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The Zen of Books and Practice: The Life of Menzan Zuihō and His Reformation of Sōtō Zen

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Menzan Zuihō (1683–1769) was one of the most illustrious writers and reformers of the Tokugawa period. During this era, there were major changes in Zen practice as well as a wide-ranging reevaluation of Buddhist doctrine. Menzan was probably the most creative and prolific of all the Sōtō Zen writers of the time.¹ His approach to learning and his emphasis on historical sources continue to this day to be characteristic of the Sōtō school, and his writings about doctrine and details of monastic practice are the foundation of the contemporary school. At the same time, Menzan was a popular teacher of Buddhism to lay men and women, and a revered Zen master who led strict training sessions for many years. He succeeded in training so many disciples that he gave dharma transmission to twenty-seven of them, many times the norm and more than all except one other Sōtō teacher. Menzan took a strikingly moderate attitude toward practice by, for example, adapting a more humane and more mainstream Buddhist outlook toward precepts. He was very critical of an excess of zeal, whether through use of the stick in the meditation hall or through excessive effort leading to the risk of mental illness. Many of these more moderate positions were not ultimately accepted in the Sōtō mainstream, so in spite of influence on the later school, some of his positions were rejected.

Despite his accomplishments, Menzan is not remembered in Sōtō Zen circles as an innovative figure, and the Tokugawa period was for many years dismissed as a backward embarrassment. In the Sōtō Zen community, Dōgen is taken as the source of all authority, and today, as if to emphasize that attitude, the school often refers to itself as “Dōgen Zen.” Menzan’s writings, although highly respected, are regarded as merely helpful notes and background information with which to gain access to the great insight and awakening of the founder. Menzan certainly wished to be seen that way, but in many regards he was as much a revolutionary as a conservator. Not only did Menzan read Dōgen with the greatest attention to textual detail and painstakingly research Dōgen’s sources but he also attempted to put into daily practice what he saw as the way that Dōgen would have done things. In this campaign Menzan was willing to go against both the practices of the established powers and the ways of his own teachers, whom he held in the greatest respect. Menzan’s detailed command of the works of Dōgen is widely noted, but his efforts did not stop there. Perhaps even more impressive was his willingness to fill in areas that Dōgen left blank and to decide ambiguities in Dōgen’s work by interpreting the texts to which Dōgen would have had access. Menzan used ancient materials that would have been available to Dōgen, but the selection and interpretation were very much his own.

To understand the importance of Menzan as well as his role in the development of Dōgen Zen, a word about Dōgen is in order. Dōgen is present in almost any study of Sōtō Zen, but why is it that he occupies such a dominant position? From the perspective of the modern Sōtō school, it is not surprising that Menzan should have devoted his life to the study of Dōgen. Indeed, in the last century, the vast majority of Sōtō-related studies, both in Japan and in the West, have been focused on some aspect of Dōgen.² Dōgen was certainly responsible for the introduction of the Sōtō Zen lineage to Japan, and his writings have become the font of orthodoxy for contemporary Sōtō Zen. It is all too easy to assume that this should obviously be the case, and that he has always been regarded in this way. Before the Tokugawa reforms championed by Menzan, however, his role was much more limited. His writings, especially the collection of essays that is now called the *Shōbōgenzō*, were treated as secret treasures, but there was no commonly accepted version and no commentaries were written from about 1300 until the seventeenth century.³ Although Sōtō monks traced their lineage to Dōgen, the content of Sōtō practice and doctrine was determined by what was passed down from teacher to disciple. In the medieval era, religious authority (and indeed authority in general) relied on the relationship of master and student. Texts and other paraphernalia were used to certify this transmission of authority. In the case of Sōtō Zen, the possession of a

Dōgen text, rather than the understanding of the contents of that text, authenticated the religious practices and teachings of the possessor.

In the seventeenth century, the *Shōbōgenzō* and Dōgen's writings about monastic practice became more widely circulated in manuscript form and were printed for the first time. It gradually became apparent that there was a discrepancy between the contents of the *Shōbōgenzō* and contemporary Sōtō customs. Even before Menzan's time, there had been attempts to reform customary practices to bring them more into line with the texts of Dōgen. These attempts used the slogan of *fukko*, which means to return to the old (ways), but with the implication that the old ways were the only correct ways. The most prominent attempt was led by Manzan Dōhaku (1636–1741), who succeeded in his attempt to reform dharma transmission, the ceremonial authentication of the status of a Zen teacher.⁴ Dōhaku, as I will refer to him henceforth to avoid confusion with Menzan, made a creative leap by reinterpreting a 1615 government decree which specified that the house rules of Eiheiji, the temple founded by Dōgen, should also be the rules for all temples of the lineage. Dōhaku made the startling claim that this rather specific legalistic decree meant that any writings by Dōgen (not just the current Eiheiji house rules), as the founder of Eiheiji, should be the source of authority for the entire Sōtō school. He then used this claim to make use of one chapter of the *Shōbōgenzō* (which is certainly nothing like a set of house rules) to justify his campaign to reform Sōtō practices of dharma transmission. His case for a sweeping transformation was thus based on a text by Dōgen that had been ignored for hundreds of years. Whether or not it was the intent of the 1615 government ruling, Dōhaku's interpretation carried the day and resulted in an enormous expansion of interest in the writings of Dōgen. He succeeded in publishing his own version of the *Shōbōgenzō* in 1686, but because of the problems arising from disputes about the *Shōbōgenzō*, in 1722 the Sōtō hierarchy requested that the government prohibit its publication, a prohibition that was not lifted until 1796, though manuscript copies continued to be available.⁵ Thus Menzan's entire research project on the *Shōbōgenzō* was carried out under the constraint of this prohibition.

From Dōhaku's beginning, Menzan worked to push the reform movement far beyond the original topic of dharma transmission and its focus on just one chapter of the *Shōbōgenzō*. Menzan sought out different manuscript versions of the chapters of the *Shōbōgenzō* and investigated the various traditions of organizing these chapters into a single collection. He also worked on Dōgen's other writings, such as his separate essays (in Chinese) about monastic regulations and a variety of independent pieces. He used these texts as his basis for authority, but he also read very widely into the sources that Dōgen himself relied upon and used these to fill in questions that Dōgen had not addressed. On this

broader basis, he advocated a much more radical overhaul of Sōtō affairs, including the rollback of some of Dōhaku's reforms that were not sufficiently close to Dōgen. For example, Dōhaku had also created a set of monastic regulations that he claimed were based on Dōgen and earlier Chinese ways. Menzan exposed this rule as being based on contemporary Chinese practices as seen in the Ōbaku temples that had become very popular in Japan.

These temples traced their lineage to a series of Chinese masters who came to Japan starting in the seventeenth century. As trade with China grew in the early part of the seventeenth century, Chinese traders in the port city of Nagasaki established temples and brought in Chinese monks to run them. Although the temples were set up for the Chinese merchant community, many Japanese monks came to Nagasaki to see for themselves this contemporary Chinese Buddhism, which came to be referred to as Ōbaku, after the mountain name of the main temple, Manpukuji.⁶ Menzan's position was that the only true sources of authority were the writings of Dōgen and the texts on which he drew, and he strenuously objected to taking contemporary practice (either Chinese or Japanese) as a model. Menzan emphasized that the old texts were to be read directly, making use only of texts that were contemporaneous or, of course, prior texts for contextualization. He did not rely on the views of living teachers and avoided commentaries. Menzan studied with a variety of teachers, of course, and revered his own lineage master Sonnō Shūeki (1649–1705). Nonetheless, when Menzan attempted to establish authority he relied neither on customary practice nor on orally transmitted knowledge. Although they insisted that they were merely transmitting the teachings of Dōgen, Menzan and the other reformers can be seen as the founders of a new tradition that derived its authority from textual commentary and scholarship, not from long-established customs and rituals. Although tradition can be thought of as a gradual accumulation of teachings or an organically developing system of practices, it can also be a deliberate construct used to bring about change to long-established customary practices.⁷ Thanks in great part to the textual work of Menzan, the Edo reform of Sōtō Zen is an example of a crafted tradition, that is to say a tradition that presents a surface of great authority and antiquity yet skillfully conceals the seams and supports used to construct that surface.

Menzan was profoundly influenced by the works of Dōgen, but he was also very much a man of his times, in that he used the textual tools and promoted the value of the contemporary trend of returning to the earliest texts, discarding centuries of oral and written secret commentary.⁸ For example, in the Ancient Learning (Kogaku) school of Confucian studies, contemporary teachers and their Neo-Confucianism were rejected in favor of reading the texts of Confucius directly.⁹ Of course, secret lineages and practices continued for many trades

and skills, but one of the most important intellectual developments in Japan at the time was this emphasis on open discussion (within prescribed boundaries of permissible topics) and increased reliance on textual analysis and commentary rather than on esoteric initiations.

Sōtō reforms of this period have been depicted in sectarian histories as simply a purging of impurities acquired during centuries of degenerate practice, yet they can also be seen as a creative application of the new trend in Japanese thought toward emphasizing original texts. Menzan is not alone in his enthusiasm for Dōgen and reforms, but his output is much larger and more comprehensive than anyone else's. Menzan argued his case for what he characterized as authentic Dōgen Zen with such a painstaking attention to textual detail and comprehensive use of materials that his influence is seen throughout the practices and teaching of the school to this day.

Early Years in Kyushu

The outline of Menzan's life can be found in the year-by-year list of events of his life, the *Chronology of the Life of Teacher Menzan, Founder of Eifuku [Temple] (Eifuku Menzan Oshō Nenpyō)*, which constitutes fascicle twenty-six of his *Extended Record*.¹⁰ It was compiled by Kōda Soryō (1702–1779), one of his most important disciples, and as is usual for this genre, it mainly consists of a list of bare facts of where Menzan was, whom he met, what ceremonies he participated in, and what he wrote. Unless another text is explicitly cited for details of Menzan's life, the *Chronology* is the source in the following narrative. To the dry details of the *Chronology*, I have added the more lively stories found scattered in prefaces to Menzan's works, and occasional asides in the texts wherever I have happened upon them.¹¹ Since much of Menzan's life is occupied with the texts he was writing, selected works are briefly described to give an overview of how his interests developed, and a few pieces will be discussed in some detail. When Menzan's age is mentioned, it is given in Japanese style: he was two years old after the first New Year's day following his birth.

Menzan was born in 1683 in the southern island of Kyushu, in what is now Kumamoto prefecture, Kamoto County, Ueki City. In the *Chronology*, Menzan is depicted as having the precocity expected of one who would become such an illustrious writer. He read the Chinese classics and basic Buddhist texts before his teens, and by his twelfth year his father recruited him to read the petitions that he was required to take care of as government station master (*ekichō*). When he was fifteen, his mother died. The following year, on the memorial day of her death, Menzan went to her grave site and shaved his head, expressing his

desire to become a monk. His father was furious that his son did not first seek permission, especially when Menzan's support was most needed by the family. His father soon relented, however, and in 1698 Menzan was ordained by Ryōun Kohō (n.d.), the abbot of a local temple, the Ryūchōin. Menzan was given the Buddhist ordination name of Zuihō, which he kept throughout his career.

Menzan's home town of Ueki is on the plain to the west of the large bay (Ariake Sea) that is behind the peninsula of Nagasaki, and is therefore not far from very active areas of foreign influence. Commerce, both Western and Chinese, was tightly controlled and confined to Nagasaki, and there was a steady stream of Japanese visitors to the area. It was not possible to travel to China, but the Chinese community set up its own temples in Nagasaki, and many Japanese monks came to see Chinese Buddhism at first hand. Although it was far from the political and cultural capitals, this area was at the forefront of the changes in Buddhist thinking. Menzan's youth occurred at a time of changes in other aspects of Japanese culture. He grew up during the Genroku era (1688–1704), when Japanese society was at peace and had settled into the strict rules of the now established military government. This period is known for the flourishing of the popular arts. The illustrious poet Bashō was developing new styles, and Saikaku had created a new kind of comic writing that described the pleasure quarters and lampooned figures of the establishment, including Buddhist monks.

As mentioned above, this was also the period of the flowering of the study of Chinese thought and a new interest in philological studies, which Menzan drew upon in his work. Along with this explosion of literary and scholarly activity came the transformation of book manufacturing and trade into an efficient system that could quickly and inexpensively bring out woodblock-printed copies of a work in the same year it was written.¹² Japan had experimented with moveable type, but woodblocks were quicker to produce because of the enormous number of type faces for different characters and the desire for Japanese-style reading marks (*kunten*) in the margins of Chinese texts. Unlike expensive type, which was taken out of the printing frames and reused for other texts, the woodblocks could simply be stored. If and when the initial print run sold out, more copies could be produced with very little additional expense. Buddhist books were a major part of this trade in earlier parts of the Tokugawa period; judging from colophons to Menzan's works, it was a simple matter for a lay disciple who had the money to take a short text to Kyoto and have it published almost immediately. This new availability of print was probably one of the most important factors in Menzan's long-term success. I know of no survey of how many copies of his works were actually distributed, but I have found that when I visit temples, even small country temples, upon learning that I am interested

in Menzan, the abbot frequently produces well-worn copies of Menzan wood-block texts that have been in the temple's possession for generations. Menzan was not part of the power structure of Sōtō, and it was only after his death that his most important reforms were implemented. The key to his success was his texts, not his personality or his connections. Without easily available printing, his reforms would probably not have met with the success they did.

After his ordination, Menzan practiced under the direction of Ryōun and also studied with other teachers. For example, he read the *Record of Linji* with a teacher of the Myōshinji line of Rinzai Zen. He also read the *Brahma's Net Sutra*, one source of the precepts most commonly taken in Japan, with a teacher specializing in Vinaya. These two texts appear repeatedly as lecture topics later in his life. Neither his ordination teacher nor the temple is well known, and Ryōun seldom appears in Menzan's writings, but there are a few paragraphs about him in Menzan's *Tribute to the Life of Zen Master Tōsui* (*Tōsui Oshō densan*).¹³ This work is a biographical sketch consisting largely of popular stories about the eccentric monk Tōsui (d. 1683), with a preface by Menzan explaining why he came to compose such a piece. Menzan relates in his preface that his teacher Ryōun was the blood nephew of the famous Tōsui, and was also connected to him through ordination: Ryōun's ordination teacher was Sengen (n.d.), who had been ordained by the same teacher as Tōsui. Menzan relates that he had often heard how important Tōsui had been to Ryōun, and that Ryōun had always wanted to prepare an account of the life of Tōsui so that others could benefit from his teaching. Nearly fifty years later, Menzan took up the task and composed this account as a token of his gratitude to his ordination teacher Ryōun. Of greater interest here than the story of Tōsui is what we can gather about Menzan and his early relationship to the Ōbaku Zen lineage.

Menzan tells us in his introduction to the *Tribute* that Ryōun and another student had been sent by their teacher to Manpukuji, the main training temple of Ōbaku, and had spent ten years there. The other student stayed on and eventually became abbot of an Ōbaku temple, but Ryōun returned to Kyushu to take care of Zenjōji, and later became the next abbot of Ryūchōin, his teacher's temple. Tōsui himself was not sent to Manpukuji, but he sent his most promising students there and they stayed and became Ōbaku abbots in their own right. So Menzan's own ordination master had trained as an Ōbaku monk, and he was surrounded by teachers who had sent their best students off to study with the Ōbaku lineage masters. He mentioned this in passing, without further comment, yet throughout his other writings Menzan displayed an implacable opposition to the influence of the Manpukuji training on Sōtō monks. He sought to bring the school back to the writings of Dōgen, which for him included getting rid of later influences, both from the Chinese Zen teachers of Manpukuji and

from medieval Japanese customs. Perhaps this early experience of seeing Sōtō monks go to Manpukuji for Ōbaku training and never return to their roots was part of the reason that Menzan was especially critical of Ōbaku teachings and practices.

Just before his twentieth year, Menzan was informed by Ryōun that he was soon going to retire, and Menzan went to Kinpōsan, the local mountain overlooking the bay, for a week-long solitary retreat to contemplate his future course of practice. Before he went up the mountain he slipped a piece of paper with a prayer for guidance written on it into the enclosed altar of a Shintō shrine at the foot of the mountain. When he returned from his retreat, during which he stayed up each night reciting the *Diamond Sutra*, a snake appeared from the same opening where he had placed the paper. Menzan interpreted this as an auspicious omen for travel, and Ryōun encouraged him to go immediately, rather than wait for his formal retirement.

Finding a Teacher in Edo

Menzan went to Edo that spring (1703), and met several of the major figures of the Sōtō world, including Dōhaku, who had just completed his successful bid to force a reform of dharma transmission practice. Toward the end of the year he met the relatively unknown teacher Sonnō Sōeki, and soon after, he left the famous teachers of Edo behind and followed Sonnō back to Taishin'in, his small temple in Sendai. Sonnō was a native of Yomezawa, some fifty miles to the southwest of Sendai in the central mountains of present-day Yamagata prefecture. He had received transmission from an obscure abbot in the Ketsudō Nōsho faction (one of the Sōjiji factions, the pillar of the sect), and had been abbot since 1697.

Sonnō is of interest here due to his influence on Menzan's thought, but Sonnō's own life is worthy of a separate study, as he was one of the earliest teachers to emphasize strictly following Dōgen. Sonnō's emphasis on strict practice, and especially his respect for Dōgen, were lasting influences on Menzan, in stark contrast to the influence of his ordination teacher, who was heavily involved in the Ōbaku movement. Sonnō once expelled a student for the casual mistake of placing an ordinary text on top of one of Dōgen's texts on a bookshelf. The student underwent seventeen days of repentance before Sonnō relented and readmitted him. Menzan received a set of precepts (*daikai*) from Sonnō during his first winter retreat. Presumably this set was some form of the bodhisattva precepts, and giving them to a new student was an indication of the importance of precepts for Sonnō, but no further discussion is given in

the *Chronology*. Sonnō was known for accepting all requests to give talks, whether at famous temples or lay gatherings. Menzan went everywhere with him, and described this as a far better way to learn than just going to hear various famous teachers lecture.

In early 1705, Sonnō decided it was time to send Menzan out to visit other Zen teachers of all lineages throughout eastern Japan. Despite his youth, he was asked to lecture at villages during his travels. He spent an entire week lecturing on Dōgen's *Advice on Studying the Way* (*Bendōwa*). Menzan lectured on this text repeatedly over the next sixty years, but it was not until just before his death that his commentary on the text was printed. He spent three evenings teaching about the precepts of the *Brahma's Net Sutra*, and he lectured on a *kōan* from the *Checkpoint of Wumen* (*Wumen Guan*). When Menzan returned from his lecture tour, Sonnō gave Menzan his approval.

In the privacy of the abbot's room, they had the following exchange. Sonnō said, "If a person asks you, 'What is this?' how will you reply?" Menzan replied, "What is this?" Sonnō continued, "Silver mountain, iron wall." Menzan responded, "Iron mountain, silver wall." Sonnō bowed and Menzan did obeisance. Sonnō then urged Menzan to preserve what was most important: to look upon the face of Dōgen, and not the face of others. Sonnō regarded this as his greatest legacy to Menzan. Although Menzan does not comment, this was presumably a direct order not to follow the lineage of the Ōbaku teachers who had been influential in his life just three years earlier. After this exchange, Sonnō revealed that he was ill and unlikely to recover.

The phrase "silver mountain, iron wall" is a stock metaphor for something that cannot be grasped, as the truth of Zen cannot be grasped by the intellect. Dōgen used it once, in his *Extensive Record* (*Eihei Kōroku*), and it occurs several times in the *Blue Cliff Record* collection, including once at the end of case fifty-six, where it appears with the same inversion that Menzan used in his reply.¹⁴ Menzan's study and use of the classic *kōan* cases continued throughout his life, and *kōan* also played a crucial role in his own Zen practice. As is discussed below, this is a quite different matter from *kanna*, the single-minded concentration on a phrase taken out of context.

Despite his illness, Sonnō presided over the summer retreat, and out of respect for a monk of the Rinzai lineage in attendance, he devoted his lectures to the *Record of Linji* (*Linji lu*). Sonnō insisted on the primacy of Dōgen's teaching, but it is clear that he was not interested in using that view to exclude anyone from his assembly, nor to overlook a text like the *Record of Linji* just because it was very important to Ōbaku teachings. Before the retreat was over, Sonnō completed the series of ceremonies for dharma transmission to Menzan. He passed away shortly thereafter. Menzan had known Sonnō for barely two years,

but the latter's influence shaped the remainder of Menzan's life. With the dharma transmission ceremonies and written certificates from Sonnō, Menzan now had the status to ordain his own students and become the abbot of his own temple. The abbacy of Sonnō's temple was not offered to him, but Menzan stayed for two months of mourning. It was 1705, and at the age of twenty-three Menzan had received dharma transmission, but he had no position, not even a place to reside.

Years of Wandering and Long Retreats

Menzan made his way to Edo, where he was allowed to stop over at the residence of Ōtomo Inaba no kami Yoshisata, who belonged to the family of the Lord of Bungo (in Kyushu). Judging from the frequency of Menzan's subsequent visits, Ōtomo became something of a patron for Menzan during these early years. As was his usual habit, Menzan went to see well-known monks of various lineages, and he also raised funds to have a portrait of Dōgen printed and distributed, presaging his later work on a popular Dōgen biography. On his deathbed, Sonnō had charged Menzan to do a one-thousand-day retreat reading Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō* and sitting in meditation. Menzan had made a copy of the *Shōbōgenzō*, but it is not clear which of the various versions of the *Shōbōgenzō* this was.

In the village of Hashima southwest of Edo (present day Kanagawa prefecture), Menzan found the situation to fulfill his promise to Sonnō. He lectured for a week on the *Lotus Sutra* and then presided over a precept assembly wherein people received the three refuges. By using this universal set of precepts combined with lectures on the popular *Lotus Sutra*, Menzan could draw villagers closer to Buddhism and to his own teaching without disturbing the rigidly enforced affiliation to a particular temple and its teaching lineage. This was the first of many precept assemblies Menzan presided over throughout his life, though his later assemblies were for precepts specific to his Sōtō Zen lineage. At the end of this particular assembly, he announced that the village elder and ten people in his household had promised to support Menzan and to bring him food every day in his three-year retreat in the local temple of Rōbaian. Before beginning the retreat, he returned to Edo to discuss his plans with his circle of acquaintances, including Ōtomo. During this trip he went to see teachers who specialized in Buddhist regulations or Vinaya, and he also took the *samaya* esoteric precepts from a Shingon teacher who went by the name of Kisan Biku. By way of reciprocating, Menzan taught him the meaning of seated meditation as practiced in Sōtō Zen. The *samaya* precepts (*sanmayakai* in Japanese

reading) are taken in the initial ceremony of the *abhisheka* ritual of esoteric Buddhism. These precepts emphasize compassion and the promotion of awakening for all beings, and were to be taken in addition to the usual full precepts of the lineage.¹⁵ Apparently Menzan took only these precepts without going on to the later sections of the *abhisheka* ritual.

In the fourth month of 1706, Menzan returned to Rōbaian and began his three-year retreat. He read and reread the *Shōbōgenzō* in alternation with meditation. He later regarded this period as the beginning of his lifelong study of the *Shōbōgenzō*, a task that some fifty years later led to the publication of his ten-fascicle work on the sources used by Dōgen, the *Source Texts Cited in the Shōbōgenzō (Shōbōgenzō shōten roku)*. Menzan was not isolated during this time. Someone came six times a month to shave his head, and he performed ordination ceremonies (*tokudo*) for several people. He had visitors who came to discuss Buddhism, including a novice monk who wanted to talk to Menzan about the precepts used in his Tendai lineage. Halfway through the retreat, a monk came from Edo to be his assistant, and began doing a daily round of begging for food.

After completing his retreat in the first month of 1709, Menzan gave talks in a variety of places and continued writing and reading in many temple libraries. He began his lifelong project of reading the one-hundred-volume *Mahaprajnaparamita sutra*.¹⁶ This massive text is often used in Japan for ceremonies to make spiritual merit, and a special chest containing these volumes can still be seen today in the main hall of Zen temples. In this ritualized reading, a few words from each volume are recited while turning the remainder of the pages from the volume (*tendoku*). Each volume is “read” in this way, often with several priests chanting and turning simultaneously. Menzan, however, actually studied the entire text, and late in his life he finished his commentary in which he summarized the gist of each of the six hundred chapters with a Chinese verse. He saw Dōhaku several times, and at Dōhaku’s urging Menzan wrote his first work of scholarship, the *Record of the Activities of the Founder of Eihei (Eihei Kaisan Oshō jitsu roku)*. This spare text is a compendium of the events of Dōgen’s life based primarily on what can be gleaned from Dōgen’s own writings. Material from other sources is also considered, but Menzan attempted to check everything against Dōgen’s own words. The *Record* was printed in 1710 with a long colophon by Dōhaku, and remains to this day a useful and reliable guide to Dōgen’s own words about his life. Menzan’s commitment to emphasizing original sources, not to mention his early command of Dōgen’s writings, shows clearly in this first work. Thus he began his publishing career at age twenty-seven in his characteristic style, and continued to write and publish for the next fifty-nine years.

In 1711 Menzan spent the summer retreat at Kūinji, in the town of Obama in present-day Fukui prefecture, north of Kyoto on the Japan Sea. Later in life, Kūinji became his main temple, but this time he was merely the assistant to the preceptor for the retreat. After this he made his first visit to Eiheiji and then returned to his retreat site of Rōbaian to begin his study of the *Eihei kōroku*, the Chinese-language collection that records Dōgen's formal talks. He returned to Kyushu to take care of his sick father, and after his father's death, he returned to the Kansai region and was an officiant at the funeral of Dōhaku in 1715. In obedience to his father's dying wish, Menzan made another retreat at Rōbaian. During this one-year retreat he made a stupa of rocks, each rock representing one character of the *Lotus Sutra*. He finished the stupa in the first few months and spent the remainder of the retreat reading other sutras and meditating. Menzan's early experience of solitary meditation combined with textual study may seem a little surprising. Apparently the Zen practice of meditation in the monks' hall (where reading was strictly prohibited) was not a norm of training when Menzan was young. The sources do not mention what Menzan's contemporaries thought of his retreat practices, and it is not clear whether or not this kind of solitary retreat combined with textual study was an unusual event for a Zen monk.

Abbot of Zenjōji and Kūinji

In late 1717, at age thirty-five, Menzan received letters of invitation to become the next abbot of Zenjōji (where his ordination teacher had been abbot). Even though Zenjōji was a small temple, it must have been a welcome offer. After raising the necessary funds, Menzan went to Eiheiji for the required honorary abbot ceremony (*zuise*), and then he made his way to Kyoto for the ceremony at the imperial court. I refer to "raising the necessary funds," although I have not been able to determine the exact amount or how he managed to raise it. However, recent scholarship utilizing ledgers and other materials has made it possible to estimate just how enormous this expense would have been. For the *zuise* ceremony at the head temple (Eiheiji) for an ordinary abbot required about forty *ryō*, of which five *ryō* went to the head temple and the rest was spent in Kyoto.¹⁷ The imperial house in Kyoto was the preeminent source for awarding religious titles and the right to wear colored robes, especially the purple robe of an imperially recognized abbot. The monks gained greater prestige, and the imperial house and its various agents collected large sums. It is clear that becoming an abbot, even of an obscure temple, was something that involved the larger community and required a very serious level of commitment from them.

Menzan arrived at his first post of abbot with these very expensive credentials from Eiheiji and the Kyoto Court, but this was apparently not enough to ensure his acceptance. Due to some problem that is not further described, he was obliged to spend the winter in a nearby temple, apparently without any duties, waiting for some resolution to the impasse. In the spring, he returned to the Kyoto area, and was persuaded to come back to Kyushu only when an assistant arrived with letters of support from the current abbot and the two prior abbots of Zenjōji. This time he took up the post without incident, an indication that local support and local politics were as important as the incredibly expensive special robes and certificates from Eiheiji and the Court.

Menzan was abbot for twelve years, teaching and restoring temples throughout the region. During this period, he lectured on a wide variety of topics and texts, including the *Record of Linji* and the *Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*. In a number of cases, the lectures and drafts he constructed during this time were used in his later publications, though some texts recorded in the *Chronology* have been lost. Menzan drew audiences from across the spectrum of Buddhist lineages, not just Sōtō followers. In 1720, for example, he lectured for six weeks on the *Record of Linji* to monks of the Rinzai and Ōbaku lineages as well as Sōtō. The contemporary interest in the *Record of Linji* reflects the influence of the Ōbaku lineage, which was responsible for a new emphasis on the text. Despite these lectures, Menzan never committed a commentary to paper. That same year, he gave lectures on the *Lotus Sutra* to Pure Land lineage devotees. He also presided over lay precept ceremonies and wrote (but did not publish) several works on precepts and basic monastic procedure, including a piece on the chants at mealtime. He also finished his first major research project, which concerned the meaning and history of the ordination precepts. This detailed work in three volumes was not published until twenty years later. During this time, he wrote the *Buddha Samādhi*, a relatively informal piece in praise of Dōgen's way of meditation. According to the colophon, a lay follower found this text years later when Menzan was a well-established teacher, and received permission to have it printed in Kyoto and distributed. This work has been popular ever since, and copies in original woodblock form of this and several of Menzan's other short works can still be purchased at the Baiyō book-store in Kyoto.

The *Buddha Samādhi* also contains two disparaging comments about *kanna* practice, which is one of the characteristic features of modern Rinzai Zen and is typically opposed by contemporary mainstream Sōtō Zen teachers.¹⁸ This practice focuses great effort on breaking through to the understanding of a single phrase culled from the *kōan*, which is referred to as observing the critical phrase of the *kōan* (*kanna*). Menzan recognizes that *kanna* has its roots

in China, but he regards it as an unorthodox offshoot and writes that *kanna* practice is a misguided attempt to force the attainment of a dramatic breakthrough. His comments consist of just a few sentences, yet the entry on the *Buddha Samādhi* in the encyclopedia *Zengaku daijiten* claims that Menzan's text is an attack on the Rinzai Zen practice of *kanna*.¹⁹ In fact, Menzan never mentions Rinzai here, and it seems much more likely that he was criticizing monks in his own school for their unruly behavior, which is what Menzan saw as the outcome of *kanna* practice. The *Zengaku daijiten* is a publication of Komazawa University, which is both the main university attended by Sōtō priests and a center for textual Buddhist scholarship, especially of Zen texts. This small example highlights the strong tendency to read back the contemporary linkage of *kanna* and Rinzai Zen into earlier texts, and to assume that the Rinzai and Sōtō lineages were as strictly separated in the past as they are now.

Menzan's temple was close to Nagasaki and the Chinese enclave, and it is not surprising that Menzan had considerable contact with the Ōbaku Zen community, apparently continuing the friendly relations he inherited from his ordination teacher, whose circle contained many clerics who became full members of the Ōbaku community. In 1725, he made a trip of several months to Nagasaki for the explicit purpose of learning more about the customs of the Chinese monks. In 1728, Menzan was in his forty-sixth year and despite all his manuscripts, he had actually published nothing of his own since the work on the life of Dōgen eighteen years earlier. Much of his time in Kyushu had been spent raising funds and managing the restoration of temples. That year representatives came to invite Menzan to become abbot of Kūinji, the temple where he had spent one retreat some seventeen years before. Although Menzan had two years earlier refused an offer to be abbot of a temple not far away on the southern tip on Honshu, he accepted the offer from Kūinji, which was to be his home base until his death.

Kūinji enjoyed a more active retreat schedule and was geographically much closer to Eiheiji and to Kyoto, the traditional capital and printing center. Apparently his audience at Kūinji was to include people with ties to the Kyoto printing establishment, which issued a flood of works by Menzan during the following decades. After his installation ceremony as abbot of Kūinji, which was attended by representatives of some forty temples of the region, he presented himself to the temple sponsors and began the summer retreat. Apparently for the first time, Menzan lectured on a fascicle of Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō*, the "Ango" fascicle, which is concerned with the meaning of the training session. After his early work on Dōgen's life, it is surprising that Dōgen was not a topic of his formal lectures until now, though this may have simply been because the new emphasis on Dōgen had not reached Kyushu. In the fall, Menzan held another

precepts assembly and made the trip to Eiheiji to receive his robe of advancement in rank and to meet the new abbot, Taikyo Katsugen (d. 1736), who was to be Menzan's major supporter during the next few years. Menzan recorded this meeting in the preface to his comprehensive work about the pure rules, published many years later:

Katsugen said, "At Kūinji you have your ordination platform, office, and monastic supervision to deal with, so you certainly have no leisure. Still, I hear that you are zealous in honoring our Founder. I have two great wishes. The first is to apply to the government to return to the Founder's ordination procedures. The second wish is to build a monks' hall at this monastery, and to implement therein the monastic rule of the Founder. I hope you will be in accord with these wishes. Does this not accord with the deep wishes of the Founder?"²⁰

Menzan apparently took this to heart, since his efforts for the following years were directed to his work on monastic rules and, of course, to his teaching during the retreats at Kūinji. Katsugen praised his research and brought Menzan to Eiheiji for a three-week visit to look at the manuscripts there and to edit Katsugen's own work on the precepts. Menzan continued to travel in order to find manuscripts of Dōgen as well as of other Sōtō authors. Beginning in 1736, he served a one-year term as abbot in rotation (*rinjū*) for Ryūkeiin in present-day Nagoya. He knew that this temple had a monks' hall still standing, though it was being used as a meditation hall, and he had hoped to try out his new rules.

Menzan advocated implementing the monks' hall practice (as opposed to the meditation hall practice followed by Ōbaku monks), which he called "returning to Dōgen's way." In this system, which Dōgen had observed during his visit to Song China and which Katsugen had referred to when Menzan met him at Eiheiji, the monks ate, slept, and meditated in the monks' hall. The practice of contemporary Ming China was to use separate buildings for different activities, and Ōbaku temples followed that system, as described in the rule composed for their use in Japan, the *Ōbaku shingi*. Menzan wrote that, of all the important urban temples, only Tōfukuji still had the old style monks' hall, and even the rural temples that still had the building were using them in the new style, for which they were not really suited.²¹

He was not able to put into effect his vision of the original Song rules during his one-year stay at Ryūkeiin, but during that time he traveled to find examples of old monks' halls in the area to study their construction. Upon the completion of his one-year term, he returned to Kūinji and immediately set about converting its hall to the monks' hall style. In 1737, he held the retreat

using the old style of practice, which Menzan continued to emphasize was the way that Dōgen had done the practice. The popular view within Sōtō communities accepts that assertion, but it needs to be emphasized that Menzan had himself reconstructed the practice, on the basis of his own reading of Dōgen, creatively imagining Dōgen's intent where necessary, by drawing on texts that Dōgen was familiar with. Menzan was not following the style of monastic practice that his teachers had taught him, and Dōgen's writings do not provide a systematic and detailed description of the full range of monastic routine. Menzan had high hopes of implementing the same reforms at Eiheiiji, but Katsugen died before he could do anything, and his successor at Eiheiiji did not seem interested in monastic reform. Menzan's dream of changing Eiheiiji practice, which would have been a major step toward reforming the standard for Sōtō practice generally, was not realized during his lifetime. It took years of discussion, culminating in a bitter dispute that nearly paralyzed major monastic centers, before Menzan's vision of the reformed rules became the official standard in 1804.²²

Menzan turned down offers to be abbot of Kasuisai and of Kōshōji, which were major temples with powerful political connections, and instead began arrangements to build a small retirement place. Up to this point, his work was largely concerned with monastic rules, and in 1741 he finished the writing of his research, entitled *Selections for Ceremonial Procedures from the Pure Rules for the Monks Hall of Sōtō* (*Tōjō sōdō shingi gyōhō shō*), and its companion, the *Additional Record of Historical Research Concerning the Pure Rules for the Monks Hall of Sōtō* (*Tōjō sōdō shingi kōtei betsuroku*). This work was not to be published for another twelve years, but he published other texts about monastic practice, including two smaller pieces about seated and walking meditation, the *Buddha Samadhi* mentioned earlier and the *Standards for Walking Meditation* (*Kinhinki*), both of which have been very widely read guides right up to the present.²³

Some of his most important work during this time was to defend the earlier reforms of Dōhaku and others. Tenkei Denson (1648–1753) continued his attacks on the reforms even though they had become official government-approved Sōtō policy, and arguments about dharma transmission continued through the end of the Tokugawa period; it is still a sensitive topic.²⁴ Because it is both the certification of awakening and the documentation required before becoming abbot of a temple, dharma transmission is the pivotal event in the life of a Zen figure. Dōhaku had pressed for a new system whereby a single dharma lineage would be held for life, rather than requiring a new lineage be taken on with new temple responsibilities. Menzan was picking up the torch for the deceased Dōhaku, fighting a rear-guard action against Tenkei's attempt to turn back the reforms and return to the old system of temple transmission.

For example, in his *Fireside Chat on a Snowy Eve* (*Setsuya rodan*), Menzan defended Dōhaku's reforms, using his exegetical skills to justify his reading of an admittedly obscure and difficult passage in Dōgen.²⁵ As is frequently seen in his writings, much of Menzan's argument here turned on narrow questions of philology. Menzan launched into a detailed analysis of the passage in question from the "Menju" chapter of the *Shōbōgenzō*, which he and Dōhaku read as allowing one and only one face-to-face dharma transmission. He showed how Dōgen is actually setting up an absurd example expressed as a contrary-to-fact conditional, which Tenkei had taken literally. In this way Menzan defended Dōhaku's reading as one that follows the meaning, even though it was the opposite of the literal reading. Menzan brings into the argument examples of similar usage and provides definitions of key terms. He is also at pains to base his reading on a full and accurate text, something that his opponents were not doing. Even in such an intimate ceremony that is at the core of the school's self-understanding, Menzan argued not from the position of authority of the awakened teacher, but from careful textual exegesis.

Another key part of the old style of dharma transmission was the genre of secret documents, called *kirikami*, that described the ceremonial details and claimed to come directly from the earliest days of the school, often attributed to Dōgen himself. To Menzan, these were obviously forgeries that were being used to justify the customs he was trying to eliminate. To expose these documents for what they were, Menzan wrote the *Personal Record of the Rejection of the Kirikami of the Sōtō Abbot's Room* (*Tōjō shitsunai danshi kenpi shiki*), in which he revealed their anachronisms and other egregious mistakes.²⁶ Neither this nor the other works he wrote on the same theme were published until the modern collections, but they were circulated in manuscript form and led to a general discrediting of this kind of secret document. Menzan followed this approach in all his areas of research and in publications in which he attempted to demonstrate the authenticity of his proposed reforms. As is discussed below, in other areas he demonstrated his ability to write for a wider audience and also a willingness to be more free with textual details.

The two pieces discussed above are rather technical in nature in comparison to what is perhaps the best window into his teaching style: *Sermons of [the Abbot of the Temple of Mount] Kenkō* (*Kenkō fusetsu*).²⁷ In the preface to this Chinese language work, he writes that it was discovered at Kūinji (whose mountain name was Kenkō, hence the title) in a worm-eaten state, left over from his teaching there thirty years prior to its 1765 printing. Some lay followers had asked permission to publish them, in part as a commemoration for his years of public teaching. In one place in the text, Menzan mentions that he was being repeatedly invited to come from Kyushu to teach at Kūinji, so one can infer that

at least some of these lectures were given in the late 1720s, before he began his position as abbot of Kūnji. The talks were presumably attended by both laymen and monks, in keeping with the title, which means sermons of a public nature.

I have selected two topics from this text for translation below, in order to give an idea of Menzan's colorful and popular style, and as a window into Zen practice of the times. As already mentioned when discussing the *Buddha Samādhi*, Menzan had a low opinion of *kanna* practice, and references to what he calls the degenerate *kōan* practices of the Song or of "these days" are common, often with comments about shouts and blows or sweating blood. After some opening remarks in chapter 3 about the transmission of the practice of sitting from India, Menzan launches a sustained attack against those who concentrate on the critical phrase, calling them merely:

narrow-minded zealots who hold up the flower, blink, smile, laugh, stare at walls, do bows from their place, and mistakenly rely on the wordless teaching. This is a deluded understanding of the mind-to-mind transmission. When I see this it seems like the vulgar arguing over a puzzle: when they solve it they are satisfied with their accomplishment.

This evil has continued so long that they cannot return to the old ways. From the end of the Song to the Yuan and Ming, many masters affirm this to be the secret essence of the separate transmission outside the teachings. They sweep away the sutra and the commentaries like old fashioned calendars that they will never use again. This evil has overflowed [China] and entered Japan, piling evil upon evil. It continues and gets worse and worse.

Recently one sees so-called "people of good mind" who have taken up a practice of Zen that entails being given just one word (*watō*) from an old [*kōan*] case. These tyros are urged on by being told: "Make it your constant theme: walking, standing, sitting, lying down. Awake now! Wake up now! If you can't achieve awakening, kill yourself. Just stick your neck out and come forward: hear one word and [there are] a thousand awakenings."

I have no space for the rest [of that kind of talk], but concerning the ways of physically driving on students [I can mention that] they bind hands or feet, they force people to sit for long periods, and there is painful sleepiness. The students are hit with the fist, slapped, stepped on and kicked, even whipped. Really this is nothing but corporal punishment, in some places done by the teachers and in some places by the students to each other.

Later, in chapter 5, Menzan develops a complex textual argument attempting to show that the way the later Chinese tradition attributes the practice to early masters will not stand up to careful historical scrutiny. After this he gives some examples of various odd occurrences that happened when people were putting extreme pressure on themselves to concentrate on their *wato*. Then he says:

This is just abnormal psychology, not something to be honored.
 When I was in Okushū [practicing under Sonnō] I heard this story.
 There was a widow who was taking instruction with a teacher of the Rinzai school. She worked for a long time on the True Man of No Rank *kōan*, and a ten-foot-tall monk appeared before her. He was utterly black, like lacquer, without mouth, ear, or nose, and he appeared every time she did zazen. She lived in constant fear, and came to enquire of this to my former teacher. He said “It is merely something made up in meditation. You should drop the *wato*, and this thing will not appear again.” This kind of thing happened countless times. How can anyone think this sort of thing is the true and properly transmitted teaching of the Buddhas and Patriarchs?²⁸

In this case the practice is clearly linked to a Rinzai teacher, and the problem is not just unseemly behavior. The problem is that it causes this nice lady to have terrifying psychological problems, and the solution is quite clear: stop doing the practice. In all these cases, Menzan is not denying that *kanna* practice does have results, but claims that the results are at a low level and come with undesirable side effects.

From a later perspective, it may be possible to interpret passages like these from Menzan as invectives against Rinzai Zen or Hakuin (1686–1769), who is seen by the contemporary members of that lineage as the reviver of their school and as the champion of the practice of observing the phrase. Hakuin, however is not mentioned by name, and there is no evidence of which I am aware that these two figures knew of each other in any way. Of course, they could have met at some point in their long and nearly contemporaneous lives, but apparently they never resided in the same area at the same time. Menzan has no use for *kanna* practice, but in most cases his disapproval is of monks identified only by their unruly behavior or their participation in the practice of regarding the phrase, not as Rinzai monks.

Chapter 4 of the *Sermons* echoes some very modern concerns about the use of the *kyōsaku* (also read *keisaku*), a heavy, hard, stiff stick used during group meditation. The often frightening use of the *kyōsaku* to keep people awake or just to “encourage” them is a fixture of Japanese monastic practice that was not

always appreciated by Zen practitioners in the West, and was regarded by some as little more than hazing. As can be seen below, Menzan had exactly the same opinion nearly three hundred years earlier. Unlike so many Zen monastic details, this particular item does not appear in the standard rules from China, and Dōgen does not say anything about its use, either. Thus there is no textual authority to keep the practice from becoming excessive, a problem that is not a modern development, as we shall shortly see. In this as in so many other particulars, Menzan is arguing for a more humane and mainstream style of Zen Buddhism, relying on ancient Vinaya texts whenever he can, attempting to curb what he sees as overzealous excesses.

In this chapter, Menzan promotes the innovation of going back to the very old “meditation stick” (*zenjō*), instead of the current *kyōsaku*, which has no textual justification. The meditation stick is a piece of equipment for the meditation hall which is mentioned in the Vinaya, though not in the rules of the Zen schools, and the term is not generally used in Zen texts. The “zen” of the word refers to meditation, not to the Zen school, hence my translation as meditation stick.

In the Vinaya the Buddha explained the way to use the meditation stick.²⁹ It is made of bamboo or reed and one end is wrapped in something soft, so it will not hurt when used. The meditation stick does not appear in the old meditation rules because it was not necessary: everyone did *zazen* on the long platform, and if someone was sleepy, they quietly took off their robe and slipped away to do walking meditation alone in the corridor. However today we do *zazen* as a group and walking meditation as a group. . . . The *kyōsaku* was made for when sleepiness cannot be avoided. Although its usage is based on the usage of the meditation stick, is not orthodox. It is used like a whip for inflicting a punishment or like using a whip on a horse. Nonetheless, nowadays because there is no rule for the use of the stick in the Pure Rules, the people who are guiding *zazen* often use it with abandon as much as they want. Once this abuse has arisen, it tends to run wild.

I have gone to various practice places to see how the *kyōsaku* is used, and . . . sometimes when a person puts up with the pain of the stick, they get sicker and sicker, until they die of it. This terrible situation arises when monks are beaten up and bloody even around the head, eye, ear, and nose. Many of the assembly have wounds filled with puss on their shoulders. . . . In this country and time, *kyōsaku* usage is so violent that I have heard of tens of *kyōsaku* being broken. This is told of throughout the population of monks. . . .

In the teaching of our founder Dōgen, for *zazen* there is a rule, and for walking meditation there is a method. . . . So I took a piece of bamboo and made a meditation stick for myself. The proper way to use the stick is as follows. If you see someone sleeping, formally pick up the stick and quietly walk over to the sleeping one's place. With the tip of the stick, stroke the top of his shoulder. In this way wake him up, and bow with the stick to display apology. If he again is sleepy, again with the tip gently push up his shoulder, and when he wakes up, bow with the stick to display apology. If he is sleepy a third time, lightly tap him on the shoulder. The stick should not be more than a foot in length. When he wakes up, bow with the stick to display apology. . . .

If you do it properly, then giving and receiving [the stick] cannot be separated, like milk and water. The way of *zazen* has been properly transmitted by Buddhas and Patriarchs. The main purpose of the stick is only to wake up sleepers. If someone is soundly sleeping, snoring and talking, we call out to him to wake him up. If someone is sleeping a bit in meditation, is it necessary to hit him strongly, to violently startle him? If a person lets go of things and his mind is quiet, then his sleep is light. If someone clings to many things and his mind is flustered, his sleep is heavy.³⁰

Stepping Down to His Study Retreat

In 1741, at age fifty-nine, Menzan turned over Kūinji to Katsudō Fukan (n.d.) and moved to the nearby small retreat temple of Eifukuan, devoting himself in earnest to writing. He had been abbot for twelve years, but apparently Menzan did not have the political connections to place his own dharma heir at Kūinji, just as he had not been able to at his former temple Zenjōji in Kyushu. These temple lineages did come back to his line, however, and now these temples have abbots that trace themselves to Menzan. They host an annual memorial for Menzan at Eifukuan, which attracts a score or more of Menzan's heirs from around the country (and at least one foreign visitor from time to time). At this point in his life, Menzan was largely finished with his work of defending Dōhaku's dharma transmission reforms that had been approved back in 1703, and he had completed his major works on monastic practice rules that very year. He did continue to write shorter works about specific aspects of monastic life, but he gave up on the effort to bring his ideas into practice at Eiheiji and in Sōtō monasteries more widely.

He returned to his earlier project about the life of Dōgen, which culminated in the 1754 publication of the *Revised and Expanded Record of Kenzei*, his popular rendition of the life of Dōgen.³¹ Menzan used the *Kenzeiki*, written by Kenzei (1415–1474) the fourteenth abbot of Eiheiji, as his basic text, but in fact his revisions and additions are quite substantial, something which was overlooked until the 1970s. Menzan's new biography gave the Sōtō community an accessible story of the life of its founder for the first time. Menzan's earlier publication had cleared away the almost complete darkness about basic details of Dōgen's life with a dry collection of key facts, but this new work of hagiography was to receive a very wide readership. The *Revised and Expanded Record of Kenzei* (*Teiho Kenzeiki*) was frequently reprinted, including an 1806 printing with illustrations that was part of the official celebration of the Dōgen memorial year. The foreword to this edition describes how a series of fundraising efforts throughout the country made it possible to have illustrations made for the new edition and for copies to be distributed throughout Japan. Thus the *Revised and Expanded Record of Kenzei* became the main source of popular knowledge of Dōgen and, until recently, was accepted in the scholarly community as well. Because it quickly became the standard, texts that Menzan used as sources were no longer copied and were nearly lost.

In 1975, Kawamura Kōdō published a comparative edition of newly discovered manuscripts of the *Kenzeiki*, and the extent of Menzan's changes have become apparent, throwing into doubt some long-accepted ideas about Dōgen, including most of the well-known and dramatic elements in his life. For example, Menzan inserts a paragraph about Dōgen's activities at age fifteen.³² In all of the oldest manuscripts of the *Kenzeiki* for this year there is the simple statement that Dōgen entered the room of the founder of Kenninji and first heard of the way of the Rinzai school. Kenninji was founded in 1202 by Eisai, after his return from China with certification as a fully qualified Zen teacher, but by the time Dōgen was fifteen Eisai had already died. In Menzan's expanded version, Dōgen is depicted as assiduously studying the sutras and commentaries, and having doubts about the doctrine of intrinsic awakening, a key teaching of Japanese Buddhism, especially in the Tendai lineage that Dōgen first followed. After first seeking local guidance, Dōgen was sent to Eisai of Kenninji for a solution to this difficult problem. All of this is lacking in the manuscripts, and yet this is the core of the popular image of Dōgen's youthful doubts, and his dissatisfaction with Tendai teaching. Menzan's version then adds a long note about the contents of the interview between Dōgen and Eisai, a mysterious *kōan* dialogue about original nature for which Menzan gives no source, and for which no source has ever been found.

The 1806 version, which was distributed throughout the country, has illustrations that show this meeting and the prior event when Dōgen was being sent to Kenninji for guidance. Thus the popular illustrated text highlighted events that are absent or unclear in the original *Kenzeiki*. These problems have caused some diminution of Menzan's reputation as a careful scholar, but it should be pointed out that this was not one of Menzan's works of philological scholarship (like his first biography of Dōgen), but a text explicitly written for a popular audience and crafted to paint a portrait of the founder whom Menzan was promoting as an inspiration to all. He makes this purpose clear in the preface, yet such was Menzan's reputation that for many years his story was taken as the definitive biography, rather than inspirational hagiography.

During this period, Menzan also wrote the *Record of the Activities of Zen Teacher Tiantong Rujing* (*Tendō Nyojō Zenji anroku*), a biography of Dōgen's teacher Rujing, and published an edition of the *Record of the Hōkyō Era* (*Hōkyōki*), which purports to be Dōgen's record of his time in China with Rujing (1163–1228). Menzan continued his major research efforts on the *Shōbōgenzō* and began to publish commentaries on Dōgen's shorter independent pieces. Due to internal squabbles about the proper text of the *Shōbōgenzō*, the government had agreed to a ban on printing of the *Shōbōgenzō* itself starting in 1722, so Menzan did not have the opportunity to publish his own edition. He printed his *Fukan zazengi monge* and *Zazenshin monge*, commentaries on Dōgen's texts about seated meditation. The word *monge* in these titles is appended to the name of the text to which it is a commentary. Menzan used *monge* to mean an explanation in response to a question, and it became a standard tag phrase used for his Japanese-language commentaries.

Despite his many earlier lectures on the precepts in general, he had not published anything on the particular precepts appropriate to Dōgen's lineage. His major work on this topic, *The Teaching of the Correctly Transmitted Great Precepts of the Buddhas and Ancestors* (*Busso shōden daikai ketsu*), had been finished in 1724 but was published in 1748. During the following fifteen years, he published four more pieces on precepts. The research materials contained in these works are the foundation of Sōtō understanding of Dōgen's views on precepts. Some of Menzan's own ideas, however, which tended to emphasize a more mainstream interpretation of precepts, were not well received by most Sōtō abbots. Menzan took the position that as important as it was to receive the precepts, the taking was a confirmation of practice, not its completion. Menzan's general attitudes are plainly laid out in his *Precepts [Assembly] Sermons* (*Jakushū Eifuku Oshō sekai*), which are his lectures delivered in 1752 during a seven-day precepts assembly attended by six hundred people, including both clerics and male and female laity. He emphasizes that for all their importance,

the precepts are only one of the three main parts of the triad of precepts, meditation, and wisdom, likening them to the three legs of a pot.³³ Eventually Menzan's position lost out to the more radical interpretation of Banjin Dōtan (1698–1775), who stressed the uniqueness of precepts in Zen and their radical power to transform the recipient at the moment they are received.

In addition to all these projects, he managed to find time to finish his *Verses for the Chapters of the Mahaprajnaparamita sutra* (*Daihannyakyō chikukan keisan*). He had written verses on each of the first fifty chapters when he was twenty-six, but in the preface he says that work on monastic rules had kept him from returning to the text. Now, at the age of seventy-three, he completed the task for the remaining five hundred and fifty chapters and had it printed in 1756. This work is not collected in the Sōtō compendiums (*Sōtōshū zensho* and *Zoku Sōtōshū zensho*), but it is included in the Wisdom Sūtra section of the *Nihon daizōkyō*.³⁴ Only three other commentaries on this sutra are included in this comprehensive collection, and Menzan's commentary is as long as the other three combined. Nonetheless, this seems to have been a minor sideline for Menzan during moments away from his major effort, which was tracking down and commenting on the texts which Dōgen quoted in his *Shōbōgenzō*, a project which he says began in 1706 at the start of his three-year retreat and continued for some fifty years. By 1758, the writing was finished and the printing of his massive *Source Texts Cited in the Shōbōgenzō* began the next year. This work has remained the essential companion to the reading of the *Shōbōgenzō*.

New Topics in His Ninth Decade

The completion of this project marked a turning point for Menzan. He had entered the seventy-seventh year of his life, and he had finished the work on Dōgen that had been his goal ever since he was a young monk. His work on monastic regulations had been well received at first at Eiheiji, but had later been effectively shelved, and his interpretations of proper precepts for Sōtō Zen were not accepted. Although his work on the *Shōbōgenzō* eventually came to be highly regarded, it was scarcely a popular work, and its usefulness was limited until the prohibition against printing the *Shōbōgenzō* itself was lifted in 1796. Despite the volume of his printed output, at this point he must have been quite uncertain about the extent of his influence and about how long it would last.

From the late 1750s on, Menzan spent much of his time as a guest at various places in Kyoto, most often in subtemples of the great Rinzai Zen temple Kenninji. He continued to publish short pieces about the Zen precepts and ordinations, now in rejoinder to attacks on his previously published pieces, and

commentaries on independent works by Dōgen like the *Gakudō yōjinshū monge*, and the *Tenzo kyōkun monge*. He presided over precept assemblies nearly every year in either Edo or Kyoto, giving precepts to several hundred people at a time, including the 1752 assembly mentioned above, in which six hundred people received the precepts.

It is unclear whether he felt he was finished with his work on Dōgen and the rules and procedures specific to Sōtō, or he felt he had failed to achieve proper recognition and wanted to turn to something different, but at this time a new focus appears in his research. He began to work on the classic Chinese Zen texts, and especially on the great collections of *kōan* commentary. In 1758 he composed and put into print his *Explanations of the Old Cases Presented by the Old Buddha of Xi Province* (*Shishshū kobutsu juko shōtei*), a commentary on the great classic collection of one hundred old cases by Hongzhi Zhengjue (1091–1157), which is excerpted from Hongzhi's record.³⁵ Hongzhi was the teacher of the Sōtō (C. Caoding) lineage in China who was crucial for the revival of the lineage and has been held in the highest regard by the lineage in Japan. These cases of Hongzhi form the core of the famous compendium of *kōan* cases and commentary, the *Book of Serenity* (*Congrong lu*), published in 1224.³⁶ There are a number of commentaries on this work, but Menzan's is apparently the only one to be printed in premodern times.

He wrote other pieces in connection with Hongzhi at about the same time, and in 1763, at age eighty-one, he was invited to come from Kyoto to the major Edo temple of Seishōji to give a six-week series of lectures about Hongzhi and this *kōan* collection. According to the entry in his *Chronology*, it was attended by six hundred people, including fifty abbots of Edo area temples. This was apparently the only time that Menzan was in the spotlight of the Sōtō institution in Edo. He was the guest of more than one abbot of Eiheiji, and he often lectured in Kyoto, but the center of power was in Edo, and this is the only time that he was the speaker at such an illustrious event. Considering that he had already printed some forty-five works (including the multivolume works on pure rules and on the *Shōbōgenzō*), it is probably significant that he was not more often invited to give lectures in this kind of setting. His work on pure rules and on matters more directly related to Dōgen were still controversial for such a setting, and perhaps he wanted to avoid controversy that would threaten the unity of Sōtō Zen. He implied this when he wrote in his 1755 preface to the *Additional Record of Historical Research Concerning the Pure Rules for the Monks Hall of Sōtō*, "These rules for the head temple are also in effect rules for all the Sōtō temples of the entire country. There may be some opposition, and if there is, then a widespread debate between me and other Sōtō monks cannot be avoided."³⁷ In contrast, Hongzhi was a much safer topic. He was a universally

respected figure, and his *kōan* were far removed from contentious details of ceremony or the specifics of monastic life.

Despite the prestigious setting for these lectures, the *Explanations of the Old Cases* is not included in the modern Sōtō collections. The following year, Menzan wrote a similar commentary on the one hundred *kōan* cases of Xuedou Chongxian (980–1052), which became the basic text for the *Blue Cliff Record* (*Biyan lu*) commentary printed in 1128.³⁸ Xuedou was one of the most celebrated poets of Chinese Zen, and the *Blue Cliff Record* is regarded as perhaps the greatest of the elaborate works of literary *kōan* commentaries. This work was the model for Hongzhi's later work that Menzan had just written about. The *Blue Cliff Record* has tended, in Japan at least, to be identified more closely with the Rinzai lineage of its authors. Nevertheless, he composed the *Explanations of the One Hundred Old Cases of Zen Teacher Xuedou Hsien* (*Shishū kobutsu juko shōtei*), which was printed in 1788 and reprinted in 1833, 1859, and several times in the late nineteenth century by the Baiyō bookstore in Kyoto. This text is not in the Sōtō collections, either, and due to the obscurity of the references in both Menzan's *Chronology* and the *Zengaku daijiten*, it is very easy to overlook the fact that this text exists at all. Nonetheless, it seems to be the most often reprinted commentary on the *kōan* of Xuedou. This kind of work was clearly much in demand, and apparently there was no expectation that Menzan would confine himself to Dōgen or even to the *kōan* collection more closely linked to Sōtō. The modern editors who decided not to include these major works in their collections of Sōtō writings may have been influenced by contemporary sectarian thinking that makes a much sharper divide between Rinzai and Sōtō Zen than was seen in the Tokugawa era even by Menzan, the champion of Dōgen.

Menzan continued to write and publish until the end of his life. Just a few months before his death he wrote *On the Donations of the Faithful* (*Shinse ron*), a brief work about the importance of the monk's appreciation of the gifts offered by the laity. He continued to spend most of his time in Kyoto, sometimes at illustrious Rinzai temples like Nanzenji, and sometimes at more obscure Sōtō temples. Menzan's health began to fail in the ninth month of his eighty-seventh year (1769), while staying in Kyoto at Seiraiin, a subtemple of Kenninji where he had resided many times before when giving lectures and leading precept assemblies. His last public activity was to preach a sermon on causation, not to his monks or to the laity, but to the animals which were being used in the ceremony of *hōjōe* in which fish and birds are released from captivity. He wrote out his final testament, and when his students realized that death was near, they asked him for his final words, but he refused to say more. He was cremated in Kyoto, and his ashes were interred at Eifukuan, with portions going to nearby Kūinji and Zenjōji in Kyushu.

He had completed formal recognition of dharma transmission for twenty-seven of his students, enabling them to ordain their own students and advance to the position of abbot. About half of these heirs predeceased him, a comment perhaps on Menzan's stamina and long life. Judging from the standard lineage charts, only Dōhaku had more recognized heirs, and only a handful of other Sōtō teachers recognized even half as many heirs.³⁹ None of his direct heirs wrote anything of note, but Fuzan Gentotsu (d. 1789), a dharma heir to Kōda Soryō, one of Menzan's main disciples, is credited with nine titles. Despite the lineage order, when one considers the dates of their lives, it is clear that Fuzan must have studied directly with Menzan.

One striking omission in Menzan's works is a comprehensive commentary on the *Shōbōgenzō*. A set of commentaries exists, each chapter of which ends with his tag line *monge*. These became a popular introduction to reading the *Shōbōgenzō*, and were thought to be by Menzan. They are not. This mistaken attribution dates to 1891, when the collection was first published, and the pieces were attributed to Menzan by the editors. They were later incorporated into the standard collection of commentaries, and Menzan came to be identified with the rather pedestrian quality of these pieces. Nagakuta Taira has examined the manuscripts upon which he determined the first printed version was based, and concluded that only three of the ninety-five essays are by Menzan.⁴⁰ Nagakuta concludes that the remaining essays are probably from talks given during 1775 and 1776 by Fuzan. Apparently they were attributed to Menzan simply on the strength of the word *monge* in the title. Partly because of the rather simple but kindly and detailed quality of these lectures (which were in fact not by him), Menzan came to be called "Baba Menzan," which can be translated as "Grandma Menzan." Fuzan's commentaries were clearly based on Menzan's teaching, rather than being from his own research, and it seems that none of his close disciples followed Menzan's habits of original research and publishing.

At the end of the *Chronology*, amid the usual laudatory formulas, the writer comments that in spite of the number of pieces Menzan published during his lifetime, it was only a drop compared to the ocean of what he had written, and which his students were just beginning to assemble. The editors assembled his twenty-six volume *Extended Record* (*Eifuku Menzan Oshō kōroku*) and had it printed beginning in 1773, four years after his death.

Menzan Compared to His Peers

Menzan was an innovative and humane teacher for people from many walks of life and a demanding trainer of a large number of Zen teachers. He is remembered,

however, primarily for the quality of his writing and his meticulous attention to textual research, not to mention the quantity and range of his output: Menzan did fundamental work on nearly every aspect of Sōtō Zen teaching and practice. I have found 103 titles, and if we include the six major edited works (for example his own unpublished version of the *Shōbōgenzō*), there are 109 titles in 281 traditional volumes (*maki*). Fifty-five titles were printed during his lifetime, and four more within a few years of his death. In modern collected editions, he has a total of over 3,100 pages, and this does not include his large commentaries on major *kōan* collections from his late period. Aside from Dōgen and Keizan, no one comes close to Menzan in the Sōtō school. Indeed, he has more titles to his name in the collections than the next six most prolific Sōtō authors put together. Furthermore, his works touch on almost every aspect of Sōtō Zen, and there are other areas of major work, such as the extended commentaries on the massive *kōan* collections, that are not even commonly acknowledged. No one wrote as much as Menzan, and in the Sōtō lineage there is no one who equaled Menzan's meticulous approach and breadth of coverage. As Kagamishima has noted, Menzan's work is the beginning of doctrinal studies (*shūgaku*) in Sōtō Zen, and it is his framework that has continued, for better or worse, to define the field.⁴¹

Menzan was unparalleled in the ranks of Sōtō Zen, but he was not the only Japanese Zen monk to work in such a comprehensive way. There is one other, perhaps even more accomplished, Zen scholar-monk in premodern Japan to whom he can be compared: Mujaku Dōchū (1653–1745).⁴² This Rinzai lineage writer, based in Kyoto, has some 374 works to his credit, including his editions of both Buddhist and secular Chinese texts. Mujaku's approach was to first establish a text on the basis of comparisons of the oldest copies available, and only then interpret difficult passages, using other examples of similar usage found in a wide range of texts. Menzan's count of 103 titles falls far short of Mujaku's, though the number of pages of original writing is harder to determine, due to the almost complete lack of modern printed editions of his work. Menzan's methods were very similar to Mujaku's, and it is unfortunate that there seems to be no evidence of direct contact between these two. However, Menzan often quotes Mujaku's own compendium of rules, the *Sōrin ryakushingi*, in his *Additional Record of Historical Research Concerning the Pure Rules for the Monks Hall of Sōtō*, so he clearly studied Mujaku. In the list of books Mujaku read is found Menzan's *Record of the Activities of the Founder of Eihei*, so at least they knew of each other's writings, although it is disappointing that Mujaku apparently only read this one early piece by Menzan.⁴³

Despite the similarity of their methods, their publication record could hardly be in greater contrast. Mujaku published only one title during his lifetime,

and even in the twentieth century only three more titles were typeset and a handful more were circulated in various forms of photographic reproduction. In sharp contrast, Menzan lived to see fifty-five of his titles published as wood-block prints, more than half of his total output. This quantity of printing of Menzan's very technical and lengthy works is all the more striking when we consider just what it meant to have something printed in eighteenth-century Japan.⁴⁴ Kyoto was the center of a thriving business in commercial publishing based on woodblock carving, which was preferred to movable type because of the greater flexibility for the intricate layers of punctuation of Japanese texts (especially Chinese written in Japan) and the ease of including illustrations. Books were an important part of life at all levels of society, but this was an era when a wild bestseller of a novel would have fewer than ten thousand copies printed. The cost of books is hard to grasp: an ordinary novel would cost as much as a month's worth of food, and even a cheap short story cost two weeks of food. Lending libraries were popular and would lend books for something like five days for 10 percent of the purchase price, still not a trivial amount. Buddhist books typically cost several times what secular works of similar size cost.

How many copies of Menzan's works were actually printed is altogether unclear, but woodblocks have to be recarved after only a few thousand copies at most. And the proprietor of the Baiyō bookstore (which owns the woodblocks of many of his works) claims that the blocks are the original carvings and laughs at the idea that anyone would have paid to have them recarved. He says this part of his business is sustained by a few professors who order copies for their classes. Menzan's works would perhaps have had an initial run of a few hundred copies, probably paid for in advance by subscription (as is implied by the prefaces). Perhaps it is not surprising that the woodblocks are not worn out after two hundred and fifty years: if we accept these rough estimates of prices, it seems that a copy of Menzan's *Source Texts* in ten volumes would have cost the equivalent of two to three years of food, at a time when food cost was a much greater part of living expenses.

Menzan's Impact

Menzan's influence came mostly from his published works, but in addition to his vast written output, he delivered a stream of public lectures, presided over sixteen major precept assemblies, counseled lay people who came to discuss Buddhist life with him, and led monastic retreats for decades. He was not an intimate of those in power, nor was he an attraction at countless public events,

like Dōhaku, but he left an indelible mark on the school with his framework of Sōtō doctrinal studies and masterful textual research that is valuable even today. As the *Chronology* says in the concluding encomium, Menzan was a master of both exoteric and esoteric Buddhism and a great teacher of both Rinzai Zen and Sōtō Zen.

I suggested at the beginning that it is important to ask why it is that Dōgen is so important to Sōtō Zen. The reader might wonder if I am suggesting that the correct reply is “Because of Menzan.” That, however, would be an unwarranted exaggeration, and indeed a disservice to Menzan himself. Dōgen’s writings are themselves sufficient reason for Menzan’s lifelong mission to understand them, beyond the fact that Dōgen was the first Japanese member of the lineage and useful to Menzan’s agenda. Interest in what Dōgen wrote continues to grow stronger and more widespread year by year, even though it is over three hundred years since these reform efforts began. It is true, however, that Dōgen is not now, and probably never was, very approachable. His powers of language and his ability to inspire are not in question, but it is a daunting challenge to grasp what those inspiring words actually mean, much less put into practice the path he indicated. Menzan’s work helped enormously to make it possible to understand Dōgen’s writings, and his approach has set a tone for Sōtō Zen studies that has continued to the present.

Menzan brought learning and philological method to his study of Dōgen and presented his findings in print so that they were available to all lineages and all factions. With this flood of new material, the secret documents and rituals upon which rival Sōtō lineages based their power lost their luster, and in many cases were revealed by Menzan to be little more than unlearned forgeries completely lacking the pedigree of any connection to Dōgen. In this new light, the claim to authority based on Dōgen became something that could be tested against the scholarship of Menzan and others, not something that had to be accepted on trust. In other words, it was no longer enough to possess some precious chapters of the *Shōbōgenzō* and use that as a basis for claiming that one’s own teaching and practice represented Dōgen’s teachings. The learning that Menzan championed gave him the tools to construct a new tradition based upon old documents. He interpreted those texts in the light of contemporary values and adapted his readings to social conditions that were very different from those of Dōgen’s time. With this interpretation, Dōgen became a powerful daily presence in Sōtō Zen, not just a revered but distant founder.

Menzan contributed to all aspects of the doctrinal discussion in Sōtō Zen, and even in an area such as precepts where his views did not prevail, his work brought together the resources and texts that defined the parameters of the arguments. It was probably his writing on monastic rules that had the greatest

effect on the practical life of Sōtō monks in training. He demonstrated convincingly that Dōgen's monastic directions required a different building and a different routine than the rules widely in effect in early eighteenth-century Sōtō, which had been heavily influenced by Ōbaku Zen. His work led to procedures of monastic practice that were new to everyone, but which were clearly based on practices that could, in most cases at least, be dated to Dōgen's time. These practices are now a major component of the self-identity of the school, and Eiheiji is one of the best known of all Buddhist monasteries in the country. Dōgen and Eiheiji are so central to contemporary Sōtō Zen that it is hard to remember that in Menzan's time it was not even clear who Dōgen was or what he had really written, much less what his texts meant.

In the more popular arena, Menzan's most enduring legacy is his biography of Dōgen. The stories that Menzan presented, and the pictures that were soon attached to them, depicted a troubled young Dōgen who courageously overcame great obstacles in his quest for the dharma. It is now clear that this work is closer to a hagiography than was previously thought, but those images helped to hold together Sōtō Zen over the years and continue to inspire members of the community whether or not they read Dōgen's writings or engage in monastic practice. This life story, along with the more poetic and philosophical pieces from the *Shōbōgenzō*, contributed greatly to the popularity of Dōgen in Japan as well as in the West.

Despite his lifelong focus on Dōgen, Menzan studied and wrote about other Zen texts and spent much of his later life as an honored guest of major Rinzai Zen temples in Kyoto. Yet this aspect of his life is little noted, and it is striking that his major works of commentary on *kōan* collections are left out of the standard anthologies and generally overlooked, despite the fact that they enjoyed over a hundred years of reprintings in premodern times. In addition, he has been held up on very insufficient grounds as an early opponent of Rinzai *kanna* Zen, a position that is very important to the modern Sōtō school. Menzan is perhaps the beginning of the modern understanding of Dōgen, but it is not correct to attribute the opposition between Rinzai and Sōtō Zen schools to him, and a proper evaluation of his work must carefully bracket modern assumptions about this opposition.

But what of Menzan's failures? His quite mainstream ideas about precepts as the foundation for practice fell on deaf ears, and Sōtō Zen now treats precepts as little more than the topic for another esoteric ceremony with little moral emphasis. And his very compassionate idea that the thrashing of the hardwood *kyōsaku* should be replaced with gentle prods with a padded bamboo stick seems to have had no effect whatsoever. Unlike the modern strict separation from Rinzai, Menzan displayed little sectarian animosity, despite his rejection of

the extremes of *kanna* practices. He respected many ways of dealing with *kōan* cases, from his own certification of awakening with a remark from a *kōan* to his commentaries on the great *kōan* collections. These, however, are just the kind of modern ideas and practices that have been emphasized in Zen communities in the West and perhaps will be followed some day.

The extent to which Sōtō Zen reflected and absorbed the values of Tokugawa society can hardly be exaggerated. Kagamishima expresses this very aptly when he asks himself whether or not we can accept the claim of Dōhaku and Menzan to have truly revived the old way of Dōgen. His answer is categorically no, because they were clearly men of their time, which was a very different time from the medieval period in which Dōgen lived.⁴⁵ Most important, Dōhaku and Menzan were willing to make compromises in order to keep the lineage going, to adapt to the stringent government controls and social demands. Furthermore, a return to Dōgen's way may not be possible because it may never have existed except as his own ideal. Dōgen died only ten years after moving away from Kyoto to begin building his own Zen monastery, properly constructed from the beginning according to his ideals. Eiheiiji was not yet a fully functional monastery upon his early death. The spread of the lineage in the Middle Ages was possible because of the adaptation of Dōgen's message and introduction of new elements to fit the needs of the people.⁴⁵ In this sense, Menzan was not so much returning to the old ways as he was reading Dōgen for inspiration and for raw materials, and then writing for his own time.

Menzan needs to be seen in this light as both more creative and perhaps less literally accurate than has been previously thought. The Tokugawa reforms led to the present situation wherein Dōgen's preeminence is so central to the self-understanding of the school that contemporary writers usually speak of Dōgen Zen rather than Sōtō Zen. Such an exclusive focus on Dōgen constitutes nothing less than the creation of a new tradition of Zen within the old boundaries of the temples and people of the Sōtō lineage. As a better understanding of his accomplishments takes shape, Menzan may emerge from his chosen position in the shadow of Dōgen to take his rightful place as one of the major creative thinkers of Sōtō Zen.

NOTES

1. This chapter is revised and expanded from material that was first published as "The Life of Menzan Zuihō, Founder of Dōgen Zen," *Nichibunken Japan Review* 16 (2004): 67–100. My appreciation to the editor, James Baxter, and to the International Research Center for Japanese Studies for permission and for their support during the

work for that article. The beginnings of this research was carried out under the sponsorship of the Japan Foundation at Komazawa University, under Professor Kosaka Kiyū's patient tutelage. My thanks to all of these people and institutions for their generous support.

2. Carl Bielefeldt, "Recarving the Dragon: History and Dogma in the Study of Dōgen," in *Dōgen Studies*, edited by William R. LaFleur (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), pp. 21–24.
3. William M. Bodiford, *Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), pp. 44–50.
4. William M. Bodiford, "Dharma Transmission in Sōtō Zen: Manzan Dōhaku's Reform Movement," *Monumenta Nipponica* 46/4 (1991): 423–451; and Lawrence William Gross, "Manzan Dōhaku and the Transmission of the Teaching," Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1998.
5. Kawamura Kōdō, *Shōbōgenzō no seiritsushiteki kenkyū* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1987), pp. 396–397.
6. Helen J. Baroni, *Ōbaku Zen: The Emergence of the Third Sect of Zen in Tokugawa Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000); and Jiang Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute: The Reinvention of Chan Buddhism in Seventeenth-Century China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).
7. Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
8. For a general discussion of the Sōtō reforms and the contemporary context, see David E. Riggs, "The Rekindling of a Tradition: Menzan Zuihō and the Reform of Japanese Sōtō Zen in the Tokugawa Era," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 2002.
9. Maruyama Masao, *Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 39–51.
10. S-Goroku 3.
11. I have also consulted the compendium of details taken from the *Chronology* and other sources by Satō Hidekō, a brief critical summary of his life by Kagamishima Genryū, and a more traditional presentation by Suzuki Kakuzen. For the two years he spent with his main teacher, Sonnō, the best source is Menzan's own record of Sonnō's life during that time, the *Record of the Teachings of the Hōei Era* (Kenmon hōei ki ZS-Hōgo). Kagamishima Genryū, *Manzan Menzan* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1988), pp. 47–59; Satō Hidekō, "Eifukukaisan Menzan Zuihō Zenji nenpu," in *Menzan Zuihou Zenji nihyaku nijukai koenki kiyō*, edited by Eifukukai (Tokyo: Eifukukai, 1988); and Suzuki Kakuzen, "Menzan," in *Dōgen shisō no ayumi*, edited by Sōtōshū Shūgaku kenkyūjo (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kobunkan, 1993).
12. Peter Kornicki, *The Book in Japan: A Cultural History from the Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), pp. 136–158.
13. S-Shiden 328–329. For a complete translation see Peter Haskel, *Letting Go: The Story of Zen Master Tōsui* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001).
14. ZS-Hōgo 3:821. Ōkubo Dōshū, ed., *Dōgen Zenji zenshū* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1969–1970), 2:189. T. 48.2003:190c27.

15. Ryūichi Abé, *Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 43–44, 53–55.
16. T. 5–7.220.
17. Tamamuro Fumio, *Edo jidai to Sōtōshū no tenkai* (Tokyo: Sōtōshū shūmucchō, 1999), p. 85; and Duncan Williams, “Representations of Zen: An Institutional and Social History of Sōtō Zen Buddhism in Edo Japan” (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2000), p. 36. Forty *ryō* = 30,000 pounds of rice, which might today cost the same number of U.S. dollars. See Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Village Practice: Class, Status, Power, Law* (Berkeley: University of California, 1996), p. 49; and Thomas C. Smith, *The Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), pp. 6, 125.
18. ZS-Hōgo, pp. 463 and 465. For an annotated translation of the entire text, see David E. Riggs, “Meditation for Laymen and Laywomen: The *jijuyūzanmai* of Menzan Zuihō,” in *The Zen Canon*, edited by Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 247–269.
19. Komazawa Daigakunai Zengaku Dai Jiten Hensanjo, ed., *Zengaku daijiten* (Tokyo: Taishukan Shoten, 1985), p. 434.
20. S-Shingi, p. 208.
21. T. 82.2607:775–778. S-Shingi, p. 210.
22. Ōkubo Dōshū, *Dōgen Zenji shingi* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, [1941] 1987), p. 284.
23. For an annotated translation of *Standards*, see David E. Riggs, “Meditation in Motion: Textual Exegesis in the Creation of Ritual,” in *Zen Ritual*, edited by Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 223–259.
24. Kagamishima Genryū, “Edo jidai no tenkai: shūgi,” in *Dōgen Zen no rekishi*, edited by Kagamishima Genryū and Tamaki Kōjirō (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1980); and Shibe Ken’ichi, “Tenkei,” in *Dōgen shisō no ayumi*, edited by Sōtōshū Shūgaku kenkyūjo (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kobunkan, 1993).
25. ZS-Shitchū 669–680. For an overview of these reforms, see Bodiford, “Dharma Transmission in Sōtō Zen.”
26. S-Shitchū. This text is discussed and selections translated in Ishikawa Rikizan, “Transmission of *Kirigami* (Secret Initiation Documents): A Sōtō Practice in Medieval Japan,” in *The Kōan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*, edited by Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 235–236.
27. ZS-Goroku vol. 2, T. 82.2604. *Taishō* pagination is provided for reference, but the reading is from the woodblock edition. For an interpretive modern Japanese rendering of the first five chapters, see Kagamishima, *Manzan Menzan*.
28. T. 82.2604.0728b08–b18.
29. Menzan does not specify, but he is apparently quoting from the *Mohe sengqilu*, T. 22.1425–513a.
30. T. 82. 2604.0726c01–0727b16.
31. S-Shiden 2.
32. Kawamura Kōdō, *Shohon taikō Eihei Kaisan Dōgen Zenji gyōjō Kenzeiki* (Tokyo: Taishukan Shoten, 1975), p. 7.

33. *Jakushū Eifuku Oshō sekai*, S-Zenkai, p. 143.
34. Naka Takkei et al., eds., *Nihon Daizōkyō* (Tokyo: Nihon Daizōkyō Hensankai, 1914–1919), pp. 10: 79–153.
35. T. 48.2001.
36. T. 48.2004.
37. S-Shingi 209b.
38. T. 8.2003.
39. Komazawa, *Zengaku daijiten*, pp. 26–36.
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