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## **An Embracing Thought: Contemporary Sōtō Interpretations of *Hishiryō***

Eitan Bolokan  
School of Philosophy, Tel-Aviv University.

The term *hishiryō* (非思量 nonthinking), is found in many of Dōgen Zenji's 道元禪師 (1200-53) writings and sermons, mostly in the context of the practice of sitting known as *zazen* (坐禪 sitting Zen) or more specifically as *shikantaza* (只管打坐 just sitting).<sup>1</sup> In recent decades, thanks to the growing number of available English translations of Dōgen's works, the term has been translated in various ways. Wadell and Abe (1973, 123), Kim (2007, 80), and Bielefeldt (1988, 189) used the translation 'nonthinking'. Kasulis (1989, 72), on the other hand, rendered it 'without thinking', while Leighton and Okumura (2004, 327) and Tanahashi and Levitt (2011, 301) opted for 'beyond thinking'. In this article I use either 'nonthinking' or simply the original, *hishiryō*.

The term *hishiryō* is not one of Dōgen's own expressions but can be found in various texts throughout Zen history which predate Dōgen: *Lotus Sutra* (法華經 Ch. *Fahua jing*), *Sutra of Manjusri Speaking of the Inconceivable State of Buddhahood* (文殊師利所說不思議佛境界經 Ch. *Wenshu Shi li Suo Shuo Bu Siyi Fo Jingjie Jing*), the treatise *Faith in Mind* (信心銘 Ch. *Xinxin ming*), and the *Buddha-Realm-Sutra* (佛境界經 Ch. *Fo Jingjie Jing*) (Harada 1985, 26). It would seem that the term most famously appears in the *Record of the Transmission of the Lamp* (景德傳燈錄 Ch. *Jingde chuandeng lu*) from which Dōgen cited the following dialogue between Yaoshan 藥山惟儼 (751-834) and a monk:

Once, when the Great Master Hongdao of Yaoshan was sitting [in meditation], a monk asked him, "What are you thinking, [sitting there] so fixedly?" The master answered, 'I'm thinking of not thinking.' The monk asked, 'How do you think of not thinking?' The Master answered, 'Nonthinking.' (Bielefeldt 1988,188-9)<sup>ii</sup>

This somewhat bewildering presentation of *hishiryō* has long kept Buddhologists, Sōtō scholars, and practitioners curious about its meaning and content. Though many diverse explanations have been offered, I will concentrate on two contemporary interpretations found in the writings of two representatives of traditionalist Sōtō theology from Komazawa University: Harada Kōdō 原田弘道 (1935–2000) and Tsunoda Tairyū 角田泰隆 (1957– ). Their analysis clarifies that *hishiryō* can be understood in at least two complementary manners: the first relates to the mental and psychological meanings associated with the term, while the second supports the concrete qualities of the physical experience associated with *hishiryō*, such as the actual performance of sitting. Harada and Tsunoda have demonstrated how *hishiryō* is characterized by these two aspects which are, in fact, co-dependent. Through their analysis and citations they have shown how *hishiryō* has been understood throughout the history of Sōtō hermeneutics as a term that cannot be limited either to the mental or to the physical; it reflects both, as it represents the living experience of practice.

### ***Hishiryō* in Sōtō Dictionaries**

Before proceeding to the analysis of *hishiryō* as found in the works of Harada and Tsunoda, it is useful to survey the various interpretations of the term according to pivotal modern Sōtō dictionaries. This will clarify the traditionalist standpoint which underpinned the two scholars and the theoretical tendencies that provided the basis for their argumentations.

According to the *Zengaku Daijiten* 禅学大辞典 (*The Large Dictionary of Zen Studies*):

*Hishiryō* is not an unconscious state that rejects the conscious activity of thinking, but [it is] thinking itself being dropped off. [It is] being free from the grasping that accompanies thinking, all the while being involved in thinking. [Thus] it is similar to a non-discriminative discrimination. (vol.1, 1044)

The *Zenshū Jiten* 禅宗辞典 (*The Dictionary of the Zen School*) explains 'nonthinking' as follows:

The three characters of *hi-shi-ryō* (非思量) signify a mode of thinking which is based upon the manifestation of [one's] original face—the dropping of body and mind—which is the meaning of *zazen*. Therefore, the character 非 [*hi*] should not be understood as a designation of negation but rather as liberation; the lack of any impediments which is the totally free existence of being. Therefore, in Shigetsu's *Funōgo* 不能語 [inadequate words] it is said: 'The immediate manifestation of thought is "non" and it is also "not". The [usual] meaning of "non" and "not" is indeed discriminative, but here they point to the reality-body of thinking'. In other words, *hishiryō* is an activity that departs from all obstructions and distracting thoughts, the realization of one's original mind—the original nature of the self. ( 923)

In the *Shōbōgenzō Yōgo Jiten* 正法眼藏用語辞 (*The Dictionary of Shōbōgenzō Expressions*) we find the following:

*Hishiryō* is the purpose of *zazen*. It is the Buddha Way culmination of the dropping off body and mind; [it is] thinking which emerges upon the manifestation of one's original face; [it is] absolute thinking. Here, the character 非 [*hi*] should not be understood as a negation but as a [designation of an] absolute liberation. *Hishiryō* is the *zazen*-based thinking of the *Samadhi* king of all *samadhis* which is set apart from all delusions and obstructions; wholesomely contemplating not thinking. *Hishiryō* is the infinite wisdom of the Buddha. (343)

Finally, the *Shōbōgenzō Eihei Kōroku Yōgo Jiten* 正法眼藏・永平広録用語辞典 (*The Dictionary of Shōbōgenzō and Eihei Kōroku Expressions*) presents this definition:

The term *hishiryō* originates in the Third Patriarch Sengcan's essay *Faith in Mind*, but it has come to indicate the vital art of *zazen* through the words of Yakusan Igen. *Hishiryō* is not a state in which the conscious activity of thinking stops, but it is thinking which is free from the grasping that accompanies thoughts, all the while being involved in thinking. For Dōgen, *zazen* is the practice of a Buddha; 'thinking' [in *zazen*] goes beyond any thought. It is only here in unfathomable realm beyond both thought and no thought that the ultimate nature of *zazen* is realized. This is clearly demonstrated by the very posture of *zazen*. (319)

From the above definitions we can mark two clear distinctions in the sectarian take on *hishiryō*. First, the term is explained as a mental quality or state that is not opposed to its own natural and dynamic circulation and ongoing flux. This is most evident in the *Zengaku Daijiten* which describes *hishiryō* as 'thinking itself being dropped off...all while being involved in thinking'. Likewise in the other dictionaries, *hishiryō* is seen as a term that does not represent the mental aspiration of 'stopping the mind' or other stereological goals. In this sense, *hishiryō* points to a vital experience that cannot be limited to any category, including the very categories of 'thought' or 'no thought'. As Leighton and Okumura put it: '[it is an] awareness that includes both thinking and not thinking, and is not caught by either' (2004, 533).

The second characterization of *hishiryō* explains the term not only mentally and psychologically but also within the context of concrete practice and the very enactment of sitting. Thus, it is no less a designation of the concrete experience of the body than it is mental or psychological.

The dictionary entries are replete with expressions such as 'activity' (作用 *sayō*), 'zazen-based' (坐禪の上 *zazen no ue*), 'the ultimate nature of *zazen*' (坐禪の極致 *zazen no gokuchi*), and 'the posture of *zazen*' (坐禪のあり方 *zazen no arikata*).<sup>iii</sup> These all highlight the fact that *hishiryō* cannot be identified solely as the internal or mental attitude of the practitioners but rather as their full involvement in the activity being performed; the very enactment of sitting is *hishiryō*. As this enactment involves both mental and physical qualities, so it reflects the concept of *hishiryō*.

Throughout the years, traditionalist interpretations of *hishiryō* were not limited to Sōtō dictionaries alone but were also evident in the studies of prominent scholars

both within and without the Sōtō School, all reflecting time and again the nondual nature of *hishiryō*. Notable examples include the words of Hata Egyoku 秦慧玉 (1896-1985), the 76th abbot of Eihei-ji 永平寺, who described *hishiryō* as 'the complete *zazen* of simply sitting upright' (1965, 62). Similarly, Nakane Kando 中根環堂 (1876-1959), founder of Sōtō-affiliated Tsurumi University, explained that 'the very physical posture of sitting upright is in itself *hishiryō*' (1936, 90). Kawamura Kōdō 河村孝道, editor of *Dōgen Zenji Zenshū* (道元禪師全集 the complete works of Dōgen Zenji), explained *hishiryō* as 'reality as manifested by the immovable sitting' (1991, 104). Mizuno Yaoko 水野弥穂子, editor of an annotated edition of the *Shōbōgenzō*, depicted *hishiryō* as 'the self of no thought—the unquestionable *zazen* of skin, flesh, bone, and marrow' (2008, 227). For Uchiyama Kōshō 内山興正, it is 'aiming at the very posture of sitting and entrusting everything to this posture' (2004, 61). Finally, Tagami Taishū 田上太秀 asserted that 'the very form of *zazen* is *hishiryō*' (1998, 215).

It is thus apparent that traditionalist explanations of *hishiryō* have consistently expressed the two interdependent characteristics of the term: a state of mind, yet with a representation of the concrete physical performance.

## Harada Kōdō's View of *Hishiryō*

Harada Kōdō was a major figure in the fields of Sōtō and Dōgen Studies during the latter part of the twentieth century. Born in Shizuoka Prefecture in 1953, Harada made his way up the academic ladder becoming a professor of Buddhist Studies at Komazawa University in 1983 and chair of the Department of Zen Studies in both 1986 and 1991. He published over 100 articles, including five monographs.<sup>iv</sup> Harada first examined the meaning of *hishiryō* in an article published in 1968<sup>v</sup> and continued his contemplation of the term in a 1985 article. I will focus on this latter study titled 'Rethinking *hishiryō*' (非思量再考 *hishiryō saikō*).

Harada believes that since early in Zen history, *hishiryō* has not implied a particular mental state lacking thoughts and conceptualization. Neither, he posits, has it represented quietist aspirations but rather a state in which the natural, ongoing circulation of all mental faculties flows without obstruction (1985, 28). Accordingly, he maintains that *hishiryō* should be understood as a broad, conceptual framework that indicates a mental quality or attitude demonstrable in any activity and not only in

the specific performance of *zazen*.<sup>vi</sup> This said, Harada does agree that the term has come to be known in the evolution of Zen history as a specific designation of the practice of sitting, especially in light of the aforementioned dialogue between Yaoshan and the monk and the crystallization of *shikantaza* as the core of Dōgen's Zen (29-31).

According to Harada, in Senne and Kyōgō's *Gokikigakishō* 御聴書抄, the earliest commentaries on Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō*, both 'thinking' (思量 *shiryō*) and 'not thinking' (不思量 *fushiryō*) were used to explain the practice of sitting. Instead of using the term *hishiryō*, Senne and Kyōgō chose to put the two categories together and thus not favor one over the other. In a quote from the *Gokikigakishō* commentaries on Dōgen's *Zazengi* fascicle (坐禪義 principles of *zazen*), Harada demonstrates this use of the two terms: 'The moment of *zazen* is thinking-not-thinking' and comments that: '*Zazen* is the total sitting to which there is no measure' (30). This claim points once more to the fact that the very categories of thinking and not thinking were considered somewhat artificial in comparison to the reality of the performance taking place, namely *zazen*, a performance which cannot be understood by any dualistic category and which is therefore described as *hishiryō*, or, as defined above in the *Zengaku Daijiten*, 'a non-discriminative discrimination'.

Continuing his analysis, Harada cites interpretations of *hishiryō* by prominent scholar-monks from the Sōtō School, including Keizan Jōkin 瑩山紹瑾 (1268–1325), Menzan Zuihō 面山瑞方 (1683–1769), and Nishiyari Bokusan 西有穆山 (1821–1910). The earliest of these are the words of Keizan Jōkin:

Do not be occupied either with awakening or non-awakening. Do not think of either realization nor non-realization. Sitting upright is to be moved like the Sumeru Mountain. It is the direct path of 'This very mind is Buddha', the Mind-Seal of all Buddhas, the intimate transmission from the Buddhas and the ancestors. This is why it has been known as 'the Dharma gate of great joy and ease'. This is what makes the practice of *hishiryō*. (33)

Keizan understood *hishiryō* as a dynamic state of mind that is not limited to the categories of awakening and non-awakening. Following Dōgen's view of practice, he stressed that *zazen* is not a goal-oriented activity, exactly because the performance of sitting is not limited to any dualistic categories. For Keizan, *zazen* is the 'direct path'

(直道 *jikidō*) of the ancestors; the path of affirmation and the enactment of the categories of both practice and realization.

Intrinsic to Keizan's understanding of *hishiryō* are his metaphors describing *zazen* as the Sumeru mountain and as 'the Dharma gate of great joy and ease', the latter being a well-known expression of Dōgen's to describe sitting.<sup>vii</sup> Keizan thus emphasized that even rigid forms such as mountains are endowed with movement and change. In the same way that a mountain is not fixed but rather changes, reacts, and is constantly in flux so too is the posture of *zazen*, and likewise the meaning of *hishiryō*. From here, Harada goes on to explain Menzan's view of *hishiryō*:

Thinking of thought is 'possessing mind'; it runs counter to the vital art [*zazen*]. Not thinking of no thought is 'no mind'; this [also] runs counter to the vital art. If you think now of not thinking, then thinking is not being thought. This is called *hishiryō*. (35)

For Menzan, *hishiryō* is a state of mind that goes beyond the very categories of 'mind' and 'no mind'. The term 'possessing mind' (有心 *ushin*) means the dynamic processes of mental activity, also known as 'mental state' (有心位 *ushin-i*).<sup>viii</sup> Counter to this stands 'no mind' (無心 *mushin*), a state in which no discriminative thoughts emerge nor any conceptualization are made.<sup>ix</sup> The state of *hishiryō*, Menzan claimed, is neither of these, or rather is both of these.<sup>x</sup>

Considering that Menzan paralleled *hishiryō* with the term 'vital art' (要術 *yōjutsu*), which for Dōgen was synonymous with *shikantaza*, the meaning of *hishiryō* does not seem to negate mental activities but rather affirms such categories as 'mind' and 'no mind'. In other words, *hishiryō* is a category that is not opposed to other categories, such as 'possessing mind' or 'no mind' and 'having' or 'lacking'. It seems that *hishiryō* does not signify such notions, as the very occurrence of practice cannot be limited to them.<sup>xi</sup>

Harada subsequently presents Nishiari Bokusan's interpretation which echoed and elaborated on Menzan's understanding of *hishiryō* as 'vital art'. Nishiari described *hishiryō* using one of Dōgen's favorite terms, namely, 'dropping off' (脱落 *datsuraku*):

The place which is neither 'thinking' nor 'not thinking' is called *hishiryō*. Why? Essentially, 'thinking' is the mental activity of the constantly becoming self. 'Not thinking' is the place which departs from this activity into stillness and emptiness. This is a concealed and an unfathomable place. Therefore, one should regard 'thinking' as 'being' and not thinking' as 'emptiness'. Yet as the thinking of now has completely dropped thinking, it is the thinking of 'how?' Similarly, 'not thinking' does not abide in 'not thinking'. Therefore we can say that both 'thinking' and 'not thinking' have been dropped off. This is *hishiryō*. (35)...What is called *hishiryō* is the thinking of *hi* (non). 'Thinking' being dropped off, 'not thinking' being dropped off, this can be termed *hishiryō*. Even though it is not in thought, it does not avoid thought. Dropped off thought is *hishiryō*. (40)

The term *hishiryō* thus depicts a state which cannot even be defined as a state; it is a happening, a dynamic activity that escapes any dualistic definition.

As Nishiari put it, once 'thinking' is thought of, the thought of 'not thinking' is 'dropped' (脱いで *nuide*) and vice versa. Therefore, *hishiryō* is not a state that negates other qualities of mind but rather that characterizes the total exertion and the affirmation of both 'thinking' and 'not thinking', of 'mind' and 'no mind'. This was also stressed by Kurebayashi Kōdō 樽林皓堂 (1893-1988), a leading commentator in Nishiari's lineage, who wrote that '*hishiryō* is the constant mutual circulation of thinking and not thinking' (1978, 170). In light of Nishiari's commentaries, Harada concludes that the meaning of the character 非 (no, non-, without, is not, Ch. *fei*) in *hishiryō* should be seen as an equivalent to the term of 'dropping off' (1985, 35). Thus, in conclusion, Harada claims that:

The absolute nonthinking of *zazen*, as well as the nonthinking of other forms which constitute our everyday life, are fundamentally one and the same. The fundamental nature of nonthinking is revealed by letting consciousness flow as it is, going beyond both existence and non-existence, and not hindering any kind of consciousness that arises. (40)



## Tsunoda Tairyū's View of *Hishiryō*

Interpretation of Dōgen's philosophy by Japanese traditionalists—mostly Sōtō scholars from Komazawa University—continues to this day. One of these leading commentators, who was influenced by many of the aforementioned scholars including Harada, is Tsunoda Tairyū, the current chair of Komazawa's Zen Studies Department.

Tsunoda Tairyū was born in 1957 in his family temple of Jōenji 常圓寺 in Nagano Prefecture and was initiated from a young age into both the religious practice and academic pursuit of Sōtō theology. On graduating from Komazawa University in 1981 with a master's degree in Buddhist Studies, Tsunoda practiced at Eihei-ji, returning to Komazawa in 1986 to pursue his doctoral studies on the subject of Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō*. Since 1993, he has served as professor of Buddhist Studies.<sup>xii</sup> Over the years, Tsunoda has come to be known as one of the foremost representatives of orthodox Sōtō thought, and his vast and ongoing philological research of *Shōbōgenzō* culminated in 2015 with publication of the voluminous *Studies in Dōgen Zenji's Thought* (道元禪師の思想的研究 *Dōgen Zenji no shisō-teki kenkyū*).

It is in the second chapter of this recent study that Tsunoda addresses the question of *hishiryō*. He begins by pointing to the use of the term in two pivotal Sōtō scriptures: the first, Sengcan's *Faith in Mind* (信心銘 Ch. *Xinxin ming*) and the second, *Extensive Record of Yunmen* (雲門広録 Ch. *Yunmen heshang guanglu*). Tsunoda shows how *hishiryō* is explained in both texts by the expression 識情難測 (Ch. *shiqing nance*) which he translates as 'an inconceivable state of mind' (2015, 256). Harada, who mentioned this same expression, renders it 'an inconceivable state of mind that goes beyond any discourse' (1985, 27).<sup>xiii</sup> It is evident throughout that Tsunoda is well aware of the mental and psychological aspects of *hishiryō*, and he clarifies them by using various citations from the founders of Sōtō. The first is from the vulgate manuscript (流布本 *rufu-bon*) of Dōgen's *Fukanzazengi*:

Do not think of good or evil; do not deal with right or wrong. Halt the revolutions of mind, intellect, and consciousness; stop the calculations of thoughts, ideas, and perceptions. Do not intend to make a Buddha, much less be attached to sitting still. (Tsunoda 2015, 257. Translation: Bielefeldt 1988, 177)

The second is from Keizan's *Zazen yōjinki*:

If you want to put an end to your illusions, you must stop thinking of good and bad and must give up all involvement in activity; the mind not thinking and the body not doing is the most essential point. (Tsunoda 2015, 257. Translation: Cleary 2002, 47)

And from the same source:

Cast off mind, intellect, and consciousness, cease recollection, thought, and observation. Do not aim at becoming a Buddha, do not be concerned with right or wrong .... (Tsunoda 2015. Translation: Cleary 2002, 43)

In light of these teachings, Tsunoda explains *hishiryō* as follows:

At the time of *zazen* the thought of right and wrong, good and bad—the very process of discriminative consideration—stop, and all mental judgments drop off as one simply sits. Such a state is called *hishiryō*. Stopping the continuous circulation of mind faculties does not mean the end of consciousness, and it surely does not mean a state of 'no thought and no cognition'. The stopping being described here means the stopping of arbitrary thinking and evolutionary mental involvement. It does not mean that one has to avoid thinking all together while practicing *zazen*, as the very aspiration not to think is in itself a thought-cognition. Although one's state of mind and the arrangement of internal attitude while sitting seems to bear a special meaning, this is nothing special at all. [*Zazen*] is not to possess a special state of mind but rather to let it all go. (2015, 257-8)

However, Tsunoda's clarification of *hishiryō* as a mental or a psychological paradigm subsequently shifts, as he claims that in the writings of the two founders, *hishiryō* is always in affinity to one's deportment while practicing or rather sitting. In Tsunoda's opinion, the founder's various concrete descriptions of sitting clarify the fundamental meaning of *hishiryō* as a full performance and not just as a mental state. In order to support this theory, he mentions, for example, that idioms of concrete or physical experience, such as 'sitting fixedly' (兀兀坐定 *gotsu gotsu zajō*) and 'fixedly sitting upright' (兀兀端坐 *gotsu gotsu tanza*), prove that *hishiryō* has a clear physical aspect which is parallel to, or more accurately co-dependent with, the mental one.

Tsunoda thus maintains that *hishiryō* should be understood as 'a state which is established once the posture of *zazen* has been established' (2015, 256).

Importantly, Tsunoda observes that in the oldest extant version of the *Fukanzazengi*, the *shinpitsu* manuscript (真筆本 *shinpitsu-bon*) of 1233, the term *hishiryō* does not appear. In its place we find the following instruction taken from Changlu Zongyuan's *Instructions for Chan Sitting* (坐禪儀 Ch. *Zuochanyī*)—a text well known to Dōgen:<sup>xiv</sup>

Whenever a thought occurs, be aware of it; as soon as you are aware of it, it will vanish. If you remain for a long period forgetful of objects, you will naturally become unified. (Tsunoda 2015, 259. Translation: Bielefeldt 1988, 181.)

Both Harada and Tsunoda mark this change between the two versions of the *Fukanzazengi* and suggest that they bear the same meaning as Dōgen's instructions from the *rufu-bon* version mentioned earlier (Harada 1985, 29).

Tsunoda summarizes his analysis of *hishiryō* thus:

In any event, a great number of scholars and Sōtō thinkers have highlighted that *hishiryō* is not some kind of an unconscious state, nor is it a state in which there is no thought and no conceptualization. In this regard, I render [Keizan's teaching of] 'Whenever a thought occurs, be aware of it; as soon as you are aware of it, it will vanish' as 'When thoughts emerge while sitting, simply recognize them'. In other words, it is the awareness of 'Oh, a thought has just emerged'. The very moment of recognition is itself the disappearance of the thought which has been recognized. Whenever thoughts and considerations emerge, [simply] be aware of them. This very awareness constitutes the departure of these thoughts. It is not that you try to eradicate them but rather that you let them depart naturally. I think this is the meaning of *hishiryō* as expressed by Keizan in terms of 'being forgetful of objects'.

Thus, *hishiryō* is not a state in which there are no thoughts or conceptions, neither is it a state of simply abiding in defilements and ignorance nor any other discriminative prudence. It is in this way that Dōgen Zenji's view of *hishiryō* was succeeded by Keizan Zenji and reflected in his *Zazen yōjinki*. This

has also become the leading characteristic of one's state of mind during *zazen* as handed down in the Sōtō tradition to this day. (2015, 260)

In these final words, Tsunoda points to the constant affinity that lies between the actual performance of *zazen* and one's state of mind while performing it, bringing to mind Dōgen's words found in the *Zanmai o zanmai* fascicle (三昧王三昧 King of Samādhis Samādhi) of the *Shōbōgenzō*, namely that sitting is of the body and the mind yet also of letting go of body-mind.

Both Harada and Tsunoda's studies adhere to the traditionalist understanding of *hishiryō* as a nondual paradigm that signifies mental and physical qualities of being. In fact, the very 'mental' and 'physical' are somewhat artificial when relating to the essence of *hishiryō* which points both to the activity and to the state of mind while performing the activity. In this regard, *hishiryō* is not a category—a pair of dual *foci* according to Kim (2007, 137 n.1) — but a performative designation of a concrete experience and of an ongoing activity.

*Hishiryō* has, nonetheless, come to be recognized, and was even identified by Dōgen himself, as the state of mind or internal attitude while practicing *zazen*. In this context, *hishiryō* is explained neither in terms of 'thinking' nor 'not thinking' but rather as a state of mind that does not hinder the various, incalculable states of mind that are in flux while sitting and *as* sitting. *Hishiryō* is thus the ongoing activity of the mind that is not entangled with its own entanglements. It is the ever-changing, ongoing, activity which is the mind itself, and it is the state of mind—the very aspiration we might propose—to entrust oneself to this very process.<sup>xv</sup>

The traditional Sōtō dictionaries, the commentaries, and the citations provided by Harada and Tsunoda show that throughout history, *hishiryō* was understood more as a concrete expression of a physical performance, of real and concrete practice rather than solely a mental one. This, of course, is rooted in Dōgen's and Keizan's own articulations of the term as a designation of the practice of sitting and not only as the content of that sitting.

Since the Renaissance in Dōgen scholarship in Japan of the mid nineteenth century, many non-traditionalist scholars from diverse fields of study have presented various elucidations of *hishiryō*, recognizing its central role in Dōgen's philosophy and practice. Of course, these diverse non-sectarian

hermeneutics deserve a thorough inspection of their own, yet this would go much beyond the scope of this current study. Nonetheless, I do find it noteworthy to briefly present three such commentaries, as they provide with somewhat of a glimpse to the manners by which this cardinal terminology in Dōgen's Zen was interpreted by non-sectarian scholarship.

In the entry for *hishiryō* in the *Kōsetsu Bukkyōgo Daijiten* 広説仏教語大辞典 (*The Large Dictionary of Buddhist Terminologies*), Nakamura Hajime 中村元 (1912–1999), asserted that in the context of the Zen tradition, *hishiryō* designates a mental state of "non-differentiation" and of "non-conceptualization" in which "things are not thought of" (2001, 1388). Also, Onda Akira 恩田彰 (1925–) maintained that from a psychological point of view, *hishiryō* can be understood as an extreme one-pointed concentration that, eventually, goes beyond both "thinking" and "not thinking" (1967, 41). Similarly, Ishii Kyōji 石井恭二 (1928–2011), one of the popular contemporary commentators on Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō* 正法眼蔵 writings, has interpreted *hishiryō* in terms of a "silent Samādhi" and as "a thinking that cannot be reached by thought" (2004, 367).

It is, of course, quite reasonable and appropriate to explain *hishiryō* in terms of psychological content or mental qualities, as the term does reflect these aspects. Nonetheless, it must be remembered that in the context of the nondual philosophy of the Mahāyāna, and of the Chan and Zen Schools in particular, the very differentiation of body and mind – quietism and action – regularly comes into question. These qualities are nondual in nature, and therefore any mental experience is also a physical one and vice versa. Consequently, any consideration of *hishiryō* should not be limited to mental or psychological meanings alone but should take into an account physical implications as well. This physical dimension of what seems at first as an epistemological and even a psychological category is heightened time and again in the writings of both Harada and Tsunoda.

*Hishiryō* can be regarded as a description of one's physical form but only while this form is considered a reflection of one's state of mind and vice versa. These two are not, in fact, 'two', and thus *hishiryō* is both the sitting of the body and the

sitting of the mind. It is the whole sitting of the body-mind which indicates an awareness that cannot be categorized as merely 'mental' nor 'physical' but that embraces both the mental and the physical.

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<sup>i</sup> All terms are given in their Japanese transliteration unless mentioned otherwise. All translations are by the author unless mentioned otherwise.

<sup>ii</sup> The story of Yaoshan and the monk, in variants, appears in the *Fukanzazengi*, the *Zazenshi* fascicle, and the *Jōdō* sermons 373 and 524 of the *Eihei Kōroku*.

<sup>iii</sup> The term 坐禅のあり方 (*zazen no arikata*), can also be translated as 'the form of *zazen*', 'the manner of sitting [in *zazen*]', and so forth. I find that in the context of the actual practice being described through this concept, the translation of 'performance' is also suitable.

<sup>iv</sup> For more on Harada's role in the development of Sōtō and Dōgen Studies, including the full details of his many publications, see the commemoration article: "Komazawa daigaku genkyōju ko Harada Kōdō sensei ryakureki oyobi gyōseki." 2001. *Komazawa daigaku bukkyō gakubu ronshū* 32: 9-16.

<sup>v</sup> The article is titled "*Hishiryō nitsuite*" (非思量について 'regarding *hishiryō*'), and is found in the following: *Komazawa daigaku bukkyō gakubu kenkyū kiyō* 26 (1968): 156-164.

<sup>vi</sup> Harada stresses that *hishiryō* is at the heart of the four basic forms that symbolize all of daily activity: walking, standing, sitting, and lying down 行住坐臥 (*gyō jū za ga*). Harada 1985, 28.

<sup>vii</sup> 大安樂の法門 (*dai anraku no hōmon*). Dōgen uses this description in the *Zazengi* fascicle and the similar 安樂門 (*anrakumon*) in the *Fukanzazengi*.

<sup>viii</sup> Charles Muller, "ushin i 有心位" *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E6%9C%89%E5%BF%83%E4%BD%8D> . accessed on 7.8.15.

<sup>ix</sup> Entry for "no mind" 無心 (*mushin*), *Zengaku Daijiten* vol.2, 1208.



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<sup>x</sup> Here, the problem of *hishiryō* reflects the problem of Buddha Nature as appears in the 'Mu' (無) *kōan* of the *Gateless Barrier Collection* (無門關, Ch. *Wumen guan*). In his recent monograph that examines the *kōan*, Heine explained that while the category of 'no' (*mu*) is still popularly recognized as a negation, it was traditionally not considered in terms of rational discourse and logical argumentations of positivistic or nihilistic implications. According to Heine, Zhaozhou's (趙州從諗, 778-897) reply of 'no' was seen as a category that: 'implies an intensive contemplative experience, during which any and all thoughts or uses of reason and words are to be cut off and discarded for good instead of explored for their expressive nuances and implications' (Heine 2014, 9-10).

<sup>xi</sup> Here *hishiryō* echoes a term used by Dōgen's teacher, Tiantong Rujing 天童如淨 (1163–1228), who is recorded in the *Hōkyōki* describing practice in terms of a 'soft mind' 柔軟心 (Ch. *rouruan xin*): 'A soft mind is body and mind dropped off as practiced by all Buddhas and ancestors. It is also called the mind seal of Buddhas and ancestors' (Kakuzen et al. 1990, 38).

<sup>xii</sup> Further biographical details can be found in Tsunoda's postscript to his latest work (2015, 667-72).

<sup>xiii</sup> This brings to mind Bielefeldt's claim that: 'In this nonthinking, both we who are sitting fixedly and the act of fixed sitting itself are not what we think, indeed fixed sitting cannot be gauged by any measure of human understanding' (1988, 147).

<sup>xiv</sup> The essay can be found in the *Chanyuan qinggui* 禪苑清規, the oldest extant collection of regulations for a Chan monastery from the eleventh century. Bielefeldt 1988, 55-57.

<sup>xv</sup> As Kim proposes: 'If the cause of the arising of predicament lies within discrimination, then the cause for the eradication of such a predicament also lies within that discrimination itself [...] For Dōgen, whether or not we use discrimination in the Zen salvific project is not the issue, rather how we use it' (2007, 84).