Article

Effortless Expressions: Dōgen's Non-Thinking about 'Words and Letters'

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Abstract: What is the relationship between Zen experience and language? Is Zen awakening/ enlightenment ineffable? In this article, I will address this general question by providing a panoramic treatment of Dōgen's (道元) philosophy of language which Hee-Jin Kim characterizes as "realizational". Building on the research of Kim, Victor Sōgen Hori and Dale S. Wright, I maintain that the idea of ineffable experiences in Dōgen's Zen is embedded within language, not transcendent from it. My focus begins by reviewing Dōgen's critical reflections on the idea of ineffability in Zen, and then proceeds to make sense of such in the context of zazen, and the practice of non-thinking, *hi-shiryo* (非思量). Based upon this inquiry, I then move into an examination of how Dōgen's "realizational" philosophy of language, in the context of non-thinking, conditions a 'practice of words and letters' that is effortless, vis-à-vis non-action, *wu-wei* (無為). From there we shall then inquire into Dōgen's use of *kōan* for developing his "realizational" perspective. In doing such, I shall orient my treatment around Hori's research into *kōan* (公案), specifically the logic of nonduality. This inquiry shall in turn provide a clearing for highlighting the non-anthropocentric perspectivism that is salient to Dōgen's "realizational" philosophy of language. Finally, I bring closure to this inquiry by showing how Dōgen's "realizational" perspective of language sets the stage for expressing a range of value judgments and normative prescriptions, both on and off the cushion, despite his commitment to the philosophy of emptiness, *śūnyatā*, whereby all things, including good and evil, lack an inherent self essence, *svabhāva*.

Keywords: zazen; Dōgen; Kōan; non-thinking; language; nonduality; ineffbility; non-anthropocentrism; normative

1. Introduction

When reading through the collection of Zen capping phrases, *jakugo* (著語) compiled and translated by Victor Sōgen Hori in *Zen Sand* (Hori 2003), (henceforth abbreviated as ZS) one encounters conceptions of language that are both positive and negative. "Open your mouth and at once you're wrong, move your tongue and at once you transgress" (開口即錯 動舌即乖) (ZS 8.111). Herein, this cautionary verse reinforces the famous characterization of Zen attributed to the first patriarch, Bodhidharma: "A separate transmission outside of doctrine, not founded on words and letters" (教外別傳 不立文字) (ZS 8.97). When paired together and interpreted literally, these verses give the impression that experiences of enlightenment in Zen are, similarly to mystical experiences in Romantic and Neo -romantic discourse, ineffable.

Other verses, however, are more nuanced about the role language plays in the practice of Zen awakening and pedagogy; for example, "It's gold, but to sell it you have to mix it with sand" (黄金又是和沙賣) (ZS 7.55). Commenting on this verse, Hori states, "Capping phrase collections are expressions of Zen awakening in language. The awakening of Zen can only be realized personally; it is not founded on words and letters. That is the gold of Zen. However, to convey that wakening to others, one must use language. To sell the gold of Zen, one must mix it with sand" (Hori 2003, p. 15). Ultimately, while there is something about Zen awakening that is unsayable, one can conventionally use words and

letters, concepts and phrases, to express the inexpressible, or describe what is indescribable. However, that being said, what is unsayable in regard to Zen is not unique to Zen singly; as Hori notes, "all immediate experience is basically indescribable" (Hori 2003, p. 11). Whether the topic of conversation is *kōan* or cabbage, what it is like to solve a *kōan*, or to describe the flavor of fermented cabbage, seems to defy words and concepts, especially when participants of the discussion do not share the same experiences. If I try to describe the flavor of fermented cabbage to someone who has never tasted such, I immediately discover that I am at loss of words. In the context of Zen, "If one attempts to describe the realization of a *kōan* to one who has not had the experience, communication naturally fails, and one reverts to saying that it is not founded on words and letters" (ibid., p. 11).

Finally, there are other verses within the collection of *jakugo* that reveal a positive connection between language and Zen practice and realization, including, "His insight is simultaneous with act, his speech equally grips and liberates" (照用同事　卷舒齋唱) (ZS 8.234). Implicit in this verse is the idea that speaking and acting are not distinct; one's use of words and letters (i.e., language) is itself an action. Thus, rather than thinking of language as an impediment to Zen awakening, it is our experience of language, specifically how we use concepts and phrases, that engenders insight.

The philosophical and religious writings within Zen master Dōgen's magnum opus, *Shōbōgenzō* (正法眼蔵), "The Treasury of the True Dharma-Eye", reveal a positive perspective regarding the relationship between language and Zen practice-realization. In *Dōgen On Meditation and Thinking: A Reflection On His View of Zen* (Kim 2007), Hee-Jin Kim argues that Dōgen's general philosophy of language is "realizational". In contrast to an "instrumentalist" view which maintains that, "language has no intrinsic place in the salvific process of Zen, and accordingly, serves only as an instrument for the sake of enlightenment", Dōgen's view, "pinpoints language as discriminative thought, and yet, possessing the capacity to liberate discriminative thought" (Kim 2007, p. 63). Critics of the instrumentalist view of language, including Dale S. Wright, as well as Hori, challenge the assumption that language is an epiphenomenon of our experience of the world, and thus nothing more than an instrument or tool to communicate interests and desires. In *Philosophical Meditations on Zen Buddhism* (Wright 1998), Wright defends an alternative thesis, whereby language is understood to be embedded within experience, including non-theoretical perception of the external world.

> *Language is present even in the "direct" perception of an object. Language and perception "co-arise". Although theoretically separable, they are indistinguishable in experience itself [. . .] Awareness of what we perceive is linguistically structured, and comes to us directly in the perception itself [. . .] Language, therefore, is not to be located only at the level of concept and predication. It is also present at the level of perception in such a way that perception, language, and thinking are all interdependent.* (Wright 1998, pp. 71–72)

Dōgen's philosophical writings, including those on language and ethics, support this non-instrumentalist thesis. From his vantage point of critical thinking, while there are limitations in our ability to use words and letters, concepts and phrases, so to express what experiences are like (e.g., solving a *kōan* or tasting fermented cabbage), those very moments of ineffability are embedded within language. For Dōgen, one's experience of ineffability is never transcendent from our use of words and letters, concepts and phrases. One reason for this stems from the logic of nonduality. According to Hori, "The logic of nonduality when applied consistently, destroys the very notion of a separate and distinct realm of nonduality" (Hori 2000, p. 299). The logic of nonduality obliterates any distinction between dualistic experiences that can be expressed in words, and nondualistic experiences that cannot. Thus, as Kim interprets and explains Dōgen's "realizational" view of language, "Dōgen did not engage in the absolutization of the symbol or in the relativization of the symbolized, which would have been dualistic. What he did in effect was to show how we can use the symbol in such a way that it becomes the total realization (*zenki*) or presence (*genzen*) of the symbolized" (Kim 2004, p. 85).

In this article I shall attempt to provide a panoramic review of Dōgen's "realizational" perspective of language. My treatment begins by examining his critical reflections on ineffability, vis-à-vis "a separate transmission outside of doctrine, not founded on words and letters" (ZS. 8.97). From there I will explore how Dōgen's philosophy of language is embedded within his practice of *zazen* and phenomenology of non-thinking, *hi-shiryō*. Based upon this inquiry we shall see how non-thinking, as a mode of nondualistic thinking, engenders a nondualistic practice of language and concepts that is effortless. In doing so, and by following Hori's lead in distinguishing how language in Zen is used and expressed from conventional/dualistic—*hen'i* (偏) "crooked"—and ultimate/nondualistic—*shōi* (正) "straight"—standpoints of truth, I plan to show how Dōgen creatively and playfully finds ways to express the inexpressible. From there, I shall pivot to his non-anthropocentric perspective concerning the nature of language; according to Dōgen, language is not reducible to humanity's use of words and letters, subjects and predicates, symbols and symbolized, but also includes, and is embedded within the world of mountains, rivers, plants and the greater cosmos. As we shall see, according to Dōgen, one's ability to read the entire earth as a *sūtra* is part of Zen awakening and enlightenment. Finally, we shall conclude our treatment of Dōgen's "realizational" view of language by examining how he uses words and letters to speak about normative issues, both on and off the cushion, from both conventional and ultimate standpoints of truth. While Dōgen is committed to the *Mahāyāna* philosophy of emptiness, *śūnyatā*, his writings show that this non-essentialist standpoint does not undermine one's ability to formulate value judgments and express normative points of view; for Dōgen, the realization that there are no mind-independent truths and/or values does not render normative expressions and proscriptions meaningless. Rather, as I interpret Dōgen, non-essentialism provides an opportunity to creatively express that which seems to defy expressions. Herein, such creativity not only reveals that Zen is not a separate transmission not founded on ethics, but that how we use words and concepts is normative (i.e., right speech); thus, I plan to show that Dōgen's ethical writings can be characterized as anti-realism in regard to metaphysical status of values, and anti-cognitivist vis-à-vis normative expressions.

2. Beginning on the Path of Language: Ineffable Zen

The belief that language falls short in being able to describe the nature of reality, or express what experiences of enlightenment are like, is woven throughout the greater body of Zen literature. On the surface, the message of a good many encounter dialogues, *mondo* (問答), and *kōan* cases, such as "The Buddha Holds up a Flower", is that language not only falls short in its ability to express the nature of things and experiences, but that language also taints our understanding of the world by hypostatizing and reifying things and experiences that are empty of a fixed essence or nature, *svabhāva*. Accordingly, the consequences for participating in any given language-game is the tendency to become attached to the words, phrases and concepts as if they actually referred to objective truths about the world. Ultimately, because all worldly beings are empty, such beings defy words and concepts.

Notwithstanding the ubiquity of inexpressibility in Zen literature, "a separate transmission outside doctrine, not founded on words and letters" (ZS 8.97) is a characterization of Zen that Dōgen was quite critical of. In his fascicle *Bukkyō* (仏教), "The Buddha's Teachings", Dōgen cautions us not to take a literal interpretation of this popular characterization of Zen; as he maintains, this characterization is fallacious.

> *Although they have transmitted and received the fallacy of a separate transmission outside of the teachings, because they have never known the inside and outside, the logic of their words is not consistent. [. . .] If we speak of authentic transmission of the one mind which is the supreme vehicle, it should be like this. But the fellows who speak of 'a separate transmission outside the teachings' have never known this meaning. Therefore, do not, through belief in the fallacy of 'a separate transmission outside the teachings,' misunderstand the Buddha's teaching.* (Dōgen 1994, pp. 57–58)

Why is this characterization of Zen fallacious? One possible answer is that not only is the idea of a "separate transmission not founded on words and letters" paradoxically based upon words and letters, but it is also hard to imagine how one could even begin to make sense of a "separate transmission outside the teachings"—separate from words and letters—unless one has an understanding of the teachings. For Dōgen, the "separate transmission fallacy" appears to be similar to the fallacy of division whereby one thinks that what is true of the whole must be true of each part. In the context of Zen, one would commit this fallacy if they were to maintain that since "Zen" cannot be conveyed in words and concepts, none of the Buddhist teachings can. According to Dōgen, to take a literal reading of the "separate transmission" verse is to adopt an anti-intellectualist view of Zen that is quietist and dualistic.

Building on Hori's examination of the interface between language and Zen experience vis-à-vis *kenshō* (見性), to think that Zen experience is completely divorced from language and rational understanding is itself a rationally constructed view which creates a duality between dualistic experiences that we can speak about, and nondualistic experiences that defy words and concepts.

> *A corollary of this logic is that nonduality never appears as nonduality; it always appears as duality. For if nonduality appeared as nonduality, it would be dualistically opposed to duality. (For similar reasons, emptiness never appears as emptiness; it always appears as form). That is why kenshō is not to be identified with a non-cognitive pure experience dualistically contrasted with conventional experience, and why Dōgen and the Vimalakīrti Sūtra say that thought and language, rather than hindering enlightenment, liberate it.* (Hori 2000, p. 301)

Accordingly, rather than thinking of Zen as a tradition that transcends language, one should think of Zen as a practice that negotiates a relationship with language whereby dualistic categories of subjects and predicates can be employed in nondualistic ways. Ultimately, it is how we use language that determines whether our words are poison or medicine.

3. "Non-Thinking" about Words and Letters

To make sense of how Dōgen uses language, both on and off the meditation cushion, it is important to examine his philosophy of non-thinking, *hi-shiryō*. In his *Zazenshin* (坐禅箴), "A Needle for Zazen", Dōgen introduces the practice of *zazen* (坐禅) through the following encounter dialogue:

> *While Great Master Yakusan Kodo is sitting, a monk asks him, "What are you thinking in the still-still state"? The Master says, "Thinking the concrete state of not thinking". The monk says, "How can the state of not thinking be thought"? The Master says, "It is Non-thinking".* (Dōgen 1994, p. 91)

What does Master Yakusan Kodo mean by "non-thinking", and how is it related with the other modes of thinking and not thinking? For starters, thinking, *shiryō* (思量), is discriminative. As Kim explains:

> *Dōgen employs a number of notions that broadly denote discriminative thinking—nenryo, nenkaku, ryochi, ryochi nenkaku, chikaku, fumbetsu, shiyui, shiryō, and so on, although they vary in their connotations and nuances. The common thread running through them is activities of consciousness and the intellect that "divide" and "split" the seamless reality, in order to designate negative significations.* (Kim 2007, p. 83)

For Dōgen, thinking is how we engage the world from a dualistic perspective; and, while the language we think through can condition a tendency to reify things, concepts and beliefs as if they had a fixed essence, this does not entail that thinking is something we can or should dispense with. The dualistic nature of thinking, *shiryō*, does not entail the conclusion that the goal of Zen practice is to transcend cognitive deliberations about life, death and authentic engagement with the world. As Kim explains:

To Dōgen's credit, delusion and enlightenment alike are rooted in discriminative thinking. Like it or not, you are bound to discriminate and differentiate things, events, and relations, in a myriad of different ways. The activities of discrimination may be self-centered, discriminatory, and restrictive. Yet, discriminative activities, once freed of substantialist, egocentric obsessions, can function compassionately and creatively. (Kim 2007, p. 87)

Based upon this characterization of *shiryō*, how might one make sense of thinking of "not-thinking", *fu-shiryō* (不思量), which Master Yakusan Kodo describes as a process of non-thinking, *hi-shiryō*?

Following Kim's interpretation, it is important to note that *fu-shiryō*, "not-thinking" is not a primordial or transcendent mode of thinking; "Not-thinking neither precedes nor succeeds, nor is outside, nor behind thinking" (Kim 2007, p. 88). Instead, as Bret Davis explains, "Thinking of not-thinking can be understood as a paradoxical practice that short-circuits this outward orientation of the intentional mind and occasions the backward step into the nondual awareness of non-thinking as the ground—or rather empty field—of both thinking and not-thinking" (Davis 2016, p. 218). Herein, thinking of not-thinking is not an attempt to negate all thoughts so to arrive at state of mental blankness. "Non-thinking is not opposed to thinking. It is the ultimate where-from and where-in of thinking; it is the open field of awareness that encompasses and engenders thinking" (Davis 2016, p. 219). The fact that thinking is dualistic does not entail that insight and realization via *zazen* is attained by abandoning thinking and having no thoughts at all. The phenomenology of "non-thinking", *hi-shiryō*, is non-positional in that "thinking", *shiryō*, is neither affirmed nor negated. Non-thinking, as Thomas Kasulis explains, "neither affirms nor denies, accepts nor rejects, believes nor disbelieves. In fact, it does not objectify either implicitly or explicitly" (Kasulis 1981, p. 75). The practice of thinking of "not-thinking" is simply to allow thoughts to effortlessly arise and dissipate, moment by moment as one's "being-time", *uji* (有時), or "existential moment".

Building upon the aforementioned points made by Kim, Davis and Kasulis, I contend that non-thinking is best understood in light of the East Asian philosophy of non-action, *wu-wei*, which is salient to both Confucianism and Taoism. Contrary to not doing anything at all, "non-action" refers to a mode of being that unfolds as subject/object duality dissolves, thereby opening a nondual horizon whereby one spontaneously acts with grace and nimbleness similar to dancers who have perfected their steps, or musicians who have mastered their scales and arpeggios. "Like the Taoist *wu-wei* [. . .] without-thinking is no retreat from the world" (Kasulis 1981, p. 95); non-thinking, or without-thinking, is a mode of awareness whereby there is no duality between a subject who thinks and the ideas and concepts one thinks about. Additionally, because thinking and ideas are inextricably tied to language, it follows that the practice of *zazen*, rather than transcending or suppressing language, opens up a new relationship with language via non-thinking. The embodied practice of the "still mountain state" that manifests on the meditation cushion is an "actional understanding" whereby words, concepts and phrases become effortless. As Kim explains, the world of dualistic concepts, ideas and categorical distinctions are fully realized just as they are: empty.

Dōgen's nondualistic mystical thinking had an especially realistic thrust, which per-meated all aspects of his religion and philosophy. That is to say, nonduality did not primarily signify the transcendence of duality so much as it signified the realization of duality. When one chose and committed oneself to a special course of action, one did so in such a manner that the action was not an action among others, but the action—there was nothing but that particular action in the universe so that the whole universe was created in and through that action. [. . .] This was indeed far from being the kind of mysticism that attempted to attain an undifferentiated state of consciousness. On the contrary, Dōgen's thought was entirely committed to the realm of duality—including its empirical and rational aspects. (Kim 2004, p. 105).

Upon realizing that all dualities, manifesting through language and experience, are the way they are because they are fundamentally nondual, one is able to fully penetrate

the "reason of words and letters", *monji no dori* (文字の道理) and thereby embody a new mode of effortless expression.

4. Effortless Expressions

There are several fascicles in the *Shōbōgenzō* that reveal Dōgen's philosophical views about language in general, creative expressions in particular; these include: (1) *Kattō* (葛藤), "Entangled Vines"; (2) *Osakusendaba* (ン王索仏陀婆), "A King Requests *Saindhava*"; and (3) *Dōtoku*, (道徳). "Expressing the Truth". Salient to each of these fascicles is the philosophical message that:

> *Language is not just that which describes and explains the state of affairs detached from the human mind; it is not isolatable, at least in principle, from the mind and its environs. Rather, language performs its various functions with the very texture of the mind and the situation in which the mind is located. It is embedded in the matrix of our whole experience.* (Kim 2004, p. 82)

For example, in *Kattō*, Dōgen uses the metaphor of "entangled vines" to describe the complicated situations that arise when we use words and letters to communicate experiences and realize dharma transmission.

> *In general, although sacred beings all aim to learn the cutting of the roots of the complicated, they do not learn that cutting means cutting the complicated with the complicated, and they do not know that the complicated is entwined with the complicated. How much less could they know that the succession of the complicated continues by means of the complicated? Few have known that the succession of the dharma is the complicated itself.* (Dōgen 1994, pp. 35–36)

Additionally, in *Osakusendaba*, Dōgen references a legend from the *Mahābhārata* whereby a king of the land *Saindhava* requests four items—salt, chalice water and horse—which have the same name, *saindhava*; this is intended to show how some words have multiple meanings, and that the use of such words is dependent upon the situation. Metaphorically, Dōgen states that the seeking of *saindhava* is "not the state of people playing stringed instruments with bridges glued" (Dōgen 1994, p. 105); to have one's "bridges glued" metaphorically refers to dogmatic adherence to fixed rules or ideas. Rather than being glued to rules and ideas, Dōgen maintains that is important to recognize that the meaning of both verbal and non-verbal expressions is always contextual, and dependent upon the occasion. If the king is thirsty, and requests *saindhava*, then the retainers bring the king water. If the king desires to enhance the flavor of a meal, then the word *saindhava* refers to salt. The meaning of words and expressions, like *saindhava*, are determined by their relationship to the situation and their ability to serve mutual interests.

Notwithstanding the importance of the aforementioned fascicles, it is in *Dōtoku*, "Expressing the Truth", that Dōgen invites us to consider the relationship between the practice of *zazen* and language. The term *dōtoku* literally means "ability to say". According to Kim, Dōgen's use of this term signifies both the "possibility" and "actuality" of expression, including non-verbal speech-acts. Non-verbal expressions, such as the "mountain-still state" of non-thinking in *zazen*, cannot be disentangled from language.

> *Not speaking is the expression of the truth being right from head to tail [. . .] Do not learn that mutes must lack expression of the truth. Those who have expressions of the truth are sometimes no different from mutes. In mutes, on the other hand, there is expression of truth. Their mute voices can be heard. We can listen to their mute words.* (Dōgen 1994, p. 272)

Additionally, while Dōgen recognized that there are instances where words and concepts are unable to fully express a particular state of affairs, such experiences of "ineffability", *fudōtoku* (不道徳), are nevertheless part of language. According to Dōgen, what is salient to Zen practice and experiences of awakening is one's ability to negotiate and express those instances of ineffability through language, both verbal and non-verbal, while recognizing that whatever one says about X will never be complete or exhaustive as there

will always be something that is left unsaid; "At the same time, when we are able to express this expression of the truth, we leave unexpressed the non-expression of the truth" (Dōgen 1994, p. 270). For Dōgen, how one negotiates the use of expressions so as to conceal and reveal the ineffable is the actualization of freedom:

> *At this time, while we continue aiming to arrive at freedom, as the ultimate treasure object, this intention to arrive is itself real manifestation—and so, right in the moment of getting free there is expression of the truth, which is realized without expectation. When expression of the truth is already happening to us, it does not feel unusual or strange.* (Dōgen 1994, p. 270)

As I interpret this passage, realizing freedom "without expectation", which neither feels "unusual nor strange", is the actualization of effortless expressions by way of non-thinking, *hi-shiryō*. Thus, my interpretation is aligned with Kim's understanding of ineffability in Dōgen's Zen: "Thought is thus ever already (*isō*) as ineffable, unnameable, and unattainable as reality. Thanks to the notion of emptiness, thought, as much as reality, is liberated from metaphysically as well as psychologically imposed referential constraints, so as to be able to practice ineffability/unnameability as unattainability in the soteric context" (Kim 2007, p. 90).

5. Realizing Kōan: "Crooked" and "Straight" Expressions

The use of *kōan* provides a window for understanding the interfaces between language and Zen awakening in general, Dōgen's Zen in particular. As Steven Heine explains in *Dōgen and the Kōan tradition: A Tale of two Shōbōgenzō Texts*Heine 1994), the *kōan*, though generally associated with the Rinzai tradition, is a salient component of Dōgen's Sōtō perspective and practice. For Dōgen, "the *kōan* should be seen not as a psychological tool that brings one to a labyrinthine impasse based on the paradoxicality of speech and silence, but as a discursive means of generating shifting, self-displacing (and thereby self-correcting) parallactical perspectives" (Heine 1994, p. 7). As a good many *kōan* reveal, the way language is used in Zen is dependent upon the standpoint from which one is speaking; what words mean, and what they say is completely dependent upon both the situation and the perspectives involved. In "Kōan and Kenshō in the Rinzai Zen Curriculum" (Hori 2000), Hori explains the significance of understanding these conditions by providing a thorough examination of the standpoints *hen'i*, "crooked", and *shōi*, "straight", which in turn reflect how one speaks in light of the *Mahāyāna* philosophy of conventional and ultimate truths. While these standpoints or perspectives are, as Hori notes, part of the Rinzai *kōan* curriculum, I maintain that they are quite helpful for interpreting and parsing out Dōgen's "realizational" perspective of language.

According to Hori, *hen'i*, meaning "crooked", is the way one conventionally speaks in the everyday world through dualistic distinctions, while *shōi*, meaning "straight", is a way of speaking from the ultimate standpoint of nonduality. From the conventional standpoint, the words and concepts one uses is the language voiced when giving instructions on how to slice vegetables, or how to effectively split and stack firewood. On the other hand, from an ultimate standpoint, because all things are understood to be empty, including language, the words and letters one uses to describe and prescribe X are understood as not being inherently real or true. As Hori explains, how one uses language in the context of the Zen *kōan* depends upon whether one's perspective is expressed from a conventional standpoint, *hen'i*, an ultimate standpoint, *shōi*, or both (i.e., the "crooked" in the "straight", and, the "straight" in the "crooked").

> *Hen'i and shōi do not distinguish two separate languages with different vocabularies; they distinguish two standpoints which use the same language and the same vocabulary but with different meaning. When the language is being used to indicate some aspect of the differentiated, the manifest, the conditioned, the realm of dualism, then it is expressing the standpoint of hen'i. The very same language, the very same sentence, can also be used to express some aspect of the undifferentiated, the unmanifest, the unconditioned, the*

realm of the nondual. When it does so, it is expressing the standpoint of shōi. (Hori 2000, p. 303)

A key distinction between "crooked" and "straight" expressions is that while "crooked" expressions are to be taken literally, "straight" expressions are not. From the standpoint of *shōi*, since one is attempting to communicate their realization/understanding of how things and experiences actually are from an ultimate standpoint of truth, vis-à-vis emptiness and nonduality, the use of metaphors, puns and non-verbal expressions provide a skillful means. Phenomenologically, this is so mainly because metaphors and puns have immediate affective power for both the speaker and listener. As a form of wordplay, metaphors and puns trigger one's imagination in a way that renders the creation and stipulation of new words and concepts for new experiences and insights unnecessary. Herein, what is particularly illuminating about Zen expressions from the standpoint of *shōi* is similar to what John Wisdom finds to be illuminating about philosophical theories: "they suggest or draw attention to terminology which reveals likeness and differences concealed by ordinary language" (Wisdom 1969, p. 41). As noted earlier, ineffability is always embedded within, or looming over all expressions that are conventionally "crooked" and dualistic. However, through wordplay, vis-à-vis *shōi*, one can creatively show ineffable nonduality to be identical with the dualities expressed in words and phrases (i.e., form itself is emptiness, emptiness itself is form). However, unlike the luminous quality of philosophical theories that help identify and explain specific problems in philosophy, Zen expressions that are "straight", *shōi*, are performative. In Zen, one does not simply describe nonduality theoretically; one attempts to show/reveal nonduality through performative expressions, albeit linguistic dualities.

In his book, *How to Do Things With Words* (Austin 1962), John Austin introduces the distinction between constative and performative statements. In regard to constative speech acts, language is able to describe the world according to conventional subject/predicate relations. For example, "fermented cabbage is piquant", or "the potatoes are in root cellar"; descriptive speech acts such as these carve the world up into dualities that we accept as either conventionally true or false. Performative speech acts, on the other hand, are different. "I apologize", or "I promise", are not describing a particular state of affairs, but instead, they are performative acts of speaking whereby, "the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action" (Austin 1962, p. 6). Examples of performative utterances in Zen include expressions such as, "go wash your bowls". As Hori explains:

In Mumonkan case 7, a monk asked Jōshū, "I have entered the monastery. Please teach me". Jōshū asked, "Have you finished eating your rice gruel"? The monk said, "I have finished". Jōshū said, "Go wash your bowl". This answer, "Go wash your bowl", is not a description but a performance. But it can be taken as performance at more than one level. If one thinks that the new monk is merely asking for instruction in monastery regulations, then "Go wash your bowl" is a concrete performance of one such regulation. However, if we take the monk's question as a direct request to Jōshū, "Show me your nonduality" in the guise of a question "Please teach me" then Jōshū's "Go wash your bowl" is a performance of nonduality dressed up as a performance of monastery regulation and a fitting answer to the monk's question. (Hori 2000, pp. 305–6)

Now, this does not mean that Zen expressions are purely performative, or that they transcend theoretical concepts and interpretations. For example, consider Zen master Hakuin's famous *kōan*, "What is the sound of one hand clapping"? While conventionally bewitching, this *kōan* is, according to Hori, metaphorically meaningful in light of the logic of duality and nonduality. Conventionally, one understands the world of duality just as one is familiar with the sound of two hands clapping; the question this *kōan* puts before us is: what is nonduality? While one will not solve this *kōan* with a theoretical explanation, Zen phrases and *kōan* do have theoretical import which "reason", *dōri* (道理), is embedded within. Accordingly, in the context of Dōgen's use of *kōan*, as Kim explains, reason is a practice.

> *It refuses to transcendentalize itself above and beyond that situation. Within this context, it does not posit itself in opposition to passion, unreason, or faith. It is not torn between the theoretical and practical, the pure and impure, or the spiritual and material. The task of reason is to understand, negotiate, configure, and clarify the forces, conditions, and problems of the ever-shifting situation, thereby orienting and guiding practitioners in their soteric enterprise. In other words, reason is not something in the abstract, but concrete and active, as a methodological and hermeneutic tool. As such, Dōgen regards reason as a practice.* (Kim 2007, p. 104)

Thus, it is in light of this practice of reason that Dōgen forcefully criticizes anti-intellectualist and quietist perspectives of Zen within the fascicle *Sansui-kyō* (山水經), "Mountains and Waters Sutra": "What the shavelings call 'stories beyond rational understanding' are beyond rational understanding only to them; the Buddhist patriarchs are not like that. Even though [rational] ways are not rationally understood by those [shavelings] we should not fail to learn in practice the Buddhist patriarchs' ways of rational understanding" (Dōgen 1994, p. 172).

Notwithstanding *hen'i* and *shōi*, throughout Dōgen's writings, his use of metaphors and puns for expressing a nondual perspective in a way that penetrates and stimulates critical thinking is woven through other linguistic strategies. As Kim enumerates, these strategies include: "(1) the transposition of lexical components; (2) semantic reconstruction through syntactic change; (3) explication of semantic attributes; (4) reflexive, self-causative utterances; (5) upgrading commonplace notions using neglected metaphors; (6) the use of homophonous expressions; and (7) reinterpretation based upon the principle of nonduality" (Kim 2007, p. 65). Some of these playful strategies are employed, for example, in his fascicle *Busshō* (佛性), "Buddha-nature;" therein, Dōgen treats several *kōan* and encounter dialogues central to Zen's literary curriculum, including an exchange between the fourth and fifth patriarchs. The fourth patriarch asked the fifth, Zen master Daiman, "What is your name"? In response:

The master answers, "I have a name, but it is not an ordinary name".
The patriarch says, "What name is it"?
The master answers, "It is Buddha-nature".
The patriarch says, "You are without Buddha-nature".
The master replies, "The Buddha-nature is emptiness, so we call it being without". (Dōgen 1994, pp. 7–8)

> Now consider Dōgen's commentary on this exchange:

> Thus, when we thoroughly investigate the words of these ancestral masters, there is meaning in the fourth patriarch's saying "*What is your name*". In the past there were people described as "*A person of What country*" and there were names described as "*What name*"—[one person] was stating to another, "Your name is *Wha*t"! It was like saying, for example, "*I am like that, and you are also like that*".

> The fifth patriarch says, "*I have a name, but it is not an ordinary name*". In other words, "*Existence* is the name"—not an ordinary name, for an ordinary name is not right for "*Existence here and now*".

> In the fourth patriarch's words, "*What name is it*"? "*What means This*, and he has dealt with *This* as *What*, which is a name. The realization based on *This*, and the realization of *This* is the function of *What*. The name is *This*, and is *What*. We make it into mugwort tea, make it into green tea, and make it into everyday tea and meals. (Dōgen 1994, pp. 8–9)

In this commentary, Dōgen is clearly playing with conventional terms in a way that expands the meaning of their use. The word "what" is a case in point. By turning this interrogative pronoun into a predicate, Dōgen creatively expresses the inexpressible—emptiness—through conventional words and concepts. Conventionally, one ordinarily uses the pronoun "what" to frame and pose a question. By using "what" as a predicate to characterize a subject, he is, ultimately, *shōi*, identifying things as an open question;

"what" is emptiness itself! As Kim explains, "Enlightenment, from Dōgen's perspective, consists of clarifying and penetrating one's muddled discriminative thought in and through our language to attain clarity, depth, and precision in the discriminative thought itself" (Kim 2007, p. 63).

6. Non-Anthropocentric Expressions

Returning to Bodhidharma's "separate transmission" verse, while Dōgen often resists literal interpretations of Zen phrases, many of his writings suggest that if one shifts their attention away from anthropocentric conceptions of language, vis-à-vis words and letters, to non-anthropocentrism, then perhaps a literal interpretation of this verse is warranted. If, in other words, one attunes their thinking to comport with the "great earth", via non-thinking, then one may perhaps realize that language is not restricted to our use of words and letters, and that Buddhist teachings are not limited and/or reducible to scripture and texts.

The concept of anthropocentrism, which is popularly associated with environmental ethics, refers to a worldview whereby humans are understood to inherently possess intrinsic value, thereby making them superior to all other beings. Accordingly, non-anthropocentrism rejects the idea that human beings are inherently more valuable than all other beings; humans are not the "crown of creation". In the context of Dōgen studies, the concept of non-anthropocentrism has been appropriated by scholars, including Graham Parkes, so as to characterize the perspectivism Dōgen proffers in the *Sansui-kyō* fascicle; "Dōgen says that viewing the world from the usual anthropocentric standpoint is like 'looking through a bamboo tube at the corner of the sky'. For a fuller experience, he recommends entertaining the perspectives of other beings, such as mountains, drops of water, celestial beings, hungry ghosts, dragons, and fish" (Parkes 2009, p. 85). Other scholars, such as Jason M. Wirth, have helped expand our understanding of Dōgen's non-anthropocentrism along the horizon of comparative philosophy. In *Mountains, Rivers, and the Great Earth: Reading Gary Snyder and Dōgen in an Age of Ecological Crisis* (Wirth 2017), Wirth brings the perspectives of Gary Snyder and Dōgen in dialogue together so as to awaken readers form their somnambulant anthropocentrism that has been fueled by our consumptive habits and capitalist ideology. Regarding the subject matter of language in light of non-anthropocentrism, language is not, as Dōgen suggests, reducible to words and letters. Instead, language is part of the interconnected world of relational beings. As Parkes notes, "The words and letters of plants and animals differ from those employed by humans, and thus constitute 'natural language' in the literal sense [. . .] insofar as we can dissolve our unexamined prejudices and conventional modes of experience, we can come to appreciate the natural world as 'the actualization of the ancient Buddha Way'" (Parkes 2009, p. 85). Based upon this non-anthropocentric perspective, the whole universe is a Buddhist *Sūtra*; "What has been called the *sūtras* is the whole Universe in the ten directions itself; there is no time or place that is not the sutras" (Dōgen 1994, p. 102). Thus, if one takes a non-anthropocentric interpretation of Bodhidharma's 'separate transmission' verse, then it seems to indicate that the dharma is not reducible to those scriptures that are founded on words and letters. Hence his cautionary point from *Sansui-kyō*, "Staying in words and staying in phrases is not the speech of liberation" (Dōgen 1994, p. 170).

For Dōgen, the language of the dharma is, from the non-anthropocentric standpoint of *shōi*, "walking mountains".

> *Mountains lack none of the virtues with which mountains should be equipped. For this reason, they are constantly abiding in stillness and constantly walking. The walking mountains must be like the walking of human beings; therefore, even though it does not look like human walking, do not doubt the walking of the mountains. [. . .] If we doubt the walking of the mountains, we also do not know our own walking. When we know our own walking, then we will surely also know the walking of the blue mountains.* (Dōgen 1994, p. 168)

What this means, based upon my interpretation of Dōgen, is that if one's perspective of the dharma is anthropocentric whereby it is absurd to think that mountains could walk and express dharma teachings, then one will not understand their own mode of walking and dwelling, and the dharma teachings that are founded on words and letters will remain occluded. For Dōgen, realizing that mountains are "constantly walking" conditions liberation. "Walking mountains" is Dōgen's poetic way of referring to the language of the dharma that is constantly manifesting expressions and sermons throughout the natural world and cosmos. For example, in the fascicle *Mujo Seppo* (無情説法), "The Non-Emotional Preaches the Dharma", Dōgen states, "Do not learn only that preaching the dharma has been orchestrated by Buddhist patriarchs; [. . .] there exists the non-emotional preaching the Dharma" (Dōgen 1994, p. 114). The non-emotional/insentient dharma preaching, vis-à-vis "walking mountains", "is not confined to the spheres of the ear as a sense-organ or of auditory consciousness; [. . .] Even with an ear on a wall, or an ear on a stick, we cannot understand the non-emotional preaching the Dharma, because it is beyond sound and matter" (Dōgen 1994, p. 121). As Kim explains, Dōgen's philosophy of language attempts to, "overcome the sociolinguistic and anthropocentric limitations of the human language and thereby open it up to the horizon of new possibilities beyond human consciousness" (Kim 2007, p. 77). Through the practice of non-thinking, Dōgen's "realizational" perspective opens a philosophy of language whereby the 'words and concepts' that effortlessly arise and dissipate on the cushion (e.g., the Buddha holding up a flower) is dependent upon the language of "mountains walking" and the "voices of the valley streams"; hence the following passage from *Keisi-Sanshiki* (谿声山色), "The Voices of the River-Valley and the Form of the Mountains": "Remember, if it were not for the form of the mountains and the voices of the river-valley, picking up a flower could not proclaim anything" (Dōgen 1994, p. 90).

7. "Non-Thinking" about the Language of Morals

Since Dōgen's non-anthropocentric perspective of the dharma is normative, a review of Dōgen's language of morals deserves consideration. For starters, Dōgen's ethics are shaped by the *Mahāyāna* philosophy of emptiness, *śūnyatā*, whereby it is understood that all existing beings are devoid of an independent self-essence, *svabhāva*. In the fascicle *Shoaku Makusa* (諸悪莫作), "Not Committing Wrongs", Dōgen is unambiguously clear that values, including good, bad and indifference are not essentially real when he characterizes such as *mushō* (無生). *Mushō* is comprised of the characters *mu* (無) and *shō* (生); the former can be translated either as nothing, or used as a negation, such as not one, not two, while the latter, *shō*, literally means to be born, or to originate. For Dōgen to characterize values as "unborn", "uncreated", or "non-appearance", reveals a metaethical perspective of anti-realism.

To understand why metaethical anti-realism, also known as irrealism, serves as an effective characterization of Dōgen's ethics, let us proceed by first clarifying what realism is. According to Michael Smith, "moral realism is simply the metaphysical view that there exist moral facts. The psychological counterpart to realism is cognitivism, the view that moral judgments express our beliefs about what these moral facts are (Smith 2007, p. 74). To affirm realism is to affirm the belief that moral facts are mind-independent, and thus, not relative to feelings, desires and attitudinal beliefs, vis-à-vis the situation and/or circumstances. In opposition to realism, antirealism/irrealism maintains that, "there are no moral facts, but neither are moral facts required to make sense of moral practice. We can happily acknowledge that our moral judgments simply express our desires about how people behave" (Smith 2007). According to anti-realism, values are not mind-independent facts; and, while some critics of this metaethical view might argue that the absence of moral facts will result in a breakdown in moral discourse, which in turn will have disastrous results for society, anti-realism contends that these concerns are inflated and ill-founded. For example, expressivism, which is a non-cognitivist counterpart to anti-realism, argues that normative disagreements are not disputes about the facts, albeit their importance for

making sense of the situation at hand, but rather our feelings and attitudinal reactions about such. Thus, if two individuals do not feel differently about the facts of a particular situation or event, then there is no moral disagreement between them. Thus, "Expressivists warn us not to be fooled by the superficial similarity between factual claims (water is wet) and moral ones (torture is immoral). Moral claims assert nothing. They describe nothing. Instead, they express our feelings. [. . .] These judgments convey our feelings, and our feelings are what move us to act" (Shafer-Landau 2015, p. 317).

Now, to see how Dōgen's use of *mushō* reveals a general commitment to anti-realism, let us consider his interpretation of the following verse from the *Āgamas* and *Dhammapada* that is believed to be a 'universal precept' of the patriarchs and Buddhas: "Avoid all evil, cultivate the good, purify your mind: this sums up the teaching of the Buddhas" (Easwaran 1986, p. 132).

Not to commit wrongs,
To practice the many kinds of right

- Naturally purifies the mind:
- This is the teachings of all buddhas. (Dōgen 1994, p. 97)

This verse is then followed by a critique of the nature of values vis-à-vis wrongness, rightness and indifference: "In regards to the wrongs which we are discussing now, among rightness, wrongness, and indifference, there is wrongness. Its essence is just non-appearance. The essence of rightness, the essence of indifference, and so on are also non-appearance, are [the state] without excess, and are real form" (Dōgen 1994, p. 98). As Kim explains, "The moral values of good, evil, and neutral did not exist in themselves or for themselves with any independent metaphysical status, because they were nothing more than the temporary configurations resulting from infinitely complex interactions of conditions" (Kim 2004, p. 224). Thus, when Dōgen uses words like rightness and wrongness, he is not referring to objective moral truths; values and normative beliefs are *mushō*.

While Dōgen resists the idea of normative essences and objective truths, he does not believe we are existentially paralyzed in our ability to formulate and express value judgments. Similar to how the absence of an objective, mind-independent truth about gardens does not restrict one's ability to cultivate the earth, or arrange and set stones, the absence of mind-independent normative truths does not undermine our capacity to take certain issues in life more seriously than others, and thereby express considered moral judgments, either in favor or against. Dōgen does not, in other words, believe that the philosophy of emptiness entails a slippery slope into a separate transmission outside of ethics. However, that being said, I do not think non-cognitivism, as a counterpart of anti-realism, is an accurate characterization of Dōgen's ethics despite the fact that feelings and emotions are salient to normative expressions and civil discourse. The main reason supporting this contention stems from the philosophy of emptiness and the logic of nonduality. In short, since non-cognitivism maintains that moral propositions are reducible to feelings, emotions and attitudinal feelings, it is likely that Dōgen would be critical of this position for the simple reason that it assumes that there is a firm duality between reason and feelings. If one believes in a fixed duality between factual and normative propositions, then that duality would entail the metaphysical belief that there are fixed essences that inherently distinguish affect from reason, thereby contradicting the philosophy of emptiness Dōgen maintains. Thus, I contend that anti-cognitivism, which is a term not used by contemporary scholars working in the field of metaethics, serves as an appropriate counterpart to Dōgen's anti-realism; mainly, moral propositions do not describe or prescribe mind-independent moral facts or truths, but instead reveal a normative perspective. Herein, this anti-cognitivist characterization ought not be associated with moral relativism, since relativism maintains that the normative beliefs that are embraced by individuals singly—subjectivism—or by different cultures—cultural relativism—are in fact true. While this distinction may seem hair-splitting, the significance of such is important since the belief in fixed normative truths or facts, albeit relative truths and facts, can become a mode of psychological clinging and attachment, which in turn can lead to ideological obsession.

Throughout a good many fascicles of the *Shōbōgenzō*, it is not hard to find examples of Dōgen expressing value judgments on a range of issues, including the practice of *zazen*, karma, monastic training, the precepts, etc. To appreciate the nuance of his writings on these issues, it is important to determine whether Dōgen is expressing his views from the standpoint of *hen'i* or *shōi*. From a conventional standpoint, *hen'i*, Dōgen recognizes that language can effectively describe the world and express normative views that are intended to be interpreted literally. For example, in *Keisi-Sanshiki*, Dōgen states that one ought not, "use Buddhism as a bridge to fame and gain" (Dōgen 1994, p. 90). From the perspective of *hen'i*, his words are to be taken at face value; one's practice should not be motivated by selfish intentions. However, in the context of the normative precept "not doing wrongs", *shoaku makusa*, Dōgen transforms what is likely to be conventionally interpreted as a deontological "ought" statement into a descriptive "is" locution. As William Bodiford explains:

> It is as if "Thou shalt not kill" is taken first as a moral imperative and by living one's life accordingly, one is transformed so that "thou shalt not kill" becomes no longer an imperative, but a descriptive statement about what one will not do because of what one has become. At that point the distinction between good and evil as principles disappears because there is no longer a need for the distinction. (Bodiford 2011, p. 156)

From the standpoint of *shōi*, "not doing" or "not committing" refers to someone who, having realized the nondual relationship between practice and realization, via non-thinking, effortlessly abides in a state of non-thinking vis-à-vis non-action, *wu-wei*. "Through keeping one's own mind pure, through the experience of without-thinking grounded in zazen, there is nonproduction (that is, there is no creation of thought objects), yet there is full performance (that is, reality is the ever-renewing process of the presence of things as they are) (Kasulis 1981, p. 96). As Dōgen states:

> It is not that wrongs exist; they are nothing other than not committing. Wrongs are not immaterial; they are nothing other than not committing. Wrongs are not material; they are not committing. Wrongs are not "not committing"; they are nothing other than not committing. An autumn chrysanthemum is neither existence nor nonexistence; it is not committing. The Buddhas are neither existence nor nonexistence; they are not committing. The self is neither existence not non-existence; it is not committing. (Dōgen 1994, p. 102).

Thus, Dōgen's writings on the moral life reveal that he did not believe that the philosophy of emptiness entails that Zen awakening is a separate transmission not founded on value judgments. As André van der Braak states, "For Dōgen, enlightenment is not a nondualistic state of mind where good and evil have been eradicated; it is a nondual perspective that fully clarifies and penetrates good and evil. Enlightenment doesn't liberate us from good and evil; it increasingly confronts us with good and evil" (Van der Braak 2011, pp. 183–84). Whether one is on the cushion or off the cushion, practitioners of Zen are confronted with normative issues. Thus, "Instead of engaging in a metaphysicization of evil or a theodicy of divine justice, Dōgen insists that evil, whether it arises or perishes, is never extraneous to practitioners' moral purview–this is the power of the vow 'not to commit any evil.' [. . .] This is Dōgen's moral vision of the universe" (Kim 2007, p. 109). The choice to sit in the "mountain-still state" of *zazen*, or not, is a normative choice since the practice of *zazen* is itself a normative practice. In his *Fukan zazengi* (普勧坐禅儀), "Universally Recommended Instructions for Zazen", Dōgen states that when practicing *zazen*, "Don't think about good or bad" (Dōgen 1994, p. 280). Herein, this instruction is open to both "crooked", *hen'i*, and "straight", *shōi*, interpretations. On the one hand, from the conventional standpoint of *hen'i*, Dōgen is instructing his students not to think about dualities such as good and bad, right and wrong, as if they were inherently real. The reason for this conventional recommendation, as alluded to above, is likely tied to the belief that such thinking tends to condition ideological attachments that are existentially limiting and a potential cause of psychological suffering. Yet, upon a critical analysis, it becomes clear that the recom-

mendation is a normative recommendation; to not think about good and evil, in other words, is a normative choice that involves normative thinking. To resolve this paradox, "don't think about good and evil" can be interpreted from the standpoint of *shōi*. Following Bodiford's interpretation of "not doing wrongs", from the standpoint of *shōi*, "don't think about good and evil" can be interpreted as a description rather than a proscription. As a descriptive locution, "don't think about good and evil" refers to a Zen practitioner who is, "not thinking", *fu-shiryō*, about good and evil. Accordingly, as noted in the *Zazenshin*, how one thinks of "not thinking" about good evil is itself "non-thinking", *hi-shiryō*. When interpreted through the eye of a "straight needle", vis-à-vis the practice of *zazen*, "don't think about good and evil" simply means "non-thinking about good and evil". Within this "mountain-still state", normative judgments are not suppressed, but simply allowed to arise and dissipate effortlessly.

Finally, it is important to note that as a normative practice, *zazen* is not limited to sitting on the cushion alone. When practitioners of Zen rise from the cushion and reenter the world of everyday life, they are, no doubt, confronted by a world of "entangled vines" and knotty value judgments. Off the cushion, what one says and how one says it is, through and through, normative. Indeed, Dōgen understood this all too well; one's choice of words, phrases and embodied gestures, have the capacity to create greater entanglements out of those that already exist or give rise to a new morass of normative disagreements. At the same time, if expressed skillfully and effortlessly, vis-à-vis non-thinking, words and phrases can untangle normative entanglements, and perhaps trigger an enlightened perspective within those who have ears to hear. Between the "crooked" and the "straight", *hen'i*, and *shō*i, if one's practice of words and letters is motivated by compassion and the vows of the bodhisattva, then one's practice of non-thinking is realized as "right speech". Hence the capping phrase, "His insight is simultaneous with act, his speech equally grips and liberates" (照用同事　卷舒斎唱) (ZS 8.234).

8. Conclusions

In *Zen Action/Zen Person* (Kasulis 1981) Thomas Kasulis' treatment of language in the context of non-thinking or without thinking, *hi-shiryō*, set the stage for thinking about language and awakening, both on and off the cushion. Framed in light of Martin Heidegger's phenomenological perspective of language and poetry, Kasulis maintains that, "In Zen, language is evoked by the present occasion itself; it is not merely a mapping of the present in terms of learned structures" (Kasulis 1981, p. 136). What this means is that in a state of non-thinking, "the Zen Master does not speak, but to use Heidegger's phrase, he lets 'language itself speak'. For the enlightened, speaking is itself a response to the directly apprehended situation. Language should not predetermine experience; nor should it arise from an independent agent who brings something to the situation" (ibid., p. 138). According to Kasulis, whether on the cushion or off, the non-thinking Zen Master simply "allows language to be" (i.e., *makusa*, not-doing); "For the Zen Master, whether presenting his students with a *kōan* or explaining the procedure for lighting the fire for the bath, insofar as his language is grounded in the relation of without-thinking and he is responsive to the situation presented to him, his language displays its own authenticity" (Kasulis 1981, pp. 138–39).

I am sympathetic with Kasulis' interpretation, particularly in regard to Heidegger's "letting language itself speak". How does "language" speak? According to Heidegger, one realizes "language speaking" through those experiences that seem to defy words and expressions.

> *But when does language speak itself as language? Curiously enough, when we cannot find the right word for something that concerns us, carries us away, oppresses or encourages us. Then we leave unspoken what we have in mind and, without rightly giving it thought, undergo moments in which language itself has distantly and fleetingly touched us with its essential being.* (Heidegger 1971, p. 59)

Based upon Dōgen's writings explored in earlier sections of this article, Zen practice is an attempt to negotiate worldly conditions and circumstances through language while remaining mindful of those aspects that are left unspoken so that they speak for themselves; in this sense, language is "realizational" for Dōgen. From a "realizational" perspective, speaking and listening effortlessly arise simultaneously through non-thinking; hence the capping phrase, "Hear it on the road and speak it on the Way" (道徳途説) (ZS 4.598). Whether on the cushion or off the cushion, if one embodies the state of non-thinking, hearing and speaking are indistinguishable. Realizing the Way, *tao* (道) which is commonly understood to defy words and concepts, is not transcendent from language, but fully intimate with it. Ultimately, it is how language is used, vis-à-vis "crooked" or "straight" words and phrases, that reveals whether one is, "sitting in a well looking at the sky" (坐井観天) (ZS 4.42), "washing the gold from sand" (沙裏淘金) (ZS 4.235), or listening to "the sound of a single hand" (隻手音声) (ZS 4.322).

Abbreviations

ZS Zen Sand: The Book of Capping Phrases for Kōan Practice

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