

THE EXISTENTIAL MOMENT: REREADING DŌGEN'S THEORY OF TIME

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Among all aspects of Dōgen's philosophical thought, his theory of time has without doubt received the most attention. Even in English there exist two book-length studies of this topic,¹ and a multitude of other authors who have treated Dōgen have also extensively commented on the subject.² This is with good reason. Without an interpretation of Dōgen's ideas on time it is very difficult to approach any other aspect of his thought, or even to form an adequate understanding of his basic concepts. And yet most previous studies of Dōgen's time theory as well as English translations of the "Uji" (usually translated as "Being-time") fascicle of the *Shōbōgenzō* have, to my knowledge, assumed without questioning certain presuppositions on the nature of time, which makes Dōgen's theory much more complicated and in some respects almost impossible to understand (a position that I have myself also shared earlier³ and which has influenced many classic treatments⁴ as well as all the most influential English translations⁵ of the text). Notably, they have viewed time as primarily durational. This article presents an effort to reinterpret the concept of time in Dōgen's theory from a different position, with stress on the momentary rather than the durational, and to offer an alternative reading of the *Uji* fascicle as well as certain other key passages in Dōgen's work that, I hope, will enable a less complicated and more lucid understanding of his ideas. My argument is grounded in numerous footnotes, remarks, and translating choices of other scholars, developing a certain line of thought to its logical conclusion and applying it to Dōgen's text in a systematic manner.

It is probably justified to say that the basic received Western view of time derives from Aristotle's treatment of the concept in his *Physics*,⁶ where time has been defined as "the numerical expression of movement in respect to 'before' and 'after,' and it is continuous, because it is the derivate of a continuum."⁷ *Time* thus has, by definition, measurements and is analogous to a *line* in space, as opposed to *the now* (*to nyn*), which relates to *time* as a *point* relates to a *line*—it is in/on it, but not a part of it.⁸ Points cannot be next to each other, because then they would have to have sides and measurements, contrary to their definition. Analogically, a *moment* appears to us in a different register of being than *time*. Moments are without duration, just as points are without measurements. Nevertheless it is difficult, and for most of the possible Buddhist ontological standpoints it is also pointless, to deny that actual, immediate existence takes place in *the now* rather than in a measurable time, which necessarily includes stretches of the already gone past and the not-yet-come future as well. To say of something that it *is* in time means that it *is* self-identical at different moments.

This necessarily implies a certain degree of essentialism in our talk of things, because no phenomenon is exactly the same at any two different moments: even if absolutely nothing else in it has moved or changed (which is impossible), it will be some units “older” at the moment that comes later, which means that there is at least one property (age) that is not essentially part of the phenomenon’s definition, although it pertains to it in some degree during the entire span of its existence.⁹

Ontological versus Linguistic Existence

Clearly it is this essentialism that makes language possible: we can use a word for only the set of those properties of a thing that necessarily characterize it in the same way at all moments of time, or, to use Saul Kripke’s famous formulation,¹⁰ in all possible worlds. But this also imposes certain limits to our language—such a linguistic designation can only *point* to a phenomenon in its momentary entirety, but never actually *refer* to the exhaustive totality of all the properties it has at any given moment. Hence it follows that the unnameable phenomenon that exists at a *moment* necessarily exceeds the nameable phenomenon that exists in *time*. The question is to which kind of entity we should grant the basic ontological status. The subject of the sentence “Dōgen was born in 1200 and died in 1253” does not refer to a newborn baby and a dying middle-aged monk at the same time, but to the subject of the sentence. “Dōgen decided to move the headquarters of his school to Echizen province” points to a much more concrete man at a very certain moment in his life. However, we are used to thinking of such designations as having the same referent. Western philosophy has traditionally postulated a continuous identity of things for the greater good of (linguistic) clarity and thus has preferred the durational mode of being to the momentary, while most Buddhist philosophers have stubbornly refused to give up immediate existence and are willing to negotiate the stability and precision of their intellectual instruments instead. We could actually say that two registers of being in the Aristotelian model correspond to the two levels of truth posited by Nāgārjuna—the “ultimate” (dimensionless and inaccessible to linguistic conceptualization) and the “shared” (truth-relations that obtain in the conventionally conceptualized world).¹¹ While in neither philosophical culture is one of the two sides entirely dismissed, it is still evident that the more operational “shared” truth is preferred by most Western schools of thought, while Buddhist philosophy prefers the less accessible “ultimate” as a point of departure.

My reading of Dōgen is based on the assumption that to overcome this split—as, before him, Tendai theory also endeavored to do¹²—is one of his main aims and concerns, and that his theory is ontologically grounded in the convergence of the two registers of being, the momentary and the durational. In order to achieve this through language, he famously (or notoriously) creates “loaded” concepts by consciously playing with the multiple meanings and nuances of Chinese characters to shift their semantic dominant and to constantly “redefine” in unexpected ways the concepts expressed by them in order to maximize the tension in their semantic fields, and also plays with the multiple readings of particular characters.¹³ In a sense, he

gives up the stability of his philosophical *langue* in order to release the maximum of the expressive power of his *parole*—which is probably also one of the reasons behind his choice for his linguistic medium of the less-regulated classical Japanese, the Buddhist usage of which had hitherto been confined to fairly simple texts meant for the lay public.

Time, in Dōgen’s text, is one of such cluster-concepts that balances between the meanings of the momentary and the durational and does not just refer to the measurable dimension of time that is implied by Aristotle’s definition. On the contrary, in what follows I hope to show that, in a certain terminological sense, the dominant of the concept tilts to the side of the momentary. This is also more in line with a number of Dōgen’s statements on the topic. For instance, a comparative treatment of the two registers of time can be found in the *Hosshō* fascicle of the *Shōbōgenzō*, in a passage where Dōgen discusses an utterance by Mazu:

Master Mazu said: “All sentient beings have, since immeasurable aeons, never abandoned the concentration *on* the nature of things (*hosshō-sammai wo idezu*). While they abide in it for long, their wearing-clothes, their eating-food, their talking and arguing, the functions of their six senses, all of their actions, everything of that is the nature of things.” . . . From the beginning of the nature of things, the concentration of [—the syntaxis here implies an alteration in the meaning of the original quote] the nature of things has not been interrupted. After there is the nature of things, the nature of things has not been abandoned. Before there was the nature of things, the nature of things had not been abandoned. The nature of things *alongside* immeasurable aeons (*hosshō narabi ni muryōgō*) is the concentration. Immeasurable aeons *are what we call* the nature of things (*hosshō wo muryōgō to iu*). However, while that is so, the complete presence of the immediate now is [also] the nature of things. The nature of things is the complete presence of the immediate now.¹⁴

We find here many of the usual techniques Dōgen employs: the centralization of the discussed concept both to denote the ultimate and to substitute the practicing consciousness, as well as the permutation of the concepts in many possible combinations so that no possible versatile predication would remain unenacted. We can also see that there is a subtle but nevertheless clear difference between the two main predications. Talking about immeasurable aeons, Dōgen inserts a certain distance between them and the nature of things, and does it twice: first by saying that the nature and the aeons are the concentration alongside (*narabi ni*) each other, and the second time by reporting their identity as something we postulate by language (*to iu*). As to “the complete presence of the immediate now,” it is identified with the nature of things without qualifications. This is further enforced by positing an “after” and a “before” to the being of the nature of things.

The “immediate now” thus has a higher ontological status, which is in complete accordance with the received Buddhist view. Unlike Aristotle, Dōgen does not see the absence of dimensions in the *now* as a problem—to the contrary, measurability is what puts the aeons “alongside” the nature of things and into language. After all, the aeons are immeasurable not because it would be impossible to measure them in principle, but because there is simply too much time there to measure. I also think

that the “complete presence of the immediate now” and not a prolonged existence (that inevitably has to contain change) is the correlate of the “dharma-configuration,” defined in a famous passage in the *Genjōkōan* fascicle:

Firewood becomes ashes and it cannot become firewood again. Although this is so, we should not see ashes as “after” and firewood as “before.” You should know that firewood abides in the dharma-configuration of firewood, for which there is a “before” and “after.” But although there is a difference between “before” and “after,” it is within the limits of this dharma-configuration. Ashes abide in the dharma-configuration of ashes, and there is a “before,” and there is an “after.” Just like this firewood, which will not become firewood again after it has become ashes, a human being will not return to life again after death. . . . This is like winter and spring. One does not say that “winter” has become “spring,” one does not say that “spring” has become “summer.”¹⁵

The notion of 法位 *hō'i*, translated here as “dharma-configuration,” is a difficult one. Usually it is seen (with slight variations) to refer to particular “points” on the axis of “time” (seen here as the time span of a thing’s existence) that simultaneously separate themselves from and contain the present and future (of the thing in question) within them¹⁶ and is, accordingly, translated as “dharma-stage” or “dharma-position.” We could compare this to a dimensionless point of view in a one-dimensional universe: if a point on a line could see, it would simultaneously gaze at the infinity of both sides of the line on which it is situated. A different view is held by Hee-Jin Kim, who claims that *hō'i* involves a nondualistic perception of reality, “in and through the mediation of emptiness,”¹⁷ not that it would be the natural condition of each separate bit of reality at each singular moment. Tanahashi, whose interpretation is closest to mine, defines *hō'i* as the “unique, nonrepeatable stage of a thing’s existence at any given moment,”¹⁸ and translates it as the “phenomenal expression” of things, possibly following Nishio and Mizuno, who have translated the term simply as *arigata*, “way of being.”¹⁹

Although all these authors stress that Dōgen teaches the unessentiality of all things, they nevertheless imply a starting point that is much more essentialist than the one Dōgen actually seems to hold. Even Goodhew and Loy—who interpret this passage as an assertion that “objects themselves are unreal, but their relativity also implies the unreality of objective time. . . . If there is only time then there is no time, because there can be no container (time) without a contained (objects)”²⁰—understand “things” as self-identical “objects” that are presumably out there in the world, whether real or unreal. However, if we look at “firewood” and “ashes” as designations of solely *linguistic* entities, names of things the existence of which we posit with our language, but which are without their own self-nature (similar to what is designated by the words “spring” and “autumn,” in which case it is easier to see that there are no objective thing-referents to which they could refer), we can understand *jūhō'i* 住法位 not as the relation between a *thing* and its (dharma-)position on whatever axis, but as the relation in which the constituent particles of reality are to each other: in one specific mode of organization they are perceived as “firewood,” in another as “ashes”; the notion of “firewood” abides in a particular configuration of

dharmas just as the notion of “offside” abides in a particular configuration of players on a football field. In a photograph that depicts an offside situation, the images of the players stand absolutely still (as they also would in a dimensionless moment), but each of them has a certain speed and direction (past, present, and future) that may, in a next moment, place them in some other configuration that can be described by some other technical term. Following the premises of Buddhist ontology, all these configurations are necessarily unique, unrepeatable and momentary, but this does not prevent us from referring to more than one of them by the same linguistic and generic term.

This reading can be supported by many passages from the *Shōbōgenzō*. For example, a similar relativization of linguistically defined concepts can be found in the *Sangai yuishin* fascicle:

In the immediate present, it is not that the father is before and the child is after, or that the child comes first and the father follows. It is also not that they are beside each other. . . . It is not the opposition of past and future, or the measurement of big and small proportions, or the discussion of old and young age. The axis of “old-young” should be applied as with Buddhas and patriarchs. It happens that fathers are young and children old; it also happens that fathers are old and children young. It can be that fathers are old and children are old, too, or that fathers are young and children are young as well. It is not for the children to apprehend the oldness of their fathers, and not for the fathers to let the youth of the children pass.²¹

It is obvious that “fathers” and “children” can only be called such in relation to each other: to be a father means to be the father of a child. We can use both of these terms to point to particular persons, but never to identify anything essential or permanent in them, because all fathers are also somebody’s children and many children somebody’s fathers. Therefore, no essential properties are necessarily embedded in a linguistic term, which is always a purely heuristic device to point to a particular instance of reality in a particular context.²²

Totality and Singularity

On the whole, however, Dōgen is less concerned with particular segments of reality that make up individually and linguistically perceived worlds than with the totality that is, in his view, equally accessible through each unrepeatable moment—which puts the minimal in focus as well. Nevertheless this does not lead him to give precedence to abstract categories over experiential understanding, as can be seen in his treatment of the same topic in the *Sangai yuishin* fascicle immediately before the passage quoted above:

The triple world is not an original existence, the triple world is not a present existence. The triple world is not a new becoming, the triple world is not a karma-conditioned birth. The triple world has no beginning, middle, and end. There is a triple world apart,²³ there is the triple world of now-here. It is the mutual reflection of its functions, the reciprocal development of its contradictions. The triple world of now-here is the triple world that can be seen [= perceived]. . . . Because the triple world is the entire universe, the now-here is

the whole of past, present, and futures. The manifestation of the whole of past, present, and futures does not overshadow the now-here. The manifestation of the now-here overshadows the whole of past, present, and futures.²⁴

It is significant how Dōgen here opposes two parallel sets of concepts: on the one hand, he rejects the “present existence” (*kon’u* 今有) and the series of beginning, middle, and end (resemblant of McTaggart’s B-series time), but affirms the “now-here” (*konshi* 今此) and, as its corollary, the compound of past, present, and futures²⁵ (*kagentōrai* 過現當來) (McTaggart’s A-series).²⁶ The rejected set conceives of reality as an organized whole, or at least something best understood through a coherent theory, while the latter is both directly open to perception and irreducible to a systematic discourse. Again, we see that the momentary is more basic than the durational, because the durational is only accessible to us through the momentary and not vice versa. Or, as Dwight Holbrook puts it, “Dogen is not denying a future and a past. . . . He is only rejecting the view that future and past lie outside the present moment. . . . Hence, he is postulating not a presentness that exists without any reference to a past or future but rather a presentness in which time does not have a linear meaning.”²⁷

When we now look at Dōgen’s conceptual apparatus in the context of these readings, we can see that the distinction between his own and the unlearned view of time may have a parallel in his language: taking a cue from Rolf Elberfeld, who distinguishes between *zu-einer-Zeit* (at-a-time) and [*bestimmte*] *Zeit* as two possible meanings of *ji/toki* 時 (moment/time),²⁸ we can tentatively assume that, just as there is a difference in meaning, pointed out by many, between the Sinified and Japanese readings (*u* and *ari*) of the character 有, there is a similar difference between *ji* and *toki*, the two readings of 時. Just as in the case of 有, where *ari* refers to the less-loaded usage and *u* is the philosophical concept, we can read the *ji* of *uji* to be specific and distinct from what would normally be called *toki*. In his thorough linguistic study of Dōgen’s work, Tajima Ikudō has listed the ostensible rules on the usage of characters and their readings, concluding that in the case of lone-standing characters, both Sinified and Japanese readings are possible and there is no clear rule that determines which is to be preferred.²⁹ However, we may assume that in such cases there can be a conceptual difference involved—that the two readings are used to distinguish between nuances of meaning. This is also not at odds with the assumption that Dōgen’s view of time does not postulate an abstract and transcendent time “behind” or “above” our normal time-system³⁰—the distinction is in our own attitude toward it. Dōgen’s *uji* is most certainly to be perceived from within our actual present, but there are certain presuppositions about the nature of time that should be overcome and abandoned for that purpose—as a result of religious practice, or perhaps also otherwise.

On the basis of these considerations, I suggest that it does more justice to Dōgen’s way of thinking to translate his *ji* 時 primarily as “moment”³¹—as a kind of shorthand for the recurrent expression *shōtōimmoji* 正當恁麼時, “precisely present moment of suchness”—and not as “time” (*toki*), keeping in mind that the momentary encompasses

the durational and not, as we are used to thinking, vice versa.³² I have also followed Nishijima/Cross and Takahashi³³ in translating the 有 of 有時 as “existence” for several reasons: among the different characters with the meaning of “being,” this one denotes “being there,” abstractly (and we can replace “there is” with “there exists”), as opposed to the “being” that we use in the sense of the copula, “being something,” but which is, in fact, also a much richer concept.³⁴ In classical Chinese this character functions as an existential quantifier in such constructions as x 有 $F(x)$ 者, “there is such an x that $F(x)$.”³⁵ Thus, if we oppose “being” to “existence” in the context of Dōgen’s thought, the distinction should be made between “being something” and “being there”; “being” in the context of the “Uji” fascicle should perhaps instead be reserved for the sense expressed in the last sentence of the fascicle: かくのごとく . . . 有時すべし, “this is how one should *be* the existential moment.”

I hope to show that this reading makes several crucial passages in the *Uji* fascicle lucid and more easily understandable, while in previous translations they occasionally require considerable conceptual activity in order to yield intelligible results that are compatible with Dōgen’s positions on other matters. I will next present an alternative translation in the “momentary mode” of those extracts of the fascicle that introduce or elaborate on Dōgen’s key concepts. This translation is meant to supplement, but not replace, the existing translations in the “durational mode,” since, as has been said, neither of the two Aristotelian thought regimes is fully adequate—but, as only one of them has been used up until now, the other should also be given a chance. What should be kept in mind, though, is that “moment,” although without dimensions, is not something atomistic or infinitesimally small, as we might think under the influence of the Aristotelian analogy of “the now” with the point—after all, something small also has dimensions, a length of zero units; the “moment” as understood here does not have dimensions at all and is thus simultaneously unmeasurably brief and everlasting, always present.³⁶

Textual Analysis: Key Passages from the “Uji” Fascicle

I

いはゆる有時は、時すでにこれ有なり、有はみな時なり。丈六金身これ時なり、時なるがゆゑに時の莊嚴光明あり。いまの十二時に學すべし。三頭八臂これ時なり、時なるがゆゑにいまの十二時に一如なるべし。十二時の長遠短促、いまだ度量せずといへども、これを十二時といふ。去來の方跡あきらかなるによりて、人これを疑著せず、疑著せざれどもしれるにあらず。衆生もとよりしらざる毎物毎事を疑著すること一定せざるがゆゑに、疑著する前程、かならずしもいまの疑著に符合することなし。ただ疑著しばらく時なるのみなり。

The so-called “existential moment” means that each moment is in itself an existence and that all existences are momentary. The “golden body of the Buddha” is a moment, and because it is momentary it has its moment of ethereal glow. You should study this in the context of the twelve hours of the present. The “three heads and eight shoulders of an asura” are just a moment, and because of this momentariness, they are such during the twelve hours of the present. The twelve hours have length and distance, shortness and

proximity, and even if you are not conscious of their measure, you still call this system “the twelve hours.” Because the marks of their going and coming are clear, people do not doubt them, but even if they do not doubt them, it is not the same as understanding them. Even if sentient beings do not make it a general principle to doubt every thing and every event that they do not initially understand, it does not follow that they necessarily agree with everything before they start doubting it. Their doubts are no more than fleeting moments as well.

The first difference in reading between the momentary and durational translation modes emerges in establishing the relation of *uji* with the measurable time-system.³⁷ The durational translations allow it to be merged with the “twelve hours of the present” (Abe and Waddell: “You must learn to see this glorious radiance in the twelve hours of your day”); the momentary version separates them because time has duration, but moments do not. This is also supported by the text’s discussion of doubting the system: even though one is unable to realize how it is precisely that the measurable system of time comes to possess its instruments of measurement—distance and others—they are not doubted, because marks of change (that testify to the passing of time) are obvious to the plain eye. However, this does not mean that one understands the phenomenon of time—just as Augustine pointed out at the start of his discussion of the subject.³⁸

II

われを排列しおきて盡界とせり、この盡界の頭頭物物を時時なりと見すべし。物の相礙せざるは、時時の相礙せざるがごとし。このゆゑに同時發心あり、同心發時あり。および修行成道もかくのごとし。われを排列してわれこれを見るなり。自己の時なる道理、それかくのごとし。

The I unfolds and becomes the world in its entirety, and one should see that all beings, all things constitute moments in this entirety of the world. Just as different things do not interfere with each other, different moments do not interfere with each other either. This is why the mind arises in the same moment, the moment arises in the same mind. And it is the same with the practice and attaining the way. When the I unfolds, it sees itself as “me.” The principle that the self is momentary works in the same way.

If we want to read this passage in the strictly durational mode, we must concede that there is a plurality of being-times, and each *thing* has a time-regime of its own (Abe/Waddell: “We must see all the various things of the world as so many times”; Cleary: “each point, each thing of this *whole world* is an individual *time*”), but this is more than simply problematic, because it implies the existence of independent things with self-natures.³⁹ This must be why Tanahashi has translated *jiji* 時時 in this particular sentence as “moments of time.” The momentary mode also allows for a non-mystical explanation of the Huayan *jijimuge* concept⁴⁰—separate moments in time are like separate objects in space, but they are all instances of the same totality.⁴¹ The text also says clearly that the unfolded self is the world, which is why the assertion of durational readings that “self is time,” that is, possesses an independent time-regime and duration, is not consistent—just like all other existents, the self should be imper-

manent and only appear in reality as a particular dharma-configuration, which is momentary. What distinguishes the self (any self) from the myriad other existents is precisely its capacity to open itself up to a relation with the rest of reality—and to experience the existential moment in a way that advances it to enlightenment, as it is explained in the next passage.

III

恁麼の道理なるゆゑに、盡地に萬象百草あり、一草一象おのおの盡地にあることを參學すべし。かくのごとくの往來は、修行の發足なり。到恁麼の田地のとき、すなはち一草一象なり、會象不會象なり、會草不會草なり。正當恁麼時のみなるがゆゑに、有時みな盡時なり、有草有象ともに時なり。時時の時に盡有盡界あるなり。しばらくいまの時にもれたる盡有盡界ありやなしやと觀想すべし。

Because of how suchness is, there are myriad forms and hundreds of blades of grass in the entirety of space, but you should also realize that the entirety of space is within each single blade of grass, each single form. The perception of this oscillating interdependence is the beginning of religious practice. When you have arrived in the field of suchness, there are singular blades of grass, singular forms; there is rational grasping and non-rational grasping of forms, rational grasping and non-rational grasping of blades of grass. Because they are nothing else than precisely present moments of suchness, each existential moment is the entirety of time; existing blades of grass, existing forms, are all moments together. In this time of all moments, there is the entirety of existence, the entirety of the world. Look—is it or isn't it the entirety of existence, the entirety of the world that is thus dripping through the fleeting moment of the present?

Abe and Waddell have interpreted 有時みな盡時なり in the vein of individual time-entities (“each being-time is without exception entire time”), while Tanahashi and Cleary only assert the identity of time with itself (Cleary: “being time is all the whole time”; Tanahashi: “the time-being is all the time there is”). It seems more justified, however, to follow Elberfeld in reading this expression as the assertion that each single existential moment contains in it the past, present, and futures,⁴² as has also been asserted elsewhere in Dōgen's text. The necessity for such an assertion is grounded in the double role of the time-word—it conveys, on the one hand, the terminologically used “existential moment” and the more loosely understood “time” of the general usage of the other. This ambiguity is also visible in the durational translations, aptly clarified by Abe and Waddell in a footnote, which puts things in the momentary rather than the durational mode: “there is only the immediate present, in which all time and being is encompassed. This is true of me and of all other dharmas as well.”⁴³

Moreover, I take the expression 時々の時 (which I read *jiji no toki* to separate the two meanings of the word), translated here as the “time of all moments” (Abe/Waddell: “the time of each and every now”; Cleary: “the time of time's time”; Tanahashi: “each moment”; Nishijima and Cross: “individual moments of time”), to indicate that the character 時 is markedly ambivalent in this passage, bringing to the fore the relationship between a singular existent and the totality of being. Just as in the experience of suchness the perception of a singular form is simultaneously the

perception of the entire reality, the totality of time is also accessible from within each single moment. The attribute “of all moments” denotes a property of time thus understood, not its composition. This is also why I have translated *ōrai* 往来 as “oscillating interdependence,”⁴⁴ deriving this from a footnote by Terada and Mizuno:⁴⁵ the beginning of religious practice is not in the realization of how reality comes and goes, but in the fact that the micro- and macro-level views, the absolutely particular and the absolutely universal, provide full access to each other.⁴⁶ This is very much the same process that Elberfeld has called “aspect alteration” (*Aspektwechsel* or *Vexierung*) in his discussion of Seng Zhao’s work: if stillness is inherent in any momentary capture of movement, but impossible to hold, then we have to alternate between incompatible points of view to see the whole as it is.⁴⁷

Although it is irrelevant for the validity of interpretation, I also suggest that the verb *more* 洩れ could be translated here in its primary meaning of “dripping” and not “being apart,” which is the usual reading. By saying that the totality of the world is leaking through the immediate present, Dōgen once again asserts its accessibility to the mind, before proceeding to discuss the views on time of the uncultivated.

IV

しかあるを、佛法をならはざる凡夫の時節にあらゆる見解は、有時のことばをきくにおもはく、あるときは三頭八臂となれりき、あるときは丈六金身となれりき。たとへば、河をすぎ、山をすぎしがごとくなり。いまはその山河、たとひあるらめども、われすぎきたりて、いまは玉殿朱樓に處せり、山河とわれと、天と地となりとおもふ。

しかあれども、道理この一條のみにあらず。いはゆる山をのぼり河をわたりし時にわれありき、われに時あるべし。われすでにあり、時さるべからず。時もし去來の相にあらずは、上山の時は有時の而今なり。時もし去來の相を保任せば、われに有時の而今ある、これ有時なり。かの上山渡河の時、この玉殿朱樓の時を吞却せざらんや、吐却せざらんや。

However, an ordinary man who has not studied the Buddhist teaching has such views on time that on hearing the word “existential moment,” he thinks: “At one moment someone was an asura, at another moment he was a Buddha. This is just like crossing a river, passing a mountain. Even if the mountain and the river continue to exist, I have passed them; my place is now in this jewel palace and vermilion tower. I and the mountains-rivers are like heaven and earth to each other.”

Yet there is more to this principle than just such thoughts. At the mentioned moments of climbing the mountain or crossing the river, there was also an I, and there had to be the moment of the I. Whenever there is an I, the momentariness is unavoidable. If a moment is not just a sign of the transition, then the moment of climbing the mountain is the immediate present of the existential moment. If a moment fully contains all the signs of the transition, then the immediate present of the existential moment is there for me. *This* is the existential moment. The moment of climbing the mountain and crossing the river, the moment of palace-tower, does it not swallow them up and spit them out [simultaneously]?

Dōgen’s argument against the primitive view should be seen as the continuation of the ongoing discussion: he has said before that the I/self unfolds and becomes the

world, which is then contained within the moment of its existence, and now reiterates the claim more strongly: whenever an I is postulated, the existential moment is present as well. This is why Dōgen's two conditionals should not oppose, but complement each other: the transitions in reality⁴⁸ that can be perceived from within the self-situation (that includes both the self and the setting, the segment of the world where the self unfolds) are contained within the existential moment, not just manifested by it. This is less immediately obvious from the translations in the durational mode (Tanahashi: "As time is not marked by coming and going, the moment you climbed the mountain is the time-being right now. If time keeps coming and going, you are the time-being right now"; other translations contain a similar dichotomy). Nevertheless the complementarity is also implied by the double rhetorical question at the end of the extract: the existential moment swallows (contains) and spits out (unfolds) the self and the existents in the same movement.

V

三頭八臂はきのふの時なり、丈六八尺はけふの時なり。しかあれども、その昨今の道理、ただこれ山のなかに直入して、千峰萬峰をみわたす時節なり、すぎぬるにあらず。三頭八臂もすなはちわが有時にて一經す、彼方にあるにたれども而今なり。丈六八尺も、すなはちわが有時にて一經す、彼處にあるにたれども而今なり。

The asura is a moment of yesterday, the Buddha is a moment of today. However, the principle of distinguishing between yesterday and today is the same thing one realizes at the time when, having gone directly to the mountains, one gazes at the thousands, the myriads of peaks in a range—nothing has gone by. The asura is one that completes its whole duration within my existential moment, and although he appears to be somewhere else, he is my immediate present. The Buddha is one that completes its whole duration within my existential moment, and although he appears to be someplace else, he is my immediate present.

In my reading, Dōgen is still dealing in this passage with the difference between the "unenlightened" view, which is based on an uncritical view of duration, and his own view of momentary existence and the self as a relation of an existent to the rest of the world. Thus, the opposition of the primitive asura of yesterday and the perfect Buddha of today is invalid because it can only be pointed out in durational time, while in fact the heuristic division of time into yesterday and today does not erase them from within each other—nothing goes by. Standing on the top of one mountain and seeing myriads of others is a spatial image for existing in one moment that contains all others. Dōgen here uses the word *jisetsu* 時節 (translated as "time"—a combination of 時 with 節, "season," "occasion") to denote a concept of time where there is no difference between the dimensional duration and the dimensionless moment of the immediate presence.⁴⁹ Thus, the argument continues from the previous passages: each existential moment contains all others (and is contained by them). I have therefore translated *ikkyō* 一經 as "completes its duration," taking the first character to mean "whole" and not "one among many," and the second one as "lasting." This allows us to see the relation between "my" point of view and the linguistically desig-

nated existents: although these have a narrative that defines them, their durational existence is for “me” summarized within each moment in which I relate to them.

VI

しかあれば、松も時なり、竹も時なり。時は飛去するとのみ解會すべからず、飛去は時の能とのみは學すべからず。時もし飛去に一任せば、間隙ありぬべし。有時の道を経聞せざるは、すぎぬるとのみ學するによりてなり。要をとりていはば、盡界にあらゆる盡有は、つらなりながら時時なり。有時なるによりて吾有時なり。

This being so, the pines are momentary and the bamboos are momentary as well. You should not conceptualize a moment as something that flies by, nor study “flying by” merely as the capacity of a moment. If moments could be fully defined by the capacity to fly by, there would be gaps between them. If you do not accept the discourse of the existential moment, this is because you are concentrating on what is already past. To sum it up: the entirety of existences in the entirety of the world are particular moments that follow each other. Because they are existential moments, they are also the moments of my existence.

I think the reason why Dōgen has picked pines and bamboos here as his examples is that both plants have specific and mutually opposed time-related connotations for the Japanese reader: pines are the symbol of longevity, bamboos of quick growth. As things, or dharma-configurations, they have the opposite internal relation to the “general” time-system. Nevertheless, coexisting pines and bamboos are simultaneous in the existential moment, not separate entities of being-time, defined by their inner dynamic and closed to each other—which would be the sense yielded by the symbolic meaning of these words if we were to stick to the durational reading.⁵⁰

There is also an important conceptual difference between “time” and “moments” flying by. When we read the text in the durational mode, we have to assume that some of the time that flies by is constantly present, while some of it has passed (Abe/Waddell: “If time were to give itself to merely flying past, it would have to leave gaps”; Cleary: “If time only were to fly, then there would be gaps”; it remains unclear where the gaps come from—the reading of Tanahashi, “If time merely flies away, you would be separated from time,” although more logical, is not supported by the text). But the problem is solved if we assume that what are seen to fly by are moments: if we would, indeed, against the text’s admonition, presume that moments fly past, one after another, like the stages of the movement of Zeno’s arrow, it would be very logical to ask what is present during the almost imperceptible interval when one moment has already passed and another one is still not yet here. However, this is not the case: the moments follow each other as an unbreakable, continuous chain that makes “me” up in the process, leaving no position from where the gaps could actually be observed. The next passage explains how this is possible.

VII

有時に經歷の功德あり。いはゆる今日より明日に經歷す、今日より昨日に經歷す、昨日より今日に經歷す。今日より今日に經歷す、明日より明日に經歷す。經歷はそれ時の功なるがゆゑに。

The existential moment has the quality of shifting. It shifts from what we call “today” into “tomorrow,” it shifts from “today” into “yesterday,” and from “yesterday” into “today” in turn. It shifts from “today” into “today,” it shifts from “tomorrow” into “tomorrow.” This is because shifting is the quality of the momentary. The moments of the past and the present do not pile on each other nor do they line up side by side.

This is one of the hard knots of the fascicle, where Dōgen introduces the seminal and much-discussed notion of *kyōryaku* 経歴, “shifting,” translated as “seriatim passage” by Abe and Waddell and “flowing” by Tanahashi. Most commentators treat *kyōryaku* as Dōgen’s usual thing, a confusing whole combining all possible elements of the sentence in all possible ways. Thus, Stambaugh writes: “Here we see one of Dōgen’s favorite devices. He reverses subject and predicate, making the subject reflexive, acting upon itself, and the predicate reflexive, acting upon itself; and he traverses all possible permutations and combinations of the elements of the sentence. The reader is left with nothing to hold on to; all static elements of the sentence have been overturned, displaced and set in motion.”⁵¹ Kim sums it all up saying nonchalantly “in brief, continuity . . . meant dynamism,”⁵² while for Abe, on the contrary, these sentences mean that while passage “in one sense, is always irreversible, it bears the reversal of all time from a transtemporal dimension.”⁵³ Heine, in turn, defines *kyōryaku* as “the comprehensive asymmetrical process of the True Man’s enlightened existential projection and ontological understanding right-now moving simultaneously in and through past, present and future, actively engaging the passenger and passageway as well as the full context of experiential reality surrounding and permeating the movement.”⁵⁴

Under the circumstances, the momentary mode of reading can perform as a true Occam’s razor so that all the sentences of the text make perfect, fairly simple, and completely rational sense, especially if we apply the sometimes altogether untranslated word *iwayuru* (“so-called”) to all the following time-designations, which seems the logical thing to do, and not just the first one.⁵⁵ Then we see that, first, the existential moment shifts from so-called “today” into “tomorrow,” because at the time that we now call tomorrow we will experience the existential moment just as we do now: we take it with us. However, the now-present existential moment, the way things are just now, will also shift away from us into what we will start to call “yesterday,” when “tomorrow” has arrived. This is how we know that the now-present existential moment has also shifted to us from what we now call “today” but used to call “tomorrow,” when what is now “yesterday” still went by the name of “today.” Therefore, we can also say that it shifts from one “today” into another (which is now still “tomorrow,” and will turn the current “today” into “yesterday”). The same also applies to all “tomorrows” and all other deictic time-designations that we might use.⁵⁶

Seen thus, *kyōryaku* is not a deep and metaphysically loaded concept, but simply the capacity of the momentary existences that allows us to relate our experience of reality to our conceptualization of time in the linguistic model where deictically defined time-designations exist and can be opposed to each other. What it requires is dismissing the notions of “today,” “yesterday,” and “tomorrow” from among the categories of our direct experience, and assigning them the role of merely linguistic

devices that help us to approach reality but are never able to completely and fully refer to it.

VIII

時は一向にすぐるとのみ計功して、未到と解會せず。解會は時なりといへども、他にひかる縁なし。去來と認じて、住位の有時と見徹せる皮袋なし。

If you judge the moments only as something passing by, you will not understand them as incomplete. Although understanding is momentary, there is no cause that would lead it elsewhere. There is not a single being who has seen through the existential moment of the dharma-configuration by considering it as going and coming.

“Incomplete” (Abe/Waddell: “something not yet arrived”; Cleary: “not yet having arrived”⁵⁷) refers to *mitō* 未到, “not-yet-reached,” which I understand to be a certain quality of openness of the existential moment toward all possible futures. “Reaching” can also signify “attaining Buddhahood,” that is, becoming perfect. Dōgen has repeatedly stressed that the existential moment comprises within itself all the other moments, the entirety of being and the entirety of time, and it would be logical to assume that it is complete in itself. However, the moment is incomplete inasmuch as it is always simultaneously passing by (moving into the past, in its suchness) and staying with us (moving into the future, in its transience). It is important to know that neither of these aspects is in itself sufficient to understand the existential moment as such. Again, in my reading, Dōgen here explicitly denies the idea of the durational present: the understanding achieved in the moment is not passed to any other moment even by karmic conditioning.

IX

經歷といふは、風雨の東西するがごとく學しきたるべからず。盡界は不動轉なるにあらず、不進退なるにあらず、經歷なり。經歷は、たとへば春のごとし。春に許多般の様子あり、これを經歷といふ。外物なきに經歷すると參學すべし。たとへば、春の經歷はかならず春を經歷するなり。經歷は春にあらざれども、春の經歷なるがゆゑに、經歷いま春の時に成道せり。

You should not conceptualize the phenomenon of shifting as the wind and the rain moving from East to West. Nothing in the entire world is ever without movement, is ever without advancing or receding—it is always in shift. This shift is like “spring,” for instance. Spring can have a multitude of appearances, and we call them “shifting.” But you should realize that they shift without involving any external thing [“shifter”]. In this example, the shift of spring necessarily makes spring shift. Shifting is not in spring, but because it is the shift of spring, this is how the shift becomes the Way now that spring is here.

Here, Dōgen resumes the discussion of “shifting” with the help of the same example of “spring” that had been used in the *Genjōkōan* fascicle to explain the concept of the dharma-configuration. We are reminded that “shifting” and the thing it is the shifting of do not relate to each other like the subject and predicate of a proposition: something called “shifting” does not exist within the confines of something called “spring,” nor is there anything external, any separately existing phenomenon, that

would be involved in the process. What we call “spring” is different at each single moment when we use this designation for each single dharma-configuration that goes by the name. The phenomenon of shifting consists precisely in this circumstance. This, as I see it, further reinforces the link of shifting with the momentary, not the durational register of time.

Conclusion

I hope to have shown that our understanding of Dōgen’s time-theory has much to gain if we abandon the idea that the concept of time is, for him, primarily durational. By interpreting the concept of *uji* 有時 as an “existential moment” that is opposed to measurable and divisible time, we obtain much more lucid readings of many key passages of the fascicle (notably the confusion with the term *kyōryaku* 經歷, “passage,” should be here translated as “shifting”) and escape contradictions with many central Buddhist positions (such as the lack of self-nature in things). This reading is also consistent with the view of the notion of *hō’i* 法位 as the configuration of minimal existent particles that momentarily makes up what we perceive as “things” and what we name with our linguistic designations, thus explaining the architecture of reality in accordance with the received Buddhist view. Further, this reading allows for an innovative treatment of the concept of selfhood as it is expressed in the fascicle: we can view the self as an active openness of an existent to the surrounding world, with which it is able to identify through a mutual relation with other existents within the existential moment. All of this is impossible or difficult as long as we interpret *uji* as a kind of durational being-time that is separately inherent in each existent.

Notes

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- 1 – Steven Heine, *Existential and Ontological Dimensions of Time in Heidegger and Dōgen*, SUNY Series in Buddhist Studies (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), and Joan Stambaugh, *Impermanence Is Buddha-nature: Dōgen’s Understanding of Temporality* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1990).
- 2 – Masao Abe, *A Study of Dōgen: His Philosophy and Religion* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992); Rolf Elberfeld, *Phänomenologie der Zeit im Buddhismus* (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog Verlag, 2004); Linda Goodhew and David Loy, “Momo, Dogen, and the Commodification of Time,” *Kronoscope* 2 (1) (2002): 97–107; Hee-Jin Kim, *Eihei Dōgen: Mystical Realist* (Boston:

Wisdom Publications, 2004); Gereon Kopf, *Beyond Personal Identity: Dōgen, Nishida, and a Phenomenology of No-Self*, 1st ed. (RoutledgeCurzon, 2001); Warren D. TenHouten, "Primordial Temporality, the Self, and the Brain," *Journal of Social and Evolutionary Systems* 20 (3) (1997); Dirck Vorenkamp, "B-series Temporal Order in Dōgen's Theory of Time," *Philosophy East and West* 45 (3) (July 1995); Christian Steineck, "Time Is not Fleeting: Thoughts of a Medieval Zen Buddhist," *KronoScope* 7 (1) (April 2007): 33–47; and many others.

- 3 – Rein Raud, "'Place' and 'Being-time': Spatiotemporal Concepts in the Thought of Nishida Kitarō and Dōgen Kigen," *Philosophy East and West* 54 (1) (January 2004): 29–51.
- 4 – For example, Reihō Masunaga, *Bukkyō ni okeru jikanron: Dōgen Zenji no jikanron* (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin). In a sense, all modern Japanese theorizing is condemned to this view by its language: *jikan* 時間, "time," already contains the concept of 間, or "interval."
- 5 – These are *The Heart of Dōgen's Shōbōgenzō*, trans. Abe Masao and Norman Waddell (Albany: State University of New York Press 2002); *Moon in a Dew-drop: Writings of Zen Master Dōgen*, trans. Tanahashi Kazuaki et al. (New York: North Point Press, 1985); *Shōbōgenzō: Zen Essays*, trans. Thomas Cleary (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1986); and Gudo Nishijima and Chodo Cross, *Master Dogen's Shobogenzo* (Woking: Windbell, 1994). The question of translations is important, because there is a growing number of philosophy scholars from outside the field of Japanese studies who are acquainted with Dōgen's thought only in translation, usually one of the ones just mentioned.
- 6 – Of course, the philosophical evolution of this concept to McTaggart (and his critics), Bergson, Husserl, and Heidegger has been significant. Nevertheless, Aristotle remains a point of reference for contemporary debate (see, e.g., Koichiro Matsuno and Stanley N. Salthe, "The Origin and Development of Time," *International Journal of General Systems* 31 [4] [July 2002]: 377–393), and is frequently invoked also in the discussions of nineteenth- and twentieth-century theory.
- 7 – Aristotle *Physics* 4.11.220a25.
- 8 – *Ibid.*, 11.220a19–21.
- 9 – Let it be noted in passing that the problematic idea of sameness can be and has been solved also in an unexpected manner in the Japanese practice of Shintō shrine architecture, where important shrines, such as the Ise Jingū, have to be torn down after a certain period of time and rebuilt according to the same design, and are still considered to be the "same" building—the sameness of the shrines is contained in the design, the relation of its parts to each other, rather than in the continuing sameness of their materials. See Rein Raud, "Identity, Difference and Cultural Worlds," in "Cultural Worlds," special issue, *Acta Collegii Humaniorum Estoniensis* (Tallinn, 2004): 98–100, and William Howard

Coaldrake, *Architecture and Authority in Japan*, Nissan Institute / Routledge Japanese Studies series (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 37–42, for further discussion.

- 10 – Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998).
- 11 – Jay L. Garfield, trans. and comment., *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nāgārjuna’s Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 296–299.
- 12 – Paul L. Swanson, *Foundations of T’ien-T’ai Philosophy: The Flowering of the Two Truths Theory in Chinese Buddhism*, Nanzan Studies in Religion and Culture (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1989).
- 13 – Hee-Jin Kim, “‘The Reason of Words and Letters’: Dōgen and Kōan Language,” in *Dōgen Studies*, ed. William R. LaFleur, Studies in East Asian Buddhism (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1985), pp. 66–68.
- 14 – *Dōgen*, ed. Tōru Terada and Yaoko Mizuno, 2 vols., *Nihon shisō taikai* 12 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1972), vol. 1, p. 84.
- 15 – *Ibid.*, 1:36.
- 16 – Joan Stambaugh, *Impermanence Is Buddha-nature: Dōgen’s Understanding of Temporality* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1990), p. 50; Masao Abe, *A Study of Dōgen: His Philosophy and Religion*, trans. Steven Heine (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), p. 42 n. 12.
- 17 – Hee-Jin Kim, *Eihei Dogen: Mystical Realist*, p. 155. This, in my opinion, is the weakest point of Kim’s otherwise brilliant and groundbreaking study of Dōgen’s thought. Of course, Dōgen is also or even mainly a religious thinker, but this is never a valid reason to give up looking for rational philosophical explanations of what he has to say. Similarly, when Steineck reduces Dōgen’s time theory to primarily a justification of his meditational practice, he is stopping halfway (see his “Time Is not Fleeting,” pp. 37–38).
- 18 – Tanahashi, trans., *Moon in a Dewdrop*, p. 318.
- 19 – Minoru Nishio and Yaoko Mizuno, trans., *Dōgen*, Shinsōban, *Nihon no Bukkyō shisō* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1986), p. 139.
- 20 – Linda Goodhew and David Loy, “Momo, Dōgen, and the Commodification of Time,” *KronoScope* 2 (1) (2002): 105.
- 21 – Terada and Mizuno, *Dōgen*, 1:12–13.
- 22 – It might seem obvious, but it is not; for instance, the Peircean semiotician John Deely (whose thought is heavily influenced by medieval European philosophy) uses precisely the same example to argue the opposite: the relation of “father” to “child” exists, as a possibility, independently of any real people occupying the respective positions; according to Deely, such “ontological relations” are

the prerequisite of any kind of signification. See Deely, *Basics of Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 44.

- 23 – I read “apart” here as separable from all the binary axes that have just been enumerated. The “triple world apart [from these]” is precisely the triple world of “now-here.” This is not illogical from the standpoint of the rhythm of the text, because the next sentence also juxtaposes two affirmations of the same idea.
- 24 – Terada and Mizuno, *Dōgen*, 1:11–12.
- 25 – I have translated references to the totality of future as “futures,” since at each present moment there are many possible ways for how things could go, and the now-here is open to all of them. But this does not affect the argument as a whole.
- 26 – See Vorenkamp, “B-series Temporal Order in Dōgen’s Theory of Time,” p. 387, for a defense of the opposite view—that Dōgen’s theory has more in common with the B-series. However, Vorenkamp bases his argument on the elaboration of McTaggart by Richard Gale in *The Philosophy of Time: A Collection of Essays*, 1st ed. (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1967), pp. 70–77, assuming, in particular, that a proof that the A-series is relative to the perceiving subject somehow automatically makes the B-series (which does not have this characteristic) more real. However, the original B-series claim entails that somewhere there has to be a fully consciousness-independent scale according to which the temporal succession of events can be judged, but there is nothing in Dōgen’s theory to support this. If the B-series were the basic form of time, McTaggart writes, “we should not perceive time as it really is, though we might be able to think of it as it really is” (see McTaggart, “The Unreality of Time,” in *The Philosophy of Time*, ed. Murray MacBeath and Robin Le Poidevin, Oxford Readings in Philosophy [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993], p. 25). But Dōgen’s time, as will be shown below, is inherent in the relation between the self and the world.
- 27 – Dwight Holbrook, “Does Time Move? Dogen and the Art of Understanding the Moment,” in “Life,” ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, special issue, *Analecta Husserliana* 74 (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002), p. 198.
- 28 – See *Dōgen: Shōbōgenzō: Ausgewählte Schriften*, 1st ed. (Tokyo: Keio University Press, 2006), pp. 94 ff. In all fairness it should be noted that the distinction between *ji* and *toki* goes back at least to Takahashi Masanobu, who nevertheless does not develop it in any depth. See his *Gendai shisō kara mita Dōgen no jissen tetsugaku: Byōdō to ai to jiyū no gensen to shite* (Tokyo: Risōsha, 1959), p. 95.
- 29 – Ikudō Tajima, *Shōbōgenzō no kokugogakuteki kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kasama Shoin, 1977), p. 274.
- 30 – This is stressed by Satoru Shinbo, *Dōgen no Shōbōgenzō* (Tokyo: Kitamura Shuppan, 2000), p. 17. See also, however, the divergent view of Kazuo Morimoto, *Derida kara Dōgen e* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1999), pp. 114–127.

- 31 – It has been suggested that the reference to duration could be avoided by resorting to a neutral term, such as “presence,” but this upsets the whole conceptual apparatus.
- 32 – This, at least, is the implication of Fazang’s tenth time-regime, the single moment of observation that contains the remaining nine. See Elberfeld, *Phänomenologie der Zeit im Buddhismus*, pp. 210–211.
- 33 – See Masanobu Takahashi, *The Essence of Dōgen*, trans. Yuzuru Nobuoka (London, Boston, and Melbourne: Kegan Paul, 1983), p. 56.
- 34 – See Raud, “‘Place’ and ‘being-time,’” p. 42: “‘To be’ is in this view ‘to be dynamically.’ ‘To be’ is a transitive verb that includes in itself the senses of ‘to construct,’ ‘to affirm,’ ‘to express,’ ‘to manifest itself as,’ and also ‘to set in question one’s own existence as.’ When things are in their respective dharm-configurations, they are not ‘they,’ but ‘them.’”
- 35 – Elberfeld goes even further in asserting that this sinogram always denotes something “concretely given” (*konkret Gegebenes*) and problematizes the use of “being” (as a philosophical abstraction) in translations of East Asian texts altogether (*Phänomenologie der Zeit im Buddhismus*, p. 231). The sinogram is nonetheless also used for positing abstract entities.
- 36 – This kind of equation is typical for medieval Japanese thought; see, for example, Esperanza Ramirez-Christensen’s discussion of Shinkei’s equation between the significance of vast seas and an autumn dewdrop, very much in the spirit of Dōgen, in *Emptiness and Temporality: Buddhism and Medieval Japanese Poetics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), p. 121.
- 37 – Elberfeld has argued that “the twelve hours of the day” do not constitute a system of mechanically measurable time, but denote the natural time that emerges from the passing of seasons and the movements of the stars, because the system divided the day from sunrise until sunset and vice versa, and the hours were therefore not equal in length everywhere and at all times (*Phänomenologie der Zeit im Buddhismus*, pp. 236–237). However, this was also the case in medieval Europe (see Richard Biernacki, “Time Cents: The Monetization of the Workday in Comparative Perspective,” in *NowHere: Space, Time and Modernity*, ed. Roger Friedland and Deirdre Boden [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994], p. 61). It is not important that the system of measurement was not flawless; Dōgen’s text says precisely that it is being assumed by people without doubting—and that the twelve hours remain twelve hours regardless of how we experience them.
- 38 – Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R. S. Pine-Coffine (Penguin, 1961), p. 264.
- 39 – Nevertheless such a view has been defended by Kazue Kyōichi in “Shōbōgenzō no jikanron,” in *Dōgen shisō taikai*, vol. 12 (Kyoto: Dohosha, 1995), p. 286, and is also implied by some other passages in English translations.

- 40 – Vorenkamp, in “B-series Temporal Order in Dōgen’s Theory of Time” (n. 28), has argued that the “Uji” fascicle cannot be read consistently without assuming that it is grounded in Huayan thought, and I certainly agree with him in this, even if our readings diverge.
- 41 – From a time-neutral standpoint, we could consider each “object” to be the sum total of the moments of its being in the world, its trajectory through space and time from the moment it starts to correspond to its name until the moment it no longer does that. In a totality that contains such objects, different objects may occupy the same space at different times, but, again from a time-neutral standpoint, this does not matter: they are interpenetrating each other without obstructing each other.
- 42 – Elberfeld, *Phänomenologie der Zeit im Buddhismus*, p. 255. However, Elberfeld also takes this to imply that *uji* here refers to single existents, which is unwarranted.
- 43 – Abe and Waddell, *The Heart of Dōgen’s Shōbōgenzō*, p. 50 n. 12.
- 44 – The compound *ōrai* 往来 appears only once in the whole fascicle, while “coming-and-going,” or transition, is termed *kyorai* 去來. See also note 48 below.
- 45 – Terada and Mizuno, *Dōgen*, 1:254.
- 46 – Nishijima and Cross have coined another, more colloquial-sounding neologism, “toing-and-froing,” for this concept.
- 47 – Elberfeld, *Phänomenologie der Zeit im Buddhismus*, pp. 195–196.
- 48 – In the compound *kyorai* 去來, the first character is different from *ōrai* 往来, but close in meaning, so it is not impossible that they point to the same meaning, and what has been translated as “transitions in reality” might also be “the oscillating interdependence [of the total and the particular],” in which case the passage would have a slightly different meaning, less emphatically stressing the relation between the self and the world, but perhaps a bit more contiguous with the previous argument.
- 49 – The same word is used in the opening passage of the *Genjōkōan* fascicle for the same purpose: to denote the time when an abstract conditional sentence is valid.
- 50 – Elberfeld adopts this view in commenting on the last sentence of this passage: “An ‘1-*uji*’ can thus be specifically distinguished from the *uji* of other givens, for example the pine-*uji*” (*Phänomenologie der Zeit im Buddhismus*, p. 267). This would, however, provide each of such entities with an independent self-nature, which should not be possible.
- 51 – Stambaugh, *Impermanence Is Buddha-nature*, pp. 43–44.
- 52 – Kim, *Eihei Dōgen: Mystical Realist*, p. 162.

- 53 – Abe, *A Study of Dogen*, p. 85.
- 54 – Heine, *Existential and Ontological Dimensions of Time in Heidegger and Dogen*, p. 55.
- 55 – Elberfeld argues at length against the possibility of translating 時 here as “moment,” precisely because all mentioned times are connected to time units of the length of a day (“today,” “yesterday,” “tomorrow”), stressing that *kyōryaku* encompasses each of these as wholes (*Phänomenologie der Zeit im Buddhismus*, pp. 268–271). However, it does not seem to follow that if the time designations that are used refer to durations, then the *kyōryaku*-capable *uji* must itself also be durational, because corresponding words in the sentence have a different status. Otherwise it would also be very difficult to make sense of the movement “from today to today” or “from tomorrow to tomorrow.” What is even more important is that his argument again ignores the importance of the word *iwayuru*, which clearly suggests that the time designations are here used as linguistic devices and not words pointing directly to experienced time-forms.
- 56 – According to Elberfeld, we can assume that Dōgen was familiar with the treatment of time in Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (*Phänomenologie der Zeit im Buddhismus*, p. 233), so we may perhaps take this passage also as a development of the ideas of Nāgārjuna on how the present cannot be in the past and the past in the present, et cetera, a seeming contradiction that he uses to demonstrate the unreality of time.
- 57 – A different interpretation of the whole passage is offered by Tanahashi: “You may suppose that time is only passing away, and not understand that time never arrives. Although understanding itself is time, understanding does not depend on its own arrival.” It seems, however, that more argumentation is needed for such a reading to be considered acceptable.