

A Comparative Approach to the Contexts of Tacit Communication

Masako NAITO

1. Introduction

The study of communication including verbal and nonverbal methods is an interdisciplinary field that relates not only to linguistics but also to sociology, psychology and anthropology. It could be better to say that it even involves the entire field of human experiences beyond those fields. It is well known that the study of communication, in particular, intercultural communication has developed primarily in USA to meet the need for promoting personal exchanges after World War II. Therefore, we have found the Western ideas and values as the basis of the theories, which could be similar feature seen in methodology of other fields. On the other hand, it is also true that we need to have a new theory presented on the basis of the Oriental way of thinking. When it comes to the Oriental ideas, it is certain that the Buddhistic thoughts reveal important clues not only as the philosophy but also as the custom in various occasions.

Although we have an eternal history of the study on Buddhism in Japan, it does not seem for many Buddhist scholars to feel a great interest directly in communication. On the other hand, we can be certain that it is not easy for scholars of communication to take advantage of the accomplishments of the study of Buddhism in their own studies. Therefore, we have found the situation at the moment where we do not share a number of valuable achievements of the studies on Buddhism in terms of making better use of them as the theoretical resources in the study of communication. In order to move the situation forward a step, I would suggest reading the Lotus Sutra, which is a typical sutra in Mahayana Buddhism, from the point of view of human communication.

When we read the Lotus Sutra focusing on how communication in the relation between various characters unfolds in the story, a manner called “*yi shin den sin* (heart to heart communication, understanding each other without language)” is often observed between Śākyamuni Buddha and his disciples and people. Since the Buddha has already attained the

enlightenment nirvana, it seems easy for him to understand telepathically with his supernatural power what his disciples, adherents and other people think in their minds. It is, however, interesting that the similar manner of communication has been seen between those who are listening together the preaching of the Buddha in various occasions. For example, Chapter 2 (Skillfulness) in the Sutra shows a scene where Śāriputra, one of the brilliant disciples of the Buddha, understands with his heart what the four classes of Buddhists; the monks, the nuns, the women and men, those think in their minds while surrounding Śāykamuni Buddha and listening to his teaching.

爾時大衆中。有諸声聞漏尽阿羅漢阿若憍陳如等千二百人。及發声聞辟支仏心比丘比丘尼優婆塞優婆夷。各作是念。今者世尊。何故慙歎称歎方便而作是言。仏所得法甚深難解。有所言説意趣難知。一切声聞辟支仏所不能及。仏説一解脱義。我等亦得此法到於涅槃。而今不知是義所趣。爾時舍利弗知四衆心疑。自亦未了。而白仏言⁽¹⁾。

Chapter 2 begins with the scene where the Buddha who awoke from his deep meditation and talked to Śāriputra. The Buddha says that the wisdom of all Buddhas is profound and infinite, difficult to realize, and that it is beyond description and comprehension. Therefore, he emphasizes that the skillful means Tathāgatas use are the highest, most wonderful way to teach the Law that Buddhas have attained to the minds and hearts of all beings. The scene quoted above describes how the remarks of the Buddha arose suspicion among those who were 1200 people including the monks, the nuns, the women and men. They thought in their minds that the cause and reason the Buddha praised the way of Tathāgatas such definitely were hard to understand. Indeed, they had difficulty in grasping the meaning from his words. But nobody uttered a word. Then Śāriputra understood with his heart the suspicion in their minds and asked the Buddha. Although the Chinese sentences above, which are quoted from *Miao fa lian hua jing* translated by Kumārajīva, did not use a phrase “以心傳心,” for the phrase had not been created at the time, it is certain that the manner itself is a very basic one in human communication in the world.

Let us see the Japanese translation of the part concerned in Chapter 2

さて、実に、先達、舍利弗は以心伝心、出家の男女修行者、在家の男女修行者たちの、こうした疑惑、疑問を知り、自らにもまた、法に対する疑惑があり、そのとき、お釈迦さまに、このように、問いかけるのでありました⁽²⁾。

The manner of communication that we understand each other not with words but with our hearts is called “以心傳心” in Chinese and “以心伝心” in Japanese respectively. I would take these phrases as a clue to consider one of the most basic manners of human communication, focusing on the differences of contexts where the manner is observed.

2. *The functions of the executive*, its Japanese translation and Chinese translation

Before we examine both the Chinese and Japanese words, I would introduce a book *The functions of the executive* by Chester I. Barnard in 1938 in this chapter. Primarily the manner, telepathic, tacit, or spiritual, is the universal one that we people have in common in our communication from the primitive society to the modern times. C.I.Barnard indicated in his book already in the 30's that it was necessary for us to pay attention to the study of such a basic manner of communication. He says,

On the other side, both in primitive and in highly complex civilization “observational feeling” is likewise an important aspect of communication. I do not think it is generally so recognized. It is necessary because of the limitations of language and the differences in linguistic capacities of those who use language. A very large element in special experience and training and in continuity of individual associations is the ability to understand without words, not merely the situation or conditions, but the *intention*⁽³⁾.

Barnard emphasizes the significance of the manner, “observational feeling” in his word, as an element that plays a key role in people’s communicating each other in organizations. He also points out that it is important because not only for corporative communication between people in the organization but for carrying out its purpose as their common purpose. The problems on human relations in organizations, companies and work places are not to be disregarded, rather, should be placed in the center for resolving as the fundamental matters in terms of its direct influence on administration. It is obvious that those are issues that many executives in organizations have widely recognized all over the world at the present time.

Let us see the Japanese translation of this part. It says,

他方、原始的な時代、高度に複雑な文明社会のいずれを問わず、「以心伝心」は同じく重要な伝達の一側面であるが、まだ一般には認められていないように思う。言語では表現でき

ない場合や言葉を使う人々の言語能力に差異があるためにそれが必要である。特別な経験と訓練および個人的な交際の継続に際し非常に大きな要素となるのは、たんなる情況とか条件のみでなく、その意向を言葉を通じないで理解する能力である⁽⁴⁾。

As the above, here the Japanese translator uses the phrase “yi shin den shin” for observational feeling in the original. According to Barnard, the English phrase is his coining and it shows that he made the phrase focusing on the situation where some people communicate each other without words, in other words, such manner occurs naturally without any indication of what to do. We can say that the English phrase shows the manner from the outside in terms of the aspect observed by someone who has not joined the manner of communication. On the other hand, the Japanese phrase, which is well known for us as daily vocabulary, shows the manner from the inner aspect of the people concerned.

We have the Chinese translation of the part as well. It says,

另外，不论是在原始文明，还是在高度复杂的文明中，“以心传心”也是一种重要的沟通交流方法。我认为，这种方法并没有普遍地为人们所认识。这种方法之所以很必要，是由于语言固有的局面性和人们使用语言的能力差异。在专门的培训和经验以及个人联系的特殊方面，一个极为重要的要素是：不通过语言就可以了解对方的能力。而且，不仅仅是为了解环境和条件，还要了解对方的意图⁽⁵⁾。

Likewise, we find that the Chinese translator uses the phrase “yi xin chuan xin”, which corresponds to the Japanese “yi shin den shin.” While it seems that using the Chinese phrase for the English phrase in the original is based on the Japanese translation, analyzing or evaluating the Chinese translation is not the purpose here. Rather I would argue that there are differences in the usage of two phrases though it is certain that “yi shin den shin” comes from “yi xin chuan xin” like other Japanese words and phrases originated in Chinese historically. It seems that greater attention should be given to this aspect in order to obtain a broader and better understanding of the manner. For this reason, I would suggest dealing with these phrases more specifically and discussing the differences between them taking into account the cultural influence on the usage in both languages. Let us begin with a brief sketch of the meaning of each phrase.

3. Japanese “*yi shin den shin*” and Chinese “*yi xin chuan xin*”

According to a Japanese dictionary *Kōjien* (sixth edition), the phrase “*yi shin den shin*” has two meanings. One is a Buddhistic term, in particular in Zen Buddhism, which indicates a method to communicate the truth that is inexpressive by words from master to disciple. And the other is to communicate thinking each other from heart to heart without words. The former is a term of Zen Buddhism, and the latter the usage of communication in our daily lives. Needless to say, these explanations are clear and accurate, though, it seems that the relationship between them is open to question. Some studies of communication take the position to deal with them separately or only take the latter as a manner in the category of nonverbal communication such as gestures and motions. In addition, there are studies that present the latter as a feature that is peculiarly seen in certain cultures or social customs from the sociological point of view. It would be not appropriate if we take the relationship between two meanings disconnectedly. On the other hand, we cannot interpret simply that the latter originates in the former in that as we have seen in the Lotus Sutra the manner itself with the latter use certainly exists well before an example of the former use. Concerning the relationship between the two, we need to examine the phrase more closely and carefully and find the way to relate them mutually. In other word, it is the subject of what the phrase conveys us through the history of its use as well as its function of showing the meaning.

Now let us move on to Chinese dictionaries to find how they explain Chinese “*yi xin chuan xin*.” Concerning the meaning of the phrase, we have found that explaining as a term of Zen (Chan) Buddhism dominates in almost all dictionaries. For example, *Zhonghua chengyu cihai* says that as a term of Zen (Chan) Buddhism, it indicates to make a person receive the truth of Buddhism in the way of intuition and inspiration not by understanding through language. *Hanyu dacidian* also has similar explanation adding another aspect of the method to encourage those who pursue the truth of Buddhism to study in such a way without relying on the words in talks and books. With respect to the sources of Zen Buddhism that both dictionaries show in their explanations, I would refer later in this paper. I would point out here that the use of the phrase in our daily lives, which is the latter in the description of the Japanese dictionary as I mentioned above, has not been indicated in Chinese dictionaries, and that even there are some dictionaries that have not taken the phrase into their entries for the reason that it is a terminology of Buddhism.

This is a striking difference between the descriptions in Japanese and Chinese. A Japanese

dictionary of Buddhist terms, *Kōsetsu bukkyōgo daijiten*, explains the meaning of the phrase “yi shin den shin” not only as a Buddhist term but also as a phrase in common use in our daily lives, which is in accord with the description in other Japanese dictionaries such as *Kōjien* as I referred to above. Such a difference means that when we use Chinese “yi xin chuan xin,” it is inevitably associated with the manner to obtain certain truth in Zen Buddhism, for example, the original meaning in Zen Buddhism is usually suggested even though it indicates to transmit some artistic secrets from master to disciple. In Japanese, however, that is not necessarily the case when we use “yi shin den shin,” in that some people may not associate it with any concept of Zen Buddhism in using the phrase as a manner of communication in daily life.

We might conclude this chapter by noting that there are certain differences observed in the meaning and usage between Japanese “yi shin den shin” and Chinese “yi xin chuan xin,” and that it is necessary to bring these concerns into focus for a careful study of this manner of human communication.

4. The contexts from the point of view of Zen Buddhism

Concerning the use of “yi xin chuan xin,” we find that there are two persons who attract our attention in the history of Zen Buddhism. One is Bodhidharma, date of birth and death unknown, who came to China around the beginning of the sixth century and made great effort to spread Zen in the country, and the other Huineng (638-713) who became the sixth successor to the head of Zen, the first of South Sect of Zen in China, despite being an illiterate worker in a temple in Mt. Huangmei. Let us see the literature related to these Buddhist priests.

First, concerning the remarks by Bodhidharma, while *Jingde chuandenglu* (1004) and *Chanyuan zhuquanji duxu* (1062) are often referred to in dictionaries, *Zutangji* (952) attracts our attention in that it cites the phrase as told by Bodhidharma himself. It describes a dialogue between Bodhidharma and his disciple Huike (487-593) in the second chapter.

Huike told Bodhidharma, “Please make my mind calm.” Bodhidharma said, “All right. Take your mind out here. I will make it calm.” Huike came forward and said, “I tried to seek my mind, but I was not able to find it at all.” Bodhidharma said, “If you could find it, it is not possible that it is your mind. With this, I have already completed making your mind calm.” Bodhidharma also talked to Huike and said, “I have completed making your mind calm. Can you see that?” Then Huike suddenly awoke and said, “Priest, I tell you, I awoke today for the first time. Every Law is essentially nothing. Enlightenment is not far

in the future. I awoke that today for the first time. That is the reason why all Bodhisattvas attained the great sea of wisdom successfully, reached the shore of Nirvana successfully.” Bodhidharma said, “How right you are.” Huike asked Bodhidharma and said, “Priest, Are there any records or documents of this Law?” Bodhidharma said, “My Law is to be initiated from heart to heart (*yi xin chuan xin*), no records or documents.”⁽⁶⁾

Thus achieved enlightenment through talking with Bodhidharma, Huike served Bodhidharma around the clock and learned for nine years. Bodhidharma told Huike that he would permit Huike to succeed his Law. As we have seen, Bodhidharma, who is the patriarch of Zen Buddhism in China, set the style for teaching Law with absolute tone. On the other hand, when we see another related literature *Liuzu tanjing*, we find that the phrase “*yi xin chuan xin*” was used in the situation where the fifth successor of Zen, priest Hongren (602-675) gave Huineng the teaching secretly and made him the sixth.

Hongren called Huineng to come to the hall in the midnight and taught him Jin’gangjing. No sooner had Huineng listened to it than he achieved enlightenment. Thus he succeeded Law in the night. Nobody, however, knew that. Hongren told him Dunjiao and gave him the priest’s robe and made him the sixth successor. Law is to be initiated from heart to heart (*yi xin chuan xin*), all ascetic monks must achieve enlightenment by themselves⁽⁷⁾.

Those examples of the phrase tell us some points of the implication. First, it is the way for giving instruction to disciples in Zen Buddhism, in other words, it is a symbolic expression to show a particular inheriting. Secondly, it is intended to appeal to one’s instinct in an emotionally engaged way what is impossible to tell through language. Thirdly, it leads disciples to realize Law and to achieve enlightenment by making their own efforts. Indeed, the moment that a priest has achieved enlightenment is not explained through language either.

According to *Linjilu* (1120), there is a story that Linji (?-867) asks his teacher Huangbo (?-857) a question on primordial of Buddhism. When Linji asked Huangbo the fundamental principle of Buddhism, Huangbo hit Linji with stick before Linji finished his question. After being hit three times, Linji thought that the time had not yet come, and went to meet priest Dayu (year of birth and death unknown). Dayu asked him, “Where did you come from?” Linji said, “I came from Huangbo’s. I asked him supreme principle and was hit by him with stick

three times. I do not understand what my faults are.” Dayu told him, “Huangbo made great efforts to deal with your question, you do not understand that, and even ask me what your own faults are.” After the word, Linji suddenly achieved enlightenment.

We also find that as far as the function of the phrase remains in the extent of Zen Buddhism as seen above, we cannot derive from it, the way indicating heart to heart communication in our daily lives.

And here we might take into account the problem on the meaning of Chinese word “xin (heart, mind).” It is one of the difficult words to deal with in particular as the terminology of Zen Buddhism. There are many phrases that include “xin” in it, such as “shi xin shi fo” “shi xin shi fa” “xin ji shi fa” “xin shi fa yuan” “ji xin shi fo” and “ji xin ji fo.” All of which tell us how deeply one’s heart is connected with the fundamental concepts such as Buddha and Law. That is to say, one’s heart itself is Buddha and is Law on its own. Interestingly, some Zen dialogues give us the opposite of “ji xin shi fo” or “ji xin ji fo,” which is “fei xin fei fo.” Dialogues concerning Mazu (709-788) show us how the paired phrases were used. Once Damei (752-839) asked Mazu a question of what Buddha is. Mazu told him “ji xin ji fo,” the heart is Buddha. With that word Damei awoke from his long dream. And on another occasion, a priest asked Mazu a question and said, “Why do you often use the phrase “ji xin ji fo” in your preach?” Mazu said, “To stop a baby from crying.” The priest said, “Then how would you say if the baby stopped crying?” Mazu said, “Fei xin fei fo,” the heart is not Buddha.” Needless to say, “baby” here represents those who seek Buddhism, and as paradoxical as it may seem that is the skillful means and wisdom known as Buddha’s way.

On the other hand, we can interpret those “xin” as Buddha nature that is a basis for all existence on earth, not as a heart functioning for ordinary psychological actions. Such an interpretation, however, does not seem contradictory to the former seen in the words of Mazu. As the use of “fei xin fei fo” in the dialogue shows, it is not possible for us to grasp Buddha nature without taking our heart as a certain clue to help us to approach the way. Therefore, we do not need to take both senses separately as opposed to each other. Rather, we need to interpret those “xin” as integrated into a certain semantic field that connects one’s heart with Buddha nature to encourage all existences to become Buddha.

It is, however, necessary to consider the differences between those terms of Zen Buddhism and common uses as indicating the way of heart to heart communication in our daily lives, even though we take the position that the Chinese word “xin” in Zen dialogues does not exclude the meaning of one’s heart in the body. As long as its usage is restricted to Buddhistic

terms, that does not allow us to use directly the phrase “yi xin chuan xin” to implicate the way of communication in our ordinary human relations. And the fact leads us to discuss further on the phrase.

5. “Yi shin den shin” in *Shōbōgenzō* by Dōgen

There are some examples of the phrase “yi xin chuan xin” in the literature on Buddhism in Japanese, which is pronounced “yi shin den shin”. First, we can see one of those in *Henjō hokki shōryōshū* edited by Shinzei (800-860) in 835, collection of the works of Kūkai (774-835) who was a Buddhist priest in the early Heian period and became the patriarch of Shingon Sect in Japan. Kūkai is also well known as an expert in writing Chinese poetry. In 813 Saichō (768-822), who went to China with Kūkai to learn Buddhism in 804 and after returning became the patriarch of Tendai Sect in Japan, wrote a letter to him and asked to borrow a book *Rishushakkyō*, which is an explanation book of *Rishukyō* (Principle of Wisdom Sutra) and is treated as important in Shingon Sect. Although they had a close relationship and respected each other as Buddhist with the same goal to establish new Buddhism in Japan, Kūkai declined to lend it. Quoting the phrase “yi shin den shin,” he says,

The treasured mysterious arcanum does not attach importance to obtaining the words in the book. It is only understood in the manner of heart to heart (yi shin den shin). The words written in the book are lees. The words in the book are rubble.⁽⁸⁾

We can see the absolute determination by Kūkai to the way for approaching the Law in his refusal to Saichō’s request. According to Kūkai, language in the book has no value *per se*. It does not help us to understand the real sense of the book. Rather, without even hesitating, he emphasizes the significance of the manner of grasping it with our own heart by devoting ourselves to the training and practice. After the purpose has been accomplished, the words used in the book become “sōhaku (lees)”. The word “sōhaku” reminds us the linguistic view that is found in Chinese classics *Zhuangzi*, in which the value of written records has been denied with a word “zaopo,” the same word in Chinese as “sōhaku,” by an old cartwright. What Kūkai shows Saichō here using the phrase “yi shin den shin” and probably Kūkai himself believes as the right way is in accord with the orthodoxy that we have found in the uses of the phrase “yi xin chuan xin” in the various literature on Zen Buddhism in Chinese.

Concerning the example of the phrase that was brought into Japanese with its traditional

views, we also find *Hasshūkōyō* in 1268 by Gyōnen (1240-1321), who was one of the great priests in Kegon Sect. In the book Gyōnen introduced the doctrine and history of Japanese Buddhism including Zen Sect based on his erudition. He says that “Tenjiku” twenty eight priests past the Law of Zen down generation after generation by “yi shin den shin.” “Tenjiku” indicates India, and it is believed that the first priest of Zen, Mahākāśyapa received instruction directly from Śakyamuni Buddha. The twenty eighth is Bodhidharma who introduced it in China in the beginning of the sixth century. Gyōnen tells us certain characteristics of the religion using the phrases such as “fu ryū mon ji” “ji ki shi nin shin” “ken shō jō butsu” as well as “yi shin den shin.” All of which are symbolic phrases in Zen Buddhism to show a particular way to perceive and grasp something beyond expression in language.

In contrast to those interpretations by Kūkai and Gyōnen, both of which are based on its traditional meaning from the point of view of Zen Buddhism in China, Dōgen’s insightful explication on the phrase “yi shin den shin” shows us that there are more aspects to be discussed on the issue. Let us see *Shōbōgenzō* written between 1231 and 1253 by Dōgen (1200-1253), who was a Buddhist priest in the early Kamakura period and became the patriarch of Sōtō Sect in Japan after returning from China. We find that there are two parts in the book that Dōgen uses the phrase, i.e. Chapter 38 Kattō and Chapter 46 Mujōseppō⁽⁹⁾.

First, let us see Chapter 38 Kattō. The word kattō derived from vine and wisteria means binding; something put you under restraint. Generally in Buddhism it indicates certain troublesome obstruction or conflict to achievement of the Law. Dōgen, however, has raised the question on such a use of the word introducing his mentor Tiantong Rujing’s (1163-1228) figurative speech, that is to say, “Vines of the gourd creep along vines of the gourd.” On the basis of the metaphorical expression, Dōgen clarifies the meaning of the word “kattō” and says that such an expression shows us the particular relationships between master and disciple in Buddhism. He emphasizes that only Rujing observed “kattō” in such a way among those who sought the Law of the Buddhas with wide knowledge and large experience. According to Dōgen, although many great priests have told us that we must cut the root of binding to attain our purpose, they have not shown us the ways such as cutting binding by using binding, or creeping along binding by using binding, even more, giving or receiving instruction of binding by using binding. Through the phenomenon of tangled vines, Dōgen sees the simple truth of human existence. Further, he recognizes what Rujing showed us by using such words as none other than “yi shin den shin,” the way by which the Law ought to be instructed directly from master to disciple.

To explain that from another point of view, Dōgen refers to a story of Bodhidharma and his four disciples. When Bodhidharma asked his four disciples, Daofu, Nizongchi, Daoyu, and Huike⁽¹⁰⁾ each in turn what they achieved, they answered one by one their thoughts, though the last one Huike made three bows to the master respectfully without saying anything. Bodhidharma told them that they gained his fell, flesh, bone, pith respectively and finally he made Huike his successor. Generally people interpret that the stage that these four disciples attained individually becomes gradually higher and deeper, in that fell is the most external and pith the most internal. Therefore, Bodhidharma gave the highest grade evaluation to Huike, who paid reverence to him making three bows in answering the question of the master.

With respect to such an interpretation, Dōgen, however, reveals another insightful understanding. He regards the body of Bodhidharma as an integrated whole, therefore, considers it inappropriate to apply a demarcation between shallow and deep to the connections between his fell, flesh, bone and pith. According to Dōgen, if you gain his fell and flesh you gain his bone and pith as well, if you do not gain his fell and flesh you do not gain his bone and pith either. In other words, when you only gained his fell you had already gained his whole body. A disciple gains the very existence of his master in such a way of “*yi shin den shin*” and that means that he succeeds the Law from his master.

Thus Dōgen pays little attention to the negative aspects of “binding,” rather he seems to intend to show how the presence of human life and its nature are connected with the properties of “binding.” As a result of discussing the relevance in the frame of Buddhism, he employs the phrase “*yi shin den shin*” for connecting the concept of binding with the Buddhist terminology.

Interesting enough, however, the second part in which Dōgen uses the phrase shows us another tone. In Chapter 46 *Mujōseppō*, Dōgen takes up a dialogue between priest Yunyan (782-841) and his disciple Dongshan (807-869) on *Mujōseppō*. The word “*mujō*” becomes pair with the word “*ujō*”, “*sattva*” in Sanskrit that means all living things with conscious mind. “*Seppō*” means preaching, teaching, therefore, “*mujōseppō*” literally means the teaching of non-living things without conscious mind. Dōgen argues that “*mujō*” here shows unmaterialized life itself and “*mujōseppō*” is certain truth without form brought by the permanent function of formless life, in other words, the function that the Law discloses itself on the Buddhas. Dōgen completely denies the thought that a Buddha teaches us what was taught by the former Buddha, rather he encourages us to learn that the Buddhas had always served such “*mujōseppō*” well before *Ion-nō* Buddha, who appears with mysteriously infinite power and

wisdom in the chapter of Jōfukyō Bodhisattva in the Lotus Sutra.

Dongshan asked Yunyan a question, “What kind of people can hear mujōseppō?” Yunyan said, “Being mujō can hear mujōseppō.” Dongshan said, “Can you hear that?” Yunyan said, “If I can, that means you cannot hear my preaching.” After these riddling exchanges, Dongshan expressed his feelings in a verse and said, “How mystical it is! How remarkable it is! Mujōseppō is profound. The voices cannot be heard with your ears, hearing with your eyes is the way to be instructed.”

The point is that what makes us hear the teaching of mujō is not with our ears, but our eyes, even our entire body. That is the reason that Dōgen leads us to learn to hear the voices throughout our body even though we have not yet realized to hear them with our eyes. Further, Dōgen emphasizes the significance of the question raised by Dongshan and tells us that Dongshan’s words are not only for a question but also a basis for reaching the core of its answer in that the question itself has already encapsulated the essence of the answer.

Focusing attention on the significance of such words of Dongshan, on the other hand, Dōgen refers to the phrase “yi shin den shin” with low evaluation. He says that something expressed in the passage of Dongshan’s words could not be understood in the way of “yi shin den shin” and that such a way would be of benefit only to beginners or juniors. Moreover, he regards inheritance of priest’s robe as superior to the way of “yi shin den shin.” As Dōgen has repeatedly emphasized its symbolic significance as authenticity of instruction in Chapter 32 Den-e, the robe that passed on from master to disciple through successive generations proves the transition of the esoteric point of the Law from master to disciple. In the chapter Dōgen has added his own impressive experience in China that a priest prayed putting the robe on the top of his head every morning.

Despite Dōgen’s absolute affirmation to the significance of inheritance of robe, it is also true that there have been opposed arguments on the matter. We can find skepticism towards inheritance of robe. For example, Huike raised a concern over the robe given by Bodhidharma as his successor, and asked him, “Why would you give me the robe after regarding the way of “yi shin den shin” as fundamentally important in instruction of the Law?” in *Zutangji*. Huineng, as the sixth successor to the head of Zen, entertained doubts about the meaning in inheriting the robe though putting it on the top of his head in *Caoxidashizhuan*. Huineng also told his disciple Qingyuan Xingsi (?-740) that he would not give the robe to his successor because the priest could tread a thorny path after receiving the robe in *Jingde chuandenglu*. Since considering the significance of inheritance of robe historically is not the purpose here, I would

not go into depth on the issue. Nevertheless, we can be certain that from the vantage point of Zen Buddhism that adopts communicating without depending on language as the foundation to stand on, both the way of “yi shin den shin” and inheritance of robe play a significant role.

Although we need to take up another chapter, Menju, with respect to the issue of “yi shin den shin” in *Shōbōgenzō*, I would suggest considering first a story of “nian hua wei xiao” that Dōgen refers to in the chapter.

6. A story of “nian hua wei xiao”

A story called “nian hua wei xiao” in Chinese, “nian hua” means “pick a flower” and “wei xiao” means “smile”, tells us that Śakyamuni picked up a flower when preaching before the crowd and then only Mahā-Kāśyapa smiled watching the scene and consequently Śakyamuni gave Mahā-Kāśyapa the Law. It is, generally, cited from *Tiansheng guangdenglu* (1036), *Rentian yanmu* (1188), and *Wumenguan* (1228) in the Song period.

First, let us see the story in *Tiansheng guangdenglu*. It says,

Śakyamuni was preaching in Lingshan. All Devas offered flowers to the Buddha. The Buddha picked up a flower and showed to the crowd. Kāśyapa smiled. The Buddha told the people, I have “zhengfa yanzang” “niepan miaoxin,” entrust them to Mahā-Kāśyapa⁽¹¹⁾.

And next, the story in *Rentian yanmu* tells us,

Wangjingong asked the priest Fohuiquan and said that what sutra had the story in Zen Buddhism of the Buddha picking up a flower. Quan said that it did not appear in *Zang jing*. Wangjing said, I happened to see *Da fan tian wang wen jue jing* three volumes at Hanlin public office and found the details of the story depicted in the sutra. Dafan king came to Lingshan, offered golden flowers to the Buddha, receded and gave the Buddha his seat, expressed a desire to preach to them. The Buddha sat down, picked up a flower and showed it to the crowd, one million people and Devas, they were all stunned into silence without knowing what to do. Only one golden ascetic had a smile. The Buddha said, I have “zhengfa yanzang” “niepan miaoxin” “shixiang wuxiang,” entrust them to Mahā-Kāśyapa⁽¹²⁾.

“One golden ascetic” means a person who strives for the ascetic training called “dhūta-” to become free of all earthly desires and illusional passions, and here indicates Mahā-Kāśyapa who

is well known for its strict practice. When we see the two stories shown above, we have found that the latter, *Rentian yanmu* has given us an account of the story in more detail than the former, *Tiansheng guangdenglu* though the content itself is similar. The latter also tells us that the source of the story is *Da fan tian wang wen jue jing*. According to the recent study on the sutra, it is conceivable that the sutra, whose authorship, whether written in China or in Japan is unknown, has been brought in order to authorize the story. It is true, indeed, that from the point of view of Zen the relationship between the story and the sutra as its source is open to discuss. There is, however, more significant aspect in the story from the perspective of communication in that the story has a concrete situation where certain act of communication occurred or at least can be imagined. Therefore, we need to consider how the event unfolded itself in the story.

With respect to the formation of the story, it seems between *Jingde chuandenglu* and *Tiansheng guangdenglu* in that there is a similar story in *Ciming chanshi wuhui zhuchi yulu* (1027), which was published a little earlier than *Tiansheng guangdenglu*⁽¹³⁾. The story in *Ciming chanshi wuhui zhuchi yulu* only tells us that Śākyamuni picked up a flower and that Kāśyapa smiled. The matter that consists of those two happenings must be the core subject of the story. And next reference that we can see the story is *Tiansheng guangdenglu*, whose content has been mentioned above. There, the story has been depicted with great circumstance using much longer passages than *Ciming chanshi wuhui zhuchi yulu*. After *Tiansheng guangdenglu*, we have found many references contain the story before *Rentian yanmu* that has been mentioned above as well. Given the time of one hundred and fifty two years between *Tiansheng guangdenglu* and *Rentian yanmu*, it is probable that the narrative depiction became eloquent both in skill and vividness as the story spread widely among Zen Buddhist. We have *Chuanfa zhengzongji* in 1061, *Baiyunshouduan chanshi guanglu* in 1063, *Huanglongmeitangxin heshang yulu* in 1078, *Zongmen tongyaoji* in 1093, *Jianzhong jingguo xudenglu* in 1101, and *Zongmen liandenghuiyao* in 1183. Among them *Zongmen tongyaoji* and *Zongmen liandenghuiyao* deserve mention in terms of the appearance of the crowd surrounding the Buddha. Both the two books include the passage to show that all the crowd remains in silence after seeing the Buddha picking up a flower at an assembly in Lingshan.

The plot of the story became gradually concrete and specific as it appeared in from *Ciming chanshi wuhui zhuchi yulu* through *Zongmen tongyaoji* and *Zongmen liandenghuiyao* to *Rentian yanmu*. Let us examine how it was shaped into one concrete scene. The story line shown in *Ciming chanshi wuhui zhuchi yulu*, that is to say, Śākyamuni's picking up a flower

and Kāśyapa's smile evolved into the plot in *Tiansheng guangdenglu*, where we see the characters not only Śākyamuni and Kāśyapa but Devas and people there. Although the plot that the crowd remains in silence after seeing Śākyamuni's act has not been seen yet, the situation surrounding Śākyamuni and Kāśyapa has become specific with more details than that in *Ciming chanshi wuhui zhuchi yulu*. *Tiansheng guangdenglu* also has brought clarity to the scene by saying that Śākyamuni was preaching in Lingshan. Thus, the characters to compose the situation, Śākyamuni, Devas, crowd, and Kāśyapa, with their actions except the response from the crowd, all have been arranged clearly in *Tiansheng guangdenglu*. Therefore, we can see that *Tiansheng guangdenglu* contributed greatly to the setting of the framework to lead us to imagine that the act of communication might have happened there.

Next, concerning the lack of response from the crowd, *Zongmen tongyaoji* and *Zongmen liandenghuiyao* have added the depiction that the crowd remains in silence after seeing Śākyamuni's act. This has a beneficial effect on the situation as to be nearing completion. It also exaggerates an incomprehensible act by Śākyamuni and at the same time a mysterious smile by Kāśyapa.

Finally those ingredients have been brought in the passages of the story in *Rentian yanmu*, where a significant event has unfolded itself making best use of those functions. As we have seen above, it tells us the story in more concrete and more effective manner than previously seen in other books. Dafan king appears on the scene. He comes to Lingshan and gives golden flowers to Śākyamuni. He also gives the Buddha his seat, and asks the Buddha to preach for people. The Buddha sits down. The Buddha picks up a flower and shows it to the crowd. There are one million people and Devas there. Staring at the scene vacantly they all do not know what to do. Only Mahā-Kāśyapa smiles towards the Buddha. Thus, Dafan king's appearance on the scene, his each attitude towards the Buddha, reference to the number of the crowd, and the euphemistic description of Mahā-Kāśyapa, all of which have contributed to bring the characters alive and to deliver vivid images for readers. We can say that after those arrangements the stage was now set completely for the following declarative statement by Śākyamuni.

When we pay closer attention to the situational arrangements for the story of “nian hua wei xiao” cultivated over centuries, we find that the story has given certain ground to the phrase “yi xin chuan xin” in the sense of its embodiment. Such a manner of communication has been realized by the story in a practical and concrete way. When we interpret that Mahā-Kāśyapa smiled because he understood something from what Śākyamuni was thinking at the

time, we find a spiritual relationship with heart to heart exchange between the two people, which is a common scene we can see in interpersonal communication in today's world. Therefore, this insightful story leads us to take the position that communication without a word seen between Śākyamuni and Mahā-Kāśyapa also gives some common ground to our ordinary tacit communication beyond particular circumstances such as giving or receiving the Law in Zen Buddhism.

7. Japanese elements in acceptance of the story

As we have seen in Chapter 5, Dōgen has shown his own view and interpretation on the phrase “yi shin den shin” in his *Shōbōgenzō*. It is interesting to note that he has not connected directly the phrase with the story of “nian hua wei xiao” in referring to the story. As a matter of fact, Dōgen emphasizes repeatedly the significance of the implicit message of the story in several chapters of the book⁽¹⁴⁾. For example, in Chapter 51 Menju after referring to the story he says that the story shows the right and concrete manner in giving or receiving the Law between two priests. And at the same time, he regards it as the inheritance principle for a master to sit face-to-face with his disciple and directly gives him the Law. Dōgen provides his own experience in China as the supportive evidence. When he first met his master Tiantong Rujing at Miaogaotai on the first of May in 1225, the master Rujing told Dōgen directly that the inheritance of the Law was achieved thus, and that this was exactly Śākyamuni's picking flower in Lingshan, Huike's gaining the pith of Bodhidharma, Hongren's giving the robe to Huineng, and Dongshan's face-to-face meeting with Caoshan Benji. On the basis of Rujing's words, Dōgen emphasizes the significance of the way of face-to-face communication in inheriting the Law. Obviously, the story of “nian hua wei xiao” functions as the origin of typification, and also it should be noted that the concrete situational arrangements of the story inspired many great priests including Dōgen with assurance of various historical situations with respect to giving or receiving the Law between priests.

Another interesting interpretation of the story by Dōgen is in Chapter 64 Udonge, the name of flower that is believed to blossom once in three thousand years, therefore is symbolic of the rare appearance of Buddhas. Referring to the story in the beginning of the chapter, Dōgen argues that the scene shown by the story happened not only between Śākyamuni and Mahā-Kāśyapa but also between the past seven Buddhas and numerous Buddhas. According to Dōgen, it is not that what the story tells us happened for the first time after Śākyamuni gained final enlightenment and became Buddha, it is that it had happened well before that. He also

argues that the one who picked up a flower is not only Śākyamuni and similarly the one who smiled is not only Mahā-Kāśyapa. The picking flower story could be seen before Śākyamuni Buddha, at the very time of Śākyamuni Buddha, and after Śākyamuni Buddha as the truth beyond time. Dōgen's philosophical deliberation on the story tells us that we might take it as an arduous but attainable step towards enlightenment. Thus Dogen reveals the potential of unrestricted interpretation by showing his own views on the story as well as the phrase.

Discussing Dōgen's interpretation of the story of "nian hua wei xiao" and its development is too broad a topic to be dealt with in so short a paper. However, we can say in connection with the phrase "yi shin den shin" that the phrase could be used differently even in Zen Buddhism, and that the concrete situation including characters and their acts shown by the story does not simply serve as embodiment of the phrase, rather gives the historical ground for many scenes of the inheritance of the Law.

On the basis of this view of the phrase and the story, let us see further both factors with a contextual approach in Japanese classics. *Eiga monogatari* in the Heian period (between 1028 and 1034, the sequel between 1092 and 1107) deserves our attention in that the work is not on Buddhism but a tale of the history of Heian period. Needless to say, Zen Buddhism was not firmly established in the period and Jōdokyō was popular among people. Therefore, we find such a narration as below in the book to be a striking instance to suggest its association with the story of "nian hua wei xiao." It says,

The image of Kashō (Kāśyapa) looks smiling and has a special kind of atmosphere.

The passage is seen in the chapter of "Tama no Kazari" in which the author tells the tale that Fujiwara no Michinaga required to make one hundred images of Śākyamuni Buddha. The author also tells how the images of ten disciples of Śākyamuni Buddha including Kashō (Kāśyapa) and Sharihotsu (Śāriputra) were made artistically showing that each image had unique appearance and atmosphere. The above depiction of the image of Kashō tells us that the story of "nian hua wei xiao" had already gained currency at the time despite unfamiliarity of Zen Buddhism in Japan.

A war tale without direct relation to Zen Buddhism in the Nanboku period, *Taiheiki* (between 1368 and 1375) also refers to the story as well as the phrase "yi shin den shin" in No.24. It makes mention of *Da fan tian wang wen jue jing* as the basis of the story. Probably the description on the story in *Taiheiki* has been taken basically from *Tiansheng guangdenglu*,

Rentian yanmu and *Wumenguan* though it describes that Śakyamuni preached to the crowd in Tōriten (Trāyastriśā), one of the six heavenly worlds in the world of desire, not in Lingshan.

With respect to the phrase “yi shin den shin,” there is a work that attracts our attention between *Eiga monogatari* and *Taiheiki. Shoku goshūiwakashū* (1326) in the Kamakura period includes a waka poetry of Go-Udain (1267-1324, the 91st Emperor). It says,

Kokoronite yagatekokoroo tsutauruzo miyonikawaranu makotonarikeru

It is immutable truth throughout the past, the present and the future to communicate heart with heart as it is. “Kokoro” is the Japanese reading of Chinese character “shin.” Therefore, the author has the phrase “yi shin den shin” as the theme in his mind and has poeticized it in the reading of Japanese way. Certainly, we can take the meaning of these two “kokoro” differently, for example, interpret the first “kokoro” as our heart and the second one as the Buddha’s teachings⁽¹⁵⁾. In other words, it could give a presentation to people on the traditional perspective of Zen Buddhism in the way of Japanese cultural form. On the other hand, this waka also allows us to interpret as communication from heart to heart without words in the spirit of no constraint of the conventional ideas. The fact that the phrase of “yi shin den shin” was taken into waka poetry in the way of its Japanese reading reveals certain features in the process of reception of the phrase that was originally related to Zen Buddhism in Chinese culture.

When we consider such a fact as well as other distinguishing aspects that we saw in the works of Japanese classics above, we might conclude that early acceptance of the story “nian hua wei xiao” in Japan and its subsequent absorption in various cultural forms presumably contributed to the use of the phrase “yi shin den shin” in more Japanese style not merely confined to the particular way in Zen Buddhism but also applied in broader contexts of communication.

8. Human communication in everyday life

Concerning the phrase “yi shin den shin,” there is a modern work that shows that interpreting the meaning as human communication in our daily lives is compatible with the traditional views on the phrase in Zen Buddhism. *Mumonkan puromunādo* (2004) by Eshin Nishimura, who is well known for his works on *Mumonkan (Wumenguan)*, says,

According to Zen Buddhism, it regards the story of “nian hua wei xiao” between the Buddha and Kashōsonja as the archetype of the way of sending message with heart, and thereby it has been keeping alive until today. It is generally known as “yi shin den shin,” but when we think about what it exactly means to communicate with heart to heart, we find it hard to say. Indeed, it is not so easy to convey our feelings to others even though between congenial spirits. Moreover, often it is the case that the other person misinterprets what you would convey⁽¹⁶⁾.

Let us recall the explanations of the phrase “yi shin den shin” in a Japanese dictionary *Kōjien* that we mentioned in Chapter 3. While understanding the two basic meanings, one is a term of Zen Buddhism and the other is the usage of daily communication, we have taken the position that the relationship between them is an open question. And examining the phrase from this point of view is also one of our subjects in this paper. When we look at the explication presented by Nishimura of the phrase based on the story, we find that it suggests certain fusion in the relationship between the two meanings. In his interpretation even the former, a term of Zen Buddhism, has not been presented as the scene in a particular situation, rather it has been thought as the use based on the latter meaning, the way of daily communication between people. Both meanings have been integrated together to bring an indication of similar level on which heart to heart communication between people could occur as an ordinary event. Nishimura’s view represents a facet of acceptance of the phrase in Japanese culture including Zen Buddhism, in that it tells us that both situations to be described as “yi shin den shin” could be perceived as tacit communication with heart to heart exchange.

We can say that the phrase was set in such a place in Japanese culture through the history of its acceptance, undoubtedly placing greater significance on the receiver rather than the sender of a message. Let us recall the context of the scene in Chapter 2 of Lotus Sutra. It tells us that Śāriputra understood with his heart what the four classes of Buddhists thought in their minds. Interestingly, while Śāriputra’s understanding with his heart of their suspicion has been a topic of the scene, almost no attention has been paid to those four classes of Buddhists, in terms of how they conveyed the suspicion in their minds to Śāriputra. In other words, the receiver will be expected to participate actively by increasing the responsiveness of understanding others’ perceptions in relation to the situation, such as feelings, guesses, wishes and judgments.

Notes

- (1) Myōhōrengekyō Hōbenhon daini, *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*, Vol.9, p.6. Underlining in the citation is added by the current author.
- (2) *Hokekyō 2, Oshakasama no yarikata (Hōbenhon)*, translated by Tsugunari Kubo and Katsuko Kubo, Ichiyōsha, Tokyo, 2000. P.35. Underlining is by the current author.
- (3) Chester I. Barnard, *The functions of the executive*, Harvard University Press, 1938. P.90. He says that the phrase “observational feeling” is of his coining.
- (4) *Keieisha no yakuwari*, translated by Kisou Tasugi, Daiyamondosha, Tokyo, 1956. P.98.
- (5) *Jingli renyuan de zhineng*, translated by Wang Yonggui, China Machine Press, 2007. P.61.
- (6) *Zutangji*, Nan-Tang Zhaoqingsi, Jing Yun, erchande, Chūbun shuppansha, Kyoto, 1972.
- (7) *Nanzong dunjiao zuishang dacheng moheboruo boluomijing liuzu Huineng dashi yu Shaozhou Dafansi shifa tanjing*, Seizan Yanagida and Kōyū Shiina, in *Zengaku tenseki sōkan, bekkkan*, Linsen shoten, Kyoto, 2001. p.49.
- (8) Eizan no Chōhōshi no Rishushakkyō o motomuru ni tōsurusho, *Zoku Henjō hokki shōryōshū hoketsushō*, No.10. *Nihon kotenbungaku taikai 71*, Iwanami shoten, Tokyo, 1965.
- (9) Dōgen, *Shobōgenzō*, annotated by Yaoko Mizuno, Iwanami shoten, Tokyo, 1990, 1991. Q.v., *Shobōgenzō*, translated by Kōshirō Tamaki, Daizō shuppan, Tokyo, 1994.
- (10) A person’s name mentioned in this paper is spelled in the way of the pronunciation of the original language.
- (11) The patriarch Mahā-Kāśyapa, *Tiansheng guangdenglu*, No.2.
- (12) Zongmen zalu, *Rentian yanmu*, No.5.
- (13) Seizan Yanagida, *Shoki zenshūshisho no kenkyū*, Hōzōkan, 1967. Shūdō Ishii, Nenge mishō no hanashi no seiritsu o megutte, *Sanronkyōgaku to bukkyō shoshisō*, Shunjūsha, Tokyo, 2000.
- (14) The story of “nian hua wei xiao” has been dealt with as “nian hua shun mu” in Chapter 27 Muchū setsumu or “yang mei shun mu” in Chapter 3 Busshō in *Shōbōgenzō*.
- (15) *Shoku goshūiwakashū*, annotated by Mutsuo Fukatsu, Meiji shoin, Tokyo, 1997.
- (16) Eshin Nishimura, *Mumonkan puromunādo*, Zenbunka kenkyūjo, Kyoto, 2004. P.34.