

# Neither Good Nor Evil

## A Non-Dualistic Ethics for Today

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Studies of morality among East Asian Buddhists reveal that, in some strands of Mahāyāna Buddhism, the attitude that puts a high value on morality can easily co-exist with the veneration of the so-called “crazy monks” such as Jigong 濟公 (1130–1209), Wōnhyo 元曉 (617–686), and Ikkyū 一休 (1394–1481). Bernard Faure points to this very tension when he suggests in his *The Red Thread* that Zen Buddhist discourses on ethics oscillate between a legalism based on respect for the monastic rule (*vinaya*, 戒律) and an antinomianism as expressed in the “hagiographical motif” of transgression, literally, “violation of precepts,” (破戒). Adherence to the five precepts (*pañcaśīla*, 五戒) and the *vinaya* (護戒, 持戒) is seen as one of the main conditions of Buddhist practice and monastic life. At the same time, independence from the law, as in the case of the crazy monks who, like Ikkyū, transgressed the monastic prohibitions against meat and alcohol consumption as well as sexual activity in the service of the bodhisattva vows, is considered a mark of compassion (*karuṇa*, 慈悲) and enlightenment (*satori* 悟り). Thus, the question naturally arises as to how it is possible to reconcile the Zen Buddhist sense of morality,<sup>1</sup>

1. The renowned Buddhologist Richard GOMBRICH argues in a recent work that

which, contrary to the repeated arguments of some critics, undoubtedly exists, on the one side, and its canonized transgression, on the other?

For a long time, it was fashionable, especially in English language literature, to suggest that Zen Buddhist philosophy is antinomian in its design insofar as it rejects or, in a more favorable reading, transcends ethics. Philosophers such as Lee STAUFFER believe that Zen Buddhism is incapable of developing an ethical system insofar as “it” fails to properly differentiate between good and evil (1989).<sup>2</sup> Others like Douglas MIKKELSON (1997)<sup>3</sup> claim, following the rhetoric of D. T. Suzuki (1870–1966) and Abe Masao (1915–2006), that enlightened persons are naturally and spontaneously moral. Abe even goes so far as to suggest that ethics be replaced by an attitude of and discourse on “self-awakening” which is “free from will and intellectualization” (ABE 2003, 43)—all features pivotal to the ethical project. However, while Stauffer denies the possibility of a “Zen ethics,” I suspect that even Suzuki and Abe never seriously doubted that Buddhism encourages moral conduct and has made significant contributions to the ethical discourse, as underscored by the recent wave of monographs on Buddhist ethics as well as the frequent calls of Buddhist thinkers to social justice. It seems to me that the reason for the antinomian rhetoric by Buddhists lies in a deep mistrust towards normative ethics and a hesitation to reduce Buddhism to mere moralism.

This skepticism towards normativism has a long tradition within Mahāyāna and, particularly, Zen Buddhism. For example, the Japanese medieval Zen master Dōgen (1200–1253) reinterprets the famous line from the *Dhammapada* that identifies the “teaching of the Buddha” with the abstention from “all evils,” the “performance of good,” and the self’s “purification of its intentions” (T 4.210.567) as the confirmatory experi-

the sense of morality based on the law of karma constitutes the core of Buddha’s own teaching (2009).

2. While it is not of direct relevance to the current argument, it is worth noting that Stauffer’s position commits, among others, the essentialist fallacy and claims that “Zen Buddhism” is monolithic and constitutes a position rather than a living religious tradition.

3. In his 2006 “Towards a Description of Dōgen’s Moral Virtues,” MIKKELSON adopts a more differentiated approach to “Zen ethics.”

ence of “presencing” (*genjō* 現成), the “power of self-cultivation” (修行力, SBGZ 1: 248), and “presencing the kōan” (*genjōkōan* 現成公案, SBGZ 1: 256) and not as moral exhortation. However, while Faure suggests that the rhetoric of transgression privileges the Bodhisattva vows over the monastic rule and the five precepts and directly applies the doctrine of emptiness (*śūnyatā*, 空) to the notion of moral regulations, Dōgen’s fascicle offers a more philosophically sophisticated approach to Zen ethics: in short, he uses the principle that “all Buddhas” (諸仏) and “sentient beings” (衆生) as well as “emptiness” and “form” (*rūpa*, 色) are “not two” to deconstruct the duality of good and evil and thus questions the very possibility of postulating a foundational moral principle itself.

I believe that the answer to this question of how to reconcile a normativism based on the precepts and the antinomianism expressed in the hagiographies of crazy monks lies in some of the postmodern approaches to ethics. In “The Problem of Ethics and the Religious Experience” (宗教経験と倫理の問題) YUASA Yasuo suggests that the practice of self-cultivation (修行) does not reject ethics but rather a legalistic attitude towards morality (2000). Jin Y. Park takes this line of argument a step further when she uses Jacques Derrida’s analysis of “the law” in her essay “Wōnhyo and Derrida on Institutional Authority” to interpret the transgressions of the Korean monk Wōnhyo as a criticism of institutional violence (PARK 2007). Similarly, in her *Saints and Postmodernism*, Edith Wyschogrod developed the trope of the “postmodern saint” to suggest that the transgressions of saints, be they actual or merely rhetorical, can be interpreted as a deconstruction of moralism insofar as they reveal the injustice and violence perpetuated by the institutions of law and suggest what Park calls an “ethics of tension.” The dialectics between adherence to and transgression of the law challenges preconceived notions of good and evil and forces scholars of Buddhism and philosophers alike to explore the liminality of what is considered moral and immoral if indeed compassion is the goal of ethics.

In this paper, I propose to use Yuasa’s notion of self-cultivation and Edith Wyschogrod’s (1930–2009) trope of the postmodern saint to analyze Ikkyū’s rhetoric of transgression and Dōgen’s radical non-dualism of good and evil. Specifically, I will interpret Ikkyū’s life and work as an example of what Yuasa calls the “attitude of praxis” (実践の態度), which

transcends, critiques, and transforms traditional ethics. I also present Dōgen’s reading of the *Dhammapada* as a deconstruction of foundationalism that places ethics in a context of what Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945) calls “absolute nothingness” (絶対無). Demonstrating that Dōgen promotes *de facto* what Nishida calls “radical criticism” (徹底的批評主義) (NKZ 5: 184; ITABASHI 2004, 131) and Tanabe Hajime calls “absolute criticism” (絶対批判, THZ 9: 48–63), I will argue that the approach of ethics favored by Ikkyū and Dōgen is, to use a term coined by Geoffrey Bennington, “archi-ethical” (BENNINGTON 2000, 34) rather than anti-ethical in that their thought challenges the assumptions underlying traditional ethics and envisions an ethics that neither relies on *a priori* principles nor rejects ethical considerations altogether. The result of this examination will be a vision of ethics that neither embraces normativism nor succumbs to antinomianism.

### IKKYŪ SŌJUN

Ikkyū Sōjun 一休宗純 (1394–1481) is one of the best known and controversial Rinzai Zen masters of the Daitoku-ji lineage. Since his mother was dismissed from the court of the emperor Go Komatsu 後小松 (1377–1433), Ikkyū grew up in poverty and was entrusted to a local temple at an early age. However, he is remembered best as the Japanese representative of the “crazy monks” who made a name for themselves by breaking the precepts, more specifically by eating meat, drinking sake, and frequenting brothels. Ikkyū, who called himself “crazy cloud” (Kyō’un 狂雲), is further famous for his rather explicit poetry that leaves little to the imagination and his life-long infatuation with the blind singer Shin. In his poems, one of which is aptly named “Escaping the Temple” (退院), he made, from a monastic perspective, rather outrageous comments such as “I desire sake, sex, and poems” (NZG 12: 146), “I pretend to sing, I am very drunk I am completely crazy” (NZG 12: 331), and “my Sūtras are sake, meat, and beautiful women” (NZG 12: 274). Bernard Faure suggests that Ikkyū was guilty of sexual as well as literary transgression. This alone should qualify him to be in the company of postmodern thinkers

but there seem to be even more affinities. Before I explore these, however, I would like to return to my discussion of Ikkyū.

Despite his behavior and rhetoric that were designed to shock, Ikkyū rejected neither morality nor the precepts but seems to have put his systematic transgression in the service of a higher purpose. First, he was highly critical of corrupt monks and even identified “sex in the temples” with “the Zen of the demons” (cited in FAURE 1998, 155). So ironically, Ikkyū, the monk famous for his transgressions, abhorred immorality, especially sexual immorality, and rejected it. As Faure observed, “paradoxically, he was himself one of the strongest opponents of certain forms of ‘wild Zen’ and marginality” (116).

In some sense, Ikkyū’s transgressions were methodical and served a “higher purpose.” It is as if he distinguished between two kinds of transgressions, appropriate ones and inappropriate ones. His behavior also resonated that overall sentiment of the later Kamakura and early Muromachi periods that extreme times call for extremes measures and thus evoked what Faure calls a “nostalgia for naturalness, a second simplicity in which sexuality would become natural again” (1998, 115). This resonates with Faure’s observations that within the Buddhist tradition transgression was only permitted in a special context and, thus, that the rhetoric and practice of permitted transgression was, in some sense, elitist. Faure points out that the hagiographies of “crazy monks” are paralleled by stories about Bodhisattvas who take on the forms of prostitutes and seduce men in order to prepare them to follow the Buddha path.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, “crazy monks” used their madness (物狂い), whether feigned or actual, in the service of the Bodhisattva vow. Faure cites the case of Jigong “who, in a Rabelaisian move, turns ‘excrement into sacrament.’ When drunk, Jigong vomits in Buddhist statues and his vomit becomes splendid gilding. His Japanese counterpart, Ikkyū, urinates on a Buddha statue, thereby covering it with gold” (FAURE 1998, 63). In this sense, Ikkyū’s transgression have to be interpreted not as antinomianism that justifies immorality and selfish behavior but one that transcends moral-

4. For example, chapter eight of the *Vimalakīrti-nīrdeśa sūtra* suggests that bodhisattvas take on the form of prostitutes for the purpose of liberating those attached to desire (T 14.475.550).

ism and identifies the bodhisattva ideal as the highest value. In other words, while, in general, precepts are a good means to alleviate suffering, they can be broken if, and only if, their transgression serves the alleviation of suffering. In some sense, the Zen rhetoric of transgression implies a threefold structure of immorality, normativism, and deliberate antinomianism in the service of the bodhisattva vows.

### THE POSTMODERN SAINT

I believe we can interpret Ikkyū's rhetoric of transgression in the light of Edyth Wyschogrod's conception of the "postmodern saint." Edyth Wyschogrod suggests that a postmodern morality be built on the hagiographies of saints and "that the hagiographic is preferred to moral theory in shaping moral discourse and action ... because of the manner in which theory is grounded in modern philosophy" (WYSCHOGROD 1990, 160). Her argument is based on the observation that "saintly life" is countercultural and counter-conceptual. In her brilliant *Saints and Postmodernism: Revisioning Moral Philosophy*, she commences her exploration of the postmodern potential of hagiographies with the definition of the saint "as one whose adult life in its entirety is devoted to the alleviation of sorrow (the psychological suffering) and the pain (the physical suffering) that afflicts other persons without distinction of rank or group or, alternatively, that afflicts sentient beings whatever the cost to the saint in pain and sorrow" (35). In even stronger words, she claims that "moral beliefs and judgments are bound up with epistemological discourse and frequently fail to induce moral acts. By contrast, exemplary lives in which saintly power and its renunciation figure teach morality by way of practice" (52). Ordinary people, to use a term that frequently appears in Buddhist texts, are driven by selfish desires, while the saints puts the other before him or herself. Traditional accounts of saints juxtapose the particularized desire of ordinary people with the altruism of the saints, almost in the way Mozi (抹子) juxtaposes his "universal love" with the "graded love" of Mencian (孟子) Confucianism. Wyschogrod, however, argues instead that saints display not a universal altruism, which would

be abstract and, ultimately, impossible but, rather, a “differential altruism” (241). She explains that

for the saints the Other’s destitution is a vortex, a centripetal force ... into which saintly desire on the Other’s behalf is drawn. The more fissured the life of the Other, the greater the Other’s lack, the weightier its claim upon the saintly self. Saints are person-differentiating, but it is lack and not proximity that is encrypted in the body or “group body” of the Other that decides who receives preference (242).

Central to Wyschogrod’s argument, here, is her contention that saints are not merely driven by *agape* that sublimates or even dispels *eros* but, very much like ordinary people, by desire. The difference from ordinary people is, however, that the saint in his/her desire for the Other focuses on the lack of the other, in the service of which the saint empties him or herself. Using the analyses of Georges Bataille (1897–1962), Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), and Gilles Deleuze (1925–1995), Wyschogrod suggests that the idealistic conception of a passionless love implies a conception of the human being as a disembodied subject in the Platonic sense that has liberated itself—and I use the pronoun “it” deliberately since a person without body is also one without gender—from the Freudian drives of aggression and *libido*. Such a conception of the person is not only unrealistic but, moreover, inhuman. This ideal has been perfected, according to Wyschogrod, by mainstream Christian theology and institutions, and one could add by any ascetic tradition, that “overturns this arrangement by ascribing negative value to the profane realm of work and positive value to the sacred now cut off from its transgressive root of desire and violence” (144).

Desire and violence are thus domesticated at the price of demonizing the human body and creating, as any Freudian would be happy to concede, even more, albeit unconscious, violence, in particular, as certain thinkers and texts in Daoism and Buddhism would claim, violence against the human body. Either way, Wyschogrod seems to argue that violence and desire should not be bottled up and repressed into the subliminal and the unconscious but expressed in an altruistic and, ultimately, universal way. She thus arrives at the notion of the “postmodern” saint

that, contrary to the “pre-modern” saint,<sup>5</sup> does not eschew but rather embraces sexual desire and violence. In fact, she proposes that

because “depraved desire”... carries the weight of its “sacred” double, the narrative cannot dispense with love in the sense of *caritas* but often invests this love with a new and material meaning, the relief of sexual need. (221)

The key to Wyschogrod’s argument is that “saintly life” is countercultural and counter-conceptual. In short, she identifies two fundamental differences between “pre-modern” and the “postmodern” saints: Representatives of the first one

instantiate general principles, are examples or embodiments of qualities that are subordinated to a controlling and totalizing discourse, one that takes already for granted the relation of universal to particular. Saints of the second type [that challenge ordinary morality] those who embody a “strange higher morality” are representative of a whole that is hard to define or, as Wittgenstein puts it, could not be pictured or said. (156)

Not only do saints as conceived traditionally instantiate generally accepted values; they also embody what Wyschogrod calls “intrasystematic coherence” (159). In other words, the pre-modern saint reinforces the social and moral *status quo*. The postmodern saint, on the other hand, embodies the “actual encounters with others” (49) and thus reflects an “intrasystematic conflict” (158). Ikkyū embodies Wyschogrod’s postmodern saint who does not demonize sexual desire and violence and thus is free for the altruistic service of the other. In Wyschogrod’s words, his path is

a plea for boldness and risk, for an effort to develop a new altruism in an age grown cynical and hardened to catastrophe: war, genocide, threat for worldwide ecological collapse, sporadic and unpredictable

5. Wyschogrod uses the categories “pre-modern” and “postmodern” saints not to indicate the time periods during which the respective saints lived but to identify what kind of morality they embodied.



eruption of urban violence, the use of torture, the emergence of new diseases (257).

## SAINTLINESS AND SELF-CULTIVATION

Wyschogrod's definition of the postmodern saint, especially in juxtaposition to the pre-modern saint, reveals two fundamental characteristics of the role the life and work of Ikkyū in particular and crazy monks in general play in Zen Buddhist folklore and philosophy: First, contrary to its appearance, the rhetoric of transgression in the case of the crazy monks is intrinsically moral in nature. Second, to interpret the madness of "crazy monks" like Ikkyū as the embodiment of humanity by postmodern saints then renders a tripartite model of morality that strongly resembles the common hermeneutics of self-cultivation. As Faure has made it clear in his analysis of Ikkyū's life and work, Ikkyū himself did not understand his transgressions of the five precepts and the monastic rules as an affront against morality but rather as an elevation of morality in the light of the bodhisattva vows. As the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa Sūtra* explains "they [the bodhisattvas] become prostitutes to liberate those with sexual desires" (T 14.475.550). In Wyschogrod's words, Ikkyū's rhetoric and proposed action are expressively counter-cultural and reflect a "higher morality," namely, the liberation of all sentient beings. In addition, not unlike Wyschogrod, Ikkyū identifies explicitly three different kinds of "Zen" whose distinguishing characteristics are moral in nature: "demonic Zen,"<sup>6</sup> "straight Zen,"<sup>7</sup> and "crazy Zen."<sup>8</sup> "Demonic Zen" is characterized by an undifferentiated violation of the precepts, "straight Zen" by blind obedience to them, and "crazy Zen" by their application and modification in the service of the bodhisattva

6. Bernard FAURE refers to this kind of "Zen" as "demoniac" (1998, 115) but renders Ikkyū's expression "Zen of demons" in English (155).

7. In his 1973 article "Beat Zen, Square Zen, and Zen," Alan Watts coined the term "square Zen" to describe a form of "Zen" that is too disciplinarian and thus, by implication, moralistic.

8. Yanagida Seizan renders Ikkyū's phrase *fūkyō* (風狂) as "crazy Zen" (*fūkyōzen* 風狂禪) in contemporary Japanese" (NZG 14: 331).

vow, that is, by a transformation of morality for the purpose of alleviating the suffering of all sentient beings. Similarly, Wyschogrod identifies these three moral attitudes as the selfish attitude of adherents and practitioners driven predominantly by *eros*, the pre-modern saint who attempts to suppress *eros* by means of *agape*, and the postmodern saint, who integrates *eros* and *agape*, since the expulsion of the former would be equivalent to the renunciation of one's humanity. In other words, the three stages implied by Ikkyū's rhetoric of transgression constitute a tripartite model of moral development.

IKKYŪ	THREE MORAL ATTITUDES	WYSCHOGROD
undifferentiated and unconscious violation of precepts	“demonic Zen”	“selfish” attitude: eros
keeping the precepts	“square Zen”	“moralistic” saint: agape
deliberate violation of precepts in the service of the Bodhisattva vow	“crazy Zen”	“higher” morality of the postmodern saint: agape- <i>qua</i> -eros

The basic form of this model is reminiscent of a well-known passage from the *Transmission of the Lamp* (續傳燈錄):

Thirty years ago, before I started practice meditation, I saw mountains as mountains and waters as waters'; after I had gained a little knowledge, I thought that 'mountains are not mountains and waters are not waters'; now that I have attained enlightenment, I see that 'mountains are really mountains and waters are really waters. (T 51.2077.614)

In his “Zen is not a Philosophy, but ...,” ABE Masao suggest that this passage indicates three metaphysical positions that are indicative of the epistemic and cognitive transformation that occurs during the practice of meditation. The standpoint of the “ordinary person” is positivistic insofar as the people at this stage mistake appearances for reality (1989, 3–24). Beginners of meditation turn introspective and thus negate the belief in an external reality, which they think to reveal as “imaginary” (*parikalpita*, 遍計) and constructed by the mind. Practitioners who have gained

an insight, however, see “reality as it is,” devoid of mental constructions and psychological projections. While the focus of Ikkyū’s rhetoric as well as the model that is embedded in it is utterly different, it does reflect the tripartite structure of affirmation, negation, and “higher affirmation,” which can be found in the above passage and is articulated by Abe.

In short, within Ikkyū’s rhetoric, “demonic Zen” indicates a pre-moral stage, “square Zen” a moralistic, and “crazy Zen” a super-moral one. First there is the “ordinary person” who, in a pre-reflective, one could say pre-moral, modality, acts out the desire and violence that are part of human existence. At the second stage, which TAKUAN Sōhō (1573–1645) refers to somewhat unflatteringly as “person of little wisdom” (1970, 35), the practitioner becomes self-reflective and realizes the selfishness that underlies this pre-reflective acting out of instincts. Using the normative morality of the precepts, practitioners at this stage try to domesticate desire by demonizing and rejecting it, but ultimately end up dehumanizing themselves. It is only at the third stage, the stage of “higher morality,” that practitioners, who now have become postmodern saints, embody humanity insofar they practice altruism without rejecting aspects intrinsic to human nature and, thus, without necessitating self-alienation. Ikkyū’s “crazy Zen” as well as Wyschogrod’s postmodern saint, who integrates *eros* and *agape*, thus reflect Confucius’ sage who has perfectly internalized the “mandate of heaven” (C. *tian ming* 天命) and is thus incapable of desiring evil (*Analects* 2.4).

This tripartite model of moral development implies two basic notions of ethics: normativism and a form of ethics that challenges normativism. Yuasa refers to the former, which is focused on the principles of conscience, rights and society, as “negative ethics” (否定的倫理) since it denies human nature and is aimed quite literally at the negation of the physical and psychological dimensions of the self. The latter one he refers to as positive ethics (肯定的倫理) since it embraces and affirms the self. In his *An Inquiry into the Good* (NKZ I: 1–200), Nishida approaches ethics in a similar manner in that he subverts the complete ethical enterprise by asking the simple question of whether the good resides within or without the self. Nishida finds both positions wanting. The latter conceives of the good as something alien to and thus alienating the self, the former begs the question of a criterion of goodness that lies outside of the self,

since otherwise human desire would be identified as that which is good. Yuasa frames the same question from a different perspective. In *Religious Experience and the Problem of Ethics* (宗教経験と倫理の問題), Yuasa asks whether or not happiness and morality are compatible. In other words, is happiness a value? Does morality make one happy? Is one of the two values primary? Or, one could ask with Wyschogrod, if *eros* and *agape* are irreconcilable. Is one of the two primary? The key to these questions lies, to Yuasa, in the dualistic framework at the basis of the ethical enterprise. While Nishida suggests collapsing the distinction between the external and the internal by postulating “god” (*kami* 神) as the “unifying power” (*tōitsu chikara* 統一力) at the foundation of all ethics, Yuasa suggests that the problem lies in the attitude that distinguishes between self and world, conscious thought and unconscious engagement with the world. To Yuasa, it is only in the practice of self-cultivation (*shūgyō* 修行) that this twofold dualism is overcome.

At first glance, Yuasa’s theory of self-cultivation seems to correspond to Abe’s ethics of self-awakening. But there are some remarkable differences. In some sense, the two attitudes characteristic of Yuasa’s approach to ethics and his theory of self-cultivation reflect in various ways Dōgen’s two modalities of self-centeredness, which Dōgen describes as “practicing the ten thousand dharmas while carrying the self” and dharma-centeredness, that is, “to practice and manifest the self by focusing on the 10,000 dharmas” (SBGZ I: 94). A removed and detached attitude results in a bird’s eye view in which the subject reflects upon reality in a seemingly objective manner. Yuasa calls the ethics that is produced by what I call “methodological retreat” (KOPF 2001, 166–8) “negative” since its criteria for goodness are outside and, subsequently, alien to the self. The second attitude is one in which the self is affirmed by what Abe calls “the dharma” and Yuasa illustrates with Kūkai’s (774–835) understanding of the “*dharma*-body” (*dharma-kāya* 法身) as *Mahāvairocana* (大日如来). This attitude implies an approach to ethics that affirms the self. However—and this where Yuasa’s system of ethics starts to resemble Ikkyū’s rhetoric of transgression and Wyschogrod’s postmodern saint—contrary to Abe, Yuasa does not think that the standpoint of self-cultivation eschews ethics; rather it integrates and dialectically elevates it. For this reason, Yuasa develops a third term, the “attitude of practice”

(实践的態度)<sup>9</sup> to describe the standpoint which combines self and other, *eros* and *agape*. In fact, in *The Body: Mind-Body Philosophy in East Asia and Contemporary Culture*, he argues that it is the purpose and goal of self-cultivation to integrate and transform *libido*, his psychological rendition of the Buddhist term “defilements” (*kleśas*, 煩惱), into “wisdom” (*prajñā*, 般若). Ikkyū’s rhetoric of “crazy Zen” reflects this notion of self-cultivation. In other words, the postmodern sainthood of Ikkyū reflects the general sentiment of Mahāyāna Buddhism and Daoism that assume that abstract thinking in general and speculative ethics in particular disembodies human existence and alienates human nature. However, unlike Laozi’s “return to the origin,” this approach suggests a self-cultivation of the natural state into what Wyschogrod calls a “higher morality.”

#### SAINTLINESS AND MORALITY

The question remains as to how transgressive behavior can be interpreted as “higher morality” without falling into Abe’s antinomianism. Jin Y. Park introduces a second reading of the rhetoric of transgression when she suggests interpreting the transgressive behavior of the “crazy monks” as ethical deconstruction. In a recent essay on Wōnhyo and Jacques Derrida, she contends that Wōnhyo’s transgressions result in a rupture of both immanence and transcendence, which alters both realms irrevocably and transforms the heretofore immaculate and clearly defined provinces of good and evil into shape-shifting targets without either identifiable borders or a center. This tension between irreducibility and transgression is, according to Park, the key to understanding the principle of “mutual inclusion” (2006, 11). She explains that

the transgression theme in Wōnhyo’s life . . . offers not a vision of harmony, but of an inevitable tension between the provisional and the ultimate reality... And this tension between the provisional and the ultimate reality, or that between the finite and the infinite, is the faith,

9. In his discussion of ethics, Yuasa refer to “negative ethics” as “an attitude of explanation” (説明的態度) and to “positive ethics” as “an attitude of conversion” (回心の態度).

which Wŏnhyo reads as the beginning of the Bodhisattva precepts. (PARK 2007, 212)

Transgression here constitutes an essential ingredient in the relationships between the opposites. In Wŏnhyo's case, the act of transgression consisted of violating the precepts and indicates what Park calls an "ethics of tension."

This "ethics of tension" is at odds with normative ethics since the latter attributes to language the power to convey truths, moral truths, in this case. However, Zen Buddhist texts, and especially case 14 of the *Gateless Barrier* (C. *Wumenquan* 無門闕, T 48.2005), Nanquan's 南泉 (748–835) cat, reveal language as static and conventional. In this particular *kōan* (C. *gongan* 公案), Zen master Nanquan kills a cat because the monks of his monastery, who were involved in an altercation among themselves, prove themselves incapable of "saying anything." In the evening of the day when this occurred, his disciple Zhaozhou 趙州 (d. 897) returns to the monastery and, upon hearing what had transpired during the day, he takes off his sandals, puts them on his head and walks out of Nanquan's chamber. Nanquan's response to Zhaozhou's action is "if you had been here, the cat would have been saved" (T 48.2005.0294).

While this *kōan* itself is very perplexing, to use it in the context of a discussion on Zen ethics is even more interesting since this case is frequently cited as an illustration that "Zen" does not have an ethics. In her *Buddhism and Postmodernity*, Park uses the basic argument in Derrida's "Force of Law" to suggest that it was the rigidity of language that "killed that cat" and interprets this *kōan* as a call to move from the interpretation of language as, to use Chinul's 知訥 (1158–1210) terminology, "dead words" (*sagu* 死句), which reflect a "direct involvement with meaning" (K. *ch'amŭi* 參意) and thus render dogmas, to the embodied modality of "live words" (*hwalgu* 活句) that express a "direct involvement with words" (*ch'amgu* 參句).

This reading echoes Dōgen's *Shoakumakusa* fascicle (SBGZ I: 243–266) in which he interprets the exhortation of the *Dhammapada* to "avoid all evil, do all good, and purify oneself" (T 4.210.567) not as moralism but as a call to embodiment or, to paraphrase Chinul, to a "direct involvement with" morality. In the same fascicle, Dōgen suggests the

collapse of the categories “good” and “evil” since their opposition would merely render the “dead words” of moralism and not the “live words” of “higher morality.” In concrete terms, to Dōgen, “all evil indicates that, in the middle of goodness, evil nature, and neutrality, there is all evil” (SBGZ I: 245), while “to say ‘all good’ implies in the good, evil, and neutrality, there is goodness” (SBGZ I: 254). Elsewhere, he observes that “if all evil is not in emptiness, there is non-production, if all evil is not in form, there is non-production” (SBGZ I: 252).

While these phrases may come as a shock to Buddhist practitioners who are familiar with *Dhammapada* and follow the precepts or anyone who emphasizes moral behavior, what Dōgen proposes is neither antinomian nor deliberately confusing and contradictory. First, he does subscribe to the law of karma and thus, to some degree, to moral efficacy when he exhorts his audience that “you should practice the cause and effect of good and evil” (SBGZ I: 249). Most of all, however, he does not advocate here, to use PARK’s terms, the “mutual exclusion” (2006, 11) of good and evil but their “mutual inclusion” and thus a deconstruction of moralism. In other words, an ethics of tension interprets the transgressive behavior found in the narratives of Wōnhyo and Ikkyū as embodiment or “presencing” (*genjō* 現成) of ethical deconstruction.

What makes Dōgen’s fascicle so fascinating is that he brings together the antinomianism of the crazy monks and the deconstruction of the conceptual basis of normativism. While most of this fascicle is dedicated to a rereading of the famous line from the *Dhammapada* and the *Āgama Sūtras* and, as Richard GOMBRICH argues, the core of “what the Buddha thought” (2009) as an instruction to engage in self-cultivation and the presencing of “all Buddhas” (*shobutsu* 諸仏), he cannot help remarking that “the śrāvaka’s adherence to the precepts is [identical with] the bodhisattva’s violation thereof” (SBGZ I: 254).

We may therefore say that Dōgen accomplishes three things in this fascicle:

1. He rejects a moral practice based on the distinction between “all evils” and “all good” and thus a moralism based on the precepts.
2. He deconstructs the possibility of differentiating between “good” and “evil,” “cause and effect,” and “sentient beings and Buddhas,” because none of them has “self-nature.” It is very important to point

out that Dōgen’s non-dualism does not constitute a rejection of difference but a rejection of essences.

3. Yet, he does not disqualify moral practice but seems to indicate that any form of practice is contextual and, if it presences all Buddhas and patriarchs, appropriate.

Dōgen’s rejection of normativism is not based on an inherent suspicion of morality but on his radical commitment to impermanence and non-substantialism. In this way Dōgen executes the “radical criticism” or “absolute criticism” that Kyoto school philosophers proposed some 700 years after him. It is a criticism that not only rejects one position to establish its opposite but also one that is self-corrective and integrates opposite positions in the knowledge that each by itself is perspectival. In short, Dōgen suggests that both normativism and antinomianism have to be integrated in order to create a sense of morality that neither alienates the self nor the other.

## CONCLUSION

What Ikkyū and Dōgen have in common is that their approaches to ethics disclose a non-dualistic philosophical structure, which suggests the non-dualism of good and evil. While Abe would argue that self-awakening is prior to and more fundamental than the secondary and abstract distinction between good and evil, Park suggests that the non-duality of good and evil implies their deconstruction. However, rather than rejecting ethics, their approach to the moral behavior of the crazy monks and Dōgen’s non-dualism of good and evil indicates what Bennington calls the “archi-ethical,” that is, an ethics that “survives deconstruction.” Specifically, Bennington proposes that “‘ethics’ cannot fail to be a theme or an object of deconstruction” and that “deconstructive thought *in general* (sic) has an ethical import” and “will have *specific* (sic) interventions to make in the traditional metaphysical vocabulary of ethics” (2000, 34–5). It is in this sense that Ikkyū’s “higher morality” and Dōgen’s non-dualism of good and evil not only deconstruct abstract and disembodied ethics but also provide the theoretical framework for an ethics that refuses to define morality as either something external to



the self or as something at odds with social sensibilities and altruism. The key to this non-dualism is the notion of transformation, which is rendered by a phenomenology of self-cultivation. The “attitude of practice” transforms, through the practice of self-cultivation, what Yuasa calls the “disjunctive dualism” (分離の二元論, 1986, 62) between thought and emotion that falsely suggests that we have to choose between the self or the world, between thinking or emotion, between *agape* or *eros*. These alternatives do not imply an either-or or a hierarchy but rather a tension between opposites that has to be embraced. It is for this reason that Jin Park terms a non-dual and non-substantial ethics an “ethics of tension.”

In this sense, Ikkyū models a “higher morality” that integrates *eros* and altruism and thus a more inclusive notion of humanity. To develop an ethics based on the purposeful transgressions of the “crazy monk,” “the addressee must,” to cite Wyschogrod a last time, “re-inscribe and not merely represent the narrative as one’s own story. In the process of reinscription a new life is shaped. The I of her/his own story, like the I of the saint is increasingly fissured by the Other who is seen as ‘ordered to my responsibility torn up from culture, law, horizon, context’” (WYSCHOGROD 1990, 149).

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