their bones to extract the marrow, drew their blood to save the starving, spread their hair to cover the mud, flung themselves from precipices to feed a tiger. When the ancients were like this, what kind of person am I?⁶

Dōgen takes up this phrase and admonishes his readers as follows:

This saying, “When the ancients were like this, what kind of person am I?” should not be forgotten by latecomers as well. When we forget it even briefly, we are sunk for everlasting kalpas. (Dōgen 2023, vol. 2, p. 73)

Literally, this means that one must never forget the saying itself. Yet it is evident that Dōgen’s concern here is not with the mere remembrance of words. What he calls for is the practitioner’s awakening of self-awareness—the constant vigilance that sustains the quest for the Way. Not only in this passage from *Gyōji*, but throughout his work, such “forgetting” belongs to what may be called the “first mode of forgetting”: that which one must be admonished and guarded against day by day as long as one continues to “learn” in the broadest sense of the word.

Here, however, the words spoken by Huike go beyond the personal and serve to awaken awareness in all practitioners. Awareness becomes universal precisely because it is uttered as “words” that transcend the boundary between self and other; conversely, one who receives such words can internalize them, embodying them as one’s own realization. Therefore, even the sayings and actions of the Buddhas and patriarchs recorded

in the *goroku*⁷, as well as the stories and teachings of the sutras, though they may initially enter the ear as mere words, will one day be realized as awareness itself. And conversely, when one's own awakening finds its most fitting expression in words, those words become a truth that transcends the divide between self and others.

2.2. The Second Mode of Forgetting

In the fascicle *Mujō seppō* (無情説法, “The Insentient Preaches the Dharma”), there is a rare passage that speaks of forgetting in relation to this very process. It can be regarded as expressing what may be called the “second mode of forgetting” within the seventy-five-fascicle edition of the *Shōbōgenzō*. Although the passage is somewhat long, it bears directly on the affirmative dimension of forgetting that will be discussed in the next section, and thus deserves closer consideration.

To begin, the fascicle *Mujō seppō* centers on the Tang-dynasty Chan master Nanyang Huizhong's exchange with a monk—“A monk asked, ‘Do insentient beings preach the Dharma?’ The National Teacher said, ‘They preach constantly, ardently, without pause.’”⁸ Dōgen develops this dialogue into his own distinctive vision of “the preaching of the insentient”. In the first half of the fascicle, several dialogues concerning the Buddha-nature of the insentient, cited from the *Jingde chuandeng lu*, are discussed as Dōgen unfolds his unique understanding of the relationship between the sentient and the insentient realms.

While I will address that topic elsewhere, what I wish to focus on here is an especially intriguing passage in the latter half, where Dōgen turns to those who “hear the Dharma but fail to understand, and soon forget what they have heard.” Here Dōgen does not rebuke the forgetful themselves, but rather those who look down on them, criticizing such people with the following remarks on the true merit of hearing the Dharma:

Do not say that there is no benefit in hearing the Dharma because it does not touch the mind of discrimination. The power of the Dharma touches the body and mind⁹—how could common thinking fully perceive it? The limits of the body and mind cannot be fully clarified. The merit of hearing the Dharma plants a seed in the field of body and mind¹⁰ that will never decay; eventually it will sprout and grow, and with time, will inevitably bear fruit. (Dōgen 2023, vol. 4, p. 26)

In the earlier example of “When the ancients were like this, what kind of person am I?”, one cannot truly grasp the meaning of these words until one encounters a situation worth staking one's life upon. Yet if the words have once been heard and engraved in one's heart, they will surely become a boundless source of strength when that moment arrives.

What Dōgen indicates here, however, is a still deeper function of “hearing the Dharma.” By rephrasing the relation of preaching and hearing as “the power of the Dharma touching the body and mind,” he relocates the discussion from the familiar realm of “consciousness and its objects” to a more fundamental ontological dimension. The “body and mind” of the listener are thereby reconstituted as an existence that transcends the limits of awareness itself. The *Mujō seppō* fascicle thus speaks of a mode of “preaching” that operates beyond the structure of human consciousness. Standing on this ground, Dōgen criticizes the attitude that values intellectual understanding and memory above all else:

Even if we do not neglect to hear the Dharma, without advancement on the road of understanding and with no claim to a good memory, there will be no benefit in it. Taking up the body and mind of humans and devas, to be one of extensive memory and much learning—this is the most essential. To forget on the spot and be at a loss once we depart—what benefit, they think, is there in that? What

merit of learning, they say, is there in that? This is because they have not met a true master, because they have not seen that person. (Dōgen 2023, vol. 4, p. 27)

Yet this passage does not advocate forgetting, nor does it reject intellectual comprehension. This is evident from what follows, where Dōgen writes:

When a teaching remains in the memory of consciousness for a while, that itself is the merit of hearing the Dharma, a time when the Dharma's work veils both mind and consciousness. (Dōgen 2023, vol. 4, p. 27)

He also adds:

It is not that we should necessarily cast aside much learning and extensive memory; but we are not to take that one corner alone as the essential function. (Dōgen 2023, vol. 4, p. 27)

Thus, Dōgen does not dismiss the function of intellect within the domain of consciousness. Rather, for him, what can be heard with the ear and grasped by consciousness remains but “one corner” of the Buddha-Dharma. The argument here therefore does not contradict the admonition in *Gyōji* to “never forget.” On the contrary, Dōgen's insistence in *Gyōji* that “When we forget it even briefly, we are sunk for everlasting kalpas.” is precisely because many practitioners, like those described here, fail to let the teaching take root as lived awareness, so that it slips away again into the exterior of consciousness. The exhortation “do not forget” thus serves as a call to go beyond that “one corner” and to be continually guided toward the living path of the Buddha-Dharma.

What must be noticed in this discussion of forgetting is that Dōgen speaks from the standpoint of a “world beyond forgetting.”¹¹ Within his vision, there exists a “world” that is never lost, no matter how many times it is forgotten from the domain of consciousness. And since what is forgotten no longer exists within consciousness, access to that world requires that we step outside the boundaries of consciousness itself.

2.3. The Third Mode of Forgetting

Within the seventy-five-fascicle edition of the *Shōbōgenzō*, there are two instances in which *wasuru* (“to forget”) functions as an act of access beyond the domain of consciousness. One, as everyone would point out, is the phrase “to forget the self” (*jiko o wasururu*) in the fascicle *Genjōkōan*, and the other appears in the fascicle *Inmo* (慇懃, “Thusness”) as “to forget the body” (*mi o wasururu*). While the first instance in *Genjōkōan* will be discussed thematically in the next section, I shall here consider the latter example in *Inmo* as representing what may be called the “third mode of forgetting” among Dōgen's “modes of forgetting.”

This case, too, concerns the relation between hearing the Dharma and consciousness, a theme continuous with the discussion in *Mujō seppō*, and is intimately related to the question of Buddha-nature in the insentient. Dōgen writes as follows concerning the circumstances of the Sixth Patriarch Huineng (慧能 *Enō*)'s ordination, who had previously been a woodcutter:

He abandoned his old mother and went in search of a wise friend—behavior rare in a person. Who could treat the debt of gratitude and love so lightly? It is because he gave weight to the Dharma and took gratitude lightly that he cast aside his debt of gratitude. This is the truth of “If those having wisdom hear it, they will believe and understand it.” (Dōgen 2023, vol. 2, p. 113)

According to the *Platform Sutra*, while Huineng was still a woodcutter, he happened to hear someone reciting the *Diamond Sūtra* in the marketplace. He then abandoned his only relative, his aged mother, and devoted himself to the Buddhist path. Dōgen interprets this as an instance of “the truth that those possessing wisdom, upon hearing the [Dharma], im-

mediately believe and understand.” Here, “truth” (道理 *dōri*)¹² refers to that which cannot be altered by human volition. Dōgen explains why this is so as follows:

Not knowing what the Buddha-Dharma is, since he had not heard of it, he did not yearn for it, did not desire it; yet upon hearing the Dharma, that he took gratitude lightly and forgot about himself occurred as it did because the body and mind possessed of wisdom were not his own. This is called, “They will believe and understand it.” (Dōgen 2023, vol. 2, p. 113)

According to the *Platform Sutra*, Huineng was illiterate and had never encountered the Buddhist teaching until he happened to hear the *Diamond Sūtra* being chanted. But once he heard it, he immediately grasped its meaning and left his mother to enter the monastery of the Fifth Patriarch. Dōgen asserts that what enabled Huineng to do so was not the “self” situated within the domain of secular causation, but rather the working of the “body and mind endowed with wisdom” (有智の身心 *uchi no shinjin*). Since this *uchi* (wisdom) is not the “self,” it cannot mean mere learning or intellectual knowledge; it must be understood as the very principle (*dōri*) of the Buddha-Dharma itself. Because Huineng was already in transparent accord with this principle, he unhesitatingly renounced the “secular world” and entrusted himself to the Buddhist path.

It is clear that this “body and mind endowed with wisdom” corresponds precisely to what, in the *Mujō seppō* fascicle, was described as the “world beyond forgetting.” Upon hearing the *Diamond Sūtra*, Huineng opened his eyes to this world beyond forgetting and, in that awakening, performed the act of “forgetting gratitude.” This “forgot about himself”¹³ (*mi o wasururu*) thus constitutes forgetting in its third mode—one that transcends both the first and second modes. And it is precisely this third mode of forgetting that Dōgen will address most explicitly in the next section, in the *Genjōkōan* fascicle’s teaching of “forgetting the self.”

3. Forgetting and the Sloughing off of Body and Mind

3.1. “Forgetting the Self” in the *Genjōkōan* Fascicle

The term *wasuru* (“to forget”) appears in the *Genjōkōan* fascicle in the following passage:

To study the way of the buddhas is to study oneself.

To study oneself is to forget oneself.

To forget oneself is to be verified by the myriad dharmas.

To be verified by the myriad dharmas is to slough off one’s own body and mind and the body and mind of others. (Dōgen 2023, vol. 1, p. 20)

For those who have already examined the various modes of “forgetting” (*wasuru*) throughout the Seventy-Five-Fascicle *Shōbōgenzō*, it becomes clear that the first two clauses of this fourfold statement correspond to the passage in the *Inmo* fascicle: “When hearing the Dharma, one takes gratitude lightly and forgets one’s own body.” “Hearing the Dharma” is here equivalent to “studying the self,” while “forgetting one’s body” corresponds to “forgetting oneself.”

In contrast, the latter two clauses situate the “world beyond forgetting” not as the “body and mind endowed with wisdom” (*uchi no shinjin*) of the *Inmo* fascicle, nor as the “field of body and mind” (身心の田地 *shinjin no denchi*) of the *Mujō seppō* fascicle, but rather as a world spoken of from the side of “the myriad dharmas that verify.” Even more noteworthy is that the final sentence introduces *shinjin datsuraku* (身心脱落 “the sloughing off of body and mind”) which for Dōgen signifies enlightenment itself.

To grasp these two points, it is necessary to examine the standpoint from which Dōgen understands the relation between “the self” and “the myriad dharmas” in this fascicle. Two

passages that appear immediately before and after this passage—the “principle of one side verification” (一方証の道理 *ippōshō no dōri*; see Tsujiguchi 2012 for a detailed discussion) and the analogy of “the boat and the shore”—offer important clues for such an inquiry.

Regarding the “principle of one side verification,” Dōgen writes as follows:

When we take up body and mind and see forms, when we take up body and mind and hear sounds—though we meet them intimately—it is not like the reflection in a mirror, nor like the water and the moon. When one side is verified, the other side is obscure. (Dōgen 2023, vol. 1, p. 20)

This passage receives a distinctive interpretation in the *Shōbōgenzō Kikigaki-shō* (聞書抄)¹⁴, the earliest commentary on the Seventy-Five-Fascicle edition, composed by Dōgen’s direct disciple Sen’e and his disciple Kyōgō. Their reading exerted a major influence on later Sōtō scholasticism, and has since become a controversial passage within the tradition.

Yet, regardless of such later developments, two points may be taken as uncontroversial for our present purpose: first, that “when one side is verified” (*ippō o shōsuru*) corresponds to “being verified by the myriad dharmas,” in the sense that verification comes from the side of the dharmas, and second, that “the other side is obscure” (*ippō wa kurashi*) corresponds to “forgetting oneself.”¹⁵ In what follows, I shall examine the correlation between these two points and the latter half of the fourfold formulation beginning with “to forget oneself”—namely the obscuration of the self-identifying standpoint.

Before proceeding, however, three observations consistent throughout the Seventy-Five-Fascicle *Shōbōgenzō* must be emphasized. First, the “self” that Dōgen speaks of is never a *cognitive subject* but the *embodied self*—the self endowed with sensory organs. Second, this body is always situated within the world and possesses a continuity that precludes any real separation from it.

The first point is evident from Dōgen’s persistent characterization of “mind-nature” (心性 *shinshō*) as inseparable from the body.¹⁶ The second point may be confirmed by such passages as that in the *Shinjin Gakudō* (身心学道, “Studying the Way with Body and Mind”) fascicle—“though ‘the human body’ may be obstructed by self and other, it is ‘all the ten directions.’” (Dōgen 2023, vol. 1, p. 127)—as well as by the on the “limits of body and mind” cited earlier from the *Mujō seppō* fascicle. Third, it must be carefully noted that when Dōgen speaks of “forgetting the self,” he does not say “the self perishes” or “ceases to exist.”

Let us now turn to the latter half of the fourfold statement, beginning with the line, “To forget the self is to be verified by the myriad dharmas.” As already noted, since this “forgetting of the self” does not signify the annihilation of the self, it must be understood that even in the moment of being “verified by the myriad dharmas,” the self continues to exist as a corporeal being within the world. However, in the *Kikigaki-shō* (For the historical significance of the *Kikigaki-shō*, see Bodiford 1993), Kyōgō interprets the phrase “when one side is verified, the other side is obscure” as follows:

When one speaks of body and mind, there are no things outside body and mind; when one speaks of shape and sound, there are no things outside shape and sound. This is what is meant by saying, “when one side is verified, the other side is obscure.” (Jinbo and Andō 1979, vol. 1, p. 200)

Under this reading, when one is “verified by the myriad dharmas,” only the myriad dharmas exist, while the self is nullified. This is precisely what I earlier referred to as the “distinctive interpretation” of the *Kikigaki-shō*.

At the origin of this interpretation lies Sen’e’s reading of the opening couplet of *Genjōkōan*—“The time when all dharmas are Buddha Dharma” and “The time when the myriad dharmas are not self.”

Sen'e comments:

When all dharmas are Buddha Dharma, there is no speaking of delusion and enlightenment, of buddhas and sentient beings, of birth and extinction. To say "none, none" is the same as saying "only existence." (Jinbo and Andō 1979, vol. 1, p. 189)

Kyōgō, elaborating on this, further states:

The phrase "the time when all dharmas are Buddha Dharma" refers to the time when all the myriad phenomena are spoken of as Buddha Dharma. From delusion and enlightenment to sentient beings, seven categories are listed above; though all dharmas indeed exist, they cannot all be exhaustively described. (Jinbo and Andō 1979, vol. 1, p. 187)

From this, they conclude that since all dharmas are Buddha Dharma, each single dharma fully expresses the whole. This amounts to what might be called a "*monistic view of Buddha Dharma*." In fact, Sen'e states at the end of his annotation:

Buddhas and sentient beings are equally the true human body pervading the ten directions; thus the buddha cannot be separated from sentient beings, and enlightenment cannot be separated from delusion. This is the single principle (一重の道理 *ichijū no dōri*). (Jinbo and Andō 1979, vol. 1, p. 189)

It is therefore evident that both Sen'e and Kyōgō interpret the phrase "*when one side is verified, the other side is obscure*" through this lens of the *single principle*.

The problem with this interpretation, however, is that it fails to situate the subsequent illustration of "the boat and the shore"—which serves to elucidate the phrase *in its proper context*—within its intended framework. In this example, Dōgen illustrates the relation between the "body and mind" of the self and the "myriad dharmas" as follows:

When people ride in a boat, if they turn their eyes and gaze at the shore, they make the mistake of thinking that the shore is moving. When they fix their eyes more closely on the boat, they understand that it is the boat that is advancing. Similarly, in confirming the myriad dharmas with a confused conception of body and mind, we make the mistake of thinking that our own mind and our own *self-nature* (*jishō*) are eternally abiding. If we become intimate with our conduct and return here, the principle that the myriad dharmas are not self is clear. (Dōgen 2023, vol. 1, p. 21)

Sen'e's annotation begins by linking this passage with the phrase "to forget the self is to be verified by the myriad dharmas," noting that the error of taking one's own mind-nature as eternally abiding makes such forgetting impossible. Yet although Sen'e identifies this initial mistake, he ultimately concludes that the illustration cannot be treated as an analogy between self and myriad dharmas. He remarks: "the example of the boat and the shore is merely about the state of deluded thought; it is not meant to correspond to anything in particular." (Jinbo and Andō 1979, vol. 1, p. 206)

It is precisely here that Sen'e's interpretation falters, for in this illustration, in Dōgen's usage, the "one side" and the "other side" do not designate the boat and the shore as two entities set in opposition, but rather indicate a fundamental shift in the standpoint from which all dharmas are apprehended.

This point is far from trivial, nor can it be dismissed by saying that "both are the same." To use a more familiar analogy, this "shift" may be likened to what Thomas S. Kuhn terms a "Copernican revolution." (Kuhn 1957). If we replace the body-mind of the self with the Earth, and the landscape of the shore with the stars of the cosmos, the meaning becomes clearer.

No astronomer who understands the historical transition from the medieval worldview—where the stars were thought to revolve around the Earth—to the modern heliocentric worldview discovered in the Copernican revolution would say, “the scenery of the Earth and the starry sky remain the same, so both views are identical.” On the contrary, the discovery of the solar system necessarily opens the horizon to the possible existence of other stellar systems as well.

In the same way, in this context, the phrase “*when one side is verified, the other side is obscure*” signifies a transition from a single-perspective world structured around the human subject to a multi-perspective world of the Buddha Dharma that situates its standpoint on the side of the “myriad dharmas.”

Yet even in this transition, the “body and mind” of the self does not vanish—just as the person on the boat does not disappear. Rather, the self continues to exist within the world where the myriad dharmas are Buddha Dharma, now repositioned as one among the “dharmas that are Buddha Dharma.”

Thus, while in the *Inmo* and *Mujō seppō* fascicles the “world beyond forgetting” is apprehended from the side of the self—as the “domain of consciousness”—here, in *Genjōkōan*, the self itself is apprehended from the side of that “world beyond forgetting.”

The final line of the fourfold passage reads:

To be verified by the myriad dharmas is to make one’s own body and mind, and the body and mind of others, slough off. (Dōgen 2023, vol. 1, p. 20)

Here, *shinjin datsuraku*, which for Dōgen is none other than enlightenment itself, appears as the culminating expression not only within the Seventy-Five-Fascicle *Shōbōgenzō*, but within Dōgen’s entire corpus.

What is first to be noted here is that in the passive construction “to be verified,” the unspoken subject—“the self”—is described as undergoing the dynamic process of “the sloughing off of the body and mind of self and others.”¹⁷

From the perspective of Sen’e’s “single principle” (*ichijū no dōri*), the crucial point—that this fourfold statement depicts the very process of transition from the ordinary realm to the awakened world—remains entirely unseen. The process of *datsuraku* (“sloughing off”) arises through the act of “forgetting the self,” and it does not lead us into a realm of indifferent oneness or nihilistic void. Rather, it opens the world in which the myriad dharmas arise anew, each with its own distinct reality.

3.2. Shinjin Datsuraku and Jijuyū-Zanmai

(“the sloughing off of body and mind” and “the samādhi of self-enjoyment”)

Dōgen’s awakening, expressed in the phrase *shinjin datsuraku*, first entered the sphere of expression in 1227, the year he returned from China, when he wrote the *Fukanzazengi* (普勸坐禪儀 *Manuals of Zen Meditation*; Bielefeldt 1988)¹⁸. From this same text, the notion of “the world that arises with a new reality” also begins to be articulated together with *shinjin datsuraku*. For this reason, our examination may start from the passage in *Fukanzazengi* where the phrase first appears. Dōgen writes:

Cease the pursuit of words and letters, and learn to step back by turning the light inward to illuminate the self. When body and mind naturally slough off, the original face will appear before you.

The *Fukanzazengi* is a practical guide to *zazen* (坐禪) written by Dōgen himself. Here, the world that manifests together with *shinjin datsuraku* is expressed in the phrase “original face” (本来の面目 *honrai no menmoku*). However, the text does not depict the landscape itself, but only describes the means and effects that enable the manifestation of the “origi-

nal face.” What is presented are primarily the attitudes and methods that bring forth the manifestation, while the content of that world remains unspoken.

In contrast, in the *Bendōwa*, written as a declaration of Dōgen’s own doctrinal standpoint, Dōgen portrays that same world in the name of *jijuyū-zanmai* (自受用三昧 “samādhi of self-enjoyment”) with a long and rhetorically elaborate passage.

Based on the understanding that this depiction remains at a stage prior to the full logical articulation of Dōgen’s Buddha Dharma in the *Genjōkōan* fascicle, I will not attempt here to trace the “depicted landscape” itself, but rather to examine the logical position that the description of *jijuyū-zanmai* occupies within the *Bendōwa*.

At the opening of the *Bendōwa*, Dōgen writes:

The buddhas, the tathāgatas¹⁹, all have a wondrous skill, supreme and unconditioned, for uniquely transmitting the wondrous dharma and verifying anuttara-bodhi. That it is bestowed only from buddha to buddha without error is because the samādhi of self-enjoyment is its standard. To disport oneself in this samādhi, studying Zen in upright sitting, is considered the main gateway. (Dōgen 2023, vol. 7, p. 17)

As far as the extant textual record indicates, occurrences of the term *jijuyū-zanmai* appear almost exclusively in Zen texts, with only a few rare examples in commentaries on the Śūraṅgama Sūtra.²⁰ By contrast, the terms *jijuyū* (“self-enjoyment”) and *jijuyū-shin* (“self-enjoyment body”) appear in many scriptures. Especially in Japanese Buddhism, they became central to esoteric Buddhist theories of the Buddha-body (*trikāya*), already discussed by Kūkai (Kūkai n.d.) in his *Ben kenmitsu nikyō ron* (弁顯密二教論, “Treatise on the Distinction Between the Exoteric and Esoteric Teachings”), where he defined *jijuyū-shin* as the Buddha’s innerly realized enlightenment:

The *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* speaks of the Dharmakāya of Mahāvairocana as the *self-enjoyment body* that preaches the inwardly realized wisdom of enlightenment; this is the realm of the Dharmakāya as both principle and wisdom. (Kūkai n.d.)²¹

At Mount Hiei, this notion was later assimilated into Tendai *hongaku* (“original enlightenment”) thought, in which the stage of realization experienced by the *self-enjoyment body* was believed to be heard and known (聞知 *monchi*) by ordinary beings—a process of doctrinal popularization already well underway in Dōgen’s time (see Ōkubo 1998, 2019). It is thus hardly surprising that during his formative years Dōgen was conversant with this intellectual milieu.

Therefore, when Dōgen, after returning to Japan, composed the *Bendōwa* as a declaration of his new religious foundation and chose to describe his own realization with the phrase *jijuyū-zanmai*, this was not merely because the term circulated within Zen circles. It was also because the concept of the *self-enjoyment body* and its inner realization (*naishō*, inner enlightenment) was already a familiar and highly significant notion in the Japanese Buddhist world.

That Dōgen was fully conversant with this doctrinal background is evident from his statement that the *jijuyū-zanmai* is “transmitted only from buddha to buddha,” a formulation consistent with orthodox Mahāyāna doctrine. Yet, given the distance between the *hongaku*-based notion of the identity of the self-enjoyment body with the secular world and Dōgen’s own use of *jijuyū-zanmai*, a question inevitably arises: how should we understand the following passage, which Dōgen prefaces with the statement, “In the direct transmission of our school, it is said, ‘This uniquely transmitted, true and direct buddha dharma is supreme among the supreme.’?” (Dōgen 2023, vol. 7, p. 21).

If someone, even once, marks the three modes of karma with the buddha seal and sits upright in samādhi, at that time, everything throughout the dharma realms

becomes the buddha seal and everywhere in the entirety of empty space becomes awakening. Therefore, for the buddhas, the tathāgatas, it increases the bliss of the dharma of their original ground and renews the adornments of their awakening to the way. Then, beings throughout the dharma realms in the ten directions, in the three roads and six paths, being bright and pure in body and mind, will all together simultaneously verify the ground of the great liberation and manifest their original face. At that time, the dharmas, all realizing right awakening, and the myriad things, all using the buddha body, quickly transcending the boundaries of realization, sit upright at the king tree of awakening, simultaneously turn the great dharma wheel, equal to the unequaled, and proclaim the profound pra-jñā, ultimate and unconditioned. (Dōgen 2023, vol. 7, p. 22)

This passage, though long, consists of only three sentences in original text. The first describes the status of *zazen*. The second, concerning the bliss of the Dharma, states that its enjoyers are “the buddhas, the tathāgatas”; in this respect, it does not deviate from the orthodox esoteric understanding. However, the third and longest sentence identifies the subject as “beings throughout the dharma realms in the ten directions, in the three roads and six paths,” asserting that they too “being bright and pure in body and mind, will all together simultaneously verify the ground of the great liberation and manifest their original face.” Here, one can discern not only an esoteric perspective but also a *hongaku*-style conception of the Buddha-body. To clarify how Dōgen understood the relationship between *jijuyū-zanmai* and both “the buddhas, the tathāgatas” and “the sentient beings of the ten directions,” let us consider the paired sentences that follow shortly after the opening of the *Bendōwa*:

The buddhas are always within it, dwelling in and maintaining it, without leaving perception of it in any of its quarters living beings are continuously within it, making use of it, without its quarters appearing in any of their perceptions. (Dōgen 2023, vol. 7, p. 17)

Both sentences concern “quarters” (方面 *hōmen*) and “perception” (知覚 *chikaku*). If read straightforwardly, the first seems to describe an all-encompassing vision unconfined by any particular object, while the second suggests a fixation upon individual objects that prevents the opening of that total field.

Within the Sōtō tradition, however, two opposing interpretations have emerged. The first, represented by the Edo-period *Shōbōgenzō Monge* (正法眼藏聞解), takes the buddhas’ vision as affirmative and that of living beings as negative (Jinbo and Andō 1979, vol. 1, pp. 9–10). The second, seen in modern commentaries such as Nishiari Bokusan’s *Shōbōgenzō Keiteki* (正法眼藏啓迪; Nishiari 2004) and his disciple Kishizawa Ian’s *Shōbōgenzō Zenkō*, (正法眼藏全講; Kishizawa 1972) reads both affirmatively. That these two readings coexist within the traditional scholarship of the Sōtō school indicates a latent tension within the *Bendōwa* itself.

If the “*yūge-zanmai*” (遊戯三昧 the “*samādhi* of playful transformation”) described here were truly a realm accessible only to the buddhas who reside beyond the world of living beings, then an affirmative reading of the first and a negative reading of the second would be natural. If, on the other hand, it were a single realm shared equally by buddhas and living beings, then both could be read affirmatively. Yet after painting this magnificent esoteric vision of *yūge-zanmai* for the sake of ordinary practitioners, Dōgen concludes with the following words:

nevertheless, all these do not darken the perception of that person is that it is a direct verification, unconstructed in stillness. If, as is thought by deluded people, practice and verification were located on two levels, each would perceive the

other; but [for them] to be mixed into [that] perception would not meet the standard of verification. (Dōgen 2023, vol. 7, p. 22)

This passage clearly asserts that the realm of *yūge-zanmai* lies outside the domain of perception and cognition altogether. If so, the majestic scene Dōgen has just described could only be a visionary depiction that no one, in fact, perceives. The latent tension within Dōgen's discussion of *jijuyū-zanmai* in the *Bendōwa* thus seems to arise from the fact that, at this stage, he had not yet found the proper expressive form for articulating the insight he had gained through *shinjin datsuraku*.

The phrases "The buddhas are always within it, dwelling in and maintaining it, without leaving perception of it in any of its quarters," and "living beings are continuously within it, making use of it, without its quarters appearing in any of their perceptions." undoubtedly convey an insight that only Dōgen himself could have expressed. Yet his attempt to frame this within the epistemological context of *jijuyū-zanmai*, a concept deeply burdened with esoteric associations, resulted in an inherent inconsistency that remained within the *Bendōwa*.

3.3. Shinjin Datsuraku and the Temporal Occasion in Which All Dharmas Are Buddha-Dharma

How, then, is the world opened by *shinjin datsuraku* depicted in the *Genjōkōan* fascicle? In this text, there is no depiction of the resplendent world of self-enjoyment (*jijuyū-zanmai*) that we find in the *Bendōwa*. Instead, the world that Dōgen describes as "being verified by the myriad dharmas" (*banpō ni shō sesaruru*) is always narrated from the sphere of lived reality itself. The first illustration of this is that of the "boat and the shore." As we have already examined, through this example Dōgen portrays the transformation of the "world" itself in such a way that two incompatible standpoints are simultaneously displaced and reconfigured. The second illustration, which we will now consider, is that of "winter and spring, spring and summer." Here, Dōgen writes:

Life is one position in time, and death is one position in time. It is, for example, like winter and spring: we do not think that winter becomes spring; we do not say that spring becomes summer. (Dōgen 2023, vol. 1, p. 22)

Spring and summer, he says, are mutually discontinuous. They exclude a substance that would connect the two, thereby articulating what may be called a temporality of the "cutting off of before and after" (前後際断 *zengo saidan*). From the outset, the *Genjōkōan* opens with the phrase, "the temporal occasion in which all dharmas are Buddha-Dharma."

The "temporal occasion" (時節 *jisetsu*) signifies not only the moment when the standpoint shifts from the self as human subject to the myriad dharmas, but also the temporal truth of the world that is revealed through *shinjin datsuraku*—the insight in which the cutting off of before and after manifests itself as the very temporal form of the world in which all dharmas are Buddha-Dharma. "Spring," while unfolding various appearances within itself, maintains a certain identity that is defined by the specific flora and fauna characteristic of that region and season.

Yet when time passes, the structural configuration constituting that identity disintegrates, and a new occasion—summer—arrives. The duration of a season or occasion varies according to beings, events, and domains, but the process of their arising and perishing always involves a fundamental movement of *release from the structure of self-identification*, which constitutes the essence of time itself. Time does not exist in phenomena that remain self-identical; it advances precisely by breaking through identity.

Then what exists in that very moment when the world's self-identity is ruptured? In that moment, however, nothing that can be identified as "something" exists at all. It is what Dōgen calls, immediately following "the time-being of all dharmas as Buddha-Dharma," "At times when all the myriad dharmas are not self, there is no delusion; there

is no awakening; there are no buddhas; there are no living beings; there is no arising; there is no cessation.” (Dōgen 2023, vol. 1, p. 9).

The self-transcending process of temporal progression unfolds through the same structural logic as *shinjin datsuraku*, yet they differ in mode. The former indicates an ontological fact—the world’s continuous release from structures that identify the self—while the latter is its existential realization, a deep form of forgetting in which this release becomes manifest. The transition from spring to summer opens a door to another reality—summer—but that door leads only into the world of summer itself. *shinjin datsuraku*, however, does not merely open another world.

In the *Inmo* fascicle, the parting of Huineng and his mother signifies both a departure from the familiar world and a discovery of a new one. Yet the new world that opens there is not another dwelling place of stability. The phrase that opened Huineng’s eyes to the path of the Buddha—“Let the mind arise without abiding anywhere” (応無所住而生其心 *yīng wú suǒ zhù ér shēng qí xīn*)—turns his vision from the very movement of detachment itself—which cannot be located or fixed—toward an infinitely open world of time and space. With respect to the world opened through *shinjin datsuraku*, Dōgen writes: “When, in our body and mind, we have yet to study our fill of the dharma, we feel that the dharma is already sufficient; if the dharma is replete in body and mind, we feel that it is insufficient in some respect.” (Dōgen 2023, vol. 1, p. 23).

He further continues:

Amidst the dust and beyond its bounds are included many forms, but we see and understand only what is reached by the strength of the eye of study. If we wish to perceive the household styles of the myriad dharmas, in addition to seeing the square and the round, we should realize that there are worlds in the four directions in which the remaining virtues of the ocean and virtues of the mountains are numerous and boundless. We should realize that it is not that this is so only beside us: it is so right here as well, in a single drop as well. (Dōgen 2023, vol. 1, p. 23)

Through such descriptions, Dōgen’s intent is not merely to emphasize the finitude of our experiential world. What is far more important is the insight that the world exists and continuously generates domains as something spatially and temporally infinite and multilayered. This insight itself does not belong to the realm of perception, yet it does not point to a world severed from perception, as described in the *Bendōwa*, for the world we live in is surely one “corner” (一隅 *ichigū*) that exists within those countless domains.

The *Genjōkōan* further describes the inner dimension of this “corner” through the examples of “birds” and “fish”:

If the bird were to leave the sky, it would quickly die; if the fish were to leave the water, it would quickly die. We should know that they take water as life; we should know that they take the sky as life. There is taking the bird as life. There is taking the fish as life. It should be taking life as the bird; it should be taking life as the fish. (Dōgen 2023, vol. 1, p. 24)

While this passage clearly expresses the inseparability of sentient beings and their environmental worlds, its implications go beyond that. When we focus on the fish, the “ocean” is indeed the domain of *taking water as life*, but for birds—except perhaps sea birds—that same ocean would be the realm of death. Yet when we shift our focus to “water,” we find that it does not exist only as “sea water.” but manifests in countless other forms. A small spring or pond can be a vital source of life for birds as well. Still, even that is only one limited aspect of the manifestations and functions of water. In nature, water becomes ice and cloud; in human society, it nourishes fields, provides steam, and supplies energy

through hydropower. Its appearances and workings are countless. As one of the myriad dharmas, water manifests its virtue across multiple domains of existence, traversing them without boundary.

On this transdomainal character of water, Dōgen writes in the *Sansuikyō* fascicle:

although we may say there is water of the various types, it would seem there is no original water, no water of various types. Nevertheless, the various waters in accordance with the types [of beings] do not depend on their minds, do not depend on their bodies; they do not arise from their karma; they are not dependent on self; they are not dependent on other. They have a transcendence dependent on water. (Dōgen 2023, vol. 2, p. 343)

What is discussed here is not an invisible realm of “unconstructed in stillness” but rather the mode of existence of water as one of the “dharmas that are Buddha-Dharma,” permeating the multidimensional real world that also includes the human world. Indeed, because “water” has a transcendence dependent on water—water transcending water itself—it does not possess any intrinsic attribute and therefore cannot be perceived. Yet it continually “manifests itself in actuality” (*genjō-kōan*) in various forms and functions. Such a mode of existence applies not only to water but to all the dharmas that appear throughout the world.

Through these depictions, we can say that the world of *shinjin datsuraku*, which in the *Bendōwa* had been described only in an ideal or visionary way, attains in the *Genjōkōan* an ontological grounding through the phrase “To forget oneself is to be verified by the myriad dharmas.” In this way, it blossoms into a concrete and grounded form of logical expression.

4. The Ethical Scope of Forgetting in Dōgen

4.1. The Ethical Dimension of the “Shoaku Makusa” Fascicle

The theme of this edited volume—*Soteriological and Ethical Dimensions of Forgetting in Asian Thought*—already indicates, through the phrase “soteriological and ethical dimensions” in its first half, that the present inquiry is not simply concerned with “forgetting” in Asian thought as such (see Wang 2024). Rather, it calls upon us to ask how this topic is situated within, and why it matters for, broader contemporary philosophical concerns—namely, the soteriological and ethical dimensions of forgetting.

In this section, in order to respond to that task, I first examine how the notion of “forgetting” analyzed so far—understood as “forgetting oneself”—is connected to an ethical dimension in Dōgen’s thought. I then ask, with the aid of comparative philosophical reflection, whether this notion can offer a perspective that contributes to the ways we approach the ethical problems that surround us today.²²

To begin, focusing on Dōgen’s fascicle *Shoaku Makusa*, which explicitly takes up issues concerning good and evil, I examine how Dōgen’s discussion of the relation between “evil” and human action connects with the account of “forgetting as the sloughing off of body and mind” (*shinjin datsuraku*, 身心脱落) developed in Section 2.

The *Shoaku Makusa* fascicle takes as its central theme the verse known as the “Gāthā of the Common Precepts of the Seven Buddhas” (七仏通戒偈): “Do no evil, practice the good, purify one’s own mind—this is the teaching of the buddhas.”²³ This verse, already found in the *Dhammapada*, has long been revered within Theravāda Buddhism and, in particular, within the Zen traditions of China and Japan. At the outset of the fascicle, Dōgen underscores its full legitimacy, stating that it is “directly transmitted from prior buddhas to later buddhas,” and that it is not merely the teaching of seven buddhas, but indeed the teaching of all buddhas.

Yet *Shoaku Makusa* does not proceed by laying out concrete behavioral rules in the manner of fascicles such as *Senmen* or *Senjō*²⁴. Instead, Dōgen begins by questioning the assumption that ethical value judgments are unconditionally absolute. Immediately after citing the *gāthā*, he remarks:

Among the ‘evils,’ there are similarities and dissimilarities between the evil of this world and the evil of other worlds; similarities and dissimilarities between prior and later times; similarities and dissimilarities between the evil of the devas and the evil of humans. Even greater still is the divergence between what is called ‘evil,’ what is called ‘good,’ and what is called ‘indeterminate’ in the way of the buddhas and the secular world. Good and evil are temporal, but time is neither good nor evil. Good and evil are dharmas, but dharmas are neither good nor evil. (Dōgen 2023, vol. 3, p. 16)

This passage does not advance a relativistic claim that good and evil are merely subjective or arbitrarily defined. Rather, Dōgen is pointing to the fact that normative structures differ across domains—this world and other worlds, prior and later times, the way of the buddhas and the secular world—without thereby dissolving ethical responsibility into individual interpretation. Acknowledging that ethical judgments are not universally absolute, Dōgen nonetheless opens a path for understanding how the injunction “do no evil” can still meaningfully operate as practice.

Dōgen then proceeds to explicate the phrase *Shoaku Makusa* in its most literal sense, namely, “do not create evils,” and begins his discussion as follows:

This unsurpassed bodhi, we hear whether from a wise friend or from a sūtra scroll. In the very beginning, we hear ‘do no evil.’ If we do not hear ‘do no evil,’ it is not the true dharma of the buddhas; it is the talk of Māra. We should realize that hearing ‘do no evil’ is the true dharma of the buddhas. This phrase, ‘do not do evil,’ is not something first created and made to be like this by common people; rather, we hear it in this way when we hear the teaching in which bodhi itself becomes discourse. (Dōgen 2023, vol. 3, p. 17)

In terms of the analysis of forgetting developed earlier, this initial hearing of *Shoaku Makusa* corresponds to what may be called the **first mode of forgetting**, namely, forgetting in the form of a **normative demand**—what may be understood as a *Sollen*. As Dōgen explicitly notes with the phrase “in the very beginning,” this is the form in which *Shoaku Makusa* is first encountered by practitioners who hear the teaching “from a wise friend” or “from a sūtra scroll.” It is heard as the injunction “do not create evils” precisely because it is received as “the teaching in which bodhi itself becomes discourse.”

At the same time, careful attention must be paid to Dōgen’s contrasting reference to “the talk of Māra.” Here, “the talk of Māra” designates a teaching that does not sound as “do not create evils” to the practitioner’s ear. Although Dōgen does not explicitly specify the content of this teaching in this passage, it would have been readily understood by his contemporaries. As is well known, in medieval Japanese Buddhism there had emerged—and become widespread—a practice-negating view grounded in *hongaku* thought, according to which all phenomena are affirmed as manifestations of original enlightenment, thereby rendering concrete religious practice superfluous (This point is discussed in Matsumoto 2000).

A closely related concern is articulated in *Shōbōgenzō Zuimonki*, where Ejō raises the following question concerning karmic good and evil:

How do you feel about the following view? Upon hearing that one’s own self is the buddha-dharma and that it is futile to seek anything outside oneself, what if a student were to believe this deeply, give up practice and studying, and spend his whole life doing good and bad according to his nature? (Ejō 2004, 2-22, p. 101)

This question directly echoes the problem that led Dōgen himself to undertake his journey to Song China—the issue of *honrai honpōshō* (“originally the fundamental dharma-nature”)—and, as discussed earlier, it was a question shared by many practitioners in Japan at the time.

Against this background, Dōgen insists that liberation from evil is possible only through a practice in which one *vows* not to create evils and *continues to enact* that vow. Only through such sustained practice does one arrive at the point where “evils are already no longer being created,” and it is precisely there that the power of *makusa*—“not doing”—is actualized.

However, given that the *Shoaku Makusa* fascicle initiates its discussion not by asserting the superiority of the Buddhist path over the secular world, but rather from the theoretical standpoint that “time is neither good nor evil” and “dharma is neither good nor evil,” the practice designated here as *Shoaku Makusa* must be understood as leading beyond attachment to whatever form “evil” may take—whether it be what is conventionally regarded as evil in the secular world or what is defined as a violation of precepts within the Buddhist path itself—and guiding one toward genuine awakening. From this perspective, it becomes necessary, at least methodologically, to consider *makusa* (“not doing”) as provisionally separable from *Shoaku* (“various evils”) when reflecting on Dōgen’s understanding of *Shoaku Makusa*. That is to say, *Shoaku* can be understood as a domain-dependent concept, limited by temporal and spatial conditions, whereas *makusa* designates a function that traverses and exceeds such domains.

Such a methodological distinction resonates closely with the analyses of forgetting developed in the earlier sections, even if it may at first glance appear somewhat forced. Yet if we return to the fundamental point that *Shoaku Makusa* is intended to release one from fixation on “evils,” then *makusa* must necessarily contain a moment that exceeds its mere conjunction with *shoaku*. Without such an excess, *Shoaku Makusa* could not function as a practice of liberation from attachment.

At this point, it is sufficient to note that usages in which *makusa* (“do no”) appears independently—without being syntactically bound to *Shoaku* (“evils”)—begin to occur only after the passage that concludes the discussion of *Shoaku Makusa* as an ought, namely: “Turning to be heard and received as the teaching of unsurpassed bodhi, one vows *Shoaku Makusa* and carries out *Shoaku Makusa* in practice.” Thereafter, such usages appear repeatedly. A detailed examination of all these instances must be left for another occasion; here I will focus on three passages that are indispensable in relation to the analyses of forgetting developed in the preceding sections.

The first passage states:

Where evils are no longer done, the power of practice suddenly appears.

This appearance appears taking as its measure all the earth, all the worlds, all time, all dharmas. This measure takes ‘do no’ as its measure. (Dōgen 2023, vol. 3, p. 17)

What is noteworthy here is that “taking as its measure all the earth, all the worlds, all time, and all dharmas” is immediately reformulated as “taking *do no* as its measure.” This indicates that *makusa* is not a practice confined within a particular normative or subjective domain, but a practice whose measure extends across the entire ten-directional realm (*jinjippōkai*), encompassing all times and all dharmas. If *makusa* were merely the negation or neutralization of particular evils, such a measure would not be conceivable. Rather, when *makusa* comes to function beyond the level of ought, its power causes the self—previously confined within “this world” through its inseparable entanglement with evils—to be sloughed off into the dimension of being verified by the myriad dharmas.

The second passage continues:

For there appears the power of ‘do no,’ evils do not themselves speak of ‘evils,’ and there are no fixtures fixed as ‘evils.’ There is the principle of one taken up and one let go. At just such a time, the principle that evil does not violate the person is known, and the principle that the person does not destroy evil is clarified. (Dōgen 2023, vol. 3, p. 17)

Here Dōgen states that, because the power of *do no* appears, evils are no longer fixed as evils. What is clarified is not a moral triumph over evil, but an awakening to a mode of existence in which neither evil violates the person nor the person destroys evil. This is not rhetorical exaggeration; it is a precise description of the workings of sloughing off that penetrate multiple domains without being captured by any one of them. The following third passage makes this point unmistakably clear:

As you bring your body and mind to practice, as you bring anyone’s body and mind to practice, as the power of practicing with the four elements and five aggregates instantly appears, it does not defile the self of the four elements and five aggregates, and even today’s four elements and five aggregates are made to carry on the practice. The power of today’s four elements and five aggregates as practice makes practice of our old four elements and five aggregates. It also causes the mountains, rivers, and the whole earth, the sun, moon, and stars to practice; and then the mountains, rivers, and the whole earth, the sun, moon, and stars in turn cause us to practice. (Dōgen 2023, vol. 3, p. 18)

Through these passages, it becomes clear that for Dōgen the ethical norm *Shoaku Makusa* initially arises, insofar as it is heard as “do not do evils,” as a question within “this world.” Yet when it is actualized as practice—when evils are no longer done—the self that posed the question has already sloughed off its internal belonging to that domain and has itself become the very working of sloughing off.

Thus, the fact that the ethical problematic of “not doing evils,” through the practical functioning of *makusa*, at once comes to possess a structure that penetrates through various “other worlds”—from the material domain constituted by the four elements and five aggregates to the heavenly realms as well—may be said to constitute one of the most distinctive features of Dōgen’s thought.

4.2. A Comparative Perspective on Forgetting in the Zhuangzi

In what follows, I reconsider the ethical character of “forgetting” in Dōgen, examined in the preceding section, from a comparative-philosophical perspective. To this end, I first turn to Daoist thought—another current within East Asian philosophy that is often regarded as closely connected to Zen—and, within it, to the *Zhuangzi*, where “forgetting” appears as one of its key philosophical motifs (for the *Zhuangzi* text, I follow the Chinese Text Project edition; see Chinese Text Project n.d.-a). Through this comparison, I aim to clarify, by contrast, the conditions under which forgetting acquires an ethical dimension.

As is well known, in the *Zhuangzi* “forgetting” is spoken of positively through the notion of “sitting in forgetfulness” (*zabō* 坐忘). This term has also played an important role, both philosophically and practically, in the subsequent history of Daoist thought.

The phrase “sitting in forgetfulness” occurs in the “Great and Most Honored Master” (*Dazongshi* 大宗師) chapter, where Yan Hui reports to Confucius that he has forgotten the Confucian virtues of benevolence, righteousness, ritual propriety, and music, and has finally entered a state of complete forgetting:

To slough off limbs and trunk; to expel perception and intellect; to detach from form; to leave knowledge behind; and to merge with the Great Thoroughfare—

this is what I call sitting in forgetfulness. (*Zhuangzi*, “The Great and Most Honoured Master”; [Chinese Text Project n.d.-a](#))

Nothing in the passage suggests that “sitting” refers to a meditative posture similar to Buddhist *zazen*. However, from the Tang period onward, “sitting in forgetfulness” came to be interpreted in this way, and Sima Chengzhen’s *Treatise on Sitting in Forgetfulness* (*坐忘論 Zuowanglun*; see [Chinese Text Project n.d.-b](#)) later systematized it as a central Daoist practice. There, *zuowang* is defined as follows:

What could remain unforgotten? Internally, one is unaware of one’s own body; externally, one knows nothing of the cosmos. One merges mysteriously with the Dao, and all thoughts are left behind. (*Zuowanglun*, “靜心義 (Jingxin yi)”; [Chinese Text Project n.d.-b](#))

The treatise further explains the nature of mind as “The mind, as a thing, has no fixed being in itself, yet neither is it non-existent in its functioning,” using the Mahāyāna logic of emptiness to articulate its structure. However, this Buddhist reinterpretation obscures the older sense of *ziran* (自然)—the spontaneous “self-so-ing” or “by its own nature”—that is inherent in early Daoism. Thus, by the Tang period, the Daoist idea of “sitting in forgetfulness” had become thoroughly systematized under the framework of Chinese Buddhist metaphysics.

By contrast, Nakajima Takahiro, in his *Zhuangzi: Become a Rooster and Announce the Dawn* ([Nakajima 2009](#)), offers an intriguing rereading through the famous passage of “Zhuang Zhou’s dream of the butterfly”:

Formerly, I, Zhuang Zhou, dreamt that I was a butterfly, a butterfly flying about, feeling that it was enjoying itself. I did not know that it was Zhou. Suddenly I awoke, and was myself again, the veritable Zhou. I did not know whether it had formerly been Zhou dreaming that he was a butterfly, or it was now a butterfly dreaming that it was Zhou. But between Zhou and a butterfly there must be a distinction. This is what is called the transformation of things. (*Zhuangzi*, *Inner Chapters*, “The Adjustment of Controversies”; [Chinese Text Project n.d.-a](#))

Nakajima highlights Guo Xiang’s comment—“When one is wholly this, one does not perceive the other”—to interpret the scene as one in which each being, Zhou or butterfly, exists in its own distinct world, fully self-sufficient and unconcerned with the other, yet capable of transformation in so far as its very nature changes ([Nakajima 2009](#), p. 155).

This interpretation understands Zhuangzi’s “forgetting” not as absorption into an absolute oneness or a void, but as the movement across distinct worlds—a reading that opens a dimension comparable to Dōgen’s ontology of “when one side is illumined, the other side is darkened.”

Conventional interpretations of “Zhuang Zhou’s Dream” tend to read the final phrase, “there must be a distinction,” as a construct of human discrimination, viewed as irrelevant from the higher perspective of the “equalization of things.” Yet this reading aligns Zhuangzi’s view of nature with the Buddhist notion of emptiness, as articulated in the *Zuowanglun*, thereby effacing the ethical dimension of his thought.

If this logic is extended to the later episode in “Perfect Enjoyment,” where Huizi visits Zhuangzi mourning his wife and finds him “squatted on the ground, drumming on a basin, and singing,” (*Zhuangzi*, *Outer Chapters*, “Perfect Enjoyment”; [Chinese Text Project n.d.-a](#)) the result becomes ethically perplexing. When “emptiness” is directly superimposed upon the human world of discrimination, the ethical dimension disappears altogether—making Dōgen’s warning, “If we do not hear ‘do no evil,’ it is not the true Dharma of the buddhas; it is the talk of Māra,” all the more strikingly apt.

Nakajima, however, focuses on Zhuangzi’s later words to Huizi:

When she first died, could I alone not be affected? But I reflected on the beginning of her being. She had not yet been born; not only had she no life, but she had no form; not only had she no form, but she had no breath.” (Zhuangzi, *Outer Chapters*, “Perfect Enjoyment”; [Chinese Text Project n.d.-a](#))

He emphasizes Zhuangzi’s process of realization through transformation—a process resonant with Dōgen’s *shinjin datsuraku*, in which forgetting functions as a dynamic opening to insight. Yet this transformation, for Zhuangzi, remains ambiguous in its depth.

In “The Adjustment of Controversies,” the story of Li Ji illustrates this clearly:

Li Ji was the daughter of the warden of Ai. When the ruler of Jin first acquired her, she wept until her tears soaked her robe; but when she reached the king’s palace, shared his bed and food, she regretted that she had wept. (Zhuangzi, *Inner Chapters*, “The Adjustment of Controversies”; [Chinese Text Project n.d.-a](#))

The “regret” described here does not amount to a deeper insight into the nature of the self or the world. The woman merely forgets the sorrow that had filled a particular temporal-spatial domain and moves into another. Yet the Zhuangzi offers no critical perspective on this transition.

Even if such “forgetting” is experienced as a process at a decisive moment in one’s life, it remains no more than a temporary event within the realm of perception. From a purely soteriological standpoint, this kind of forgetting may appear salvific—like the waters of the river Lethe, offering relief to those tormented by regret. Nevertheless, it is difficult to discern any ethical dimension in such an experience.

4.3. Nietzsche on Forgetting: A Comparative Philosophical Examination

However, can this kind of human “forgetfulness” truly be regarded as something that cannot be connected at all to an ethical dimension?

In what follows, in order to pursue this question at a deeper level, I turn to Nietzsche, who likewise positioned “forgetting” (*Vergessen*) as a fundamental moment of human existence (see [Kiritani 2022](#)), and undertake a comparative philosophical examination of his account in relation to Dōgen’s notion of forgetting. Unless otherwise noted, references to Nietzsche’s works in this section are based on the digital critical edition provided by NietzscheSource ([NietzscheSource n.d.](#)); English quotations are based on the translations by R. J. Hollingdale, with minor modifications where necessary.

Nietzsche’s reflections on forgetting first appear in *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*, ([Nietzsche 1983](#)), published in 1874 as the second essay of the *Untimely Meditations*. This work was written when Nietzsche was thirty years old and still situated within the academic world. Nevertheless, it should not be dismissed as an immature work simply because of its early date, for the line of thought concerning “forgetting” developed there continues through to *On the Genealogy of Morals* ([Nietzsche 1967](#)) and ultimately connects with Nietzsche’s late thought, articulated in the idea of the will to power.

In the opening pages of *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*, Nietzsche depicts the “forgetfulness of the animal” neither as a fault nor as a virtue, but as a phenomenon that illuminates the human dimension of forgetfulness that follows immediately after. Yet this illumination is not a soteriological one, as we might find in Zhuangzi.

Nietzsche writes:

To see this is hard for man, because he takes pride in his humanity over the animal, yet looks with envy upon the animal’s happiness—for what he wishes is simply to live, like the animal, neither weary nor in pain; and he wishes it in vain, because he does not wish it as the animal does. ([Nietzsche 1983](#))

This passage portrays a moment in which human beings, though they boast of their humanity, cannot help but envy the animal's happiness—a happiness grounded in its immediate forgetfulness. Yet Nietzsche does not idealize this forgetfulness; it is neither to be condemned nor praised. Rather, it serves to illuminate the human condition in which forgetfulness has ceased to be a natural endowment and has become a matter of struggle and self-regulation.

Unlike Zhuangzi, Nietzsche does not treat “ethics” or “morality” as arbitrary constructs that can be relativized or dismissed. Though they may not uniformly regulate every mode of life, they function, for Nietzsche, as socially objective norms—inescapable systems of constraint that structure human life. His question, therefore, is how forgetfulness exists and functions within such normative structures.

Using the same analytic distinction employed in my reading of Dōgen, we may distinguish several existential modes of forgetting in Nietzsche's thought.

The most immediate, first mode appears in the following statement from *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*: “In the smallest and also in the greatest happiness there is always one thing that makes happiness happiness: the ability to forget.” (Nietzsche 1983) This first mode of forgetting, as the source of happiness, recalls the state of dreamlike release depicted in Zhuangzi's *Butterfly Dream*.

Yet for Nietzsche, such forgetfulness is by no means a “natural” faculty in the human sphere. Within the human world, the power to forget is always bounded by what he calls the formative power (*Formkraft*), which continually generates new systems and thereby establishes “a single limit which must not be transgressed.” This limit demarcates forgetting as the boundary between the world of form and its exterior—Nietzsche's second existential mode of forgetting. He rephrases this “limit” as a *horizon* (*Horizont*), writing:

Beyond this horizon nothing remains to remind us that there are still men, passions, doctrines, and purposes. And this is a universal law: every living being can become healthy, strong, and fruitful only within a horizon. (Nietzsche 1983)

However, the forgetting that here serves as the boundary balancing two domains takes on a deeper and more dynamic significance in Nietzsche's later work. In the *Second Essay of On the Genealogy of Morals*, he describes forgetfulness not as a mere weakness of habit but as an active, positive power: “Forgetting is not just a *vis inertiae*, as the superficial imagine, but rather an active and in the strictest sense positive faculty of repression.” (Nietzsche 1967) Here, forgetfulness is no longer the passive border of consciousness but an *active faculty*—a formative power of life itself, now reinterpreted as a fundamental manifestation of the will to power (*Wille zur Macht*).

What was earlier described with ambivalence in *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*—the animal's oblivion, at once enviable and contemptible—is now affirmed as a positive force, incorporated into the very structure of life. In this third existential mode, forgetting becomes the indispensable condition for vitality, ensuring what Nietzsche calls “the health of the rulers”—the capacity to act, create, and affirm life without being paralyzed by memory.

If we seek a parallel to Nietzsche's *will to power* within Dōgen's thought, it would correspond to what Dōgen calls *the causal conditions of life and death* (殺活の因縁 *sekkatsu no innen*)—the dynamic forces that shape the structure of each realm of sentient existence. In contemporary terms, this might be compared to the instinctive impulse of all living beings “to live on.”

Yet Nietzsche's conception differs radically from Dōgen's. For Nietzsche, this power is not bounded by any limitation; it becomes an almost metaphysical principle, a self-affirming drive that generates form, value, and hierarchy. Moreover, Nietzsche situates

this force primarily within the pre-legal and pre-moral relations that underlie the formation of human society, seeing it as the generative ground of morality itself.

Dōgen, by contrast, extends his vision beyond the human and moral domains to include the worlds of non-human beings and insentient things. His ethical vision, as expressed in the principle of *makusa* (“not doing”), does not arise from the will to dominate but from the realization that all realms—human, animal, and natural—are pervaded by the same *Buddha-Dharma*. Thus, whereas Nietzsche’s forgetting is bound to the genesis of morality within power relations, Dōgen’s forgetting operates across sentient and insentient domains as a practice of sloughing off such relations.

Nietzsche’s primary concern here lies in exposing *morality* as a system devised by the strong for the domination of the weak—one that legitimizes itself through an appeal to evolutionary necessity. What he seeks to reveal is not the contingent historical form of moral codes, but the deeper genealogical mechanism by which moral valuation arises from relations of force.

Dōgen, on the other hand, never questions either the structural existence or the historical genesis of what he calls *the causal conditions of life and death*. For him, all sentient beings are already born within meaningful structures of existence. The ethical question of “how one ought to live” is therefore not a matter of reconstructing or overcoming these structures but of actualizing *makusa*—“not doing”—within whatever realm one happens to dwell.

Where Nietzsche interprets forgetting as a condition for the creative destruction that sustains power, Dōgen sees forgetting as the existential practice through which one becomes attuned to the self-transcending continuity of all dharmas. This fundamental divergence stems from the differing functions that “forgetting” assumes as a third existential mode in Dōgen and in Nietzsche.

In the concluding section of *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*, Nietzsche contrasts “the historical” with two counterforces: the unhistorical (*das Unhistorische*) and the supra-historical (*das Überhistorische*).

With regard to the unhistorical, he writes:

By the term ‘unhistorical’ I mean the art and the power of being able to forget and to enclose oneself within a limited horizon. (Nietzsche 1983, II, §10)

In Nietzsche, this “art and power of forgetting” signifies the capacity to delimit oneself—to remain vital, creative, and productive within the boundaries of a chosen horizon. Dōgen’s third dimension of forgetting, however, stands in direct contrast. To reverse Nietzsche’s formulation, one may put it thus:

By the term *shinjin datsuraku*, Dōgen designates the opening of oneself from a limited horizon into the world of ‘the dharmas that are Buddha-Dharma.’

Yet Nietzsche also introduces another dimension: the *supra-historical*. He understands it as the ability to accept the recurring violence and oppression through which the strong exercise their “power of forgetting” over the weak—an acceptance of repetition as fate.

However, Nietzsche himself adopts an ambivalent stance toward this position. In the third section of *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*, he writes:

Today we would rather rejoice sincerely in our own ignorance, and, as active and advancing men, as worshippers of the process itself, spend a cheerful day. (Nietzsche 1983, II, §3)

Here Nietzsche expresses a clear refusal to accept the burden of repetition and suffering that such a view entails. Rather than embracing this harsh vision of life, he voices a desire to remain innocent, light-hearted, and unburdened—“to rejoice sincerely in our own ignorance” and to live as “worshippers of the process itself.”

Yet in the final section, Nietzsche explicitly names “art and religion” as exemplary forms of the supra-historical, and states:

The names of these counteragents against the historical are—the unhistorical and the supra-historical. They are the natural antidotes to the overgrowth of history, the medicines for the historical sickness of life. (Nietzsche 1983, II, §3)

If this is read as one of Nietzsche’s characteristically cynical formulations, a certain coherence can be established between this passage and the earlier one. Yet such coherence amounts to no more than a minor rationality—an attachment to a merely surface-level consistency.

For what Nietzsche articulates in this final section attains, in the period of *On the Genealogy of Morality*, its religious–metaphysical final form in the doctrines of the *Übermensch* and of eternal recurrence. This final form, however, lies outside the thematic horizon of the present volume, namely “forgetting.” For eternal recurrence negates the very dimension of forgetting itself.

Nietzsche’s conception of “forgetting” ultimately becomes something to be overcome precisely because it remains confined within a dualistic structure—between the *realm of memory*, which is retained within consciousness, and the *realm of forgetting*, which lies outside it. Whether at the level of the individual or of the collective, forgetting for Nietzsche can exist only as the other side of memory: an exterior domain that marks the limits of consciousness.

4.4. The Ethical Dimension of Forgetting in Dōgen

Even in Dōgen, in what may be called the second mode of forgetting, a dualistic structure remains constantly operative as a feature of human cognition. What should be remembered is often “forgotten” and dissipates into the exterior of that domain.

Yet through the third mode of forgetting—*shinjin datsuraku*, the sloughing off of body and mind—this exterior is not eliminated but reconstituted: it is seen anew as part of a multilayered world vertically structured by the Buddha-Dharma of all dharmas, within which even our ordinary domain of cognition attains its rightful place as one corner. From this perspective, even our domain of cognition, which had seemed bounded by memory, attains a new place as a partial region within a vaster expanse.

In this multilayered way of reconfiguring history, world, time, and space, Dōgen’s *forgetting* functions not as Nietzsche’s first mode of forgetting—the oblivion of the animal or of Zhuangzi’s butterfly—nor as the second mode that marks the boundary between one’s own domain of values and its outside, nor yet as Nietzsche’s terrifying third mode, which fuses forgetting with the will to power. Nor does it take the impossible path of transcending forgetting altogether. Rather, it opens a new ground upon which an ethics adequate to the present age might be built.

If we recall that ethics concerns the field of social norms and relations, then the horizon opened by Dōgen’s “forgetting the self” can be understood as a vision that embraces not only human beings but also the various sentient beings, and even the insentient realms—matter, viruses, bacteria, plants. Each of these constitutes its own relational structure, its own individuality, yet all are penetrated by the same “all dharmas as Buddha-Dharma” that traverse and link their domains. In this sense, Dōgen’s view stands apart from both relativism, which dissolves differences into mere contingency, and monism, which absorbs all beings into a single total structure.

The passage in *Genjōkōan* describing the relation of fish and birds to their respective worlds speaks primarily to the individuality of each domain. But when read together with the discussion of “the water of transcendence” (*tōdatsu no mizu*) in the *Sansuikyō* fascicle,

it reveals that, despite the structural and axiological differences among realms, all are traversed by the same working of the dharmas.

However, the “Buddha-Dharma of all dharmas” spoken of by Dōgen functions as a void-like space or passageway that traverses all domains; it does not possess a “self” as an independent entity. The ontological character of these dharmas indicates that they belong to the same fundamental dimension of forgetting.

This is not something that operates only within the monastic hall. Even for people living ordinary lives, when the appropriate conditions arise, they can peer into another realm through the open space that emerges within relational structures, gaining awareness of the workings of dharmas that usually remain unseen within the context of their everyday world.

5. Conclusions

In this paper, I have examined “forgetting” in Dōgen primarily at the philosophical and ethical level. For this reason, little has been said about the fact that Dōgen Zen’s practical system is constituted by monastic regulations (*shingi*) and *zazen*. This omission may well be the most perplexing aspect of the present study for some readers. In this concluding section, therefore, I would like to revisit the arguments developed thus far—while also offering an explanation for this omission—by relating them to problems encountered in our actual lives.

Ordinarily, as long as one remains immersed in the quiet routine of everyday life, one does not seek the Way. It is only when one encounters intractable problems within one’s concrete existence—through experiences of love and death, poverty and discrimination, war and oppression—that one finds oneself driven into an impasse and begins to seek the Way. The first existential mode of forgetting analyzed in this paper, namely, the form of forgetting expressed as “that which must not be forgotten,” functions precisely as a guide at this point of departure. The statement found in the *Shoaku Makusa* fascicle, discussed in Section 3—“in the very beginning, we hear ‘do not create evils’”—corresponds exactly to this initial orientation.

It must not be overlooked, however, that this “beginning” never simply recedes into the past. Rather, it continues to function as a force that propels one anew toward the second and third modes of forgetting. This is because the question first encountered is not a problem that remains internal to consciousness. As it gradually becomes clarified through the second and third existential modes, it reveals itself to be a question concerning the ontological structure of the world itself and one’s own existence within it.

By the ontological structure of the world, I mean that the world in which we live is not composed of a single domain structured by a unified semantic or normative order. Rather, domains governed by different structures—normally invisible in everyday life—exist simultaneously, overlap in the same place, or run in parallel with one another.

War represents the most extreme manifestation of such contradictions. Yet experiences closer to everyday life—love and death, crime and accidents, poverty and discrimination—share the same structural background. In many cases, it is difficult to identify a single, monistic domain within which the problem itself can be resolved.

The transition to the third existential mode through the fundamental forgetting designated as *shinjin datsuraku*—the sloughing off of body and mind—enables one, through detachment from fixation upon “this world” (*shikai*), which had previously constituted the self, to regasp problems that had once engulfed one’s entire existence as only “one corner” (*ichigū*) of reality.

In Dōgen Zen, this process is practiced in a safeguarded manner through a systematic path of cultivation consisting of life regulated by the precepts and the practice of *zazen*. In

this paper, however, by following the internal logic of the *Shōbōgenzō*, I have taken as my object of analysis the theoretical problem that may be called the “structure of the question” itself—prior to its articulation within any particular practical system. This does not imply a dismissal of the value of practical guidance such as that found in Dōgen Zen, for if one who has encountered what is called a “great mass of doubt” (*daigidan*) were to attempt to walk the path without any guidance at all, one might even place one’s life in danger along the way.

At the same time, it should be emphasized that such processes are by no means remote from our everyday lives. For example, Engaku-ji²⁵ in Kamakura was founded by Hōjō Tokimune, the eighth regent of the Kamakura shogunate, after the Mongol invasions, in order to mourn soldiers who had died in battle, regardless of whether they were friend or foe. Even if one visits the temple merely as a tourist, when one stands there and listens to this history, one cannot but find oneself present at a moment in which the third mode of forgetting discussed in this paper is realized—as a time of quiet prayer.

This Buddhist temple does not offer a place of comfort to those who share a common culture or set of values, as State Shinto once did, nor does it create a site of reconciliation between the soldiers on the Mongol side—including Chinese and Goryeo troops—and the Japanese warriors who confronted them. Yet those who stand there are nevertheless present at a moment of the forgetting of “sin.” This, however, can never mean forgetting the soldiers who lost their lives, nor the suffering of their families.

If ethical questioning is to remain possible, the world must remain open.

A monistic closure would foreclose precisely the openness that such questioning requires.

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Notes

- ¹ This also implies that Dōgen’s Buddha-Dharma, as expressed in the seventy-five fascicles, does not aim merely at a state of undifferentiated non-discrimination, and thus cannot be dismissed as an anti-intellectual form of *hongaku* (“original enlightenment”) thought.
- ² *Fukanzazengi* was written in 1227, the year Dōgen returned to Japan.
- ³ *Bendōwa* was written in 1231, the second text he composed after his return.
- ⁴ Here, “domain” does not refer to a subjective perspective, but to structurally distinct fields of practice, normativity, and existence.
- ⁵ Across the seventy-five fascicles, the verb *wasuru* (“to forget”) appears thirty-seven times; including two further instances in *Bendōwa*, the total comes to thirty-nine. The noun “forgetting” (忘 *bō*) occurs four times. (These counts exclude quotations from scriptures or *goroku* (“Recorded Sayings”).)
- ⁶ *Shōbōgenzō*, vol. 2, p. 72. Citations follow the seven-volume (Dōgen 2023), Sōtō Zen Text Project (see Bibliography).
- ⁷ *Goroku* (禪語錄): Collections of “Recorded Sayings” in Chan/Zen Buddhism, preserving the sayings, dialogues, and teachings of past masters; frequently cited by Dōgen.
- ⁸ see Keitoku Dentōroku 景德伝燈録 (*Jingde chuandeng lu*), T.2076, 51:438a9–25.
- ⁹ “Body and mind” (身心 *shinjin*) is a key term in Dōgen’s thought. For Dōgen, it denotes a single, inseparable reality. In the *Bendōwa*, a work that predates the seventy-five-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō*, he states: “In the buddha-dharma it is always taught that body and mind are not separate.”

- 10 It is of course possible to read Dōgen's phrase "the field of body and mind" from the standpoint of Yogācāra epistemology. However, such a reading obscures its connection to what may be called the ontological foundation of Dōgen's thought—namely, the status in which dharmas are Buddha-Dharma. In the *Mujō seppō* fascicle itself, the workings of this "field of body and mind" are explicitly identified with the function of "the preaching of the insentient."
- 11 The term "world" here refers to the open expanse of the ten directions (尽十方界): not a bounded totality, but an ever-unfolding expanse in which beings appear.
- 12 The term "*dōri*" (道理), translated here as "truth," carries a range of meanings that extend beyond propositional truth. It also implies an ontological principle—reason, law, or order—that transcends human volition.
- 13 Bielefeldt translates *mi o wasururu* (身をわする) as "forgot about himself," but the Japanese term *mi* (身) literally means "body."
- 14 The title of the commentary *Kikigaki-shō* means "Abstract of the Hearing Record." Although Sen'e was a direct disciple of Dōgen, it is now generally accepted that this text is not a record directly heard by Sen'e from Dōgen.
- 15 For a detailed discussion, see my *Philosophical Studies on the Shōbōgenzō*, pp. 22–54.
- 16 See Note 15.
- 17 Here, "the sloughing off of the body-and-mind of self and others" should be understood on two levels. First, it means that both "self" and "others" appear in the world opened "through the sloughing off of the body and mind" of the self, the world in which the dharmas are Buddha-Dharma. Second, at the deepest level, the phrase also indicates the sloughing off of the structure in which self and other are constituted as separate entities. This is not a mystical fusion of two individuals but the transformation of their relationship within the horizon of the Buddha-ancestors, as written in the *Busso* (佛祖, "Buddha Ancestors") fascicle: "In the summer retreat of the first year of the Hōkyō era of Great Song, I, Dōgen, attended upon my late teacher, the Ancient Buddha and Great Master Tiantong.(如浄) At that time I fully investigated receiving and venerating this Buddha-Ancestor. It is only Buddha with Buddha."
- 18 This paper cites the translation by Bielefeldt (1988) in the bibliography and thus adopts his title; however, in the Sōtō school, the work is generally titled "*Universally Recommended Instructions for Zazen*."
- 19 "Tathāgata" (如来 *Nyorai*) is a term used to refer to one who has attained the highest religious realization.
- 20 Occurrences appear in the *Lengyan wenju* and *Lengyan zongtong*, both later than the *Jingde chuandeng lu*. Incidentally, the earliest hit in CBETA—the *Jingang ding yuga lüe shu sanshichi zun xinyao*—refers not to "jijuyū-zanmai" but to "jijuyū-sanmayā."
- 21 see 辨顯密二教論卷下T 2427, 77, p. 379b22.
- 22 For influential discussions of "forgetting" in contemporary Western philosophy that proceed from different problem-settings—such as memory, narrative identity, or political responsibility—see, for example, Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), and Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958). The present study does not engage these approaches, as its focus lies on forgetting as an existential–ethical structure articulated in Dōgen's thought.
- 23 *Dhammapada*, (verse 183, T.210, p. 567b1–2), though with "what is good" (所善 *Shozen*) instead of "good deeds" (衆善 *Shūzen*).
- 24 In *Senmen* ("Washing the Face"), Dōgen states that "when one does not wash the face, there is an offense both in receiving obeisance and in offering obeisance to another." (Dōgen 2023, vol. 3, p. 86). Likewise, in *Senjō* ("Purification"), he remarks: "If the length of the nails exceeds one grain of barley, that is an offense." (Dōgen 2023, vol. 3, p. 151).
- 25 Engaku-ji is a Rinzaï Zen temple and has no direct historical or doctrinal affiliation with Dōgen or the Sōtō school. It is cited here not as an example of Dōgen Zen, but as an illustration of how the third mode of forgetting discussed in this paper can be concretely realized as a space of prayer beyond sectarian boundaries.

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