

# DHARMA TRANSMISSION RITUALS IN SŌTŌ ZEN BUDDHISM

STEPHAN KIGENSAN LICA

## 1. Introduction

Lineage and its propagation are a central concern of the Chan and Zen 禪 traditions. As John McRae remarked, it is “not only the Chan school’s self-understanding of its own religious history, but the religious practice of Chan itself that is fundamentally genealogical”.<sup>1</sup> This is nowhere more obvious than in the Chan and Zen notions of “Dharma transmission”, the varied practices and strategies employed to transmit and verify from one generation to the next the patriarchal authority said to date back to the Buddha himself. The nature, validity and lines of transmission of necessity take center stage whenever the Chan and Zen traditions face a moment of crisis and have to reconstitute themselves in response to internal or external challenges.<sup>2</sup> Transmission, in other words, provides the symbolical resources which allow the “imaginary community” of practitioners to unite around an ever reimagined past.<sup>3</sup>

The use of a genealogical rhetoric of continuity to hide the remaking of the past in Chan and Zen discourses has led some scholars to adopt the concept of “invented traditions” when discussing transmission and lineage formation.<sup>4</sup> British historian Eric Hobsbawm explains this term as follows:

“Invented tradition” is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which

<sup>1</sup> McRae 2003: 8.

<sup>2</sup> On lineage formation in early Chan, see McRae 1986. On the reinvention of lineages in the Song, see Schlütter 2008: 78-104. On disputes concerning transmission in Ming China, see Wu 2008. On transmission disputes in Japan, see Bodiford 1991. On similar concerns in contemporary American Zen, see Bodiford 2008b: 277-279.

<sup>3</sup> On “imaginary communities”, see Company 2003: 316f.

<sup>4</sup> See for example Wu 2008: 11, or Morrison 2010: 4, nt. 7.

seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.<sup>5</sup>

Scholars have extensively explored what could be called one aspect of the ‘symbolic’ side of Dharma transmission, namely the manipulation of lineages and the textual practices associated with it.<sup>6</sup> It is the other member of the above definition, ritual, which has until now received little attention. Dharma transmission, however, not only involves the creation of lineages and of texts detailing them, it also is a specific event marking the birth of a new patriarch in a defined institutional context.<sup>7</sup> In other words, Chan and Zen practitioners not only chronicled, discussed and quarreled about transmission, they also inherited the Dharma from their forebears and transmitted it to their heirs. This article will explore these concrete ‘ritual’ aspects of the ‘invented tradition’ of Dharma transmission in the context of Japanese Sōtō Zen 曹洞禪.

A large number of the records of Sōtō Zen oral transmissions known as kirigami 切紙, brought to scholarly attention by the research of Ishikawa Rikizan 石川力山 deal with Dharma transmission and the rituals associated with it.<sup>8</sup> Based mainly on these sources, this paper will present a detailed investigation into the historical development of Dharma transmission rituals in Sōtō Zen, with a special focus on their transformation during the Tokugawa 徳川 period (1603–1868). It argues three major points. Firstly, transmission rituals in Sōtō Zen derived from and retained the character of precept initiations.<sup>9</sup> Secondly, Dharma transmission in Sōtō Zen as formulated in the early modern period relies on the systematic

<sup>5</sup> Hobsbawm 1983: 1.

<sup>6</sup> Apart from the scholars cited above, see Adamek 2007. Also the pioneering efforts of Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山. See Yanagida 2000.

<sup>7</sup> On Dharma transmission in Song Chan, see Schlütter 2008: 60–65. In Ming China, Wu 2008: 10. In the Japanese Ōbaku 黄檗 school, Nakao 1995. For a translation of a Sōtō transmission ritual and lineage document, see Bodiford 2000.

<sup>8</sup> Ishikawa’s research has been collected posthumously in Ishikawa 2001. On Dharma transmission kirigami, see Ishikawa 2001: 523–718, on ritual esp. 586–642.

<sup>9</sup> I use the term ‘precept initiation’ in contrast with ‘ordination’, which in Buddhism also is conferred through the taking of precepts. Whereas the latter serves to induct an individual into the monastic community, the former refers to practices which bestow the precepts a second time on an already ordained cleric in a manner reminiscent of the initiation rituals (kanjō 灌頂) of esoteric Buddhism. Such precept initiations, known as “precept consecration” (kai kanjō 戒灌頂) developed in the Tendai school in the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. For the most comprehensive account of precept consecrations, see Shikii 1989.

distinction and complementary usage of precept and Dharma lineages. This usage developed in response to medieval practices and bears only an indirect connection to Dōgen 道元 (1200–1253), the tradition's founder. Lastly, the context in which to understand the formation of Sōtō Zen transmission rituals are the oral initiation practices (kuden hōmon 口伝法門) of the Tendai 天台 tradition.

To arrive at these conclusions, the paper first investigates the ritual model of Dharma transmission developed during the Tokugawa period. It then turns to the question of up to which extend these early modern practices reflect modes of transmission in early Sōtō Zen. Finally, an early modern transmission ritual will be discussed in detail to trace its connections to Tendai oral transmission practices.

## 2. Early Modern Sōtō Zen Dharma Transmission Rituals

This section will establish the ritual complementarity of Dharma and precept transmission in early modern Sōtō transmission rituals and discuss their institutional context.

Medieval Sōtō Zen was a highly fractured movement. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Sōtō leaders established a sectarian form of organization based on a pyramid structure. At the top of each pyramid resided a central lineage monastery, supported by a hierarchical network of sub-temples. Abbotship at a given monastery was held on a rotational basis by monks belonging to one of its sub-temples.<sup>10</sup> Under this system, Dharma transmission was closely related to abbotship, as a monk would change his lineage affiliation according to the temple at which he served as abbot (in'in ekishi 因院易嗣 or garanbō 伽藍法), rather than adhering to a single, personal lineage. In other words, each time a monk assumed a new appointment, he would undergo Dharma transmission at the hands of his predecessor. This system guaranteed that the abbotship of any given monastery would never be awarded to a candidate from a different faction and consequently both encouraged the proliferation of lineages and protected their integrity.

With the unification of Japan under the Tokugawa military dictatorship (bakufu 幕府) this pluralistic, lineage based structure of Sōtō Zen came

<sup>10</sup> See Bodiford 1991: 429.

under increasing strain. In between 1608 and 1615, the government promulgated a series of laws aimed at implementing a more centralized form of sectarian organization. All Buddhist schools had to designate an approved, school-wide central monastery, to which all other temples would be related in a family-tree like manner (*honmatsu seido* 本末制度). In the case of Sōtō Zen, two head temples, Eiheiji 永平寺 and Sōjiji 総持寺 were allowed, but the unification still threatened the medieval lineage structure and severely disrupted smaller lineages, which lost most of their institutional clout by being forced into the same organizational structure as more influential factions.<sup>11</sup>

At the same time, Japanese Zen lineages came under ideological pressure through the arrival of Yinyuan Longqi 隱元隆琦 (1592–1673), perhaps better known under the Japanese reading of his name, Ingen Ryūki, as the founder of the Ōbaku 黄檗 tradition of Zen. Yinyuan, who was strongly favored by the government, was a representative of a movement in Ming period continental Chan 禪 which strove to restore the tradition by implementing strict standards relating to the practice of Dharma transmission.<sup>12</sup> In comparison, Japanese transmission practices, such as the *garanbō* regime, began to be considered as unorthodox and standing in need of reform.<sup>13</sup>

In response to these institutional and ideological challenges, the *shūtō fukko* 宗統復古 reform movement arose in 17<sup>th</sup> century Sōtō Zen, the most prominent leader of which was Manzan Dōhaku 叡山道白 (1635–1715). The reform movement rallied around the cause of disestablishing the practice of *garanbō* and instead adhering to the lineage received from one's teacher (*isshi inshō* 一師印證).<sup>14</sup> The movement's campaign partially succeeded when the government in 1703 introduced regulations which split Dharma transmission in two.<sup>15</sup> The government stipulated that when a cleric first underwent transmission, he would receive three

<sup>11</sup> See Takenuki 1989: 314.

<sup>12</sup> See Wu 2015: 27f, 62–67.

<sup>13</sup> See Bodiford 1991: 432ff.

<sup>14</sup> For an overview of the reform movement, see Bodiford 1991.

<sup>15</sup> The complete text of the regulation can be found in the *Shūtō fukko shi* 宗統復古志 by Sanshū Hakuryū 三洲白龍 (1669–1760), ZSSZS, vol. 1, 594. On Dharma transmission in the Tokugawa period, see Shibe 1993.

transmission documents. These were, firstly, a Certificate of Succession (shisho 嗣書), secondly a Bloodline (kechimyaku 血脈) and finally a document entitled “Great Matter” (daiji 大事), a diagrammatic interpretation of Zen teachings.<sup>16</sup> When the cleric subsequently assumed a different abbotship, he would receive from his predecessor the Bloodline and Great Matter of the temple in question but no new Certificate of Succession.

This split system of transmission was based on a compromise offered by the reformers to their opponents. In an undated submission to the Office of Temples and Shrines the reform camp defined the three documents of transmission as follows:

The Three Documents of Transmission of the [Sō]tō house

Certificate of Succession: The correct line of Dharma transmission.

Bloodline: The correct line of Precept transmission.

Great Matter: The secret meaning of the inner verification of Certificate of Succession and Bloodline.<sup>17</sup>

According to this submission, every Sōtō master simultaneously held two separate but complementary lineages. The first is the lineage of the Buddhist precepts, dating back to the Buddha himself and culminating in the new initiate. This lineage is recorded in the Bloodline. The second is the Zen lineage proper, again running from the Buddha to the initiate and recorded in the Certificate of Succession. Needless to say, these two lineages were identical in content, but separating them allowed for an accommodation of the old system of temple based succession, here associated with the Bloodline, with the reformer’s demand for personal transmission, represented by the Certificate of Succession.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> See Matsuda 2000, 2002.

<sup>17</sup> 洞家傳法之三物 一、嗣書 傳法之正脈也、一、血脈 傳戒之正脈也、一、大事 嗣書血脈內證之密意也。Shūtō fukko shi, ZSSZS, vol. 1, 590. Matsuda notes the possibility that this submission might be a later embellishment by the author of the Shūtō fukko shi, Hakuryū. See Matsuda 2000: 92.

<sup>18</sup> That is to say, the two lineages were identical when a monk received transmission for the first time. Obviously, they would diverge as he took up abbotships at different temples.

This separate but complementary relationship between Dharma and precept transmission also came to be implemented on the ritual level, a process in which Manzan appears to have been a central player. The Shitsunai kirigami narabi sanwa 室内切紙並参話 (Kirigami and Exchanges Kept Inside the Room; hereafter Shitsunai kirigami) is a collection of oral transmission materials passed from Manzan to Tokuō Ryōkō 徳翁良高 (1649–1709) in 1691.<sup>19</sup> It is based on Manzan's research into the kirigami kept at Daijōji 大乘寺<sup>20</sup>. This collection contains a ritual manual for Dharma transmission entitled Denbō shitsunai shiki 伝法室内式 (Ceremony [Occurring] Inside the Room for Transmitting the Dharma; hereafter Denbō shiki). This document describes the process of Dharma transmission during which the new initiate would receive the Certificate of Succession, but does not mention the transmission of precepts nor the Bloodline document.<sup>21</sup> However, at the end of the text the following explanation is appended:

If the above is carried out in an abbreviated manner, it takes seven days and nights. Circling the halls and offering incense, following the instruction of the teacher, is completed on the fifth day. Imparting the precepts at nightfall is completed on the sixth day, in the third hour the Dharma is transmitted.<sup>22</sup>

This passage indicates that the ritual of the Denbō shiki was intended to be carried out together with a second one, during which the precepts and presumably the Bloodline were imparted. Unfortunately, the Shitsunai kirigami does not contain a precept initiation. It does, however, contain a kirigami entitled Kaidan shasui 戒壇洒水 (Sprinkling of [Empowered] Water on the Precept Platform) which provides guidance on how the “instructor” is to “sprinkle water forward and backward” (jungyaku shasui 順逆洒水) during the “night of imparting the precepts” (jukai ya 授戒夜).<sup>23</sup> The inclusion of this text in the Shitsunai kirigami suggests that the ceremony used to impart the precepts on the night before Dharma transmission was Dōgen's Busso shōden bosatsukai sahō 仏祖正伝菩薩

<sup>19</sup> Kept at Komazawa University Library, call number 188.85/96.

<sup>20</sup> On Manzan's kirigami researches, see Hirose 2012.

<sup>21</sup> In Shitsunai kirigami, 39o–41o.

<sup>22</sup> 右略行之時、七晝夜也、巡堂燒香從師指揮、行滿五日、▪昏授戒、行滿六日、三更伝法。In Shitsunai kirigami, 39o–41o.

<sup>23</sup> 授戒夜教授師順逆洒水法。Kaidan shasui, in Shitsunai kirigami, 16o.

戒作法 (Procedure of the Bodhisattva Precepts Correctly Transmitted by Buddhas and Ancestors; hereafter Bosatsukai sahō). This text, the earliest record of a Sōtō transmission ceremony, describes a ritual during which the disciple receives both the set of 16 precepts used in Sōtō lineages and a Bloodline chronicling the precept lineage. In the Bosatsukai sahō, an “instructor” is described as being in charge of the “forward” and “backward” sprinkling of water, a ritual provision identical to the one found in the Kaidan shasui.<sup>24</sup>

Although the Bosatsukai sahō is the only transmission ritual composed by Dōgen himself, its popularity in the Sōtō school seems to have waned during the medieval period. However, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century its performance was revived by none other than Manzan’s teacher, Gesshū Sōko 月舟宗胡 (1618–1696).<sup>25</sup> Manzan himself must have been familiar with the Bosatsukai sahō also from his *kirigami* researches at Daijōji, as a copy of the text was preserved there.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, in the minds of Manzan and his fellow reformers, the Bosatsukai sahō was intimately connected to the transmission Dōgen had received from his Chinese mentor, Rujing 如淨 (J. Nyojō, 1163–1228). In his Zenkai ketsu 禪戒訣 (Meaning of the Zen Precepts), Manzan explains that when Dōgen received the Dharma (juhō 受法) from Rujing, the Zen precepts were transmitted (den zenkai 伝禪戒) as well. As Manzan emphasizes that the ritual Rujing used to impart the precepts was the same as the one Dōgen used to transmit them to the Rinzai master Shinchī Kakushin 心地覺心 (1207–1298), Manzan was no doubt thinking of the Bosatsukai sahō.<sup>27</sup> Finally, the reform movement’s standard bearer in the generation after Manzan, Menzan Zuihō 面山瑞方 (1683–1769) in his Busso shōden daikai ketsu 仏祖正伝大戒訣 (Meaning of the Great Precepts Directly Transmitted by the Buddhas and Patriarchs) explicitly situates the Bosatsukai sahō in the context of transmission:

Furthermore, producing the Busso shōden bosatsukai sahō, [and] employing [it to] make those students of [one’s] lineage who have not yet received the precepts receive them according to this method [i.e. the Busso shōden bosatsukai sahō]. Furthermore, transmitting [the Busso shōden bosatsukai sahō]

<sup>24</sup> See Bosatsukai sahō, DZZ, vol. 15, 402.

<sup>25</sup> See Zenkai ketsu 禪戒訣, T 82: 615b.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 616a.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. See also below, 3.1, for the question of Chinese precept initiations.

to those who enter the room and receive the Dharma, [one] causes the precept lineage (kaimyaku 戒脈) to continue for eternal generations. This method [i.e. the Busso shōden bosatsukai sahō] is the very ritual protocol at the time transmitted face to face on [Mt.] Tiantong [i.e. between Rujing and Dōgen].<sup>28</sup>

It might seem strange that a ritual used during Dharma transmission might also have been employed for the more prosaic purpose of initiating a new disciple. Manzan resolved this difficulty by differentiating between “imparting the precepts” (jukai 授戒) and “transmitting the precepts” (denkai 伝戒). The former refers to simply receiving the precepts together with a Bloodline from one’s master, whereas the latter implies that one becomes empowered to act as a master in one’s own right, implying Dharma transmission.<sup>29</sup>

Given the above, it seems reasonably certain that the precept initiation used together with the Denbō shiki was indeed the Bosatsukai sahō. This would mean that the procedure of Dharma transmission promoted by Manzan is as follows. For the first five days, the candidate would offer incense in the various halls of the monastery. On the evening of the sixth day, he would receive the precepts and a Bloodline in the Bosatsukai sahō ritual. Finally, later that night, he would undergo the actual transmission ritual as prescribed in the Denbō shiki, receiving the Certificate of Succession.

In many ways, this conjoined use of precept and Dharma transmission reflected wider fashions in early modern transmission rituals. The notion of Dharma and precept transmission as separate yet complementary is also found in the Shicchū no shiki 室中之式 (Ceremony inside the Room). This document records the transmission in 1686 between the 33<sup>rd</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> abbots of Eiheiiji, Tetsuō San’in 徹翁山隱 (?–1700) and Kōiku Kukushū 高郁馥州 (?–1688) during which the precepts were imparted in a separate ceremony.<sup>30</sup> However, this was not the Bosatsukai sahō but an unrelated ritual, which chimes with Manzan’s lament concerning the

<sup>28</sup> 且製仏祖正伝菩薩戒作法。以使門下参学未受此戒者。依法受持。更伝授入室得法者。令戒脈連続永代。其作法者。当時自面授於天童之規範。See Busso shōden daikai ketsu, SSZS, vol. 3, 87b.

<sup>29</sup> Denbō shitsunai mijji monki 伝法室内密示開記 (Record of Secret Instruction of Transmitting the Dharma inside the Room), SSZS, vol. 15, 175b

<sup>30</sup> Kept at Komazawa University Library, call number H172/38.



neglect of Dōgen's precept initiation.<sup>31</sup> The proceedings also did not observe the separate transmission of lineage documents. The Certificate and the Bloodline, while defined as relating to Dharma and precepts transmission, respectively, were imparted together during the Dharma transmission ritual, which would render the *Shicchū no shiki* in its present form unusable under the new regime of separate transmission.

Given this fashion of using Dharma and precept transmission in a complimentary manner, it can be argued that Manzan's achievement was primarily to ritually systematize their relationship by having them imparted in separate ceremonies. This allowed him to consistently identify Dharma transmission with individual and precept transmission with institutional succession. He could then exploit this model to enable a compromise on the reform of medieval transmission practices. Consequently, the development of early modern transmission rites needs to be understood at least in part as a ritual solution for an institutional and an ideological problem. In other words, the members of the reform movement responded to the crisis triggered in the Sōtō school by government attempts at unification and the ideological challenge to the validity of Sōtō transmission practices not only on the discursive but also on the ritual level. As they presented their efforts as a return to the paradigmatic transmission between Rujing and Dōgen, their ritual model asserted a sense of continuity in the face of a break with previous practices of transmission such as the *Shicchū no shiki* and acted as an invented tradition in Hobsbawm's sense.

It should be pointed out that Manzan's efforts also need to be considered in the context of the politics of oral transmissions. In the Sōtō school, secret oral transmissions began to gain importance and to become formalized at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. This coincided with the competition between the two main Sōtō factions, the Gasan 峨山 and the Meihō 明峰 lineages, culminating in the institutional rift of the early Sōtō order.<sup>32</sup> Both sides in this conflict sought to bolster their legitimacy through the claim of being in possession of esoteric lore. For example, Nan'ei Kenshū 南英謙宗 (1387–1460) asserted that the secret interpretation (*hiketsu* 秘訣) of a central doctrine of medieval Sōtō Zen,

<sup>31</sup> *Shicchū no shiki*, 3u.

<sup>32</sup> See Bodiford 2008a: 105ff.

the “Five Positions” (goi 五位) given in the Meihō line was faulty as it was not based on the correct transmission handed down in his own Gasan lineage.<sup>33</sup> As in other fields of medieval Japanese culture, secret transmissions were regarded as a lineage’s most treasured possession and the ultimate arbiter of its orthodoxy. In this way, secret transmissions were a key means to the accumulation of symbolic capital and contributed greatly to the integrity, promotion and perpetuation of both individual lineages and the garanbō regime as a whole.<sup>34</sup>

As we have seen, Manzan’s transmission ritual is based on the kirigami kept at Daijōji, which as he himself belonged to the Meihō faction. In pronouncing his ritual model, which unlike for example the Shicchū no shiki observed the separation of precept and Dharma lineages, the correct one and campaigning for this claim to be recognized by the government, Manzan implicitly denied the legitimacy of other lineage’s secret transmissions. In other words, Manzan was attempting to establish his own Meihō line as a main source of orthodoxy on the basis that it was in possession of the correct transmissions. And it is precisely in this context of oral transmission teachings that his claim was disputed. In his Shōbō tekiden shishi ikkushū 正法嫡傳獅子一吼集 (Collection of the Lion’s Roar of the Legitimate Transmission of Shōbō [Temple]), a polemical attack on the reform movement, Jōzan Ryōkō 定山良光 (?–1736), a member of the Gasan lineage, accused the reformers of not possessing the correct oral transmissions (kuden 口伝) for understanding the nature of Dharma transmission.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, fellow reformer Menzan, who unlike Jōzan shared Manzan’s attitude towards the garanbō system and supported the separation of precept from Dharma transmission, none the less attacked Manzan’s dismissal of the Bloodline and Great Matter as medieval forgeries on the same grounds of oral transmissions. Menzan argued that as Manzan belonged to the Meihō line he did not have access to the correct lore of the Gasan faction, to which Menzan himself belonged.<sup>36</sup> In short, the controversies surrounding the reform movement

<sup>33</sup> See Licha 2015: 93.

<sup>34</sup> See Licha 2011: 39–42.

<sup>35</sup> See Shōbō tekiden shishi ikkushū, SSZS, vol. 15, 53ab.

<sup>36</sup> For Manzan’s dismissal, see Manzan oshō tōmon ejoshū 円山和尚洞門衣御集 (Priest Manzan’s Worn Robe for the [Sō]tō Gate), SSZS, vol. 15, 125ab, 127ab. For Menzan’s

cut across the line dividing reformers from their opponents and can also be seen as a struggle for orthodoxy among oral transmissions lineages.<sup>37</sup>

### 3. Dharma Transmission in Early Sōtō Zen

It has become apparent that the systematic distinction of and complementarity between Dharma and precept transmission is a fundamental feature of the reformer's model of transmission, and one that is reflected on the ritual level by imparting the Certificate of Succession and the Bloodline in two different rituals. As we have seen, the reformers of course understood, or pretended to understand this model to accurately reflect transmission at Dōgen's time. Whether this is in fact the case or not shall be put to the test in this section. It will be argued that whereas no such systematic distinction between precept and Dharma transmission can be found in Dōgen himself, it did develop, if in a different form, in the lineages stemming from his reformist third generation heir, Keizan Jōkin 瑩山紹瑾 (1268–1325).

#### 3.1. *Dōgen and Dharma Transmission*

The introduction of Chinese Chan traditions to Japan came with the misunderstanding that they transmitted their own precepts, the so called "Zen precepts" (zenkai 禪戒). No evidence suggests that Song period Chan had separate teachings on the precepts or that it carried out precept initiation rituals which would have set it apart from other forms of Chinese mainstream Buddhism. The concept of "Zen precepts" was generated entirely from Japanese concerns and although it was the acclaimed Rinzaï monk Kokan Shiren 虎関師錬 (1278–1347) who first explicitly claimed the identity of Zen and the precepts, it was Dōgen who ritually

rebuttal, see his Tōjō shitsunnai kuketsu 洞上室内口訣, SSZS, vol. 15, 169b, and Tōjō shitsunnai sanmotsu ron 洞上室内三物論, SSZS, vol. 15, 194b–195b.

<sup>37</sup> This contrasts strikingly with struggles for Sōtō orthodoxy in the Meiji 明治 period (1868–1912), which John LoBreglio has argued were conducted according to the standards of a rejection of a monastic elite and a demand for empirical and historical verifiability. Interestingly, however, the precepts remained at the heart of the controversy. See LoBreglio 2009.

asserted and actualized this relationship in the Bosatsukai sahō.<sup>38</sup> The purpose of the present section is to establish whether this entailed a ritual distinction between Dharma and precept transmission along the lines seen in Manzan.

There appears to be little reason to assume that this was the case. The Bosatsukai sahō is the only transmission ritual composed by Dōgen and it is concerned exclusively with transmitting the precepts. The text contains passages which suggest that at least at the time of its composition Dōgen considered the ritual of the Bosatsukai sahō to be a form of Dharma transmission. For example, the ritual culminates with the recipient inspecting his name inscribed on the Bloodline:

Next, the instructor unfolds the Bloodline and passes it to the master. The master puts it on his left elbow and invites the recipient, lighting the torches and making [the recipient] look at the names of masters and disciples [in the genealogy] of transmission.

Next, the recipient answering to the invitation bows with folded hands and proceeds to the master's left side. Turning to the Bloodline he bows, or else makes a fast prostration. Bending his body with folded hands, he sees the names of masters and disciples in [the genealogy of] Dharma succession.<sup>39</sup>

Dōgen here clearly refers to receiving the precept lineage as “Dharma succession”. This transmission is certified by a Bloodline.

This last fact, the transmission of a Bloodline document, could be cited against understanding the Bosatsukai sahō as a Dharma transmission ritual. This is because in the Shōbōgenzō 正法眼藏 (Eye and Treasury of the True Dharma) fascicle “Shisho” 嗣書 (On the Certificate of Succession) Dōgen explicitly calls the document certifying transmission a “Certificate of Succession” (shisho 嗣書), not a “Bloodline” (*kechimyaku* 血脈).<sup>40</sup> However, this argument assumes that there existed in Dōgen's time a clear distinction between the two types of documents. This position is not unequivocally supported by the available evidence. The Go yuigon

<sup>38</sup> See Bodiford 2005: passim, esp. 196–207 and Kagamishima 1985.

<sup>39</sup> 次教授師展血脈度猷和尚。和尚移取左臂上、而召受者、燃燭而教見師資相伝之名字処。次受者、応召合掌問訊、進到和尚之右之辺、向血脈問訊。或速礼一拜、合掌曲身見師資嗣法之名字。Bosatsukai sahō, DZZ, vol. 15, 408f.

<sup>40</sup> Shōbōgenzō shisho, T 82: 67c–71c.

ki 御遺言記 (Record of Final Words) is a text attributed to the third abbot of Eihei-ji, Tettsū Gikai 徹通義介 (1219–1309). It purports to record Gikai's final conversations with Dōgen as well as the transmission Gikai received from Dōgen's successor, Koun Ejō 孤雲懷奘 (1198–1280). The text can be divided into three parts of decreasing historical reliability.<sup>41</sup> The first part, in which Gikai converses with Dōgen is the most reliable as some of the recorded material also features in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century Eihei-ji sanso gyōgō ki 永平寺三祖行業記 (Record of the Deeds of the Three Ancestors of Eihei Temple; hereafter Gyōgō ki) which is generally considered the oldest biographical source for Dōgen, Ejō and Gikai. The Go yuigon ki recounts a conversation during which Dōgen asks Gikai whether Gikai has in his possession the Certificate of Succession to the Rinzai lineage of Zhuoan Deguang 拙菴德光 (1121–1203) (rinzai ka busshō zenji shisho 林際下仏照禪師嗣書). This is the Certificate which Deguang granted Dainichibō Nōnin 大日房能忍 (?–1196), the founder of the so called Japanese Daruma 達磨 school to which Gikai originally had belonged.<sup>42</sup> Gikai had received this document from his first teacher, Ekan 懷鑑 (?–1253). Gikai replies that the Certificate is called a “Bloodline of the Transmission of Ancestral Masters” (soshi sōden kechimiyaku 祖師相伝血脉). Dōgen then assures Gikai that this document indeed is a Certificate of Succession (shisho 嗣書).<sup>43</sup> Regardless of whether this passage records Dōgen's actual words or not, it demonstrates that in early Sōtō Zen no strict division between Bloodline and Certificate was observed. Together with what has been said above regarding the Bosatsukai sahō, it seems clear that the Dharma/precept distinction as found in Manzan cannot be traced back to Dōgen.

This is not to say that no distinction at all was made between precept initiation and Dharma succession in early Sōtō Zen. The Gyōgō ki describes Dōgen as having three Dharma heirs (hōshi 法嗣), Ejō, Senne (?) 詮慧 and Sōkai 僧海 (?).<sup>44</sup> If precept transmission was enough to qualify one as Dharma heir, why is there no mention of Gikai's teacher Ekan

<sup>41</sup> Ishikawa 2001: 552ff.

<sup>42</sup> On the Daruma school and its relationship to Dōgen, see Faure 1987.

<sup>43</sup> Go yuigon ki, DZZ, vol. 17, 61.

<sup>44</sup> Gyōgō ki, SSZS, vol. 16, 3b.

and of the Rinzai master Kakushin, both of whom had received the precepts from Dōgen? To answer this question, it is necessary to understand what “Dharma heir” means in the context of the Gyōgō ki.

The entry on Ejō contains the following passage describing his succession to Dōgen:

[Dōgen] transmitted the Busso shōden bosatsukai sahō [to Ejō]. It was the manner of Bodhidharma imparting [the Dharma] to the second ancestor. At a certain time, Dōgen took up the story of “one hair piercing many holes”. At these words, the master [Ejō] had a great awakening and prostrated. Dōgen asked: “Why are you bowing?” The master said: “I do not ask about the one hair. What about the many holes?” Dōgen smiled and said: “Thoroughly pierced.” The master bowed and retreated. Dōgen was exceedingly happy and made [Ejō] his true Dharma heir.<sup>45</sup>

This passage implies that the Bosatsukai sahō was understood as a form of Dharma transmission as it is described as the “manner of Bodhidharma imparting to the second ancestor”. However, to receive the Bosatsukai sahō here is treated as a perhaps necessary but by no means sufficient condition for succeeding to the Dharma. Rather, Ejō became Dōgen’s true heir only when he engaged his teacher in a kōan exchange. “To be made a Dharma heir” here is portrayed not as having to undergo a specific ritual procedure such as the Denbō shiki but as being able to display an adroitness at playing Zen word games.

Gikai’s biography in the Gyōgō ki reinforces and elaborates this point. It describes Gikai’s succession to Ejō as follows:

Again, the master [Gikai] said, “These days I have understood [something about] the story concerning the ‘dropping off of body and mind’ attained by the former teacher [Dōgen].” [Ejō] said, “Well, well. What have you understood?” The master said, “I thought it was a red bearded barbarian, yet here is the red of a barbarian’s beard.” [Ejō] said, “Among the many bodies, there is a body like this. In the recesses of the former teacher’s house, in the room of the Buddhas and ancestors, what is there in succession?”<sup>46</sup>

<sup>45</sup> 傳授佛祖正傳戒法。達磨授二祖儀也。有時元公。舉示一毫穿衆穴之因緣。師言下大悟禮拜。元問。禮拜事作。生。師云。不問一毫。如何是衆穴。元微笑曰。穿了也。師禮拜了退。元大悅而為眞法嗣。Gyōgō ki, SSZS, vol. 16, 4b.

<sup>46</sup> This sentence could alternatively be rendered in the indicative: “[...] there is the matter of succession.”

There is the diligence of the abbot. Among the students of the former teacher, only I transmit this. I now wish to transmit it to you.”<sup>47</sup>

Again Gikai becomes a Dharma successor upon successfully engaging his teacher in a kōan exchange revealing his understanding of Zen teachings. This passage also clarifies what succession implies, namely “the diligence of the abbot”. In other words, “Dharma succession” in the context of the Gyōgō ki does not point to a formal ritual requirement but is closely related to the successor’s ability to serve as abbot.

To summarize the findings of this section, the only transmission ritual we know Dōgen to have carried out for certain is the Bosatsukai sahō, which situates Sōtō Dharma transmission in the context of precept initiation. There appears to have been an understanding that something more than this was required in order to be recognized as a true Dharma heir. Yet this ‘something’ was not a formal ritual requirement but rather a personal aptitude for serving as a monastic leader. For these reasons it seems anachronistic to read the distinction between Dharma and precept transmission as understood by Manzan back into Dōgen.<sup>48</sup>

### 3.2. *Dharma and Precept Transmission in Gikai and Keizan*

If the ritual distinction between precept and Dharma transmission cannot be attributed to Dōgen, how can its ubiquity in later Sōtō Zen be

<sup>47</sup> 師又曰。近日會先師所得之身心脱落話。驛云。好好。作・生會。師云。將謂赤鬚胡。更有胡鬚赤。驛云。許多身中。有如是身。先師屋裏。仏祖室內。有紹嗣底事。有住持用心。先師門人中。只吾一人傳之。僉[今?]欲與授汝。 Gyōgō ki, SSZS, vol. 16, 7ab.

<sup>48</sup> For arguments which affirm the Dharma/precept transmission distinction in Dōgen, see Kagamishima 1961: 168f and Ōkubo 1966: 171–174, 180–185. However, Kagashima provides no proof for the existence of such a distinction beyond quoting the Tokugawa period scholar-monk Eisen 英泉. Ōkubo, on the other hand, relies on evidence that has since been questioned, especially regarding the authenticity of Dōgen’s Certificate of Succession kept at Eiheiji 永平寺 and the reliability of the second part of the *Go yuigon ki*. The Certificate Dōgen is said to have received in China most likely is a medieval Japanese forgery. See Heine 2006: 260, nt. 85 and Sugawara 2003: 42. The final part of the *Go yuigon ki*, cited by Ōkubo as proof that there was a clear distinction between Dharma and precept transmission, and that among Dōgen’s disciples only Ejō received the former, contains some anachronistic material and cannot uncritically be taken to give a historically accurate account of Gikai’s transmission. See Ishikawa 2001: 525, 713, nt. 5.

accounted for? Given the ambiguities of the available evidence, a final answer might not be possible but an informed guess can be made.

Some of Dōgen's most able disciples had converted from the Daruma school.<sup>49</sup> After entering Dōgen's community, the converts continued to affirm the relationships they had established during their Daruma school days. Thus Gikai continued to regard himself Ekan's disciple and received Ekan's transmission which, according to the *Go yuigon ki*, included a Certificate of Succession of the Rinzai school which might have been called a "Bloodline". He also, according to the *Gyōgō ki*, received from Ekan a Sōtō precept initiation ritual, presumably the *Bosatsukai sahō* which Ekan in turn had received from Dōgen and which would have included a Sōtō precept Bloodline.<sup>50</sup> Gikai thus held lineage documents from both Sōtō and Rinzai lineages.<sup>51</sup> These he passed to his own successor, Keizan, whose faction came to dominate medieval Sōtō Zen.<sup>52</sup> Keizan himself in 1292 received the *Bosatsukai sahō* precept initiation from Gien 義演 (?–1313), Gikai's successor as abbot of Dōgen's monastery Eihei-ji.<sup>53</sup> Keizan thus held documents of succession to three different lineages, a fact which in itself demonstrates the fluidity of the concept of "transmission" in early Sōtō Zen.

This fluidity was workable only as long as the Sōtō movement was confined to a handful of monasteries and held together by the personal relationships among its leading figures. As the movement grew and developed larger temple networks, it became necessary to create stronger institutional structures. One early attempt was undertaken by Keizan at his monastery Yōkō-ji 永光寺. Keizan decreed that his followers should serve as abbots based on seniority in Dharma succession.<sup>54</sup> To implement this system, it was necessary to clearly define Dharma succession.

<sup>49</sup> See Faure 1987. Also Ōkubo 1966: 453–490.

<sup>50</sup> See *Gyōgō ki*, SSZS, vol. 16, 6b. The *Gyōgō ki* refers to the Rinzai Certificate Gikai received from Ekan as a *shisho*, which supports the assumption that in early Sōtō Zen no clear distinction was made between these two types of documents.

<sup>51</sup> Ōkubo 1966: 462. Also, *Gyōgō ki*, SSZS, vol. 16, 6b.

<sup>52</sup> See Ōkubo 1966: 477, 484.

<sup>53</sup> See Bodiford 2008a: 62.

<sup>54</sup> 守嗣法次第. See *Tōkokuki 洞谷記* (Record of Tōkoku), SSZS, vol. 3, 15ab. See also Bodiford 2008a: 86.



Keizan differentiated precept transmission, which he is the first to call *denkai* 伝戒, from Dharma transmission.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, in his diary of events at Yōkōji he uses phrases like “allow the precept ritual” (*kyō kaihō* 許戒法) for the former and “perform Dharma Succession” (*gyō shihō* 行嗣法) for the latter.<sup>56</sup> Keizan might thus have been the first to systematically differentiate between precept and Dharma transmission. This chimes with Sugawara Shōei’s suggestion that Keizan was the first to distinguish *shisho* from *kechimyaku* certificates.<sup>57</sup> It also explains why the lineage of Dōgen’s disciple Jakuen 寂円 (1207–1299), which controlled Eihei-ji for much of the medieval period relied exclusively on the *Bosatsukai sahō* to transmit abbotship from one generation to the next.<sup>58</sup> They might simply not have adopted Keizan’s innovation and instead continued to follow Dōgen’s precedent.

However, although Keizan appears to have established precept and Dharma transmission as distinct categories, there is no evidence that by his time the understanding of the latter had changed significantly when compared to Dōgen. In a sermon preached in 1323 to commemorate Keizan’s imparting to his disciple Meihō Sotetsu 明峯素哲 (1277–1350) Dōgen’s monastic robe, Keizan notes that Meihō had been his Dharma heir (*hōshi* 法嗣) for 22 years.<sup>59</sup> He is referring to an occasion in 1301 during which Meihō successfully engaged his teacher in a *kōan* exchange and received Keizan’s seal of approval (*inka* 印可).<sup>60</sup> In other words, also for Keizan to become a Dharma heir meant to proof one’s mettle in *kōan* practice rather than a specific ritual event.

Furthermore, in contrast to the early modern ritual model, Dharma and precept transmission seem not to have been thought of as complementary in early Sōtō Zen. For example, the *Shōkō oshō jōjō* 秀香和尚讓狀 (Succession Document of Priest Shōkō) from 1445 lists Ejō’s six Dharma heirs, Gikai, Kangan Giin 寒巖義尹 (1217–1300), Gien, Jakuen, Bussō

<sup>55</sup> See Sangi isso ji 三木一草事 (Concerning the Three Trees and One Grass), ZSSZS, vol. 1, 63.

<sup>56</sup> Tōkokuki, SSZS, vol. 3, 10.

<sup>57</sup> Sugawara 2003: 47.

<sup>58</sup> See Bodiford 2008a: 74.

<sup>59</sup> See Sotetsu hōe sōden hōgo 素哲法衣相伝法語, reproduced in Satō 2009: 88.

<sup>60</sup> See Satō 2009: 48.

仏聡 (?) and Ekan 慧鑑 (?). It differentiates between those who have received both the Dharma and the precepts (denbō kaihō 伝法戒法) from Ejō and those who have merely been imparted the precepts (kaihō 戒法).<sup>61</sup> This usage suggests that Dharma and precept transmission in 15<sup>th</sup> century Sōtō Zen were understood as sequential rather than as complementary. Instead of receiving both Dharma and precepts on a single ritual occasion, it appears that a given monk would first be initiated into the precepts, presumably using the Bosatsukai sahō and would only later receive full Dharma transmission.

To summarize the findings of this section, Dōgen in the Bosatsukai sahō did position Dharma transmission in the context of precept initiation rituals, yet the systematic distinction between Dharma and precept transmission cannot be attributed to him. Rather it might tentatively be suggested that this distinction evolved in Keizan's faction as part of an effort to implement stronger institutional structures. Yet 15<sup>th</sup> century Sōtō monks do not appear to have thought of precept and Dharma transmission as strictly complementary, but as either independent from each other or else as sequential. Furthermore, the cases of Ejō, Gikai and Meihō succeeding their respective masters suggest that to become a Dharma heir in early Sōtō Zen was not primarily conceived of as a ritual procedure but as associated with one's ability to perform kōan exchanges and serve as abbot. Now the time has come to explore the origin of both Dharma transmission rituals such as the Denbō shiki and the dual structure of Dharma and precept transmission which defines early modern transmission practice.

#### 4. The Sources of Sōtō Dharma Transmission Rituals

In the late Middle Ages and the early modern period systems of secret transmission reached their apex in all areas of culture and Sōtō Zen was no exception. Dharma transmission rituals proliferated in great variety and for various audiences.<sup>62</sup> In this section, the 1641 Tashitō zen denbu

<sup>61</sup> See Sahashi 1979: 106f.

<sup>62</sup> For example, rituals of transmission for lay practitioners and kings began to appear. See Ishikawa 2001: 662–667.

no gishiki zu 多子塔前伝付之儀式図 (Diagram of the Ritual of Succession in Front of the Pagoda of Many Children; hereafter Gishiki zu) will be introduced as a representative example of the kind of “unorthodox” transmission rituals condemned by Manzan’s reform movement. A comparison of this ritual with the ones described in the Bosatsukai sahō and the Denbō shiki will establish that both the Gishiki zu and the Denbō shiki can be seen as drawing on the Bosatsukai sahō. Furthermore, an investigation of ritual elements contained in the Gishiki zu but not the other two ceremonies will lead us to Tendai oral transmission practices and precept teachings as the background from which Sōtō transmission rituals arose.

#### 4.1. *The Tashitō zen denbu no gishiki zu*

The Gishiki zu is a ritual of the Kaian lineage (kaian ha 快庵派), a sub-branch of the Gasan faction. Like the Bosatsukai sahō it is a precept initiation during which the master transmits the sixteen article precepts established by Dōgen, as well as a Certificate of Succession and a Blood-line.<sup>63</sup> In both the Bosatsukai sahō and the Gishiki zu the student is made to sit in the master’s chair following the transmission. While a straightforward affair in the Bosatsukai sahō, in the Gishiki zu this takes the form of master and disciple acting out an allusion to two stories of the Linji lu 臨濟錄 (Record of Linji) in which a certain Magu 麻谷 (?) manages to ‘steal’ Linji’s 臨濟 (?–866) seat.<sup>64</sup> This is an excellent example of how medieval Sōtō monks came to regard kōan stories as instructions for ritual action.<sup>65</sup>

One fundamental difference between the two rituals is that whereas the Bosatsukai sahō is to be carried out by two teachers, the “instructor” (kyōjushi 教授師) and the master (oshō 和尚), the Gishiki zu relies on a single preceptor. This shift is already apparent in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century Baisan oshō kaihō ron 梅山和尚戒法論 (alt.

<sup>63</sup> Ishikawa 2001: 595.

<sup>64</sup> For the stories, see Linji lu 臨濟錄, T 47: 496c and 504a. For a description of this part of the ritual, see Licha 2011: 179.

<sup>65</sup> For ritualization of kōan, see Licha 2009.

Baisan oshō kaihō den 梅山和尚戒法伝; Priest Baisan's Discussion of the Precept Ritual). This earliest commentary on the Bosatsukai sahō by Baisan (?–1417) explains that the precept initiation can be performed either by one or by two preceptors. The first method is preferable, as it more closely resembles Bodhidharma's transmission to the second patriarch.<sup>66</sup>

Comparing the Gishiki zu next to the Denbō shiki, both rituals focus on a single preceptor. However, unlike the Denbō shiki which transmits only a Certificate of Succession and leaves the precepts and the Bloodline to be bequeathed in the Bosatsukai sahō, the Gishiki zu transmits both the Dharma and the precepts together in a single rite. Still, despite this difference in emphasis the two rituals have in common many elements which do not appear in the Bosatsukai sahō. Firstly a seven step knee walk (shikkō 膝行) the disciple uses to approach the master.<sup>67</sup> Secondly, the rubbing of the disciple's head as a symbol of transmission and prediction of attainment of Buddhahood (machō 摩頂).<sup>68</sup> Thirdly, when receiving the Certificate of Succession and/or the Bloodline the student is to wear his ceremonial robe (kesa 袈裟) on both shoulders instead of off the left shoulder.<sup>69</sup> And finally in both rituals much attention is given to the alignment of the master and disciple's bowing clothes (zagu 坐具).<sup>70</sup> These shared elements suggest that the Gishiki zu and the Denbō shiki have a common background in medieval transmission rituals which developed after Dōgen's time.

Finally, some elements are evident in all three rituals. Firstly, torches are used to dramatically illuminate the disciple's inspection of the lineage chart, be it a Bloodline or a Certificate.<sup>71</sup> Secondly, in all three rituals the recipient is instructed to tour the halls of the monastery and offer incense before receiving the initiation.<sup>72</sup> And finally, all three anoint the disciple

<sup>66</sup> Baisan oshō kaihō ron, SSZS, vol. 3, 'Zenkai' 禪戒, 2ab.

<sup>67</sup> Gishiki zu, in Ishikawa 2001: 595f. Denbō shiki, in Shitsunai kirigami, 39u.

<sup>68</sup> Gishiki zu, in Ishikawa 2001: 596. Denbō shiki, in Shitsunai kirigami, 39u.

<sup>69</sup> Gishiki zu, in Ishikawa 2001: 596. Denbō shiki, in Shitsunai kirigami, 39u.

<sup>70</sup> Gishiki zu, in Ishikawa 2001: 595. Denbō shiki, in Shitsunai kirigami, 39o.

<sup>71</sup> Gishiki zu, in Ishikawa 2001: 596. Denbō shiki, in Shitsunai kirigami, 39o. Bosatsukai sahō, DZZ, vol. 15, 172f.

<sup>72</sup> Gishiki zu, in Ishikawa 2001: 595. Denbō shiki, in Shitsunai kirigami, 39u. Bosatsukai sahō, DZZ, vol. 15, 186ff.

by sprinkling him with empowered water (shasui 洒水). In summary, considering these shared elements it seems clear that both the Gishiki zu and the Denbō shiki are distant descendants of the Bosatsukai sahō, which by the early fifteenth century had come to be performed by a single preceptor. However, both the Gishiki zu and the Denbō shiki further reflect medieval developments such as wearing the robe off both shoulders and the knee walk clearly foreign to Dōgen's ritual. The question which now must be faced is exactly which sources medieval Sōtō monks turned to in order to create these rituals. This paper would like to suggest that a close consideration of ritual elements found in the Gishiki zu, but neither the Bosatsukai sahō nor the Denbō shiki will provide an answer to this problem.

The *Gishiki zu* contains much material foreign to the Bosatsukai sahō and the Denbō shiki alike. The three most representative points include firstly the use of mirrors, secondly the transmission of sūtra texts and finally the text's name itself. Firstly, the *Gishiki zu* instructs that two mirrors are to be stacked on a table. The master takes the upper mirror, the disciple the lower one. They turn to each other, align the mirrors and recite: "I illuminate you, you illuminate me. In between, no image."<sup>73</sup> These words are taken from the commentary on the gong'an 公案 (Jp. kōan) "Master Ma is feeling unwell" recorded in the Chinese gong'an collection *Biyan lu* 碧巖 (Blue Cliff Record) and are another example of a ritualized kōan story.<sup>74</sup>

This use of mirrors is not unique to the Gishiki zu. An identical procedure is used in the Shicchū no shiki mentioned above. The Denbō shiki does not employ mirrors but Manzan in his commentary on the post-reform transmission ritual, the Denbō shitsunai mijji monki makes reference to two mirrors.<sup>75</sup> This raises the interesting possibility that variants of the Denbō shiki did use mirrors, and/or that it was Manzan's editorial decision to delete this element in the version he himself transmitted. If it is correct, as I will argue below, that the use of mirrors was adopted from Tendai initiation rituals, such an editorial choice on Manzan's part might

<sup>73</sup> 吾照你、你照吾、於中無影像. *Gishiki zu*, in Ishikawa 2001: 596.

<sup>74</sup> For the gong'an, see *Biyan lu*, T 48: 165a.

<sup>75</sup> Denbō shitsunai mijji monki, SSZS, vol. 15, 175b.

be indicative of his desire to create a more uniquely “Sōtō” transmission ritual purged of foreign influences.

The second element characteristic of the Gishiki zu is the transmission of sūtra texts.<sup>76</sup> After anointing the disciple, the master hands the student two volumes of “holy scripture” (nikan shōkyō 二卷聖經).<sup>77</sup> Unfortunately, the text does not name the scriptures to be transmitted. However, there is an early modern kirigami entitled Shōkō raihai narabi sankie fugen jūgan narabi kaikyō ge 焼香礼拝並三帰依普賢十願並開經偈 (Burning Incense and Prostrating and Three Refuges, Fugen’s Ten Vows and Gatha of Opening Sūtra) which describes a transmission ritual in which the master imparts the Lotus Sūtra (sk. Saddharma puṇḍarīka sūtra, ch. Miaofa lianhua jing, jp. Myōhō renga kyō 妙法蓮華經) and the Sūtra of Indra’s Net (sk. Brahmajālasūtra, ch. Fan wang jing, jp. Bonmōkyō 梵網經) to the student. A similar rite, datable to 1417 and spuriously attributed to the so-called “founder” of Japanese Rinzai Zen, Eisai 栄西 (var. Yōsai; 1141–1215) transmits only the Lotus Sūtra.<sup>78</sup> Thus the two volumes of holy writ mentioned in the Gishiki zu are likely either two fascicles of either the Lotus Sūtra or the Sūtra of Indra’s Net or otherwise one fascicle of each.

Finally, the Gishiki zu’s title needs to be considered. The “Pagoda of Many Children” refers to the mythical transmission between the Buddha and the first Zen ancestor Kāśyapa. According to one version of this legend, Kāśyapa received transmission upon first encountering the Buddha in front of this pagoda.<sup>79</sup> The title of the Gishiki zu indicates that the ritual it describes can be considered a reenactment of this first transmission. This is reinforced by the master identifying himself at one point with Kāśyapa, stating that “Our Great Master Śākyamuni Buddha transmits to me, Kāśyapa, I now transmit to Ananda [the second ancestor].”<sup>80</sup> In fact, some Sōtō transmission materials take this image one step further

<sup>76</sup> Gishiki zu, in Ishikawa 2001: 596.

<sup>77</sup> Gishiki zu, in Ishikawa 2001: 596.

<sup>78</sup> Ishikawa 2001: 589–593.

<sup>79</sup> For example, Denkōroku 伝光録 (Record of Transmitting the Light), by Keizan, T 82: 345b.

<sup>80</sup> 我大師釈迦牟尼仏陀付授吾迦葉、吾今付授阿難陀。Gishiki zu, in Ishikawa 2001: 595.

and claim that the transmission between the Buddha and Kāśyapa occurred inside a pagoda. They furthermore relate the concrete transmission ritual taking place in the abbot's quarter directly to what occurred in this mythical pagoda.<sup>81</sup> These three characteristics of the Gishiki zu suggest that Sōtō transmission rituals formed under the influence of medieval Tendai initiation teachings, as the next section will argue.

#### 4.2. *The Gishiki zu and Tendai oral transmissions*

Tendai initiatory lineages began to form around the middle of the Insei 院政 period (1086 – 1192) and include the Eshin 恵心, the Danna 檀那 and the Kike/Kaike 記家・戒家 along with their many sub-divisions.<sup>82</sup> Here the Eshin faction shall serve as a test case for tracing Sōtō transmission rituals to medieval Tendai teachings. In the following it will be demonstrated that all three of the characteristics of the Gishiki zu described above have a clear precedent in Eshin lineage initiation practices or teachings. Finally, the distinction and complementarity between Dharma and precept transmission, so fundamental to Manzan's model of transmission will be shown to have a forebear in the Tendai understanding of the relationship between initiatory teachings and the precepts.

Firstly, the use of mirrors has a venerable history in Tendai. The founder of Japanese Tendai, Saichō 最澄 (767–822) stresses in his Shugo kokkai shō 守護國界章 (Composition on Protecting the Realm), which records his dispute with the Hossō 法相 scholar Tokuitsu 徳一 (? , fl. 9<sup>th</sup> cen) that “the principle of the perfect interpenetration of mirror and image cannot be understood without oral instruction, the succession of masters indeed has a reason.”<sup>83</sup> Based on passages such as this, medieval Tendai scholiasts developed a sophisticated ‘mirror lore’ which they recorded in oral transmission materials. One, two or three mirrors were used in initiation rituals to communicate the teachings of “Three Contemplations of One Mind” (isshin sangan 一心三觀) or “Three Thousand in

<sup>81</sup> See for example the Kūjinsho kirigami 空塵書切紙 (Kirigami of the Writing of Emptiness and Dust) in Ishikawa 2001: 532ff. Translated in Bodiford 2000.

<sup>82</sup> See Hazama 1953: 43.

<sup>83</sup> 鏡像圓融義。非口決不解。師師相承。良有以也。 Shugo kokkai shō, in T 74: 159c.

One Instance of Thought” (ichinen sanzen 一念三千).<sup>84</sup> The following example is drawn from Sonshun’s 尊舜 (1452–1515) collection of Eshin lineage teachings, the Nichōshō kenmon 二帖抄見聞 (Notes on the Nichōshō):

[...], when cleaning and adorning the place of initiation, hang in the east and west two bright mirrors facing each other. Sentient being and Buddha sitting beside each other, make them sit in between the two [mirrors]. Continually reflecting each other, the images are not exhausted. In a single feeble thought, immediately there are established the Three Thousand.<sup>85</sup>

During initiation the disciple is made to sit in between two mirrors reflecting each other. This usage is admittedly different from the way the mirrors are employed in the Gishiki zu, although it could be argued that it was adopted to fit the gong’an from the Biyan lu. However, other Sōtō transmission rituals resemble the Nichōshō kenmon more closely. The Sangyō denju giki 山居伝授儀軌 (Ceremony for Transmitting to the Mountain Dweller) describes a ritual for transmitting the “precepts of the Buddhas and Ancestors” (busso daikai 仏祖大戒) and the “wisdom-life of the Buddhas and Ancestors” (busso emyō 仏祖慧命) certified by a Bloodline and Certificate of Succession.<sup>86</sup> This text instructs that when preparing the dōjō 道場 one is to hang two mirrors on the walls.<sup>87</sup> This is strikingly similar to the Nichōshō kenmon and suggests that medieval Sōtō monks drew inspiration from Tendai ‘mirror lore’.

The second characteristic of the Gishiki zu is the transmission of scripture, most likely the Lotus Sūtra and/or the Sūtra of Indra’s Net. The Nichōshō kenmon similarly touches on the transmission of scripture in the Eshin lineage. Concerning which “two scriptures” (ichi ni shō kyō 一二正經) are to be kept in the precept platform (kaidan 戒壇), the text explains that in the Eshin lineage the two scriptures are the two parts of

<sup>84</sup> For an overview of mirrors in Eishin, Danna and Kaike lineages, see Kiuchi 2012.

<sup>85</sup> 所謂嚴淨道場。東西相對懸於明鏡二面、生・仏並座令坐二其中間。重重相累影現無窮。介爾一心即具三千。Nichōshō kenmon, in TSZS, vol. 9, 187a.

<sup>86</sup> Sangyō denju giki, in Shicchū kirigami 室中切紙 (Kirigami inside the Room), kept at Komazawa University Library, call number H172/15, vol. 2, 36u, 37o. The Shicchū kirigami is another collection of kirigami associated with Manzan’s lineage. See Hirose 2012: 66.

<sup>87</sup> 壁上高懸兩鏡。Sangyō denju giki, in Shicchū kirigami, 36o.



the Lotus Sūtra (hokke honjaku ryōkyō 法華本迹兩經) but that other lineages use the Sūtra of Indra's Net and the Lotus Sūtra together.<sup>88</sup> The Sōtō practice of transmitting either or both of these thus has a clear precedent in Tendai precept thought and practice. Furthermore, Tendai monk's ritual use of scripture in the context of transmission rituals was not limited to imparting the precepts. Scriptures, especially the Lotus Sūtra also prominently featured in rites of initiation into oral transmissions, in which case it was sometimes combined with the use of mirrors. The Nichōshō kenmon's discussion of one such initiation ritual explains that after one has cleaned and adorned the initiatory space, one is to place in it two mirrors, as described above, as well as a copy of the Lotus Sūtra and fascicles three and five of Zhiyi's 智顗 (538–597) Mohe zhiguan 摩訶止觀. The text emphasizes that in oral transmission (kuden 口伝) the Lotus Sūtra is indispensable, as "all *Dharma* gates exhaustively enter therein".<sup>89</sup> This use of both mirrors and scripture together suggests that Sōtō monks not only adopted isolated elements from Tendai initiation rituals but sometimes copied an entire ritual motif wholesale.

Finally, the symbolic location of transmission is of considerable interest. Sōtō transmission is portrayed as taking place either in front of or inside a pagoda. This has clear antecedents in Tendai discourses on both transmission and Zen. Firstly, the Eshin lineage understood its own transmission of the Perfect/Sudden precepts (endon kai 円頓戒) and Three Contemplations of One Mind to originate with Śākyamuni Buddha passing them to Nanyue Huisi 南岳慧思 (515–577), the teacher of the founder of Tiantai Buddhism, Zhiyi. This transmission was to have occurred in the Pagoda of Many Jewels (tahōtō 多宝塔) described in the fifteenth chapter of the Lotus Sūtra.<sup>90</sup> During initiation both master and disciple were enjoined to think of themselves as reenacting this original transmission inside the pagoda and identifying with its protagonists.<sup>91</sup> This recalls the reenactment of the original transmission between the Buddha and the first ancestor as which the Gishiki zu portrays Zen succession.

<sup>88</sup> Nichōshō kenmon, TSZS, vol. 9, 233a.

<sup>89</sup> 一切法門悉納此內故也。Nichōshō kenmon, TSZS, vol. 9, 161ab.

<sup>90</sup> See Tendai sūzu 天台宗図 (Outline of Tendai Principles), in ZTZS, vol. 14, 146.

<sup>91</sup> See Kechimyaku sōshō shikenmon 血脈相承私見聞 (Personal Notes on the Transmission of the Bloodline) ZTZS, vol. 14, 474.

Furthermore, some factions of the Tendai school used their own transmission teachings to interpret Zen succession. The encyclopedic Keiran shūyō shū 溪嵐拾葉集 (Collection of Leaves Gathered from Storms and Streams), associated with the precept lineage (*kaike* 戒家) records the following notion of Zen transmission.

Śākyamuni Buddha entered the pagoda and gave the world seat to Kāśyapa; like the two Buddhas of the Lotus sitting beside each other. Śākyamuni did not give any verbal explanation. This is the second method of transmission in the Zen school.<sup>92</sup>

In this quote the image of Śākyamuni Buddha sharing the seat with Prabhūtaratna Buddha inside the Pagoda of Many Jewels from the Lotus Sūtra is superimposed on the Zen transmission from the Buddha to Kāśyapa. It is not difficult to imagine that Sōtō masters found inspiration in Tendai teachings like these when formulating their own imagery of Zen transmission and thus chose the Pagoda of Many Children as the symbolic location of transmission rituals.

Finally, as we have seen in the last section, the complementary use of ritually separate precept/Dharma transmissions has no clear precedent in early Sōtō. Yet it does carry a strong similarity to the Tendai practice of transmitting initiatory teachings always together with precepts. The Nichōshō kenmon explains their relationship as follows:

Question: Do those who receive the Bloodline of the Three Contemplations of One Mind necessarily receive the Bloodline of the Perfect Precepts?

Answer: This is the case. It is merely regarding the sequence that there is difference among scholar's transmissions. Some say: First receive the Perfect Precepts, then one can receive the Bloodline of the Three Contemplations of One Mind.<sup>93</sup>

Thus according to 'some' Tendai scholars the disciple has to receive the "Bloodline of the Perfect Precepts" (*enkai kechimiyaku* 円戒血脈)

<sup>92</sup> 釈迦此塔中入給与界座於迦葉如法花二佛並坐。釈迦一言不説。此是禪宗第二付法方也。Keiran shūyō shū, T 76: 761a.

<sup>93</sup> 尋云、一心三觀血脈受者、必円戒血脈伝耶。一義云、然也。但前後事学者相伝不同也。一義云、先受円戒、後可受一心三觀血脈。Nichōshō kenmon, TSZS, vol. 9, 234a.

before he can receive initiation into the Three Contemplations in One Mind. Likewise, in Sōtō Zen the future master first receives the Bloodline of the “Zen precepts” before he succeeds to the Dharma. It appears that the elusive origin of the separate yet complementary use of Dharma and precept transmission in Sōtō Zen might be found here at the heart of Tendai initiations and that Sōtō masters consciously copied Tendai ritual practices in order to create their own transmission ceremonies.

### 4.3. *Tendai Precept Texts in Sōtō Zen*

Despite these extensive similarities between Sōtō and Tendai transmission practices, the question remains whether it is possible to show that Sōtō masters in fact had access to and appropriated Tendai initiatory teachings. In this section, the Daruma sōshō isshinkai giki 達磨相承一心戒儀軌 (Ritual of the One Mind Precepts Transmitted by Great Master Bodhidharma, hereafter *Isshinkai giki*), spuriously attributed to Eisai shall provide one concrete example of such adoptions. The *Isshinkai giki* is a collection of Tendai precept teachings, including an initiation ritual.<sup>94</sup> Furuta Shōkin has demonstrated that this text originated in the Eshin lineage and came to be transmitted to monks of Eisai’s lineage at Kenninji 建仁寺.<sup>95</sup> It contains a section entitled “Perfect/Sudden Vajra Jewel Precepts of the Buddha Vehicle” (*bujjō endon kongō kai 仏乗円頓金剛戒*) which offers a highly abstract interpretation of the ten grave precepts given in the Sūtra of Indra’s Net. The first precept is discussed as follows.

First [precept], For all material and mental [dharma] in the ten dharma realms, not giving rise to the view of cessation in the abiding dharma, this is the precept of not killing beings.<sup>96</sup>

The remaining nine precepts are treated similarly. One widespread Sōtō kirigami, the Daruma daishi isshinkai 達磨大師一心戒 quotes the *Isshinkai giki*’s definitions of the ten precepts verbatim.<sup>97</sup> This constitutes

<sup>94</sup> For a brief description of the ritual, see Bodiford 2005: 204f.

<sup>95</sup> See Furuta 1986.

<sup>96</sup> 十法界色心於常住法中不起斷見為不殺生戒. Furuta 1986, separate volume, 50.

<sup>97</sup> Manuscript copy kept at Seimyōji.

clear proof that the composers of medieval Sōtō oral transmission materials could access and actively appropriate Tendai precept thought, in this case most likely through the mediation of Kenninji.

Nor did this process of appropriation come to an end with the Middle Ages or even Manzan's reform movement. Banjin Dōtan 萬侶道坦 (1698–1775) was the most vocal advocate of the unity of Zen and the precepts in post-reform Sōtō Zen. In the *Zenkai shō* 禪戒鈔 (Explanation of the Zen Precepts) he explains his position as follows.

Receiving [the precepts] is itself transmission [of the precepts]. Transmission that itself is Understanding. Sentient Beings immediately awakening to the Buddha mind. [That is] called True Reception of the Precepts.<sup>98</sup>

This assertion, which is also found in the *Isshinkai giki* is an almost verbatim quote from a collection of Kamakura period Eshin lineage lore, the *Kawataya bōshō jūkyūtsū* 河田谷傍正十九通 (19 Notes on Primary and Secondary [Meaning] of Kawataya).

Receiving [the precepts] is transmission [of the precepts]. Transmission that is Understanding. Sentient Beings awaken to and enter into the knowledge of the Buddha.<sup>99</sup>

The influence of Tendai thought thus extended beyond the Middle Ages and continued to shape early modern Sōtō Zen notions of the precepts and their transmission. In this sense it is telling that in the *Zenkai shō* Banjin ends up calling on the authority of Saichō in order to defend the dual structure of Sōtō Zen Dharma and precept transmission.<sup>100</sup>

## 5. Conclusions

A complex tangle of developments underlies the formation of early modern practices of Dharma transmission. Early modern Dharma transmission is based on the systematic distinction and complementarity

<sup>98</sup> 受者伝也。伝者は覚也。衆生即悟仏心。名真受戒矣。Zenkaishō 禪戒鈔, SSZS, vol. 3, 440a.

<sup>99</sup> 受者伝。伝者は覚。衆生悟入仏知見。Kawataya bōshō jūkyūtsū, TSZS, vol. 9, 109a.

<sup>100</sup> See Zenkaishō 禪戒鈔, T 82: 646c. Banjin's interpretation of the precepts, especially the notion of the unity of (Za)zen and the precepts (*zenkai ichinyō* 禪戒一如) remains fundamental to modern Sōtō dogmatics. See LoBreglio 2009: 92.

of precept and Dharma transmission. The roots of this arrangement are certainly to be found in Dōgen, who positioned Zen transmission in the context of precept initiation. Yet for Dōgen precept initiation in itself was not a sufficient condition for succeeding to the Dharma. Rather, a student had to display certain personal qualities, especially the ability to successfully engage in kōan exchanges and to serve as abbot, in order to count as a fully fledged heir. There is no evidence to suggest that in early Sōtō Zen Dharma succession was associated with any specific ritual event. None the less, Dōgen's new conception of transmission served as the basis for later generations of Sōtō masters to formulate their own understanding of Zen transmission. Thus in Keizan's faction there appeared a tendency to distinguish precept from Dharma transmission, even if they do appear to have been interpreted as sequential rather than complementary. Medieval masters began to interpret this distinction under the influence of Tendai precept and initiation practices and eventually came to borrow many of the latter's key elements. These included the ritual use of mirrors and the transmission of venerated texts such as the Lotus Sūtra but also the framing of the Buddha's transmission to Kāśyapa in imagery derived from this important text. This led to the creation of texts such as the *Gishiki zu*, which, while retaining some basic links to the *Bosatsukai sahō* rely heavily on Tendai derived ritual elements. In the course of these adoptions, an understanding of Dharma and precept transmission modeled on the dual transmission of Tendai initiatory teachings and Perfect/Sudden Precepts became increasingly popular, as the *Shitsuchū no shiki* also attests. It was the systematization of this two-tiered model which allowed Manzan to solve the problem of the relationship between personal and temple succession. Manzan ritually divided the transmission of the precepts from that of the Dharma. To this end he followed his teacher Gesshū's direction and revived the use of the *Bosatsukai sahō* as precept initiation ritual during which the Bloodline is transmitted. This he combined with the *Denbō shiki*, based on his textual research at Daijōji, during which the Certificate of Succession was imparted. It should be noted, however, that there is a strong possibility that Manzan edited the latter so as to produce a ritual purged of foreign influences, as the discrepancy regarding the use of mirrors between the Manzan's *Denbō shiki* and Menzan's commentary on it suggests.

Dharma transmission cannot be abstracted from the concrete institutional circumstances in which it is practiced. In each of the instances discussed in this paper, any change in the pattern of Dharma transmission implies an active re-imagining of the tradition in light of specific agendas. Manzan's reform movement itself is perhaps the clearest example of the ways in which complex motivations overlap in the reformation of transmission practices. On the one hand, his emphasis on personal succession must be seen in the context of the increasing control the Tokugawa government exerted on monastic institutions, which led to centralized sectarian structures, as well as the ideological challenges to the orthodoxy of Sōtō transmission practices.<sup>101</sup> At the same time, Manzan's efforts were aimed at weakening rival lineages by undermining their secret transmissions and affirming his own Meihō line as the repository of Sōtō orthodoxy. Yet paradoxically the authority Manzan claimed for his faction derives from exactly the system of oral transmissions itself, as can be seen from the fact that the transmission ritual Manzan promoted shares many features with 'unorthodox' rituals. It thus comes as no surprise that Manzan's understanding of transmission continued to be disputed in the framework of the politics of oral transmissions. In these disputes the battle lines were not drawn straightforwardly between those who favored the reform of Dharma transmission and those opposing it. Rather, they also ran between members of the Meihō and of the Gasan factions, just as they did 300 years earlier when Sōtō esoteric lore first came to be formalized. This implies, despite Manzan's protestations to the contrary, that Dharma transmission in Sōtō Zen after him does not constitute a return to Dōgen but the last remnant of the medieval system of oral traditions itself.

The reformation of Dharma transmission practices played a central role in the construction, imagination, and "invention" of Sōtō Zen. When the tradition was faced with significant institutional and ideological challenges, it reacted not only on the discursive but also on the ritual level, adopting practice to changing circumstances and occasionally even deploying it as a weapon in internal disputes. At the same time, Dharma transmission is, at its most basic and in all its forms, nothing but the pure affirmation of continuity itself, and in this sense the "invented tradition" *par excellence*.

<sup>101</sup> See Bodiford 1991: 431f.

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- SSZS *Sōtōshū zensho* 曹洞宗全書 (Complete Works of the Sōtō School). Ed. Sōtōshū zensho kankō kai 曹洞宗全書刊行会. Tōkyō: Sōtōshū zensho kankō kai, 1970–1973.
- T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經 (Tripiṭaka Collected in the Taishō Era). Ed. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 et al. Tōkyō: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai 大正一切經刊行会, 1904–1923.
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## ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the formation and transformation of Sōtō Zen 曹洞禪 Dharma transmission rituals (*denbō* 伝法 or *shihō* 嗣法) from the point of view of Eric Hobsbawm's notion of 'invented traditions.' It argues that the reformation of transmission rituals was an important tool for re-inventing' Sōtō Zen whenever the tradition faced an institutional or ideological crisis. Focusing on the transformation of transmission in the Tokugawa 徳川 period (1603–1868), the paper makes three points. Firstly, transmission rituals in Sōtō Zen derived from precept initiations. Secondly, Dharma transmission in Tokugawa Sōtō Zen relied on the systematic distinction and complementary usage of precept and Dharma lineages, which developed in response to medieval practices. Finally, the context in which to understand the formation of Sōtō Zen transmission rituals are the oral initiation practices (*kuden hōmon* 口伝法門) of the Tendai 天台 tradition.

In order to arrive at these conclusions, the paper first investigates the transmission ritual promoted by the Tokugawa period reformer Manzan Dōhaku 叡山道白 (1635–1715). It shows that this ritual relies on a systematization of the separate but complementary transmission of Dharma and precept lineages. It then investigates the origins of this usage, concluding that while Dōgen 道元 (1200–1253) did position Dharma transmission in the context of precept initiations, the systematic distinction of Dharma and precept transmission stems from a later period. Finally, the paper clarifies the influence Tendai initiatory practices exerted on the development of Sōtō transmission rituals.

The paper concludes that the Tokugawa period transformation of Dharma transmission ritual needs to be understood firstly as a form of crisis management and secondly in the context of a struggle among oral initiation lineages for orthodoxy.