

# Kaito Kanmen: Reflections on the Mirror's Edge

J. H. Stone II

*"Almost always it is the fear of being ourselves  
that brings us to the mirror."*

A. Porchia, *Voces*

Recently, J. C. Maraldo raised the following question and posed a central problem for the interpretation of Buddhist uses of metaphor. He wrote:

Could metaphors perhaps turn out to be connectives more basic than literal meanings, to be concrete embodiments of a whole which devalue a language of fixed concepts referring to independent entities? In this sense, mind as mirror, mind as brain, and mind as walls, tiles and stones would all be metaphors, whether meant literally or not. They are transpositions . . . in which the nature of mirrors, brains and concrete pieces become as enigmatic as that of minds, in which each side of the equation becomes metaphoric and mutually illuminating/obfuscating. (LaFleur, 1985, p. 121)

This article, subtitled "Reflections on the Mirror's Edge," can be taken as a loosely knit reflection upon Maraldo's question . . . and I stress "loosely."

In December 1970, at the beginning of a programmatic lecture on the orders of discourse, Michel Foucault confessed that he would rather not begin the lecture, that he would rather be "a happy wreck" and merely submit to the flowing of discourses around and through him. Certain, however, that such an apparently bold devolving of discursive responsibility could only result in its being seized by the institutions and discourses that so stringently constrained and situated his "own," he 'began,' advancing a hypothesis which might, as he said, "serve to fix the terrain—or perhaps the provisional theatre—with which [he would] be working." He said:

I am supposing that in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures whose role is to avert its powers and dangers, to cope with chance events, to evade its ponderous, awesome materiality. (Foucault, 1972, p. 216)

Irony lurks here—in Foucault's own terms, none who *uses* language can choose not being a wreck around and through which discourses ebb and flow. None can choose not being subject simultaneously and agonistically to multiple "discourse regimes." What Foucault refers to as "the ponderous, awesome materiality" of discourse is a primary and material condition of possibility (and impossibility) for human intercourse—of whatever kind. Each of us, to a greater or lesser degree and with greater or lesser awareness, is always already wrecked upon the shoals, reefs and indefinite depths of those discourses we aim to control. For me, then, being a wreck around and through which multiple discourses flow is not the issue—the issue is whether and in what ways one can be "a happy wreck"!

In the theatre of discursive play constituted by Buddhist studies, aiming to articulate certain interested (and thus political) imaginings from within the anonymous discourse regime more or less controlled by what Foucault might interpellate as "the Buddha function," welcome to what is intended as a *tour de farce* in one brief act. For the sake of brevity, I will set aside certain problems of interest: namely, the politics of translation; skillful means or *hoben* as the dominant liberating tactic of the buddhas and patriarchs; "the buddha function" as an analogue of "the

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author function" as theorized by Barthes and Foucault; the struggle between grammars of purity and freedom in Buddhist discourses; the *Jatakas* as parody, etc. Instead, I shall focus upon the role of inversion or reversal in Buddhist praxis (taken here as the non-difference of theory and practice in the human quest for liberation). And, as the title of this talk indicates, what Bielefeld has called "the venerable mirror metaphor" in Buddhism will serve as my focus and reflective occasion.

First, however, a few brief remarks on the title. "Turning the head and reversing the face" can be taken as referring to Dogen's notion of *kaito kanmen* which implicates notions of inversion/reversal, the non-difference of self/other, bondage/freedom, purity/impurity, etc. That Dogen's notion of *kaito kanmen* is prominent among the more definitive metaphors of reversal and inversion in "official" or hegemonic Japanese buddhist discourse cannot easily be denied. I have chosen, however, to begin with a lesser-known, marginal example of inversion that, on the face of it, confronts such hegemonic discourses agonistically. I refer to the "dharma interview," officially among the most serious tests of a novice's progress towards enlightenment, between the head monk, Manan, and the novice nun, Mujaku, reputed to have been "the most beautiful of Daiye's seven female disciples." It seems that Mujaku, before she was ordained, would often visit her *roshi*, Daiye, at the monastery on Kinzan, staying in his quarters. Manan strenuously objected to this apparent violation of monastic propriety, but urged on by Daiye, finally agreed to give Mujaku an interview that would test the level of her achievement. I follow, somewhat loosely, Leggett's translation of this happy tale.

When Manan came [to Daiye's quarters], Mujaku [asked]: "Will you make this a dharma interview or a worldly interview?"

Manan replied: "A dharma interview."

Mujaku said: "Then let your attendants depart. She went in first, and then called to him to enter her [cell] alone. When he came past the curtain, he found [Mujaku] lying face upward on the bed, naked. He pointed to her *joseiki* and [asked]: "What is there in here?"

Mujaku replied: "All the buddhas of the three worlds and the six patriarchs and great priests everywhere—they all come out of here."

Manan [asked]: "And would you let me enter, or would you not?"

Mujaku replied: "A donkey might pass; a horse may not pass." Manan said nothing; and Mujaku declared: "The dharma interview with the head monk is ended." [Then] she rolled over and showed her ass. Manan turned red and fled.

[Upon hearing of this], Daiye said: "The old thing had some insight, didn't she? She outfaced Manan!" (Leggett, 1985, p. 106)

Evoking an even more venerable buddhist metaphor, Mujaku 'mooned' the head monk, enacting the grammar of freedom. Manan, enslaved by the grammar of purity/authority, was embarrassed rather than liberated; and inversions proliferated. Conventions of gender status and ecclesiastical authority, roles of superior/inferior, worldly/otherworldly, praise/abuse, spiritual/carnal, purity/impurity, upper/lower, front/rear, face/ass . . . at many different discursive levels and simultaneously, "official" discourses that work only within the limits of purity and gravity are agonistically challenged and undercut. The verbal/gestural polyphony of Mujaku's enactment of a grammar of freedom displaces the univocity of grave purity and counters the official discourse with all the semantic tension and impertinence of the mirror metaphor, with the subversive ambivalence of what Bakhtin has termed "the carnivalesque"—a dis-cursive practice of inversion, subversion, parody, scatology, humor, marginality and transgression. Mujaku's is a discourse in which "everything taken for granted loses its certainty and is plunged into context and flux" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 12).

Such carnivalesque inversions of the register or grammar of purity and "the narrow-minded seriousness of its pretense" are, of course, not uncommon in Buddhism, particularly in *Ch'an* and *Zen*. One might suggest that such inversions express a return to the repressed . . . in many instances occasioning an irruption of the often occluded body/world dialectic; in some, the return of non-elite values and cultures; and in others the affect of a certain Taoist style that takes humor seriously as an occasion for maximizing freedom. In short, Mujaku's tale is by no means specific to the *Zen* of the early Kamakura period in Japan; nor, as many assume, is its subversive transgression of the norms of hegemonic discourses limited to the more radical and marginal practices believed typical of *Ch'an* and *Zen*. One need only recall Mara's scoffing at Gotama's claim to enlightenment in the introduction to the *Jatakas* where that claim is witnessed and cosmically authenticated not by gods, the heavens or any other transcendental guarantors, but by the earth . . . and an indefinitude of other inversions occur (periodically, I suspect) throughout the history of Buddhism.

In "The Mirror of the Mind," Demieville refers to the work of Yin-k'o Ch'en who argued for "the more or less folk origins of *The Platform Sutra*" (Gregory, 1987, p. 14), arguably if mistakenly the founding text of *Ch'an* Buddhism. In the *Wu-men-kuan*, a spiritually serious seeker asked the master Yun-men, "What is the Buddha?" and was thunderously informed that the Buddha was a dried shit-scraper (Jpn., *kanshiketsu*). Buddhist Tantrism takes the material body in all its polyvalence as a privileged means to freedom. The *Nikayas* stress the seminal but asexual role of the grotesque, inside-out body as a privileged focus of so-called meditation, and often accent its openness, fluidity and fluids, as a gaping wound in the world. Gotama advocated disciplined *vippasana* on the ten foul things . . . with the 15-day old corpse of a beautiful young woman being among his favorites. Chih-i, the founder of T'ien-t'ai Buddhism, extolled the *samadhi* of evil; and in the *Zenrin Kushu*, "shitting, pissing" (*ashi sonyo*) are taken as non-different from "walking, standing, sitting and lying" in manifesting the 'ultimate,' i.e., empty or interdependent, nature of reality. Nan-chu'an lifted his foot as a warning after he had thrown the brick at his disciple in the garden; Lin-chi advised: "Meeting Sakyamuni, kill him! Meeting Bodhidharma, kill him too!" (Shigematsu, 1981, p. 111); and the *Kaccapa-jataka* (#273) regaled and taught its audience with the truly pathetic tale of a certain lascivious monkey who, getting no response when he ejaculated in the Future Buddha's ear while that worthy was in deep *samadhi*, made the agonizing error of engaging in fellatio with the gaping beak of a dozing tortoise!

Each of these examples--and there are many, many others--evinces different modalities of inversion, of reversal; each is an expression of oppositional or counter-tendencies, of transgressive attempts to subvert some element of received praxis or another. Apparently, even early Buddhist discourse, which ambivalently negotiates the tensed gap between purity and freedom, was unable fully to avert the powers and dangers, the random, "awesome materiality" of the carnivalesque. Arguably the paramount example of testing the Future Buddha's powers of concentration, the *Kaccapa-jataka* unabashedly gives voice to Gotama's having taken it in the ear . . . in a story that the tradition fully accepts as having been told by the Buddha himself! Of parenthetical interest here is the extreme resistance of the political unconscious of the translator to this violation of what he took as normative, permissible Buddhist discourse. Aiming to avert its transgressive power and having his conception of Buddhism endangered, Chalmers translated this *jataka* from Pali into Latin; and in so doing retained it as an "oriental artifact" available only to the putative prurient interests of the cultured elites of late 19th-century England. A clear example of class and gender warfare being waged at the seemingly innocent level of mere translation (Cowell, 1895, II, p. 246).

Not unlike mirrors, such inversions are reflective. They image the realities with which they struggle; they refract the image they ostensibly reflect; and they occasion reflection and interrogation. But, those familiar with recent and traditional interpretations of the mirror metaphor in Buddhism might well ask, "Since, like the buddha-mind, a mirror is passive in relation to that which it reflects, how can it do anything at all?" For example, in "The Mirror of the Mind," Demieville asserts that in Buddhism:

To some, reflections in a mirror serve to illustrate the unreality of the phenomenal world. To others, on the contrary (sic.), the clear mirror is like the absolute, reflecting back to man his ideal image. Or again, the mirror's property of faithfully reflecting objects without being touched by them is compared to the detachment of the sage, who apprehends reality in an impersonal and immediate manner. (Gregory, 1987, p. 33)

In the same essay, Demieville notes that the *Huai-nan-tzu* identifies "the light of the soul" with "the completely passive luminosity of the mirror," and then quotes al-Ghazzali to the effect that "normally a mirror is able to receive images and reflect them just as they are." In his essay on the Ch'an metaphors of moon, lamp and mirror, Whelan Lai comments that "the mirror reflects reality as it is, and without superimpositions." And later in the same essay he argues that "the mirror and the lamp tell of correspondingly an objective and a subjective approach. The mind as mirror is passive, a receptacle of external data."

A passage in the *Anguttara-nikaya* seemingly gives canonical support for this position:

Suppose a pot of water, uncontaminated by dyes, unheated, not bubbling over, free of moss and water plants, without eddy or ripple, clear, limpid, pellicular, set [out] in the open, and a man with eyes to see were to look there for his own re-flection—he would know it, he would see it, *as it really was* [italics added]. (Hare, 1973, p. 171)

Enso, when introducing "Joshu's Four Gates" in the *Hekiganroku*, also appears to concur with the contention that a mirror reflects reality just as it is.

In the bright mirror on its stand, beauty and ugliness are revealed . . . a handsome fellow disappearing, an ugly one comes; an ugly fellow disappearing, a handsome one comes. Life is found in death; death in life. (Sekida, 1977, p. 171)

Bankei Yotaku agrees:

The unborn mind is like a bright mirror. When anything is placed in front of it, its shape has to be reflected even though the mirror has no intention of reflecting it. And when it is taken away the mirror does not reflect it, even though it does not decide to cease reflecting it. (Cleary, 1978, p. 113 f.)

Among these interpretations of the mirror as metaphor for the enlightened mind, the common assumption is that the mirror is passive in relation to the phenomena it reflects. This assumption is, at the same time, accurate and problematic. Put most simply (and only too obviously), it is not the fundamental property of a mirror to "faithfully" reflect objects, nor does a mirror reflect reality as it is . . . without superimpositions. In short, if the trope obtain, if the buddha-mind is "like a mirror which reflects exactly what is placed before it," to quote Powell, more obfuscation is gained than illumination. A mirror that passively reproduces or replicates "exactly what is placed before it" has all the possibility of a hare's horns or crows' teeth . . . none.

In order to push the metaphor beyond that of the mirror's spurious passivity, one might simply reflect upon one's last look in a mirror. In what senses can it be conclusively argued that the image in the mirror was one's own face—rather than merely not someone else's? Was the perceived image your face or that of an "other"?

Was the face that, quite literally, fixed your gaze, your face as it is in reality? And how is that? Was it your face as only you can perceive it or as it is perceived variously and ambiguously by others? And finally, was the image in the mirror expressive? Of what? Did it signify? If so, what? The answers to these questions are not self-evident, nor are the questions non-problematic. Although a mirror is quiescent in relation to that which it reflects, although it neither adds to nor detracts from the suchness it reflects, we all have seen and known that a mirror does in fact do something. A mirror, whether bright or needful of polishing, always inverts that which it reflects, and its inversive power can be taken as evincing a fundamental principle or presupposition of much Buddhist praxis. While simultaneously and precisely replicating the world as seen and known, the gaze of a buddha, informed by the buddha-mind, like the spotless mirror, always inverts, reverses and turns around that same world.

At one level, when one gazes into a spotless mirror or into the gaze of freedom, the image perceived is a chimera, a mere simulacrum; but at another level and simultaneously, that image is one's precise, inverted "other." When the nuns of Tokei-ji in Kamakura, or I, practice *kagami no zazen*, the image in the mirror is an inverted "other." Setting aside the interesting politics of gender that might lurk as a difference that really makes a difference in this particular practice of *zazen*, listen to the song of the nun Junso.

Reflections are clear yet do not touch the eye,  
And the "I" facing the mirror is also forgotten. (Leggett, 1985, p. 72)

The image perceived in Junso's sitting, strikingly non-different from other images in the mirrored walls of Tokei-ji, is refractory and serves to problematize, even erase, the "I" or self. When one practices mirror-sitting, one doesn't see oneself in the mirror. No matter how immaculate the perception, the image has a turned head, a reversed face and an inverted body. The perceived "other" is, to be sure, oddly familiar once one is able to get beyond the habitual self-evidence of continuity and identity; but at the same time that "non-different" other is defamiliarized—to use Bourdieu's terms, *reconnaissance* and *meconnaissance* are imbricated. The image in the mirror is "I" and "not-I." It is quite literally the only other that one can ever see and know that is one's exact, unambiguously given opposite; and in terms of the metaphor, as Junso sang, one must in turn be its reversed "other." When practicing *kagami no zazen* ("mirror sitting"), the inverted self is habitually familiar, but finally an alien, silent and even hostile "other" to which the imaged is a matter of utter indifference. In short, the face reflected in the mirror is the very visage of the not-self.

In the *Mahalisutta*, Gotama is described as "he (who), by himself, thoroughly sees and knows . . . this world face to face" (Rhys-Davids, 1977, I, p. 197). And, not to rehearse "dead-words," what, face to face with the world, did Gotama see and know, fully experience and thoroughly articulate? Put most trenchantly, in each nexus of human struggle he saw and knew the world as "other," and elucidated three modalities of that alterity, each of which agitated and perturbed dominant modalities of self-evidence and self-interest. In elucidating the co-originated "other" as the necessary occasion for dis-ease, flux and not-self, Gotama reflected, refracted and inverted the physiognomy of the world of lust for and attachment to ease, permanence and self. His praxis of inciting, agitating and gladdening those whose dis-ease he saw and knew, however, was rarely eristic and triumphalistic in aiming to substitute his "truth" for the falsehoods of the world. Unlike Hippocrates who compared therapeutic practice to "a struggle and . . . a farce with three characters" (patient, disease and therapist), Gotama, while clearly recognizing the farce, usually took himself out of play, mirroring the struggle as it was fought between his interlocutors and the world of their desire, interest and bondage.

In the *Bhaddiya-suttanta*, Gotama's use of expedients, tricks and deceptions is recalled in a dialogue with Bhaddiya, and in the process a provocative accusation is made which bears upon Gotama's therapeutic style.

I have heard, sir, that Gotama the recluse is a conjuror [P., *mayavin*], that he knows a seductive trick by which he entices away the followers of those holding different views.

At the end of this conversation in which Gotama seemingly opposed the allegation that he was a conjuror or juggler, he asked Bhaddiya: "Did I ever say to you, 'Come, Bhaddiya, be my follower; I will be your teacher?'"—Bhaddiya answered, "No"; and Gotama continued:

Then, Bhaddiya, it seems that some recluses of brahmins are vain and empty liars, and misrepresent me contrary to the fact as being one who holds such a view, who proclaims such a view, in saying: "Gotama the recluse is a juggler. He knows a seductive trick by which he entices away the followers of those holding other views."

Bhaddiya then responded, apparently contradicting Gotama:

A good thing, sir, is this seductive trick. A lovely thing . . . I wish, sir, that my kinsmen (would be turned around) by this trick . . . if all . . . could be converted by this trick, it would be of profit and happiness to one and all of them.

Gotama:

So it would . . . if these great sal trees (were turned around) by this seductive trick, it would be to their profit and happiness for a long time—that is if they could think—to say nothing of one who has become a man! (C. Rhys-Davids, 1982, II, 200 ff.)

Here the Buddha denies soliciting others' followers and holding the views that others attribute to him; but he not only doesn't deny using conjuror's tricks, he affirms such devices as being good and lovely . . . capable of turning around, converting, those who can think.

In the *Anguttara-nikaya*, Gotama describes his tactics and "seductive tricks" to a gathering of monks:

Monks, I recall having visited hundreds of times an assembly of nobles, priests, householders (etc.). And even before I had seated myself among them, or had spoken to them, or had engaged them in conversation—whatever their colour, that I became; whatever their (discourse), that became mine. And I instructed them, incited them, roused them and gladdened them with *dhammakatha*; and they didn't know me when I spoke, but reasoned among themselves, saying: "Who is this who speaks? A man or a [god]?" Then, when I had instructed, incited, roused and gladdened them, I vanished; and they knew me not when I was gone, but questioned each other: "Who is this who has vanished, man or [god]?" (Hare, 1978, IV, p. 205)

Here the practitioner of seductive tricks portrays himself as a shape-shifter, going forth in disguise, mirroring his interlocutors' voice and color. On the terrain of each dharma-battle, "whatever their colour, that [he] became; whatever their discourse, that became [his]." Bracketing the too common tendency to interpret such shape-shifting and vanishing as expressions of early Buddhist *Urduhmheit*—"primordial stupidity" being among the more prevalent characteristics common to violent caricatures of the Other (whether primitive, oriental or female)—refusing to disguise condescension as tolerance—what can one make of this?

Recalling that Gotama is alleged to have had "the powers and gifts of . . . withholding his own theories and inviting discussion of those of others"; and that he often began dialogues by setting aside as unprofitable issues upon which his interlocutor disagreed with what he understood to be Gotama's views—how can one best construe the tropes in this characterization of his style as a trickster? First, let's

allow that these assemblies serve synecdochally for any context in which the dharma is contested. Second, let's assume that Gotama's shape-shifting, his going forth in disguise, enacts "the wonder of education" rather than being a gratuitous display of "the mystic wonder" of the *siddhis*, the value of which was severely compromised in the *Kevaddha-sutta*. To accept the notion that Gotama appears literally or physically identical to his interlocutors would reduce such dharma-battles to mere masquerades.

The Buddha's disciplined approach to dharma-battles is made very clear. Before he engages in dialogue, he takes up his potential interlocutors' color and voice . . . gaining the advantage of seeming non-different from them. In this passage elaborating the very early practice of *upaya*, "color" is best taken as denoting his interlocutors' values, dispositions, manners and style . . . the habitual affect of the other. Taking up their "voice" or discourse, their nuances and uses of language, not only serves to enable the appearance of non-difference from and continuity with his opponents, but also has certain tactical advantages. He is able to exercise his seductive tricks without appearing to do so. By entering into and using their discourses, he is more able to occasion the realization that whatever inversion or reversal occurs is self-inflicted and not dependent upon their constructions of Gotama as "other" and as the source of their perturbation. In his shape-shifting, then, the Buddha can be compared to what Roland Barthes has termed a *texte de plaisir*, i.e., an interpretive occasion that is continuous with one's culture and values, one which ostensibly authenticates self-evidence.

However, the tendency to totalize this characterization of Gotama's 'foxy' style should be avoided since not infrequently Gotama does choose to appear as "other," as, to evince Barthes once again, an analog to a *texte de jouissance*, i.e., a text that is discontinuous with one's culture and values, an occasion for crisis in self-identity and in one's relation to received knowledge and hegemonic discourse. The cunning of Gotama's self-characterization as a shape-shifter, juggler or *kuhaka* (Skt. for "trickster") might also serve as a caution to those, both inside and outside the Buddhist traditions, who claim the Buddha's function as theirs or as their authority for authentic Buddhist praxis. Buddhist, Buddhologists, both and neither—can it be argued that each gets "the Buddha function" most consistent with her voice and color, discourse and *habitus*? Present readership included . . . Parenthetically, one might suggest that the 'foxy' Buddha's shape-shifting practices can serve to illuminate the many academic failures rationally and systematically to typologize seemingly agonistic strata of the dharma.

"Whatever their discourse, that became [his]"—not quite! When the other's discourse didn't "tend to edification," when it was unprofitable and not conducive to occasioning a greater degree of freedom, Gotama refused to give it voice. Gotama, adumbrating and going beyond Tung-shan's "dead words," set aside certain topics and discourses as "animal talk." In the *Samyutta-nikaya*, he charged the monks as follows:

Monks, talk not *tiracchanakatha* [animal talk] of divers kinds, such as: talk about rajahs, robbers, great ministers; talk of armies, panic and battle; talk of food and drink and clothes, beds, flowers, garlands and perfumes; talk of relatives, vehicles, suburbs, towns and districts; talk about women and champions; talk about streets and gossip at the [village] well; ghost-stories, desultory talk and fabulous talk about the beginning and end of the world; talk about existence and non-existence. (Woodward, 1979, V, 355)

"Why do I say this?"—that question was Gotama's, not mine. I ask rather, "What does Gotama's saying this do?" He distinguishes between valid and invalid discourse in excluding "animal talk." These excluded discourses, including *nota bene* ontologies and metaphysics, are taken by Gotama as obstacles to freedom. Here, if arguably, is one of the earliest attempts within the tradition to establish the boundaries of a distinctly Buddhist discursive formation, to "control, select and

organize" discourse in order to avert its "powers and dangers." Ironically, such attempts on the part of the Buddha (which, of course, must be attributed to those who first established the canon and initiated the process of tradition-formation, i.e., to those who first and anonymously institutionalized and controlled 'the Buddha function')—such attempts to limit the range of discourses conducive to freedom from attachment and suffering collided directly with Gotama's shape-shifting praxis and the implication that there is no discursive practice that is necessarily not conducive to freedom, and none that is necessarily conducive to freedom. For example, the attempt to limit *dhammakatha* to a grammar of purity fell foul of the expedient use of so-called "animal talk," and eventually led to a total collapse of the distinction between *tiracchanakatha* and *dhammakatha*, as we saw earlier in Yun-men's calling the Buddha a dried shit-scraper.

And, when Gotama "vanished" from the field of the dharma-battle, he left his interlocutors, both within and outside the traditions, with a question of such profound ambiguity as to haunt Buddhism and Buddhology for millennia: "Who was that masked man? A man or a god?" As long as these myriad interlocutors remained immersed in their own discourse and *habitus*, answers remained possible. If, however, after *dhammakatha* had occasioned their immersion in their discursive bondage, their "voice and color" was inverted, the question became irrelevant.

It is said that Narcissus saw his reflection in the pool, plunged headlong into representational "reality," and drowned in self-obsession. Tung-shan Liang-chieh saw his reflection in a stream and instantly realized the non-difference among the image in the water, himself and Yun-yen, his master!! A cultural trope or two might lurk here, but suffice it to suggest that, unlike Narcissus, Tung-shan didn't mis-take his image for an other, nor did he mis-take it for the same as that which it reflected. The anecdote from the *Tung-shan Wu-pen-ch'an-shih yu lu* is apt:

Just before leaving [his master], Tung-shan asked: "If, after many years, someone should ask if I am able to portray the Master's likeness, how should I respond?"

After remaining quiet for a while, Yun-yen said: "Just this person." Tung-shan was lost in thought. [Then] Yun-yen said: "Chieh-acarya, having assumed the burden of this Great Matter, you must be very cautious."

Tung-shan remained very dubious about what Yun-yen had said. Later, as he was crossing the river, he saw his reflected image and experienced a great awakening as to the meaning of the previous exchange [with Yun-yen] and composed the following *gatha*:

Earnestly avoid seeking without,  
Lest it recede from you.  
Today I am walking alone,  
Yet everywhere I meet him.  
He is now no other than myself,  
But I am not now [he].  
It must be understood in this way  
In order to merge with suchness.  
(Powell, 1986, pp. 27-28)

"The Master's likeness" after many years is "just this person"? "This person" referring to Yun-yen or to Tung-shan? In what sense can it be said that even Yun-yen, some years later, can be his own likeness? In what way can Tung-shan, some years later, be Yun-yen's likeness? A clue might lie in Tung-shan's response to seeing his own likeness in the water of the flowing river. Unlike Narcissus and most who use or comment upon the mirrored image, Tung-shan sees and knows that the image is both a likeness and at the same time an "other." Walking alone, he meets his likeness everywhere—not only in the water/mirror. The likeness he meets everywhere is non-different from himself, transgressing the orders of sameness and difference,

continuity and discontinuity, self and other. Or, walking alone, Tung-shan meets Yun-yen's likeness everywhere . . . all things, sentient and non-sentient, portray the master's likeness to the radical freedom of Tung-shan's gaze. Tung-shan, the mirrored image, Yun-yen—all things merge in the empty non-difference of suchness.

Listen to Hakuin:

One night in a dream my mother came to me and presented me with a purple robe made of silk. When I lifted it, both sleeves seemed very heavy, and on examining them I found an old mirror in each sleeve. The reflection from the mirror on the right penetrated to my heart and vital organs. My own mind, mountains and rivers, the great earth—seemed serene and bottomless. The mirror in the left sleeve, however, gave off no reflection whatsoever. Its surface was like that of a new pan that had yet to be touched by flames. But suddenly I became aware that the luster of the mirror from the left sleeve was innumerable times brighter than the other. After this, when I looked at all things, it was as though I was seeing my own face. For the first time I understood the meaning of the saying: "The *tathagata* sees the Buddha-nature in his own eye". (Yampolsky, 1971, p. 121)

The mirror on the right adapts itself to conditions, to the individual mind, mountains, rivers and the great earth. It inverts the world of interdependence, piercing to the very heart and bowels of self and identity. The mirror on the left is empty, reflecting nothing, inverting nothing, neither confirming nor disconfirming self and other . . . nor does it illuminate the non-difference of self and other. The mirror on the right turns Hakuin's gaze inward as it reflects and inverts the external world. The mirror on the left, reflecting nothing but illuminating everything equally, turns Hakuin's gaze outward. He wrote: "After this, when I looked at all things, it was as though I was seeing my own face"—as in a mirror. For Hakuin, who thunderously advocated "taking the whole world as one's meditation cave," the world of interdependent co-origination has the characteristics of the face in the mirror, reversed, non-different, utterly other and empty of non-dependent reality. His striking, and strikingly poetic, use of the metaphor tends strongly to sustain his privileging of "not-self" as the "Great Matter" as well as to exemplify paradigmatically the reversal, the turning about, common to many characterizations of freedom in some Buddhisms. One might, for example, compare Hakuin's two mirrors to the dominant modalities of the bodhisattva's practice, compassion and wisdom. Like the mirror on the left, in his wisdom the enlightened being knows that there are no beings to be released from bondage; but, like the mirror on the right, he vows to save them all, i.e., to adjust to the experienced conditions of human possibility. One could also set Hakuin's reflective poetics aside as merely poetic reinscriptions of the mirror as metaphor for the exercise of expedient devices which, in order to occasion freedom, adjust to while inverting the conditions of human possibility.

For Hakuin, seeing all things as if in a mirror, as though he was seeing his own face, led to his insight into the meaning of the saying: "The *tathagata* sees the buddha-nature within his own eye." Here, if arguably, the *tathagata* or enlightened one becomes a metaphor for the mirror on the right, for that trickster's gaze, for that seeing and knowing that adjust to and penetrate all things and elucidate their lack of self-nature. The buddha-nature becomes a metaphor for the mirror on the left . . . and their conjunction in a single discursive act—Hakuin's having turned them to reflect each other as it were—both illuminates and obscures the issue.

In his *Dokugo shingyo*, in many ways a carnivalesque commentary on the *Hrdaya-sutra* which is arguably the most inversive/transgressive text in the Mahayana canon, Hakuin returned to the mirror metaphor:

If you have grasped the mind of the buddha-patriarchs  
 How could you possibly be blind to their words?  
 To determine how authentic your own attainment is,  
 The words of the Patriarchs are like bright mirrors. (Waddell, 1980, 111 f.)

This use of the metaphor resonates with Gotama's practice of entering into his interlocutors' discourse in order to invert it, to turn it from "animal talk" to an occasion for freedom. Here the words of the enlightened ones who have gone before illuminate and invert, clarify and problematize the authenticity of every claim to freedom. Earlier I quoted Demieville to the effect that some take "the clear mirror (as) like the absolute, reflecting back to man his ideal image." Just so—the very face of the interdependent, empty non-self.

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