

RELATING FREELY

"Beingtime always has flowers and fruits" (*Kūge*)

自由な関係づけ有時かならず花果あるなり

Chiara Robbiano

What theory of time makes it possible to "relate freely"?

1. What theory of time makes it possible to "relate freely" Premises and definitions.⁽¹⁾

This question signals the search -in Dōgen's thought- for a solution for the lack of freedom one might experience while relating to one's environment and to others. This sense of lack of freedom might be caused by a wrong understanding of time and causality. One might regard oneself as un-free because one sees one's present actions, values and opportunities as fully determined by past events. This assumption might induce one to regard any creative action as impossible. That is, one might believe that one's actions are determined by laws of physics, habits, society, genes and what not, and will never result in a change of state of affairs, habits, values and opportunities for oneself or for others. We will sketch Dōgen's theory of time as presented in the fascicle *Uji* of the *Shōbōgenzō*. Here Dōgen shows how any activity that is performed in the present changes the course of all times.

A premise -which we will not discuss here- to Dōgen's theory of time is the Zen Buddhist assumption that we do not exist as independent, permanent selves. In fact, to exist means to relate with the environment and with others, in always different and unique situations⁽²⁾. If to exist means to relate, what does

it mean to relate freely? In order to relate in the best possible way, responding to the unique situation at hand, what do we need to free ourselves from? One possible answer is 'past and future'. We need to let go of past and future -in two senses. In one sense, we need to let go of past and future as intentional objects: one cannot relate with the situation at hand if one's attention is directed towards distracting memories or plans. In a second, more important sense, the past and future we should let go of are our subjectivity or intentionality, i.e. the ways we are habitually directed towards the world.⁽³⁾ Another way to refer to past and future in this sense is *karma*, which means 'action' in Sanskrit and refers, in Buddhist context, to intentional actions, values, preferences: how we habitually perceive and deal with reality,⁽⁴⁾ their direct consequences and the opportunities related to our intentionality.⁽⁵⁾

2. Dōgen's dual aspect theory of time

Dōgen encourages us to try and encounter the reality of each unique situation, by freeing ourselves as much as possible from our anticipations, our regrets, distractions (past and future as intentional objects) and unexamined intentionality (past and future as subjectivity). We need to free ourselves from our tendency to pigeon hole the situation and react to it in habitual, automatic ways. In order to defend the possibility of freeing ourselves from past and future in this sense, while justifying the possibility of the effects of our present action to extend to the future and even to the past, he develops a dual-aspect theory of time.

According to Dōgen's dual-aspect theory of time, as elaborated in *Uji*,

1. The past is gone. Everything obtains only for a little while.
2. The now has all times in itself.

Relating freely turns out to mean: letting go of past and future, to

unobstructedly and responsively perform an activity in the now that is related & transmitted (経歴する) to all worlds and all times.

3. First aspect of time: Discontinuity and impermanence

The first aspect of time -its discontinuity and impermanence- is one that even common people easily understand. Common people rightly think that the past is gone. However, Dōgen warns us that they are not wise because they *only* see that side of the story.

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。(DZZ 1: 190)
"when he [the common person] hears the words 'uji' (beingtime) he thinks 'There was a time [an angry demon with] three heads and eight arms, and there was a time the sixteen-foot or eight-foot [golden body of Buddha]. For example, it was like crossing a river or crossing a mountain. The mountain and the river may still exist, but now that I have crossed them and am living in a jeweled palace with crimson towers, the mountain and the river are [as distant] from me as heaven is from the earth'. But the state of affairs is not limited to this one aspect" (Nishijima & Cross adapted)

The common person understands "time" as: "some time ago I saw a statue with three heads and eight arms, some time ago this and that occurred; that time is now very far away from me". They are right, but they do not appreciate a positive consequence of the discontinuous aspect of time. What could that be? The positive consequence of discontinuity and impermanence is the importance

of しばらく: the fact that this state of affairs is the case only しばらく 'for a little while': it will soon yield a new state of affairs. Why is this good news? Because change is possible! But how to steer change? We need to know the second aspect of time.

4. Second aspect of time: presence of all times in the now

[...]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、彼處にあるににたれども而今なり。しかあれば、松も時なり、竹も時なり。(DZZ 1: 190-1)

"... this state of affairs of yesterday and today is simply this: the bits of time of entering into the mountains and looking out across a thousand or ten thousand peaks are not over. The three heads and eight arms are a passage in my beingtime; though they seem to be in the distance, they are now. The sixteen-foot or eight-foot [golden body] are also a passage in my beingtime; though it seems to be yonder, it is the now. If this is so, pine trees are time, and bamboos are time" (Nishijima/Cross adapted)

The common person does not understand this: all times are in the now. The moment when I saw a statue with three heads and eight arms, which is no more in front of me right now, that moment is with me now in this moment.

How is it possible for all times to be in the now? How can it be possible that all times can be changed -by free or unfree relational activities? In order to answer this question, we need to reflect on what is time made of and on what reality is made of. According to Dōgen, this moment is made of times: it is co-dependently originated (*pratītyasamutpāda*) by all times and is originating all

times. Moreover, not only this moment is 'all times', but each aspect of reality is time (beingtime, *uji*) - pine trees are time, and bamboos are time. Both what we regard as things and what we regard as actions are 'beingtime'. When we say that something is real, it exists, it is the case, what is really there are a manifold of 経歴 *kyoryaku*. *Kyoryaku* ('passing down' & 'transmitting') are the passages and transmissions that co-dependently originate the state of affairs in the now; and all the passages and transmissions which, from this now extend to all times. Thus, my activity in the now is related to -transmits to, co-creates- all times and all worlds.

5. Relations among times

How is it possible for both aspects of time to be the case? Don't they contradict each other?

How is it possible, e.g. for the past to be both over and done with, and to be in the now?

Dōgen gives us a hint: times swallow and spit out one another other.

[...] 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。(DZZ 1: 190)

"How could that time of climbing the mountain and crossing the river fail to swallow, and fail to spit out, this time [now] in the jewelled palace with crimson towers?" (Nishijima/Cross adapted)

This image shows us one time, e.g. the past, that swallows the present; and then, the same time, e.g. the past, that spits out present. This image helps us visualize the dual-aspect of time. It allows us to see how, e.g. the past, on the one hand, meets, changes, encounters the present; while, on the other hand, the past is gone, and leaves us free in the present; thus, change is possible.

6. Effort in passing and transmitting

Since we are not isolated from the rest of reality and the now is co-dependently originated and originating all times and all worlds, Dōgen encourages us to engage in a free, attuned action -which is the result of practice.

In the *Kūge* fascicle, Dōgen explains that
有時かならず花果あるなり。(空華 DZZ 1: 109)
"Beingtime always has flowers and fruits" (*Kūge*).

In other words, every now, every action, changes reality. Every moment is made of fruits which have been flowers and it is flowers of what will be fruits. This awareness might well encourage us to put effort in each of our activities. So much is at stake if each of our actions create worlds. In fact, if we encounter the other after pigeon-holing them in our old categories, and if we automatically act out of habits, then there will be no freedom in our actions, and the fruits might well be a reinforcement of old unsatisfactory patterns of relations. On the contrary, if we exert ourselves to pay close attention to the unique situation at hand, we might well relate freely to it, by performing an attuned and careful. Our free action will be passed and transmitted to all times and all worlds and change the quality of reality.

わがいま盡力経歴にあらざれば、一法一物も現成することなし、経歴することなしと参學すべし。経歴といふは、風雨の東西するがごとく學しきたるべからず。(DZZ 1: 192)

"We should learn in practice that without my effort now in passing and transmitting, not a single dharma nor a single thing could ever be realized or could ever pass and transmit anything. We should never learn that passing and transmitting is like moving east-west of wind or rain."

(Nishijima and Cross adapted)

World are not created and changed randomly: they are not independent from us as the weather is. World are created by each of our actions and by the passages and transmissions that relate our actions to all times and all worlds.

7. Conclusion -we are changing reality with all our actions

We interpret Dōgen as arguing that we co-create worlds in the now -by being times, related to all times. And that he encourages us to make an effort to let go of past and future and to practice to relate freely in the now.

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DZZ *Dōgen zenji zenshū* 道元禪師全集 [Complete Works of Zen Master Dōgen]. 2 volumes. Ed. Dōshū Ōkubo (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1969-1970).

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- (1) Peter Hershock (*Valuing Diversity*, 2014: 93) uses the phrase 'relating-freely' to refer to "liberating patterns of relationality", i.e. the Chan (or Zen) Buddhist practice of responding in most attuned way to the present situation, by nondually relating to what is happening: "Especially in Chan, Buddhist practice itself came to be conceived explicitly as the means-to and meaning-of fully realized nondualism or resolutely liberating patterns of relationality. As illustrated in the many "encounter dialogues" that record exemplary interactions of Chan masters and their students, the practice of desisting from dichotomous thinking-and explicitly from any indulgence in "seeking" attainments or acts of "picking and choosing"-comes to ultimate fruition in distinctively virtuosic capabilities for relating-freely, even in the absence of any options for exercising freedoms-of-choice. In Chan, the epitome of realization was simply "according with situations, responding as needed" (sui-shi-ying-yong): demonstrating, not blind acceptance of whatever is happening in an attitude of critical disengagement, but rather active commitment to changing the way things are changing by elucidating the liberating nature or disposition (xing) of present circumstances, as they have come to be".
- (2) Cf. e.g. "when we try to understand the myriad dharmas on the basis of confused assumptions about body and mind, we misapprehend that our own mind or our own essence may be permanent. If we become familiar with action and come back to this concrete place, the truth is evident that the myriad dharmas are not self." "Though the light [of the moon] is wide and great, it is reflected in a foot or an inch of water. The whole moon and the whole sky are reflected in a dewdrop on a blade of grass and are reflected in a single drop of water. Realization does not break the individual, just as the moon does not pierce the water. The individual does not hinder the state of realization, just as a dewdrop does not hinder the sky and moon". "To learn the Buddha's truth is to learn ourselves. To learn ourselves is to forget ourselves. To forget ourselves is to be experienced by the myriad dharmas. To be experienced by the myriad dharmas is to let our own body and mind, and the body and mind of the external world, fall away". (*Genjōkōan*, Nishijima & Cross).
- (3) Kopf (2001: 53) uses the word positionality, and explains "I take the term 'positionality' to denote intentionality in the widest possible sense, including somatic and even unconscious forms of intentionality".
- (4) "Intention, I tell you, is karma. Intending, one performs deeds of body, speech and mind" (*Āṅguttara Nikāya: The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha*, in Carpenter 2004: 98).
- (5) In Peter Hershock's (2012: 40) definition: "karma consists in the meticulous consonances that obtain between abiding patterns of *values-intentions-actions* and the patterns of *outcomes and opportunities* we experience."

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●付録

参考までに、本論文中で引用されている道元『正法眼蔵』の現代語訳(玉城康四郎『現代語訳 正法眼蔵』1、大蔵出版、1993年、同『現代語訳 正法眼蔵』3、大蔵出版、1994年)を付す。本論文で使用されている引用記号のあとに、該当する現代語訳を掲載した。(編集委員)

DZZ1: 190

「こういうわけであるのに、仏法を学ばない凡人の場合には、有時について、さまざまな見解をいただく。すなわち、有時とは、あるときは三頭八臂の不動明王となり、あるときは一丈六尺や八尺の仏身となった、と思う。たとえば、自分は、河や山を過ぎてきたというようなものである。たとい、その山や河はあるにしても、わたしは、それらを過ぎ来たって、現在は玉殿朱楼にいる。すなわち、山河もあり、われもあり、天も地もあると思う。しかしながら、道理はこのようないすじだけではない。」(玉城 1993, 274)

DZZ1: 190-1

「昨日・今日の道理というのは、昨日が過ぎて今日が来ているのではない。たとえば、山のなかに入って、千峰万峰を一目に見わたしているような時節である。けっして過ぎ去ったわけではない。三頭八臂もあり、丈六八尺もある。三頭八臂も、すなわちわが有時として経過した。あなたにあるようだけれども、永遠の今である。丈六八尺も、すなわちわが有時として同じように経過している。あそこにあるようだけれども、これも永遠の今である。そういうわけであるから、松も時であり、竹も時である。」(玉城 1993, 274-275)

DZZ1: 190

「山にのぼった時、あるいは河を渡った時、その時は今の玉殿朱楼の時

を呑みつくし、吐きつくさないことがあろうか。」(玉城 1993, 274)

DZZ1: 109

「その時々存在に、かならず華や果実がある。」(玉城 1994, 425)

DZZ1: 192

「いまわが尽力して経めぐっているものでなければ、一事一物も、有時として実現することはなく、経めぐることはないと学ぶべきである。経めぐる<経歴>ということは、風や雨が東から西へ、西から東へと去来するようなものであると学び来たってはならない。」(玉城 1993, 279-280)