

MUAN XINGTAO: AN OBAKU ZEN MASTER OF THE SEVENTEENTH  
CENTURY IN CHINA AND JAPAN

BY

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## CONVENTIONS OF USAGE

1. This thesis uses the *pinyin* system of alphabetic transliteration for Chinese names and titles, except for some quotations of passage from works that originally used the Wade-Giles system. The use of diacritic to mark the four tones of Mandarin are omitted for some frequently used words, such as Muan. Japanese transliteration of important Chinese titles and names are provided in parentheses. This thesis uses the modified Hepburn system for Japanese names and titles. Macrons are applied to distinguish long vowels from short vowels. The macrons are omitted for some frequently used words, such as Obaku and major cities. Sanskrit terms follow the conventional system of transliteration and important Sanskrit terms are given their corresponding Chinese transliteration in parentheses.
2. Chinese and Japanese names are given in their native conventional arrangement with the surname preceding the first name. After their first appearance, only the surnames are used thereafter. Names of Chinese and Japanese monks are recognizable by their style name or literary name, followed by their dharma name. Only their style names are used after their first appearance unless their dharma names are more commonly used in academic texts.
3. Chinese or Japanese transliterated titles of texts are identified with their corresponding traditional Chinese or Japanese characters in parentheses at their first appearance. After their first appearance, only the Chinese or Japanese transliterated titles are used thereafter.
4. The years given in this thesis are cited according to the Gregorian calendar. Months and days use the Chinese and Japanese lunar calendars. In this thesis, all references to known dates for dynasties, reign periods and important figures are provided in parentheses when they first appear.
5. The terms “Chan” and “Zen” are used respectively depending on whether the backgrounds of discussions are in China or Japan. The same treatment is applied to the different Buddhist lineages; “Linji” and “Rinzai”, “Caodong” and “Soto” despite their having the same Chinese characters.

## ABBREVIATIONS

C.	Chinese
d.	died
J.	Japanese
r.	reign year
S.	Sanskrit
<i>Mokuan zenshū</i>	<i>Shinsan kōtei Mokuan zenshū</i> 新纂校定木菴全集

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## ABSTRACT

Muan Xingtao was a prominent Chan master of the seventeenth century. This study attempts to examine his religious and cultural legacy and his numerous accomplishments. Among his many achievements were his successful consolidation of the Obaku headquarters of Manpukuji in Japan and cultivation of many Japanese dharma heirs which greatly expanded the Obaku's territories. He was praised for his artistic abilities in painting and calligraphy which led to the Japanese designating him as one of the "Obaku sanpitsu 黄檗三筆". He earned the highest religious honors of the purple robe and obtained the patronage from the shogun and Japanese elite. He characteristically manifested the virtues of filial piety and loyalty and transmitted the Ming style of Buddhist teachings, which placed more emphasis on the lay believers, *nenbutsu* and monastic discipline to Japan. His life represented the religious influence achieved through the interconnection between nations.

## INTRODUCTION

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century Tokugawa *bakufu* period, the Obaku sectarian branch, 黄檗派<sup>1</sup> made a remarkable impact to Japanese Buddhism and culture. In 1641, the Tokugawa shogun issued a policy of national isolationism; foreigners were not permitted to enter or trade with the Japanese except for the Dutch, Chinese and Koreans. The Dutch and Chinese were only allowed to dock at the Nagasaki 長崎 port and Koreans at Tsushima 対馬. In addition, Japanese were prohibited from traveling overseas without permission. There are many discourses about the motivations behind the Japanese nationalistic seclusion; economic concerns, threat of political stability, goal of prohibiting and eliminating Christianity, etc. Inevitably, the circumstances of 17<sup>th</sup> century Japan and the desire for authentic teachings of Buddhism escalated the demand to invite Chinese Buddhist monks to come to Japan as a substitute for Japanese monks studying abroad.

The 17<sup>th</sup> century for China was an era of upheaval; political turmoil, an upsurge of the merchant class, an intensely innovative intellectual society, increasingly close association with foreigners and the unitary movement of syncretic religious practice of combining Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism as one teaching. These conditions all directly and indirectly affected the Chinese people's religious and social life. Some of the new merchant class operated trades or took up employment overseas, particularly in

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<sup>1</sup> When Yinyuan established the Manpukuji and started their Buddhist activities as a religious institution, they originally called themselves the Rinzaishōshū Obakuha 臨濟正宗黄檗派, in order to distinguish themselves from the Rinzaishū 臨濟宗. The name of Obaku shū 黄檗宗 did not exist until after 1874 when the Meiji government allowed Obakuha to become an independent sect.

Japan. The increase of Chinese merchants in Japan created a demand to accommodate the merchants with Chinese religious facilities on foreign soil to satisfy their burden for liturgical services and need for religious comfort. Yinyuan Longqi (隱元隆琦, J. Ingen Ryūki, 1592-1673) was invited to come to Japan under these circumstances and he promoted and propagated the “authentic” Ming style of Obaku Zen Buddhist teachings in Japan. Indisputably, Yinyuan was an eminent Linji (臨濟, J. Rinzai) Chan master and a charismatic founder. However, some scholars claim that the success of the Obaku sect in Japan required more than just a single great founder; it required undivided devotion and corporation from every proponent of the Obaku sect. This study focuses on Yinyuan’s right hand man, Muan Xingtao (木菴性瑠, J. Mokuan Shōtō, 1611-1684), who dedicated his life to the consolidation and expansion of the Obaku sect in Japan.

When Yinyuan first crossed the ocean and landed at Nagasaki, Japan in 1654 at age 62, he did not expect to stay there long;<sup>2</sup> he did not foresee how successful he would be able to propagate the Buddhist dharma in Japan. The success of the Obaku sect in Japan has left many clues for Obaku researchers to track down. Undeniably, the energetic devotion of Muan was an essential element that we cannot afford to neglect. Most of the Obaku scholars have dedicated their book or articles to the analysis of all three Obaku founding masters together or focused on only Yinyuan. Nevertheless, I have attempted to center on Muan to systematically discuss his life according to the chronological order of his biography. Furthermore, I tried to understand how history molded Muan’s teachings and concepts and have made an effort to thoroughly analyze

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<sup>2</sup> Yinyuan originally planned to stay in Japan for only 3 years.

some of the major circumstances in his life. By doing so, I hoped to discover some valuable facts about Muan and his substantial impact on Buddhism history. Baroni in her book *Obaku Zen: the Emergence of the Third Sect of Zen in Tokugawa Japan* has detailed studies about the formation and development of the Obaku sect and its relationship with Japanese secular authorities. She believes that the success of the Obaku sect in Japan was because of its highly sinicized Chan practice and culture.<sup>3</sup> However, she offers very little attention to an in-depth analysis of Muan. Baskind in his dissertation, “Ming Buddhism in Edo Japan: The Chinese Founding Masters of the Japanese Obaku School”, has a comprehensive discussion and a lot of valuable information regarding the history and various aspects of the Obaku School. He dedicated a whole chapter to the analysis of Muan’s life and his contributions as well as his teachings. Baskind considers that the Chinese cultural legacy of the Obaku sect was the most valued asset that the Obaku monks owned.<sup>4</sup> The Japanese scholar, Takahashi Chikumei, in his book, *Ingen, Mokuan, Sokuhi*, uses many of Muan’s poems to elegantly and systematically describe Muan’s life. These three works became a valuable framework for my study.

The fundamental resource of this study has been concentrated primarily from the eight volumes of the *Shinsan kōtei Mokuan zenshū* 新纂校定木菴全集 (The newly compiled and revised complete collection of Mokuan). Hirakubo Akira 平久保章 compiled the *Mokuan zenshū* and it was published in 1992 by Shibunkaku Shuppan.

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<sup>3</sup> Helen J. Baroni, *Obaku Zen: The Emergence of the Third Sect of Zen in Tokugawa Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000), 121.

<sup>4</sup> James Baskind, “Ming Buddhism in Edo Japan—The Chinese Founding Masters of the Japanese Obaku School” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2006), 275.

According to Hirakubo, he started editing this complete Muan collection in September of 1979 and completed the work in March of 1981. His collection is compiled from fourteen published writings or sermons of Muan and three different collections of poems or verses by Muan. During his comparison and research among these materials and original texts, Hirakubo became aware that there was a lot of repetition amongst them. Therefore, from all the referenced texts he had available, he chose eight as the basic texts for his edition. Many of the original texts were borrowed from the Obaku Bunkaden 黄檗文華殿 of Manpukuji 萬福寺, other monasteries and university libraries. In addition to the eight original texts, he added more material from the other texts to supplement the deficiency of his basic materials. If there were differences among the basic texts and the others, he recorded the differences in detail in the head notes. In addition, he organized an appendix and an index to add to the last volume of *Mokuan zenshū*.<sup>5</sup> These eight volumes of newly compiled and revised complete works of *Mokuan zenshū* contain many of Muan's recorded sayings, dharma teachings, verses, biography, etc. The *Mokuan zenshū* covers the periods before and after Muan's arrival of Japan. The appendix includes the *nenpu* 年譜 (chronological biography) of Muan and provides a chronological list of the main events of Muan's life, articles of congratulations from many disciples for Muan's sixtieth birthday, collections of articles and poems from many disciples and patrons in China and Japan to congratulate Muan for his seventieth birthday and a description of the final events of Muan's death and thereafter. Unfortunately, the information recorded in the *nenpu* is very brief; it does not offer many details of events or

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<sup>5</sup> The abbreviation of *Shinsan kotei Mokuan zenshū* 新纂校定木菴全集.

happenings. Supplementary resources, such as the *Obaku bunka jinmei jiten* 黄檗文化人名辞典 (Dictionary of names in the Obaku culture), become even more important in studying the details of Muan's life. This dictionary was published in 1988 by Shibunkaku Shuppan and is a useful resource for researching the Obaku field.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I focused on the historical background and context of 17<sup>th</sup> century China which influenced Muan's life. The Chinese government underwent a tumultuous change in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and Chinese Chan Buddhism experienced a period of vicissitude as well. We can glimpse the turbulence and injustice of the times through the study of four great Chan masters in the late Ming dynasty; Yunqi Zhuhong (雲棲株宏, J. Unsei Shukō, 1535-1615), Zibo Zhenke (紫柏真可, J. Shihaku Shinka, 1543-1603), Hanshan Deqing (憨山德清, J. Kanzan Tokusei, 1546-1623) and Ouyi Zhixu (藕益智旭, J. Gūeki Chigyoku, 1599-1655). Some of these masters encountered prosecution from Ming court. All four Chan masters encouraged the practice of syncretizing the three great teachings; Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism. They also motivated the cultivation of lay Buddhists and diligently practiced the combination of Pure Land and Chan Buddhism. These religious movements shaped the teachings of the Obaku founding masters; Yinyuan, Muan and Jifei Ruyi (即非如一, J. Sokuhi Nyoitsu, 1616-1671).

This first chapter also studies the beginnings of Muan's life; his renunciation of the secular world to become a monk and his genuineness in searching for the truth during his early monastic life in China. These important events are expounded in chronological

order. Subsequently, some of Muan's essential management experiences in China before immigrating to Japan are also set forth in chronological order as well.

Chapter Two begins with an investigation of the historical context of the social and religious climate in 17<sup>th</sup> century Japan. This historical background influenced the Chinese community in Nagasaki and especially had a distinctive connection with the arrivals of the Obaku founding masters. Chapter Two continues with the establishment of the Manpukuji monastery, Muan's life in Japan, his management skills and relationships with the Japanese elite as well as his retirement and death.

Chapter Three concentrates on the teachings and practices of Muan. As an eminent Chan monk, Muan demonstrated many substantial moral teachings and sophisticated Chan Buddhist practices. Furthermore, of the three founders, Muan cultivated the greatest number of Japanese Obaku disciples. Through these many disciples, the Obaku sect was able to become established and respected as a new Buddhist Zen sect and was able to vigorously expand throughout Japan. Inevitably, Chinese culture was also brought into Japan along with the expansion of the Obaku sect. Chinese temple architectural skills and design enhanced Japanese temple building and social life. Muan's talents of poetry, calligraphy and painting, as well as those of the other two founding masters, benefited the growth of the Obaku sect in Japan. These cultural exchanges enriched Japanese society and tradition. The establishment of the Obaku sect in Japan not only had an extraordinary impact on Japanese Buddhist religion but also generated vast influences on Japanese culture.

## CHAPTER I: MUAN'S LIFE IN CHINA

Muan Xingtao is known as one of the three famous Obaku monks who came to Japan from Southern China in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He assisted his master, Yinyan Longqi, to establish the Zen sect known as Obaku in Japan. Muan not only expanded the Obaku sect's teachings by enlightening the greatest number of Japanese disciples among the Obaku three founding masters but also secured a firm foundation for many generations of the Obaku sect to use to thrive on. Besides developing and completing the building of the Manpukuji, he also initiated the first Obaku temple in the Tokyo area, the Zuishoji 瑞聖寺. In his lifetime, the Japanese shogun bestowed upon him the purple robe and his talents in calligraphy and painting earned the admiration of many Japanese who honored him with the title as one of the three "Obaku Sanpitsu 黄檗三筆" (The three brushes of the Obaku). Muan's influences in Japan were not only religious but also expanded to encompass cultural and historical dimensions. Looking back in history, we repeatedly realize that an outstanding individual is oftentimes the outcome of his era. In this chapter, I analyze the historical background of the Chinese Ming dynasty before Muan journeyed to Japan. The environment and trends of 17<sup>th</sup> century China had an inevitable effect on Muan, particularly; syncretistic religious thought, Confucian teachings and frequent engagement with the literati culture. Muan's Chinese origin and foundations in Buddhist training and practice cultivated while in China became essential elements to his accomplishments in Japan.

## The Context of 17<sup>th</sup> Century China

The Ming dynasty was a fascinating period in Chinese history; its founding emperor, Zhu Yuanzhang (朱元璋, 1328-1398), began as a monk before joining the White Lotus Society<sup>6</sup> rebellion and eventually becoming emperor. He understood the important role in society and the state that religion plays and therefore, set various regulations to control Buddhism during his reign. Timothy Brook mentions that at the beginning of the Ming dynasty, the emperor established legislation to purposefully position monks and monasteries to submit to the control of state.<sup>7</sup> This was the beginnings of the suppressive measures against Buddhism throughout the history of the Ming court. Zhu began with the establishment of a supervisory office to closely govern monks and nuns. In 1372, he issued ordination certificates and ordered monks and nuns to obtain them in order to be considered legitimate. Later, he demanded all clergies to register their date of ordination with the local registration offices.<sup>8</sup> During the nearly three hundred years of Ming dynastic rule, the Ming court experienced an enormous crisis from the Manchu which threatened their borders, as well as bandits and rebellions that spurted up inside the country. Of the nineteen Ming emperors, only a few were

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<sup>6</sup> The White Lotus Society was started during the Southern Song Dynasty by Mao Ziyuan. Members of this group regularly recited, invoked and sang praises to the Buddha, and also listened to confessions from members. During the Yuan dynasty, the Mongol court spurred popularity of this society. The society had a slogan which said, "The country is in great confusion, and Maitreya is coming down to be reborn." See Ch'en 1972.

<sup>7</sup> Timothy Brook, *The Chinese State in Ming Society* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 139.

<sup>8</sup> Jonathan C. Cleary, "Zibo Zhenke: A Buddhist leader in Late Ming China" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1985), 29.

considered as being capable.<sup>9</sup> The corruption of the Ming officials and eunuchs were outrageous. Underneath all this disorder and unpredictable climate, religious beliefs became a more important element of people's life, offering them some sense of comfort and control. Nevertheless, at the same time Buddhism faced many vicissitudes. Most of the emperors of the Ming dynasty were devoted to both Buddhism and Daoism. However, Emperor Jiajing (嘉靖, r. 1522-1566) favored Daoism and Buddhism was severely discouraged during his regime.<sup>10</sup> He allowed Buddhist images to be destroyed and damaged within the palace's Buddha Hall and also let Daoist priests become high ranking officials.<sup>11</sup>

Political and economic changes triggered new transformations to the social orders, particularly the raising of the merchant's social status. The innovation of better printing technology precipitated the spread of philosophical and religious thoughts and also tremendously altered the people's everyday lives. Frequent foreign contacts in trade and religions such as the Christian missionaries and Jesuits,<sup>12</sup> broadened the common people's horizons and enriched their financial and religious dimensions. Art also flourished during the Ming period; writing poetry was very popular among the literati, artistic paintings became more sophisticated, delicate porcelains were made in large quantities, tea drinking was developed into an art and the skills of Buddhist temple architecture achieved a high level of perfectionism. This high level of temple

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<sup>9</sup> Shi Shengyan 釋聖嚴, *Ming mo zhongguo fojiao zhi yanjiu* 明末中國佛教之研究 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1988), 1.

<sup>10</sup> Albert Chan, *The Glory and Fall of the Ming Dynasty* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), 109.

<sup>11</sup> Shi Shengyan 1988, 27.

<sup>12</sup> The Catholic missionaries, Xavier came to Guangtong in 1552, and Matteo Ricci came to Guangzhou in 1581. See Shi Shengyan 1988, 38.

architecture led later to the Obaku sect importing the Ming style of Buddhist temple architectural design and techniques into Japan when they started the building of Manpukuji.

Corrupt Ming officials caused enormous suffering and despair to the common people and bribery became common practice. The poor people had nothing they could offer to government officials and so became the most disadvantaged people in Ming society. They turned to become bandits or to search for comfort and hope in religion. Belief in the Merciful God, Guanyin (觀音, J. Kannon, S. Avalokiteśvara), became popular among the common people who sought protection from illnesses and other troubles. Reciting the name of Amita Buddha also became popular for those hoping for rebirth in the Western Paradise. The worship of Mazu 媽祖 for protection from sea disasters prevailed in the Southern coastal areas, such as the Fujian 福建 province.

Landlords and retired officials together formed a powerful gentry class in the Ming dynasty. They had more time and luxury to explore and enjoy the literature which was becoming more widely available and accessible due to the new printing technology. With the outspread of literature, Chan's philosophy and practices became more prevalent among the elite and gentry classes.

### Buddhism in the Late Ming and Early Qing

During the transition between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Ming dynasty declined rapidly, particularly during the period of the Wanli 萬曆 reign (1573-1620).

After the death of the capable minister Zhang Juzheng<sup>13</sup> (張居正, 1525-1582), eunuchs took advantage of the young and selfish emperor, Shenzong (神宗, r. 1572-1620). They demanded favors from both rich and poor and levied high taxes on numerous things. Shenzong himself did not take note of his minister's advice or conduct court business for twenty years. During his regime, the monks, Zibo Zhenke and Hanshan Deqing, both suffered unjust persecutions. In 1603, Zibo was accused of spreading seductive writings about replacing the crown prince. He was arrested, tortured and, in the end, the reverend Chan master died in the prison.<sup>14</sup> In 1595, the Emperor Shenzong ordered Hanshan arrested and thrown into prison. Hanshan was accused of taking a great amount of gold from the emperor's mother, the Dowager Empress Cisheng 慈聖 (1546-1614) and privately constructing the unauthorized temple of Haiyinsi 海印寺. He was exiled to Leizhou 雷州<sup>15</sup> until the Great Pardon of 1606.<sup>16</sup> These monks' experiences of being tortured and having false charges levied on them by amoral eunuchs and officials, gives us a glimpse into the severe degree of corruption during the Ming dynasty.

On the other hand, the growth of industries and poor soil made more people chose trades as their livelihood. In addition, the increasing demand of trade from foreigners stimulated a commercial boom that caused an economic and social upheaval. Merchants became so prosperous that they advanced their status to gentry by purchasing

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<sup>13</sup> Chan 1982, 155. When Shenzong was a boy, Zhang Juzheng was his tutor and Grand Secretary to guide him.

<sup>14</sup> Chuheng Peng ed., *Li dai gao seng gu shi. Di 4 ji* (Taipei: Fo xue yuti wen hua she, 1979), v. 7.

<sup>15</sup> Now is the Guangtong, Haikang province.

<sup>16</sup> Peng 1979, v.8.

examination degrees or marrying into the elite and gentry families. The four classes<sup>17</sup> of social order started to become obscured, causing anxiety among the elite and gentry classes. On top of all this social upheaval, many natural and man-made catastrophes occurred everywhere. During the Wanli reign, many famines occurred and heavy taxes were levied on the people to support the army in defense of the troubling borders. During the Tianqi period 天啟 (1621-1627), droughts occurred all over central China and the northwest region resorted to violence and banditry.<sup>18</sup> Desperate people were attracted to religion more and especially to superstitious practices and belief, such as talismans, charmed waters and secret societies were organized having names of Buddha.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Buddhism flourished among the elite, officials and eunuchs. Wu in his book *Enlightenment in Dispute: the Reinvention of Chan Buddhism in Seventeenth-Century China* mentions, “The Wanli emperor and his mother, the Dowager Empress Cisheng, promoted Buddhism as a means to perpetuate their personal welfare.”<sup>19</sup> The Dowager Empress summoned Hanshan to a grand ceremony to pray for the blessings of the emperor to have a new heir and this event became one of the triggers for Hanshan’s arrest later. She also offered a reception of a vegetarian meal and purple robe to Zibo when he visited the capital city.<sup>20</sup> During this era of corruption and uncertainty, people in different social classes and generations sought salvation through Buddhism. The elder people wanted to offset their sins through belief in the Buddhist

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<sup>17</sup> The order of four classes were gentry, farmers, craftsmen and merchants.

<sup>18</sup> Chan 1982, 334-335.

<sup>19</sup> Jiang Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute: The Reinvention of Chan Buddhism in Seventeenth-Century China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 22.

<sup>20</sup> Peng 1979, vol.7 and 8.

concept of merit. The fathomless philosophy of Buddhism drew the attention of intellectual people who were also speculative about the afterlife. Eunuchs who knew they had committed many crimes or injustices tried to utilize the merits of building Buddhist monasteries to escape the punishment of going to hell.<sup>21</sup> The poor people were devoted to Buddhism in the hopes that they may have a better outcome in this life or the next. For all of these reasons and more, Buddhism experienced revitalization again during the late Ming period. Nevertheless, during the transitional period between the Ming and Qing, many Ming loyalists and literati chose to become Buddhist monks to escape serving the new Qing government because their Confucian beliefs held that serving two masters was disgraceful. As Timothy Brook has claimed, this tendency became a reason for the Confucian eremites to escape the reality of the Qing rule.<sup>22</sup>

According to Kenneth Ch'en, the early Manchu emperors of the Qing dynasty patronized the Buddhist sect of Lamaism because it was similar to the Shamanism which the Manchu people practiced. They also believed that by continuing to support Lamaism, they would earn the allegiance of the Mongol and Tibetan tribes. Aside from their support in Lamaism, the Emperors Shunzhi (順治, r. 1644-1661) and Yongzheng (雍正, r. 1722-1735) both favored the Chan Buddhism School. During Shunzhi's reign, he would often invite Chan monks to the palace to discuss Chan doctrines and practices.<sup>23</sup> With the revitalization of Buddhism during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the literati became interested in the study of Chan Buddhism and made it a popular topic of literature.

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<sup>21</sup> Chan 1982, 114.

<sup>22</sup> Wu 2008, 84.

<sup>23</sup> Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1972), 450.

Wu indicates that in the late Ming period, Chan Buddhism was greatly influenced by the literati. The literati had the appropriate training in literary composition and Confucian classics and most did not need to perform laborious work; they had many cultural recreations to occupy their leisure time. One of their many cultural pastimes was reading, learning and writing about Chan Buddhist texts because they enjoyed and appreciated the sophistication of Chan wisdom and philosophy. Wu denotes the literati's spiritual experience of studying Chan as "textual spirituality" because their fascination with Chan Buddhism was focused on reading and commenting on Chan texts but were not serious enough to follow the precepts or be ordained as monks. These arrogant literati were so self-assured that they would openly challenged monks over their knowledge and interpretation of Chan.<sup>24</sup>

However, another crucial explanation for the rise in popularity of Ming Chan Buddhism was the challenge to Zhu Xi's (朱熹, J. Shuki, 1130-1200) Neo-Confucianism. Wang Yangming (王陽明, J. Ōyōmei, 1472-1528) challenged the theory of Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucianism, which said that one's goodness comes from the intensity of searching for principle (*li 理*) in the outside world and in the study of the Classics of Confucius. Wang Yangming was a Confucian scholar and Ming official who argued that principle is inside oneself; one should look into one's own mind to find the inborn knowledge of the good (*liangzhi 良知*). He maintained that this innate knowledge of good would provide the rules and standards for people to observe. Wang was convinced that everybody could

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<sup>24</sup> Wu 2008, 47-67.

obtain sage-hood by simply cultivating and examining themselves diligently.<sup>25</sup> However, Wu indicates that Chan Buddhism did not have a great influence on Wang Yangming's thoughts but rather, it was Wang who inspired the other Chan monks.<sup>26</sup> Wang's followers continued to grow and established the Taizhou School<sup>27</sup> 泰州學派 to promote the similarities between Confucianism and Buddhist philosophy. One of the Wang's famous followers, Zhou Rudeng (周汝登, 1547-1629), concluded that "Confucianism and Buddhism were the same and the Confucian program of self-cultivation had to include the study of Buddhist teaching."<sup>28</sup> The sinicized form of Chan Buddhism survived after the Buddhism persecution in A.D. 845 and continued to grow through the Song and Yuan dynasties. Wu states that during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the activities of Buddhism and Confucianism grew side by side<sup>29</sup> and promoted the rise of Chan Buddhism.

During the Ming period, in addition to the popularity of Chan Buddhism, there were many concepts that came along with the development of Ming Buddhism. In the confusion and uncertainty of the late Ming period, the idea of merits and demerits became popular again. According to Brokaw, the development of ledgers of merit and demerit was an effort that evolved through several centuries of transformation and the combination of Confucian, Daoism and Buddhism practices. The concept of retribution in China had a very long history; it can be traced back to the Confucian Classics period.

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<sup>25</sup> Cynthia J. Brokaw, *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit: Social Change and Moral Order in Late Imperial China* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991), 18-20.

<sup>26</sup> Wu 2008, 68.

<sup>27</sup> The Taizhou School was founded by Wang Yangming's disciple, Wang Gen and was considered as leftism of Wang Yangming's thought.

<sup>28</sup> Wu 2008, 74.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

However, development of the merit accumulation system began around the fourth century A.D. Later, it expanded into a concept for Daoists as a means to attain immortality and for Buddhists as a means to obtain salvation. The ledgers of merit and demerit gained considerable popularity in the sixteenth century when a scholar-official, Yuan Huang (袁黄, 1533-1606), claimed that his success in life was due to the accumulation of merit points. Yuan Huang was able to influence the scholars and literati of his times. Brokaw believes that the system of merits and demerits gave people a sense of positive control about their life in those very uncertainty times.<sup>30</sup> This system also stimulated religious cultivation among society, particularly among the scholars.

Since the beginning of the Ming dynasty, Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism were accepted by the Ming court, officials and the Chinese people. According to Sun and Langlois in their article “Three Teachings Syncretism and the Thought of Ming Tai-tsu”, they state that Ming Tai-tsu believed in spirits, ghosts, portents and magic. He was not only a monk but was also involved in the Red Turban movement and popular religious societies such as the White Lotus Society before ascending to the throne. Also, as a Ming emperor he learned to utilize Confucian scholars as advisors for political and governmental expertise. During the Ming period the “Three Teachings Syncretism”, which combined the Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian ideas and rituals together, became the trend of the times.<sup>31</sup> Many of the Ming emperors were interested in either Buddhism or Daoism, if not both, and employed Confucian scholars to manage their government.

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<sup>30</sup> Brokaw 1991, 15-27, 230.

<sup>31</sup> John D. Langlois, Jr., Sun K'O-K'Uan “Three Teachings Syncretism and the Thought of Ming T'ai-tsu” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 43, no. 1, (Jun., 1983), 97-139.

For example, Emperor Yongle (永樂, r. 1402-1424) suspiciously died from the poison of a Daoist's elixir<sup>32</sup> and also during his lifetime he had Buddhist monks compile the *Yongle Southern Edition Buddhist Canon*<sup>33</sup> 永樂南藏. During the period of Emperor Xian Zong (憲宗, r. 1465-1487), Buddhist and Daoist temples prospered and the number of monks multiplied to a few hundred thousand. An official calculation showed that the amount of rice consumed by these monks would supply the capital city for a whole year.<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, Emperor Jiajing was a devoted Daoist; he favored Daoism over the Buddhism. He had an ambitious goal of becoming immortal and believed that Daoism offered more promise over the other religions to help him obtain his dream of immortality. In Jiajing's last twenty-five years of reign, he was so zealous for Daoist's alchemy practices and ceremonies that he let his prime minister, Yan Song (嚴嵩, 1480-1567) handle all of his governmental tasks.<sup>35</sup>

As a momentum of the times, the “Three Teachings Syncretism” became a religious practice of this era. Wu concludes, “...as a result, an atmosphere of integration of all three teachings (*sanjiao heyi* 三教合一) took form and led to a more accommodating attitude toward Buddhism, especially Chan Buddhism.”<sup>36</sup>

The four eminent Chan monks in the Ming dynasty; Zibo Zhenke, Yunqi Zhuhong, Hanshan Deqing and Ouyi Zhixu all emphasized the harmony of the “three teachings” in their religious teachings. Zibo stipulated that the teachings of Buddhism,

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<sup>32</sup> Chan 1982, 109.

<sup>33</sup> Li Fuhua, He Mei, *Hanwen fojiao dazangjing yanjiu: Research on the Chinese Tripitaka* (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2003), 406.

<sup>34</sup> Chan 1982, 109.

<sup>35</sup> Yan Song was so corrupt that he sold government positions for cash without any moral concerns.

<sup>36</sup> Wu 2008, 50.

Confucianism and Daoism are eventually the same teachings. The only differences were in the terms they utilized to express their teachings. Ultimately, Zibo attempted to point out that the “benevolence” or “filial piety” in the Confucian *Analects* and the “Buddha nature” in Buddhism referred to the mind and are the same. The goal of all four of these eminent monks was to teach all cultivators to detach or elevate their minds from their bodies and other worldly matters.<sup>37</sup> Zibo believed that the truth could not be altered simply by which terms were used or by the teachings they belonged to, the truth is still the truth. However on some occasions, Zibo also indicated the shortcomings of Confucianism and Daoism, holding Buddhism to be superior.<sup>38</sup> Yunqi expounded his understanding about the different terms regarding the accumulation of merit in the three teachings. He pronounced that in Confucianism, the accumulation of merit is called the four ethical principles. In Buddhism, the accumulation of merit is called the Six Perfections and in Daoism, it is referred to as the Three Thousand Merits and Eight Hundred Virtuous Achievements. They all referred to acts of accumulating virtue and merit.<sup>39</sup> The four eminent Chan masters believed that the three teachings pointed to the same principles, the only differences were in the terms used. These four great Ming Chan monks tried to reformulate the Chan Buddhism dharma teachings and so, their religious ideals prevailed. Muan was born afterwards, at the end of Ming dynasty and, inevitably, was affected by the great religious movements of his time.

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<sup>37</sup> Cleary 1985, 145.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 147-148.

<sup>39</sup> Hanshan, Ouyi, Lianchi, Zibo and Sengchan. *Ming chao si dashi ji* (Taipei: Taiwan yinjing chu, 1970), v.3, 82.

Another characteristic of Ming Buddhism was the combination of the Pure Land's "nianfo 念佛" (J. *nenbutsu*) or reciting the Buddha's name with Chan practices as a means of cultivation. When the Obaku Zen masters brought this practice to Japan, it caused a great controversy in Japanese Buddhist community.<sup>40</sup> Hanshan mentions in his own biography that after he decided to become a monk, he did not have a Chan master or texts to train himself on how to meditate. In addition, he did not know much about the technique of Chan practices and therefore, he simply concentrated his mind on Amitabha Buddha while repeating the Buddha's name. After days and nights of reciting the Buddha's name and meditating, Hanshan was able to see the image of Amitabha Buddha and Guanyin.<sup>41</sup> Zibo believed that a pure mind makes rebirth in the Pure Land possible. He encouraged lay followers to not just recite the Buddha's name mechanically but to focus their minds to contemplate the Buddha. Along with the invocation practice, he also asked practitioners to study Chan and the scriptural teachings.<sup>42</sup> Ouyi emphasized that the fundamental cultivation of a Buddhist is the practice of reciting the Buddha's name, subsequently to be followed by the precepts, studying the Buddhist dharma and texts and then cultivating the meditative contemplation of Chan.<sup>43</sup> According to Ch'en, "Under the Ming dynasty only the Linji branch of the Chan and the Pure Land Schools remained active..."<sup>44</sup> Although, these eminent Ming monks strived to revive Chan

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<sup>40</sup> At the time, the Japanese Buddhism, they considered the *nenbutsu* a Pure Land practice and not an orthodox Zen practice.

<sup>41</sup> Hanshan, *The autobiography & Maxims of Master Han Shan* trans. by Richard Cheung and Chuan Yuan Shakya, (Hong kong: H.K. Buddhist Book Distributor, 1995), v.10.

<sup>42</sup> Cleary 1985, 141-142.

<sup>43</sup> Shi Shengyan 1988, 79.

<sup>44</sup> Ch'en 1972, 435.

Buddhism by encouraging the practice of Chan with Pure Land teachings, after these masters died, Chan entered into a very different stage.

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Linji and Caodong (曹洞, J. Soto) Chan masters became influential in the Buddhist world due to their active spreading of dharma transmissions.<sup>45</sup> Through the efforts of eminent Linji Chan masters, Linji became the prevalent Chan sect. In the lineage of the Linji Chan School; Miyun Yuanwu (密雲圓悟, 1566-1642) was a remarkably talented Linji Chan master. His dharma master was Huanyou Zhengchuan (幻有正傳, 1549-1614). Miyun received a surprising welcome when visiting Zhou Rudeng in Shaoxing 紹興 because of Zhou's great admiration for his iconoclastic Chan style. Zhou's admiration for him made Miyun a famous authentic Chan master among the literati.<sup>46</sup> Miyun had been an abbot for many different monasteries and became the abbot of the Mount Huangbo 黃檗山 Monastery in 1630 which was the same temple that the Obaku sect in Japan would later originate from. Miyun also received the honorific purple robe from the imperial court of Si Zong (思宗, r. 1628-1644) in 1631 and had a total of twelve certified dharma heirs.<sup>47</sup>

Feiyin Tongrong (費隱通容, 1593-1662) was Miyun's dharma heir. Originally, he was trained by a Caodong master for ten years but preferred the antinomian Linji Chan style. When he read about Miyun's recorded sayings, he was fascinated by Miyun and became determined to receive his transmission. Feiyin became the abbot of the Mount Huangbo monastery in 1633. He was a very influential Chan monk among the famous

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<sup>45</sup> Wu 2008, 84.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 87.

Chan centers in Zhejiang 浙江. However, his book *Wudeng yantong* 五燈巖統 (The strict transmission of the five Chan schools) became controversial in the Buddhist world. In his book, Feiyin tried to explicate the unclear transmissions of dharma lineage. He believed that self-proclaimed Chan monks should be relegated to the “lineage unknown” category. He altered the officially approved Chan lineages in the *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄 (Records of lamp transmissions during the Jingde reign). This caused the Caodong monks to challenge him and in the end, the governor of Zhejiang ordered his book *Wudeng yantong* burnt.<sup>48</sup> Feiyin had sixty-four certified dharma heirs and Yinyuan, who was to bring the Ming style of Chan practice to Japan, was one of them.<sup>49</sup> Feiyin and Yinyuan were both natives of Fujian and established a strong presence at Mount Huangbo as the lineage of Miyun. When Yinyuan went to Japan he also brought Feiyin’s book, *Wudeng yantong*, with him.

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Linji and Caodong Chan schools promulgated from a regional school to becoming a national and even an international school after several generations of dharma transmission. After the fall of the Ming dynasty in 1644, Chan Buddhism and its teachings followed the retreat of the Southern Ming government and spread out from the southeast coast into the southwest.<sup>50</sup> By 1657, the Linji Chan School reached Beijing when the Qing emperor, Shunzhi, met with Hanpu Xingcong (憨樸性聰, 1610-1666).<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Wu 2008, 7-8.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 92-93.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 97.

The politically unstable period of the Ming-Qing transition created a new trend of Chinese emigration. Now Buddhist believers and Chan monks also traveled with the refugees, merchants and other Chinese emigrants to spread Chan to Japan, Vietnam and Malaysia.<sup>52</sup> Before the arrival of the Obaku Zen masters, Daozhe Chaoyuan (道者超元, J. Dōja Chōgen, 1599-1662), a second-generation dharma heir of Feiyin, went to Japan in 1651 to become the abbot of Sofukuji 崇福寺. He earned the respect from many Japanese Zen monks with his impeccable personality of not seeking worldly fame or benefit.<sup>53</sup> When Feiyin Tongrong's first dharma heir and Daozhe's dharma uncle, Yinyuan Longqi, arrived in Nagasaki in 1654, Daozhe withdrew himself from the abbacy of Sofukuji and allowed Yinyuan become the abbot. Later, after Yinyuan left Sofukuji for Fumonji 普門寺 and Jifei came to Sofukuji, Daozhe retired to allow Jifei to ascend to the abbot position.<sup>54</sup> Daozhe taught many Japanese monks but left Japan eight years later. He instructed many of his disciples to seek teachings from the Obaku masters. Muan's Japanese disciples, Chōon and Egoku had both studied under Daozhe before seeking the Muan's teachings. According to Baroni, Daozhe was considered to be the forerunner of the Obaku sect by many Obaku scholars.<sup>55</sup> Along with the Linji School, the Caodong School also expanded their teachings into Japan. In 1677, Xinyue Xingchou (心越興壽, J. Shinetsu Kōchū, 1639-1695) also known as Donggao Xinyue, arrived in

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<sup>52</sup> Wu 2008, 109.

<sup>53</sup> Rinoie, Masafumi. *Obaku sanketsu Egoku Dōmyō Zenshi den*. (Tōkyō: Daizō Shuppan, 1981), 52.

<sup>54</sup> *Obaku bunka jinmei jiten* (Kyōto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1988), 263.

<sup>55</sup> Baroni 2000, 34-35.

Nagasaki. He had brief contacts with Muan and asked for his help after having just arrived in Japan.

Under the political circumstances of China and Japan in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Obaku sect founding monks undertook the voyage to come to Japan despite the dangers of a long ocean journey. The authentic Ming style of Buddhist practice was able to follow them to arrive in Japan. Muan was one of the pivotal Chan masters who committed the second half of his life to illuminate the Buddhist teachings in Japan.

### Muan and His Buddhist Career

According to the *nenpu*,<sup>56</sup> Muan had a predestination with Buddhism; his becoming a Buddhist monk was an inevitable fate. Muan was born on the third day of the second month of 1611 in the Quanzhou 泉州 province of southern China. His father came from the Wu clan and his mother from the Huang. When he was born he had two teeth in his upper jaw and the people of his clan were very surprised, calling him “the child of Bodhidharma” connecting him with the legend of the two teeth of Bodhidharma.<sup>57</sup> Bodhidharma is considered to be the first Chan patriarch who brought the Chan practice from India to China. Muan’s childhood had some of the same

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<sup>56</sup> This *nenpu* refers to the chronological biography of Muan, which was compiled into the appendix of *Mokuan zenshū*, and henceforth referred to as *nenpu*.

<sup>57</sup> Buddhist Text Translation Society ed., *The Sixty Patriarch’s Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra: with the Commentary of Tripitaka Master Hua* (Burlingame, CA: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 2002), 11-12. The legend describes the event when Bodhidharma encountered with Shen Kuang; out of anger, Shen Kuang whipped out his beads toward Bohidharma and knocked out Bohidharma’s two teeth. There was a saying that if a holy man’s teeth fall to the ground, it won’t rain for three years and therefore, it said that Bohidharma did not let his teeth fall to the ground, instead, he swallowed them.

characteristics that the late Ming Chan master, Hanshan Deqing, described in his autobiography about himself. His autobiography describes himself as not being fond of playing with other children, but would rather sit alone.<sup>58</sup> When Muan was little, he would often pay respects to Buddha and the elders of his village. Unfortunately, he lost his mother at the age of four and the following year, he lost his father. Afterwards he was dependent on his grandmother to raise him. Muan was described as a child who was polite, truthful and having compassion for living beings. During Muan's life, he often practiced acts of releasing animals. Muan wrote a few poems later in his life about the act of releasing animals, showing his deep affection for living beings. One of his poems reads:

Fate and appearance are different but the Buddha nature is the same.  
 It is only due to ignorance that some fall into a different path.  
 In this life [if] some become the meat in the cauldron, it was because they were  
 meat consumers in their previous life.  
 Men need to hurry to release these captured animals without hesitation.  
 The injustice causes injustice continually without end.  
 If we can realize this true meaning we can say that we understand the Buddha's  
 teaching of having compassion for living beings.<sup>59</sup>

Muan started his education at the age of seven in the village school by studying Confucius' and Mencius' teachings. However, he could not continue his studies beyond the first fascicle of Mencius due to his poverty. At the age of ten, Muan started to adopt the way of devoted Buddhists; reciting the name of Guanyin Buddha and practicing a vegetarian diet. His desire to become a monk began after Muan paid a visit to the

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<sup>58</sup> Hanshan 1995, 1.

<sup>59</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 1: 443.

Kaiyuan monastery 開元寺 at thirteen years old. The next year, a family friend, Wu, inspired Muan about becoming a monk and taught him the importance of searching for one's true nature. From then on, Muan could not cease thinking about becoming a monk. His grandmother understood his intentions and allowed him to enter the Kaiyuan monastery to learn from Master Yinming 印明 at the age of sixteen.

### Determined to Seek the Dharma Truth

From the age of seventeen, Muan's life was a constant learning process of the Buddha dharma from various Buddhist masters. He traveled to numerous monasteries to receive teachings from different Chan masters and it was in this period that Muan firmly obtained his understanding of the Buddhist dharma and teachings. As described in the *nenpu*, the year after his entering monastery, Muan was anxious to learn the Buddhist sutras when he heard his classmate reciting the *Sutra of Forty-two Chapters* 四十二章經.<sup>60</sup> He begged his classmate to expound it again for him. He was so amazed at the Buddha's words that he started to pay his respects to Guanyin, continuously reciting the vows of Guanyin and also began following the precept of not consuming food after noontime. This eagerness to learn and cultivate himself inspired him to go to Shitou Cliff 獅頭岩 in the Northern Mountain 北山 the following year to sit and contemplate for three days and nights, eating only a single dried persimmon a day. On the third night, under the moonlight, Muan saw a great figure wearing armor and holding a pestle. The

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<sup>60</sup> It is the earliest Buddhist sutra that had survived and translated into Chinese.

figure told Muan that he was a heavenly divinity and advised Muan to go back to monastery to receive the precepts and learn the correct way of cultivation. As a result, Muan shaved his head the next year when he was nineteen years old and joined the Buddhist order. At the age of twenty, Muan received the ten basic precepts from his master, Qiaoyun Zhenchang (樵雲真常, 1557-1639), and studied the Chinese Buddhist Canons under Qiaoyun at Bizhi Cliff 碧芝岩. Qiaoyun was a master of monastic precepts; he was credited with the revival of Buddhism in southern China during the late Ming period. Ouyi Zhixu, Yinyuan Longqi and Yongjue Yuanxian (永覺元賢, 1578-1657) all have written poems or memories about Qiaoyun. Muan studied the *Mituo shu chao* 彌陀疏鈔, which was written by one of the four great late Ming Chan masters, Yunqi Zhuhong. He also studied the *Lotus Sutra*, *Brahmajāla-sūtra* 梵網, the *Diamond Sutra*, etc., with Chan master, Ya 雅. In 1635, Muan took the full precepts from the Gushan 鼓山 Chan master, Yongjue Yuanxian. Yongjue began as a Confucian scholar but at the age of eighteen, after hearing the *Platform Sutra of the Six Patriarch*, became so astonished at the subtle Buddhist philosophy and profound teachings that he started to investigate and learn the Buddhist teachings. In 1603, Yongjue disregarded his Confucian studies and concentrated on studying Buddhism under Wuming Huijing 無明慧經. Yongjue was a prolific Buddhist writer<sup>61</sup> and a Caodong sect Chan master. He greatly influenced Muan when Muan sought his teachings and studied with him several times during Muan's early years between the ages of 25 to 27 and again at 36. In the year

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<sup>61</sup> Jialing Fan, *Ming mo Caodong dianjun: Yongjue Yuanxian chan shi yanjiu* (Taipei xian: Hua Mulan wen hua chu ban she, 2009), 17-19.

1637, Muan received the Bodhisattva precepts from Yongjue and that same year entered Yongjue's summer retreat. Muan encountered many prominent Chan masters in the process of seeking the true dharma. The *nenpu* mentions that Muan did not know about Buddhist sectarian differences until he was 25 years old, but after he was aware of them, he chose to cultivate Chan teachings.<sup>62</sup> Yongjue's teachings had a deep impact on Muan and they can be observed from Muan's behavior later in life. Later when a Caodong sect monk, Xinyue, asked Muan for help in Japan, Muan was open minded enough to disregard sectarian differences and tried to help him.

In 1636, the Ming dynasty was in tremendous chaos; rebellions were raising up everywhere. Despite the danger, Muan made his pilgrimage to Hangzhou 杭州 to visit Master Xueguang 雪關 and then went to Longju 龍居 to listen to Master Gude's 古德 teachings. Thereafter, Muan continue his journey to arrive at Longshu 龍樹 to receive the teaching of the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* 楞嚴經 from Master Xuesong 雪松. During this period of time, Muan was dispirited by not being able to understand the true dharma. However, his friend encouraged him, saying that even though he did not understand Chan and the abstract teachings of the Buddha right now, as long as he continued to be pure and sincerely search for the truth, he could still become a good Chan master. Muan felt a sudden relief and had the courage to continue his trip to Tiantong 天童 to pay a visit to and consult with the famous Chan master Miyun. However, Muan did not stay long under Miyun's "violent" Chan style teaching. In 1637, Muan entered Yongjue's summer retreat and during the retreat Muan inquired of Yongjue how to contemplate "the key

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<sup>62</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 8:3508.

phrases 話頭”.<sup>63</sup> Yongjue taught him to contemplate the topic without letting it depart from him for any second, just like a starving and thirsty person thinks of food. Muan religiously followed Yongjue’s teaching for thirteen days and nights, concentrating only on the key phrases and forgetting to sleep and eat. On the thirteenth night, Muan suddenly had a great realization of the true destiny of his life and experienced a great feeling of liberation and joy. Muan composed a poem about it:

It is very strange, strange, and extremely strange.  
 One flower of light opened in the midnight.  
 It appears face to face brightly without any opposition.  
 To prosper now and make the ancients proud,  
 It is an extremely wonderful arrangement.<sup>64</sup>

After this experience, Muan was elated and assured about the Buddha’s and patriarchs’ great teachings. In the *nenpu*, it says that the next year Muan was sick for twenty days and nights. After recovering, he continued his journey to search and visit eminent monks and to obtain Buddhist teachings from them. He traveled to Jinsu 金粟 to pay a visit to Monk Feiyin and, later in 1643, encountered Feiyin again at Jinsu Mountain. In 1645, as the Ming dynasty was falling and rebellions were rising up everywhere, the Qing army made their way into the capital. Despite the difficulty of traveling, Muan continued his pilgrimage and when he arrived at Linshanwei 臨山衛 in Shaoxing province,<sup>65</sup> the land and water transportations were blocked. He was stuck there for more than three months. Muan ran out of food and resources and stayed alone in one room. At this time he felt

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<sup>63</sup> Wu 2008, 14.

<sup>64</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 8: 3512.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 653.

shame as a monk because he could do nothing to rescue the falling Ming dynasty. He decided to stop eating and waited for death. His friend comforted him by saying that the falling of a country was the will of heaven; a monk should only be concerned about his cultivation and follow the Way sincerely. This incident demonstrates Muan's strong sense of patriotism to the Ming dynasty. Baskind believes that this patriotism became one of the main reasons for Yinyuan and Muan deciding to cross ocean to propagate the Buddha Dharma in Japan.<sup>66</sup> Later Muan continued his trip from Linshanwei and climbed up the Tiantai Mountain 天台山 to pay his respects to the statue of Zhizhe Dashi 智者大師 (Zhiyi 智顓 was the founder of the Tiantai School in China and was called Zhizhe or Tiantai Dashi). Muan passed Wen Zhou 温州 and visited the pagoda of the great master, Yongjia 永嘉 (665- 713). In 1647, Muan practiced “sealed confinement” by physically restricting himself in a room called Zhulin 珠林室 at the Kaiyuan Monastery where he secluded himself from the mundane world and focused on the study of the Buddhist sutras. During this time, Muan also composed a few poems to express his state of mind during his sealed confinement.<sup>67</sup>

The year of 1648 was a crucial year in Muan's life. Fate led him to meet with Yinyuan again and later he became Yinyuan's disciple. This meeting signaled the end of Muan's pilgrimages to search for and learn from other eminent monks. When Muan heard that Master Feiyin had successfully propagated the Buddha Dharma at Tiantong, he intended to visit Feiyin again. However, the road to Tiantong was blocked and unable to

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<sup>66</sup> Baskind 2006, 112.

<sup>67</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 1: 472.

pass through. Muan decided to climb up Mount Huangbo and visit Yinyuan instead. In the year of 1650, Yinyuan bestowed Muan the whisk, which is used by the master teacher during sermons, symbolizing Yinyuan's approval of Muan. In 1651, Muan received certification from Yinyuan and officially became Yinyuan's Dharma heir. That year Yinyuan was already sixty years old and had more than ten years of experience as a Chan master. Muan had been molded under an experienced and excellent Chan master. Very soon, Muan's life would take him in a very different direction. In this same year Muan's dharma brother, Yelan 也懶, was invited to Japan to be an abbot of Sofukuji in Nagasaki. Unfortunately, he encountered disaster at sea and did not survive. In the third month of 1652, Muan received a letter from his Dharma brother Yunqian 蘊謙, who was the priest of the Fukusaiji 福濟寺 in Japan. Muan asked his disciple, Lingsou 靈叟, to depart for Nagasaki in the sixth month to survey the Japanese Buddhist community. In 1653, Muan met with Yiran 逸然, the priest of Kofukuji 興福寺 from Japan. Lingsou also came back from Nagasaki and provided information about the Buddhist faith and the cultivation in Japan. The next year, Yinyuan Longqi departed for Nagasaki and Muan saw him off at Xiamen 廈門. A year later, in 1655, Muan received Master Yinyuan's request to cross the ocean to Nagasaki and assist him in Japan.

Muan's life in China followed the traditional way of cultivation as any earnest Buddhist monk would follow. He joined the assembly and made pilgrimages to visit as many prestigious Buddhist masters and monasteries as possible. He learned not only from the past patriarchs but also from the sermons of eminent masters of his time. He engaged in debate, entered retreats and contemplated the key phrases and public cases,

constantly seeking the true dharma teachings and enlightenment. Thereafter, he confined himself to a single room in a temple to engage in the study the Buddhist sutras and texts in order to further advance his dharma cultivation and also to sequester himself from the mundane world. Muan's perseverance led him to receive the *inka* from Chan master Yinyuan. He became the abbot of Taiping Monastery, had disciples of his own and opened a lecture hall to expound the dharma teachings. Muan solitarily adhered himself to the proper way of Buddhist trainings as most of the prominent Chan masters had done in the past.

#### Muan's Administrative Experiences in China

Soon, Muan would become a remarkable Obaku Chan master and abbot, manifesting his great leadership of administration and management abilities in Japan. The early years of Muan's life in China already had demonstrated these exceptional skills and capacities. When Muan was twenty-two years old, his ordination teacher passed away and he went back to the "house 房" he belonged to in order to take over some responsibilities. Wu Jiang's book has very valuable information about the late Ming Buddhist institutional system of "house". He states the lands and buildings of a large monastery were divided into several "houses", each "house" operating independently to collect rents from the tenants.<sup>68</sup> However usually after a few years, the house's lands or buildings were taken over by powerful local gentries due to the lack in supervision by the

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<sup>68</sup> Wu 2008, 33.

house head. According to the *nenpu*, in 1632, Muan was able to organize and manage three “houses” together and everyone lived together harmoniously. He was able to reclaim twenty-three *mu* 畝 of lands for his grandmother’s retirement and a shelter to use as an ancestor’s shrine. The next year, Muan continued to redeem more old buildings and study rooms that belonged to the “house” and use them as an Amitabha hermitage or dining hall. Already as a young man, Muan demonstrated his skillful management capacity and leadership abilities by leading people and reclaiming lost properties back to the “house”. In 1635, an assembly from Muan’s house all recommended him as the superintendent but the young twenty-five year old Muan declined. At the time, he had committed in his mind to concentrate on the learning of the Buddha Dharma and to perceive the profound meanings of Chan. As time went by, inevitably, Muan took on more responsibilities. In 1639, Muan was an assistant comptroller and decided to provide all the lamp oil himself due to his concerns about the Buddhist concept regarding cause and effect. The people called him the “little Yingan 小應菴”; Yingan was the thirteenth Patriarch of the Linji School. In 1643, when Muan went to Jinsu to learn from Master Feiyin, Feiyin made him the guest prefect and put him in charge of all the visitors that came to the monastery. In the next year he was promoted to monastery controller and was in charge of all the monks residing in the *sangha* hall. In the year 1648, Muan traveled to Huangbo to see Yinyuan and Yinyuan appointed him as the monastery business controller. The next year Muan became a “western hall”,<sup>69</sup> the title given to a monk who held high leading rank and was in the position of helping the chief priest. In

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<sup>69</sup> This is opposite with “eastern hall”. Usually the abbot is the head of the “eastern hall” and the monk who held the leading rank other than the abbot is called the “western hall”.

1650, after receiving the whisk from Yinyuan, Muan became the abbot of the Taiping monastery 太平寺 at Lianshi 歙石. During Yinyuan's winter retreat of 1651, Muan was the head monk in charge of all the trainees and also obtained dharma certification from Yinyuan. After finishing three years of abbacy at Taiping Monastery, in the winter of 1654, all the elder patrons of the Huiming monastery 惠明寺 along with the local officials invited Muan to stay in the Huiming Monastery in Xiangshan 象山. On the first day of the twelfth month, Muan opened the lecture hall, offered incense to pray for the great Dharma teachings and appointed his disciple, Tieshan 鐵山 as the "western hall". The devoted Buddhist believers and virtuous elders all asked Muan to ascend the hall. They all believed that during their time of war and disturbance, they would be able to have a peaceful Buddhist community because of Muan's great virtue. Early in the year of 1655, Muan was able to redeem two study halls and change them to be used as ancestral halls. He also reclaimed twenty-six *mu* of lands to use for the needs of offering sacrifices and had his disciple, Lingsou, resided there to maintain them. Evidence of Muan's organizational and administrative skills were demonstrated during these years when in China. These managerial abilities were the crucial elements Yinyuan recognized and sought to utilize to fully assist him in Japan. Therefore when Yinyuan needed a responsible and talented monk to help him in Japan, he asked for Muan without hesitation.

## CHAPTER II: MUAN'S LIFE IN JAPAN

The study of Muan's life in Japan is the focus of this thesis. Japan is where Muan was able to bring his talents and practice into full play. In Japan, Muan demonstrated his great administrative and managerial abilities by completing the building of Manpukuji, put the *Obaku shingi* 黄檗清規 (Pure rule of the Obaku sect) into practice, cultivated numerous Japanese disciples, established his artistic talents in painting, poetry and calligraphy and continually earned the trust and patronage of the Tokugawa shogun and elite. His success symbolized the success of the Obaku sect in 17<sup>th</sup> century Japan and indicates the remarkable influences of Chinese culture and Buddhism on Japanese soil that even the isolationist policy of the Tokugawa *bakufu* could not prevent. From an in-depth investigation of Muan's life, we may be able to find the important elements of Muan's success.

### The Context of 17<sup>th</sup> Century Japan

However, before we continue to investigate the great Chan master's life, it is indispensable to have a grasp of 17<sup>th</sup> century Japanese political, social and religious background. In the history of the 9<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Japanese emperors were only figureheads in the political sphere. The emperors functioned mainly as the head of the

religious priests for the indigenous Shinto tradition.<sup>70</sup> The 17<sup>th</sup> century transpired during the era of the Tokugawa *bakufu*; the government went through five shogunates during that century. The Tokugawa *bakufu* was a type of military government that was established in the 1180s and was an embodiment of power by military force. The Tokugawa *bakufu* was able to convince the emperor to bestow on them the title of shogun to legitimize their authority to rule. The *bakufu* government utilized military force for civil administration to control the country. Ironically, when the Tokugawa *bakufu* military ruled Japan from 1603 to 1868, the Japanese people experienced two relatively peaceful centuries.

The first Tokugawa shogun, Ieyasu (家康, 1542-1616) obtained the title of shogun in 1603; he systematically expanded the policies of his precedents, Oda Nobunaga (織田信長, 1534-1582) and Toyotomi Hideyoshi (豊臣秀吉, 1536-1598). Ieyasu divided the daimyo class into three groups; the *shinpan* 親藩, the *fudai* 譜代 and the *tozama* 外様. The *shinpan* was derived from his extensive family; the other two groups were non-kinship groups of daimyo. The *fudai* were Ieyasu's trusted longtime partners who were appointed by him as daimyo. The *tozama* were his former powerful enemies.<sup>71</sup> Ieyasu enforced several regulations on his daimyo. He disallowed them to form alliances among themselves, sent out watchdogs to monitor them, required all daimyo to swear loyalty to him, limited the number of castles a daimyo could have and ordered them to obtain his permission before entering into marriage agreements. Ieyasu

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<sup>70</sup> Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 3.

<sup>71</sup> Louis Perez, *The history of Japan* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1998), 58.

required all daimyo lords to provide for the expense of defending the country, and to pay for the costs of maintaining public roads and horse exchange stations.<sup>72</sup> His grandson, Iemitsu (家光, 1604-1651) further secured the control of the Tokugawa clan by establishing the right to confiscate a daimyo's lands and then grant them to other loyal and more reliable lords. He also rigorously practiced the "alternate attendance" system to keep the daimyo in check. This alternating attendance system required the daimyo to reside in the *bakufu's* capital, Edo, in alternate years and also to maintain residences in their own home domains. While traveling back to their home domain, their wives and children were required to remain in Edo. This system proved to be a very effective political control system. The alternate attendance system weakened the daimyo's wealth and their ties with their home domains.<sup>73</sup>

The Tokugawa shogun, on one hand provided economic support to the emperor and, on the other, enforced several regulations to effectively control the imperial court and aristocrats. The Tokugawa shogun granted the emperor, who was only a political symbol at the time, a large area of tax land and rebuilt a magnificent palace for the imperial family. Before the Tokugawa period, the emperor was able to appoint abbots for the various temples or bestow the purple robe and honorific titles to eminent monks. The shogun now prohibited the emperor the ability to grant the purple robe directly to priests or to appoint abbaies without consulting with him first. The shogun limited the power of the emperor even in his aspect of exercising religious authority. This was one of the strategies that the Tokugawa shogun utilized to separate the imperial court with the

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<sup>72</sup> Perez 1998, 59.

<sup>73</sup> Gordon 2003, 13-14.

Buddhist institutions in order to secure his power.<sup>74</sup> Eventually, the Purple Robe Affair<sup>75</sup> caused Emperor Gomizunoo (後水尾天皇, 1596-1680) to abdicate his throne in 1629 in protest of the unauthorized act of the shogun, Iemitsu. Furthermore, Gomizunoo was later obliged to marry the daughter of the second shogun, Hidetada (秀忠, 1579-1632). The Tokugawa shogun also set up an official post in Kyoto to scrutinize the imperial court, the nobility and the Buddhist temples.

After the previous period of the Age of Warring States (1467-1568), the main preoccupation of Ieyasu was to establish a stable political and economic feudal regime to secure his own family's power and authority. To accomplish this goal, Ieyasu heavily utilized the Confucian concept of social orders and classes. He divided the populace into four main social classes; the samurai, the farmers, the artisans and the merchants; their status became hereditary. Ieyasu harshly punished those who tried to change their social status. Peasants were also forbidden the mobility of migration and intermarriage between classes was prohibited as well. Through strict social class division, Ieyasu Tokugawa was able to control the Japanese people and secure his own power.

Tokugawa brought stability to Japan soon after he successfully won the war of unification. This caused many of the samurai to become town and city dwellers at a time of relative peace. They were instructed to either reside around their daimyo's domain castles or nearby the shogun's castle at Edo. Some lower ranking samurai, the *ashigaru* 足輕, or foot soldiers, were forced to work as officers in rural towns, survey land, assess

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<sup>74</sup> Baroni 2000, 166.

<sup>75</sup> In 1627, the Tokugawa shogun invalidated one of the privileges of the imperial court; the bestowal of the purple robes to priests which symbolized their highest order of priesthood. This caused Gomizunoo to abdicate and other monks to object the shogun's action. See more on Baroni 2000, 166-171.

output, collect taxes and keep local order.<sup>76</sup> Ieyasu employed, as well, the Neo-Confucian concepts of morality, loyalty and filial piety to educate the samurai to become administrators. Over time, most samurai transformed from warriors into bureaucrats. They managed the business of the *bakufu* and the domains for their daimyo. Their promotions were now highly dependent on their literacy, not swordsmanship.<sup>77</sup> The samurai class became the pillar of the Tokugawa regime, positioned on top of the four classes.

The farmer class was ranked directly under the samurai class since agriculture was considered the basis of the economy in the Tokugawa period. Agricultural productivity intensified due to improvements in water irrigation methods. Below the farmers were the craftsmen and then the merchants. The peaceful and stable environment of the Tokugawa period brought with it a growth of commercial and industrial activities.

Besides these four social classes, there were some groups that did not fit into any of these categories. These groups included Buddhist priests, actors, prostitutes, outcasts, etc. The outcasts were those people who performed tasks that were considered unclean by mainstream society, such as handling burials, executions, animal carcasses, etc.<sup>78</sup>

Economically, the “alternate attendance” system provided a great stimulation and proliferation for the urban and town economies. The daimyo spent large sums to pay for their grand processions to travel back and forth between Edo and their home castles. The alternate attendance system stimulated an enormous amount of traffic across country. It

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<sup>76</sup> Perez 1998, 57.

<sup>77</sup> Gordon 2003, 14-15.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 16.

facilitated a substantial amount of business to provide goods and services to the daimyo, their staffs and their families. The daimyo also had to support and maintain several residences to comply with the “alternate attendance” system. The stability of the Tokugawa regime spurred an economic boom of the 17<sup>th</sup> century in Japan.<sup>79</sup>

Religion was one of the most problematic difficulties for the Japanese unifiers, Oda, Toyotomi and Tokugawa, not only had to face resistance from the established religious institutions but were also confronted by zestful Christian missionaries.<sup>80</sup> In 1549, Christianity was introduced into Japan through a Jesuit missionary, Francis Xavier (1506-1552); a pioneer who led extensive Christian missionary work in Asia. In Japan, the earliest missionaries were mostly Portuguese Jesuits who brought with them not only the Christian gospel but also European goods to trade with the Japanese.<sup>81</sup> They taught the Japanese that all men were equal before God and a faith that believing in the existence of Paradise would compensate them for their hardships in the present life.<sup>82</sup> Christianity obtained support from Oda Nobunaga at the beginning of their propagation. Oda intended to use Christianity as a counterforce against the Buddhist institutions to make them submit to his control. Oda Nobunaga was originally the lord of the Owari domain and started his rise to power in 1555. Oda was responsible for brutally killing thousands of Buddhist monks and burning the great libraries and temples. He put an end to the political power of the Tendai monastic center on Mt. Hiei. By the time Oda died, there were approximately 150,000 Christians and two hundred churches in Japan. In

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<sup>79</sup> Gordon 2003, 20-25.

<sup>80</sup> Joseph Mitsuo Kitagawa, *Religion in Japanese history* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), 136.

<sup>81</sup> Kitagawa 1966, 136-137.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 139-140.

contrast, his successor, Hideyoshi, issued an anti-Christian edict on 1587 proscribing Christianity entirely and caused a great deal of anxiety among the Christians. His anti-Christian edict was motivated by several influences; power struggles among the Christian daimyo, the Buddhist leaders' outrage over losing believers to the new Christian faith, and disharmony within the various Christian sects.<sup>83</sup> However, the proscription edict was largely unenforced until in 1614, when the Tokugawa shogun issued an edict announcing that Christianity was detrimental to the welfare of Japan and its teachings were contrary to Shinto, Buddhism, and Confucianism. With this edict, Tokugawa ordered the destruction of all Christian churches, the deportation of their missionaries and forced the Japanese believers to renounce their faith or otherwise to be persecuted or deported. In 1633, the Tokugawa *bakufu* made a drastic decision to close trade and communications with all foreign countries, with exception of some commercial trade with the Dutch, Chinese and Koreans in the port of Nagasaki<sup>84</sup> and Tsushima. This was the beginning of the Japanese isolationist policy. The Christian uprising in Shimabara in 1637 was a direct result of this religious persecution, as well as the severe oppression and cruel taxation of Tokugawa *bakufu*. Over the next two centuries, the Japanese had to annually demonstrate that they were parishioners of their own neighborhood Buddhist temples and perform a ritual of walking on the pictures or bronzes of Christ or the Virgin Mary.<sup>85</sup>

The anti-Christian policy prompted the “*jidan sedo* 寺檀制度”, which required the Japanese to be a “*danka* 檀家” or “parishioner” and to register with a Buddhist

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<sup>83</sup> Kitagawa 1966, 144.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>85</sup> Perez 1998, 62.

temple. The *jidān sedo* system did not allow the *danka* to change places of residence or to travel without permission. In return, the temple where the *danka* were registered would guarantee that they were not Christian. This system worked as a household registration system and imposed extreme control over the common people's mobility during the Tokugawa period. In order to secure his hegemony, Tokugawa devoted particular attention to the religious institutions as well. The Tokugawa shogun set up strict regulations in different years to monitor priests and temples throughout the Tokugawa periods called the *jiin shuhatto* 寺院諸法度. The *jiin shuhatto* required the priests to act as public servants by providing official certification of marriage or death for the *danka*, cooperating with all government orders and modifying public attitude to comply with authorities. In return, the priests and temples were given stipends obtained from landholdings. The temples could not buy or sell its land or property and could not build or restore a temple without the *bakufu*'s permission. Temples had to follow an orderly arrangement of “*Honmatsu seido* 本末制度”, which organized temple branches under the authority of their respective head temples. The head temples had to adhere to the shogunate, follow the shogun's orders and present their annual registers report, the *honmatsu chō* 本末帳, to the shogun. This gave the head temples the legitimate authority to investigate a branch temple. It also gathered all the different scattered branches under a hierarchal system of governmental control. In return, the shogun bestowed economic and political protection to the Buddhist temples. With these changes, the religious institutions were financially and politically under shogun's control.

The Tokugawa shogun gradually fastened his political dominance over his opponents. He successfully reduced the authority of the emperor over the Buddhist monasteries, manipulated the daimyo's military and financial resources toward his benefit, disarmed and retrained the samurai into becoming bureaucratic servants, exacted class restraint among the common people and, now, the Buddhist institutions were also under his authoritative supervision.

### The Chinese Community in Nagasaki

Before the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Chinese from the Fujian area of China frequently traveled overseas to trade with foreigners. At late Ming dynasty, the disorder of the country in general and frequent rebellions and wars now prompted people to seek safety and survival in other neighboring countries. As Berger indicates in his dissertation; "The struggles for scant resources forced communities to send members abroad on commercial enterprises..."<sup>86</sup> Japan became an ideal country for the Chinese in the southern littoral area to conduct trade with. Japan shared similar cultures, religions and languages with China; these cultural similarities and the geographical proximity of Japan attracted many Chinese emigrants.

Originally, the Chinese community in Nagasaki was established by sailors and merchants who did not plan to stay permanently in Japan. Later, when the Ming dynasty collapsed, refugees, Ming loyalists, learned scholars and monks all found their reasons to

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<sup>86</sup> Louis Jacques Willem Berger, IV., "The Overseas Chinese in Seventeenth Century Nagasaki" (Ph.D. diss, Harvard University, 2003), 5.

migrate to Japan. The Chinese community in Nagasaki became a large diverse group. A major trend of folk religion during the Ming dynasty in the southern coastal Chinese region was the belief in Mazu as the protective deity of sea voyages. Berger describes that when Chinese sailors arrived in Nagasaki, they would bring their statues of Mazu from their boats and place them in one of the three Chinese temples in Nagasaki for safekeeping and to offer prayers in appreciation for their safe journey. When they returned to China, their images of Mazu would accompany them again in their boats for their safe sea journey home.<sup>87</sup> The three Chinese temples in Nagasaki became the centers of the Chinese community. These Chinese temples not only provided religious comforts to the Chinese, they also provided a place and opportunity for overseas Chinese to meet and socialize together. The Chinese temples in Nagasaki were originally responsible for inviting Yinyuan to come to Japan as their abbot. A year later, Muan was summoned by Yinyuan to assist him and upon his arrival, was assigned the abbacy of the Fukusaiji temple.

During the Tokugawa period, three sub-groups of Chinese immigrants were present in Nagasaki. These three groups were formed because of the different regional dialects they spoke and their native birthplaces. Each of the three groups instituted one of the three Chinese temples. The Kofukuji was established by the people from Jiangsu, Jiangxi and Zhejiang and spoke the *Wu* dialect. The Fukusaiji was formed by people from southern Fujian; particularly from Quanzhou and Zhangzhou and spoke the

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<sup>87</sup> Berger 2003, 22.

southern *Min* dialect. The Sofukuji was initiated by the people from northern Fujian; especially from Fuzhou and spoke the northern *Min* dialect.<sup>88</sup>

In 1654, before Yinyuan arrived in Nagasaki, his fame was already well known to many of the Japanese monks. This esteem was a direct result of the international trade between China and Japan. Some of Yinyuan's earlier published works had already been imported for sale and circulated in Japan before his arrival.<sup>89</sup> The *Obaku geki* 黄檗外記 says that the Japanese monk, Tokuō Myōkō (禿翁妙宏, 1611-1681), found two volumes of Yinyuan's works by chance from a book dealer in Kyoto who wanted to sell a number of voluminous works together for a better price. After Tokuō read them, he let Ryōkei Shōsen (龍溪性潜, 1602-1670) borrow them, upon which both monks discussed Yinyuan's works and found them to be marvelous.<sup>90</sup> Another reason for Yinyuan's warm reception was that, until his arrival, four centuries had passed since any prominent Chinese Buddhist monks had visited Japan.<sup>91</sup> The Japanese looked to Chinese Buddhism as their model and source for up-to-date religious practice and orthodoxy. The arrival of Yinyuan created a sensation not only to the Chinese community in Nagasaki but also in the Japanese Buddhist society as well. His arrival proved later to be influential and remarkable for the history of Buddhism in Japan.

When Chinese Buddhist monks arrived at Nagasaki they needed interpreters to help them to expound the Buddha's teachings to the Japanese. Japanese authorities also needed interpreters to assist and communicate with the Chinese merchants. During the

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<sup>88</sup> Berger 2003, 35.

<sup>89</sup> Baroni 2000, 76.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 42.

fall of the Ming dynasty, many non-merchant groups became members of the Chinese community in Nagasaki. These groups included monks, Confucian scholars, musicians, painters, physicians, etc. The highly educated Japanese-speaking Chinese immigrants became the best candidates to perform translations for both the Japanese officials and the Chinese merchants. The first Chinese interpreter was Feng Liu 馮六 in 1604; his job was not limited to only translations. At that time, Feng was required to solve quarrels between Chinese factions as well as between the Chinese and Japanese and to deliver punishments to Chinese offenders according to the Nagasaki law. In addition, he was also responsible for reporting on the current Chinese situation to the *bakufu* and to handle business transactions for the *bakufu*'s orders of Chinese merchandise.<sup>92</sup> According to Berger, the interpreters in Nagasaki formed a prestigious group; their positions were semi-hereditary, they were able to settle inside the port city and obtained financial gains and respect.<sup>93</sup> Interpreters in the Nagasaki Chinese community functioned as influential community leaders. They performed as representatives for the needs of the Chinese overseas in Nagasaki and on the other hand, filled a post as an official for the Japanese government in dealing with Chinese matters.

Besides the merchants and interpreters, the Buddhist monks were another substantial group of overseas Chinese in Nagasaki. The three Chinese temples in Nagasaki originally not only worshipped Buddha but also deities from various Chinese folk religions. The goddess Mazu was a guardian of sailors and Guandi was the deity for merchants. These Chinese temples served the three communities of overseas Chinese

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<sup>92</sup> Yamawaki Teizirō, *Nagasaki no Tōjin bōeki* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1964), 294.

<sup>93</sup> Berger 2003, 61.

and their abbots were appointed based on their native ties; each temple was served by an abbot from one of the three sub-group's areas. The Japanese officials welcomed the Chinese Buddhist monks because of the official anti-Christian regulations as well as for their desire for to learn more about Chinese culture. Before the Obaku founders came to Japan, the clergies of the three Chinese temples attracted mainly local Chinese patrons. However, the arrival of the Obaku founders changed this dimension; the clergies were not only able to serve overseas Chinese but were also able to attract numerous Japanese Buddhist followers. Furthermore, the Chinese monks were eventually able to travel outside Nagasaki to propagate their Buddhist dharma. The Chinese merchants, interpreters, physicians and artists did not have this degree of freedom to travel unless they were accompanying a monk traveling outside of Nagasaki.<sup>94</sup>

Since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Chinese had resided freely in Nagasaki. However, in 1685, an incident changed all that when a Chinese ship carrying a book of images of Mazu was mistakenly thought of as the Virgin Mary. The *bakufu* feared religious sedition and they restricted the freedom of interaction between the Chinese and Japanese in Nagasaki. Nevertheless, after the victory of Qing court in the civil war with Zheng Chenggong (鄭成功, J. Tei Seiko, 1624-1662) who occupied Taiwan, the Qing court canceled its restriction on ocean travel and trade in 1684 and resumed international trade with Japan again. This caused a vigorous upsurge in trade between China and Japan and Chinese ships to Nagasaki increased from 85 in 1685 to 193 in 1688.<sup>95</sup> In 1688, in order to gain central control of the trading system and restrain the expansion of trade, the

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<sup>94</sup> Berger 2003, 128.

<sup>95</sup> Marius B. Jansen, *China in the Tokugawa World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 25-41.

Japanese government built a residence quarters and forced all the Chinese merchants who came to Nagasaki to live together within the walled compound until their return trip from Japan.<sup>96</sup> According to Yamawaki, there were three reasons the Japanese *bakufu* built the residence compound for the Chinese merchants. The first reason was to eliminate smuggling. Second reason was to keep eye on the transactions of copper with the Chinese merchants. Finally, the third reason was to prevent Christianity from infiltrating into Japan through the Chinese merchants.<sup>97</sup> In general, the Chinese were welcomed in Japan because the Japanese considered the Chinese merchants as good sources of trade revenue and also because of the generous acts of the Chinese monks. In 1682, when a disastrous fire combined with the failure of rice production, famine spread in Nagasaki. The Chinese monks of Sofukuji constructed a giant cauldron to cook large quantities of rice porridge to feed the hungry Nagasaki residents. Earlier the Chinese Buddhist monk, Mozi Ruding 默子如定 (J: Mokusu Nyojō, 1597-1657), organized a building project of the first stone-arch bridge in Japan to provide safe access for people to use when coming to the temple during flood season. The bridge was completed in 1634 using funds from the temple parishioners and prompted a boom of bridge building around the city. A total of twenty stone-arch bridges were constructed, thirteen of which were funded by the overseas Chinese community themselves. These projects demonstrated a responsibility of social service by the Chinese community to the Japanese society.<sup>98</sup> The Chinese community in Nagasaki provided the Japanese with an unofficial connection between the

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<sup>96</sup> Berger 2003, 24-26.

<sup>97</sup> Yamawaki 1964, 75-80.

<sup>98</sup> Berger 2003, 11, 110.

two countries and continuously supplied the Japanese demand for spiritual and cultural material. In particular, the Chinese community invited Yinyuan to come to Nagasaki to minister to the spiritual needs. Yinyuan's arrival and allowance to establish the Obaku sect in Japan further led to the creation of a tremendous socio-religious influence that changed Japanese Buddhism and society.

After Yinyuan arrived in Nagasaki and contacted the Chinese community there, he personally met with the Buddhist community and realized that he needed substantial help from his homeland monastery. He wasted no time in sending a letter to summon his capable disciple, Muan, to come to Japan to assist him.

#### Muan's Life in Japan at the Beginning

Yinyuan's letter doubtlessly entrusted Muan with the task of propagating the Buddhist teachings in Japan and, as expected in no time at all, Muan demonstrated his charismatic leadership skills in promoting the Obaku sect in Japan. Muan arrived in Nagasaki on the ninth day of the seventh month in 1655 and was escorted to Fukusaiji by Yunqian and his lay disciples. The next day, Muan was able to go to Kofukuji to pay his respects and visit with his master, Yinyuan. A month later, after a short happy reunion with Muan, Yinyuan agreed to travel to Fumonji under the arrangement of Japanese Rinzai monks, and left Muan in Nagasaki. After Yinyuan departed for Fumonji, Muan stayed in Nagasaki and became the abbot of Fukusaiji from 1656 to 1660 until he was eventually permitted to travel to Fumonji to meet with Yinyuan.

In the ninth month of 1655, under the request of translators and the Abbot of Fukusaiji, Muan ascended to the hall to expound the Dharma teachings to a large number of participants from the Nagasaki Buddhist community, among whom were also two Nagasaki town officials.<sup>99</sup> In the winter of 1656, at the request of the Fukusaiji abbot and patrons, Muan was given the honor of starting the three months of winter retreat. This honor offered Muan an opportunity to meet with many potential Japanese disciples. According to the *nenpu*, the people of Nagasaki all asserted that since the elder monk, Yinyuan, had come to Japan inspiring the people of Nagasaki with the orthodox belief and then had to travel afar, Master Muan is now here and he is as same as Yinyuan.<sup>100</sup>

However, Muan's life in Japan at the beginning was not all rosy. We can get a sense the difficulties from the letter Muan sent to his dharma friend in China.

“...the Buddha Dharma had been lost for a long time here, if [we are not careful to avoid] offending [them] even a little bit, they would all slander...before, there was a monk that violated the Nagasaki laws and caused suspicions and rumors. If it was not because [of the peoples trust in] my master's virtue and reputation, it would have become a [serious] matter...”<sup>101</sup>

Muan faced many different impediments, not only being in an unfamiliar foreign location and trying to propagate the Buddha's dharma, but also having to deal with people from his own country who had many different intentions. There was another letter from Muan to Yinyuan in 1655, during the time when Muan was in Nagasaki alone and Yinyuan was restricted to Settsu after his arrival at Fumonji. In this letter Muan expressed his worry

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<sup>99</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 8:3535.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 8:3536.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:798.

and concern regarding the circumstances which Yinyuan had to deal with such as his old age and language barrier. Muan also asserted his respect to his master and that he would follow Yinyuan's teachings and guidance every second. Despite his being alone in Nagasaki, the teaching of the Buddhist dharma was not being interrupted. In the same letter, Muan also stated that he believed that the decision for Yinyuan to go to Fumonji was the right decision because the environment in Nagasaki was very complicated and there were many people from so many different backgrounds. He indicated it was a challenge for only one person to deal with all of them and that sometimes when you try to satisfy all of their demands, it could turn around to harm you or cause you to become overwhelmed.<sup>102</sup> Lin mentions in his book that when Yinyuan was in Nagasaki, there were too many admirers requesting calligraphy from Yinyuan and that in order to satisfy all of them, Yinyuan had become exhausted and could not keep up with their demands.<sup>103</sup> Lin also mentions that during this period the Chinese at Nagasaki had many different political motivations; some were self-enterprising merchants, some were merchants but employed by the Zheng Chenggong's trading company, some were still loyal to the late Ming dynasty and some were upholders of the new Qing dynasty. Inevitably, there were some people who manipulated Yinyuan's reputation for their own personal benefit. Yinyuan did not want to become involved in their political disputes; he was concerned only about the propagation of the authentic Buddhist teachings.<sup>104</sup> Muan felt that for Yinyuan to leave Nagasaki and go to Fumonji was a wise choice.

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<sup>102</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 2:779.

<sup>103</sup> Guanchao Lin, *Yinyuan Longqi ch'an shi* (Xiamen: Xiamen daxue cubenshe, 2010), 110.

<sup>104</sup> Lin 2010, 103.

In the twelfth month of 1655, Muan wrote another letter to Yinyuan explaining the reasons why he did not go with Yinyuan to Fumonji. The letter first stated that Yinyuan had gone there as a guest and did not know whether he would stay long or not. Secondly, Muan disliked the Japanese *bakufu*'s restrictions on the freedom to travel for Yinyuan and his followers. He was afraid the restriction to travel would happen again and cause Yinyuan and his followers to be restrained in one location.<sup>105</sup> For the trip from Nagasaki to Settsu, the *bakufu* limited the number of followers who could go with Yinyuan. The Chinese were under the severe supervision of the Japanese officials. Baroni also mentions that "... he [Yinyuan] was not allowed to leave the [Fumonji] temple compound for any reason, nor was any visitors allowed entry to see him..."<sup>106</sup> Muan made a wise decision to stay at Fukusaiji because, if he was also restrained within Fumonji, then the work of spreading the Dharma teachings and meeting potential disciples would have been limited more severely than in Nagasaki. Since the Japanese government at that time did not yet trust Yinyuan, he was placed under virtual house arrest. They were afraid that Yinyuan was a spy of the Chinese Ming loyalist, Zheng Chenggong. It was a wise choice for Muan to stay in Nagasaki; some of his best Japanese dharma heirs such as Tetsugyu, Tetsumon and Tetsugen all became his disciples during this period of time. Tetsugyu longed to study with the Chinese monks and so went to meet Yinyuan on the third month of 1655. However Yinyuan had to leave for Fumonji in the eighth month and Tetsugyu went back to Myoshinji but was later able to

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<sup>105</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 2:781.

<sup>106</sup> Baroni 2000, 48.

visit Muan at Fukusaiji and participated in Muan's winter retreat the next year.<sup>107</sup> Later, Tetsugyu joined Muan's assembly to become his first Japanese dharma heir. Tetsumon (鉄文, 1634-1688) met with Yinyuan when Yinyuan was at Nagasaki in 1654 but the following year had to leave because his ordination teacher became ill. Tetsumon spent three years caring for his ordination teacher until his death and then returned to Nagasaki to join the Obaku assembly. However, Yinyuan had already departed for Fumonji and so Tetsumon met with Muan and later became Muan's disciple.<sup>108</sup> Tetsugen was another example of a Japanese monk from this period who became one of Muan's new Japanese disciples. Tetsugen was originally able to study with Yinyuan but later, when Yinyuan had to leave for Fumonji; Tetsugen went to study with Muan instead.<sup>109</sup>

While Yinyuan was at Fumonji, the Japanese government did not allow many people to visit him. In the beginning, only the former Kyoto Deputy, Itakura Shigemune (板倉重宗, 1586-1656) was allowed to see and talk to Yinyuan at Fumonji. Itakura's motivations to contact and converse with Yinyuan were to determine Yinyuan's real intentions in traveling all the way from China to Japan.<sup>110</sup> The Japanese officials suspected that Yinyuan was a Ming spy because of his connection with the leader of the Ming loyalists, Zheng Chenggong.<sup>111</sup> The restriction to travel was slowly dissolved in an official letter from the *bakufu* dated the twenty-sixth day of the seventh month, 1656. It stated that Yinyuan could now travel in certain areas for up to ten to twelve days but

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<sup>107</sup> *Obaku bunka jinmei jiten*, 245.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 258.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 247.

<sup>110</sup> Lin 2010, 112.

<sup>111</sup> Baroni 2000, 47.

required the escort of one of three Japanese monks; Ryōkei, Tokuō or Jikuin 竺印 and also stated that Yinyuan could have up to two hundred Japanese monks attend his practice or retreat.<sup>112</sup> This limited audience was a day and night difference compared to the conditions Yinyuan experienced upon his first arrival in Nagasaki where so many admirers could come to pay their respects to him and were willing to become his disciple. These restrictions and conditions again confirmed to Muan that he had made the right decision in staying at Fukusaiji and not accompanying Yinyuan to Fumonji. From these incidents, we understand that life in Japan was restricted and unpleasant at the beginning. However, this would all change when the Tokugawa shogun bestowed Yinyuan with a piece of land to build a new monastery in 1659 and Muan was then allowed to leave Nagasaki for Fumonji in 1660.

### The Building of Manpukuji

In the fall of 1660, Tetsugyu carried a letter of Yinyuan and Ryōkei from Fumonji to Muan summoning him to Fumonji. Yinyuan now had more freedom to travel and was also granted some land for the building of a new monastery. This was the most important event in the formation of the Obaku sect in Japan. Yinyuan would need Muan's assistance to accomplish the construction of the Obaku headquarters, Manpukuji. In the second month of 1661, Muan accompanied Yinyuan to check the land granted for the new Obaku monastery. Muan composed a verse to express his gratitude and the

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<sup>112</sup> Baroni 2000, 49.

auspicious sign of the beginning of this new chapter in Obaku history.<sup>113</sup> On the eighth day of the fifth month in 1661, the construction of Manpukuji began. Not too long afterwards, on the twenty-ninth day of the eighth month, Muan followed Yinyuan to relocate to Mountain Yamato 大和, which Yinyuan renamed to Mount New Obaku in memory of Mt. Huongbo in China.<sup>114</sup> At that time only a few temple structures were built; the monastery front gate, the Western Residence Hall, the steward dormitory, the kitchen and a pavilion called Double Cranes.<sup>115</sup> The name “Double Cranes Pavilion” was derived from when Yinyuan first arrived at this plot of land and saw two cranes elegantly flying there. Yinyuan sensed this as an auspicious sign for the location and therefore chose the plot for the new Manpukuji monastery.<sup>116</sup> The Dharma Hall was built in 1662 with a fund of 1,000 *ryo* of gold from the will of Sakai Tadakatsu (酒井忠勝, 1587-1662)<sup>117</sup> who was the great counselor of the Tokugawa shogun. The opening dedication ceremonies were held in the first month of 1663. Muan’s *nenpu* just simply states that Yinyuan resided in the Eastern Residence Hall and Muan resided the Western Residence Hall.<sup>118</sup> Soon afterwards, on the fourth day of the ninth month of 1664, Yinyuan retired from the abbacy and Muan was appointed as the abbot. The complete construction took about eighteen years to finish and most of the works were performed under Muan’s direction and management. According to Baroni, by the time Muan took the abbot’s seat

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<sup>113</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 8:3549.

<sup>114</sup> The names for Mt.Obaku and Mt. Huongbo have the some characters, 黄檗, whether in Chinese or Japanese, but their pronunciations are different.

<sup>115</sup> Kimura Tokugen, *Obakushū no rekishi, jinbutsu, bunka* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 2005), 55.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>118</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 8:3552.

in 1664, only six temple buildings were completely constructed: the Dharma Hall (Hōdō), the Meditation Hall (Zendō), the Eastern and Western Residence Halls (Tōzai no hōjō), the kitchen (chūdō) and the bathhouse (yokudō).<sup>119</sup> In Sasaki Kōzō's book *Manpukuji*, he indicates that by the end of 1664, besides the six buildings Baroni mentions, there also was a steward's dormitory, a storage house, an assistant's dormitory, the Chikurin Shōja 竹林精舎, a founding abbot's tower 寿藏 and the Shōin-dō 松隠堂, but some of these structures do not exist anymore.<sup>120</sup> The Chikurin shōja was built using 100 *ryo* donated from one of the shogun's vassal, Kondō Sadamochi (近藤貞用, 1606-1696). The Shōin-dō was a small sub-temple inside the Manpukuji complex; it was here that Yinyuan resided after his retirement. During the first year of Muan's abbacy, the financial foundation of the monastery was secured with a 400 *koku* stipend from the *bakufu*. Muan also received a donation of 20,000 *ryo* of silver and 45 teak trees from the fourth Tokugawa shogun, Ietsuna (家綱, 1641-1680), in 1667.<sup>121</sup> Ietsuna also offered his administrator of construction, Aoki Shigekane (青木重兼, 1606-1682) and his master carpenter from the Akisino 秋篠 clan from fifteenth day of the twelfth month of 1667 to the fifteenth day of the tenth month of 1668, to help build the Shakyamuni Treasure Hall (Daiyūhōden), the Guardian King Hall (Tennōden) and dining hall (Saidō).<sup>122</sup> In the same year, the Relic's Hall (Shariden 舍利殿) was also completed and housed five pieces

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<sup>119</sup> Baroni 2000, 58.

<sup>120</sup> Sasaki Kōzō, *Manpukuji* (Tokyo: Chūō kōron bijutsu shuppan, 1964), 16.

<sup>121</sup> Genshō Takenuki, *Kinsei Obakushū matsujichō shūsei* (Tokyo: Yuzankan, 1990), 21.

<sup>122</sup> *Obaku bunka jinmei jiten*, 6.

of the Buddha relics donated by Emperor Gomizunoo.<sup>123</sup> In 1668, a bell tower was constructed and was the gift of the Nagasaki bugyō, Kurokawa Masanao (黒川正直, 1602-1680) who was Muan's disciple and obtained teachings from Muan periodically.<sup>124</sup> After Yinyuan retired in 1664, Muan continued to receive much support from the shogun, Emperor, nobilities and many powerful government officials to help with the building of the Obaku monastery. It took eighteen years under Muan's leadership to finish the building of the Obaku headquarters, Manpukuji, from which it became a strong base for the Obaku sect to propagate and fortify their teachings. The drum tower 鼓楼 was the last structure to be built in 1679 and, in that same year, Muan passed the abbacy on to Huilin Xingji (慧林性機, J. Erin Shōki, 1609-1681). Presently, seventeen of these temple buildings have been dedicated as national treasures of Japan. The Ming dynasty style of architecture, especially the snakebelly-like cornices, the Manzi shape of the railings, and the round shape of the windows, etc. are very different and uncommon with Japanese temple buildings of the time. Many famous Chinese artists, such as the skillful Buddhist sculptor, Fan Daosheng (范道生, 1637-1670), were invited to carve or paint and contribute their efforts to the many Ming-style Buddhist sculptures and paintings. Throughout construction of the Obaku Manpukuji, Chinese culture and art crossed over the ocean and arrived in Japan to bring about a fresh inspiration to Japanese culture and architecture. The author of *Manpukuji* said that during the construction period of Manpukuji, many Chinese carpenters, artists, tailors and even the shoes makers were

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<sup>123</sup> Takenuki 1990, 21.

<sup>124</sup> *Obaku bunka jinmei jiten*, 90.

invited to Japan to help to build the Manpukuji.<sup>125</sup> With the completion of building Manpukuji, Muan had thoroughly demonstrated his administrative leadership and his capabilities for managing and organizing large scale of construction projects and groups of workers while also handling all the other responsibilities for which he was entrusted. The numerous donations and support of the Japanese emperor, shogun and other high ranking officials as well as the contributions of the many Chinese artisans made the completion of Manpukuji a symbol of the remarkable cultural, social and religious interrelationship between the two nations.

#### Management Skills and Relationships with Japanese Elite

Under Muan's leadership, the Obaku Manpukuji was successfully completed and the size of the complex was 90,000 *tsubo* or approximately 22,000 acres. This was a very large monastery to organize and manage. Muan fully employed his management skills and talents to accomplish the difficult task of finishing the construction of Manpukuji as well as organizing it. At the same time, Muan composed many verses, poems, expounded dharma teachings and recorded sayings to his Obaku patrons and cultivators either to obtain or maintain a beneficial relationship with them. In addition, he also fully executed his responsibilities as abbot; he led the morning and evening practices, conducted the summer and winter retreats, ascended to the lecture hall to expound Buddhist teachings, trained many of the Japanese disciples and served as a founder for

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<sup>125</sup> Sasaki Kōzō 1973, 24.

some of the other newly established temples. Nevertheless, Muan also diligently held *sandan kaie* 三壇戒会 (triple ordination platform ceremony) and responded to the summons of Tokugawa shogun. The *nenpu* does not provide us with much information about how Muan handled all of these tasks and other sources also do not mention many details about it. However, in 1665, just after Muan became the abbot of Manpukuji; we read from the *nenpu*:

“... [Muan] lead the assembly to follow the strict *sangha* rules vigilantly and diligently. [Everyday] right after the morning recitation of sutras, he would enter the Shakyamuni Treasure Hall to pay his respects to Buddha. When the evening gathering had just begun, he would debate with and ask questions to the assembly according to each individual’s capability. All the disciples and lay cultivators obeyed Muan’s directions. [Muan’s leadership] increased the reputation of the Obaku sect. This made the Elder Monk [Yinyuan] very happy; he asked the bakufu to disregard their plan for a three year limitation of the Obaku Manpukuji abbacy and they agreed...”<sup>126</sup>

Because Yinyuan had been the Manpukuji abbot for three years, a suggestion was made to make it tradition that each abbot should only hold office for three years, starting with the second abbot of Manpukuji. However, Yinyuan was so pleased with Muan’s performance that he requested the *bakufu* to allow the succeeding abbot himself to decide the length of his abbacy.<sup>127</sup> This record articulates a lot about the respect and high regard Muan was given after having demonstrated such quality and capacity in the management of Manpukuji. We can also perceive that not only did Yinyuan totally trust the ability of Muan but the shogun also supported him as well. The magnitude of Shogun Ietsuna’s

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<sup>126</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 8:3556.

<sup>127</sup> Otsuki Mikio, “Manpukuji jūji no sennin ni tsuite (1) 万福寺住持の選任について” *Obaku bunka*, no. 47 (September, 1979), 1.

support can be seen in the year of 1667 from his contribution of 20,000 *ryo* of silvers and some teak woods to aid in the building of Manpukuji after Yinyuan's retirement. Later in 1670, when Muan was sixty years old, Ietsuna bestowed upon him the highest honor of the purple robe.<sup>128</sup> Obaku scholar, Nakao Fumio argues in the 27<sup>th</sup> fascicle of the *Obaku Bunka*, that the success of many well established religious organizations not only needed prominent founders but also required exceptional disciples to widely promulgate their teachings and beliefs. Without enthusiastic disciples to greatly publicize the revered virtue and teachings of the founder, there would not have been a well known religious institution. One of the examples Nakao provides is the founder of the popular Soto School in Japan, Dogen 道元, who diligently and quietly cultivated Zen teachings at the secluded Eiheiiji 永平寺. If Dogen did not have Zen Master Keizan Jōkin (瑩山紹瑾, 1268-1325) as his disciple, the Soto School would not have had the successful result in Japan as it enjoys today. Nakao also quotes from the article of Akino Kōdō (秋野孝道, 1858-1934), who said that:

“...Zen master Yinyuan came to Japan when he was sixty-two years old and passed away at age eighty-two. In a period of only twenty years, he founded the Obaku sect headquarters and also laid a stable foundation for today. This is certainly because Yinyuan had a wonderful personality but, also was [because of his disciples such as,] Sokuhi, Mokuan and those outstanding disciples, eight or ten of them being available at the time. That was why the Obaku School was able to flourish. If at the time [Yinyuan] did not have those remarkable disciples [to help him], then no matter how wonderful his personality was, the Obaku School would not have prospered ...”<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 8: 3566.

<sup>129</sup> Fumio Nakao, “Shūmon hatten no kitei to jōken 宗門発展の基底と条件”. *Obaku bunka*, no.27 (February, 1976), 1.

Muan was the abbot of Manpukuji for more than fifteen years; no other Manpukuji abbot since has had the abbacy longer than him. By his hands, the headquarters were completed and through the disciples he cultivated, branch temples were broadly expanded throughout Japan. Nakao states at the end of his article, that through historical research, we are able to gradually know and gain clues of how greatly Zen master Muan contributed to the development and spread of Obaku sect. Taya Mokurai 田谷黙雷 in his article “Mokuso ki o mukaete 木祖忌を迎えて” (The upcoming memorial day of the founding master Muan) states that Muan, during his thirty years of propagating the Buddha dharma in Japan, had contributed tremendously to the Obaku sect; Muan had held the ordination ceremony, *sandan kaie*, three times, was summoned to the shogun four times, ascended to the lecture hall five times and also established more than ten new temples in Japan.<sup>130</sup>

The *sandan kaie* is a triple ordination ceremony which is performed with greatly ritualized ceremony that adheres to strict structures and takes place over the course of eight days. It combines the Obaku monks' final ordination with a service for lay believers to confer their precepts. The first two days were dedicated to the broader Buddhist community to receive precepts and included laypersons and monks. The third and fourth days of the ceremony were for bestowing the monastic community's formally accepted novices with robes and bowls and for them to take and receive a lecture on the ten precepts. All of the events of these first four days comprised the first platform. The fifth and sixth days of the ritual were dedicated to the full Vinaya code ordination of

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<sup>130</sup> Taya Mokurai, “Mokuso ki o mukaete 木祖忌を迎えて”. *Obaku bunka*, no. 67 (January, 1983), 14.

monks, which comprised the second platform. On the seventh and eighth days, the Bodhisattva precepts were explained and bestowed to monks, which comprised the third platform. The Obaku masters were the only Buddhists in Japan to perform this kind of ordination ceremony.<sup>131</sup> According to Muan's *nenpu*, in 1665, when Muan was the abbot of Manpukuji, upon the request of his four Japanese disciples, Tetsugyu, Egoku, Tetsugai and Bessan; he held the first *sandan kaie* in Manpukuji. The *nenpu* says an assembly of more than five hundred participated.<sup>132</sup> The second time Muan conducted the *sandan kaie* was in 1670; the *nenpu* says the participators were greater than the first *sandan kaie*.<sup>133</sup> In 1674, Muan held the first *sandan kaie* service at Zuishoji, the new Obaku temple in Edo. This event began the tradition of having the *sandan kaie* held in two locations; the Manpukuji and Zuishoji.<sup>134</sup> In this *sandan kaie*, members of the imperial family, aristocracy, powerful warrior families and Tokugawa family received their precepts. Baskind states that "...This influential network of supporters; sedulously cultivated by both Yinyuan and Muan, represented the most tangible and important asset of the Obaku school."<sup>135</sup> In 1677, Muan conducted another *sandan kaie*; the *nenpu* says more than one thousand two hundred followers took part.<sup>136</sup> Baroni comments that the holding of the *sandan kaie* gave lay believers an opportunity to renew their bonds with the Buddhist monastery and to earn merit by taking the precepts. It was also an unusual

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<sup>131</sup> Baroni 2000, 94-97.

<sup>132</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 8: 3556-3557.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 8: 3566.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 8: 3574.

<sup>135</sup> Baskind 2006, 126.

<sup>136</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 8: 3578.

experience for the ordinary Japanese who wanted to watch the magnificent ritual.<sup>137</sup>

Baskind's dissertation credits Muan for his devotedly holding the *sandan kaie* ordination ceremony in both Uji and Edo which substantially contributed to the expansion of the Obaku sect because of their popularity with the Japanese participants.<sup>138</sup> It also served to strengthen the Obaku sect's affiliation with lay believers.

The first time Muan was invited to have an audience with the fourth Tokugawa shogun was on the twentieth day of the seventh month of 1665. Muan expressed his appreciation for the shogun's bestowal of the official red seal certificate on the eleventh day of the seventh month of 1665 for the land where the Manpukuji was built. Manpukuji was also awarded a stipend of 400 *koku* of rice.<sup>139</sup> The second time Muan was summoned by shogun was in the third month of 1669 and Muan conveyed his thanks for the shogun's aid in assisting the construction of Manpukuji by donating silver, teak wood and offering his master carpenter to physically help build the monastery. The third time Muan visited the shogun was in the fourth month of 1671. Muan expressed his gratitude for the bestowal of the highest honor of the purple robe from shogun in the fifth month of 1670 and also formally submitted the announcement of the completion of Zuishoji in Edo.<sup>140</sup> The fourth and last time Muan had an audience with the shogun was in the ninth month of 1674. In the winter of that same year, the *bakufu* ordered a *sandan kaie* be held at Zuishoji, giving the location the same capability as the Manpukuji in being able to hold this ceremony. These two locations became the only two permanent

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<sup>137</sup> Baroni 2000, 86.

<sup>138</sup> Baskind 2006, 106.

<sup>139</sup> Takenuki Genshō, *Nihon zenshūshi*, (Tokyo: Daizō shuppan, 1989), 219.

<sup>140</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 8:3566-67.

locations to have this significant service.<sup>141</sup> From the records of *Mokuan zenshū*, we can perceive the remarkably unusual relationship between Muan and the fourth Tokugawa shogun. However, from the *Mokuan zenshū*, we are not able to know exactly whether their meetings were requested by Muan or the shogun, or whether they may have been requested by both, but the facts are that within this ten year period of time; Muan had four audiences with Tokugawa shogun. This privilege was not accomplished by the other two Obaku founding masters; Yinyuan and Jifei. We can also see that with each trip to Edo, Muan used the opportunities to nurture the ties between the Obaku monastic community and their numerous important patrons. This illustrates Muan's detail oriented leadership of administration and interpersonal skills. During his first trip to Edo in 1665, Muan stopped along the way to visit the governor of Mino 美濃, Inaba Masanori (稻葉正則, 1623-1696), who was one of the high ranking Tokugawa cabinet members and had a close friendship with Muan. Muan managed to visit with him three out of his four trips to Edo. Inaba had been a great supporter of the Obaku sect since its beginnings and later became a disciple of Tetsugyu.<sup>142</sup> Before leaving Edo, Muan composed verses for many officials and imperial family members. During his first trip, Muan also wrote the dharma words to the fifth shogun's mother, Madame Keishōin 桂昌院 explaining the cultivation of sitting meditation.<sup>143</sup> On another trip to Edo in 1669, Muan not only interacted with many noble families, he also visited Chōanji 長安寺 to burn incense and pay respect to

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 8:3574.

<sup>142</sup> *Obaku bunka jinmei jiten*, 19.

<sup>143</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 8:3557.

Sakai, who had passed away in 1662.<sup>144</sup> The lord of the Yanagawa 柳川 castle in Chikugo 筑後, was Tachibana 立花 who also invited Muan to stay at his mansion in Edo during this trip. While Muan was staying with him, Tachibana expressed his intention of changing his family temple of Baigakuji 梅岳寺, which originally belonging to Soto sect, to become an Obaku branch temple. Later, this family temple became the Fukugonji 福嚴寺 and Muan's disciple, Tetsumon served as its abbot.<sup>145</sup> Muan was able to utilize every opportunity available to bring other temples over to the Obaku sect and expand the Obaku territory. During Muan's last trip to Edo, he transmitted the dharma to Tannen 湛然,<sup>146</sup> composed verses for Inaba and other government officials and gave dharma words to many imperial ladies.<sup>147</sup>

Since the times of Emperor Go-uda (後宇多, r. 1274-1287), a tradition existed that Japanese emperors were unable to meet with foreigners face to face. Although this tradition kept the retired Emperor Gomizunoo from meeting with the Obaku masters directly, he was able to communicate with them through Japanese monks or by writing.<sup>148</sup> Nevertheless, in the year 1663, Muan was bestowed three dharma implements from Gomizunoo<sup>149</sup> and Muan composed a verse to expound his appreciation.<sup>150</sup> From this bestowal we can sense the approval and honor that Gomizunoo held for Muan. In the

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 8:3564.

<sup>145</sup> *Obaku bunka jinmei jiten*, 220.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 226.

<sup>147</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 8: 3574.

<sup>148</sup> Baroni 2000, 175.

<sup>149</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 8: 3560.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 5: 2177.

year 1678, when Empress Tōfukumonin 東福門院<sup>151</sup> passed away, Muan wrote a funeral verse to express his condolences.<sup>152</sup>

Taking up the responsibilities after the heritage of Yinyuan, Muan continued to maintain close relationships with the Japanese nobilities and even furthermore earned their support and trust. He understood the importance of having support and patronage from the nobility and Buddhist community. Even after his retirement, Muan continued to devote his time and abilities for the benefit of Obaku sect. At the age seventy-one, Muan wrote a preface honoring a Japanese convert, Ryōō Dōkaku (了翁道覺, 1630-1707), for building of a storage hall to house Buddhist canon. Ryōō was a regular supporter of Manpukuji; he owned a medical academy in Edo and a pharmacy produced Kintaien 錦袋園. He used the proceeds from his sales to make yearly donations to many Buddhist groups including Manpukuji.<sup>153</sup> In the same year, Muan also wrote a preface honoring Master Dogen's recorded sayings and wrote several verses to Japanese officials.<sup>154</sup> Besides interacting with the aristocracy, he also worked hard on expanding the Obaku sect monasteries through his many dharma heirs and generating connections with the lay people. Some of his Japanese disciples became outstanding Zen masters, such as Tetsugen, Tetsugyū, Egoku and Chōon. Even though we are not able to obtain the explicit of happenings from the recorded events on Muan's biography, looking at the outcome of the Obaku sect at the time, we know that Muan accomplished a great deal for

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<sup>151</sup> Tōfukumonin is Tokugawa Hidetada's daughter who married to Gomizunoo in 1620 as a conciliatory measure with court.

<sup>152</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 8: 3579.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 6: 2773. Also see Baroni 2000, 190.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 8:3584,

the Obaku sect. What amazed us the most is his managerial skill, which Muan illustrated in the numerous responsibilities he possessed during his abbacy of Manpukuji. He completed building the grand Manpukuji complex through the support of shogun and high ranking officials, expanded the Obaku sect as a result of cultivating numerous Japanese followers, actively performed the *sandan kaie* and maintained meaningful relationships with shogun, elite and officials by way of his trips to Edo and audiences with the shogun. Muan's contribution to the Obaku sect was remarkable and indisputable.

#### Retirement and Death

After being the abbot of Manpukuji for more than fifteen years,<sup>155</sup> in 1680 at the age seventy, Muan retired and recommended Huilin as the third abbot of Manpukuji. The *nenpu* describes that even though Muan was retired, he still participated in the morning and evening worships and practices. When there were visitors who wanted to pay him a visit, he would receive them himself. He did not show any sign of aging and still composed verses for patrons and disciples.<sup>156</sup>

In the twelfth month of 1682, Muan caught a cold and became ill while practicing meditation with some other practitioners. At the beginning of 1683, his condition showed progress and he was better. However, by the first month of 1684, Muan became ill again. This time he knew that the physician and medicine would not help him recover. He instructed his disciples to stop offering him medicine and that after his death to not

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<sup>155</sup> Muan was the abbot of Manpukuji from September 1664 to January 1680.

<sup>156</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 8:3587.

wear the mourning apparel as it was against the Buddhist rules. His final utmost wish was to have his disciples preserve their Dharma thought and carry on the teachings of the Patriarchs. His final verse was “All things are empty. All dharma are without aspect.” On the twentieth day of the first month of 1684, he passed away peacefully. Three days later when it is time to seal the coffin; the *nenpu* says that his skin and flesh were still soft and there was a stream of warm air rising from the top of his head.<sup>157</sup>

As the great Chan master closed the final chapter of his life, many of his disciples, dharma heirs, patrons, and lay followers lamented their loss. Muan manifested remarkable human achievements and characteristics as a Chinese Chan master in the 17<sup>th</sup> century of Chinese and Japanese Buddhist history. He was not only a prolific writer and Chan master, but also a skillful manager and a talented Chan artist. His contributions greatly influenced Japanese culture and Buddhist community. Later in the Meiji era, in the year of 1881, Muan was bestowed the honorific title of *Emyō kokushi* 慧明國師.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 8:3593.

<sup>158</sup> *Obaku bunka jinmei jiten*, 354.

### CHAPTER III MUAN'S TEACHINGS AND PRACTICES

The extraordinary success of the Obaku sect was not matched by any other later Buddhist sect in Japan. In addition to the good timing of being at the right place at the right time; the Tokugawa shogun utilized the Obaku sect to counter the other long established Buddhist sects in order to dilute their religious force.<sup>159</sup> Wu's article, "Taikun's Zen Master from China: Yinyuan, Tokugawa Bakufu, and the founding of Manpukuji in 1661" gives an incisive observation which suggests that the *bakufu's* supporting of Yinyuan was "...calculated considerations to engage China and to create a symbolic presence of China in a new Japan-centered world map..."<sup>160</sup> As a direct result, the Obaku sect benefited greatly from the shogun's and other official's patronage. However, there were some remarkable human interactions that fermented the great connections between the two nations and among people. The interpersonal skills and cultivation of Muan's virtues were one of the core reasons for the prosperity of Obaku sect in Japan.

#### Muan's Practice and Teaching of Virtue

The trends of the late Ming religions were a suggestion of a syncretic nature of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism practices, as well as the Pure Land practice of reciting the Buddha's name with Chan cultivation. Interest in Chan philosophy among

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<sup>159</sup> Baroni 2000, 183.

<sup>160</sup> I would like to thank Prof. Wu Jiang for sharing this most recent paper with me "Taikun's Zen Master from China: Yinyuan, Tokugawa Bakufu, and the founding of Manpukuji in 1661", (2011), 7.

the literati also promoted the Chan monks to cultivate the aesthetic talents of poetry, calligraphy and painting in order to socialize with the intellectual class. The influences of Confucianism and Daoism may have manifested in the Obaku practice naturally because of the tendencies of the Late Ming Chinese religious culture, but the belief regarding the “three teachings are one” are rarely mentioned in Muan’s writings. I could only find two verses in praise of the three sages, Confucius, Laozi and Sakyamuni, together.<sup>161</sup> There may well be other less obvious passages in Muan’s collected works or letters to his disciples mentioning the three teachings together. Verses Muan wrote in praise of either Confucius or Laozi are also rare.<sup>162</sup> However, it is worth noting that there are many of Muan’s writings, particularly his writings to his lay believers, which remarked about many of the Confucian virtues such as, benevolence, righteousness, sincerity and filial piety, etc. The Confucian concepts of virtue were unquestionably practiced among Chan monks during the late Ming period. From the occurrences recorded in Muan’s *nenpu*, we perceive that Muan venerated and cared for his Master Yinyuan as a filial pious son would do for his own parents.

In 1654, Yinyuan decided to fulfill the unfinished responsibility of his disciple and was willing to take the dangerous trip to Japan in old age in order to propagate the Buddhist teachings. To make the trip easier for his old master, Muan arrived at Quan Zhou 泉州 earlier than Yinyuan to manage a vegetarian festival and to arrange the Kaiyuan monastery for his master’s five day stay. During that time Muan carefully and respectfully attended at Yinyuan’s side. Muan not only accompanied his master to

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<sup>161</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 2:721 and 5:2265, these are the only two verses I could find.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:722 and 5:2275, these are verses that praise Confucius and Laozi.

Xiamen to see him off safely, also ordered his disciple, Xueji 雪機 to follow and protect his master all the way to Japan.<sup>163</sup> Later, when Muan received a letter from his master to go to Japan to help him to spread the Buddhist teachings, he did not hesitate to fulfill his master's request. The letter from Yinyuan said:

This old monk is already mentally and physically exhausted in recent years, even though I came to Japan as requested. However, it was barely for me to make it to come here. I urgently hope you can come here to help me, because you are a remonstrator of the Buddhist Dharma. Nevertheless, when I investigated closely, I believe the future of the Buddhist Dharma is now. To revive the Buddha's teachings here would all rely on your support and assistance. Therefore, I've had Xieji contact you; Xieji can utter the detailed information to you and does not need this old monk to repeat them. This indicates my highest expectation.<sup>164</sup>

As soon as Muan received the letter written by Yinyuan on the third month of 1655, Muan said that "he could not disobey his master's order, even though his master is ten thousand *li* away."<sup>165</sup> Muan's respect to Yinyuan was displayed here; he obeyed and took actions to prepare himself for a long dangerous journey to an unfamiliar country. We are not able to know what kind of information that Xieji had brought with him from Yinyuan to Muan but from Yinyuan's letter we can know that Yinyuan was exhausted, urgently needed help, and had high expectations on Muan. He believed he could rely on Muan to assist him in the foreign land. Yinyuan also believed that the time to propagate the Buddhist teachings was now. At the time, Muan was comfortable with his surroundings and his relationships with the official and gentry patronages in China. They had all expressed their desire to have Muan become the abbot of the Huiming temple at

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<sup>163</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 8: 3530.

<sup>164</sup> Hayashi Sekkō, *Mokuan*, (Uji-shi: Obakusan Manpukuji, 1983), 90.

<sup>165</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 8: 3534.

Xiangshan. Only one year before, several honorable officials and Chan masters had written the preface and postscript for Muan's publication.<sup>166</sup> Despite all this, Muan departed on the twenty-sixth day of the sixth month of 1655 and arrived in Nagasaki on the ninth day of the seventh month of the same year.

On another occasion, in 1658 after Yinyuan and Muan were both in Japan and the shogun had invited the sixty-seven year old Yinyuan to visit Edo, Muan would often send a monk to inquire after his old master's condition because he was constantly concerned for his master's old age and the hardships of his road trip.<sup>167</sup>

Muan not only showed respect and care for his master while Yinyuan was alive but, even after Yinyuan passed away, Muan continued to pay his deepest respect and concerns for his master. On the third day of the fourth month of 1673, Yinyuan passed away and Muan slept beside his *kan* 龕 (J. gan, a stupa-shaped coffin that is used for the funeral of monks) for one hundred nights and meditated beside it for one hundred days. Muan also composed several poetic verses for the rituals of "putting the body into coffin", "sealing coffin" and "hanging a portrait of the venerable monk" to express his respect, lament and praise for Yinyuan's achievements. Two times a day, in the morning and evening, Muan would recite a sutra, and every seven days he would conduct the ritual of releasing animals for Yinyuan's benefit. After hundred days, Yinyuan's coffin entered into the stupa and Muan then documented all the items in Yinyuan's living hall, the Shoin-dō, and had people take turns to guard them.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 8: 3530-3532.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 8: 3544.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 8: 3570-3571.

Muan also showed his brotherly love to his Dharma brothers. His relationship with Jifei is a good example. When they were both in Nagasaki, they showed extreme Dharma friendship and the people called them the “Two Ambrosia Gates 二甘露門”.<sup>169</sup>

Muan redeemed land for his grandmother to retire on and a house for a shrine for his ancestors when he was only twenty-two years old. Eight years later he took time off to visit his grandmother. In 1655, Muan retrieved some houses and land from a landlord and used them to house his ancestors’ spirit tablets and to offer his respect. He also had his disciple, Lingsou, reside there to care for the shrine. Muan practiced Confucius’ teachings of venerating one’s ancestors as a way to demonstrate his filial piety.

The article in the tenth fascicle of the *Obaku Bunka* “Obaku kōsō itsuden (6), Dōtoku 黄檗高僧逸傳(その六), 道德” (The legend of the eminent Obaku monks, number six, Morality), states that Muan was praised for his morality and was extolled along with his Dharma brother, Jifei with the phrase, “When talking about the morality, it is Mokuan; when talking about Zen, it is Sokuhi”. The author continues on to state that after Yinyuan retired and Muan became the second abbot of Manpukuji, Muan strictly followed the monastic code. After diligently practicing the morning recitation, he would ascend to the Dharma Hall to worship the Buddha. In the evening, after the night service, he would gather the assembly and interrogate them accordingly to each individual’s ability. He completed the construction of Manpukuji during his seventeen years of abbacy; everyone said that he made the Manpukuji become magnificent and prosperous. Muan would always humbly respond to the people’s comments by saying that “When I

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<sup>169</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 8: 3546.

became the abbot, the monastery was already almost complete. It was Yinyuan's virtue and the believer's strengths that made this happen; without them, nothing could have been accomplished."<sup>170</sup> This article also says that even after Muan became the abbot of Manpukuji, he did not live in the abbot's quarters; rather he reserved them for his master, Yinyuan. Whenever he had new rare offerings from patronages, he would offer them to Yinyuan first. Muan also attended to his disciples very kindly. The author considers that Muan's moral virtue and kindness could have been the reason for him having the most disciples among all of Yinyuan's other dharma heirs.

There is another article in the *Obaku Bunka* fascicle sixty-seven, "Ichido dake no deai—Mokuan zenshi to Sinetsu Kochu 一度だけの出会い---木庵禅師と心越興儔" (Encountered only once --- Zen Master Mokuan and Sinetsu Kochu) by Kimura. He says that Xinyue (J. Sinetsu) was a Soto shū Zen master and in the beginning, when he first came to Japan, he did not have a permanent monastery to reside in. He was temporarily residing at the Kofukuji in Nagasaki, when a Rinzai monk in the Kofukuji wrote a letter to Muan and complained that since Xinyue was a Soto monk, it would better for him to go back to China as soon as possible. Muan responded to him that it did not matter whether he belonged to the Rinzai or Soto sect as long as he was working on spreading the Buddha's teachings; that was more important. Muan did not consider sectarian differences as a good enough reason to refuse help to someone. Instead, Muan showed his great virtuous and generous character by accepting Xinyue as a Buddhist Zen master who only had propagating the Buddha's teachings in mind. Xinyue wrote several letters

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<sup>170</sup> Nakao 奈加緒 (this name can be a pen name), "Obaku kōsō itsuden (6), Dōtoku 黄檗高僧逸傳(その六), 道德", *Obaku bunka*, no.10 (July, 1974), 1.

to Muan and, in return, Muan also wrote at least three letters back to him offering his consideration and encouraged Xinyue to come to visit him at the Manpukuji. Nakao Fumio in one of his articles “Toku o akiramen koto o yōseyo 徳を明らめんことを要せよ” (Revealing virtue as a necessary requirement) claims that when we look at the large temple community size in the Manpukuji from a distance, we are certainly able to understand that the great virtue of Muan was the foundation of the magnificent outcome of the Obaku sect. Nakao also says that when people called Muan “a virtuous person”, it was not just a praise of admiration but a simple statement of fact.<sup>171</sup> Nakao uses one of Muan’s Dharma words as an example to illustrate how important the quality of virtue was in Muan’s teachings. This Dharma word was a verse of advice from Muan to his disciples:

The behavior of a disciple of the Way requires him to be committed to the foundations [of virtue] but not to emphasize the significance of gaining benefits. It demands him to brighten the highest virtue and to not follow the path of profit. If one has even the smallest intention of making a profit, then the foundations of virtue have already been demolished. If the basis of virtue is destroyed, then ignorant feelings will arise. [In this case], within oneself, you have lost the proper trustworthiness, and outwardly, you have become perverse, without a moral and open-minded spirit, and only to have crafty and deceitful behaviors. Even though you may be provided with plenty of precious materials, you will unavoidably betray your humanity and righteousness. Once your career reaches its utmost highest, you will fall into a hell; suffering hardship and all kinds of tortures. These kinds of detriments all come from the mind of cultivating profits and the ancient saints, therefore, were afraid of falling into this kind of path. They disregarded nourishing benefits and were able to constantly bear the foundations of virtue in their minds. [They would rather] become emaciated inside a cave and live close by the edge of a valley stream all their life. They did not respond to the summons from emperors. They were not pleased with the scattering flowers from the heavenly divine. Day and night, they diligently concentrated [on the virtues]

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<sup>171</sup> Nakao Fumio, “Toku o akiramen koto o yōseyo 徳を明らめんことを要せよ”. *Obaku bunka*, no.19 (June, 1975), 1.

like statues of wooden men encountering flowers and birds. [Even so], they were still afraid of being negligent of the highest virtue and were not harmonized with the basis of virtue. Moreover, [if one] could not disregard the desire of chasing after profits, the basis of virtue would be lost first and then one would become indolent and not be dedicated. [Therefore], the desire to understand the truth of life and death, as well as, to escape from hell would be merely like a white cloud floating ten thousand *li* away.<sup>172</sup>

Muan unmistakably advised his disciples to dedicate their minds to the cultivation of virtue because virtues are the foundations of a Buddhist practitioner. Muan alerted his disciples to the dangers of chasing after profits. This objective would lead them to a horrific hell even though the profits may supply them with material enjoyments such as precious jade in the mundane world. He expounded how carefully the saints in ancient times vigilantly observed their virtues. They totally disregarded whatever worldly honors and fame could bring them, concerning themselves only with their loss of dedication to cultivate virtue.

#### Muan's *Nenbutsu*, Meditation and Precept Concepts

When Yinyuan arrived in Nagasaki and started his teachings to the Japanese Buddhist community, one of the criticisms from other Japanese Zen masters was the way the Obaku monks practiced Zen. The Ming style of Zen practice that Yinyuan brought with him was a “*nenbutsu*” style of “Pure Land outside and true Zen inside”.<sup>173</sup> To the Japanese Buddhist community, which still followed the Song or Yuan period of Zen

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<sup>172</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 1:352.

<sup>173</sup> Baroni 2000, 106.

practices, they considered the Obaku style of Zen as a corrupted impure form of Zen practice. In the *Mokuan zenshū*, we do not find a lot of writings regarding the practice of *nenbutsu*, in fact many of the writings and teachings tried to redirect the practice of recitation of the Buddha's name into a method used to concentrate one's mind as a means of focusing during meditation. According to Baroni, the practice of *nenbutsu* was primarily a method for Chan masters to use to instruct the lay believers in the practice of meditation. In China, during the Ming period, lay believers were an important stream of financial support for Buddhist monasteries. Chan masters, considering the capacity of lay Buddhists and also wanting to help them cultivate meditation, used the easy method of reciting the Buddha's name as expediency for teaching the lay Buddhists meditation.<sup>174</sup> When the Obaku masters came to Japan, they brought with them the Ming style of *nenbutsu* practice. One of Muan's verses, "On advising the good practitioner of the *nenbutsu*",<sup>175</sup> can exemplify the expedient purpose of *nenbutsu*. Muan emphasized that the importance of recitation was to constantly search for awakening of their inner mind and to not look for the "Pure Land" outside of their mind. In his recorded sayings, there are scarcely any mention regarding being "reborn in the West or Pure Land"; only a handful are to be found. In the *Mokuan zenshū*, one mention of the Pure Land is in a verse Muan wrote to teach a *nenbutsu* practitioner. Muan stated that the best way for one to cultivate the Buddha's way in old age is to concentrate one's mind to recite the Buddha's name day by day without letting it leave one's mind, then when one faces the

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<sup>174</sup> Baroni 2000, 106-112.

<sup>175</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 3:1152.

end of life, one would be reborn in the Pure Land.<sup>176</sup> Baskind states in his dissertation that Muan would apply the expedient method to personalize his teachings to suit individual practitioners.<sup>177</sup> For an older cultivator, *nenbutsu* could be the most straightforward method of reaching a mental state of single-mindedness.

In the *Mokuan zenshū*, we can find many teachings discussing the right way to meditate or practice sitting meditation. Most of these recorded sayings do not mention or emphasize the *nenbutsu*. One of Muan's verses says:

You learn sitting meditation in a little temple; Zen is not sitting or lying, it is neither transmitted. It is only when people can subtly awaken to realize the impermanency of life, then one comes to a complete understanding when you throw on a garment and sit stably.<sup>178</sup>

In this verse Muan expounded that realization of the impermanence of one's life is the key of learning meditation; sitting or lying postures did not matter. This is the same teaching Hui-neng, the Sixth Patriarch, expressed in the *Platform sutra*:

During life it will sit, not lie;  
After death it will lie, not sit.  
A set of stinking bones---  
How can it establish success?<sup>179</sup>

Hui-neng pointed out that the success of obtaining enlightenment is through the realization of one's mind, not through the physical cultivation of one's body. In another verse of Muan's:

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<sup>176</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 5:2119.

<sup>177</sup> Baskind 2006, 132.

<sup>178</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 3:1165.

<sup>179</sup> Thomas Cleary, *The Sutra of Hui-neng Grand Master of Zen with Hui-neng's Commentary on the Diamond Sutra* (Boston:Shambhala, 1998), 61.

To work on the skill of meditation, it only requires a sincere and honest heart without various outside temptations. It only exerts on the word “thoroughly”, besides that, there is no other way I can demonstrate to you. Just think about what the Master Nanquan said to his assembly; it is not the mind, it is not Buddha, and it is not material, after all what is it? One contemplates on this thought without forgetting it, every thought deeply within one’s mind without letting it go. Thinking continually to the end and it naturally becomes sudden understanding, it never mutually deceives and it is my instruction to you.<sup>180</sup>

Muan stressed the persevering spirit of constantly dwelling on a *koan* with sincerity and this was the only way to reach enlightenment. He stressed the inward searching of realization to achieve the bliss of enlightenment rather than just faithfully reciting the Buddha’s name and hoping to be reborn in the Pure Land.

One of the great distinctions between Obaku sect and other Japanese Zen Schools was its strict observance of the Obaku monastic code. Many of the Japanese Zen Buddhists who decided to join the Obaku Zen practice did so because of the Obaku sect’s strict observance of Buddhist monastic precepts. Yinyuan understood what the importance of exactly following the monastic code would do for the future generations of Obaku. After he retired, he devoted his time to generating the *Obaku shingi*. It regulated the summer and winter retreats<sup>181</sup> and various other monastic codes, and was faithfully followed by Muan and his disciples. The fifth section of *Obaku shingi* stresses the importance of monastic discipline; it says that a student of the way must first keep all the precepts before practicing meditation; if one did not keep the precepts, he could not meditate and if he could not meditate, then he could not obtain wisdom.<sup>182</sup> In Muan’s

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<sup>180</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 4:1863.

<sup>181</sup> Baroni 2000, 104.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 91-92.

writings, he repeatedly emphasized the importance of the precepts to Zen cultivators. He stated in a verse to a Zen practitioner:

The precepts are the first significance necessary for disciplining oneself. In addition to following the precepts, one must cultivate meditation and wisdom to thoroughly abandon the slightest defilements. If one is able to fulfill these means without insufficiency, then one would outstandingly surpass all forebears and achieve exceptional wonder.<sup>183</sup>

Muan encouraged cultivators to first comply with the precepts and, in addition, to practice one's meditation and obtain wisdom. If one can thoroughly cultivate these "Threefold Trainings" without deficiency then one would be able to exceed all the patriarchs and obtain a state of exceptional wonder. Here, Muan emphasized that the first step was to follow the precepts. In another verse, he described the precepts as the foundation of the Great Way. In this verse he says:

Precept is the foundation of the Great Way, only [after one complies with the precepts] then the clean and pure mind can be harmonized. [Even] when at ease, one's mind would not violate fraudulently and immediately one can surpass the ten stages of the merciful Bodhisattva.<sup>184</sup>

In this verse, Muan clearly expounds that the basis of achieving the Great Way is to follow the precepts, if one can obey the strict monastic code, one's mind would be appropriate; even letting go of your mind, it would not offend the truth and eventually one would be able to become a Buddha. Again, Muan believed that the fundamental element of achieving enlightenment is through the precepts. Through Muan's active

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<sup>183</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 5:2137.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:2234.

holding of precept ordination ceremonies and his prolific dharma disciples, Baskind believes that “...no other single member of the Obaku school contributed as much as Muan to the propagation of precepts in the religious sphere of seventeenth-century Japan...”<sup>185</sup>

### The Cultural Life of Muan

During the Ming dynasty, the trend of integrating the three great teachings of Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism together inspired the Confucian literati to study the Buddhist sutras. The followers of Wang Yangming, particularly the Taizhou School; were also encouraged to study Chan Buddhism. These sophisticated literati often socialized or debated with Buddhist monks. In order to be comparable and socialize with the literati, many Buddhist monks strived to strengthen their abilities in poetry, painting and calligraphy. In addition, some well educated gentry and literati would take refuge in a Buddhist monastery after failing the civil service examination or as a means to escape corvee. At the end of Ming dynasty, there were also many literati who entered monastic life in order to escape acknowledging the sovereignty of the Qing dynasty. This environment enriched the learning standards of poetry, painting and calligraphy amongst the Buddhist monks. Brook states that “...By the late sixteenth century, many within the upper ranks of the clergy sought to shorten the social distance between themselves and

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<sup>185</sup> Baskind 2006, 139-140.

the gentry by striving for equality in gentry cultural skills like composition, calligraphy, poetry, and painting,...

<sup>186</sup>

In Chinese society, proficiency in poetry was one of the skills the literati tried to hone in order to pass the civil service examination and hold official positions. Poetry from the past has also been an enduring piece of information for later generations.<sup>187</sup> Poetic composition frequently occurred in the life of the intellectuals, oftentimes when they gathered for memorable occasions. Monks who could compose magnificent poems gained the admiration of the gentry and literati and could perpetuate relationships with them.

During Muan's devoted religious life, he composed numerous poems on many different occasions; some to his dharma master, some to dharma heirs, and some to lay supporters or for memories of wonderful times or scenery. In 1654, Muan composed eight poems to express his admiration for the eight delightful scenes at Xiangshan when he took the abbacy at the Huiming temple.<sup>188</sup> Earlier in his life, Muan wrote poems to describe his sentiment and compassion regarding the practice of animal releasing. Indisputably, Muan frequently applied his poetic skills to interact with patrons, particularly high ranking Japanese officials and their families. Muan presented a poem to the fifth Tokugawa shogun's mother, Madame Keishōin, for her initial ordination of

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<sup>186</sup> Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 111.

<sup>187</sup> Stephen Owen, "Poetry in the Chinese Tradition", *Heritage of China: Contemporary Perspectives on Chinese Civilization*, ed. by Paul S. Ropp, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1990), 294.

<sup>188</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 2: 606.

taking refuge in Buddhism.<sup>189</sup> He also gave a poem to the feudal lord of Setsu, Aoki, for his seventieth birthday<sup>190</sup> and composed a congratulatory poem for Emperor Gomizunoo on his eightieth birthday.<sup>191</sup> Poetry writing became an essential implement for Muan to use to bridge social gaps with the Japanese elite. Oftentimes Muan would write poems to bestow to his disciples as dharma teachings or to confirm their cultivation. At the time, ability with the Chinese language became an important quality for Japanese disciples to learn in order to obtain Dharma teachings from their Chinese masters. Proficiency in poetry writing among Obaku monks inevitably magnified the desire to learn Chinese among the Japanese literati and cultivators. Many Japanese disciples were able to compose Chinese poetry or verse to convey their cultivation with their Chinese Chan masters. Egoku, one of disciples of Muan, left many poems. His poetry was said to have the atmosphere of Zen spirit although they might use the wrong words or not follow the correct rhyming order.<sup>192</sup> Muan himself was a prolific writer; he left at least 17 different varieties of works containing verses, poems, recorded sayings, etc.

Painting was another sophisticated skill that Chinese literati and monks liked to nourish. Chinese intellectuals used paintings to express their inner feelings or convey covert political ideas. For instance, bamboo was one of the frequently painted subjects that represented the spirit of righteousness. Muan was one of the Obaku monks that possessed a remarkable talent for painting. He was not only good at painting religious figures, such as Guanyin, Sakyamuni Buddha, Maitreya Buddha, etc. but also had

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<sup>189</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 6: 2579.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 6: 2646.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 7: 3441.

<sup>192</sup> Rinoie Masafumi, *Obaku sanketsu Egoku Dōmyō Zenji den*, (Tokyo: Daizo shuppan sha, 1981), 234.

excellent floral Chinese ink painting skills. Manpukuji still holds a set of three of Muan's paintings; the Maitreya Buddha, a daffodil with chrysanthemum and an orchid with bamboo. According to the Obaku scholar, Otsuki Mikio, in Yu Jianhua's 俞劍華 book, *The Chinese Painting History* 中國繪畫史; Muan's name is mentioned as one of the famous Daoist and Buddhist painters of the Ming period.<sup>193</sup> This is evidence that Muan's painting talents were already recognized by people before beginning his journey to Japan. Otsuki praises Muan's paintings for having the Ming literati's personality of gracefulness and simplicity. He also believes that Muan's painting style may have contributed to the formation of the Japanese *nanga* 南画 or the Southern painting style. This style of Southern painting was a school of Chinese painting that became very popular during the Edo period. Nanga also refers to a style of literati painting during the Edo and Meiji periods of Japan which gained popularity among many of the Japanese literati who also enjoyed composing poetry. The famous Japanese painter representing this *nanga* school is Ikeno Taiga 池大雅.

Author, Seki Masamichi writes in his article, “Botan kaka ni shōsoku o tsutau 牡丹花下に消息を伝う” (Convey the message under the peony flowers) describing a painting with an inscription Muan had created. In the painting, a cat is comfortably sleeping next to a house under a big gorgeous peony flower. Seki believes that when Muan created this painting in 1662 with its inscription on it, he was confident and

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<sup>193</sup> Otsuki Mikirō. “Mokuan no kaiga shumi ni tsuite 木庵の絵画趣味について”, *Obaku bunka*, 67 (January 1983), 4-7. In this same article, Otsuki also remarks that in a later edition of Yu Jianhua's book the *Dictionary of Chinese Artists Names* 中國美術家人名辭典, it did not list Muan's name for some unknown reason.

optimistic about the newly established Obaku monastery. Seki explains that the inscription on this painting indicates the great meaning and purpose of Bodhidharma's coming to China as well as the subtle meaning of the Dharma portrayed as a cat sleeping underneath a peony flower.<sup>194</sup> We can get a glimpse of Muan's painting skills and instinctive Chan spirit that he spontaneously conveyed through this painting and calligraphy.

In Chinese history, the practice of calligraphy was one of the most highly valued cultural disciplines. The eminent connoisseur of calligraphy, Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修, once expounded his thoughts about practicing calligraphy. He believed that the joy he gained from practicing calligraphy or painting helped him cultivate inner peace and preserve his nature and emotions thus helping him improve his moral character.<sup>195</sup> Cultivation of calligraphy in Japan was already prevalent but, when the Obaku founding masters brought the Chinese style of calligraphy to Japan, it inspired the further cultivation of Japanese calligraphy. Yinyuan, Muan and Jifei were called the *Obaku sanpitsu*. All three of them have their own personalities expressed in their calligraphies. Japanese Obaku scholars say that Yinyuan displayed maturity in his calligraphy writings, Muan manifested a powerful and grandiose spirit and Jifei portrayed strength and vigor. Their calligraphy styles were called “*karafu* 唐風” or the Chinese style, and “*Obakufu* 黄檗風” or the Obaku style, by the Japanese and were valued as treasures.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Seki Masamichi, “Botan kaka ni shōsoku o tsutau 牡丹花下に消息を伝う”, *Obaku bunka*, 55, (January, 1981), 2.

<sup>195</sup> Valerie Malenfer Ortiz, *Dreaming the Southern Song Landscape: The Power of Illusion in Chinese Painting*, (Boston: Brill, 1999) 150.

<sup>196</sup> Hayashi Sekkō, *Obaku bijutsu* 黄檗美術 (Uji shi: Obakusan Manpukuji, 1982), 3-4.

Muan's talents of painting, poetry and calligraphy became wonderful Buddhism propagandist instruments. These talents not only enriched the life of the Obaku masters but also greatly transformed and elevated the culture of the Japanese Buddhist community and society.

### Muan's Japanese Disciples

One of the major characteristics of late Ming Buddhism was its closer relationship with the lay followers. The Buddhist monastery not only provided religious training and teachings for monks and nuns but also provided for the religious and spiritual needs for the lay community. There was a general prevailing concept of merits and demerits in the late Ming society. The Obaku monks brought with them the same Ming concepts and practices to Japan. At Manpukuji, they had an animal releasing pond in front of the temple buildings right behind the front gate. The practice of releasing live animals was frequently practiced by Muan and the Obaku monks. It provided the opportunity for lay followers to cultivate benevolence and accumulate merit. Through the Japanese dharma heirs that Muan had nourished, the Obaku Zen teachings expanded throughout Japan and among the common people. Several of Muan's remarkable disciples demonstrated how great the virtue of a Zen master could be. Muan had a total of fifty-three dharma heirs<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> In the *Obaku bunka jinmei jiten*, it says Muan has 47 dharma heirs (p. 354). According to Baroni's book; *Obaku Zen: The Emergence of the Third Sect of Zen in Tokugawa Japan*, Muan has 46 heirs (p. 59). And in the Volume 8 of *Mokuan zenshū* page 3779, Muan has 53 dharma heirs.

most of whom were Japanese disciples. Many of them became influential in Japanese Buddhist history and society and the most famous of his disciples was Tetsugen.

Tetsugen Dōkō 鉄眼道光 (1630-1682) was famous for his lifetime work of producing the first complete Japanese woodblocks of the Buddhist canon; the *Obaku Tetsugen Issaikyo* 黄檗鉄眼一切経. This edition was the only standard Japanese Buddhist canon before the Taisho edition.<sup>198</sup> Besides this outstanding contribution to the Buddhist community, Tetsugen also dedicated himself to the needs of the common people, especially during times of severe famine. His compassionate acts and pertinacious spirit deeply impressed the Japanese. The Japanese Ministry of Education included an article in their reading textbooks for sixth grade students about Tetsugen's indefatigable will of accomplishing the printing of the Japanese Buddhist canon. Minamoto Ryoen 源了圓 is the author of *Tetsugen* 鉄眼, book number 17 of twenty volumes in *The Japanese Zen Recorded Sayings* 日本の禅語録十七. He states that when he was an elementary school student, he was strongly moved by the article about Tetsugen and so were numerous other Japanese school children.<sup>199</sup> Tetsugen's heroic and merciful acts not only affected the people of his time but also affected many other generations afterwards and so the Zen school he belonged to, the Obaku School, also became known to Japanese society indirectly. According to Minamoto; Tetsugen was born on New Year's Day of 1630 in the Higo 肥後 province. His father was a shrine

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<sup>198</sup> Helen J. Baroni, "Buddhism in early Tokugawa Japan: the case of Obaku Zen and the monk Tetsugen Dōkō" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1993), 172.

<sup>199</sup> Minamoto Ryoen, *Tetsugen: Nihon no Zen goroku 17* 鉄眼: 日本の禅語録十七 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1979), 12.

monk (社僧) and later became a Pure Land believer. His mother was a virtuous lady who devoted great efforts to Tetsugen's education. When Tetsugen was seven years old he was able to memorize the *Kanmuryojukyo* (観無量寿経, S. Amitāyurdhyāna-sūtra). This sutra is one of the three major Pure Land sutras and emphasizes the teachings of complex visual contemplation. At the age of thirteen, he joined the Pure Land assembly. He decided to leave his hometown at seventeen and went to Kyoto at the age of twenty-one. Before meeting with the Obaku Zen master, Tetsugen followed the instructions of the True Pure Land master, Saigin 西吟. Baroni gives a few reasons of why Tetsugen decided to leave his birth religion of the True Pure Land to join the Zen sect. One of the reasons was that the priests of the True Pure Land religion practiced the custom of eating meat and disregarded the celibacy precept. These practices confused Tetsugen's mind and prompted him to search for other Buddhist sects.<sup>200</sup> The strict monastic code the Obaku practiced was very appealing to Tetsugen; he especially believed in the monastic precepts against sexual misconduct and the killing of living things. His value on discipline was also emphasized by Muan.

The *Obaku bunka jinmei jiten* describes, that in the summer of 1655, Tetsugen paid a visit to Yinyuan in Nagasaki and diligently studied Zen under him. However, not too long afterwards, Yinyuan decided to travel to Fumonji at Settsu and was unable to continue instructing him, so Tetsugen went to Fukusaiji to visit Muan. Muan did not admit him into his assembly until after the second time Tetsugen requested. The records

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<sup>200</sup> Helen J. Baroni, *Iron Eyes: The Life and Teachings of the Obaku Zen Master Tetsugen Dōkō* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 14.

show that Tetsugen went back and forth between Fumonji and Fukusaiji for a while. In 1661 he participated in a 楞嚴經 *Suramgama sutra* lecture of Kengan 賢巖 at Tafukuji 多福寺 where he met his future disciples; Hoshu 宝洲 and Kankai Nyosetsu 觀海如節.<sup>201</sup> In 1665, Tetsugen participated in the summer retreat held by Jifei and Jifei appointed him as the *joza* 上座, or the head seat.

In 1667, Tetsugen made a decision to move to Osaka to start his plan of printing the Buddhist canon. In 1668, Tetsugen initiated his first fund raising lecture at Osaka; he received one thousand silvers from a compassionate nun. Tetsugen usually would hold a Buddhist dharma lecture in a monastery and, during the lecture, would expound on his Buddhist canon printing project to the monks, nuns and lay participators in order to seek their support. In this same year, he also asked his dharma brother, Tetsugyū for support of his Buddhist canon printing project. In 1669, Tetsugen went to Mt. Obaku to pay a visit to Yinyuan and pronounced his determination to make wooden blocks of the Buddhist canon. Yinyuan bestowed him with the Ming edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon and composed a verse for him. Muan also gave him a verse praising his meritorious acts as well as his determination in carving and printing the Buddhist canon and encouraged his extraordinary work.<sup>202</sup> Tetsugen and his disciples set up a base of operations in Osaka. They had Zuiryuji 瑞龍寺 as their project headquarters, a storehouse called Hozoin 宝藏院 inside the Manpukuji area and a printing house in Kyoto. Between the years of 1669 to 1680, Tetsugen spent most of his time traveling

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<sup>201</sup> *Obaku bunka jinmei jiten*, 248.

<sup>202</sup> *Mokuan zenshū*, 7:3339.

through the Kanto, Kansai and Kyushu regions. He begged in the streets and gave lectures to raise funds for his project and, when he had the chance, he would pay a visit to his master, Muan. In 1671, when the new monastery Zuishoji was established at Edo, Tetsugen was appointed as the canon prefect by Muan.<sup>203</sup> In the year 1676, while Tetsugen was practicing *mondo* 問答<sup>204</sup> with Muan, Muan drew his questions from the Lotus Sutra since Tetsugen had expressed his wish to lecture on it. That same year, Tetsugen received his *inka* from Muan and Muan referred to him as “the monk who lectures on the sutras”. According to Baroni, Obaku masters would usually like to draw *koans* directly from the context of a disciple’s life rather than use some from the traditional *koan* collections.<sup>205</sup> In 1680, after twelve years of hard work, Tetsugen finally completed his goal of carving the woodblocks for the Buddhist canon. However while waiting to present a copy to shogun and apply for permission to commercially print and distribute the Obaku edition of Buddhist canon, a horrible famine occurred in the Osaka and Kyoto areas and his plans were not completed. Instead, Tetsugen raised money to rescue the people from the famine.<sup>206</sup>

Before coming back to the Osaka area, he asked for a donation from one of the *daimyo* in Edo, one thousand *ryo* of gold. He and his disciples set up a food distribution center in his home temple, Zuiryūji. It was said that they fed more than ten thousand people each day. Unfortunately, this donation was not able to provide enough assistance to people for very long due to the seriousness of the famine. Tetsugen had to continue

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<sup>203</sup> *Obaku bunka jinmei jiten*, 248.

<sup>204</sup> One of the formal Zen practices of questions and answers between Zen master and disciples.

<sup>205</sup> Baroni PhD diss., 1993, 244.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

raising funds in order to feed the hungry suffering people. He wrote a long pleading letter to a wealthy merchant in Edo asking for a large donation. He held lectures to raise money and continually distributed food tirelessly. However couple weeks after distributing the food, Tetsugen contracted a disease from the famine due to his close contact with the people; he fell ill and died soon after. It was said that more than 100,000 people attended his funeral to show their appreciation. Many regarded him as a living Bodhisattva. Through Tetsugen's fund raising and lectures, Obaku Zen was able to spread into many new territories and also propagate to the lay people on a larger scale. The heroic and merciful acts of Tetsugen manifested a greater image of the Obaku teachings to the multitude of Japanese society. The great influence of Tetsugen is undeniable in Japanese history and through him the teachings of Obaku spread. Although it was Tetsugen who made his name on Japanese Buddhism history, without Muan's teachings and guidance the Japanese would not have had Tetsugen.

The majority of Muan's first generation of dharma heirs were Japanese, except for Tieshan 鐵山, Xieji and Lingsou who were his disciples before he came to Japan. Among the Japanese dharma heirs, aside from Tetsugen, there were three who stood out and made vast contributions to the growth of the Obaku sect. These three, Tetsugyu, Egoku and Choon, were called the "Three Masterpieces of the Obaku" 黃檗三傑 (J; Obaku sanketsu).

Tetsugyū Dōki 鉄牛道機 (1628-1700), was born in the Nagato 長門 province. When he was seven years old, a fire destroyed his family's house and they had to move to Tottori 鳥取 Inaba 因幡 to live with his mother's family. At age eleven, he began his

monastic education at a local Rinzai monastery. He took tonsure at age fifteen and during this period, suffered from an eye problem that almost caused him to lose his eyesight. It took three years for him to recover his vision. At age nineteen, he traveled to many famous Buddhist temples to study the sutras and receive various lectures from the eminent masters of his time. During this period, he prayed to the Kannon 観音 to help him be able to meet with a venerable Buddhist master. In Tetsugyū's mind, he always had the ambition of going to China to study the Buddhist teachings, however at the time, Japan was under an isolationist policy. The *bakufu* did not allow foreigners to come into Japan or Japanese to travel abroad freely. In the fall of 1654, Tetsugyū heard about the arrival of Yinyuan and wanted to pay him a visit but was stopped by the temple's abbot where he was staying at the time.

In 1655, Tetsugyū was finally able to pay a visit to Yinyuan but, soon after, Yinyuan left Nagasaki for Fumonji. Instead, Tetsugyū stayed at one of the Japanese Rinzai branch temples, Zenrinji 禅林寺, in Nagasaki. He planned to visit Muan at Fukusaiji, but the abbot of Zenrinji would not allow him to do so because he was afraid that Tetsugyū may decide to study under the Obaku masters. Through the help of the Nagasaki *bugyo*, an administrative official who was a lay patron of the temple, Tetsugyū was eventually able to visit Muan. The next year, he participated in Muan's winter retreat and was appointed as *jisha* 侍者, or attendant. Muan called him the “outstanding great man of the Shizan” 紫山.<sup>207</sup> In 1658, he joined the winter retreat of Jifei at Sofukuji. In the year 1659, when Tetsugyū was on his way to Shotaiji 紹太寺 to become

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<sup>207</sup> Kimura 2005, 209.

the abbot, he stopped by the Fumonji to visit Yinyuan. His position during this time was in limbo between the Japanese Rinzai and Obaku sects. In the fall of 1659, he was appointed the head seat at Myoshinji. In the fall of 1660, he went back to see Yinyuan at Fumonji and delivered Yinyuan's and Ryōkei's summoning letters to Muan at Nagasaki to inform Muan of the good news about building a new monastery at Uji 宇治. Tetsugyū accompanied Muan to Fumonji before returning to Shotaiji.

In 1664, when Muan became the second abbot of Manpukuji, Tetsugyū paid a visit to Muan and joined his winter retreat, serving as a canon prefect. In the eighth month of the following year, when Muan was on his way to Edo to respond to the first summons of the Tokugawa shogun, Tetsugyū welcomed Muan at the Shotaiji and followed him to Edo. In the winter retreat of 1666, Tetsugyū became so absorbed in his cultivation that he neglected to even sleep or eat. One early morning when he heard the sound of the wakening bell, he suddenly became enlightened. He received the *inka* and whisk from Muan in that year and became the first Japanese dharma heir of Muan.

During Tetsugyū's life, he contributed significantly to two projects that improved the lives of the Japanese common people. One is called the Tsubakinuma kantaku jigyo 椿沼干拓事業 which was one of the Big Three Obaku Constructions. It diverted the Tsubakinuma's water into the Pacific Ocean and transformed the polder into farm land. The village people had petitioned the *bakufu* government for years to perform this task but could not obtain permission. The villagers sought Tetsugyū's intervention to obtain assistance of Inaba Masanori to petition the *bakufu* for approval. Finally it gained the

attention of the *bakufu* and construction was completed in 1671.<sup>208</sup> Another remarkable project was the land improvement project at Kajima 加島. This construction went through three generations of effort and they were still unable to accomplish it. It was a difficult assignment and required a high level of skills. The villagers asked Tetsugyū again to assist them and Tetsugyū devoted all his efforts to help them with both his skills and financial assistance.

In the year 1675, Tetsugyū became the second abbot of the Zuishoji. Later, he continued to found many temples. Tetsugyū made three vows when he was forty-one years old. He vowed to extensively expand the Buddhist dharma, establish Buddhist temples, and to carve and publish the Buddhist canon. Tetsugyū established numerous temples covering the areas from Kansai to Kanto. It was said that in his life time he had either founded or rebuilt a total of more than fifty temples. By founding so many temples, he was able to expand the Buddhist dharma teachings to large regions and sectors of the Japanese people. Tetsugyū had a total of sixty dharma heirs and more than five hundred commoners who joined in his teachings. Tetsugyū also dedicated himself to join Tetsugen's Buddhist canon's project of fund raising. He accomplished all three of his great vows during his life time.

Egoku Dōmyō 慧極道明 (1632-1721) was the second Japanese dharma heir of Muan. His father died when he was five years old; he and his mother had to move to Bushū 武州 and depended on his uncle for their living. He was sent to live in a

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<sup>208</sup> Kimura 2005, 210.

monastery when he was nine years old and at seventeen became a monk.<sup>209</sup> In 1650, when he was nineteen years old, he heard that Yeh-lan, Yinyuan's Dharma heir, was coming to Nagasaki from China and decided to accompany Jikuin to Nagasaki. On the way, while staying at an inn, he met Daozhe whose master was also Feyin's dharma heir and Yinyuan's Dharma brother. He decided to follow Daozhe back to Sofukuji and there, served as the general affairs administrator.<sup>210</sup> At the time, under Daozhe, there were many Japanese Buddhist disciples who had joined his assembly, such as Jikuin, Chōon and Tetsusin, etc. One day, Egoku heard a Chinese merchant made a defamatory remark saying that the Japanese monks are hungry and therefore, like to come to the Chinese temple to cultivate so they would not have to be hungry again. Egoku became so mad that he left Sofukuji and lived as a mendicant. It was said that he was able to gather a lot of food and raise enough money to bring back to the temple and proved to the Chinese merchant that his remarks were wrong.

In 1658, when Daozhe went back to China, he instructed Egoku to seek instruction from Yinyuan, but also advised him to first practice sealed confinement to physically seclude himself from outside world. Daozhe believed that Egoku would be an essential figure in the future. Eventually, in 1664, Egoku and twenty other disciples of Daozhe paid a visit to Yinyuan, but Yinyuan had retired that year and instead they joined the assembly of Muan. Egoku joined the winter retreat that year and took a position as bath prefect. When he was thirty seven years old, one day after the evening rain, he climbed up the mountain and watched the sunset. When the wind from the creek blew on

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<sup>209</sup> *Obaku bunka jinmei jiten*, 36.

<sup>210</sup> Kimura 2005, 226.

him, all of a sudden, he felt he had become emancipated from the entire mundane world and so became enlightened. He received the *inka* from Muan in 1671 and obtained the dharma robe in 1674.

Egoku also established or rebuilt many temples; in 1672, he and his disciples together rebuilt a simple heritage into a grand monastery called Hōunji 法雲寺. After its rebuilding, the monastery included a Dharma Hall, a dining hall, a bell tower, abbot residence and a front gate. The *Obakushu matsujichō shusei* 黄檗末寺帳集成 credits twelve temples to Egoku as their founder or rebuilder.<sup>211</sup> In order for the common lay followers to be able to easily understand the Obaku Zen disciplines and teachings, Egoku used kana 仮名<sup>212</sup> to narrate and compose the “Ichimizen 一味禪” which was published in 1691.<sup>213</sup> He composed many Buddhist stanzas, and his calligraphy demonstrated the spiritual virtue of a Zen monk; his paintings also showed many sophisticated details as well.<sup>214</sup>

In the year 1687, he became the third abbot of Zuishoji which was the highest position in the Obaku sect for Japanese monks at that time. He conducted the third *sandan kaie* in 1688 and bestowed the precepts to 2,000 people. Egoku had a total of forty-two dharma heirs and passed away at the age of ninety. Among his great accomplishments were the restoration and building of twenty temples and through his efforts of composing and publishing the Ichimizen, he was able to reach the common

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<sup>211</sup> Baroni 2000, 79. Also see Genshō Takenuki, *Kinsei Obakushū matsuji chōshūsei* 1990.

<sup>212</sup> Japanese syllabic writing system based on Chinese characters, used to express the sounds of Japanese instead of the meanings of each individual words.

<sup>213</sup> Rinoie 1981, 245.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 234-240.

people on an unprecedented scale to greatly expand the fame of the Obaku sect.

Chōon Dōkai 潮音道海 (1628-1695) was born in the Hizen province 肥前. He lost his mother at the age of five and was raised by his grandmother. At age nine, he started his learning at the village's Buddhist temple. By age of thirteen he took his tonsure to become a Buddhist monk. When he was seventeen, he secretly sneaked out of the monastery with his Zen friend to visit the Kongoji 金剛寺. In the spring of the next year, he went to Kyoto to study Confucianism, visited several famous Buddhist temples and attended their lectures and sermons. From that time on he became very interested in the Zen style of the Yuan dynasty monk, Zhongfeng Mingben 中峰明本 (1263-1323; J. Chuho Myohon). Chōon heard about the great reputation of Isshi Bunshu 一絲文守 and made the trip to Shiga, planning to visit this great master at Eiganji 永源寺. However by the time Chōon arrived there, Isshi had already passed away so instead Chōon took Isshi's successor, Nyusetsu Bungan 如雪文巖 (1601-1671) as his master. Chōon set aside all mundane concerns and diligently studied under Nyusetsu for two years. Later, following Nyusetsu's order, Chōon became the head of a small Buddhist temple at Sanjou village 山上村. During this period of time, Chōon quietly resided in the small temple but went back to Eiganji to participate in the summer and winter retreats. At age twenty-four, he and his dharma friends got together and practiced meditation for seven days without sleeping and, as a result, his mediation skills became more advanced.

In 1654, Chōon went back to Kyushu. In the seventh month, he paid a visit to Yinyuan at Kofukuji but did not take up residence there. Instead, he became the disciple

of Daoche at the Sofukuji. In the fall of 1661, Chōon had an opportunity to read the *Wu-deng yan-tong* (J. Goto gento) and realized that Yinyuan was a descendant of Zhongfeng, the orthodox lineage of Linji and grand dharma heir of Miyun. He decided to make a trip to Manpukuji to ask for permission to join Yinyuan's assembly but was denied at first. Eventually, through the help of his old friend, Du Zhan 独湛, he was able to enter the assemblage. After joining the Obaku assembly, Chōon dedicated himself to the study of Zen and meditation from all three Obaku founders and their dharma heirs. In the winter of 1663, he entered the first *sandan kaie* of Yinyuan in Manpukuji and served as a guest prefect. In 1664, when Yinyuan retired and Muan ascended the dharma hall to teach, Chōon served as a guest greeter. Due to his hard work, the people praised him and called him the Vairocana Buddha 金剛仏. In 1665, in response to the shogun's summons for Muan, Chōon accompanied him to Edo; people believe that this trip offered Chōon the opportunity to initiate many close relationships with high-ranking officials and samurai in the Kanto area. Later he served as a canon prefect 藏司 in Manpukuji for Muan. In the 1669, several high-ranking officials persuaded Tokugawa Tsunayoshi (徳川綱吉, 1646-1709) to build Kosaiji 廣濟寺 for Choon at Mantokuzan 万徳山. At the time Tsunayoshi was still just a feudal lord 藩主, not yet a shogun. Later in 1683, this temple was abolished when Tsunayoshi's son died unexpectedly and Chōon resigned and moved to Fudōji 不動寺 at Kokuryūzan 黒瀧山.<sup>215</sup> In 1671, Muan had Chōon oversee the building project at Zuishoji and in this same year, he received the *inka* from Muan. The following

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<sup>215</sup> Shōman Hidetoshi 正満英利 “Chōon Zenji to Eisan Zenni” *Obaku bunka* no. 73, (January 1984): 3.

year, Chōon was bestowed certification and the robe from Muan to indicate his maturity of dharma learning and understanding. In 1674, when Muan had his first *sandan kaie* at the Zuishoji, Chōon served as a reciting preceptor.

Chōon was an erudite monk; he not only studied the Buddhist texts, but was also interested in esoteric Buddhism, Confucianism, Shinto thought, and ancient Japanese history. He had a special interest in the Seventeen Article Constitution (*Kenpo hongii* 憲法本紀) and the *Taishi kuji jongi* 太子旧事本紀. He was able to gain access to these two articles and became an expert on Shinto thought; he even held lectures about these two Shinto texts. In 1679, he obtained permission to publish a woodblock edition of the *Sendai kuji daiseikyo* 先代旧事大成経. However later, in the year 1682, an official priest of the Ise Shrine made a formal complaint against the text as a counterfeit. As a result, the text was banned, the woodblocks destroyed and Chōon was placed under house arrest at the Kosaiji. Later, his sentence was reduced to fifty days after the intervention of the fifth shogun's mother, Madame Keishōin.

Chōon was also enthusiastically committed to the lay Buddhist community; he held several fourfold assembly precept ceremonies to bestow the Buddhist precepts to lay cultivators. It was said that during his lifetime, he bestowed precepts to more than a hundred thousand Buddhist monks, nuns and lay cultivators and founded more than twenty-two temples in the Kanto area. He was a very devoted and powerful contributor to the newly established Obaku monastery.

Chōon was also a reformer; he believed that Japanese Zen should embrace both monastery practitioners as well as lay cultivators and therefore, Buddhism should include

the teachings of Shinto and Confucianism.<sup>216</sup> In order to broaden the Buddhist teachings to the widest range of common people, Chōon accepted the practice of the Pure Land style of *nenbutsu* with Zen meditation, a concept that clearly collaborated with the Obaku Zen style. He believed that using the *nenbutsu* as a tool could benefit the less capable people. Even though they may not be able to obtain enlightenment in this life, nevertheless, they may be able to have Buddhist teachings remain in their organ of hearing in their next life and so become the seed of emancipation to their eternal life.<sup>217</sup> Despite his high intelligence and extensive reading, Chōon's teaching pedagogy for the lay cultivators emphasized an easy, familiar and common sense approach. It was said that when Chōon held lectures, the dharma hall was always full. He disliked the Rinzai style of *koan* practice and preferred strict monastic discipline. He criticized some of the dharma transmissions which did not require intercommunication between master and disciple. In his life time, Chōon had total of sixty-four dharma heirs.

Through these outstanding Japanese dharma heirs of Muan, the foundation of Obaku sect was firmly secured. We can conclude with Baskind's comment in his dissertation, "...Even if the foundation was set by Yinyuan, Muan's singular ability to teach and successfully cultivate disciples is what ensured the future survival and expansion of the Obaku organization."<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>216</sup>Horiki Sōsen 堀木宗詮 "Tōkai zenji no zazenron 道海禅師の座禅論" *Obaku bunka* 49, (December 1979), 3.

<sup>217</sup> Horiki 1979, 3.

<sup>218</sup> Baskind 2006, 114.

## CONCLUSION

When investigating Japanese religious history, we recognize that during the Edo era, the Obaku sect was able to be successfully established under Tokugawa regime. The Tokugawa shogun and imperial family were strong patrons of the Obaku sect. At the time the Obaku founding masters traveled to Nagasaki, the Tokugawa shogun had already constructed a strong and centralized government for his regime. The shogun had promulgated many regulations on his people, *daimyo*, religious institutions, priests, nobility and even the emperor. At the beginning of unifying his government, one of Tokugawa's main concerns was the potential power of the Buddhist monasteries, so he issued numerous *hatto*, or regulations, to restrict the growth of these monasteries. Under his government, Christianity suffered persecution and was prohibited from the Japanese. The entire country was under a "closed door" policy. Under this confined environment, the success of the Obaku sect was a surprising phenomenon.

There are many rationales to explicate why the Obaku sect was welcomed by the Japanese and especially by the Tokugawa shogunate, who greatly contributed to the favorable outcome of Obaku sect. Much of the initial success of the Obaku sect was due in part to the Japanese yearning to renew their Buddhism with orthodox Chinese teachings. The declining Japanese Buddhism of the times desperately needed the vigorous inspiration of Chinese Chan. The Obaku sect also offered what the Tokugawa *bakufu* needed, strict precepts for the Japanese monastery community. Also, a newcomer such as the Obaku sect would not have any bias toward the Tokugawa shogun and would

be easier to manipulate and act in accordance with the shogun's wishes. The Obaku sect provided a perfect counterforce for the Tokugawa regime to use against the traditional Buddhist sects in Japan. The Tokugawa *bakufu* intentionally promoted and manipulated Manpukuji to be a symbolic representative of China, "...to harness the political benefits of having a Chinese presence in Edo, Japan".<sup>219</sup> Also, the Japanese *bakufu* and people admired and welcomed the Chinese culture as well as their Chan teachings which came along with the Obaku masters.

Each of these reasons has elements of truth; however, the success of the Obaku sect was beyond the combination of all of the above. The era of the Ming dynasty in China molded some very prominent Chan monks who not only had intensively studied and contemplated Buddhist teachings but had also cultivated a sophisticated quality of skills in poetry, calligraphy and painting. These cultural disciplines undoubtedly secured great benefits to the establishment of the new Obaku sect. In addition, the Ming style of Buddhism encouraged the syncretism of the Three Teachings, a complement of Confucianism and Daoism with Buddhism which provided a sophisticated environment for Chan monks cultivating Buddhism during Muan's era. Muan fully manifested the traditional Confucian virtues of filial piety, humbleness, respect and benevolence.

The international trade between China and Japan provided another milieu for people to economically and culturally explore in both countries. It also furnished the Obaku monks and Muan with a brand new sphere in which to make significant contributions for Japanese Buddhism. This milieu allowed Muan to substantially utilize

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<sup>219</sup> Wu 2011, 8.

his talents and strive for the perfection and prosperity of the Obaku sect in Japan. The influences of Muan and the Obaku sect were numerous to Japanese Buddhism.

The first crucial step in the establishment of the Obaku sect was the building of its headquarters, Manpukuji. Muan was a felicitous assistant for Yinyuan even during the beginning stages of the building of Manpukuji. Yinyuan retired in the middle of constructing Manpukuji and after only three years of abbacy. Muan took over full responsibility for completing the construction of the Obaku headquarters in Uji. It took a total of eighteen years to accomplish the building of the 22,000 acre Manpukuji complex. During the process of such an essential project, Muan was able to achieve the multiple tasks of not only overseeing the construction projects but also obtained support from Tokugawa shogun and Japanese elite. Additionally, Muan also continued his teachings and nourished his many Japanese disciples and handled the administrative duties of an abbot as well. During this period of time, Muan demonstrated his remarkable management skills, perseverant personality and absolute devotion to his master, the Obaku sect and the Buddhist community. At the same time he brought Chinese temple building architectural design and skills to the Japanese Buddhist community along with the carving skill of many Buddhist sculptures. Without Muan's devotion, we can hardly imagine what the outcome of the Obaku sect would have been in the 17<sup>th</sup> century of Japan.

Muan's Zen teachings heavily emphasized meditation and monastic precepts. He taught his numerous disciples and lay followers to persistently meditate on the key phrases. He believed that persistent meditation on key phrases was the only way to

achieve enlightenment. *Nenbutsu* was only an expediency to use in concentrating one's mind when meditating and that one could not merely use *nenbutsu* itself to reach the Pure Land. Muan believed that sincerity and strict obedience to the monastic precepts was the basic foundation of Zen cultivation. Muan faithfully carried out the teachings and regulations of *Obaku shingi*. He also held the greatest number of *sandan kaie* ordination ceremonies for his Japanese cultivators of the three Obaku founding masters. These acts truly conveyed Muan's intention of placing precepts forward as the number one priority in Zen practice.

Muan trained fifty-three dharma heirs and numerous other disciples and followers. His Japanese dharma heirs became some of the most important foundations for the expansion of Obaku sect in Japan. However, there are no detailed records describing Muan's training process. We can only get a glimpse some of his ideas from Muan's various works which were compiled in the *Mokuan zenshū* or from some of the biographies of his famous Japanese disciples. The main pedagogic method of Muan was to use expedience means to teach his disciples. As Baskind has pointed out, Muan would personalize his teachings to the tastes of his audience.<sup>220</sup> There is a lot of valuable information and material content in the *Mokuan zenshū* for Obaku researchers to explore, particularly in understanding the aspects of Muan's Zen teachings and concepts.

During the 7<sup>th</sup> century Prince Shōtoku implemented the so called "Taika Reforms", importing Chinese cultural and Confucian classics into Japan. The Chinese writing system was also brought back by Japanese envoys and students. Classical

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<sup>220</sup> Baskind 2006, 132.

Chinese writing was learned by Japanese intellectuals. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Japanese literati and Buddhist disciples were able to utilize these Chinese writing skills to communicate with the new Chinese monk emigrants. They favored and admired the Chinese cultural skills of poetry, calligraphy and painting and so Muan's talents for poetry and especially calligraphy and painting were greatly appreciated and praised by the Japanese. Muan's abilities also revealed the excellent level of artistic cultivation of the Obaku Chan masters. Through these valuable instruments, Muan was able to establish significant and meaningful relationships with the shogun, officials and his disciples to earn support and recognition from them. Muan's calligraphy and painting inspired the Japanese intellectuals to learn the Ming style of painting and calligraphy, creating a new dimension in Japanese intellectual culture.

The success of any religious institution involves many elements, and an outstanding contributor certainly helps the outcome of the institution. However, the effect of one individual can rarely make a lasting and penetrating influence. The Obaku scholar, Nakao Fumio, stresses this concept in the article I mentioned earlier in this study. Although Muan's writings do not indicate that he ascribed to this theory, his record shows that he was one of the most prolific teachers and cultivated the greatest number of outstanding Japanese disciples of the three Obaku founders. I believe he might have understood that a group of people of similar percipience could expand the institutional horizons and endure the challenge of times. Several streams run longer and penetrate deeper than a single large pond of water.

Since my thesis is the study of the Chan master Muan, I have tried to investigate many aspects of him and his times, hoping to discover and maybe unlock some valuable information about him. However, this thesis only represents a preliminary study of Muan, there is still a lot of noteworthy data and knowledge hidden and waiting for Obaku scholars to reveal. I believe the more one learns about Muan's life, the better we can understand the success of Obaku sect and its influence in Japan. I also believe that the most distinguished contribution of Muan was that he was able to honestly present what he knew authentic Chan Buddhism should be and diligently manifested it to the Japanese Buddhists through his teachings and interactions with them. Many extensive outcomes and influences adhered naturally to his teachings and interactions afterward.

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