*Dogen, Women, and the Dragon Princess of Lotus Sutra Chapter Twelve: Issues of Context and Interpretation*

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Was Dogen a “great manly hero” who proclaimed a profound affirmation of awakened persons of all genders? Or was he a Zen teacher who when speaking of women’s value compared women to trees and walls? Is there a marked difference, with respect to views of women, between the Dogen who in the *Raihai tokuzui* stated that women have become buddhas and the Dogen who wrote in the *Shukke kudoku* that the talk that women can become buddhas in a female body is not the authentic teaching of the Buddha?

Dogen’s views of gender and women deserve another look; and the answer to these questions turn in part on whether or not Dogen later in life changed his interpretation of *Lotus Sutra* Chapter 12.

In this essay I would like to look at Dogen’s teachings as they relate to women in three of his essays and in the *Eihei Koroku (Eihei Dogen’s Extensive Record)*. One essay is an independent work, and the other two are from the various collections of Dogen’s writings that are called by the name “The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye” (or “The True Dharma Eye Storehouse”; hereafter *“Shobogenzo”*). The first, the “Talk about Wholeheartedly Pursuing the Way” (hereafter *Bendowa)*, should be considered an independent work, although it was belatedly included in the ninety-fascicle “Honzan” edition of the *Shobogenzo* compiled in 1815. The second, the essay called “”Bowing [to a Teacher] and Getting [the Teacher’s] Marrow” (hereafter *Raihai tokuzui*), has been included in most recensions of the *Shobogenzo,* although only the “short” version is attested by more than one manuscript; for this reason I will confine my discussion here to the short version, and discuss in another essay the additional material in the long version.[[1]](#footnote-1)Finally, the essay called “The Merit of Leaving Home [and Becoming a Monastic]” (hereafter S*hukke kudoku*), was included in the 60-fascicle edition of which a 1381 copy exists, in the twelve-fascicle *Shobogenzo* (for which a manuscript copy dated 1420 exists)*,* as well as in the Edo period Honzan edition.

While the *Eihei koroku* contains writings from all stages of Dogen’s career, the three essays are thought to represent different Dogens from different periods. Where they touch on women and lay people, they seem to contradict each other. In such a manner are created the interpretive problems I address here.

In Heine’s schema in his recent book *Did Dogen go to China?* the *Bendowa* belongs to Dogen’s very early writings; in fact, it is very likely the first written record of Dogen’s teachings.[[2]](#footnote-2)  *Raihaitokuzui* belongs to the “early middle” or “transitional” period. S*hukke kudoku* is regarded as a revision of an earlier essay called “Leaving Home” *(Shukke)*.” Scholars date this and most—but not all-- of the twelve essays included in the 12-fascicle *Shobogenzo*” (hereafter *Junikanbon*) to the last few years of Dogen’s life.

I have placed the *Raihai tokuzui* at the center of this discussion, because it is the text in which Dogen, in my view, very deliberately presents his views on women and gender in a thoroughgoing manner. Comparison of the *Raihai tokuzui* with each of the other texts in turn will allow me to lay out a number of connected aspects of his views.

I intend to compare Dogen’s views as expressed in the three essays and the *Eihei koroku* with each other. But in all cases I will also trace Dogen’s views to China, and compare his versions with versions he most likely learned there.

**1. The *Raihaitokuzui* and the *Bendowa***

In an essay published in the *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* in 1999*,* I attempted to broaden the context of the discussion of Dogen and women by pointing out in some detail that in the areas of China in which Dogen (may have) spent four years studying Chan, a small but significant number of nuns and lay women had already won recognition within widely read Chan lineage genealogical literature as awakened Dharma heirs.[[3]](#footnote-3) A few nuns and laywomen had won recognition as Chan teachers, and those nuns had themselves produced widely recognized female dharma heirs. A larger number of nuns and laywomen received “DharmaWords” (*fayu,* J. *hogo*) from eminent male Chan teachers, a sign of a substantial teacher-disciple relationship in which the disciple is actually practicing Chan. Many more nuns and laywomen visited the temples of and interacted with famous Chan teachers, forming a teacher-disciple relationship with them. I pointed out that Dogen, who had traveled to China, could well have been aware of this.

After he returned from Song China in 1227 as an heir to Rujing's Dharma, Dogen stayed for a few years at Kenninji, the Tendai temple founded by Eisai where he had originally become a disciple of the deceased Zen teacher Myozen. There he wrote the *Bendowa*.[[4]](#footnote-4) Some think the *Bendowa* is Dogen’s rebuttal to the Daruma-shu, a Zen school that was centered on the charismatic self-certified teacher Noonin and had been outlawed by the court of emperor Go-Toba in 1194. In any caseis a beautiful essay setting out the reasons why Dogen advocated seated meditation (*zazen)* as a new primary practice.[[5]](#footnote-5) It includes (or in some versions entirely consists of) questions and answers, both penned by Dogen. Women and gender come up only in the following exchanges:

The fictional questioner asks:

“Can this practice [Zazen] be done by men and women in lay life, or is it only suitable for monks?

Dogen answers:

“The [Indian and Chinese Chan] Ancestors have said in their teaching, ‘When it comes to realizing the Buddha Dharma, make no distinction between male and female, or between the exalted and the lowly.’”

The fictional questioner asks:

“By leaving home life behind, monks are quickly separated from all their various ties so that they have no impediments to diligently practicing seated mediation. But how can those of us involved in the daily pressures of lay life turn to doing training and practice so that we may realize the Way of the Buddhas, which is unconcerned with worldly affairs?”

Dogen replies:

“The Buddhas and Ancestors, out of their overflowing sympathy, have opened the great, wide gates of their compassion. They have done this so that they might help all sentient beings realize the truth and enter the Way. Who amongst those in the worlds of either the mundane [lay] or the saintly [monastic] could possibly be excluded from entering?[[6]](#footnote-6)

…

“It simply depends on whether you have the determination or not: it has nothing to do with being a householder or a monastic.[[7]](#footnote-7)

…

“In Great Song China, I never heard it said that present-day rulers and their ministers, gentry and commoners, men and women, had not fixed their hearts on the Way of the [Indian and Chinese Chan] Ancestors. Both those in the military and those in civil service were intent on seeking training in meditation and studying the Way. Among those who were intent, many undoubtedly illumined that which is the foundation of their hearts and minds.”[[8]](#footnote-8)

In the *Bendowa* Dogen mentioned two women who appear in stories who were “rescued by their genuine faith and trust.” The first is a “woman who came to understand what the Great Way is due to her playfully dressing up in a monk’s robe in a previous life.” In the story she is depicted as an arhat. The other, in a story from Song dynasty China, is a faithful laywoman who awakened upon seeing an ignorant old monk, to whom she had brought food daily, just dumbly sitting. [[9]](#footnote-9)

As Dogen stated clearly in the *Bendowa,* the requirements for practice and awakening are great determination, great faith and an awakened teacher. No one is excluded from possessing either faith or determination. Training, including centrally the practice of zazen, is also absolutely necessary for awakening.

When Dogen wrote that “The [Indian and Chinese Chan] Ancestors have said in their teaching, ‘When it comes to realizing the Buddha Dharma, make no distinction between male and female, or between the exalted and the lowly,’” he transmitted faithfully what had been said in Song China, according to our records. For example, Dahui Zonggao (J. Daie Soko) (1089-1163), the most famous of his generation’s Linji (Rinzai) Chan lineage teachers, made the following statements in his public sermons. About Lady Tang, one of his most successful lay students, he said:

“Can you say that she is a woman, and women have no share [in enlightenment]? You must believe that This Matter has nothing to do with [whether one is] male or female, old or young. Ours is an egalitarian Dharma-gatethat has only one flavor.”[[10]](#footnote-10)

In another sermon Dahui said:

For mastering the truth, it does not matter whether one is male or female, high class or of low birth. One moment of insight and one is shoulder to shoulder with the Buddha.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Dahui’s contemporary, Hongzhi Zhengjue (1091-1157), an outstanding Caodong teacher during the Southern Song dynasty, was famous for his teachings on “Silent Illumination Chan.” Describing the moment when one is free of all impediments and experiences reality, he wrote:

“Everyone has this complete within himself or herself. At this moment there is no male or female or other distinction of mark *(xiang).* Only a pure, single marvelous clarity.”[[12]](#footnote-12)

Again he wrote:

“The real mark is the mark of no mark;

The real mind is the mind of no mind.

The real attainment is the no-attaining attaining.

The real activity is the no-activity activity.

“In that condition, each and every phenomenon (dharma) is within my power; if all marks appear in my person, all marks are beautiful. At such a moment, one does not see that there are such distinguishing marks as rich and poor, male and female, right and wrong, gain and loss. It is only because there are marks that you accept and marks that you reject that you are not able to join yourself to emptiness and experience equality with the Dharma realm *(Dharmadhatu?)*”[[13]](#footnote-13)

Finally, Hongzhi write thus of the activity (of the Buddha[-nature] discovered at the moment of awakening:

“Is it not that in this moment [of awakening] a monk or nun receives the complete and sufficient activity [of the Buddha-nature]? It is where you act, and where I act, and where all the Buddhas and patriarchs are at work; how could distinctions of monastic and lay, male and female, matter then?”[[14]](#footnote-14)

Dogen eventually developed his own distinctive understanding and expression of the relation of awakening, practice, and the activity of the Buddha/Buddha-nature. But on the fundamental points, that form and *xiang,* and thus gender,are irrelevant to awakening, and that the Buddhas and patriarchs understand the activity of Buddhahood universally to pervade all phenomenal activity and save all beings, the Dogen of the *Bendowa* was on the same pagewith the Chinese ancestors.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Steven Heine has indicated that he thinks that since answers to only three of eighteen questions of the Bendowa address whether women and/or lay people can practice Zazen and attain awakening, those who appreciate Dogen’s “’refreshingly ecumenical’ universal outlook embracing laypersons and women” and see a change in Dogen’s later works, as well as those who support women as practitioners and teachers, should not make too much of the universalism expressed in these lines.[[16]](#footnote-16) I believe the opposite is true: there are reasons for the latter group to make much of Dogen’s ringing proclamation in the *Bendowa*. The *Bendowa* is Dogen’s way of setting the tone and the rules for his incipient practice community, his way of revealing who he is and will be as a teacher. As American Zen teacher Myoan Grace Schireson writes of the *Raihai tokuzui* (Bowing [to the Teacher] and Obtaining the [Teacher’s] Marrow):

*“Raihai tokuzui* was written early in Dogen’s teaching career (1240) and represents the foundational teaching in Dogen’s Zen that all beings, without exception, fully express Buddha nature. More specifically, in *Raihai tokuzui*, Dogen uses gender equality itself as an example of the complete expression of Buddhism in all beings. In 1240, Dogen was engaged in an attempt to build a community based on this very teaching. It was to be a community that not only taught equality, but also actually functioned based on respect for the equality of all beings, including women, as Buddhist teachers. Beginning with the Buddha himself, many great Buddhist teachers had to work around customs and laws of their times and cultures that placed women in the position of second class citizens. In this context, *Raihai tokuzui* was more than simply a statement of and about equality; Dogen wanted to go further to establish an actual community based on this teaching. Without enacting his understanding of equality in his community, full and true expression of the Buddha’s teaching would be compromised.”[[17]](#footnote-17)

Even more than the *Raihaito kuzui* essay of 1240, we can see the *Bendowa* of 1231*,* Dogen’s first surviving written statement, as proclaiming the nature of the practice he intended to encourage in his new community and the Buddhist insights he thought essential to enact there. It is very significant that in the *Bendowa* Dogen clearly states the instruction he has received from the ancestors: “When it comes to realizing the Buddha Dharma, make no distinction between male and female, or between the exalted and the lowly.” This proclamation affirms the commitment of true Chan and Zen masters to teaching lay women and men and supporting their practice, and declares it to be a necessary commitment for one who wants to teach and practice as the buddhas do. As Schireson writes: “Without enacting his understanding of equality in his community, full and true expression of the Buddha’s teaching would be compromised.” Following on this strong proclamation, in 1240 Dogen took a further step in the *Raihai tokuzui*: He proclaimed awakened women to be fully equal to awakened men as teachers for those not yet awakened.

**2.Reading the *Raihaitokuzui* in conjunction with the *Eihei koroku***

Another set of texts that predates the *Raihai tokuzui* essay is Dogen’s two, or possibly three, “Dharma Words” (J. *hogo,* Ch. *fayu*) to his nun disciple Ryonen. These were all probably written before the *Raihai tokuzui,* and they deploy language and themes that are developed at more length in that essay. Again we find in Dogen’s *hogo* to Ryonen references to stories and language that are brought up by Dahui and Hongzhi in support of women and their practice.

Around 1231 Dogen left Kenninji and moved to Anyo’in, a small hermitage in the Fukakusa district on the outskirts of Kyoto to found an independent monastery. There his circle of students began to form, including followers of the Daruma school, With this move he came under attack from the monks of Mt. Hiei, the headquarters of Tendai.[[18]](#footnote-18) He sacrificed his status as an “official monk” as well as his link to Tendai and Enryakuji. He became a “reclusive monk (*tonseiso).*”

At his hermitage in Fukakusa in 1235 and 1236 Dogen raised money to build a Monks' Hall (*sodo*), a characteristically Song dynasty Chan style training hall, and subsequently changed the name of his temple there to Koshoji. In 1243, for reasons not revealed in extant sources, Dogen left Koshoji and led his disciples into the mountains of Echizen, where with the help and protection of a prominent warrior-class patron he built a new monastery.

Although we do not know a lot about Dogen's early efforts to collect and teach a group of students before and during the thirteen years that he taught at Fukakusa, it is clear that Buddhist nuns were among his community of disciples and donors, including the nun Ryonen.[[19]](#footnote-19)

Dogen wrote at least two and probably three Dharma Words *(hogo)* Ryonen, whom he praised as a serious practitioner. In the first undated Dharma Word included in volume 8 of the *Eihei koroku (The Extensive Record of Eihei [Dogen]),* he wrote:

“Wayfarer Ryonen, you have the seeds of transcendent wisdom *(prajna)* from former lives, intently aspiring to the great way of buddhas and ancestors. You are a woman, but have the strength of will of a great manly person (*daijobu)*.”[[20]](#footnote-20)

In the third Dharma Word for Ryonen, for which we have a manuscript copy in Dogen’s own hand dated 1231, he wrote:

“This mountain monk regards the sincerity of the aspiration for the way of wayfarer Ryonen, and sees that other people cannot match her.”[[21]](#footnote-21)

The nun Ryonen is listed in the Zen lineage chart in the Zen dictionary published in Japan in 1985 by the Soto School as Dogen’s Dharma-heir.[[22]](#footnote-22)

Let us pause a minute to think about what Dogen says to and about the nun Ryonen. In light of the *Raihaitokuzui,* where it is said that one’s truly awakened teacher “is not in the form of a man or woman but rather will be a person of great resolve --literally, a *daijobu—*we can see that Dogen in his praise of Ryonen was saying that she had what it takes to become a true Zen teacher; perhaps she was of teacher caliber already. We should not think of the nun Ryonen as a marginal hanger-on in a sangha where attention was all given to the male students on whom the future rested. First, Dogen is committed to teaching all based on their equal capacity to express Buddha-nature. And second, Dogen tells her (and us) that “other people cannot match her.”

In 1234 a nun named Egi joined his community as one of a group of Daruma-shu disciples. Both Ryonen and Egi reappear in records we have from his Echizen period, which suggests that they remained in Dogen's circle for a long time. If Ryonen had wanted to set out on her own as a teacher, there would not have been institutional support. But she may have taught other women in Dogen’s circle.

The Daruma-shu group also included the monk Ejo, who between 1235 and 1237 wrote down excerpts of Dogen's talks and responses to questions, forming a text called the "Record of Things Heard" (J. *Zuimonki),*[[23]](#footnote-23) One exchange in this text features an unnamed nun asking Dogen a question, which makes it evident that nuns attended and spoke at Dogen's informal teaching sessions. Dogen’s circle included women who gave financial support as well: in 1237 the aristocratic nun Shogaku donated a lecture hall for Koshoji.[[24]](#footnote-24) Ryonen may have played a useful teaching and networking role for Dogen.

In 1240, during this Koshoji period, Dogen also delivered the *Raihai tokuzui* sermon. The sermon begins with the theme of how to choose a teacher and how to obtain his or her most profound teaching, namely, awakening. But it becomes in large part a sermon on how awakened nuns and laywomen, though lower in status in the sangha than monks, should be honored by monks and laymen and are worthy of being their teachers. In this sermon Dogen tells several important stories of awakened women Chan ancestors and the men who bowed to them and received their teaching. Dogen makes clear that the moral of these stories is that one must see oneself lightly, and see everyone and everything as one’s teacher, including women and lower status people. This is the attitude of a truly admirable Dharma student.

Some scholars have suggested that Dogen's real purpose in giving this sermon was to make the point that true students of the Way would be willing to take *him* as a teacher.[[25]](#footnote-25) Monks in Japan were divided into “official monks *(kanso)*” and “monks in retreat *(tonseiso)*.” The first group was restricted to monks of aristocratic birth; their role was to perform ceremonies and give dharma instruction to the court. The great institutions of the Tendai and Shingon sects were administered by such monks. The greatly sought-after teachers there taught inner circles of monks who, like themselves, were of aristocratic origin. Dogen could have participated in all this. He was of aristocratic birth as the son of the Great Minister of the Center *(naidaijin)* Minamoto no Michichika, who died in 1202, and he had been ordained at Enryakuji, the headquarters temple of the Tendai school. However, he had in 1230 given up the status of an “official monk” *(kanso)* incurring a considerable loss of status.[[26]](#footnote-26) The monks who joined Dogen at Koshoji were at risk of cutting themselves off from the traditional route to monastic fame and leadership.[[27]](#footnote-27)

This line of interpretation has some plausibility and force. Yet to suggest that Dogen talked about awakened women and the men who entrusted their practice and education to them solely in order to talk indirectly about himself goes a step too far. We should not forget that women were present in his early sangha; surely the audience listening to this sermon was not exclusively male. We must not forget Dogen’s sincere praise of the nun Ryonen’s practice and attainment in the Dharma Words recorded in *Eihei koroku.* There most likely were awakened women present in his sangha ready or nearly ready to be teachers for Dogen’s students, if the students could bring themselves to submit to them. Even though in the *Raihaitokuzui* Dogen often seems to be addressing male students, as he talked he may well have had in mind women whom he could recommend as teachers, or equally likely, some women audience members who were personally interested in the question of whether women could teach. In the texts of Yuanwu Keqin, Dahui Zonggao and others in Song dynasty Chan, one can usually find a close correlation between a master's mention of the possibility of a woman becoming awakened through Chan practice and the recorded presence of a woman either as intended recipient of the Dharma Word, letter or poem in which the point is made or as sponsor of the sermon containing the point.

Some point out that at the beginning of the *Raihai tokuzui,* women are being compared to foxes and stone pillars. Steven Heine writes:

“[In addition to affirming the role of women,] the *Raihai tokuzui* also suggests, perhaps ironically, that demons, pillars and foxes are worthy representatives of the Dharma.”[[28]](#footnote-28)

To this reader, though, the apparent irony in comparing women to foxes and pillars lessens, and even disappears, if one knows to what Dogen refers when he brings up foxes and pillars, and if one reminds oneself about Dogen’s oft-used level-shifting, paradoxical, ever challenging “koan-like” writing strategy. Most important, Dogen’s message surely was that every single thing, however unremarkable or apparently mundane, can be one’s teacher.

**3. “Getting the Marrow by Doing Obeisance”: A close reading**

The essay *Raihaitokuzui* is found in two versions. The short version is attested by many manuscript versions, while the long version, which contains the short version plus additional material, is attested by only one. The long version is found in the “*Secret [Himitsu] Shobogenzo”* in 28 chapters housed atthe Eiheiji temple.Since the creation of the 95-chapter “Honzan” edition of the *Shobogenzo* in the early nineteenth century, the long version has been included in many subsequent editions and in English translations. William Bodiford argues that the contemporary almost universal inclusion of the additional material gives us a false idea that the additional material was important and well-known in the pre-modern period, and creates a chapter that disturbs the flow of the larger *Shobogenzo* (Bodiford, 2012). Because of limits of space, and in order to present a close reading of the short version, I will treat here the short version only.

Dogen begins his sermon with the topic of the difficulty of finding a true teacher,[[29]](#footnote-29) and the importance of dropping everything to study with such a teacher when found. The point he wishes to make is that true teachers may take any form: even a youth, a layperson, or a woman may be a true teacher. With this theme in mind, the short version of the essay can be divided into two parts, each of which reflects different aspects of Dogen’s reflection on the Chinese story from which the title is taken. The first part reflects Dogen’s reflection on the story as a whole, while the second part may be triggered in part by the unexpected fact that the story includes a nun among the four chief disciples of the monk Bodhidharma, the putative transmitter of the “Dhyana (Chan, Zen)” lineage from India to China.

The story as found in the early Song dynasty genealogical history of the Chan school called the *Transmission of the Lamp [compiled in] the Jingde Era,* shows the Indian monk Bodhidharma, soon to return to India, asking his four chief disciples Daofu, Daoyu, Huike, and the nun Zongchi, to express their deep insight in verse. When the first one does, he says, “You got my skin.” When the second one, the nun Zongchi, does, he says, “You got my flesh.” When the third one does, he says, “You got my bones. When the fourth one does, he says, “You got my marrow.” The Chan tradition since the Song dynasty has seen the one who got his “marrow,” the monk Huike, as Bodhidharma’s only true heir. In *“Katto”* a later essay in the *Shobogenzo*, Dogen famously refused to sanction ranking the understanding transmitted to each disciple according to intimacy or thoroughness, saying that seeing one of them as Bodhidharma’s dharma-heir and the others as unequal would be a mistake.[[30]](#footnote-30)

In the first several paragraphs of the *Raihai tokuzui* Dogen’s focus is on the difficult task of finding a teacher, and the trusting, devoted, energetic response to the teacher’s instruction that should ensue. He writes: “A true teacher has nothing at all to do with such characteristics as male and female and so on, but the teacher must be one who is a great man (Ch. *dajangfu*, J. *daijobu*), must be 'such a person' (i.e., one who is intimately acquainted with *satori*)...”[[31]](#footnote-31)

It is particularly significant that Dogen’s essay begins with a sentence the first part of which is a quotation from the famous statement of the nun Chan teacher Moshan Liaoran to a male Chan student named Zhixian. In the story of their encounter, Zhixian is wandering about in search of a teacher. He hears that a nun has set herself up as abbess and teacher, and is both curious and skeptical about her implied claims. Zhixian decides to test her out; if she fails to demonstrate awakened mind, he will “overturn her teaching platform.” If she impresses him, he will stay and study with her. When he enters the Abbess Liaoran’s temple at Moshan (Mt. Mo) and meets her, Zhixian flunks the first coded dialogue. Subsequently Zhixian’s test question to her is, "What is the person in the mountain [i.e., Mt. Mo] like?" Reading his mind, perhaps, she replies: "It is not [a matter of] male or female form and so on." After another exchange, defeated and impressed, he stays, and later acknowledges that at least half his accomplishment is due to her teaching. [He receives dharma transmission from his next teacher, Linji Yixuan (Rinzai Gigen).] So while Dogen’s mind is on the important story of the nun and three monks who are Bodhidharma’s dharma-heirs, his mind is also making a connection to the story of Moshan Liaoran, the story of a woman who teaches a male disciple, and the story a male disciple who stays on to study with her after he has found her to be a true teacher. Apparently her deep insight into the irrelevancy of form and characteristics *(xiang)* to the awakened mind of the true teacher has impressed him deeply.

The second part of Dogen’s sentence says that the teacher must be a *daijobu* (Ch. *dajangfu*), a “great manly person.” Behind this term lies a passage from the *Nirvana Sutra (i.e., Sutra on the Final Nirvana of Sakyamuni*), fascicle 9, the *Rulaixing* chapter, which says: "If one is able to know that he has the Buddha nature, I say that he has the characteristics of a man (*jangfu*). If there is a woman [who knows], then she is a man (*nanzi*)."

The rhetoric of gender equality in Chinese Chan in the Song dynasty draws heavily on the concept of *“daijobu,”* someone who, whether a man or a woman, has the characteristic fierce strength and determination of a great manly person, or, someone who cuts through all delusion with a single stroke, and, upon awakening, is beyond the limitations, including the gender limitations, of the unawakened. In Japan too in the late Kamakura period Dogen is not alone in using this term to argue for gender equality, at least if the woman is capable of the decisive strength of will of which great manly persons are capable.[[32]](#footnote-32) As the *Nirvana Sutra* passage makes clear, not all men are capable of being “great manly persons” either: in that way, there is equality, perhaps. Lori Meeks quotes the Vinaya master Eison who was a close contemporary of Dogen as writing: “Even women, if they renounce the world now, pursue Buddhist learning and practice, take the tonsure and reach enlightenment, are all manly persons. Truly this is a reason to rejoice!”[[33]](#footnote-33)

Dogen’s next offering in the essay called *Raihaitokuzui* is: “The teacher is not a person from the past or from the present. More likely it will be a fox spirit who will be the good friend….The teacher will not be in the dark about cause and effect; the teacher may be you or I or someone else.”

As for the student, s/he needs sincerity and the believing mind. S/he must prize the dharma and value herself or himself very lightly. S/he must flee the world and regard the way as his or her abode. If she or he does this, the master will be revealed to be inside the student. Dogen writes: “The ancestor [Huike] who cut off his arm to get the marrow does not refer to another; the master who will teach you the sloughing off of body and mind (like his own teacher Rujing in China) is already within yourself.” At this point in the essay, his mind is on the true meaning, the takeaway moral, of the story of Bodhidharma and Huike.

With Huike, Zhixian and Moshan Liaoran, and the Chinese ancestors who also told these stories to encourage their women students no doubt still in mind, Dogen turns to the task of expanding his examples of successful students beyond Huike. He says, “There is not just one instance of a person who had the determination to regard the dharma as something precious….I shall present just a few examples here.”

The reader or listener is now waiting for some straightforward human examples like Huike. But instead of offering those, Dogen turns to the strange idea that one can find the Dharma wisdom being taught by entities in any form—“as a pillar, as a lantern, as all buddhas, as a little fox, a demon, a man or a woman.” (This is the passage that Heine takes to be ironic.) And then he immediately introduces himself in a direct address to the listener: “if you have gotten my marrow…” Dogen quotes an unidentified utterance of Sakyamuni Buddha that says that nothing about the teacher’s appearance, caste, shortcomings, or behavior should weigh at all with a student seeking a teacher; what is important is that the student venerate and prize the teacher’s wisdom. This leads back to the “teachers” that can be found in the world—trees and rocks, pillars, walls, the little fox to whom the god Indra did obeisance and put questions about the dharma. “Long ago [the great god] Indra honored a wild fox as his own master and sought the Dharma from him, calling him “Great Bodhisattva.” It had nothing to do with whether the teacher was in a high or low [noble or base] form because of past karma.”

**A note on the wild fox and Indra, and on pillars and lanterns**

Does the *Raihai tokuzui* use irony to put down women? Let us pause to consider whether the comparison between women and wild foxes is meant ironically.

Dogen more than once brings up the story of Indra and the wild fox in his writings. In this story Indra realizes that he wants to take refuge in the three jewels, and he asks a wild fox trapped in a well to preach the Dharma to him.[[34]](#footnote-34) [He doesn’t offer to get the fox out of the well, however.] The story is found in the *Unprecedented Causation Sutra*. In the sutra the fox in the well says to Indra: “You are the king of devas, but do not behave well. The Dharma teacher is down here and you are up there. You are asking for essential dharma without expressing respect. The Dharma water is pure and capable of saving beings. Why do you regard yourself as higher?”

We can see that the story of Indra and the fox is entirely on point in Dogen’s sermon. In Dogen’s view, Indra does well to ask the fox. The fox does well to demand respect from Indra if he wants dharma. The fox points out that, where dharma is co concerned, worldly or cosmic status and form of rebirth mean nothing. If women, Dogen and the fox are all on a par as being socially and karmically viewed as inferior, and therefore treated without respect, but worthy of respect as dharma teachers, then women are not necessarily put down by being compared with the fox of the sutra.

Pillars and lanterns too have a long history in Chan of being dharma teachers. Dogen no doubt was familiar with the following exchange in the record of Shitou:

“A monk asked Shitou, ‘Why did the first ancestor come from the West?’ Shitou said: ‘Ask the temple pillar.’”[[35]](#footnote-35)

Based on this and many other examples from the records of Yunmen and others, I suggest that when Dogen proposes that one seek the Dharma from pillars and foxes, he does so on the basis of sutra stories or stories in Chan literature in which protagonists truly seek to learn or should seek to learn the dharma from such beings—in fact, from all beings. Seen with the eye of true dharma, things are not what they seem to the worldly eye; one has to consider every possible angle if one wants to catch a glimpse of what the true dharma eye sees. Furthermore, leading the reader rapidly through several apparently conflicting views of a subject is Dogen’s constant strategy in his writings of the Early and Middle periods. This strategy unseats one’s settled assumptions, opening one’s eyes to the possibility of seeing buddhas in ordinary people and mundane things. Is this not what is going on here? No irony is intended.

With this we reach the end of section one of the short version. Dogen has already beautifully and realistically portrayed the mental attitude the successful student must have. Further, he has followed earlier masters in undercutting with bizarre, even grotesque examples from Chan and Mahayana literature any expectations one might want to hold on to about the teacher. And he hints here that he is challenging the listener or reader to recognize wisdom in him, to recognize the challenge that he himself presents as a monk without much of a following who might nonetheless open up vast wisdom to one who can look beyond status or ecclesiastical accomplishment. He is just a “reclusive monk” who dropped out of the rank of the “official monks” who serve the state and emperor, the rank into which he had been ordained. He wears black robes, not the white ones of official monks.[[36]](#footnote-36) He lacks significant patrons. Why would you study with him? Wisdom can be sought from him by those who with fierce determination want to find the supremely valuable way, and have the imagination and the fierce resolve to inquire of a demon, a pillar or a little fox.

In section two of the short version Dogen turns to the subject of how the best Song dynasty monks, the ones who really seek the Way, do not draw lines between people of high and low status and between women and men where the Way is concerned. The key criterion is wisdom. A female, monastic or lay, who has wisdom wins everyone’s respect in Chinese Chan circles. According to Dogen, a few Tang, Five Dynasties and Song dynasty Chinese monk students were admirably willing to do obeisance to a woman who has attained the Way, and they awakened thereby. This contrasts with Japanese monks, who only want to choose their teachers from among those of equal or higher rank. In the Buddhist order nuns rank below monks, and in Japanese society the status of men of a given rank is greater than that of the women of that rank. Female monastics and laywomen will certainly not be taken as teachers by Japanese monks. But this is a big mistake.

Dogen writes: “Deluded people of high social status, age, seniority, monastic rank or accomplishment on the bodhisattva path, though, think that they cannot bow to those of lower status or rank and take them as their teachers, even if such lower ranking persons have acquired the Dharma.” He then offers a long list of telling examples. For instance, some think to themselves, "I am the chief of the monk officials who govern monastic affairs, so I cannot bow to ordinary men and women, even if they have acquired the Dharma." Others think, "I have reached a very high stage of the bodhisattva path, and I cannot honor nuns and the like, even if they have acquired the Dharma." Dogen points out that this is entirely the wrong attitude in one who truly seeks the dharma. "When a nun (who as a nun ranks lower than any monk) who has acquired the Way, who has acquired the Dharma appears in the world (as an abbess), for the monk who seeks the Dharma and studies Zen to enter her assembly, bow to her in homage (as his teacher) and ask [her] about the Dharma is the mark of his excellence as a student. It [finding an awakened teacher] should be like finding drinking water when you are thirsty."

One might argue that Dogen has still not left the subject of his own claims to be recognized as a teacher of great worth. But in fact his discourse in the second section is not like the first: it is consistently focused on the value of a woman, lay or monastic, who has attained the Way, and stories of Chinese monks whose capacity for recognizing transcendent wisdom **in a woman** has led to their own awakening. In the root story of this essay, Bodhidharma recognized the awakened mind of the nun Zongchi. Dogen tells the story of the monk Guanqi Zhixian, who during the Five Dynasties in China studied under the nun teacher Moshan Liaoran; this story is told in the *Jingde chuandeng lu,* and is given in full below. He ends by saying, "Zhixian's bowing to and seeking the Dharma from Moshan showed the superiority of his determination [to attain the Way]."

He then tells how a nun named Miaoxin became the provisions manager of the ninth century master Yangshan Huiji (807-883)'s monastery, because the monks at the monastery agreed that she was the most qualified. Her duty was to attend to donors, donations and provisions, particularly of grain and food. Her cloister was apparently lower on the mountainside than the main compound that contained the Dharma Hall and Abbot's Quarters. Seventeen traveling monks from Szechwan who stopped for the night at her cloister on their way up the mountain to study with Huiji bowed to her in sign of taking her as their teacher. This came about because, in the evening as they were resting, they had a discussion about the Sixth Patriarch's comment as recorded in the *Platform Sutra* that "it is not the wind that moves, or the flag that moves, it is your mind that moves," which she overheard. When her disparaging remarks about their discussion were reported to them, they did not brush them aside. Instead,

"They were ashamed that they had not been able to speak [Dharma, as those who understood Chan would do]," and at once they put on their outer robes and performed the ceremonial etiquette appropriate to seeking an interview with a teacher. In the formal interview she said to them, 'It is not the wind which moves, it is not the flag which moves, and it is not the mind which moves.' When they heard this comment of hers, they had a realization, and made bows of thanks and became her disciples. Then they returned to Szechwan, since they had found enlightenment and a teacher, and did not need to climb the mountain the next day to see Huiji.[[37]](#footnote-37)

The moral Dogen draws from these stories of Chinese monks who have taken lower status people--women--as their teachers is that the Japanese monks in his audience should do the same. Dogen says, "When the abbot of the monastery and the senior monk with whom he shares his teaching seat are not around, you should ask a nun who has acquired the Way to teach you." Don't prefer a monk, even a senior monk, if he has not acquired the Way.

In support of his point that in China men Chan students take enlightened women as their teachers, he makes a more general observation:

"At present nuns enroll in the monasteries of the Sung. When one becomes famous for her attainment of the Dharma, and receives the imperial edict from the government officials appointing her abbess of a monastery for nuns, then at [another, neighboring men’s] monastery she "ascends the Hall (*shangtang, J. jodo).*" That is, she goes to the Dharma Hall in response to an invitation issued with great ceremony and ascends the high seat to teach by giving a formal sermon and answering questions, as the Chan teacher who is an abbot or who represents the abbot does on the most formal of teaching occasions. “All of the monastic community [of the neighboring monastery] from the abbot down attend to hear her teaching, listening to the Dharma while standing formally in their positions. Among those who ask questions [of the woman master] about [old] sayings (*wato*, Ch. *huatou*) there are also male monks. This is a long-established practice."

Holding the inaugural ceremony in a nearby larger monastery would be especially necessary if one's new monastery were small, but in the case of male monastics it seems to have happened in China even when the monastery to which one was appointed was quite large. But regardless, Dogen clearly means to tell his listeners that, on this occasion of her first sermon as abbess, her assembled audience of students included all of the monks of her host monastery from the abbot down, and the questioners included monks. His point is clearly that in Song China men students of Chan who were monks and members of the Chan lineage were willing to present themselves formally and ritually in the role of student in relation to a woman teacher.[[38]](#footnote-38)

An important feature of this scene that Dogen describes is that the woman teacher ritually takes the role of Buddha in relation to the assembled company as she takes her place on the high seat of the Dharma Hall, and as she speaks the Dharma from the standpoint of enlightened Mind. As we know, this contradicts the notion of the five hindrances that is found in the Lotus Sutra chapter 12 and in many other Mahayana texts, namely that a woman cannot in the present female body become a Buddha or any of four other important cosmic figures.

Dogen solves this problem, as those in Song China had done, by invoking the idea that an awakened woman should no longer be seen as a woman, for she is now something else, a *daijobu* (*mahapurusha; a great manly person*), a teacher of gods and humans.[[39]](#footnote-39) When he tells the story of Miaoxin summarized above, his narrative has Yangshan Huiji say to the other monks in recommending Miaoxin for the position, "Although [Miao]xin Huaizi[[40]](#footnote-40) is a woman, she has the determined spirit (*shiki*) of a *daijobu*. " And immediately following his description of enlightened Song nuns becoming abbesses, he says:

"Because a person who has attained the Dharma is an authentic ancient Buddha, we should not greet that person in terms of what s/he once was. When s/he sees me, s/he receives me from an entirely new standpoint; when I see him/her, my reception of her/him is based entirely on today, [not on what she (or I) was in the past]. For example, in the case of a nun who has received the treasury of the true Dharma eye through transmission, if [the arhats of] the four fruitions, the pratyekabuddhas, and even the (advanced bodhisattvas) of the three wise stages and of the ten holy states pay homage to her and seek the Dharma from her, she should receive their obeisance."[[41]](#footnote-41)

The reason of course is that she is not to be thought of primarily as a woman any longer, and thus lower than any man and any monastic; she is not to be thought of primarily a nun any longer, and thus lower in status than any monk; she is an awakened being, and thus from a Buddhist point of view higher than even arhats, pratyekabuddhas and advanced bodhisattvas, and able to teach them.

Dogen concludes the shorter version of the *Raihaitokuzui* sermon as found in the seventy-five volume version of the *Shobogenzo* by alluding to the eight-year-old dragon girl of the "Devadatta" chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*. He says:

"Even an eight-year old girl who practices the Buddha Dharma and is enlightened in it is the leader and guide of the fourfold sangha, the compassionate father of sentient beings. For instance, the dragon (*naga)* girl in the *Lotus Sutra* achieved buddhahood. Giving respect and homage to someone such as her is the same as giving it to all the buddhas."

**The status of nuns and women Buddhist practitioners in Dogen’s Japan**

When Dogen gave this sermon Japan was not like China. Unlike China, there were no fully ordained Buddhist nuns in Japan for almost all of Dogen’s lifetime. Full ordination for women using the full set of 348 precepts, in a manner recognized by the male authorities of a Buddhist monastic institution in Japan occurred in 1249 in the city of Nara for the first time in more than four centuries.[[42]](#footnote-42) There had been full ordination of nuns in the Nara period, but by the early years of the 9th century during the Heian period the court ceased to support monastic institutions for women and to invite nuns to participate in court ceremonies. Without state support, full ordinations for women stopped. Nonetheless, women (and lay men) could enter into “home-leaver” (*shukke*) status, and many did. This fact, recently brought to light by the Japanese scholar Katsuura Noriko and, in English, by Paul Groner and Lori Meeks, should completely change how we read the essay called *Shobogenzo* essay called *Shukke kudoku, “*The Merit of Home-leaving.”[[43]](#footnote-43)

In the late Heian and Kamakura periods, Meeks writes, the term *“shukke”* was ambiguous; it could refer to laypeople, including lay women, as well as those who served in officially recognized clerical positions. *Shukke* was a recognized status, and an expected life cycle event. Laywomen (and men) took Buddhist names, wore Buddhist robes, and shaved, cut or covered their tresses. They made a commitment to full-time religious practice. Priests commonly bestowed the precepts on women in private tonsure ceremonies. Because they lived a life of renunciation and full-time religious practice, Dogen and others called women like the nun Egi, who studied with Dogen, “nuns (*ama*).” For a time the term *ni (bikuni)* was reserved for those who had shaved their heads*,* but by late Kamakura it too came to refer to all “lay monastics” or “privately professed nuns,” including those who merely cut or covered their hair. Unlike lay men who entered *shukke* renunciant status, who often kept on living with their wives and families, women left their families and abandoned their female names, their long hair and feminine clothing, as well as their sexual lives.

By the mid-Heian period, most educated women expected to spend the final years of their lives as Buddhist lay renunciants. Due to the spread of Pure Land faith, in the Heian period this was usually considered a step necessary to the attainment of personal salvation, an aid to their preparations for death. By the mid-Kamakura period, the timing of women’s shukke had become more fixed and its signification more rigid: a woman was to take vows when she became a widow--no sooner and no later—and her *shukke* was to be understood as an act of allegiance directed at her late husband and his household.

In the mid-twelfth century, women were still recognized as members of their natal families, and especially of their father’s lineages. By the thirteenth century, many elites had come to view women as members of their husband’s lineages; and by the fourteenth century, this new view of family had spread to commoners as well.

However, whether or not they had received these ordination rituals, women were expected to be patrons of male priests, not their students.

With these facts in mind, we turn now to the second text to be considered in relation to the *Raihaitokuzui* essay, “The Merit of Leaving Home” *(Shukke kudoku).*

***Shukke kudoku* and *Raihaitokuzui***

The chapter called “The Merit of Leaving Home” contains the famous passage in which Dogen denies that the teaching that women can become buddhas in a female body is an authentic transmission of Shakyamuni’s golden words.

Let us turn now to this famously puzzling passage that seems to contradict what Dogen sets out in his *Raihaitokuzui* essay:

“Among all buddhas of the three times and ten directions there are no buddhas, not even a single buddha, who become buddhas as householders (*zaike jōbutsu*). Due to the existence of buddhas in the past, there is the merit of going forth from home and receiving the precepts (*shukke jukai*). The gaining of the Way (*tokudō*) by living beings always depends on going forth from home and receiving the precepts. In essence, because the merit of going forth from home and receiving the precepts is itself the constant norm (*jōhō*) of all buddhas, that merit is incalculable (*muryō*). Although within the holy/sagely teachings (*shōkyō*) there is talk of becoming a buddha as a householder, that is not an authentic transmission (*shōden*); although there is talk of becoming a buddha in a female body (*nyoshin jōbutsu)*, that too is not an authentic transmission. What the buddhas and [Chan] ancestors authentically transmit (*busso shōden suru*) is becoming a buddha as a home-leaver (*shukke jōbutsu*).”[[44]](#footnote-44)

There is little to guide one’s interpretation of this passage, as its next to last sentence is the only sentence in the essay, indeed in the *Junikanbon,* that mentions the issue of women and buddhahood at all. It has been suggested that it is an interpolation, the work of a later editor. It has also been seen as showing that at the end of his life Dogen did not escape the influence of interpretations of Chapter 12 of the *Lotus Sutra* that were unfavorable to women. Speculation is unavoidable; I would like to reflect on such speculations briefly here.

The sentence in question makes the most sense when placed within the context of other “late teachings” of Dogen that are inconsistent with earlier teachings such as the *Raihaitokuzui.* Ishikawa Rikizan’s persuasive essay on this line places it in the context of the *Junikanbon* essays as a whole, which display certain features new to Dogen’s writing.[[45]](#footnote-45) As David Putney writes,

“Some of the key changes that we find in [Dogen’s] later writings [when compared with his earlier ones] include: (1) his severe critique of the Rinzai (Linji) tradition…; (2) his escalating critique of Chinese Chan Buddhism in general; (3) the emphasis on his own exclusive ‘transmission’ of the Buddha Dharma; and (4) Dogen’s apparent ‘rejection’ of lay Buddhism.”

To this we could add: (5) frequently quoting the *Lotus Sutra* and a wide variety of other sutras and sastras; and (6) strongly emphasizing the need to attend to karmic causation.

Dogen’s one-line statement about the need for a woman to exchange her body for that of a man before she attains buddhahood could be associated with difference number 4, as the problems of the difficulty of practice and attainment experienced by women and that experienced by lay people were initially raised together in the *Bendowa*. But our one-line statement also belongs to category number 2, in that it could reflect Dogen’s late repudiation of the way in which Chinese Chan in the Song dynasty (and earlier) interpreted the story of the dragon princess in chapter twelve of the *Lotus Sutra.*

In the *Raihaitokuzui* Dogen agrees with the general Chan interpretation of the story of the dragon girl of the *Lotus Sutra*, which is a very subitist interpretation. To quote Hongbian, a 9th century Chan teacher: “One wrong thought and Ananda falls into hell; one correct thought and the dragon girl becomes a buddha.” Awakening is not a gradual, step-by-step process. It is a sudden transformation. It can happen to anyone.

This oft-expressed Chan interpretation of the story of the dragon princess in Chapter 12 of the *Lotus Sutra* could be said to ignore several ambiguities in the *Lotus Sutra* story itself. The story itself stresses that the dragon girl’s attainment of buddhahood after hearing the *Lotus Sutra* preached and appearing before the Buddha and his disciples is very quick; the word “suddenly” *(C. huranzhijian; J. hatato, huto, hyoito)* is also used. But the story also can be read as not subitist, as it takes the dragon girl through every step of the transformation prescribed by orthodox Buddhism. She becomes male in body, she goes to another world, she becomes a monk, she performs all the bodhisattva practices, she manifests the 32 bodily marks and the 80 physical characteristics that indicate that a male will become a buddha, and she manifests as a buddha teaching the Dharma to an assembly of listeners. All this is done speedily, immediately, suddenly, but it is done.

Furthermore, in the narrative Sariputra says that a woman’s body is filthy, and thus a woman cannot attain enlightenment, much less be ready for buddhahood. He brings up the five barriers to a women’s (next?) birth: the barrier to her being a Brahma king, Indra, Mara, a Cakravartin king, and a buddha. The dragon daughter appears, but neither she nor Manjusri rebut Prajnakuta or Sariputra directly, for example, by pointing to the emptiness of the five barriers; the dragon princess rebuts the challengers only by demonstration. Thus it is never made perfectly clear in the story that the five barriers are irrelevant to women’s attainment of bodhi (awakening), given the tremendous power of the ultimate expression of the Buddha’s wisdom as revealed in the *Lotus Sutra,* as well as the potential for Buddha wisdom (=buddha nature) in all, which also revealed in the sutra.[[46]](#footnote-46)

Surely the universalism of the *Lotus Sutra* is a major part of the story. In the *Lotus Sutra* Buddhahood is predicted for every last person. Even children who playfully build a stupa in the sand will become buddhas. And speedy attainment of Buddhahood,, another important part of the story, is also found elsewherein the sutra: in chapter 16 of the *Lotus* *Sutra* the Buddha announces that his constant thought is how to help sentient beings quickly perfect their buddha bodies. In the assembly in chapter 12 someone asks whether Manjusri’s preaching of the *Lotus Sutra* has enabled any hearer to speedily accomplish buddhahood. Manjusri replies by describing the dragon girl. So to draw subitism out of this story, as the Chan teachers do, is justified, despite the detailed description of the stages via which the dragon girl attained buddhahood.

Dogen concludes the shorter version of the *Raihai tokuzui* sermon as found in the seventy-five volume version of the *Shobogenzo* by alluding to the seven-year-old dragon girl (eight years old by Chinese reckoning) of the "Devadatta" chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*. He says:

“But when someone practices the buddha dharma and expounds the buddha dharma, though such a person be a girl eight years of age, that person is a guide and teacher for the four groups and a compassionate father for all sentient beings. Such a person may be compared to the daughter of the Dragon King who attained buddhahood. Offerings should be made and respectful homage paid equal to that accorded to the buddhas and tathagatas. This is an ancient rule in the buddha dharma. Those who do not understood this, who have not received the single transmission, are to be pitied.”[[47]](#footnote-47)

Dogen’s phrase “the daughter of the Dragon King who attained buddhahood” tallies with the way in which Tang and Song dynasty Chan teachers refer to the dragon princess. In their view, her complete awakening is attained in a single instant of thought. Her performance demonstrates the emptiness of all obstacles to awakening, including those associated with being a non-human, a child, a female and a non-monastic. In the *Raihaitokuzui* Dogen’s phrasing reflects this interpretation: the story is a story of a female non-ordained dragon child who attained buddhahood.

By contrast, in the *Shukke kudoku* Dogen seems to reject that subitist interpretation in favor of a more gradualist reading of the *Lotus Sutra* version of the story:

“Although [in the sacred writings] there is talk of becoming a buddha in a female body (*nyoshin jōbutsu)*, that too is not an authentic transmission. What the buddhas and [Chan] ancestors authentically transmit (*busso shōden suru*) is becoming a buddha as a home-leaver (*shukke jōbutsu*).”

Why does this change in Dogen’s thinking, apparently a change to a less subitist position, occur? Scholars who isolate this essay and try to answer this question have so far had little success. If scholars, as Ishikawa Rikizan does, group this essay with apparently similar essays, some of which are late; and if we accept the grouping that occurs in the *Junikanbon* in a way that ignores the problems with seeing a consistent set of characteristics among all those essays so grouped, they can hazard somewhat stronger interpretive theories.[[48]](#footnote-48)

Here let us consider the essay *Shukke kudoku* by itself as a context for the problematic two lines. First, the *Shukke kudoku* begins with long quotations from sutras and sastras, prominently including the *Lotus Sutra.* The very first line is “Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva said:

Question: If the precepts of the home dweller enable one to be born as a deva, gain the bodhisattva path and attain nirvāṇa, then what use are the precepts of those who go forth from household life (*shukkekai*)?

The essay thus begins with a question from a passage from the *Great Perfection of Wisdom Śāstra* (Skt. *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra*, C. *Dà zhìdù lùn*, J. *Daichidoron*),[[49]](#footnote-49) a text that is attributed to Nāgārjuna, though nowadays thought to have been compiled by Kumarajiva. Dōgen cited the passage because it explains the “merit” (*kudoku*) of “going forth from household life” (*shukke*). A person who receives the precepts of the lay person can gain the bodhisattva path and attain nirvana—perhaps also attain buddhahood: this is admitted in the question. But the passage goes on to say that though both can attain the Way, the obstacles on the lay path are immense. Dogen comments:

From this we know that, for one who goes forth from household life (*shukke*), cultivating the precepts (*shukai*) and practicing the way (*gyōdō*) is very easy.

Yet at the same time, attaining peace of mind as a home-leaver is very difficult, and leaving home is difficult. But, according to Dogen, “the benefit of going forth from household life (*shukke no ri*) is merit that is incalculable (*kudoku muryō* 功徳無量). Thus, although lay followers (*byakue* 白衣) have the five precepts (*gokai* 五戒), they are not like those who go forth from household life. Summing up, Dogen writes:

Do not entrust your evanescent life to the winds of impermanence, wasting this excellent, superior body. Piling up life after life of going forth from home, let us store up good deeds and accumulate virtue.

Then, while discussing the centrality of the full precepts to the Buddha’s intention, he cites three vows made by Sakyamuni as recorded in the *Flower of Compassion Sūtra* (C. *Peihua jing*, J. *Hike kyō*, Skt. *Karuṇā-puṇḍarīka-sūtra*), translated by Dharmakṣema.[[50]](#footnote-50) Here are two of the vows he quotes:

Among the five hundred great vows of the Buddha Śākyamuni, vow number 137 is: In the future, after I have attained right awakening {*shōgaku* 正覺}, if there are people who, in accordance with my dharma, wish to go forth from household life, I vow that they shall have no obstructions — which is to say, weakness, loss of memory, confusion, pride, lack of due caution, deluded lack of wisdom, many afflictions, and minds that are distracted. If that is not the case, then may I not attain right awakening [in the first place].

And:

Vow number 138 is: In the future, after I have attained perfect awakening, if there are women who, in accordance with my dharma, wish to go forth from home, study the Way, and receive the great precepts (Mahayana precepts, *daikai*), I vow to make them attain those goals. If that is not the case, then may I not attain perfect awakening [in the first place].

The first vow establishes that the Buddha wants people to be home-leavers, and has the intention and the power to help them succeed. The second vow introduces the subject of the Buddha’s support for the full ordination of women. Surely this is a subject that, in the context of the whole essay, Dogen was not forced to bring up. He brings it up voluntarily. Why?

Perhaps, as he urges that importance of taking the Mahayana precepts for full ordination, he realizes that while many men who left home in the Japan of his time did so as laymen, they had the choice to seek full ordination with the Mahayana precepts or the full 250 precepts. But women did not; no ordination as bikuni (Skt. bhiksuni) with 348 precepts was available to them, and ordination with the Mahayana precepts was purely a private matter between a woman and her male preceptor that conveyed no powers or religious status. Here Dogen subtly supported the proposition that there should be public, recognized ordination for women in Japan and a full-fledged nun’s sangha.

As Lori Meeks has made clear, in this Dogen reflected one of the concerns of his age. He joined a number of male Japanese monastic leaders particularly among Rinzai Zen and Vinaya monks, who deplored the fact that Japan, unlike China, had no order of fully ordained female monastics.[[51]](#footnote-51) In 1249 Eison of the Vinaya school ordained twelve nuns who had revived an important convent in Nara with the 348 precepts of the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya.

We must also note that before quoting these two vows, Dogen tells the story, a favorite of his, of the woman entertainer who put on a monk’s robe to amuse her audience. The merit of even that insincere wearing of the monk’s robe propelled her in future lives to become a nun, and then an arhat. Dogen also tells this part of the story in the *Bendowa.* Dogen continues the story here, relating how she, now a nun, visited well-off, still attractive women in their homes to persuade them to take ordination as a nun. By telling this story, Dogen added great support to his argument that home leaving produces much merit; but he also added support to the idea of women leaving home attaining the Way.

Given the context provided by theses other passages in the *Shukke kudoku,* what can we make of the two lines “Although in the sacred writings there is talk of becoming a buddha in a female body (*nyoshin jōbutsu)*, that too is not an authentic transmission. What the buddhas and [Chan] ancestors authentically transmit (*busso shōden suru*) is becoming a buddha as a home-leaver (*shukke jōbutsu*).”

First, the two lines are not clearly related linearly. Is Dogen saying that nuns like his own successful disciple Ryonen may and do become buddhas, because they are not really in the body of a woman? Dogen in this and some other essays shows himself to be at odds—shockingly-- with Song dynasty Chan in the matter of recognizing awakening in lay people. Perhaps he means to say that lay women, like the dragon girl, must change their bodies before becoming buddhas, but not nuns.

Or perhaps the passage is about the dragon girl story in the *Lotus Sutra*. In other *Junikanon* essays Dogen expresses his reverence for the *Lotus Sutra,* even saying that it is the only sutra that expresses the truth; all others are “skillful means” *(hoben)*. However, the subitist interpretation of the story may not have seemed right to Dogen once he focused on monastic training. Perhaps he merely wanted to express that discomfort by affirming here that the story does say that the dragon girl changed her body before becoming a buddha. The subitist reading of the dragon princess story depends on a profound insight into emptiness. Dogen’s possible discomfort would have matched his increasing interest in and commitment to the importance of cause and effect (and merit) displayed in this and other essays in the *Junikanbon,* with a concomitent lack of interest in stressing emptiness*.[[52]](#footnote-52)*

A second speculation has considerable weight with me, though perhaps less logical support. In Dogen’s late essays he quotes and interprets passages from a wide range of sutras and sastras. Eiheiji had not long before received the gift of a tripitaka. Perhaps Dogen realized as he read widely in it that not a single one of the texts he read depicted a Buddha in a female body. Modern feminist scholars have found not a single Buddha in a female body in the vast canon of Buddhist texts. Even the Dragon princess in the course of attaining complete and perfect awakening changes her body. Perhaps, since Dogen in none of his late essays elaborates any further on this theme, he only wanted to make a note of the fact that Buddhas in female bodies never appear in the golden words of the Buddhas.

Or—a third speculation--perhaps Dogen saw the need to align himself with other monks who found in the *Lotus Sutra* story of the dragon girlauthority for the view that women can be saved, but only by changing her body to a male body, leaving the five hindrances behind. This ambivalent application of the *Lotus Sutra* story to women did offer women eventual buddhahood, as well as the hope of leaving their female bodies behind.[[53]](#footnote-53)

Is Dogen’s one sentence meant to position him within the discourse on the dragon girl story widespread in his day? Let us review briefly what we know of that discourse, or of the array of discourses, that we know had developed by Dogen’s time, the key point of which is that women are especially burdened with sin.

The idea that women are burdened with sin and bear the five hindrances did not immediately arrive in Japan from the continent with Buddhism. Yoshida Kazuhiko points out that in the Nara period in Japan (710-194) the idea that women were especially burdened with sin had yet to be conceived.[[54]](#footnote-54) Saicho used the story to support the idea of Buddhahood in this very body.[[55]](#footnote-55) But in Heian Japan (794-1185) the story of the dragon king’s daughter became widely known, and mention of the five hindrances or barriers to women’s salvation entered aristocratic as well as monastic literature. In some poems by aristocratic ladies reference to the dragon princess serves to illustrate that even though women carry the five obstructions—now interpreted as intrinsic sinfulness, five flaws inherent in women--women can achieve buddhahood, or be saved.[[56]](#footnote-56) Others stress women’s heavy burden of sinfulness, their inferiority. Texts by monks in the Heian period also stressed, based on the *Lotus Sutra* or Amida’s vows, that, though women’s nature is deeply sinful, thanks to the power of the Buddha’s teachings they too can attain buddhahood or be reborn in paradise.[[57]](#footnote-57)

It is not at all clear that all texts by women, even those most exposed to Buddhist texts and preaching, bought so completely into the trope of the deep sinfulness of women or the need for birth in a male body. As Meeks writes, “Many have argued that court women, especially those poised to patronize large-scale artistic projects, tended to read the dragon girl’s enlightenment as proof that they too could achieve buddhahood at the end of this lifetime and without having to pass through a separate lifetime in a male body.”[[58]](#footnote-58)

But, as Dogen, as a monk, might be expected to share the view of his fellow monks that women bear a great burden of sin and require the attainment of a male body to be saved. Yet, while it may be unquestionable that Dogen’s one sentence saying that the teaching that women can attain buddhahood in a woman’s body is not the authentic teaching of the buddha shows that he did not on some level escape the world of the *Lotus Sutra*—or, arguably, the world of Mahayana sutras--, it is not clear from this one sentence that Dogen shared the view that women bear a great burden of sin.[[59]](#footnote-59)

Speculation is endless. Whatever Dogen intended here, if indeed he was the author of the offending line, is at least partially hidden, and certainly not emphasized, here or elsewhere in Dogen’s writings.[[60]](#footnote-60) By contrast, Dogen repeatedly repudiated, in this and other chapters of the *Junikanbon,* his earlier affirmation in the *Bendowa* of the possibility of fully awakening while in lay status. He explicitly stated, for example, that the famous Chan Layman Pang of Tang China would have become far more awakened had he become a monk; he limited himself by remaining a layman. The error of remaining in lay life was clearly in his sights in his late essays. But in all of Dogen’s late writings, onlythese two lines appear that seem to qualify women’s hopes.

Meanwhile, in China, using the same language and citing the stories of Moshan Liaoran and the daughter of the Dragon King Sagara in the *Lotus Sutra*, Chan monks and nuns continued to assert that awakening and buddhahood did not depend on one’s gender or monastic status. Chinese Chan never repudiated the subitist discourse of the irrelevance of maleness and femaleness with respect to awakening or attaining Buddhahood, a discourse that relied heavily of the story of the dragon princess in the *Lotus Sutra*.

1. This fact is well known, but the implications for scholarship are very clearly stated by William M. Bodiford in “Textual Genealogies of Dogen,” in Steve Heine, ed., *Dogen: Textual and Historical Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press 2012), p. 18. The *Raihai tokuzui* is not in the 60-fascicle *Shobogenzo* (Bodiford p. 31-32.) It is in the “Honzan” edition. It is also in the 28-fascicle manuscript version that possibly dates from the mid-14th century; it is in this version that the extra material appears that is often added to the “long version.” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Heine, Steven. *Did Dogen Go to China? What he wrote and when he wrote it.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Miriam L. Levering, “Dogen's Raihaitokuzui and Women Teaching in Sung Chan,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 21/1 (1998), 77-110. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Steve Heine, *Did Dogen Go to China*, p. 128. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. I use here the translation offered by Shasta Abbey, translated by Rev. Hubert Nearman. It is called “A Discourse on Doing One’s Utmost in Practicing the Way of the Buddhas.” <http://www.shastaabbey.org/pdf/shobo/001bendo.pdf> Accessed on Dec. 10, 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *Bendowa,* Nearman trans., pp. 17-18. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Nearman, trans., p. 18. I changed “monk” to “monastic.” [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Nearman, trans., p. 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Nearman, trans., p. 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. *Dahui Pujue Chanshi pushuo, Dainihon zokuzokyo* 1, 31, 5, p. 455a. Hereafter cited as *Dahui pushuo.* This and the following quotation from Dahui are also found in my 1982 article “The Dragon Girl and the Abbess of Mo-shan: Gender and Status in the Ch’an Buddhist Tradition,” *Journal of the International Association for Buddhist Studies* 5:1 (1982): 19-35. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. *Dahui pushuo,* p. 433b. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. *Hongzhi Chanshi guanglu*, T.48: 67c. This and the following two quotations from Hongzhi’s *Guanglu* are found in my chapter “Lin-chi (Rinzai) Ch’an and Gender: The Rhetoric of Equality and the Rhetoric of Heroism,” in Jose Ignacio Cabezon, ed., *Buddhism, Sexuality and Gender.* Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1982, pp. 137-156. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Ibid., p. 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Ibid, p. 65c. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. While Dogen did not recognize Dahui as a genuinely fully awakened teacher, Dahui’s writings had a great influence on Dogen. Gender was apparently a matter on which Dogen agreed with Dahui. Ishii Shudo, *“Raihaitokuzui ko,” Komazawa Daigaku Bukkyo gakubu ronshu* 37 (Oct. 2006)*,* pp. 69-90; p. 86a. Accessed online at <http://wwwelib.komazawa-u.ac.jp/cgi-bin/retrieve/sr_bookview.cgi/U_CHARSET.utf-8/XC00720150/Body/rbb037-07-ishii.html> on January 15, 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Steven Heine, “The Dogen Canon: Dogen’s Pre-Shobogenzo Writings and the Question of Change in His Later Works,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 1997 24/1-2, p. 51. The quoted phrase is from Carl Bielefeldt, “Recarving the Dragon,” 1985. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Myoan Grace Schireson, “*Raihaitokuzui:* Dogen’s Seven Arguments for Empowering Zen Women,” in Eido Frances Carney, ed., *Receiving the Marrow: Teachings on Dogen by Soto Women Priests*. Temple Ground Press, 2012, pp. 57-68. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Carl Bielefeldt, “Filling the Zen shuu: Notes on the *Jisshuu Yoodoo Ki*,” *Cahiers d’Extreme-Asie* 7 (1993-1994), p. 235. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Technically these nuns were lay nuns, as full **bhikṣuṇī** ordination for nuns had lapsed in Japan in the ninth century, and was not restored until 1253. See Lori Meeks, *Hokkeji.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. *Eihei koroku*, volume 8; translated by Taigen Dan Leighton and Shohaku Okumura as *Dogen’s Extensive Record: A Translation of the Eihei Koroku* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004), pp. 506-07.I have retained most of the translation by Leighton and Okumura, but have changed it to make it more literal. Leighton and Okumura’s translation obscures the gendered term “*daijobu”* (great manly person), and thus obscures the continuity of Dogen’s diction with that of his Chinese predecessors. Leighton and Okumura also obscure the term “former lives.” [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. *Dogen’s Extensive Record,* pp. 522-24. Quoted sentence is on p. 524. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Chart 18, in *Zengaku daijiten,* ed. Zengaku daijiten hensanjo, Tokyo: Taishuukan shoten, 1985, vol. 3 (Bekkan) p. 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. On the *Zuimonki,* see Heine, *Did Dogen Go to China?,* pp. 138-141. More detailed bibliographic information is given in William M. Bodiford in “Textual Genealogies of Dogen,” in Steve Heine, ed., *Dogen: Textual and Historical Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. On the subject of women in Dogen's sangha, see Tajima Hakudo, *Dogen Keizan ryo Zenji no nisokan* (Nagoya, Japan: Soto-shu Koto Nigakurin Shuppanbu, 1953); Tajima Hakudo, *Sotoshu nisoshi* (Tokyo: Sotoshu Nisodan Honbu (Sanyo Sha), 1955); Ishikawa Rikizan, "Chusei Bukkyo ni okeru ni no iso ni tsuite: toku ni shoki Soto-shu kyodan no jirei o chushin to shite, *Komazawa Daigaku Zenkenkyujo nenpo* 3:141-53 (March, 1992). In English see Paula Kane Robinson Arai, *Women Living Zen.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Morten Schlutter made this suggestion at a conference on Song Buddhism held at the University of Illinois in April 1996. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Kenji Matsuo, *A History of Japanese Buddhism* (Global Oriental: Folkestone, Kent, UK, 2007), p. 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. William M. Bodiford, *Soto Zen in Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism no. 8, 1993), p. 25. My summary of Dogen's career in Japan after his return from China is indebted to Bodiford's account on p. 22-26. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Heine, *Did Dogen Go to China?,* p. 129. Steven Heine is far from the only scholar of Zen Buddhism who has seen irony in Dogen’s writing here, though to my knowledge he is the only one who has ventured this idea in writing. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. The term Dogen uses might better be translated as a mentor or a guide: it is the same term that is used in China of teachers who direct one's doctoral research. Not only does this teacher instruct you in some subject, s/he also guides you in your efforts to reach the goal. Hee-Jin Kim uses the term "guide" in his translation in his *Flowers of Emptiness: Selections from Dogen's Shobogenzo,* Lewiston, NY, Edwin Mellen Press, 1985. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Ishii Shudo, “*Raihaitokuzui ko,* pp. 62-63. This is also the burden of a Dharma Hall sermon (*jodo)* in the *Eihei koroku,* among other places. See Leighton and Okumura, p. 109-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. The first part of this sentence is taken from the statement of Moshan Liaoran to Zhixian that Dogen quotes below. The second part of the sentence says that the teacher must be a *daijobu* (Ch. *dajangfu*). The notes in the Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei edition of the *Shobogenzo* (vol. 81) cite the *Mahapariirvana Sutra (i.e., Sutra on the Final Nirvana of Sakyamuni*), fascicle 9, the *Rulaixing* chapter, which says, "If one is able to know that he has the Buddha nature, I say that he has the characteristics of a man (*jangfu*). If there is a woman [who knows], then she is a man (*nanzi*)." Kim's translation of *dajangfu* is interesting: "What counts is that the guide be a being of virtue." This translation has an advantage in that it reflects the way in which Mencius reinterpreted the meaning of the term *dajangfu* to mean not a hero of great physical strength or political power but rather a moral hero, a man of virtue. The third part of the sentence refers to the story discussed by Dogen in his "*Immo*" fascicle, the statement that if you want to know "such a thing," you must be "such a person." [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. I like Lori Meeks’ translation of *“daijobu”* as “great manly person.” See Meeks, *Hokkeiji,* pp. 104-105. Meek writes of contemporaries of Dogen among Rinzai priests in Kyoto and Kamakura, and among Nara priests from others schools who had contact with those Rinzai priests, as impressed with Chan accounts of nuns active in Chan circles in China. Among those who similarly spoke of women as capable of being successful students of Chan and Zen if they were “manly persons” is Enni Ben’en’s Chinese teacher Wuzhun Shifan (1177-1249). In describing a certain woman in the order, he says, “Even though she is a female priest (or: “female monastic,” a nun; *niso*), she can be regarded as a manly person *(jobu)*.” *Hokkeiji,* p. 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Eison, *Choomonshu*, 220. Eison quotes the *Sutra on the Final Nirvana of Sakyamuni*), fascicle 9, the *Rulaixing* chapter just before making this statement about women. Meeks, *Hokkeiji,* p. 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. p. 846: Indra bowed to a wild fox and took refuge in the three treasures.

    p. 848-49. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Andrew Ferguson, *Zen's Chinese Heritage: The Masters and Their Teachings*, p. 82. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Kenji Matsuo, *A History of Japanese Buddhism,* (Global Oriental: Folkestone, Kent, UK, 2007), pp. 26-27. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. This story cannot be found in an extant Chinese text. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. I am indebted for help with this passage to Joan Piggott of Cornell University and William Bodiford of U.C.L.A. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Dogen’s usage parallels that of the Chinese original, *dajangfu*, a “great hero” or a “great fellow.” [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. “Huaizi” literally means “child, or son, of the Huai River”—perhaps a nickname for Miaoxin because she came from the Huai River region. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. My translation here is largely based on that of Hee-Jin Kim in ibid., p. 290. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Lori Meeks, *Hokkeiji,* p. 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Katsuura Noriko (1995, 2002). Lori Meeks, “Reconfiguring Ritual Authenticity: The Ordination Traditions of Aristocratic Women in Premodern Japan,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 33.1 (2006): 51-74. Lori Meeks, “Buddhist Renunciation and the Female Life Cycle: Understanding Nunhood in Heian and Kamakura Japan.” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 70.1 (2010): 1-59. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Translation by Griffith Foulk. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Ishikawa Rikizan, "Dogen no 'Nyoshin fujobutsu ron' ni tsuite--Junikanbon *Shobogenzo* no seikaku o meguru oboegaki," *Komazawa Daigaku Zenkenkyujo nenpo* 1:88-123 (March, 1990). [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. I take the universalism of the sutra to imply universal potential for buddhahood, even though the term “buddha-nature” is not found in the sutra. Furthermore, East Asian Buddhists after Zhiyi always read the *Lotus Sutra* in tandem with the *Nirvana Sutra* where the buddha-nature concept is explicitly introduced. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Stanley Weinstein’s translation of the *Raihaitokuzui* for the Soto Zen Text Project, <http://scbs.stanford.edu/sztp3/translations/shobogenzo/translations/raihai_tokuzui/rhtz.translation.html> Pages not numbered. Accessed on February 17, 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Ishikawa Rikizan, "Dogen no 'Nyoshin fujobutsu ron' ni tsuite--juni kanbon *Shobogenzo* no seikaku o meguru oboegaki," *Komazawa Daigaku Zenkenkyujo nenpo* 1:88-123 (March, 1990). [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. T. 1509.25.160c28-161b24.” [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. T #157, 3.211b6-9. In the sutra these vows lack numbers, as well as the formulaic expressions in which the vow is framed, starting with “In the future, after I have attained right awakening,” and ending with “If that is not the case, then may I not attain right awakening [in the first place]. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Meeks, Lori. *Hokkeji and the Reemergence of Female Monastic Order in Premodern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010), pp. 107-110. P. 109 discusses Dogen and this vow in the *Shukke kudoku*. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. I want to note here that while Chapter 12 of the *Lotus Sutra* does not mention emptiness, and while, as scholars have correctly noted, the *Lotus Sutra* does not expound, thematize or stress the teaching of emptiness, in several chapters of the *Lotus Sutra* it is clear that deep insight into emptiness is essential to teaching the Dharma, to repentance, and to the Buddha’s wisdom. And in the Tiantai/Tendai traditions, the *Lotus Sutra* is read through Nagarjuna. So a subitist reading of Chapter 12 that depends on insight into emptiness is not out of line with the wider context provided by the *Lotus Sutra.* [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. It is worth comparing Dogen and Song Chan to the case of Shinran and his followers explored by Galen Amstutz in “Ambivalence Regarding Women and Female Gender in Premodern Shin Buddhism,” *Japanese Religions*, Vol. 35 (1 & 2): 1-32. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Kazuhiko Yoshida, “The Enlightenment of the Dragon King’s Daughter in the *Lotus Sutra*,” translated by Margaret H. Childs, in Barbara Ruch, ed., *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Pre-Modern Japan,* Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, U. of Michigan, 2002: 304. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. See Paul Groner, “The *Lotus Sutra* and Saicho'sInterpretation of the Realization of Buddhahood with This Very Body.” In George J. Tanabe and Willa J. Tanabe, eds., *The Lotus Sutra in Japanese Culture*, 1989. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. See Yoshida, pp. 307-308, and Edward Kamens, “Dragon-Girl, Maidenflower, Buddha: The Transformation of a Waka Topos, ‘The Five Obstructions,’ *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 53, no. 2 (Dec. 1993): 389-442. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Yoshida, p. 311. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Meeks, 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. This is the conclusion reached by Ishikawa Rikizan in his essay on this passage. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Paula Arai speculates that the offending line is an interpolation by a later editor. See Paula Kane Robinson Arai, *Women Living Zen.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)