

STEVEN HEINE



*Like Cats and Dogs*

CONTESTING THE MU KŌAN IN  
ZEN BUDDHISM

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## { ACKNOWLEDGMENTS }

*Like Cats and Dogs* represents my second monograph that deals entirely with a single kōan case record. The first book on such a topic, *Shifting Shape, Shaping Text: Philosophy and Folklore in the Fox Kōan*, published in 1999, examined the second case of the *Gateless Gate* collection produced in 1229 dealing with the story of a wild fox appearing within the monastery gates of master Baizhang to ask a probing question about karmic causality. The current volume on the Mu Kōan examines the first case of the compilation of forty-eight kōans, which is a dialogue between master Zhaozhou and an anonymous disciple about whether or not a dog has Buddha-nature. In a subdialogue of one of the main versions of the kōan, Zhaozhou remarks that the dog does not have spirituality because of its awareness of karma.

This publishing sequence was not done by design. Looking back, I am somewhat surprised, since the scholarly development was by no means a matter of systematic career planning. Rather, my focus on the first two cases is something that transpired in an unforeseen and unanticipated way some years apart. It was part of a more general continuing interest in examining the vast body of kōan literature in relation to various interpretations and understandings that have been put forth by scholars and practitioners for more than a millennium.

Although I have commented elsewhere on the third case in the *Gateless Gate* concerning Juzhi cutting a novice's finger, I have no intention (as of now) of writing an entire book on that theme. Perhaps I can best do such a sustained study of a particular kōan record if it deals with animals, whether real or mythical. The Cat Kōan, which is case 14 in the collection and also involves an act of violence, is briefly discussed in these pages because part of the narrative is attributed to Zhaozhou, but this is not likely to become the topic of a full-length study.

My next scholarly tome will probably be a critical analysis of the styles of rhetoric in the *Blue Cliff Record*, particularly as seen through Yuanwu's prose comments on Xuedou's verses. As explained here, this seminal text—arguably the most eloquent and comprehensive in scope of the major kōan collections produced in Song-dynasty China—does not contain the Mu Kōan, even though the work was composed a century before the *Gateless Gate*. In fact, the *Blue Cliff Record* was probably published too early, rather than too late, to include a reference to the case of the dog, which did not become prominent until the 1130s based on a range of sociocultural factors affecting the formation of Zen thought in Southern Song intellectual history.

The *Blue Cliff Record* does, however, contain the Cat Kōan, which is spread out over two cases (63 on Nanquan's cutting the cat, and 64 on Zhaozhou's quixotic response upon hearing the story). It seems that at the time of the formation of the classic collections, Zhaozhou was probably better known for this case than for the Mu Kōan, which is striking given the apparently overwhelming importance of the dog dialogue for the kōan tradition. Exploring the reasons for the oversight is one of the primary aims of this volume.

Unlike *Shifting Shape, Shaping Text*, which deals extensively with the role of magical, shape-shifting foxes in monastic ritual as influenced by popular religiosity and folklore, here I limit my discussion of dogs to the way they are depicted in Zen literature. The reader will learn of canines that bark at the moon, howl and growl, chase and disgrace, run after mistaken prey or gnaw on rotting bones, or lick hot oil or spilled blood. However, I do not talk about dogs outside of their portrayal in Zen texts, such as those creatures that were used in ancient ceremonial sacrifices, in palace veneration, or as objects of worship (especially in Japan) or sources of food (in China). For me, the dog is something that is good to think, not to eat.

Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that, as with the fox, the image of dogs in Asian religion and culture is complex and continually evolving. I recently learned that a Zen monk in Japan has taken the mimicking quality to new heights by training his pet to participate in the practice of temple rites by praying standing upright on its hind legs. This can be considered either a celebration or a mockery of canine behavior (<http://thebuddhistblog.blogspot.com/2008/03/praying-dog-and-how-animals-teach-us.html>).

*Like Cats and Dogs* has been a long time coming, and I am grateful for brainstorming and feedback received from various colleagues and associates over the years, including Roger Ames, William Bodiford, Ruben Habito, Victor Hori, Seijun Ishii, Chris Ives, Richard Jaffe, Gereon Kopf, Miriam Levering, Shirō Matsumoto, Yuki Miyamoto, Michaela Mross, On-cho Ng, Takashi Odagiri, Steve Odin, Jin Park, Mario Poceski, Michael Quick, Morten Schlütter, Therese Sollien, John Tucker, Pamela Winfield, Dale Wright, Lidu Yi, and Jimmy Yu, among many others. I greatly appreciate the support of Cynthia Read and her staff, and also thank several student assistants who helped prepare the manuscript for publication, including Jennylee Diaz, Maria Sol Echarren, Maria Magdaline Jamass, Kristina Loveman, and Gabriela Romeu.

In particular, I express my warmest regards for translator and artist par excellence Kaz Tanahashi, who contributed the calligraphy for the book cover. Kaz first sent me a digital version and then mailed the actual scroll while he was overseas in Europe. Unfortunately, this arrived when I was away on vacation and, left to stand outside my home by the postman, it was apparently stolen. When I told Kaz, he was kind enough to send another version but also asked, "Why would anyone want to steal nothing?"

I have also learned from an erstwhile supervisor what I playfully call the Yes Kōan. This developed when I persistently asked a simple either/or question about carrying out an important yet sensitive assignment—should I, or shouldn't I?—and was finally texted, in a word, “Yes,” but without it being made clear which alternative was the one being affirmed. Ooooh! Or, should I say, U/You?

May readers find within these pages the appropriate canine, or the one that will hunt best in relation to his or her style of learning about Zen teachings. Whether or not they will be able to meet Zhaozhou's dog face to face, well, that is a horse of a different color. I am reminded of a fox hunting expression that refers to the lead dog catching the scent of the vulpine and giving out a “full cry.” Once the call is made, all the other dogs fall into line to pursue the prey with unified vigor. Why not go fetch? But after hearing the cry according to the Zen injunctions, maybe you'd better shut your yap before even hounds start laughing at you. Just don't do anything to make them dogs bark, as in the following verse: “Once Zhaozhou's mouth made these unfounded remarks, / Who could distinguish right from wrong? / He had to endure hearing so much laughter of the dogs, / Who, in the dead of night, started barking in the vacant hall,” and enjoy!

Or, as the rock group The Band sings, “It's dog eat dog and cat eat mouse / You can rag Mama rag all over my house.”



FIGURE 0.1 Map of Chinese Chan Buddhist Temples.

Like Cats and Dogs

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## More Cats Than Dogs?

### A TALE OF TWO VERSIONS

#### Overall Significance of the Mu Kōan

The Mu Kōan 無公案 (or Wu Gong'an in its original Chinese pronunciation) consists of a brief conversation in which a monk asks master Zhaozhou Congshen (Jp. Jōshū Jūshin, 778–897) whether or not a dog has Buddha-nature (Ch. *foxing*, Jp. *bussō*), and the reply is Mu (Ch. Wu), literally, “No.” This case is surely the single best-known and most widely circulated and transmitted kōan record of the Zen (Ch. Chan, Kr. Seon) school of Buddhism. It is recognized as “the kōan of kōans,” according to Japanese authority Akizuki Ryūmin, or as the first and foremost example among thousands of cases.<sup>1</sup> As recently deceased master John Daido Looi, one of the main exponents of the Sōtō school’s approach to Zen in America, said of its importance for the Zen tradition, “All the rest of the kōan system, of the 700 or 2,000 of the cases, are simply a process of refining what’s originally seen in Mu.”<sup>2</sup>

Another prominent contemporary Zen leader, the late Taiwanese monk Sheng Yen, whose teachings that were greatly influenced by the prominent twentieth-century Chinese Chan reformer Xu Yun spread extensively and remain highly influential in the West, has based his approach almost entirely on disseminating the Mu Kōan as a means of “shattering the great doubt.” Although, like Akizuki, he stems from the Linji/Rinzai school, a different lineage than Looi’s Caodong/Sōtō school background, Sheng Yen reaches the same conclusion in calling Mu “the most clear-cut, the easiest to use, and the most effective” of case records.<sup>3</sup>

The focus on the Mu Kōan is most closely connected with the teachings of twelfth-century Linji school master Dahui Zonggao (Jp. Daie Sōkō), who stressed this case as the single most important “key-phrase” (Ch. *huatou*, Jp. *watō*, Kr. *hwadu*), or “head-word” or “punch-line,” representing a shortcut path that leads to sudden awakening. The list of enthusiastically supportive comments mentioned by various modern masters is a powerful indicator of pan-sectarian unity showing that the priority of this kōan runs across partisan lines and historical boundaries that are otherwise rather conflictive in regard to endorsing respective styles of teaching and practice.

## FORMATION OF THE KŌAN TRADITION

The crucial role played by the case of Zhaozhou's dog must be cast in terms of the history of kōans 公案 (Ch. *gongan*, Kr. *kongan*) representing the mainstay of the development of Zen literary arts, as well as ritual training. These spiritual riddles or reason-defying enigmas, often climaxing with pithy but seemingly nonsensical catchphrases, such as "three pounds of flax," "a cypress tree stands in the courtyard," or "being and nonbeing are like vines entangling a tree," to cite just a few of hundreds of examples, lie at the heart of theory and practice in nearly all circles of Zen past and present. The case records are contained in major kōan collections that constitute the leading set of primary texts studied in temples and academies throughout China/Taiwan, Japan, and Korea and, since the twentieth century, in practice centers and universities in America and the West.

Most kōan cases feature extensive poetic (Ch. *songgu*, Jp. *juko*) and prose (Ch. *niangu*, Jp. *nenko*) commentaries explaining the brief and opaque yet revelatory oral exchanges that constitute the Zen encounter dialogue (Ch. *jiyuan wenda*, Jp. *kien mondō*). This type of question-and-answer dialogue constitutes an intriguing style of reflective repartee generally held between an enlightened teacher and an aspiring disciple or rival teacher. At once formulaic and innovative with a deliberately bewildering manner of expression that highlights the role of irreverence and disingenuous blasphemy by utilizing the rhetorical devices of irony, duplicity, and wordplay, the encounter dialogue showcases one party demonstrating his or her authentic understanding through verbal prowess that relies on disassociation, misdirection, non sequitur, or reticence. The charged interplay exposes the extent of ignorance and suffering on the part of the interlocutor by challenging his or her misguided views and assumptions to the core. Such a comeuppance can be baffling and humiliating, but the sense of profound self-doubt it generates helps trigger a sudden flash of insight through stirring or shocking the dialogue partner out of an unconscious attachment to logic and reliance on conventional uses of language that had been blocking the path to spiritual awakening.

As a repository of enigmatic verbal communication capped off by thought-provoking quips and puns, kōan case records have formed the centerpiece of Zen for over a thousand years. During Song-dynasty (960–1279) China, which marked the classical period in the development of Chan texts, kōans were extracted from a remarkably large array of dialogues about the experience and transmission of enlightenment attained by ancestors from the formative period of the school that had emerged during the Tang dynasty (618–907). Old or precedent cases (Ch. *guze*, Jp. *kosoku*) were catalogued in collections with commentaries and, beginning in the late tenth century, were utilized in the setting of monastic training halls to inspire and test the level of understanding of trainees. The pedagogical function of kōans was expanded

significantly in the eleventh century, and during the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries these writings and forms of practice spread rapidly to Korea in the second half of the Goryeo dynasty (968–1392) and to Japan at the dawn of the Kamakura era (1185–1333). The process of dissemination, which took place amid the threat of Mongol invasions in both countries, was followed by the ongoing growth of influence of the Zen temple institution in East Asian societies that continued through the early modern period.

The major kōan collections of Song China include the *Blue Cliff Record* (Ch. *Biyānlù*, Jp. *Hekiganroku*) of 1128 by Linji-Yangqi (Jp. Rinzai-Yōgi) stream master Yuanwu Keqin (Jp. Engo Kokugon) based on one hundred cases with verse comments selected by Xuedou (Jp. Setchō) during the mid-eleventh century;<sup>4</sup> the *Record of Serenity* (Ch. *Congronglù*, Jp. *Shōyōroku*) of 1224 by Caodong school master Wansong (Jp. Bānshō) based on one hundred cases and verse comments in the record of Hongzhi (Jp. Wānshī) from half a century earlier; and the *Gateless Gate* (Ch. *Wumenguan*, Jp. *Mumonkan*) of 1229 with brief prose and verse comments on forty-eight cases by Wumen (Jp. Mumon), another Linji-Yangqi stream master. These texts elaborate on succinct dialogues with stunningly eloquent yet puzzling and paradoxical poetic and other interpretive remarks. Each style of commentary, whether poetry or prose or a hybrid form known as the capping phrase (Ch. *zhuoyu*, Jp. *jakugo*), has a strict set of discursive rules and precedents that must be followed, thus demanding great literary skill on the part of the commentator, even if eminent secular writers might find some of the Chan works too didactic and, in many instances, overly wrought or mannered.<sup>5</sup>

The three collections were complemented by dozens of similarly constructed Chinese texts. Two additional kōan compilations, one Korean and the other Japanese, are crucial for understanding the transnational component of the later stages of the classical period of the kōan tradition. The first of these is the collection of 1,125 cases in the thirty-volume *Collection of Prose and Verse Comments on Cases* (*Seonmun yeomsongjip*, Ch. *Chanmen niansongji*) produced in Korea in 1226 by Hyesim, the successor to Jinul. The founder of the Jogye Order in the first decade of the thirteenth century, Jinul never went to China but greatly admired Dahui's teachings about the key-phrase and abandoned his Huayan school background once he discovered these. Hyesim's text is somewhat contradictory to Jinul's approach in compiling Chinese commentaries on so many kōan records. This collection was expanded to include 1,463 cases with additional interpretative remarks in the *Explanation of Prose and Verse Comments on Cases* (*Seonmun yeomsong seolhwa*, Ch. *Seonmun yeomsong shuo-hua*) by Hyesim's disciple Gag'un. Since little is known about Gag'un's life—he may have been an immediate follower or lived up to several generations later—the text can hardly be dated but is often linked to the thirteenth century.

The main Japanese collection of this era is the *300 Case Treasury of the True Dharma-Eye* (*Sanbyakusoku Shōbōgenzō*, a.k.a. *Mana Shōbōgenzō*) produced

in 1235 by Dōgen, which is a listing of case records without commentary.<sup>6</sup> Compiled relatively early in Dōgen's career before he had begun his major writing, the kōans listed in this text became the basis for his innovative interpretations of case records evident in two compilations of sermons composed over the next couple of decades: the vernacular Japanese (*kana*) sermons contained in the *Treasury of the True Dharma-Eye* (*Shōbōgenzō*, a.k.a. *Kana Shōbōgenzō*), which in different versions contains seventy-five or ninety-five fascicles (there are also several other variations) that were mainly completed by the mid-1240s; and the Sino-Japanese (*kanbun*) sermons contained in the first seven volumes of the ten-volume *Extensive Record* (*Eihei kōroku*) that were mainly composed over the last decade until Dōgen's death in 1253.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the ninth volume included in the *Extensive Record*, which contains ninety case records with poetic remarks that were compiled in 1236, makes this collection another preparatory kōan text setting the stage for more elaborate prose commentaries.

Drawing on narratives about ancestors primarily from an earlier period, the Chinese kōan collections, which became the backbone of the classical canon, were relevant for both monk-poets trained in monasteries and scholar-officials or literati involved in studies of Chan. These textual and ritual developments, which transpired during an era of intense government supervision of all possibly subversive cultural activities including writings spawned by expanding religious movements that might seem to be critical of authority, would not have been able to succeed without the vigorous intellectual, as well as political and financial, support of educated lay followers.

The participation of literati representing the emerging elite class of Song society's new meritocratic bureaucracy was a crucial component in the growth of the Chan school. This group enjoyed visiting Buddhist temples to interact with and learn from knowledgeable priests. However, dramatic sociopolitical shifts greatly affected relations between clergy, who engaged in literary composition as the primary means of expressing their understanding of the Dharma, and lay authors among scholar-officials, who were intrigued by Chan and the promise of self-examination and self-fulfillment its teachings offered. The primary loyalty of literati was to the imperial court or leaders of a local jurisdiction, rather than a diffused church institution, and they were wary of falling into disfavor or being accused by rulers of noncompliance or insubordination.

In examining the impact of literati influences on the vast body of kōan commentaries, it is important to distinguish between two major historical phases of the Song dynasty. The first phase was the Northern Song (960–1127), an age when government policy promoted the unity and harmony of previously divided regions and cultural factions through a new emphasis on cultivating *wen*, or literary arts, rather than depending on expertise in *wu*, or martial arts. During this phase, Chan masters generally occupied an insider position with imperial authorities and were greatly supported by scholar-officials, which led to the flourishing of rhetorical embellishments in their writings. This literary

trend culminated in the publication of the *Blue Cliff Record* with its multi-layered and allusive commentary on kōan cases. Since internal warfare was stopped during this period, so that the pen became mightier than the sword, the image of weapons used as a tool to eradicate ignorance became a meme appearing frequently in kōan commentaries, such as the famous saying regarding the function of a “double-edged sword” that at once kills delusion and gives life to spirituality (as in a verse remark on case 11 in the *Gateless Gate*).

The Northern Song was not an altogether peaceful time for literati or priests, however. Opponents of the political reformer and poet Wang Anshi and his minions often had to face severe criticism and, in key instances, banishment or some other sort of punishment.<sup>8</sup> Victims included the eminent poet Su Shi (a.k.a. Su Dongpo), who integrated sophisticated literary pursuits with a great interest in Chan practice in addition to taking on public administrative positions such as serving as mayor of Hangzhou. Therefore, while ecclesial and secular roles often interacted in highly compatible and constructive ways, this combined activity could also work to the disadvantage of any literati or clergy who came into conflict with secular powers, a trend that was greatly accelerated in the next period.

The second historical phase was the Southern Song (1127–1279), when formidable political developments forced Chan leaders to find themselves in a less favored or outsider position. This situation caused some leaders to endorse a discouragement or even disdain for writing as an end in itself since this endeavor was associated with failures leading to the fall of the Northern Song. Literature as an occupation was no longer praised and, in fact, was seen as reflecting the deficient social condition that contributed to the ceding of northern lands to the invading Jurchen when the capital was relocated from Kaifeng to Hangzhou, south of the Yangzi River. The anti-literary trend within the Chan school was initiated, according to traditional accounts, with the destruction of the xylographs of the *Blue Cliff Record* by Yuanwu’s foremost disciple, Dahui, which probably took place less than a decade after the completion of the text.<sup>9</sup>

Exacerbating the problems in this significantly altered cultural environment was the fact that many of the literary giants of the Northern Song had died. These included the incomparable Su Shi (d. 1101); the prominent monk-poet and Chan historian, Juefan Huihong (d. 1128), who endorsed a literary approach to practice; and the most prestigious scholar-official, Zhang Shangying (d. 1121), who embraced Chan and befriended Juefan, as well as other priests. Both Juefan and Zhang were closely associated with Yuanwu and also with Dahui, who was initially advised to seek out Yuanwu as a mentor by Juefan. Dahui was well versed in the subtleties of the literary approach to Chan training, although he admitted that it took him many years of frustrating struggles and false starts with trying to solve various kōans until he finally became enlightened in the late 1220s. At a key juncture of his career during the early

stages of the Southern Song a few years later, Dahui came to consider deficient the commentarial approach to kōans advocated by the literary figures he knew well. He saw rhetorical enhancement as an act of indulgence that could no longer be afforded since it would distract the mind in a way that was detrimental to the intensive concentration required for an experience of awakening.

Based on this approach, Dahui emphasized the Mu Kōan as the primary, although not exclusive, vehicle needed by any disciple, whether lay or monastic, to realize enlightenment. He also rejected other forms of training as hopelessly counterproductive. While the primary tendency in the *Blue Cliff Record* was to compile multiple layers of commentaries, Dahui, who was trained as an expert in this standpoint, eventually maintained the seemingly opposite view. He argued that contemplating an abbreviated key-phrase, with Mu as the single main example, represents an excruciatingly difficult task but, in the end, is the most effective and rewarding method that results in a path leading directly to the attainment of enlightenment.

Dahui's focus on a single kōan case must be seen against the background of larger historical trends working against the priority of literary pursuits. This context forms an important but often unacknowledged framework for the advocacy of the Mu Kōan that is articulated by so many contemporary practitioners and researchers. From 1142 to 1161, there was a government ban on ordinations of new clergy and heavy taxation imposed on monasteries and priests. In this challenging environment, when he personally experienced periods of banishment offset by stages of acceptance and favored treatment at the hands of imperial authorities, Dahui was highly critical not only of the *Blue Cliff Record* but also of other forms of Chan, including various Linji factions and practices of the developing Pure Land and reviving Tiantai schools. While frustrated with what he often considered the impatience and superficiality of literati who sought spiritual solace through reading texts, Dahui's strongly held views on the efficacy of the Mu Kōan as a shortcut that could be followed effectively by lay followers are still reflected in remarks today about how this case functions as the centerpiece of his Zen training.

Nevertheless, the literary approach or "lettered Zen" (Ch. *wenzi Chan*, Jp. *monji Zen*) that prevailed in the Northern Song was by no means altogether abandoned because of Dahui, and this standpoint was perpetuated by countless exponents in the Southern Song and later periods. In fact, many supporters of the key-phrase method also gained reputations for their verse and prose remarks on various kōan cases. Despite at times shrill partisan polemics, there remained much overlap and interaction between factions. For example, Hakuin and Yamada Mumon, two strong supporters of Dahui in Edo-period and modern Japan, respectively, are among the most compelling commentators on the *Blue Cliff Record*. The former, who was probably the most passionate defender of Dahui in history, was said to have read carefully through Yuanwu's text dozens of times. Understanding and coming to terms with the impact of

underlying connections, rather than one-sided divisiveness, between advocates and detractors of a literary approach for interpreting the Mu Kōan is one of the main themes of this volume.

#### HOW MANY KŌAN CASES?

Around the time of the initial compilation of the major collections of kōans in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, the task of solving the mystery of a case's inner meaning was established through ritual re-enactments initiated by Yunmen (Jp. Unmon) and Fenyang (Jp. Fun'yō). Finding a solution to, or passing, a kōan case became the standard device for examining and certifying the degree of a disciple's spiritual attainment. This meditative practice was further developed and transmitted in various configurations, or with modifications and adjustments. Contemplation of seemingly unfathomable kōans culled from Tang-influenced Song records as conducted under the tutelage of an esteemed mentor continues to be the fundamental pathway for reaching a transcendent realization in the monasteries of the Linji/Rinzai school in China and Japan, as well as the Jogye Order in Korea. It is also used in some Japanese Sōtō (Ch. Caodong) sect lineages, although with less emphasis despite ample commentaries on kōans composed by Dōgen and other medieval interpreters. The creative employment of some type of kōan training cultivated in relation to contemplation has been disseminated worldwide and continues to develop in training centers that have proliferated in the West since the early stages of the twentieth century.

Despite an emphasis on the Mu Kōan by numerous commentators, many varieties of kōan records with commentaries are extant and supported by diverse theories concerning how to apply these sources to styles of meditation and related training rituals. Even with differing procedures and interpretative models that reflect schismatic debates, as well as cultural variances and historical discrepancies, between competing cliques, the role of the kōan functioning in one fashion or another has been a constant of the Zen Buddhist approach to attaining authentic realization. Although frequently refuted by Confucian and other critics in the premodern period, and further attacked in modern times as a kind of "mumbo-jumbo" by some Orientalist skeptics,<sup>10</sup> the appeal of kōans for many practitioners and researchers alike is based on the innate resistance of this literary form to being categorized neatly in terms of conventional categories of language or philosophy since the primary aim of kōan cases is precisely to baffle and befuddle the ordinary intellect.

It is often said that there are 1,700 kōan case records to choose from, even if modern scholarship has shown this to be a misnomer that apparently derived from the fact that the names of approximately this number of ancestors are mentioned in the earliest and most influential of the Song-dynasty genre of transmission of the lamp records, the *Jingde Transmission of the Lamp Record*

(Ch. *Jingde chuandeng lu*, Jp. *Keitoku dentōroku*) of 1004.<sup>11</sup> Also, a Qing-dynasty collection that was prominent at the time of its composition contained the same amount of entries and, therefore, reinforced the impression.

In reality, there are at once far fewer and many more than 1,700 cases. There is considerably less in the sense that the amount of kōans generally studied in temples in China and Japan is limited to several hundred records at most. However, for some traditions, this number can go up to a couple thousand, or, moving in the other direction, it can be reduced to just one case that exemplifies the meaning of the entire group. It can also be argued that there are many more than 1,700 cases in the corpus. Any number of the dozens or hundreds of stories attributed to scores of masters who are cited in the transmission of the lamp records, whether or not explicitly included or alluded to in the major twelfth- and thirteenth-century kōan collections, can, and often do, qualify as kōans to be contemplated according to later commentaries. Over the centuries, the number of records has been expanded by numerous advocates of the tradition through developing newer interpretations that reflect original ways of appropriating or supplementing classical texts. One source counts as many as 5,500 traditional kōans when all the variables are taken into account.<sup>12</sup> This amount of cases has been catalogued in terms of five or eighteen, or as many as twenty-five groupings or more, depending on the theory of categorization related to wide-ranging implications of diverse styles for interpreting cases.

A remarkable growth in the number of cases has been accomplished either by shortening and abbreviating or by adding to and elaborating on the encounter dialogues that compose the staple of kōan collections. The writings of post-Song Chan commentators, which created a retrospective interplay with classic sources, often refer directly or indirectly to a variety of interpretations that built up around a particular case record. Any one of these collateral readings, in the right context, functions as a discrete kōan. An important work like the *Collection of Zen Entanglements* (*Shūmon kattōshū*), a Japanese Rinzai text from 1689, contains many new combinations, as well as variations or extensions, of previous case records that are considered independent kōans.

Furthermore, one of the most famous kōans inquiring about the “sound of one hand clapping” (*sekishu no onjō*) is said to have been invented outright by Hakuin in the eighteenth century as a substitute for older, more established cases, such as the Mu Kōan, although this saying may have been derived from a capping phrase in the *Blue Cliff Record*.<sup>13</sup> In addition, modern commentators find parallels in Western literature and thought, such as the paradoxical Biblical reprimand regarding false morality used to gain societal power: “The first will be last, and the last will be first.” Another example is Bishop Berkeley’s philosophical puzzle regarding human perception: “If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?” which raises seemingly unanswerable questions about the ability to gain full first-hand knowledge of

reality. Both examples force the mind to go beyond conventional modes of thought and verbal expression to attain a higher level of truth.<sup>14</sup>

A notion that there is a set body of cases considered to constitute a specified curriculum may be relevant for a particular school's instructional method that focuses on mastering a fixed list of records. For example, as a result of Hakuin's system of classifying kōans into five main categories, a catalogue of 250 total cases is still studied in some Japanese Rinzai lineages, such as at Daitokuji and Myōshinji temples in Kyoto. In the Korean Jogye Order, generally only one kōan is assigned to advanced practitioners that requires many years of advanced study, whereas in the Japanese Rinzai school a sequence of mini-cases or "checking questions" (*sassho*) is often brought up and adjusted by the mentor to test the level of understanding of a disciple during a prolonged period of training. Therefore, a pan-sectarian survey encompassing different ways that kōan cases and collections are formed and utilized indicates that there is by no means a static quantity of case records. Rather, despite claims of orthodoxy based on a fixed set of teachings in some quarters, the tradition overall remains fluid and flexible and keeps evolving in complex and multifaceted ways.

#### MU CASE AS FIRST AND FOREMOST

Regardless of the remarkable extent of diversity of cases in various commentaries and styles of training, it seems abundantly clear that the importance of the Mu Kōan is one of the main principles agreed upon by almost all Zen factions today. This is true across the apparent divergences of sects and streams and their regional or national and chronological borders, although there are certainly exceptions since in some sectors, especially the Japanese Sōtō school, many masters seem to have had little or no engagement with the case.<sup>15</sup>

According to this prototypically puzzling yet particularly provocative example of an encounter dialogue, tenth-century master Zhaozhou responds cryptically to a monk's stimulating—or, is it really just an uninformed or even silly?—question in regard to whether or not a dog possesses the supposedly universal spiritual quality of Buddha-nature. The doctrine of all-encompassing spiritual reality was first articulated when the *Nirvana Sutra* (Ch. *Niepan jing*, Jp. *Nehan kyō*) was introduced into China in the early fifth century and quickly became authoritative for all forms of Mahayana Buddhism. The Mu Kōan's core inquiry reflects a rhetorical conceit evident in numerous Zen dialogues whereby a novice desires to pay due respect while also presenting a brash challenge to established authority, whether in the form of traditional scripture or a living master.

In the mainstream version derived from the first case of the *Gateless Gate*,<sup>16</sup> as well as a multitude of other sources, Zhaozhou simply answers, "No" (Ch. Wu, Jp. Mu). This literally means denial in the sense that "It does not have," "There is no Buddha-nature," or "The dog lacks it." In contrast to the approach

of various scholastic Buddhist schools of the era that evoked the authority of scriptures, this expression shows that Zhaozhou responds with enigmatic indirection or perhaps disdain, rather than an outright rejection, of the orthodox doctrinal position and any attempt to deal with the matter in terms of rational discourse and logical argumentation. The Tang master discloses his own understanding of the matter of Buddha-nature by cleverly dismissing while also reorienting the inquiry of an anonymous and apparently unenlightened disciple.<sup>17</sup>

The *Gateless Gate* version with its simple one-word answer is the main rendition of the Mu Kōan that is generally cited because it reinforces Dahui's view of the key-phrase method. Although the "No" response could suggest refutation based on vacuity, nihility, absence, lack, or loss that would stand in dualistic contrast to presence, existence, or being, the term is taken by Dahui as a categorical denial of creed that can be referred to as the Emphatic Mu standpoint, which functions as a skillful supralinguistic pointer to an exceptional understanding of transcendental nothingness. This realm remains unbound by conventional polarities of existence or nonexistence and can only be grasped through the heights of Samadhi-based contemplation. For Dahui, the term "Mu" conveys absolute negation as the topic of an intensive contemplative experience, during which any and all thoughts or uses of reason and words are to be cut off and discarded for good instead of explored for their expressive nuances and implications.

The *Gateless Gate* version, recognized as the single most noteworthy case, was endorsed by Yuan-dynasty master Gaofeng Yuanmiao along with his disciple Zhongfeng Mingben, who is best known for explaining the definition of the kōan as a "public" (*kō*) "record" (*an*) based on the notion of legal precedents used in the Chinese court system. Over the centuries, the Mu Kōan has captured the imagination of both monks and secular commentators, who speak eloquently of the case's power to illuminate the mind as part of their daily lives. In recent times, Garma C. C. Chang (Chang Chen Chi) was a twentieth-century Chinese proponent of the case, whose writings and translations in English have had a strong effect on the development of Zen scholarship and practice in the West.<sup>18</sup> The Mu Kōan was also championed as the essential component of Zen training by two leading Japanese scholars who have greatly influenced modern scholarship: Yanagida Seizan, who revolutionized historiographical studies of Zen, and D. T. Suzuki (Daisetsu), whose impact based on years of publishing and teaching in English was remarkably wide-ranging.<sup>19</sup>

In considering the basis for the case's popularity, American Rinzai school leader Philip Kapleau, a model of post-World War II non-Asian masters who trained in Kyoto temples, has asked rhetorically, "What is the source of Mu's power, what has enabled it to hold first rank among koans for over a thousand years?" He argues that while other cases "bait the discursive mind and excite the imagination, Mu holds itself coldly aloof from both the intellect

and imagination. Try as it might, reasoning cannot even gain a foothold.”<sup>20</sup> According to another recent commentator, “The word ‘Mu’ transcends the koan. It transforms the koan. It becomes greater or, at least, other, than the koan. It takes on cosmic, super-natural, dharanic, mantric, significance. It goes way beyond what the original compilers of the koan had in mind. What either the questioning monk or Zhaozhou had in mind.”<sup>21</sup>

MUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU!

An additional expression highlighting the case’s importance involves the way the Mu Kōan has been represented in traditional and contemporary drawings, such as Figure 1.1, which depicts a simple exchange between a pair of monks, one senior and wise and the other junior and uninformed. Another drawing shows the dog as a perplexing ideation formed in a trainee’s mind during meditation. This illustration of the case’s “crime scene” (Ch. *xianchang*, Jp. *gempa*), to follow the legal metaphor embedded in the meaning of the term “kōan,” suggests an atmosphere in which a novice is being forced to confront a moment of extreme frustration and even desperation caused by unproductive reflection on the abstraction of the doctrine of Buddha-nature. This deep-seated anxiety,

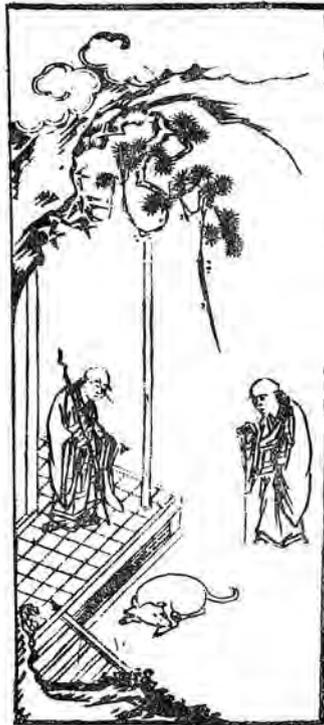


FIGURE 1.1 *Traditional Drawing of Case.*

or intense “sensation of doubt” (Ch. *yiqing*, Jp. *gisei*, Kr. *uijeong*), functions as a crucial existential turning point that undermines certitude yet leads toward direct contemplation of Mu that will ultimately be conducive to a fundamental spiritual reversal or turnabout resulting in an experience of awakening.<sup>22</sup>

In Figure 1.1, a sleeping dog lies in the midst of mentor and student(s), suggesting a concrete situation in which a monk happens to see an animal on the temple grounds that stirs a speculative question, although some commentators counsel against comparing the case to an actual context. Another drawing features a third monk as seemingly representative of a larger assembly that may have been present during the dialogue, whereas yet another drawing shows a lone practitioner apparently imagining the controversial creature. Whether or not the dog was present in actuality or conceptuality, these illustrations demonstrate that over the centuries, monastic and lay practitioners alike have long been assigned this case to contemplate unceasingly day and night, according to typical instructions for training in meditation, while waking or sleeping and whether walking, standing, sitting, or lying down (Ch. *xingzhu zuowo*, Jp. *gyōjū zaga*), until awakening is fully and finally attained.

The Mu Kōan is particularly known for the way it leads to the intense personal experiences of those who seek an existential transformation from undergoing anxiety to attaining an illuminated state of mind. There are countless stories expressed by priests and by a more general group of Zen followers who find that they struggle mightily with the uncanny nature of doubt brought about by the conundrum of the dog’s Buddha-nature. These accounts attest to the ability of the case to trigger a spontaneous flash of insight, although there are also many instances of frustration that cause a trainee who cannot pass the Mu Kōan to become so frustrated and desperate that he or she must be assigned a different case.

As an intriguing modern example of how Mu has functioned as an internal catalyst that propels a practitioner to be freed from reliance on language and thought, in the second story in Natsume Sōseki’s *Ten Nights’ Dreams* (*Yume jūya*), a samurai who is challenged rather disdainfully by his teacher to gain enlightenment or else commit suicide “sat cross-legged on the cushion” all night long and thought to himself, “The famous master Joshu says, ‘Nothingness . . .’ ‘What is nothingness? The silly old ass.’ I clenched my jaw and let out the warm breath through my nostrils. My temples felt taut and throbbed with pain. . . .”<sup>23</sup> In the film version of this sequence released in 2007 for the one hundredth anniversary of the originally serialized book as directed by Kon Ishikawa, who is well known for his samurai films, the warrior is tormented by visions of an image of the Mu ideograph hanging on the wall above. This seems to taunt and mock his meager efforts as he recites the catchphrase over and over during the night.<sup>24</sup> Although he thinks he fails, by being impervious to pain when he thrusts the sword, the samurai demonstrates and is confirmed by the mentor in his attainment of awakening.

Sōseki's imaginary samurai eventually gains success by the end of a long night's vigil that is acknowledged and praised by his mentor, as does a contemporary Western meditator trained by Yamada Mumon, formerly the famous abbot (rōshi) at Daitokuji temple who published dozens of commentaries on various kōan collections. Yamada, the lay follower reports, "told me I must become one with Mu. I must die the great death (of the ego, of the self, of ordinary identity) using Mu as my sword, in order to get at the truest answer to the question Who am I?"<sup>25</sup> After several weeks of contemplation in which this practitioner went through periods of anxiety and exasperation mixed with stimulation and consolation, she reports that during a trainee's ritual interview with the teacher her dismay was thoroughly overcome as concentration on Mu rendered superfluous any concern with the source dialogue: "I went into sanzen and I WAS. . . I didn't have any answers; I didn't care. I wasn't going anywhere; there wasn't anywhere to go. It didn't matter to me whether or not I answered this koan. It didn't matter who I was; I just was. I was fully there. I took a breath and let out my 'Mu.' I was Mu."

The atmosphere of the previous anecdote makes an intriguing contrast with Yamada Rōshi's much harsher treatment of a novice training at Daitokuji temple that was recorded in a fascinating scene near the conclusion of a film on Japanese Buddhism titled "Land of the Disappearing Buddha," which appears in the still popular *Long Search* series of documentaries on world religions produced by BBC in the 1970s. To buttress the focus on an intense personalizing of the Emphatic Mu by making it into one's own authentic form of contemplation, in modern Zen monastic practice disciples are often asked to present their own distinctive interpretation of this one-word barrier as part of the exercise of being tested by the master (*sanzen*). In this instance, the reserved yet bemused British narrator, theater director Ronald Eyre, has the opportunity to observe a private interview (*dokusan*) between teacher and disciple at the prominent Rinzai temple in the ancient capital. During this session, the young monk, who seems very much dedicated to the task of solving the case, roars the word "Mu" rather like a mad dog adding a punch line to some insider joke. It certainly appears to the viewer at first glance that he connects powerfully with the truth of nothingness.

However, Yamada is not impressed, and he calmly and unflinchingly dismisses the novice by commenting that the answer must come from the inner depths and not be pronounced by the lips alone.<sup>26</sup> A mechanical, rote-learning type of repetition of catchphrases rather than genuine expression (or silence) is the bane of teachers who supervise kōan studies. Even though it seems like the disciple was screaming in a fierce growl not just an ordinary articulation of "Mu" but "Muuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu" (using "u" eighteen times or more for emphasis, as suggested recently by a Western commentator),<sup>27</sup> he nevertheless fails to communicate in an appropriate way reflecting his authentic understanding of Zen. The master quickly rings the bell, signaling that the time for the

private interview is up and it is now time to evaluate the next disciple, who has been waiting patiently in queue for his turn to be tested.

### Variations of Sources

As compelling as the examples of training may be, one of the primary aims of this book is to show that the *Gateless Gate* version preferred by Dahui and so many other key-phrase advocates does not, by any means, constitute the final word regarding the meaning and significance of the Mu Kōan. That is because there is considerable variation among classic texts that contain different versions and interpretations of the case, including examples with positive responses, a mixture of affirmation and denial, or expressions of inconclusive irony and ambiguity. Numerous commentaries problematize an understanding of the case through deliberately ambiguous, inconsistent, or contradictory remarks. The issues of textual diversity and historical complexity seen in relation to numerous renditions of the Mu Kōan available in voluminous collections are a rich and intricate area with multiple ramifications that needs to be opened anew in Zen studies.

In particular, I will develop a critical hermeneutic juxtaposition and comparison of two main editions of the Mu Kōan that were concurrently forged and commented upon in Song-dynasty and subsequent collections:

- (a) The better-known version in the *Gateless Gate*, in which the reply to the query about a dog's Buddha-nature is "No," or the Emphatic Mu response that is accompanied by injunctions to embrace the absolutism of supreme negation as expressed in minimal rhetorical fashion in support of the key-phrase method
- (b) The other major version in the *Record of Serenity* and additional collections, in which there are both "Yes" (Ch. You, Jp. U) and "No" replies extended by Zhaozhou, with a follow-up question-and-answer dialogue in each instance for a total of four subdialogues that frequently result in multilayered interlinear commentaries expressing a view of ambiguity and relativism

I will refer to the Emphatic Mu standpoint in the *Gateless Gate* as the "Ur Version" because it is so basic, while labeling the alternative Yes-No (or No-Yes, in some instances) rendition as the "Dual Version" since it highlights a twofold or combined response. The approach of this rendition and its commentaries is also referred to as the Expansive Mu, which encompasses but does not delimit corollary, including opposite, responses.

As show in Table 1.1, despite the prevalence of the Ur Version in most discussions today cutting across sectarian divisions, the history of the main kōan collections tells a different story by showing that the Dual Version was cited

TABLE 1.1 Mu Kōan Versions Used in Main Collections

Text (case no.)	Year	School	Version
<i>Blue Cliff Record</i>	1128	Linji	N/A
<i>Record of Serenity</i> (18)	1224	Caodong	Dual
<i>Gateless Gate</i> (1)	1229	Linji	Ur
<i>300 Case Treasury</i> (114)	1235	Sōtō	Dual
<i>Explanations of Prosel Verse</i> (417)	13th c.	Jogyē	Dual (from <i>Record of Serenity</i> )
<i>Zen Entanglements</i> (49)	1689	Rinzai	Dual

more frequently and in ways that are unexpected in terms of the conventional view based on sectarian rhetoric. Why this history of the Mu Kōan case's complicated textuality seems to have gotten lost or misrepresented is a primary area of focus in this volume.

Although the examination here is not limited to just two versions, since there are so many variations of editions and interpretations of the case that tend to be overlooked or neglected, the goal is to come to terms with and rectify scholarly deficiencies through contrasting the absolute negation of the Emphatic Mu with the uncompromising contingency of the Expansive Mu. This is seen in light of their respective implications for understanding views of language and literature, knowledge and learning, ritual and meditation, and reality and transcendence. The contrast will be shown against the backdrop of the sociopolitical ups and downs and twists and turns felt by the Zen religious institution and its individual leaders and particular schools of thought during the classical and subsequent historical periods in traditional East Asia and the modern West.

#### THE QUESTION BECOMES MORE QUESTIONABLE

Given the two main versions of the Mu Kōan, the question is whether the apparent unanimity of the mainstream standpoint adequately reflects the history and thought of the case or appears to be somewhat limited and perhaps fundamentally misleading. Despite all of the attention that is accorded this kōan—or perhaps because of a degree of overexposure leading to an uncritical acceptance of stereotypes and unexamined assumptions that are echoed in one analysis after another—it must also be asked: How much is really known and understood in regard to the full background of the Mu Kōan, as well as the contours and contexts of extensive doctrinal conflicts, regarding its significance for Zen theory and practice that transpired during Song China and subsequent periods? Many of these debates tend to get either exaggerated and reified or suppressed and discounted—but, in any event, misrepresented—due to sectarian biases that continue to affect current understandings of this and related kōans.

In conducting research for this book by examining a wide range of sources from both sides of the Pacific, I was particularly struck and rather disconcerted by the extent to which a specific view of the Mu Kōan expressed in the *Gateless Gate's* Emphatic Mu has been portrayed as the only valid approach. This holds for writings that represent four seemingly disparate Zen movements—the Linji school of modern China and Taiwan, the Jogye Order of Korean Seon, and the Rinzai school in Japan, especially since Hakuin, in addition to some elements within the Japanese Sōtō sect.<sup>28</sup> Nearly all commentators express an uncommonly common view that runs across national borders and cultural boundaries and encompasses the worldwide spread of Zen in the contemporary era. Although various lineages often disagree in regard to other aspects of Zen training, their views on the case of Zhaozhou's dog are surprisingly uniform.

My studies suggest that this lack of variation may be a product of shared myths based on longstanding beliefs and customs that are not necessarily objectively supported and, so, impede investigative scholarship. As modern American poet Adrienne Rich has said, "Every journey into the past is complicated by delusions, false memories, false namings of real events." The Ur Version is actually a truncated rendition of what appears as a longer exchange in the *Record of Zhaozhou* (Ch. *Zhaozhoulu*, Jp. *Jōshūroku*).<sup>29</sup> Meanwhile, interpretations of the textual origins and development, as well as ideological ramifications, of the case record remain obscure.

Part of the hermeneutic problem involves the way that key issues reflecting the varieties and variability of source texts and commentaries on the Mu Kōan were often hotly contested by Chan factions in the twelfth century and later epochs in terms of schismatic arguments concerning styles of contemplation. The discord, at once directly related to and of a much grander scale than this one case, involves the role of language seen either as an efficacious tool for disclosing truth or as a technique based on the traditional Buddhist imperative to maintain silence while in a meditative state. These areas of conflict have been the topic of careful academic studies seeking to unravel some of the controversial matters that have emerged since the classical period due to a one-sided focus evident in most self-presentations of the respective schools, whether intended or not, on maintaining the orthodoxy of a single line of interpretation.

Recent research on traditional Zen debates has been developing rapidly but, in my opinion, is somewhat lacking in trying to clarify the importance of the Mu Kōan with prominent but, in the final analysis, partial exceptions because misleading generalizations tend to cloud supposedly impartial observations. It is, therefore, necessary to develop a comprehensive yet flexible methodological approach reflecting an innovative archaeology of knowledge that accounts for the consequences of historical complexity and enables hermeneutic reflexivity in appropriating various versions and interpretations of the original texts, which need to be sorted out and evaluated for authenticity and consistency.

The approach taken here, which will be defined in chapter 3 as “multilateral historical hermeneutics,” represents a holistic and neutral rather than sectarian and, therefore, one-sided research method. It attempts to capture and assess different phases and perspectives of the intricate unfolding of theoretical commentaries and practical applications of kōan records with an emphasis on receiving plurality and variety rather than insisting on singularity and uniformity. In reopening an investigation into the origins and implications of the Mu Kōan, it is important to be sensitive to the way current understandings that illuminate the source materials are often slanted based on inherited partisan biases. This methodological approach attempts to put in context and frame the circumstances and motivations behind contemporary articulations that may conflate, superimpose, or substitute polemics for a clear and impartial view of variegated historical developments.

#### AN OPEN AND/OR SHUT CASE?

In undertaking this exploratory exercise, I am influenced by seminal meanings of the term “kōan” in Song Chan literature drawing heavily, yet somewhat sardonically, on the original concept of “gongan” used in the legal sense of the public records of criminal cases taken under consideration by a local magistrate. This figure of authority and judgment functioned during the Tang dynasty as a combined detective and prosecutor, as well as judge and jury, in single-handedly investigating the truth of alleged wrongdoings and meting out different levels of punishment once the matter got settled. In detective stories (Ch. *gongan xiaoshuo*, Jp. *kōan shōsetsu*), which became a popular style of fiction during the Song dynasty that, like many Chan records, was written in vernacular rather than formal Chinese, the magistrate probes a mystery with great dedication and determination. He utilizes the powers of keen observation and insightful inference to discover and expose the basis of a misdeed through unlocking the conundrum behind its perpetrator’s transgression.<sup>30</sup> The official then assigns an *a propos* retribution to those found guilty as charged, which often involves some form of corporal punishment, such as blows of a stick, which is supposed to instigate a remorseful attitude on the part of the convicted party.<sup>31</sup>

In the Chan rhetorical context, the temple abbot assumes the role of the public official, while the unwary interlocutor who expresses a misapprehension of the Dharma is given his just desserts in the form of verbal comeuppance or nonverbal humiliation. The injunctions include “I give you thirty blows” and, contrariwise, “I spare you thirty blows,” in addition to various sorts of shouts and slaps to create a penitential response. Zhaozhou’s “lip Zen” teaching style, so called because of an aura that supposedly emanated from his mouth when he spoke to followers or adversaries, was less radical than many of his colleagues in disclosing truth by focusing on enigmatic remarks about particulars at hand

instead of resorting to physical rebuffs. In any event, rather than penal reform in a legalistic sense, Chan refutations and admonishments, whether delivered in a harsher tone or softer manner, are designed to inspire a sense of redemption by overcoming emotional morass on the part of the ignorant through attaining spontaneous spiritual insight.<sup>32</sup>

Extending the analogy of investigative work, kōan commentators in the major collections who remark on previous interpretations generally praise those masters who are able to “wrap up a [Chan] case” 欸結案, or allow the record’s experiential significance to be revealed through literary evocations that uncover and overcome the misguided views of the unenlightened. For example, in the *Blue Cliff Record* Yuanwu remarks of Xuedou’s astute poetic comments: “A double case, the master handles all crimes with the same indictment,” and then adds ironically, “A triple case, a quadruple case. He puts a head above the head.”<sup>33</sup> The latter phrase, which alludes to iconography of the multiheaded and -limbed bodhisattva Guanyin (Jp. Kannon), suggests redundancy reflecting a lack of insight. But, by a characteristic Zen-style inversion, the image can paradoxically convey higher levels of truth that build upon yet transcend preliminary insights, as also suggested by the Sino-Japanese translation of the Greek term for wisdom 上智 (Ch. *shangzhi*, Jp. *jōchi*) that indicates “rising above knowledge.”

The aim of my research and analysis of source materials is not to presume to set myself up in the position of an arbiter in the manner of a Chinese magistrate in the premodern judicial system or a Zen abbot in the temple institution of yore who passed judgment on the proceedings in light of precedent rulings. Rather, I hope to borrow more modestly from the model of the kōan-based detective, who digs behind the scenes so as to reveal hidden truths that need to be opened up and taken more fully into account.

The Ur Version of the Mu Kōan seems to be an example of an open-and-shut case (Ch. *xianchenggongan*, Jp. *genjōkōan*), to conjure a term used in various ways in both the legal and the kōan tradition. The term refers to the unity of reality and appearance, or mystery and manifestation, in that the seemingly obscure truth is actually readily apparent right before one’s eyes. Wansong makes an interesting ironic remark in regard to difficulty in discerning the self-evidence of truth in his capping phrase comment on a Hongzhi verse on the Mu Kōan that refers to a monarch’s lack of insight about a messenger from another king who had tricked him: “Although [the truth] is right in front of him, he keeps walking by” 當面蹉過.

The basic issues to be examined are the crime scene of the Mu Kōan in that the monastery grounds are the site of the dialogue that questions the controversial doctrinal formulation of the universality of Buddha-nature, although we do not know in which hall or under what specific circumstance the exchange took place; the transgression, whereby an inquiring monk confronts the applicability of a critical tenet to his religious quest, albeit in a rather naïve and

unproductive way even if his background and motivation are unclear; and the judgment, in that Zhaozhou's (non)reply deliberately suppresses the query so as to surpass the question-and-answer process altogether, although that reading may be subject to further analysis. Following this model, it appears that the meaning and significance of the case, while endlessly fascinating and requiring months or years of study to attain full comprehension, seems in the end to be rather straightforward and unambiguous in its focus on absolute truth that is not subject to disparity of interpretation; or, rather, there is one acceptable elucidation with varying possible applications, as opposed to a wide array of explanations with a common use.

In other words, the Mu Kōan is a clear-cut case. Or so it seems. However, as in most sorts of investigations, appearances can be deceiving and nothing is really what it looks like at first glance. For example, a person is found stabbed to death, while a suspect who seems to have had a motive for murder is running off with bloody hands; surely, the killer is readily found, some observers would think, but avoiding a rush to judgment is essential for solving the crime. What if it turns out that the suspect was actually trying to help the victim but panicked when he saw police approaching, while the real criminal is escaping unscathed?<sup>34</sup> Given the rhetorical bent of the topsy-turvy and upside-down world of duplicity and misdirection in Mu Kōan discourse, it is important not to take any conclusion for granted by considering additional ample evidence that discloses an ever-deepening sense of complexity regarding the existence of different renditions and interpretations as expressed in manifold layers of commentary on the case.

One of the primary features of Zhaozhou's dog and many other cases is the way they are said to arouse and heighten consciousness of existential doubt that disturbs and disrupts the status quo by calling into question conventional notions about self and reality, leading to the awakening of a higher level of spiritual awareness. In researching this case, I have found there to be doubtfulness arising not only through but also surrounding the kōan due to its complicated textual history that has largely been overlooked. Despite Wumen's apparent emphatic focus on Mu, for example, the final couplet in the *Gateless Gate's* verse comment, "As soon you get caught up in 'Yes' or 'No', your body fails and your life is lost" 纔涉有無/喪身失命, may leave the door open to a more ambiguous or relativist position that does not necessarily favor negation over affirmation and, thus, may support in part the Expansive Mu standpoint.

In line with this sense of ambivalence, the renowned modern Japanese scholar Iriya Yoshitaka, an expert on Chinese literary sources, as cited by Ishii Shūdō, another eminent Chan specialist, makes the following skeptical comment. Of those who adhere strictly to a single view of the kōan's function based on the Ur Version, which is different from other renditions that either prefer or seek to coordinate positive and negative responses to the primary question, Iriya says:

I have held doubts for some time with regard to the way Zhaozhou's Mu has been dealt with previously. To the question, "Does a dog have the Buddha-nature?," Zhaozhou replied affirmatively as well as negatively. However, Zen adherents in Japan have rendered the kōan exclusively in terms of his negative response, and completely ignored the affirmative one. Moreover, it has been the custom from the outset to reject the affirmative response as superficial compared to the negative one. It seems that the *Wumenguan* is responsible for this peculiarity.<sup>35</sup>

Even though the aim of evoking Mu for many commentators and practitioners is to create a heightened sense of productive doubt that helps to spark a breakthrough to profound insight, what both Iriya and Ishii suggest is a sense of being troubled and dismayed in a way that motivates an inquiring mind to question and refashion the conventional understanding of the meaning of the kōan. Based on this and numerous other materials, I have formed suspicions that the way the case is usually interpreted in terms of the Emphatic Mu may disregard alternative versions and viewpoints because the mainstream approach is wedded to stereotypical notions derived from sectarian polemic reflecting ideological biases that have built up over the centuries. My critical approach is greatly influenced by John McRae's deconstruction of the "string of pearls" view of the tradition, which asserts that there was a pristine process underlying the generation-to-generation transmission of Zen lineage, as being similarly embedded with discrepancies and misrepresentations of the complexities of actual historical circumstances.<sup>36</sup>

To challenge the Ur Version from the perspective of standing in contrast to conventional views stressing absolute negation, I will show that the Mu Kōan has been appropriated in classic Chinese and Japanese commentaries much more disparately than is generally indicated. Later chapters of this book will document that well over a dozen possible renditions of the case are extant, including examples in which Zhaozhou responds in variable ways, such as a positive reply or a negative answer with a follow-up dialogue, as well as versions attributed to other masters or expressing a different approach. The multiplicity of interpretations reflects a varied and, at times, conflicting theoretical outlook for articulating religious experience through encounter dialogues. This discussion also highlights the fact that some oft-cited versions of the case that supposedly preceded Zhaozhou have been shown to be questionable or even spurious.

#### **Four Myths about the Mu Kōan**

Unraveling misunderstandings about the formation and further development of the Mu Kōan case record leads to a considerably more complex matter than

is indicated by Iriya's brief remark. Textual studies sensitive to historical context demonstrate quite persuasively that the apparently open-and-shut case is a tangled web of historical and rhetorical mystery involving multiple factors. The kōan record is by no means a single unchanging literary entity but appears in numerous versions in diverse texts from the Song and later periods, and with varying elucidations and types of exegeses. Furthermore, Zen dialogues contain numerous anecdotes probing the relevance of the doctrine of Buddha-nature in relation to mundane phenomena, such as earthworms, cats, cows, and, in another case attributed to Zhaozhou, cypress trees, as well as insentient beings like stones, mountains, rivers, and seven pounds of flax (plus other things that may be hard to categorize, like dried shit-sticks). These dialogues usually convey an inconclusive and uncertain line of thinking that seems to differ from or even contradict the Emphatic Mu standpoint.<sup>37</sup>

Following the lead of numerous scholars, my aim is to relativize and problematize a singular focus on a particular view of the term “Mu” functioning as a decisive nonanswer to the kōan's core question by interpreting additional discourses. As one of the keys to acknowledging and engaging different sorts of commentaries, it is necessary to look past the abbreviated Ur Version, which provides only the first part of a larger dialogue that is contained in some other editions of the case. As a way of summing up the concerns and objections to the mainstream account mentioned thus far, I will briefly consider four commonly held myths regarding to the Mu Kōan before setting an agenda for how to extricate from the methodological impasse these misconceptions tend to generate.

#### MYTH ONE: AN EXPRESSION OF AND BY ZHAOZHOU

Although almost all commentators attribute the one-word barrier “Mu” to Zhaozhou and try to discern his intentionality by capturing his state of mind just prior to uttering the syllable, the case is not mentioned in the earliest records of his life and teachings composed in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Three texts that are crucial to studies of Tang-dynasty Chan ancestors do not contain any mention of the dialogue of the dog in relation to Zhaozhou: the *Ancestors' Hall Collection* (Ch. *Zutangji*, Jp. *Sōdōshū*) vol. 18 of 952, the *Song Biographies of Eminent Monks* (Ch. *Song gaosengzhuàn*, Jp. *Sō kōsoden*) vol. 11 of 988, and the *Jingde Record* vol. 11 of 1004. However, the *Ancestors' Hall Collection* does contain a dialogue in which Zhaozhou is asked whether or not a cypress tree possesses the Buddha-nature.

It is also noteworthy that the Mu Kōan is not a part of the writings of Fenyang, the earliest compiler and commentator on case records, or the *Blue Cliff Record*, the most prestigious of the classic collections (nor is it cited anywhere else in the recorded sayings of compiler Yuanwu). Zhaozhou's dog dialogue is also not included in the comprehensive—and relatively late—compendium

of transmission of the lamp records, the *Five Lamps Merged into One* (Ch. *Wudeng huiyuan*, Jp. *Gotō egen*) vol. 10 of 1253.

Meanwhile, the *Jingde Record* includes the first recorded anecdote to have a question raised in regard to a dog's Buddha-nature, which is attributed to Weikuan (Jp. *Ikan*), who was a student of Mazu (Jp. *Basō*) representing the Hongzhou school a generation before Zhaozhou. This exchange finishes in a much more undetermined manner than the Ur Version of the Mu Kōan after a round of circular reasoning wherein Weikuan says that the dog has the Buddha-nature but he himself does not. In addition, there is a dialogue concerning Buddha-nature in relation to an earthworm being cut in two featuring Changsha (Jp. *Chōsha*), who is another disciple of Zhaozhou's teacher, Nanquan (Jp. *Nansen*).

Therefore, the association of Zhaozhou with the Mu Kōan probably stems from a period at least a hundred years after the seminal transmission of the lamp texts and more than two centuries subsequent to the master's death. Citing the Ur Version did not become common until a time during the early years of the Southern Song, which is difficult to pin down but must be associated with the teachings of Dahui, the major interpreter of this version of the case beginning in the mid-1130s who continued to emphasize it until the time of his death thirty years later. The kōan is perhaps first found several decades before this in the recorded sayings of Yuanwu's teacher, Wuzu (Jp. *Gosō*), who died in 1104 and whose record includes a couple of references to the case that were later cited by Dahui and his followers as evidence of a precursor demonstrating longstanding interest in the topic.<sup>38</sup>

A recent scholarly work on Zhaozhou's recorded sayings published in China has collected approximately four hundred citations of the Mu Kōan, including mentions with interpretations of both the Ur and Dual versions found in various texts from the Song, Yuan, and Ming dynasties in addition to a few Kamakura Japanese sources.<sup>39</sup> Of these, Dahui weighs in with by far the greatest number at forty references, or one tenth of the total amount, with about half of those that refer to the Emphatic Mu located in the last five volumes of his thirty-volume record that contain letters of exhortation to lay followers. The next highest count is Women with five citations, including the *Gateless Gate*, all of which cite the Ur Version.

In considering the controversy in regard to versions that were prevalent at the formative stage of the kōan tradition, it is important to note that the Ur Version seems to be an abbreviated variation of the case that appears in the *Record of Zhaozhou*. According to tradition, this text was initially compiled around the time of Zhaozhou's death in 897 and was published as early as 953. However, there is no evidence of that edition, and the earliest extant version is a three-fascicle text that may have first appeared around 1138 as vols. 13–14 of the *Records of the Sayings of Ancient Masters* (Ch. *Guzunsulu*, Jp. *Kosonshukuroku*)—this publication probably occurred just a few years after the

key-phrase method was initiated by Dahui; perhaps this edition is based on earlier redactions from the late tenth century, but again, no documentation exists in support of that contention. It is often said that the recorded sayings of Zhaozhou were the first in what became a long series of works chronicling prominent Tang and Song Chan masters, but the notion of there being a version of this text close to the time of Zhaozhou's life is yet another myth.

The *Records of the Sayings of Ancient Masters* is a compendium of the recorded sayings texts of thirty-six prominent Tang Chan masters in forty-eight fascicles that was still being re-edited around 1267, so it is difficult to determine the provenance of the canonized edition. The *Record of Zhaozhou* included in the larger text contains the dialogue about the dog but with a brief follow-up exchange in which the disciple asks why not, since Buddha-nature theory endorses that view. Zhaozhou responds ironically by saying that it is because the dog has awareness of karma.<sup>40</sup> The text includes another version in which Zhaozhou's response seems to be affirmative, albeit without actually saying "Yes," by indicating that "all roads lead to Chang'an" (the explicit "Yes" response appears in other texts). The term "Chang'an," which was the name of the ancient capital, literally means "lasting peace" and was commonly used as a metaphor for nirvana. Zhaozhou's *Record* also contains a short but intricate dialogue that deals with whether a cypress tree has Buddha-nature, an exchange that resembles the Weikuan dialogue in that there is no conclusive response.

All three of these records—the Mu reply with an additional dialogue, the positive answer, and the exchange in regard to a cypress tree—are distinct from and yet probably contributed to the formation of the Yes-No rendition. The Dual Version, which was established with the records of Hongzhi and his Dharma-brother Qingliao (Jp. Shōryō) and began to be compiled in the 1130s, or around the time of Dahui's initial focus on the Mu-only rendition, may have been cited as early as the late eleventh century, thus preceding the Emphatic Mu version. Since the Expansive Mu rendition was incorporated into the *Record of Serenity*, a Caodong school text, it was obviously well known at the time of the composition of the *Gateless Gate*. Women's text was similarly produced in the 1220s by a Linji-Yangqi abbot from one of the prestigious government-supported Five Mountains (Ch. *Wushan*, Jp. *Gozan*) monasteries that represented the pinnacle of the Chan school's institutional structure. The Dual Version was cited extensively in the Song dynasty, although the great majority (over three quarters) of the four hundred extant citations in classic texts deal with the Ur Version.

#### MYTH TWO: MAIN CASE FOR ZHAOZHOU

Given issues of unreliability in early kōan collections due to a lack or disparity of references to the Mu Kōan being attributed to Zhaozhou, how important is the case for understanding the approach of this master? Zhaozhou, a tenth

generation (after first patriarch Bodhidharma) Chan ancestor, was said to have lived for 120 years—and was known by the sobriquet “Old Buddha” 古佛 (Ch. *gūfo*, Jp. *kobutsu*), an expression apparently first used by master Xuefeng (Jp. Seppō), for both the Methuselah-like longevity of this master and the profundity of his teaching. It is generally acknowledged that there are more kōan records in the major collections associated with Zhaozhou than any other Tang master; Gagun’s *Explanations* contains eighty-one cases or nearly six percent of the total. However, from reviewing a wide variety of source materials, such as retrospective Song kōan collections and other texts, it seems that during his lifetime Zhaozhou was primarily recognized for a number of other famous cases, including “the cypress tree standing in the courtyard,” “go drink a cup of tea,” and “wash your breakfast bowls.”

In fact, Zhaozhou is probably better known with regard to the famous case concerning his reaction to master Nanquan cutting a cat in half, when Zhaozhou puts his sandal on his head and walks away, than for the record that deals with a dog. Nanquan performed this violent act as a way of scolding two sets of monks from eastern and western wings of the temple grounds who were squabbling about possession of the animal, no doubt prized for keeping at bay rodents and other noxious pests in addition to providing some companionship for lonely monks. This extreme action evokes with a sense of irony the kind of art-of-war imagery and do-or-die rhetoric that infuses much of kōan literature, including Women’s Mu Kōan comments in regard to wielding General Kuan’s mighty sword, as well as the allusion to Linji’s famous remark concerning the need to kill buddhas and ancestors. When, later that night, Zhaozhou hears from his mentor that the cat was slain and he responds in an apparently absurd way, Nanquan says that if this mischievous act had taken place at the time of the incident it would have been enough to save the animal.

The Cat Kōan figures prominently in the opening section of the *Record of Zhaozhou* (item 6), which highlights a dozen examples of the master’s interactions with mentor Nanquan over a twenty-year period of study near the beginning of his career. It is also included in four major kōan collections, including *Blue Cliff Record* cases 63 and 64 (one case for Nanquan’s act of violence and one for Zhaozhou’s response to the account), *Record of Serenity* case 9, and *Gateless Gate* case 14, as well as Dōgen’s *300 Case Treasury* case 181 (as previously indicated, the Mu Kōan appears in the latter three texts as cases 18, 1, and 114, respectively, with the Dual Version constituting the first and third instances).

Three traditional drawings of the case suggest a sequence of action—a drawing by Sengai depicts the monks quarreling, and two others show Nanquan’s action and Zhaozhou’s reaction reflecting the fact that this narrative takes up two cases in the *Blue Cliff Record*. What the Cat Kōan shares with the case about whether or not a dog possesses Buddha-nature is a focus on the role of nonhuman sentient beings and how their existence is to be dealt with in relation

to the aspirations of people who are striving, perhaps erratically or ineffectively, to gain enlightenment. Needless to say, the case of the cat has a distinctive focus in terms of the antinomian implications of Nanquan's severing the animal, which represents a blatant violation of the Buddhist precepts, to make a philosophical point regarding the transcendence of petty claims that invariably lead to endless conflict.<sup>41</sup> Is the cutting of the cat justifiable, or should the story be taken as an allegory concerning the destruction of ignorance symbolized by the monks' attachment to the feline?<sup>42</sup>

In the renowned modern novel *Temple of the Golden Pavilion* (*Kinkakuji*) by Mishima Yukio, based on a true account of a monk who burned down a famous monastery in Kyoto shortly after World War II, the abbot of a Zen temple comments on this case at the conclusion of the fighting when the ancient city was no longer under the threat of American bombing. This is particularly frustrating for the disturbed young acolyte who narrates the story, because the cryptic symbolism of the traditional Chan parable escapes him and only seems to reinforce the imperious and indifferent qualities of monastic leadership. In any event, like the Mu Kōan, the Cat Kōan seems to show a disregard for the affairs of nonhumans; the matter of their partaking of ultimate reality appears to represent rank speculation, which does not hold up to scrutiny in light of the concrete affairs of people. Nevertheless, to make a joke, both kōans show that all beings are subject to "the immutable Law of Paws and Effect."<sup>43</sup>

### MYTH THREE: DOCTRINE OF UNAPOLOGETIC DENIAL

While commentators generally refer to Zhaozhou's "unapologetic denial"<sup>44</sup> in response to the monk's probing query regarding the doctrine of the universality of ultimate reality, reading over the voluminous Zen texts from China and Japan reveals that the kōan tradition holds at least a dozen versions of the case. These include (1) the "No" response accompanied by different editions of a follow-up dialogue probing why not (there are at least two main and one additional variation of this dialogue); (2) a couple of versions of the case where the answer is positive, one of these with "Yes" and another with an indirect reply or including a brief follow-up dialogue searching for the reason; and (3) several versions combining positive and negative responses with or without follow-up dialogues, and with the "No" answer appearing either prior or subsequent to the "Yes" answer.

Much of the reason for a sense of hegemony of the Ur Version versus marginalization of the Dual and other alternative versions stems from two key historical periods when Zen factions, particularly representatives of the Linji/Rinzai and Caodong/Sōtō schools in China and Japan, were contending and contesting the meaning of the case by engaging in hyperbolic sectarian rhetoric. Both periods were marked by several common features, including increased government oversight and competition among all religious movements encompassing

Zen and non-Zen in addition to other Buddhist and non-Buddhist schools among Daoists and Confucians.<sup>45</sup> Zen was particularly in a position of rivalry, yet with considerable influence also absorbed from the Pure Land school stressing the practice of the recitation of the Buddha's name (Ch. *nianfo*, Jp. *nembutsu*), which appealed to lay practitioners.

The first main phase involved the dispute that erupted in twelfth-century China between two main Chan standpoints. One was the *kōan*-investigation (Ch. *kanhua* Chan, Jp. *kanna* Zen, Kr. *ganhwa* Seon) approach advocated by Dahui and many but by no means all subsequent Linji school followers, which features the supralinguistic understanding of Mu based on the key-phrase technique. The other was the so-called silent-illumination (Ch. *mozhao* Chan, Jp. *mokushō* Zen, Kr. *mukjo* Seon) approach of Hongzhi and some Caodong school followers, which highlights a more gradual approach to practice that Dahui critiqued for promoting a static view of spirituality in a way that violated the Zen principles of ineffability and spontaneity.

The second main phase was during eighteenth-century Japan, when the eminent Rinzai sect reformer Hakuin, who was greatly inspired by Dahui's key-phrase method, severely criticized various rival standpoints. These included opponents in Zen, particularly but not only in the Sōtō sect, as well as other Buddhist schools, such as Pure Land and Nichiren. Hakuin evoked many of the same reasons that were mentioned during the Song dynasty regarding the priority of minimalist discourse as a focus for meditative training.

During the twelfth century, heated debates often accompanied by an accusatory tone concerning the applicability of the key-phrase method were not a matter of idle speculation. Factions of monks argued strenuously, or quarreled like cats and dogs, in regard to the merits of seemingly polarized standpoints that held to very different views of the role of language in relation to contemplation. Based on written records, even though Hongzhi and Caodong colleagues including Qingliao did not react directly to criticism emanating from Dahui's camp, which was mainly one-sided in that the attacks were not reciprocated in kind, the atmosphere of conflict and competition infiltrated many different aspects of Zen discourse from that era. Ideological discord in the 1100s shattered a sense of harmony among the streams of Chan that had been preserved for a couple of centuries and was greatly enhanced during the Northern Song dynasty just decades before. At this crucial transitional phase, if an idea concerning *kōan* training disagreed with what someone else asserted, the response might well be, to evoke an American colloquialism, "Them's fightin' words."

The standpoint of *kōan*-investigation won the Song debate in that silent-illumination, to the extent that there was such a consistent approach, more or less died out rather quickly, whereas the key-phrase method has prevailed in most quarters, including elements in the Caodong school. It is important to note, however, that the classic disputes were generally not concerned directly with multifaceted variations and divergent vagaries of interpreting the

Mu Kōan per se, but in most instances involved associated topics regarding styles of meditation that probably should not always be linked to this case. By inheriting discord over ideologies that continue to infuse and affect current historical research and religious training methods, contemporary discussions of the kōan are sometimes clouded or unclear in tending to install on a pedestal the Emphatic Mu linked to kōan-investigation. This can transpire even when the advocate's lineage would seem to fall on the other side of traditional discord. Meanwhile, additional approaches are neglected or suppressed, or their intentionality is subverted to be considered a byproduct of the conventional approach.

The effect of classic debates, in which highly charged words like “heretical,” “useless,” and “demonic” typically populated the polemical verbiage, is to create a legacy of divisiveness, which promotes winners and disregards or disparages losers in a manner that tends to perpetuate partisan polemics. Although there are many outstanding examples of recent Western scholarship that seek to develop a more nuanced and even-handed theoretical understanding of the Mu Kōan, some of these works emphasize a highly specialized analysis that focuses on a particular component. There is a need for an unrestricted scholarly view of the history and theory of the case in which competing standpoints are enabled to coexist harmoniously while being examined critically. An understanding of traditional discord should not ignore, but at the same time should not revert to rehashing, the kōan-investigation versus silent-illumination controversy while trying to uncover the broader context reflected in yet not bound by the somewhat invented and misleading dispute. Studies that are limited to this conflict may not capture fully the significance of the Mu Kōan, which challenges and undermines a strict adherence to the mainstream interpretation.

#### MYTH FOUR: MU MUST NOT BE EMBELLISHED

The conventional view suggests that the term “Mu” puts an abrupt end to any analysis of the meaning of the monk's query and Zhaozhou's response. However, classical records reveal that there are hundreds of verse and prose commentaries in Chinese and Japanese texts. Many of these do support the key-phrase method by emphasizing Mu-only, while numerous other remarks that prefer another version or understanding of the case tend to bypass, disagree with, or contradict that outlook. In one example, a Zen master simply says, “Dahui affirms No, but I affirm Yes.” There are also instances of the kōan being used as a basis for discussing diverse metaphysical issues regarding the role of sentient and insentient beings, in addition to a variety of precepts-oriented concerns about the killing and eating of meat or of ethical matters related to animals that may or may not partake of Buddha-nature.

Historical research makes it clear that the Ur Version of the Mu Kōan, rooted in a particular era of Chinese religious and cultural history, probably

was not featured as such until the writings of Dahui from 1134 after he had parted ways with Yuanwu, who retired in 1130 and died five years later. Around that time, Dahui supposedly destroyed the *Blue Cliff Record*, which he had come to consider a distraction from meditative practice based on the key-phrase technique.<sup>46</sup> Dahui's comments on the kōan probably originally targeted an audience of lay disciples whom he accumulated during stints in the remote southeastern countryside of Fujian and Guangdong provinces, where he was exiled for political reasons for more than fifteen years of his career, and in temples located in the area of the capital when he regained the favor of imperial authorities and was appointed to a prestigious abbacy during the final stage of his life.

Moreover, since the text's provenance and early history is very difficult to determine, it is not at all certain that the Ur Version was the rendition most widely used during all phases of Song Chan. In fact, the earliest remark I have seen in regard to the Mu Kōan is a verse commentary on the Dual Version by a Yunmen lineage monk named Fo Yinyuan in the late eleventh century that endorses a relativist standpoint concerning existence and nonexistence: "The great function of total activity expresses freedom,/ 'Yes' and 'No' are two parts of a pair./ How much awareness of karma is encountered by people and dogs?/ From now on we shall always reflect upon Zhaozhou's comments"<sup>47</sup> 大用全機得自由。有無雙放卻雙收。幾多業識逢人犬。從此時時憶趙州。 The third line of the poem evokes Zhaozhou's reply about karmic awareness in response to a follow-up question about why a dog would not have Buddha-nature, since all beings are said to possess this endowment.

### On Juxtaposing the Two Main Versions: Mu and You

From a careful examination of several hundred records of citations and allusions to the case in classic collections, it is my contention that the Ur Version of the Mu Kōan, while of great value and importance, is but one rendition and that an emphasis on absolutism based on the key-phrase method can be misleading. Other perspectives include affirmative, indirect, ironic, contradictory, and expansive in addition to various kinds of negative responses to the core question. These alternative standpoints reflect a considerably broader range of rhetorical styles and interpretative views than basing the case in terms of a single syllable serving as a vehicle for promoting the termination of discourse. The full implications of the kōan are not necessarily revealed by translations or interpretations focusing exclusively on the Emphatic Mu response, which is sometimes presented with an exclamation point or a transliteration of the Sino-Japanese original for stress (as in "Mu!" or "無!") or with a series of "u's." Therefore, it is necessary to juxtapose and critically compare the two main versions of the case.

## EMPHATIC MU, OR WORD TO END ALL WORDS

The Ur Version is a brief dialogue with the master's simple reply:

When a monk asked master Zhaozhou, "Does a dog have Buddha-nature or not?" he replied, "No" (Ch. Wu, Jp. Mu).<sup>48</sup>

趙州和尚因僧問。狗子還有佛性也無。州云無。

In the *Gateless Gate's* prose remarks on how to apply the case to contemplation, it is said that reflection upon Mu is at first as uncomfortable as trying to swallow a red-hot iron ball but it ultimately has the power of a war hero's sword to remove delusion and realize perfect freedom. In addition to being the first case presented in this collection, which is generally assigned to new practitioners but often with follow-up questions, the kōan was also the critical catalyst in the six-year religious quest of the text's compiler, Wumen, as well as scores of other monastic and lay trainees in the Song and later periods.

According to the key-phrase method that uses this version exclusively, Zhaozhou's negative reply leads to the removal of excess verbiage in a way that supports the notion of Zen as a "special transmission outside the scriptures, with no reliance on words and letters" (Ch. *jiaowai biechuan buli wenzi*, Jp. *kyōge betsuden furyū monji*). The Mu response is understood as a nonword or a final word to end the use of all words in explicating—or, to put it conversely, resisting the tendency and refusing to expound or expand upon—traditional Buddhist doctrine. For Dahui, Jinul, Hakuin, and their followers, the Mu Kōan functions as the central example of a case from which a critical summative watchword is to be extracted from the overall case narrative to become an object of meditation.

A detailed examination of some issues of translation and interpretation based on the grammatical structure and syntax of the exchange in light of minor variations in different editions will be discussed in chapter 4. Given the function of the "No" answer relative to the way the inquiry is posed in terms of the syntax of "does it have... or not?" and since there are both positive and mixed responses in other versions, one of the main topics to be considered is whether there is a compelling linguistic argument for the Emphatic Mu interpretation. Or is the Ur Version open to more extended interpretative scrutiny than is traditionally argued?

## EXPANSIVE MU, OR WORDS THAT PERPETUATE WORDS

An equally prominent version that was prevalent in the Southern Song, in which there are both negative and positive responses, is featured in Hongzhi's record (Ch. *Hongzhilu*, Jp. *Wanshiroku*) 2.18, which became the basis for case 18 in the *Record of Serenity* collection of 1224 with extended prose, verse, and capping phrase commentary. This version no doubt influenced case 114

in Dōgen's *300 Case Treasury* compiled a decade later, after he had returned from a four-year journey to China (1223–1227), and it was also used with the order of the responses reversed in Dōgen's "Buddha-nature" fascicle of the *Treasury of the True Dharma-Eye*. Although all of the aforementioned texts are products of Caodong Chan or Sōtō Zen lineages, chapter 5 will show that there was an abundant number of Linji school commentators during the classical period, so that the Dual Version is not strictly a matter of sectarian preference, even though—when it is not ignored—it is often represented that way.

As the main alternative to the Ur Version, this double-answer rendition also includes follow-up dialogues to the positive and negative answers, and thus casts the role of denial relative to affirmation in ironic or paradoxical rather than absolutist terms:

A monk asked Zhaozhou, "Does even a dog have Buddha nature or not?" and Zhaozhou said, "Yes." The monk said, "Since it already has [Buddha-nature], why does it enter into this skin-bag?" and Zhaozhou said, "It knows better yet willfully chooses this transgression." Again a [or another] monk asked, "Does even a dog have Buddha-nature or not?" and Zhaozhou said, "No." The monk said, "All sentient beings have Buddha-nature, so why does the dog not have it?" and Zhaozhou replied, "Because it has awareness of its karma."<sup>49</sup>

僧問趙州。狗子還有佛性也無。州云有。僧云。既有為甚麼卻撞入這箇皮袋。州云。為他知而故犯。又有僧問。狗子還有佛性也無。州曰。無。僧云。一切眾生皆有佛性。狗子為甚麼卻無。州云。為伊有業識在。

Even though Zhaozhou's "Yes" response literally means "it does have," this should probably not be taken at face value as it could also suggest a unique level of affirmation unbound by duality. In other variations of this version, denial precedes assertion, but in all renditions of the Dual Version both answers are invariably accompanied by ironic questions challenging further the antimony of existence versus nonexistence. In "Buddha-nature," Dōgen develops his own rhetorical flair by combining discursive ingredients from baroque Chan kōan collections like the *Blue Cliff Record* with Japanese vernacular expressions, including (mis)pronunciations of Chinese terms, while providing a lengthy interlinear commentary on many of the words and phrases throughout the dialogue that alludes to a wide variety of Chan sources. Variations on the Dual Version are also cited in several passages in Dōgen's *Extensive Record* collection of sermons in vols. 1 through 7 and verse comments on kōans in vol. 9. These stand in addition to remarks that seem to endorse the Emphatic Mu standpoint in an earlier essay from 1234, *Guidelines for Studying the Way* (*Gakudōyōjinshū*).

The Dual Version, again with minor deviations, appears in the *Compendium of Lamp Records* (Ch. *Zongmen liandeng huiyao*, Jp. *Shūmon rentōeyō*) vol. 6 of 1183 in the entry for Zhaozhou, and it is also found in the *Jeweled Compendium of Verse Comments* (Ch. *Chancong songgu lianzhu tongji*, Jp. *Zenshū juko renjutsū shū*) vol. 14, a collection of poetic remarks on 818 kōan records first published in 1179 but better known from a 1392 redaction. It is important to note that in this work the Dual Version stands alongside the Ur Version; the former has a dozen comments and the latter nearly three times that amount.<sup>50</sup>

In general, the Dual Version gives rise to interpretations that highlight ambivalent literary embellishments seemingly uncommitted to any particular viewpoint while featuring extensive remarks with rhetorical flourishes that reflect the integration of literary Zen with modes of contemplation. However, the approach to exegesis of Hongzhi, Wansong, and Dōgen was not necessarily carried out by subsequent textual developments in the Caodong/Sōtō sect. In the medieval Japanese canon of Sōtō kōan-commentarial literature referred to by the generic term *Commentaries* (*Shōmono*), which includes an esoteric style of initiation documents known as “paper strips” (*kirigami*) that use diagrams or illustrations in addition to verbal communication, there was a decided preference for the Ur Version based on the *Gateless Gate*.<sup>51</sup> Interestingly enough, the Dual Version was kept alive through Japanese Rinzai sources, including case 49 of the *Collection of Zen Entanglements*, although this text also includes a couple of follow-up cases that unsurprisingly support an emphasis on the Emphatic Mu.<sup>52</sup> The appearance of the Dual Version in that text means that the Expansive Mu standpoint was known in traditional Japan, even if this topic is not frequently mentioned in contemporary scholarship.

#### CASE VERSIONS AND CORRESPONDING RELIGIOUS VISIONS

As indicated previously, I refer to the Mu-only response as the Ur Version since it is generally thought to be the primal record that has been consistently transmitted and disseminated. Because of the complexity of factors involved in demonstrating that this version was probably not the original or even the most authentic record of the case, I am using the term “Ur” somewhat tongue-in-cheek or in a way that is deliberately disingenuous. On the other hand, the designation is relevant in that this rendition is the one most frequently cited and readily identified by nearly all Zen factions, as well as the vast majority of scholars and practitioners.

The Ur Version is contrasted here with the Mu/Wu-U/You, or No-Yes (or, in some instances, the inverted U-Mu, or Yes-No), rendition, or the Dual Version, so called in that positive and negative responses are conjoined in a brief yet fuller passage of dialogues. “Dual” in this instance does not imply a philosophy of duality in a way antithetical to Buddhist thought. For better or worse, the number of citations of this version in classic collections is considerably more

limited than the Ur Version, as far as I can tell from extensive research, but by no means did support for this die out.

The abbreviated Ur Version featuring a short dialogue with a one-word reply is generally taken to highlight the notion of transcendental negation attained through the termination of logic and language and is accompanied by sparse commentaries emphasizing nothingness. The more complex Dual Version, with four subdialogues in all, suggests the contingency of opposites and need for ongoing exegesis as it is accompanied by expansive commentaries featuring elaborate rhetoric. This contrast makes for an exciting philosophical debate between two distinct visions of Zen truth that has not been fully examined, or has been subsumed under other discursive structures in which the Mu-only rendition tends to prevail. Whereas the Emphatic Mu stresses holding to one interpretation of the case with multiple applications based on negation, the Expansive Mu accentuates a wide variety of interpretations that are posited according to particular situations based on relativism. This outlook recalls the Sanskrit word *saindhava*, which refers to an ancient legend in which a servant anticipates his king's every need, such as for salt or a horse. This notion, cited in items 37 and 39 in Zhaozhou's recorded sayings, suggests that each and every person has his or her own level of understanding that needs to be addressed and authenticated by the appropriate teachings of his or her master.<sup>53</sup>

Why has the Ur Version been more or less immune from critical studies in regard to its historicity, and how should its relation to the Dual Version be examined? In what way can these very different, seemingly opposite—or perhaps from another angle, complementary—approaches be seen in relation to one another or reconciled in terms of the overall tradition? Does negation and irrationality trump relativism and rhetoric, or is that a received convention in need of re-evaluation? Is there a sense of standoff or sendoff; that is, are these renditions conflicting or can this contrast somehow be understood without the sense of one “versus” the other or privileging of Mu absolutism over Mu-U ambivalence?

A comic strip, “Non Sequitur,” may be taken to highlight a kind of compatibility between the two main versions. An empty wall plaque for the “Thought for Today” suggests the self-deconstructing key-phrase method emphasizing negation, whereas the In-Out boxes for “Existence” and “Nonexistence” indicate the role of the Dual Version—or perhaps it would be more appropriate if these slots were filled with creative literary devices!

Instead of being bound to one view or the other, the conceptual complications indicated by seemingly contradictory or paradoxical versions of the kōan can be explored continually without seeking a firm or final conclusion. This effort exposes an underlying tendency evident in many interpretations to trumpet Mu as a timeless truth unscathed by scrutiny and evaluation and to view the textual history of the case as a kind of inevitable trajectory of accumulated sequential standpoints linked together in a straight line unaltered

by vicissitude that led inexorably and culminated in the supremacy of the Ur Version. Deconstructing an overreliance on the Emphatic Mu is not intended to disparage or vitiate that version so as to invert the general trend in support of the alternative rendition of the Expansive Mu as having priority. Rather, the aim is to counteract deficient methodological predispositions and remedy any apparent ideological imbalance brought about by hidden (or not-so-hidden) sectarian agendas to evaluate the hermeneutic situation of Mu Kōan studies from an open-ended and even-handed perspective.

My approach to issuing this minority report by unraveling the way classic debates inform yet are, in turn, seen through the lens of contemporary arguments is guided in large part by Griffith Foulk's crucial reminder in regard to examining the history of kōan writings. Despite claims made by many exponents of an eternal verity that unfolded in a systematic and unimpeded sequence through concrete historical figures represented in specific texts, Foulk points out, "To fully master the kōan genre . . . one must realize that it is in fact a literary genre with a distinct set of structures and rules, and furthermore that it is a product of the poetic and philosophical imagination, not simply a historical record of the utterances of awakened people."<sup>54</sup> Thus, my goal is to root the two main versions of the case in terms of their respective textual origins and cultural implications.

An account of an interesting transnational episode highlights a disconnect between views long held in Chinese and Japanese approaches to the case. Zhaozhou's temple located in Hebei province near Shijiazhuang south of Beijing (as was custom, the master bore the name of the town and temple) was rebuilt in the late 1980s following its destruction during the Cultural Revolution. The late Keido Fukushima, rōshi of Tōfukuji temple in Kyoto, was invited along with some monks and other representatives from Japan to attend the ceremony. In front of Zhaozhou's stupa, which was the one ancient memorial that survived the devastation, Fukushima shouted "Mu/Wu" in such a loud and penetrating way that it was taken as a great tribute by his followers, while the Chinese priests in attendance were left bemused. They were probably not familiar with the tradition of the dramatic delivery of the Mu response in post-Hakuin Japan and, after all, associated the Tang ancestor primarily with many other kinds of sayings and accomplishments than the dog dialogue.<sup>55</sup>

Highlighting the Ur and Dual versions along with other renditions of the case is not just a matter of cataloging distinctive texts, in that each version along with some of the extensive remarks and allusions they have engendered conveys a very different corresponding vision of the role of discourse in connection (or disconnection) with meditation. Furthermore, the two versions generate dissimilar kinds of commentarial literature, with the Mu-only version focusing on metaphors for the function of negation related to the psychology of contemplation, whereas the Yes-No version with several dialogues highlights the role of interlinear commentary that is rhetorically sophisticated in using irony and indirection.

## POSITING “LIVE WORDS” AS COMMON GROUND

While it can be helpful to examine the structure and implications of a recapitulation of classic debates, because of the complexity and diversity of views, it is equally important not to limit our understanding to what has traditionally been said in regard to ideological discord. It is possible to become free from conceptual polarity through recognizing that there is a common theoretical ground with numerous variations. Therefore, a hermeneutic reorientation can be initiated because each of the main Chan thinkers in his own way claims to support the role of evoking “live words” (Ch. *huoju*, Jp. *katsuku*, Kr. *kwalgū*), which reflect the dynamism of awakening that is crucial for attaining spiritual realization, over and above “dead words” (Ch. *siku*, Jp. *shiku*, Kr. *sagu*), which represent unedifying uses of language. This distinction was first advocated by the tenth-century master Dongshan Shouchu (Jp. Tōzan Shusho) of the Yunmen lineage and was supported in principle by nearly all Zen masters in East Asia, despite disagreements regarding how this goal would be achieved.

What was considered a live or a dead word could be interpreted in very different ways and might well be extended or inverted within a school of thought or even by a particular teacher when reviewing his overall works. Dahui and his followers refer to “tangled vines” (Ch. *geteng*, Jp. *kattō* 葛藤) as a metaphor for the deficiency of using counterproductive discourse that is antithetical to the key-phrase method. The use of the disparaging epithet draws from parallel references to the “complications” of unsuccessful poetry evoked in Song literary criticism. A very different approach favored by leading masters such as Juefan, Yuanwu, Wansong, and Dōgen tends to question or reverse this outlook by celebrating the disentangling of conceptual entanglements through expressing tangled words as an optimal means for conveying the ongoing process of realizing enlightenment.

The two characters in the compound are bivalent, with the first referring to the destructive tendrils of the invasive kudzu (a loan word from Japanese) vine, which can have beneficial uses in medicine, diet, and basket weaving, and the second to the beautiful blossoms of the enchanting wisteria vine. In support of the positive use of the term, in early Chinese wedding rites entangled vines were a commonly used symbol for the ceremonial binding/bonding of marriage partners and their families.<sup>56</sup> For Yuanwu, tangled vines sometimes serve as a synonym for *kōan*, or a modifier that reinforces the constructive role of rhetorical devices, although he is somewhat ambivalent in that *geteng* can also suggest the negative sense of complications, which is the translation sometimes chosen by contemporary interpreters. Among advocates of using the term “entanglements” in a positive sense, Dōgen goes furthest by declaring that vines represent a thoroughly productive way to capture the multiple implications of enlightenment, which encompass truth and untruth or errancy.<sup>57</sup>

Thus, the contrast between Dahui's key-phrase approach stressing abbreviation and the view of literary elaborations can be summed up, to cite the Japanese pronunciations with their end-rhyme, as a matter of "Watō (*huatou*) Versus Kattō (*geteng*)." Defining the Zen discursive polarity in this manner helps to explain the complex controversy in regard to the role of rhetoric that cuts across sectarian and national divisions.<sup>58</sup> The tremendous degree of variation and variability in Mu Kōan commentaries has led Watō interpreters to insist that the real message of the case is a commitment to the transcendence of nothingness, which might result in a reification of nihilism, whereas Kattō supporters argue that the true point is the relativity of affirmation and negation in endless ambiguity, which might result in the ethical problem of antinomianism.

What links Watō and Kattō is the idea endorsed by all parties that awakening involves an interior realization and the trainee must dispense altogether with a biased view of the case based on the effects of rote learning. Prior to attaining this state, all forms of expression may seem forced and artificial, with the trainee getting frustrated to the point of suffering attacks of anxiety, so that in many instances physical symptoms ensue, such as fever, sores, headaches, and regurgitation. However, once enlightenment is fully achieved, the spiritually awakened trainee exudes a degree of self-awareness and self-confidence such that whatever comes out of his or her mouth will be a spontaneous and, therefore, an authentic expression of live words that have "the ring of a bell or the echo of a canyon" and reflect that "one tastes water and knows for himself whether it is warm or cool."

Therefore, it is necessary to clarify and help resolve some basic issues in regard to the fundamental conundrum in Zen concerning the role of ineffability, or need for silence by relinquishing all manner of verbal expression through the process of abbreviation, and a seemingly contrary emphasis on literary embellishment, by cultivating the use of rhetorical devices such as extensive allusions and indirect references, as well as inventive wordplay and imaginative linkages to seasonal and mythical imagery. The background and implications of these religious visions need to be carefully sorted out to gain a full picture of the diversity and complexity of traditional Zen interpretative standpoints regarding the Mu Kōan in relation to training methods.

A primary area of significance of this study is to explain and come to terms with the basis and implications of longstanding sectarian disputes by situating them in terms of underlying areas of cohesion between feuding factions that may well stand apart, but perhaps in different ways than what is presented in stereotypical depictions derived from the self-presentation of one of the parties engaged in discord. Although the Emphatic Mu version is usually associated with the Linji/Rinzai school and the Expansive Mu seems to be championed by the Caodong/Sōtō school, interpreting differences strictly along sectarian lines is undermined by many examples of disparities and exceptions, so that this proves to be a misleading model of interpretation. The hermeneutic

situation is much more complicated than is indicated by the somewhat useful but, in the final analysis, simplistic dichotomy of *kōan*-investigation and silent-illumination. While Korean Seon was for the most part uniform and consistent in supporting the Ur Version, although the Dual Version appears in Hyesim's collection with commentary by Gag'un, in China and Japan there was considerably more variation and crossover between competing lineages. Any sense of conflict or opposition was probably based more on differing visions of truth than sectarian loyalty.

Thinking through Wu/Mu and You/U unfettered by modern (mis)appropriations enables access to the remarkably pluralistic elements formed during the Song dynasty and beyond, as Zen continued to develop in the Yuan and Ming dynasties in China while simultaneously spreading and thriving in Korea and Japan. My approach is based on a multilateral methodology with the following guidelines:

- (a) Rather than assessing debates in terms of *kōan*-investigation versus silent-illumination, it is preferable to examine the discursive interactions through the lens of *Watō* as seen in relation to *Kattō*, while keeping in mind that these terms were used in various ways so that no fixed meaning should be ascribed to either one.
- (b) This distinction reflects two different theories of learning and knowledge acquisition: one involves direct teaching grounded in imitation or the replication of repeated activities through mnemonic devices, which makes the *Watō* similar to *nainfo/nembutsu* recitation as an iconic module for instruction; and the other evokes free association by allowing images and ideals to be projected in continuous yet contradictory fashion, which allies *Kattō* with poetry production that is fundamentally ironic.
- (c) Whenever taken to an extreme, the supporters of each standpoint tend to refute and repudiate their adversaries, even among their own clique, for causing the decline and possible downfall of Zen as a religious movement, so that *Watō* followers become insistent while *Kattō* followers fall sway to being inconsistent.
- (d) Nevertheless, the *Watō* and *Kattō* viewpoints have much in common in terms of going beyond descriptive and analytical uses of language reflecting dualistic presuppositions to articulate a prescriptive approach to spiritual attainment based on disclosing live words.

## Would a Dog Lick a Pot of Hot Oil?

### RECONSTRUCTING THE UR VERSION

#### The Function of Rhetoric in Watō Discourse

This chapter establishes a reconstruction of the significance of the Ur Version that is evaluated impartially and without judgment reflecting either support or criticism for the religious vision and ritual practice this rendition of the case represents. The Ur Version is examined here in terms of the rhetorical implications of the key-phrase method based on a large body of personal narratives commenting on how the Mu Watō functions as a shortcut path to enlightenment in addition to metaphysical reflections, especially by modern philosophers and intellectuals, on the meaning of nothingness. The analysis of the diversity and complexity of the Ur Version's discourse, which is generally celebrated for the opposite qualities of minimalism and simplicity, helps set the stage in the third and fourth chapters for a deconstruction of the Emphatic Mu standpoint when it is taken as the sole valid approach to the Mu Kōan through a multilateral hermeneutics combining theoretical considerations with textual and historical studies.

The key-phrase method is rooted in the notions of nihility and reticence in stressing abbreviated forms of expression through the use of parsimonious language to epitomize the Zen motto of being a special transmission outside the sutras. H. D. Thoreau once said that "Silence is the universal refuge." For Watō proponents, a single word or phrase cut off from the fuller narrative context of the kōan record approximates remaining silent and yet avoids the pitfall of quiescence. Investigating Mu, it is said, stands in contrast to the extreme view of stillness associated with the inactivity of silent-illumination that produces the problematic states of feeling like a "withered tree" or "cold ashes" while meditating alone as if in a "dark cave."

As has often been noted in studies of comparative religious thought, few people speak at greater length or with more eloquence about any topic than do mystics in regard to the virtues of negation and renunciation. Dahui's followers were no exception in creating dozens of volumes of writings concerning the merits of undertaking the religious quest based on engaging with Mu.

The function of Watō is conveyed persuasively through various kinds of verbal imagery for conjuring the excruciating experience of doubt and the physical and mental symptoms it causes, in addition to the extraordinary power of Mu to cut through ignorance and realize awakening.

There have been a number of outstanding, detailed explanations of doctrinal works explicating the key-phrase outlook in recent studies of Dahui (China), Jinul (Korea), and Hakuin (Japan), along with translations of the *Gateless Gate* among other classic works such as Dahui's letters to lay followers.<sup>1</sup> Not wishing to try to replicate that ample material here, I instead analyze anew several key elements of the discursive styles of commentaries on the Emphatic Mu. The discussion is based on several noteworthy examples, including frequently cited passages from the writings of Dahui and followers, as well as important representative selections cited from lesser-known sources, such as relatively unfamiliar poetic remarks stemming from Song- or Yuan-dynasty texts. For example, a verse commentary by a monk named Jingshan Gao warns against making any effort to try to interpret the significance of Mu from a rational perspective: "The dog has no Buddha-nature,/ [Zhaozhou's] compassion is like a deep ocean./ Those who try to dissect the saying line by line/ Destroy their ability to understand it"<sup>2</sup> 狗子無佛性。慈悲似海深。尋言逐句者。埋沒丈夫心。 Even this brief poetic expression makes use of a central metaphor precisely to defeat a reliance on rhetoric.

Victor Sogen Hori notes that current Japanese Rinzai monastic training perpetuates the use of various premodern discursive styles as a means of explicating the function of the key-phrase technique but also points out that this trend is often overlooked in favor of highlighting the role of realization, or of ends over and above means. Based on his own training that lasted more than several decades while he was a monk at Daitokuji temple in Kyoto, Hori observes:

The focus on the *kenshō* [seeing into one's true nature] experience has obscured the fact that traditional Rinzai monastic *kōan* practice includes many years of literary and intellectual study... which includes the appending of capping verses to *kōan*, the writing of lectures, the composition of Chinese verse, the memorization of large amounts of text, the practice of good calligraphy. This traditional form of scholarship is such an important part of *kōan* practice that it is fair to say that the true modern descendant of the Confucian literary scholar is the Japanese Zen *rōshi*.<sup>3</sup>

In contrast to the key-phrase method of dissociating Watō from both content and context, supporters of the Dual Version use many kinds of literary techniques associated with the Kattō outlook that explore the possibilities of free association with diverse sources and influences received to illumine divergent levels of meaning of the Mu *Kōan*. Hori's comments point out that such rhetorical devices are by no means abandoned by practitioners of the Emphatic

Mu, so that proponents of the two main renditions and their corresponding visions of religious truth can be seen to occupy a more substantial degree of common ground based on live words than is indicated by studies that end up echoing sectarian polemics.

To draw out the significance of rhetoric used to explicate the Watō approach, I will first provide an overview of doctrinal disputes among the scholastic schools of Chinese Buddhism about whether or not the universality of Buddha-nature encompasses all sentient beings, including even a dog. These debates form a necessary backdrop for understanding how Zhaozhou's Mu response succinctly puts an abrupt end, or at least significantly reorients the conventional sense of ideological conflict. Then, I will analyze two main discursive elements evident in the rhetoric of Watō that are at once contradictory and complementary. The first element involves the quality of intensely subjective personalization evident in autobiographical remembrances, as well as more formal biographical accounts explaining how individual monks and nonclerical practitioners have sought to surpass doubt to attain enlightenment. The subjective element of personal experience is accompanied in Watō-based rhetoric by the thoroughly objective or impersonal notion of absolutization expressed through ruminations on nothingness in classical Chinese thought, as well as by Kyoto school theorists in modern Japan, who examine the traditional notion of Mu in terms of comparative philosophical perspectives.

### **Watō Rhetoric Emerging from the Context of Doctrinal Disputes**

The Ur Version of the Mu Kōan consists of a deceptively simple yet endlessly perplexing question-and-answer exchange, which is completed by a provocative single-word response from Zhaozhou without further dialogue or comment. Mu represents a deliberately puzzling and contradictory reply to the monk's inquiry that evokes a seemingly sardonic view of one of the most basic and far-reaching theoretical issues in Mahayana Buddhism. Based on a famous passage from the *Nirvana Sutra*, the doctrine of an all-pervasive Buddha-nature encompassing living and, for some interpretations, nonliving beings became the fundamental tenet supported by the major scholastic schools of Tang China. These included the Dilun, Sanlun, Huayan, and Tiantai schools, in addition to the then-fledgling and more practice-oriented Chan and Pure Land movements.

According to Chinese Buddhist teachings based on the sutra, *everything* has Buddha-nature, or the potential to attain awakening. A primary area of controversy concerns whether this quality really encompasses all things, except perhaps the hopelessly karma-stricken *icchantika*, which represents a category of impure beings that could not expect to realize the goal of enlightenment. As a culmination of extensive debates during the early Tang, in his final work, the *Adamantine Scalpel* (Ch. *Jin'gangbei*, Jp. *Kingōhai*), produced around 780 just

two years before his death, Tiantai school thinker Zhanran who was primarily known as an interpreter of Zhiyi proclaimed unequivocally that Buddha-nature incorporates all sentient and insentient beings.

Zhanran's view of unimpeded universality, which was also reflected in some of the teachings of the pre-Huineng Northern school of Chan, was not necessarily accepted by ninth-century Chan masters, including Zhaozhou. By the time of the emergence of the Hongzhou lineage, which became the primary stream of the Southern school several generations after the sixth patriarch, Chan thinkers like Huangbo who were influenced by Yogacara's Mind-only philosophy as expressed in the *Lankavatara Sutra* tended to refute, at least indirectly, some of the animistic implications of Zhanran's affirmation of the spirituality of all beings. As an example of Chan skepticism in regard to universality, Weishan was known to say, "All living beings originally do not have Buddha-nature,"<sup>4</sup> and Nanquan said ironically of humans in relation to sentient beings, "If the one making a gift is thinking of giving, he enters hell like a shot. If the one getting a gift is thinking of receiving, he is bound to be reborn as an animal."<sup>5</sup> However, when asked by a monk, "What is my Buddha-nature?" a master replied, "Go away! Go away! You do not have Buddha-nature," thereby suggesting that while humans may be superior to other beings, if they trumpet this egoistically, their sense of true awareness is lost.

#### WHO AND/OR WHAT HAS BUDDHA-NATURE

Given this somewhat contradictory conceptual background, the Mu Kōan, which forms an ironic touchstone with the valorization of de-anthropocentric animistic naturalism as a religious ideal in East Asia, probes whether or not a vital principle is shared without partiality, restriction, or exception by all living beings, even dogs or other animals and, by implication, plants and nonliving beings, including mountains, rivers, or stones. In other words, is the doctrinal construct that each and every entity partake of ultimate spiritual reality, while perhaps a consistent theme on an abstruse hypothetical level, in the final analysis an absurd tenet that becomes irrelevant and counterproductive to an individual person's religious practice aimed at attaining awakening? It seems that the universality of Buddha-nature is exposed by Zhaozhou's Mu reply for being an untenable notion that must be cast aside precisely for a practitioner to authentically achieve Buddhahood. Zen training, it implies, should be based on the imperative to overcome each individual's all-too-human sense of suffering while trying to attain release from unedifying concerns. Yet, Mahayana doctrine is not rejected altogether and can still function, if used appropriately, as a relative truth or skillful means for instructing disciples.

Furthermore, Zhaozhou's apparent assertion that a dog does not possess a spiritual endowment seems to make a mockery of the notion of universality,

which represents a belief seemingly detached from existential concerns, in favor of personal, practical engagement with the path leading to the attainment of enlightenment. Therefore, the inquirer should worry less about the dog and more about his own intimate religious pursuit. In interpretations of the Ur Version stressing the key-phrase technique, Mu functioning as a kind of necessary evil serves as a linguistic device that is used to overcome dependence on language, or as a word that sets aside the need for other words, a poison counteracting poison, or, in another remedial metaphor, a homeopathic or highly diluted dose of verbal communication that eradicates any need for further discourse. These images demonstrate the use of rhetoric to divulge a non- or anti-rhetorical approach.

According to Fenyang's analysis of the variety of encounter dialogues that he adapted into *kōans*, questioning the teaching of sutras is one of eighteen kinds of cases. However, Fenyang does not cite the Mu *Kōan* as an example of this category, probably because it was not yet in circulation at the time, but rather an exchange in which Shoushan (Jp. Shuzan) is asked, "All beings have the Buddha-nature, so why do they not know of it?" and the master replies, "They know."<sup>6</sup> As an intriguing variation on that theme, there is a subdialogue in the Dual Version of the Mu *Kōan* in which Zhaozhou indicates incongruously that the reason dogs do not have Buddha-nature is that they possess an awareness of karmic causality. These examples suggest that knowledge of reality is not sufficient for awakening because this capacity harbors an element of affliction or defilement. The irony is that cognizance of karma is precisely what defines a human's distinctive feature in comparison with all other beings and, thus, represents the key to his or her ability to attain enlightenment.

Does a dog, which at that time in Chan discourse was primarily known as a scavenger or guard animal but not necessarily a domesticated pet or man's best friend, even though there may have been some affection for the creature's sense of loyalty, know that it is a dog?<sup>7</sup> To what extent does the dialogue's reference to a lowly canine seek to divulge indirectly the inquirer's personal sense of insufficiency and reveal an unconscious acknowledgment of a lack of self-worth? Does the image of the dog, which is known for various kinds of foolish behavior when instinct overrules mindfulness, function as a metaphor for deficient understanding on the part of the inquirer?

The Ur Version's adamantly dismissive approach to the dog having Buddha-nature recalls the Buddha's silence in regard to a list of speculative questions that do not tend to edification because they set up problematic polarities regarding finitude versus infinitude, or life versus death. In contrast to Sakyamuni's kinder and gentler approach, which provides a rationale through the parable of the "arrow in the heart" for remaining reticent based on the urgency of the quest for nirvana that does not allow time for distraction, the

Zen master makes his repudiation known to the disciple somewhat shockingly. He causes humiliation and a sense of comeuppance without offering a painstaking explanation of the reasons for his reluctance to participate in idle discourse. Responding with harsh measures to an existential problem recalls a popular Japanese saying, “You sometimes have to be cruel to be kind,” in setting straight an incorrigibly stubborn learner.

As a disciple of the Nanquan, also the mentor for Changsha who participated in a prominent dialogue on the Buddha-nature of an earthworm cut in two, Zhaozhou was a major figure in the famously irreverent and antinomian Hongzhou lineage. This stream was initiated by Mazu (Jp. Baso) two generations earlier and eventually gave rise to the Linji school that came to prominence in the eleventh century. The pedagogical approach of the Hongzhou lineage uses irrational and paradoxical rejoinders couched in everyday colloquial language as a means of challenging presuppositions and stimulating the mind of the inquirer to surpass words and thought, including doctrinal discourse as expressed in scriptures. Like Huineng, who was said to have ripped up the sutras, and Deshan, who burned the *Diamond Sutra* once he was sure of his ability to know well but remain unbound by its strictures, the aim of Zhaozhou’s pedagogical style is to fulfill the intent but not necessarily the content of Mahayana Buddhist teachings, which may in fact need to be dismissed and discredited or even destroyed—both literally and figuratively—if they lead to an attachment.

Zhaozhou’s overall style is highly regarded, however, not for histrionic and destructive actions like striking or slapping or shouting at disciples, or tossing down the ceremonial fly-whisk in disgust, as was carried out by many Hongzhou stream masters, but for responding in dialogues with enigmatic yet compelling comebacks that leave his views ambiguous, open-ended, and inconclusive. In addition to the dialogue about a dog’s Buddha-nature, Zhaozhou answers “Yes” to a query concerning the Buddha-nature of a cypress tree (a frequently used image in his record, as he lived in an area that was known for the proliferation of this species). He also deals ironically in various dialogues with the spiritual quality of other sentient beings, including a cat, radish, and water buffalo (another popular topic), as well as insentient objects like a famous arched stone bridge spanning a river located near his monastery.

As an example of his unorthodox style of pedagogy, in *Gateless Gate* case 11 Zhaozhou replies in opposite ways to the same prompt by giving contrasting evaluations—one ecstatically positive and the other dismissively disparaging—of two hermits who both raise a fist when he enters their respective cave dwellings.<sup>8</sup> From the opposite direction, in item 459 in the *Record* the master gives followers who behave quite differently the identical instruction, “Go drink a cup of tea.”<sup>9</sup> Therefore, Zhaozhou’s approach, which is puzzling and defies predictability or decisiveness as contradictions and discrepancies abound, may not necessarily be reducible to the Emphatic Mu.

## ABBREVIATION RE ALLUSION IN EMPHATIC MU DISCOURSE

While seemingly rich in allusions to various Buddhist and non-Buddhist strands of theoretical history that may seem intriguing as a stimulus for creative reflection, whether or not this is intended, for key-phrase advocates the term “Mu” is not to be considered thought provoking in the ordinary sense. It is utilized neither to provide a literal response nor for its embedded discursive meanings, but just the reverse as a supralinguistic vehicle that exposes the unanswerable nature and basic insignificance of the monk’s query concerning the possibility of a dog possessing Buddha-nature.

Often referred to as the *muji* (Ch. *wuzi* 無字) or “no-word” (alternatively: the “word No”) case, the Mu Kōan is celebrated not for exploring the complexity of doctrine but because it captures in a single word the heart of Zen functioning as an ineffable transmission that eliminates cogitation and rhetoric at the root by not relying on any particular manner of deliberation or phrasing. Dahui understands the Mu response neither as the straightforward denial of “there is no Buddha-nature” seen in opposition to an affirmation that “there is Buddha-nature” nor as a higher sense of nonbeing, but as a level of negation beyond the dichotomy of having or being and not having or nonbeing. He interprets the key-phrase in a transliteral way as a shortcut to awareness reached through an intensive contemplative experience conducted each and every moment of the day. The case supports anti-intellectualism in reflecting a level of insight that surpasses reason by cutting off thought and language to serve as the key to a nonlogical experience spontaneously catapulting the practitioner to a realization of sudden enlightenment beyond thought and words.

For leading Zen researchers Yanagida Seizan and Umehara Takeshi, the emphasis on nothingness beyond ordinary nihility makes the Mu Kōan the centerpiece of Chinese Chan and Japanese Zen teachings.<sup>10</sup> Based on this standpoint, Akizuki admires the Mu Kōan for expressing “supreme negation” as the “heart of Oriental Nothingness,” because its compact manner of expression surpassing contradictions seems to epitomize the essential features of simplicity and starkness divulged through disarming spontaneity that underlies the style of discourse characteristic of Asian thought.<sup>11</sup>

Whereas the Kattō approach highlighted in the *Blue Cliff Record* composed at the end of the Northern Song expands upon core dialogical exchanges by offering different types of intertextual comments including capping phrases, the Watō outlook designed less than a decade after the publication of this collection stresses the role of verbal contraction. That is why Dahui mainly cites the truncated Ur Version in his writings, in which even the follow-up dialogue initiated by the anonymous monk that is included in *Zhaozhou’s Record* and a host of other sources is not cited.

Therefore, one might expect that supporters of the Ur Version would use as little rhetoric as possible, and indeed that seems to be the entire point of

the key-phrase method's manner of isolating concise yet pungent critical terms from a case record. Perhaps the most prominent example of a single-minded focus on one word is by the author of the *Gateless Gate*, who reports that he spent six long years contemplating the Mu Kōan before attaining a breakthrough. In a brief poem contained in the final fascicle of his recorded sayings that is often referred to as the "20 Mu's" (Ch. *ershi Wu*, Jp. *nijū Mu*), Wumen evokes the technique of concentrating one's whole body and entire spirit on Mu. The word is repeated for emphasis in four lines with five characters each by following a traditional Chinese poetic form that is used in Buddhist poetry, including kōan collection commentaries:<sup>12</sup> No, No, No, No, No/ No, No, No, No, No/ No, No, No, No, No/ No, No, No, No, No.<sup>13</sup> 無無無無無。無無無無無。無無無無無。無無無無無。

From the standpoint of kōan-investigation, Wumen's verse seems to fulfill an inexorable progression in the abbreviation of rhetoric to a point just short of silence devoid of linguistic content. The reduction of unnecessary verbiage was initially set in motion by the very origins and nature of the kōan tradition, for which it was essential at all stages of development to continue to shorten or abridge the respective forms of expression. This process started with the extraction of encounter dialogues from somewhat longer narratives about the life and teachings of Chan ancestors included in transmission of the lamp records from the early eleventh century and culminated with the formation of the key-phrase method.

Has the tendency to find a shortcut reached an endpoint through the use of the term "Mu" functioning as a mnemonic device or self-effacing semantic prompt that triggers awakening without leaving a conceptual residue? Can the Watō outlook proceed from the legacy of Wumen's incessantly negative verse to create additional means of abbreviated expression? Ideally, whether mentioned one or twenty times, the key-phrase speaks for itself without the need for further remarks or additional elaboration. However, to stay free from nihilistic implications and also to acknowledge the workings of the unenlightened human mind that cannot help but seek an articulation of ideation, it must be acknowledged that Mu as a discursive unit is allusive and referential just as much as it is elusive and reverential. Seeing or hearing the word is bound to stimulate thoughts, and, therefore, some form of expression can and must be used to clarify the meaning of the term, even if this is understood as a skillful means to be discarded once its utility is exhausted.

As a way of highlighting the complex discursive style of the Emphatic Mu, whereby abbreviation and allusion are inseparably intertwined, a modern Japanese Zen interpreter has created an image in Figure 2.1<sup>14</sup> featuring the key-phrase in the center of the diagram, which in my reproduction is left as the original Chinese character to highlight the iconic function of Watō. Mu is surrounded and, thus, reinforced or extended by references to three important notions regarding the role of negation that either influenced or are evoked by

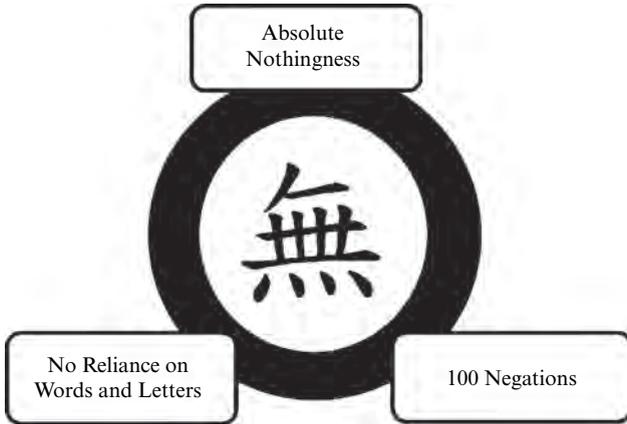


FIGURE 2.1 *Iconic View of Mu Watō.*

the key-phrase. These include the Zen motto “No reliance on words and letters,” the Madhyamika Buddhist reference to “100 negations,” and the modern Kyoto school conception of “Absolute Nothingness” (*zettai mu*).

Because of the severity of his reprimands regarding how not to think or behave when contemplating Mu, Dahui would likely refute certain kinds of teaching such as this illustration, which could be considered to represent yet another level of abstraction that misses—or dismisses—the main antirhetorical element that is crucial for the success of *kōan*-investigation. Dahui might also repudiate other discursive styles like shouting out the word “Mu,” which are commonly used in training programs today, supposedly in his honor, as part of the post-Hakuin style of Japanese Rinzai practice. The extra “u’s” and use of exclamation points might also not find favor. Unnecessary displays of visual or aural stimulation would not be appropriate from a strict Emphatic Mu standpoint.

### The Power of Personalization

Despite the different kinds of injunctions Dahui has made or would likely make, a consistent and compelling focus on the somewhat elaborate rhetoric of personalization suggesting the inner existential experience of overcoming doubt and attaining awakening is shared by many followers of Watō.<sup>15</sup> Symbolic imagery evokes three aspects of the process: the initial feeling of entrapment or the profound uncertainty of the sensation of doubt in regard to the pitfalls of ordinary language and thought, which is compared to the desperation felt by a cornered rat; the exuberance of gaining liberation from ignorance achieved through contemplating the inscrutability of Mu and its capacity for an unbridled defiance of logic and rhetoric, which functions like a sword or knife cutting

through any and all delusion or conceptual obstructions; and the experience of sudden awakening that occurs as a spontaneous flash of insight, which is said to enable a transcendent camaraderie with the spirits of Zhaozhou along with the full family tree of Chan ancestors.

Whether assigned from among a large number of possible records for a life-long course of study whereby the practitioner continues to concentrate on the kōan until full enlightenment is eventually attained, as in Korea, or offered as an introductory part of the training curriculum, as in Japan, the Ur Version leads to subitaneous enlightenment that transpires only after weeks, months, or even a number of years of sustained and sometimes excruciating practice. Many of the most distinguished masters in Zen history confessed proudly that they had struggled mightily with solving the case for prolonged periods before achieving a resolution. The sense of pride that their explanations convey is based on the idea that anxiety is a necessary and invaluable stage on the religious path in that the greater the feeling of doubt, the more profound the realization of truth.

Discourse based on personal experience was initiated in the context of Song intellectual life that fostered a new focus on individualism, as well as the need to wrestle with internal demons to achieve a radical breakthrough. This was accomplished through self-examination and personal growth as a result of engaging the key-phrase method that served as the ultimate tool for spiritual maturation. Dahui and many monks, as well as literati and other lay practitioners, found it necessary to overcome existential disturbance caused by diverse social and emotional factors. Devastating personal experiences of turmoil were caused by banishment, exile, imprisonment, or defrocking, as well as becoming the target of severe criticism and humiliation by a mentor for merely parroting words without demonstrating a genuine internal understanding of their meaning.

Given the ups and downs and slings and arrows of the religious quest conducted in a competitive and highly supervised sociopolitical environment, part of the mentor's role was to adjudicate whether a realization of one of his followers who contemplated Mu could be authenticated as successful or not, since many Watō practitioners claimed breakthroughs that had to be substantiated, as in a legal case. For example, Dahui says approvingly of the experience of Madame Qingguo, a laywoman who struggled with Mu while also reading sutras and worshiping Buddha despite being warned about the drawbacks of these practices: "I heard that one night last winter while sleeping, she all of a sudden awoke. She got up and sat in meditation by raising the key-phrase [in her mind]. Suddenly, there was a joyous event."<sup>16</sup> However, it is not clear whether the master fully confirmed her enlightenment or merely praised a momentary insight.

Because of the all-pervasive and all-consuming nature of doubt, not all of the strivings for awakening were successful at the time, and in some cases this

makes the account even more captivating because the practitioner is forced to give up on the Mu Kōan and press on with other cases. For example, Gaofeng simply abandoned the Mu Kōan after three years of agony. Although this disappointing experience was ironically productive in that it heightened his sense of angst, he had to shift to another case before he was able to realize enlightenment. On the other hand, as a novice Taego visited several masters and throughout his twenties he worked on another kōan attributed to Zhaozhou, “The ten thousand dharmas return to the one; where does the one return?” At age thirty-three, he attained a resolution and then moved on to work with the Mu Kōan but first felt greatly challenged until eventually after four years of practice he succeeded in attaining awakening. This breakthrough was expressed in the following poem: “The solid doors shatter./ Clear wind blows/ From beginningless time.”<sup>17</sup>

In modern times, Sheng Yen reports that he once meditated on the Mu Kōan in twenty-seven-degrees-below-zero weather while practicing in the remote mountains of Japan before he eventually succeeded in “shattering the great doubt” by solving the case. Another contemporary account is provided by scholar-practitioner Victor Hori, who was born and raised in Canada but after earning a doctorate from Stanford University in Western philosophy practiced as a Zen monk in Japan before returning to the West to become a university professor and author of academic writings. Hori notes his personal struggles and remarkable sudden realization with its universal implications:

When I received the *jakugo* assignment [composing a capping phrase] for “Mu,” try as I might, I could not find a capping phrase that summed up “Mu.” Weeks went by. I lost track of the number of times I went through the *Zen Phrase Book* from cover to cover without success. I was beginning to think there was no such verse. Finally, in disgust, the *rōshi* gave me a hint. All at once an avalanche of suitable pages tumbled off the pages, all of which I had read many times before without making the association. It was as if *every* verse expressed “Mu.”<sup>18</sup>

Another recent example is by Ruben Habito, a former Catholic priest who taught at Sophia University in Tokyo and is currently a university professor and Zen center leader in Dallas, Texas. Habito became involved with meditation practice but “was inclined to approach [Mu] through elaborate intellectual gymnastics, having been trained in philosophy in my Jesuit formation and also being of rather inquisitive temperament” before he attained “that explosive experience that would enlighten my whole being—and indeed the whole universe!” From reading Kyoto school philosophy, Habito learned “that this *mu* is not the same as the *concept* of ‘nothingness’ or ‘nonbeing’ that is simply in opposition to ‘being.’ . . . Thus, in my *zazen*, I gave up my mental efforts at trying to analyze the concepts involved, and I simply sat—with my legs crossed, straightening my back, regulating my breathing, putting my whole being to focus on this *mu*

with the outbreath.” Habito reports that “Roshi encouraged me in interviews ‘to become one with’ *mu*, to become totally absorbed (*botsunyū*: literally, ‘to lose oneself and enter’ into it). *Mu* and only *mu*. *Mu* with every breath. Likewise, *mu* with every step, every smile, every touch, every sensation.”<sup>19</sup>

#### DAHUI’S EXPERIENCES AS A MODEL FOR THE RELIGIOUS QUEST

Dahui’s reputation is augmented considerably by the account of his own extraordinary enlightenment experience achieved under Yuanwu, as well as subsequent extensive periods of banishment to the malarial south in Guangzhou before returning triumphantly at the conclusion of his career to assume the abbacy of Mount Jing, the top-ranked Five Mountains temple near Hangzhou. This fascinating and well-documented narrative is dramatic in its twists and turns by conveying how profound disappointments and disillusionment could be offset by prolonged periods of recovery and release during a complex life-long spiritual journey.

The account as summarized by the timeline in Table 2.1 is culled from autobiographical writings in addition to other works from the twelfth century that review and assess Dahui’s career accomplishments in relation to rival schools of thought, as well as stories and legends that built up around his life situations while he struggled in various settings before attaining enlightenment. The Dahui narrative encompasses years of training with Chan masters along with friendships with prominent literati like Juefan Huihong and Zhang Shangying, both of whom suffered through their own challenges, including imprisonment and exile due to pressures from the imperial court, a fate to which many apologists for Buddhism at the time were subject.

At the beginning of his pursuit of the Buddhist path following extensive travels to study under various teachers from both Linji and Caodong lineages, Dahui spent the most time in Jiangxi province with Zhantang Wenzhun, who was a master of the Huanglong stream of the Linji school. Although Dahui gained Dharma transmission and felt that he had developed a great intellectual understanding of Chan, including what is referred to as eighteen minor awakenings along the way, the attainment of full enlightenment still very much eluded him. Sometime after Zhantang’s death, Dahui interacted for a time with Juefan, who had also studied under Zhantang and was involved in accumulating the master’s recorded sayings, and with Zhang, who suggested that he seek out Yuanwu in the Yangqi stream within the Linji school. It took nearly a decade for Dahui to finally meet up with Yuanwu, and their time together lasted just a few years in all. But after realizing his goal ten years after Zhantang’s passing, Dahui’s fame began to spread quickly far and wide, and a host of scholar-officials vied for the opportunity to study with him. Dahui was awarded a purple robe and the honorific title Fori, or Buddhist Sun.

TABLE 2.1 Dahui Timeline

Year	Event/Activity
1089	Born in Anhui Province
1101	Abandons classical education to pursue monkhood
1104	Ordained as a novice
1105	Becomes full-fledged monk, studies in Hebei province with successor to Furung Daokai of Caodong school, then in Hunan with Zhantang Wenzhun, second-generation disciple of Huanglong and disciple of Xuedou of the Yunmen school
1109	Meets Juefan Huihong while studying under Huanglong stream
1115	Zhantang Wenzhun dies, Dahui befriends Buddhist laymen Zhang Shangying and Han Ju and visits Yuanwu of Yangqi stream at recommendation of Wenzhun
1116	Edits Wenzhun's <i>yulu</i> with preface by Juefan Huihong and epitaph by Zhang
1117	Visits Juefan and poet Han Zicang
1119	Nicknamed "Maoxi" and lives in residence of Zhang, who recommends full-time study with Yuanwu as alternative to Huanglong stream
1125	Disciple of Yuanwu at Tiannang Wanshou temple in Kaifeng and attains enlightenment
1126	Receives Purple Robe and official title, Fori (Buddhist Sun)
1129	Withdraws with Yuanwu to Jiangxi Province, also visited by Hongzhi, and spends time in Hunan, while Yuanwu retires to Sichuan province in 1130
1133	Stays in Han Ju's residence
1134	Moves to Mount Yunju in Fujian Province, becomes disturbed by the quietism of silent-illumination and develops focus on key-phrase/kōan-investigation of Mu Kōan
1137	Invited to abbacy at Mt. Jing outside of Hangzhou by statesman Zhang Jun
1141	Receives official praise for growing temple with two thousand monks yet criticism for strictness of training method, then exiled to south because of association with Zhang Jucheng, a former Yuanwu student who advocated war with the Jin invaders from the north
1148	Compiles <i>Dahui shu</i> and <i>Zhengfayanzang</i> collections
1150	Sent to Meiyang Quandong, where malaria epidemic kills one hundred monks, but resists invitation to come out of exile
1155	Officially pardoned to resume clerical status but continues to minister to lay community
1156	Pilgrimage north from first to eleventh month when he arrives at Mt. Ayuwang in Zhejiang Province
1157	Succeeds to abbacy at Mt. Tiantong upon death of Hongzhi
1158	Returns to abbacy at Mt. Jing by imperial decree and gains 1700 followers
1159	Visited by attendant of future emperor Xiaozang
1161	Retires and returns to Tianning in Kaifeng and supports Confucian temple construction
1162	Refuses invitation by Imperial Court
1163	Dies after returning to Mt. Jing, leaving ninety-four heirs

Dahui's account highlights a phase during 1125, the year that Yuanwu was concluding an extended lecture series that resulted in the publication of the *Blue Cliff Record*. Following an extended period in which he had struggled day and night and finally broke through the kōan "East Mountain walks on water"

東山水上行, Dahui spent many months working through another case, “Being and nonbeing are like wisteria vines clinging to a tree” 有句無句, 如籐依樹. He found that Yuanwu routinely would almost always immediately cut off his responses, in addition to those of his colleagues, for being dead wrong. Dahui’s already profound sense of doubt was compounded by an even greater feeling of anxiety.

One day, Dahui was in the abbot’s quarters along with some officials who were eating the evening meal, but he got so distracted by the discussion that he held the chopsticks in his hand and forgot to start eating. After Yuanwu made a sarcastic comment that he must be investigating “boxwood Chan”<sup>20</sup> 楊木禪, an image suggesting an earnest but plodding and slow-to-awaken style of training, Dahui blurted out, “Teacher, it is the same principle as a dog staring at a pot of hot oil; he cannot lick it but he cannot leave it alone, either” 和尚。這箇道理。恰如狗看著熱油鑊相似。要舐又舐。不得。要捨又捨不得。Yuanwu said approvingly, “You have hit on a wonderful analogy. This is what is called the Vajra cage [so hard you cannot get out of it] or the prickly chestnut ball [that cannot be swallowed].”<sup>21</sup>

Yuanwu then brought up the case of the wisteria vines that had led to his own enlightenment experience under Wuzu, and Dahui, who was eager to learn more, asked Yuanwu what his teacher had said when he inquired about this same story (*hua* 話). Yuanwu was at first not willing to discuss it, but Dahui insisted that when Yuanwu had talked it over with Wuzu, they were not just in a private meeting as he had inquired in front of the whole assembly, so if it was a public matter then nothing should now prevent Yuanwu from revealing what took place. Next, as Dahui further reports:

Yuanwu said, “I asked, ‘What about being and nonbeing, which are like wisteria vines clinging to a tree?’ Wuzu said, ‘A drawing cannot portray it, and a sketch will not be able to depict it.’ I asked further, ‘What about when the tree falls down and the vines die?’ Wuzu said, ‘How intertwined they are!’”<sup>22</sup> The minute I heard him bring this up, I understood and said, “I got it!”<sup>23</sup>

老和尚乃曰。我問。有句無句如藤倚樹時如何。祖曰。描也描不成。畫也畫不就。又問。忽遇樹倒藤枯時如何。祖曰。相隨來也。老漢纔聞舉便理會得。乃曰。某會也。

The enlightenment of Dahui, who is depicted in traditional drawings in the typical regal pose of a Song Chan master that emulated imperial portraits, transpired at a very troublesome time for China, and the very next year in 1126, as a consequence of the attack by the Ruzhen (Jurchen) Jin from the north, the capital was moved to Hangzhou and the Southern Song dynasty began. Yuanwu and Dahui withdrew to Jiangxi province and then to Mount Yunju in Fujian province farther to the south where they may have briefly met Hongzhi,

who later became a Caodong master in Zhejiang province and Dahui's main ideological adversary even though they maintained cordial personal relations.

According to the *Chronological Biography of Dahui* (Ch. *Dahui Pujue Chanshi nianpu*, Jp. *Dahui Fukaku Zenji nenbu*), beginning in 1134 Dahui reversed his course regarding literary Chan and instead developed kōan-investigation as a shortcut targeting the focus on a critical word or phrase extracted from a kōan, while discarding the dialogue's content as an impediment to gaining insight.<sup>24</sup> Although there were literally hundreds of cases to choose from, Dahui used only a small handful since he believed that deep penetration of one or two cases was sufficient to attain awakening, especially for lay followers with a limited background in Chan classics or time for meditation. This was an approach he continued to preach for the next thirty years while aggressively bashing other forms of practice. However, it is still a matter of debate whether or not the key-phrase technique was intended primarily for nonmonastics, or to what extent Dahui may have allowed for monks (and, in some instances, advanced lay practitioners) to undertake other kinds of practice while performing kōan-investigation.

After the first period of exile, from 1137 to 1141 Dahui was rehabilitated and served as abbot at Mount Jing, where he was prized by imperial authorities for attracting nearly two thousand followers, but he then suffered a second and more devastating period of exile lasting fifteen years. During this phase, Dahui was highly successful in proselytizing to lay disciples. In the late 1140s, he published a voluminous collection of his *Correspondences* (Ch. *Dahui shu*, Jp. *Daie sho*), as well as a six-volume kōan collection, the *Treasury of the True Dharma-Eye* (Ch. *Zhengfayanzang*, Jp. *Shōbōgenzō*), before returning triumphantly in 1157 and reconnecting with Hongzhi in the capital, where he remained an abbot for the rest of his life.

In the third volume of the *Treasury*, Dahui cites one of the two versions of the Mu Kōan that appears in the *Record of Zhaozhou*. After the initial dialogue in which Zhaozhou answers “No,” Dahui refers to a four-line verse comment by Yuanwu's teacher Wuzu. Following the second part of the dialogue, in which Zhaozhou's reply to the query about why a dog does not have the spiritual possession shared by all buddhas above and bugs below deals with the dog's awareness of karma, Dahui cites a verse by one of his early teachers, Zhenjing, with whom, it is said, he had once studied the Xuedou collection of cases that became the basis for the *Blue Cliff Record*: “As for expressing that [a dog] has awareness of karma,/ Who says that its meaning is not deep?/ When the sea dries up you can finally see its bottom,/ But when people die you still do not know their minds”<sup>25</sup> 言有業識在。誰云意不深。海枯終見底。人死不知心。

Dahui's citations of predecessors indicate that the Mu Kōan was being referenced up to half a century before the formation of the Watō technique, but it is not clear that the verse comments by either Zhenjing or Wuzu would have supported the use of the Watō method.

## Metaphors for Doubt and Practice

To maintain a strict focus on the abbreviated quality of Mu with as little remainder as possible of related concepts either uttered through words or lurking in the back of the mind, Dahui and followers articulate the basic ingredients of Watō practice through a series of metaphors capturing several levels of transformative personal experience. These include the anxiety of doubt and the psychophysical suffering it causes; direct instructions for how to practice while avoiding deficient methods, such as holding thoughts about the key-phrase; and the limitless capacity of Mu to conquer illusion and break open once and for all the gateless barrier to awakening. This style of pedagogy makes a deliberate use of reiteration and redundancy in tone so as to create the impact of uniformity and monotony of viewpoint, which is not considered deadening but rather an effective and unambiguous discursive tool for driving home the main theme and making awareness attained by virtue of Watō seem like it becomes second nature. Literary elaboration and embellishment, however intriguing and thought provoking for its allusive power, is considered a hopeless dead end.<sup>26</sup>

Nevertheless, the tremendous popularity of the *Gateless Gate* since the time of its composition in the late 1220s is largely based on the way it uses a variety of imaginative images to convey a range of rhetorical elements involving Watō expressions while maintaining consistency with Dahui's view that the true mystery lies not within words themselves but, as with the proverbial finger pointing to yet not being the moon, through an interior experience cultivated through direct instruction. The kōan collection by Wumen, who once noted in his recorded sayings that he heard of a disciple of Dahui who concentrated on the Mu Kōan for forty days and nights without interruption, offers prose comments that admonish followers to focus all of their efforts without partiality or delay on realizing the significance of the key-phrase to become one with the state of mind of Zhaozhou.

Wumen's remarks on the first case, cited in full here, are generally considered to be introductory to all of the forty-seven other kōans included in the *Gateless Gate*:

In order to master Zen, you must pass the barrier of the ancestors. To attain this wondrous realization, you must completely cut off the way of ordinary thinking. If you do not pass the barrier, and do not cut off the way of ordinary thinking, then you will be like a ghost clinging to the bushes and weeds. Now, I want to ask you, what is the barrier of the ancestors? It is just this single word "No." That is the front gate to the Zen school. Therefore it is called the Gateless Gate of the Zen School. If you pass through this barrier, you will not only see Zhaozhou face-to-face but you will also go hand-in-hand with the successive ancestors, commingling your eyebrows with theirs, seeing with the same eyes, and

hearing with the same ears. Isn't that a delightful prospect? Wouldn't you like to pass this barrier?

Arouse your entire body with its three hundred and sixty bones and joints and its eighty-four thousand pores of the skin; summon up a spirit of a ball of doubt and concentrate on this word "No." Carry it continuously day and night. Do not form a nihilistic conception of vacancy or a relative conception of "has" or "has not." It will be just as if you swallow a red-hot iron ball, which you cannot spit out even if you try. All the illusory ideas and delusive thoughts accumulated up to the present will be exterminated, and when the time comes, internal and external realms will be spontaneously united. You will know this, but for yourself only, like a dumb man who awakens from a dream.

Then all of a sudden an explosive conversion will occur, and you will astonish the heavens and shake the earth. It will be as if you snatch away the great sword of the valiant General Kuan and hold it in your hand. When you meet the Buddha, you kill him; when you meet the ancestors, you kill them. On the brink of life and death, you command perfect freedom; among the six-fold worlds and four modes of existence, you enjoy a merry and playful Samadhi. Now, I want to ask you again, how will you carry this out? Employ every ounce of your energy to work on this "No." If you hold on without interruption, behold: the Dharma candle is lit with a single spark!<sup>27</sup>

參禪須透祖師關、妙悟要窮心路絕。祖關不透心路不絕、盡是依草附木精靈。且道、如何是祖師關。只者一箇無字、乃宗門一關也。遂目之曰禪宗無門關。透得過者、非但親見趙州、便可與歷代祖師把手共行、眉毛厮結同一眼見、同一耳聞。豈不慶快。莫有要透關底麼。將三百六十骨節、八萬四千毫竅、通身起箇疑團參箇無字。晝夜提撕、莫作虛無會、莫作有無會。如吞了箇熱鐵丸相似、吐又吐不出。蕩盡從前惡知惡覺、久久純熟自然內外打成一片、如啞子得夢、只許自知。驀然打發、驚天動地。如奪得關將軍大刀入手、逢佛殺佛、逢祖殺祖、於生死岸頭得大自在、向六道四生中遊戲三昧。且作麼生提撕。盡平生氣力舉箇無字。若不間斷、好似法燭一點便著。

Various sorts of metaphorical expressions are rapidly listed or evoked. For example, the defective style of meditation is likened to a ghost clinging to weeds, a somewhat anomalous borrowing from supernatural imagery. The determination to overcome angst is compared to hanging on the brink of life and death while summoning all 360 bones of one's skeleton (an image also used by thirteenth-century master Zuqin's self-description of his working with this case) and 84,000 pores of the skin to wrestle with the red-hot iron ball symbolizing the sensation of doubt. Wumen also compares the explosive conversion of sudden enlightenment to a candle lit with a single spark, as well as the intimacy and silence of a mute person awakening to reality but unable to put it into

words. This leads to full freedom marked by commingling one's own eyebrows with those of Chan ancestors in a state of joyous nirvana, while also being willing, in an allusion to Art of War stories, to snatch away a general's famous weapon to slay the Buddha.

#### NOTIONS OF ILLNESS AND GUILT RELATED TO DOUBT

A number of intriguing metaphors are used by Dahui and followers to characterize the central role played by doubt as a double-bind experience that is essential for attaining a transformative breakthrough. Working through doubt requires intense dedication and determination to overcome a profound level of anxiety that often gives rise to bodily symptoms and is also compared to the confession of guilt in a legal context. Total dedication to the challenge of engaging with Mu is by no means an easy task. Kōan commentaries compare struggling with this particular syllable and the uncertainty and instability it provokes to the condition of having a prickly chestnut burr forced down one's throat. The predicament is also likened to someone trapped who can neither stay put nor escape, or who hangs from a hundred-foot pole by the fingernails while being prodded with an unanswerable question from below, has his or her hair put on fire without the possibility of quick remediation, gets attacked by a fierce dog that never lets go, or is confronted by thousands of enemies all at once without holding a weapon or forming any strategy. In these metaphors, the immediacy and palpability of feelings of desperation is deftly evoked.

Zen masters have often talked about the need to recognize the symptoms and overcome the effects of the "illness of emptiness" (Ch. *kunghing*, Jp. *kūbyō*). As Juhn Young Ahn suggests, "Not only did practitioners of Chan and Zen . . . literally succumb to the malady of meditation while mulling over this [Mu] kōan but they also seem to have become ill precisely because there was, as the title [of Ahn's dissertation chapter] states, nothing to get sick over."<sup>28</sup> Nagarjuna once pointed out that appropriating emptiness is like trying to tame a snake, and the logic-defying word "Mu" is mystifying and perplexing and can easily lead to misunderstandings. An example of how easily the notion of nothingness can be conflated with mere absence or lack, yet how productive it can be to work through such delusions to generate genuine insight, is when Candrakīrti mentions a kōan-like anecdote in which someone was told by a shopkeeper that he had nothing to sell, to which the buyer responded, "Then I'll buy nothing." Nothingness is not always problematic in Buddhism, and a joke has been made that when the Dalai Lama received an empty box as a birthday present he remarked, "Wow, Nothing! Just what I always wanted!"; it also has been said that Sakyamuni's favorite cereal would be Cheerio-s.

In Dahui's words, the Zen illness is like having a mixed poison (*zadu*) entering into the mind that, like oil spoiling flour, could not be removed once the

intrusion took place.<sup>29</sup> “The illness,” he hastens to add, “applies not only to wise literati but also to experienced meditators.”<sup>30</sup> Dahui then turns the blame for the tendency to intellectualize on “a brand of bald heretics who, without having even cleared their own eyes, just teach people to rest and relax, like a dead snubnose-dogwolf.”<sup>31</sup>

Suffering from the malady of meditation often refers to the state of dullness or torpor that can result from silent-illumination by causing physical symptoms. The ailments include, but are not limited to, cold feet, difficulty in catching one’s breath, a ringing in the ears, stomach cramps, or intense perspiration. Some of these conditions have been associated either with the diagnosis of tuberculosis or with an underlying sense of panic that may be accompanied by hallucinations indicating the onset of what would likely be called today a nervous breakdown. The Zen malady is referred to in *Record of Serenity* case 11 on “Yunmen’s Two Sicknesses,” and many prominent masters, including Yuanwu, Dahui, Wumen, and Hakuin, were said to have been plagued by these troubles on their extended pathways to achieving a realization.<sup>32</sup> Hakuin was one of the main monks who suffered from this malady, and it is likely that he mentioned ghosts, perhaps in tongue-in-cheek fashion as in the *Gateless Gate* commentary, because some might suspect them as the culprit instigating disease that symbolizes an interior process of disturbance.

Nearly all of the stories that pertain to gaining enlightenment through contemplation of the Mu Watō involve psychophysical struggles lasting over the course of time until a resolution is found. According to an account of Yuan-dynasty master Hengchuan, “In the old days when I was traveling on foot, I too believed there was such a thing as Zen. For three days and nights, I kept my attention on the word *No*, observing it horizontally and vertically, but I could not see through it. My chest felt like a lump of hot iron, but there was no understanding.”<sup>33</sup> Then Hengchuan entered the private quarters of his teacher, who brought up a different case: “On South Mountain, bamboo shoots; on the Eastern Sea, black marauders,” and Hengchuan reports, “As soon as I tried to open my mouth, he hit me: at that moment I emptied through, and the word *No* was smashed to pieces. How could there be any buddhas? How could there be a self? How could the myriad things exist? This is the fundamental realm, the stage of peace and happiness without concerns.”<sup>34</sup>

Another fascinating example of a monk anguishing with the Zen malady is Mengshan, an eighth-generation disciple of Wuzu who was assigned Zhaozhou’s Mu by his teacher. From dedicating himself for eighteen days like a cat chasing a mouse, a hen sitting on eggs, or a rat gnawing at coffin wood, he quickly had a major breakthrough while drinking tea, but his request for confirmation was repeatedly turned down by his mentor and he was advised to investigate further. Two years passed without any significant development and then Mengshan became ill with dysentery and felt as if he were on the verge of death. After taking a confessional vow, he resumed his investigation of the case

and before long he felt his intestines churning, although he simply ignored this physical discomfort and went on with his practice.

Mengshan noticed that “After a while, my eyelids did not move and later I did not even notice that I had a body. Only the key-phrase [continued] uninterrupted. When evening arrived I arose [from meditation] and my illness was half gone. I sat again until quarter past the third watch [of the night] and all the illnesses had completely disappeared.”<sup>35</sup> However, Mengshan needed to persist and bear with sores appearing all over his body before transforming “meditative-work in the midst of illness” (*bingzhong gongfu*) into “meditative-work in the midst of activity” (*dongzhong gongfu*).<sup>36</sup> When gaining full enlightenment while hearing the sound of an incense bowl being struck by the head monk while he was in a trance state contemplating Mu, Mengshan was told by his teacher that he captured the essence of Zhaozhou’s key-phrase. He extemporaneously created a verse about his sudden awakening that included the following lines: “Master Zhaozhou stands above the crowd,/ But his features are just like ours”<sup>37</sup> 超群老趙州。面目只如此。

The kōan “Zhaozhou asks about death” 趙州問死, included as *Blue Cliff Record* case 41 that also appears as *Record of Serenity* case 67, shows that, while dying symbolically from the typical Zen malady is always a threat, this apparent failure is a double-edged sword that can have positive results. According to the case record, Zhaozhou asks Touzi, “So, what about the time when the person of great death returns to the living?” and Touzi replies, “He is not permitted to go traveling by night; the light must be cast for him to arrive.”<sup>38</sup> The metaphor of dying signals the bottoming out of great doubt, or the final loss of self. If appropriated authentically, this leads to an experience of the great death, or the attainment of nirvana. Touzi’s response suggests that one must be reborn from doubt/death as symbolized by darkness of night to come back and be fully involved in the world of the living, or to stand in the light of day while in a sense being in the nighttime of nirvana. By equating the dimness of the great death with the realm of brightness and life, the kōan equalizes apparent opposites.

In addition to evoking the symptoms of illness, Watō discourse about doubt also draws imagery from the Chinese court system and its distinctive approach to dealing with crime and punishment. Watō advocates give the legal context a special interpretation by emphasizing the role of the master as an arbiter who unequivocally determines right from wrong after sifting through all of the available evidence, and the trainee needs to be made aware of his transgressions and admit culpability while adopting a remorseful and repentant outlook.

According to Zhongfeng Mingben in *Evening Talks in a Mountain Hut* (*Shanfang yehua*), a text from the early Yuan dynasty, Chan masters “are the senior administrators of the monastic ‘court’” who comment on cases “not just to show off their own erudition or to contradict the ancient worthies”<sup>39</sup> but to make a clear and decisive judgment to avoid misapprehension and enable their

followers to realize the truth for themselves. Zhongfeng's assessment is supported by Sanjiao Laoren, who, in a preface to a restored copy of the *Blue Cliff Record* dated 1304, uses a series of metaphors to reconstruct the legal element related to overcoming doubt that results in "complete transcendence, final emancipation, total penetration, and identical attainment [with the ancestors]":

Now, the public case is the torch of wisdom that illuminates the darkness of the passions, the golden scraper that cuts away the film clouding the eye, the sharp ax that severs the life-root of birth and death, the divine mirror that reflects the original face of both the sage and the commoner. . . . Just as the compass needle always points south, out of compassion one is shown the way. Each blow of the staff, leaving a welt, is to bring about understanding. . . . For this reason the great teachers handed down instructions that the mind is to die on the [meditation] cushion. Each inquiry is like an official promulgating an order, directing people to read regulations and know the law, or extinguishing bad thoughts as soon as they arise.<sup>40</sup>

Taking responsibility for being accountable in spiritual training, as in admitting a sense of legal guilt through appearances or correspondences with the court system and accepting the punishment that is meted out for one's case, represents a crucial turning point in the quest to attain realization.

#### DIRECT INSTRUCTIONS AND CRITIQUE OF OTHER CHAN VIEWS

Once the full ramifications of doubt are realized, the trainee is next advised on the strengths and the potential pitfalls of Watō practice, in addition to the weaknesses of alternative types of Zen teaching. A main type of rhetoric endorsed by Dahui involves the negation of negation in that the "thou shalt not's" for the kōan-investigative style of meditation are delineated. By using the approach of direct instruction with a minimum of literary embellishment, Dahui's prose voice as expressed in his *Record* (Ch. *Dahui yulu*, Jp. *Daie goroku*), especially in letters to lay practitioners who were trying to attain previously unfulfilled mystical aspirations, is clear and unambiguous in regard to what thoughts and practices about Mu must be avoided at all costs to identify and escape from typical conceptual snares and pitfalls and to be able to thrive and advance on the path of training:

This one character is the rod by which many false images and ideas are destroyed in their very foundations. To it you should add no judgments about being or nonbeing, no arguments, no bodily gestures like raising your eyebrows or blinking your eyes. Words have no place here. Neither should you throw this character away into the nothingness of emptiness,

or seek it in the comings and goings of the mind, or try to trace its origins in the scriptures.<sup>41</sup>

In this and related passages, Dahui urges the trainee to avoid the extremes of becoming either dull (*hunchen*) or agitated (*diaoju*), which are considered “two kinds of diseases” that disturb body and mind.<sup>42</sup> These instructions were later formalized by Korean Zen followers into a list of ten defects to be eliminated.<sup>43</sup>

A disciple of Dahui further points out that the ongoing threat of dullness disrupts all those who attempt to gain awakening through the path of silent-illumination: “Practice in the Caodong tradition was very dense and obscure,” he reports, “and therefore after doing this for ten or twenty years people still did not succeed. Thus, it was difficult for them to find heirs [to their tradition].”<sup>44</sup> It is important to note, however, that Dahui endorses somewhat varied approaches for different training situations, and even though he refutes the Caodong school for being decadent and complacent, he also says, “Although we do not approve of silent illumination it is necessary that each of you face the wall [to meditate in a Caodong-like seated posture].”<sup>45</sup>

The Caodong school was not the only target of criticism. Although it is not clear whether reports that Dahui burned the xylographs of the *Blue Cliff Record* are accurate, proponents of the Watō approach presume that the collection deserved to be eliminated and argue that some supporters of the text (possibly including even its creator, Yuanwu) would in the final analysis have agreed with this assessment.<sup>46</sup> A passage in the *Precious Lessons from the Zen Forests* (Ch. *Chanlin baoxun*, Jp. *Zenrin hōkun*), a text from around 1180, contains a Linji-Huanglong stream monk’s (Xinwen Tanben) reflections on the regrettable condition of the Chan school because of an overreliance on literary studies. After Fenyang, Xuedou, and Yuanwu offered verse and prose comments on kōan cases, he suggests, there seemed to be no turning back to try to restore the path of a special transmission as reflected in the unencumbered source dialogues of Tang masters.

For Xinwen, this created a desperate situation in which monks were consistently misled by false expectations. During his travels to Fujian province, Dahui saw first-hand the way students were being pulled in the wrong direction: “Day and night, he pondered the fate of these students until finally he felt sure about the correct course of action to take. Dahui smashed the woodblocks and tore up the words [of the *Blue Cliff Record*] so as to sweep away delusion, rescue those who were floundering, get rid of excessive rhetoric and exaggeration, and destroy the false teachings and reveal the truth”<sup>47</sup> 日馳月驚浸漬成弊。即碎其板闢其說。以至祛迷援溺剔繁撥劇摧邪顯正。 What is the explanation for Dahui’s radical action? Could it be that he had an “unruly temperament,” as claimed by Wilhelm Gundert, the German translator of the first complete edition of the *Blue Cliff Record* produced in the West?<sup>48</sup> Or, was he simply carrying out what seemed like a necessary exercise in sectarian reform? In any case, there

is nothing in the passage to suggest that Yuanwu would have concurred with his actions.

Another passage refuting rival viewpoints from *Precious Lessons from the Zen Forests* shows that, according to Dahui's successor Wan'an (Jp. Ban'an), there was much criticism directed at practices found in all branches of Chan, including students in the Linji school whose teaching techniques fostered the extreme feeling of agitation. By misappropriating the true quality of "encounter," various trends were turning older practices into either a stereotyped, rigid formalization of ritual practices or a counterproductive personal confrontation with competitors of the temple's teaching master. These practices included dialogues held in the Dharma Hall (Ch. *shangtang*, Jp. *jōdō*), the rite of "entering into the room" (Ch. *rushi*, Jp. *nyūshitsu*) of the abbot for special instruction, and the testing of levels of understanding through other kinds of kōan inquiry and commentary held on the monastery grounds—all legitimate and useful techniques if authentically followed.

Wan'an's critique draws a sharp contrast between formerly (Tang) authentic with then-current (Song) inauthentic training methods:

When the ancients went to the Dharma Hall, first they brought up the essentials of the great teaching and questioned the assembly; students would come forth and inquire further. Eventually it developed into the form of question-and-answer. People these days make up an unrhymed four-line verse and call it "fishing words." One monk pops out in front of the group and loudly recites a couplet of ancient poetry, calling this "an assault line." This is so vulgar and conventionalized, it is pitiful and lamentable.<sup>49</sup>

This passage goes on to repudiate the practice of entering the abbot's room, which had once been a way for the master to offer intensive instruction targeting a particular individual or small group of disciples that, unfortunately, was turned into an opportunity for him to assert his superiority and authority by citing incomprehensible cases. Wan'an also abhors the tendency to invite eminent visitors to a monastery when, instead of learning and benefiting from their expertise in an atmosphere of cooperation and the mutual reciprocity of ideas, there is a challenge mounted unceremoniously to solve a particular kōan before the whole assembly just for the sake of setting up misleading antagonisms.

The main problem with all of these deficient practices is that they lead away from rather than toward an experience of awakening by fostering either an obsession with negativity through sitting quietly for too long a time without reaching Samadhi or a mechanical clinging to words lacking insight. Dahui refers to the conceptual drawback underlying deficient practices as a matter of failing to bridge the gap between an actually limited and ideally limitless mind, which he says "is like trying to scoop up the entire ocean with a small calabash." In using the image of the bottle gourd in this negative way, Dahui

attacks the intellectual scaffolding of the Kattō-oriented approach featuring intertextual comments that have grown up around an old case like tangled vines and are evoked through layers of allusions to reflect on the meanings of other kōan cases.

However, Kattō thinkers may agree with Dahui's assertion that, in the end, the goal of Zen study is to be able to think for oneself rather than mimicking words gained from rote learning alone, so that there is a profound sense of knowing the truth from inside out and of manifesting authentication (*zheng*), "like a person who drinks water and knows whether it is cold or warm for himself" (*ru ren yinshui lengnuan zizhi*).<sup>50</sup> Both sides, Watō and Kattō, want to avoid what could be called "cookie-cutter Zen" and wish to focus on the priority of self-knowledge or tailoring insight to make Zen awareness one's own (as in the German word for authentic, *eigentlich*). The basic disagreement between the two approaches concerns whether the authenticated truth of subjectivity is to be found within or outside of the realm of words and letters.

Despite the fact that Dahui was rather argumentative and contentious in admonishing approaches held by his Linji-Huanglong (Jp. Rinzai-Ōryō) and Caodong school rivals, the merits of the Emphatic Mu were widely recognized and accepted by representatives of different factions, and there was a remarkable degree of consistency in the way that the meaning of the Mu Kōan came to be expressed. However, as Morten Schlütter notes in a conference presentation, this changed by the end of the Ming dynasty in that "over several centuries, kōan introspection meditation continued to develop in ways that probably could not have been imagined by Dahui." Changes included an even greater emphasis on the role of doubt, as well as examples of syncretism with Pure Land recitation techniques that resulted in the creation of a new key-phrase, "Who chants the name of the Buddha? (*nianfo [zhe] shi shui*)."<sup>51</sup> Although these trends seem to "undermine Dahui's original intention," Schlütter concludes by indicating that "kōan introspection in the Chan school overall stayed very close to Dahui's vision, even hundreds of years after his time, and even in the Caodong tradition that Dahui had severely criticized."<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, this comment probably refers to the writings of Watō proponents, and the next several chapters will show that other commentators on the Mu Kōan in both Linji and Caodong schools did offer more variety than is generally recognized by supporting the Kattō position associated with the Dual Version.

### **Awakening and the Affirmation of Negation**

Although the word "Mu" can drive the unenlightened to distraction and cause a fit of frustration that often leads to physical illness, which represents an important stage of the bottoming out of despair before initiating a turnaround

in the process of personal growth, it also has a very positive meaning. Mu is said to encompass the entire universe and function like a sword that slices its way through all barriers, a ladle of cold water that cools off a huge boiling cauldron, an iron broom that sweeps away all residue, or a sun that has the power to melt rocks.

Therefore, another type of discourse developed by Dahui expresses an affirmation of negation highlighting what the key-phrase method is able to accomplish for the seeker. This rhetoric uses metaphors to proclaim in triumphal fashion how Watō overcomes doubt and induces an experience of awakening that is attained by the seasoned and dedicated trainee. The following passage may seem repetitive of the previously cited list of Dahui's negative injunctions, but in this example the use of metaphor to explicate the positive function of the key-phrase is added:

A monk asked Zhaozhou: "Does even a dog have Buddha-nature?," and Zhaozhou answered, "No." When you observe No, do not ponder it broadly, do not try to understand every word, do not try to analyze it, do not consider it to be at the place where you open your mouth [to say it out loud], do not reason that it is at the place [in your mind] where you hold it up, do not fall into a vacuous state, do not hold onto mind and await enlightenment, do not try to experience it through the words of your teacher, and do not get stuck in a shell of unconcern. Just at all times, whether walking or standing, sitting or lying down, hold on to this No steadfastly. "Does even a dog have Buddha-nature or not?" Hold on to this No earnestly to the point where it becomes ripe so that no discussion or consideration can reach it and you are as if caught in a place that is just one square inch. When it has no flavor whatsoever as if you were chewing on a raw iron cudgel but you get so close to it that you cannot pull back, then that really is auspicious!<sup>53</sup>

The main affirmative recommendation Dahui makes is that practitioners should give unending attention and commitment to solving the case, throughout the twenty-four/seven, so to speak, by engaging the Watō at any and every moment while taking part in the four daily activities.

Elsewhere, Dahui suggests that once doubt is centered on the Watō, it will become like a huge growing ball and, eventually, this ball of doubt will shatter all other sources of anxiety and the root cause of uncertainty will disappear in the moment of enlightenment. Therefore, "Great doubt will necessarily be followed by great enlightenment."<sup>54</sup> He also remarks that if one begins to feel dull and muddled during meditation, he or she must muster all of his or her energies by holding up the word "Mu": "Then suddenly you will be like the old blind woman who blows [so diligently] at the fire that her eye brows and lashes are burned right off."<sup>55</sup>

Furthermore, sixteenth-century Korean master So Sahn in *The Mirror of Zen* comments with a series of metaphors in regard to the staunch commitment and keen skills that are needed to be able to surpass angst:

A hen nests on her brood, always keeping them warm. When a cat chases a mouse, its mind and eyes never wander from the object of its hunt, no matter what. A starving man has but one object: food; a man with a throat parched from thirst conceives of but one goal: get water. A child who has been left alone for a long time by its mother only longs to see her again. All of these focused efforts come only from the deepest mind, and are not artificial. It is a kind of intense sincerity. Without such a deeply straightforward striving mind, it is impossible to attain enlightenment.<sup>56</sup>

Hakuin frequently cites Dahui's emphasis on integrating Chan practice with secular concerns, as when he addresses the lay community by saying in his *Letter to Lord Nabeshima (Orategama) I*, "The Zen Master Dahui has said that meditation in the midst of activity is immeasurably superior to the quietistic approach . . . [which is] like trying to cross a mountain ridge as narrow as a sheep's skull with a hundred-and-twenty pounds load on one's back. . . . What is most worthy of respect is a pure kōan meditation that neither knows nor is conscious of the two aspects, the quiet and the active. This is why it has been said that the true practicing monk walks but does not know he is walking, sits but does not know he is sitting."<sup>57</sup>

Another Edo-period example highlighting the impact of Mu is the practice of sealed confinement in a small chamber used by the Ōbaku school, which had migrated to Japan from China at the end of the Ming dynasty. According to this practice, which enables limitless freedom through being restricted while meditating with great intensity in unusually limited space for up to several years or more, the trainee "unceasingly investigates [the Watō] . . . knocks up against it, then hits it again, and again, and suddenly he breaks through and cuts away his [previous] failures [with the kōan] and at once smashes the world of emptiness, levels the great earth, opens both eyes, and jumps out of the cell. His joy in body and mind and his freedom in action are as if he drank down the eight thousand great oceans in a single mouthful without leaving even one drop."<sup>58</sup>

#### POWER OF MU

Watō discourse offers many examples of metaphors used to describe the power that the syllable Mu exerts to remove ignorance and attain enlightenment. A theme evoked in the *Gateless Gate* borrowed from Art of War rhetoric involves images of weaponry and death in regard to battling ignorance and attachment. In another example, Yuanwu's teacher Wuzu once brought up the Mu Kōan while giving instruction in the abbot's quarters, and when asked by a disciple for a verse comment, he offered the following: "Zhaozhou shows his sword, /

Reflecting frost in a blaze of light./ If you persist in looking for answers,/ It will cut you in shreds”<sup>59</sup> 趙州露刀劍。寒霜光焰焰。更擬問如何。分身作兩段。

Lanxi Daolong (Jp. Rankei Dōryū), a prominent Chinese monk who was brought by the Japanese shogun to serve as founding abbot of Kenchōji temple in Kamakura in the 1250s, wrote a poem that refers to “Zhaozhou’s Dog” in the title. From its content, the verse does not appear to have anything to do with this topic, but the connection is apparent if the allusion to Wuzu’s blade is known by the reader (which, of course, would have been the case in medieval Japan when Zen monks were well versed in Chinese texts): “My snow-white blade relies on heaven’s strength;/ What is difficult is easy if one sees with the eyes of truth./ Ignore the peril to your own lives and draw near –/ The world is strewn with skulls in the cold!”<sup>60</sup> Hakuin and many others cited or evoked the Wuzu verse’s sword imagery.

Several classical verses suggest that the power of Mu is like a warrior killing off barbarians, an avalanche of falling rocks, a grindstone rolling rapidly down a hill, or a mirror that is smashed. According to a poem by Gushan Gui: “Somebody asked, ‘Does the dog have Buddha-nature?’/ And Zhaozhou replied, ‘No.’/ With that saying he annihilated the barbarians,/ Who still have no clue”<sup>61</sup> 有問狗佛性。趙州答曰無。言下滅胡族。猶為不丈夫。 The next example by Shaoshi Mu also uses dramatic imagery of destruction: “When Zhaozhou uttered ‘No’,/ Mountains collapsed and stones were split asunder./ If you haven’t fully comprehended this yet,/ You’ve gained only a small splinter”<sup>62</sup> 趙州曰無。崖崩石裂。未舉先知。只得一橛。

Another approach by Jiyan Ran to this graphic metaphor is offered in the following verse: “Twenty-four measures of iron,/ Cast into one grindstone,/ Flew down the big street,/ And nobody was able to stop it”<sup>63</sup> 二十四州鐵。鑄成一箇錯。颺在大街路。無人踏得著。 The following poem by Yiyan Jian highlights a mathematical truism that reflects the sheer simplicity of an experience of awakening: “The dog’s not having Buddha-nature/ Smashes the great round mirror./ Seven times nine equals sixty-three./ All wisdom becomes clear and pure”<sup>64</sup> 狗子無佛性。打破大圓鏡。七九六十三。一切智清淨。

Although the metaphors all express destruction, there are also constructive images exploring how Mu results in enlightenment that is compared to the purity and clarity of a huge solid substance, like a silver mountain or iron wall that signifies equanimity, which is also indicated in the last verse cited previously. For Taego, “The word Mu is like a pellet of alchemical cinnabar: touch iron with it and the iron turns to gold. As soon as [Zhaozhou’s] Mu is mentioned, the face of all the buddhas of past, present, and future is revealed.”<sup>65</sup> Another verse comment by Nantang Xing similarly reflects this triumphal standpoint: “Zhaozhou said the dog has no Buddha-nature –/ The seventh primordial buddha, Tathagata, puts his hands together and listens,/ Dancing on three platforms on the peak of Mt. Sumeru/ While ocean waters form a wave

that leaps sky high”<sup>66</sup> 趙州狗子無佛性。七佛如來合掌聽。須彌岌嶸舞三臺。海水騰波行正令。

Nearly two centuries following the origins of the Watō technique, Japanese Rinzai master Daitō composed capping phrases on the Ur Version with a follow-up dialogue that emphasized both the destructive (“hammer”) and constructive (“gold”) qualities of Mu. He thereby perpetuated the legacy of the *Blue Cliff Record*’s style of commentary mixed with Dahui’s emphasis on the role of the key-phrase. According to Daitō’s interlinear comments cited in parentheses:

A monk asked Zhaozhou, “Does a dog have Buddha-nature or not?” (His tongue is already long). Zhaozhou said, “Mu.” (To buy iron and receive gold/Completely fills emptiness/To throw a holeless iron hammer head right at him).

The monk said, “Even the creeping creatures all have Buddha-nature. Why wouldn’t a dog have Buddha-nature?” (Why doesn’t he get control of himself and leave?). Zhaozhou said, “Because it has awareness of karma.” (The old thief has met complete defeat).<sup>67</sup>

In typical capping-phrase fashion, the final remark suggests, perhaps disingenuously, that Zhaozhou’s last response may fall short.

#### CAODONG/SŌTŌ SCHOOL EXCEPTIONS

These prose and poetic comments mainly derive from either the Linji/Rinzai school in China or Korean Seon, whereas Caodong/Sōtō monks like Hongzhi and Dōgen are generally known for their preference for the Dual Version. However, even though his Caodong predecessor and successor commented on the Expansive Mu, the interpretation of Rujing (Jp. Nyojō)—referred to by Dōgen as his only authentic teacher whose recorded sayings were heavily edited by Sōtō scholastics in the Edo period so as to make them sound consistent with the Japanese sect’s founder<sup>68</sup>—seems to be an interesting example of a cross-sectarian view. Rujing’s approach does not appear to diverge significantly from Dahui’s explanation of Mu as a method of surpassing conceptualization through concentrating on an unresolvable phrase in this sermon:

How do you deal with random, scattered thoughts? In Zhaozhou’s “Dog has no Buddha-nature,” just this one word “No” sweeps them away with an iron broom. The more places you sweep, the more the residue swirls; the more it swirls, the more places there are to sweep. Continue sweeping and removing the residue. If there is a place this broom cannot reach, then you must risk your life to keep on sweeping. Day and night sit erect and vigilant, and do not let anything cause you to let go of this broom. Then

all of a sudden your sweeping breaks open the great void, and all of the myriad distinctions and particularities are swiftly and fully penetrated.<sup>69</sup>  
 上堂。心念分飛。如何措手。趙州狗子佛性無。只箇無字鐵掃帚。掃處紛飛多。紛飛多處掃。轉掃轉多。掃不得處拼命掃。晝夜豎起脊梁。勇猛切莫放倒。忽然掃破太虛空。萬別千差盡豁通。

Although Rujing may appear to be an advocate for what is usually considered the Linji position, there should be no simplistic conclusion drawn in regard to labeling his status. His use of the metaphor of a broom that eliminates defilements may be deemed quietist in orientation and gradualist in its approach to meditation, and thus revelatory of silent-illumination rather than kōan-investigation. In particular, the final line seems different than Dahui's view in suggesting that discursive thought is an avenue rather than obstacle to realization.

It is also noteworthy that in an early work, the pedagogical essay *Guidelines for Studying the Way (Gakudōyōjinshū)* from 1234, Dōgen appears to support the Watō approach when he says of the case:

This word “No” can neither be measured nor grasped, for there is nothing to grab hold of. I suggest that you try letting go! Then ask yourself these questions: What are body and mind? What is Zen conduct? What are birth and death? What is Buddhism? What are worldly affairs? And what, ultimately, are mountains, rivers, and earth or men, animals, and houses? If you continue to ask these questions, the two aspects of movement and non-movement will no longer appear. This nonappearance, however, does not mean inflexibility.<sup>70</sup>

The goal of overcoming the duality of activity and passivity may be agreeable to all parties in that Dōgen's emphasis seems close to Dahui. Moreover, in the “Buddha-nature” fascicle, Dōgen refers to the Mu Kōan as having the capacity of a rock-melting sun. However, in that text the Sōtō sect founder clearly departs from the Watō model by emphasizing the crucial role of philosophical reflection on the multiple implications of nothingness and negation in relation to foundational topics such as mortality, ethics, and nature.

#### MONISM AND PARTICULARISM

Another set of tropes found in almost all quarters of the kōan tradition that are of special significance to Watō followers is the seemingly twin notions of monism, or the unity of all kōans in a single case, and particularism, or the micro-level of dealing with challenging questions that follow up and test the capacity of a breakthrough. Monism reflects the view that “one is all and all is one,” as symbolized by the image according to early Qing-dynasty Caodong

school master Weilin Daopei of “pouring a ladle of cold water into a huge boiling cauldron: it will immediately become clear and cool.”<sup>71</sup>

According to a comment in the *Blue Cliff Record*, “A hundred public cases are pierced all the way through on a single thread, and the whole crowd of old masters are held accountable in their turn.”<sup>72</sup> In the introductory remarks on case 23, Yuanwu indicates that his commentaries are designed to polish the tool of rhetoric to create a sole device that assesses the understanding of trainees, so that learning to penetrate one case is coterminous with mastering all kōans:

Jade is tested with fire, gold is tested with a stone, a sword is tested with a hair, and water is tested with a pole. In the school of patch-robed monks, through a single word or a single phrase, a single encounter or a single state, a single exit or a single entry, a single opening or a single closing, you are able to determine whether someone is deep or shallow and you can decide whether he is facing forward or backward.<sup>73</sup>

Unlike some Japanese Rinzai traditions, the Korean approach to kōan-investigation did not consist of contemplation on a lengthy, graduated series of ever-deeper kōan cases. The typical view in Korea was that “all kōans are contained in one,” and therefore it was, and still is, quite common for a practitioner to remain with a particular Watō/Hwadu during his whole meditational career, most often the Mu of Zhaozhou.<sup>74</sup> The aim of practicing with various key-phrases, all of which are essentially the same in terms of function and result, is to realize the state of mind—but not the concept behind what was said, since this is considered irrelevant and counterproductive—that the Tang Chinese Chan master must have faced before he uttered such expressions as “Wu/Mu” or “cypress tree standing in the courtyard.”<sup>75</sup> Other developments in Korean Zen thought that were initiated by Jinul have argued for the unity of sudden and gradual enlightenment, as well as the processes of cultivation and realization, a notion that resembles Dōgen’s oneness of practice and attainment (*shushō ichinyō*).

Despite the apparent uniformity of Watō metaphors and the tendency to see one kōan related to all cases, in the self-correcting fashion of the Zen tradition most post-Hakuin Rinzai lineages in Japan emphasize the need to tailor the study of the Mu Kōan for individuals seeking to dissolve their subjectivity into a myriad of insubstantial possibilities. Therefore, the case is accompanied by a series of checking questions provided by the mentor for ongoing confirmation to ensure that the trainee has attained completely, and will not go on to suffer a setback from, an authentic understanding. One of the impetuses for developing this technique was Hakuin’s being asked during his own odyssey toward attaining enlightenment to describe the arms and legs that sprout from Mu. Hakuin later grouped as part of a graduated curriculum the Mu Kōan into the category of introductory, or *hosshin* (or Dharmakaya), cases to be studied at the very beginning or at least early in the training cycle, thereby heightening

the need after it is solved to test further and try to confirm the novice's level of understanding. This process resembles the deepening of involvement with a single kōan case in the typical Korean style of practice.

During formal Rinzai practice, a single kōan usually breaks into parts, the initial main case (*honsoku*) and numerous checking questions. In follow-up queries the trainee is asked to demonstrate a response to the case that is related to many different particular situations ranging from following the precepts and performing temple chores to other seemingly mundane activities. Checking questions evoke the Chinese notion of “blocking the view” after entering a compound of buildings through a main gateway. The Zen disciple is deliberately misled or pointed in the wrong direction to heighten a sense of anxiety and insecurity about his ability to understand. This experience becomes a crucial turning point in building toward a successful resolution of a spiritual crisis and the attainment of enlightenment.

Akizuki Ryūmin has published the kōan curriculum used by a nineteenth-century master in the Myōshinji line who recorded the main case and twenty-one checking questions for the Mu Kōan.<sup>76</sup> It is said that at other temples, such as Tōfokuji, the practice can include one hundred or more such questions. The inquiries cited by Akizuki fall into several patterns: challenging the practitioner to express his own unique sense of freedom from samsara or equanimity of mind; borrowing parts of the dialogues from the Dual Version that help polish an appropriation of the case; and instructing the trainee to “stop” the sound of a bell, a sailboat, or a fight on the other side of a river.

Specific examples include “After seeing Mu, what is your proof?”; “How do you answer when asked, ‘What is Mu when you have died, been burned, and turned into a pile of ash?’”; “Without putting forth your hand, get her to stand up”; and “Emancipate the ghost,” which alludes to a trope also evoked in the *Gateless Gate* prose commentary. Since these questions may either become formulaic and stale or lead to vague multiplicities, some teachers today use additional queries, or sub-kōans, as a supplement to the main case, like “How old is Mu?”; “What is the color of Mu?”; “Divide Mu into two”; or “Explain Mu to a baby.” Although it is not clear what constitutes the historical basis for these queries or when they came to be added to Zen monastic training, it has probably been common practice in Rinzai lineages since the late Edo period.

### Mu Watō as Supreme Negation

The role of personal experience suggests that the gateless barrier of Mu functions as a means of heightening yet fully overcoming existential angst, which results in a spontaneous breakthrough to an experience of enlightenment. Accounts of attaining enlightenment mentioned earlier highlight the intensely subjective, interior realm in which contemplating Mu can lead to turmoil and

confusion causing physical duress that is an unavoidable stage on the path to overcoming delusion and realizing enlightenment. The other main aspect of Watō-based religiosity located at the far end of the methodological spectrum involves the impersonal or objective realm of philosophical reflection on absolute nothingness beyond the realm of personalization yet never fully separable from a subjective dimension. Kyoto school thinker Nishida Kitarō, who trained in the Rinzai key-phrase technique early in his career before developing a rigorous philosophical approach to appropriating Mu that was greatly influenced by Western phenomenology and psychology, is a prime example of a modern thinker who creatively integrated the subjective and objective realms in ways that influenced many practitioners. However, Nishida has also been subject to criticism for possibly breaching the Emphatic Mu standpoint's stress on remaining nonspeculative.<sup>77</sup>

#### A BOOK ABOUT NOTHING . . . OR NOT

One of the main areas of concern in examining the Ur Version is that the term “Mu” seems to be especially intriguing and thought provoking in the way it conveys a message concerning Mahayana doctrine by conjuring wide-ranging associations with a variety of topics in East Asian thought, including Buddhist and Daoist conceptions of ultimate reality seen in terms of an experience of nothingness. However, the mainstream interpretation of the case emphasizes the contrary point that Mu should not be considered an object of rational or literary reflection since it at once embodies and enforces the stoppage of such unproductive intellectual endeavors. The issue of thought versus no-thought is one of many indicators that the briefer a kōan record, the more enigmatic and open-ended it may appear and with greater possibilities for refashioning its meaning in diverse and distinctive ways.

Despite—or, perhaps, because of—its brevity and simplicity, Zhaozhou's monosyllabic response (far more common in Sino-Japanese than in English), at once completing and eliminating discursive interaction, resonates with the legacy of East Asian philosophies of nothingness seen from the perspective of absolutization. These implications range from Indian/Sanskrit sources like the Madhyamika notion of the insubstantiality or emptiness 空 (*sunyata*, Ch. *kong*, Jp. *kū*) of all categories to Daoist concepts of nonbeing usually referred to by the character 無, implying negation beyond ordinary extinction, nonappearance, misapprehension, chimera, or absence.

There are also significant affinities with several prominent Wu/Mu-oriented Chan/Zen doctrines attributed to Bodhidharma, Huineng, and other early ancestors prior to the onset of the kōan tradition. These include notions of no-thought (Ch. *wunian*, Jp. *wunen*), no-mind (Ch. *wuxin*, Jp. *mushin*), no-form (Ch. *wuxiang*, Jp. *muso*), and nonabiding (Ch. *wuzhu*, Jp. *mujū*), all of which evoke Laozi's basic tenet of nonaction (Ch. *wuwei*, Jp. *mui*), in addition to the

related representation of the empty circle (Ch. *yuanxiang*, Jp. *ensō*) that is often demonstrated in Zen calligraphy. Sixth patriarch Huineng's disciple Shenhui is supposed to have instructed a disciple, "Just look at nothingness (*mu*)!" which in the *Platform Sutra* represents the end of dualism that causes passions to arise. The disciple replied, "What can I look at, as there is nothing there?" and Shenhui said paradoxically, "Appearing does not mean you are looking at something."

It is important to keep in mind that the role of Mu should not be privileged in Chan discourse since Chinese thought is generally characterized by a sense of the mutually referencing quality of apparent opposites, such as existence and nonexistence or being and nonbeing. According to Hans Kantor's discussion of Daoist philosophical influences on Buddhism:

Each side—the present and the non-present—being the opposite of the other is real, yet neither one exists independently from the other. The two are mutually complementary and, in this sense, inseparable. The complementarity between the hidden and manifest is a bipolar yet non-dual relationship involving a "change of aspects" which must be realized in order to see the "oneness" ("yi") and the "perpetuity" ("chang") of this contiguous world of change.<sup>78</sup>

In the second chapter of the *Daodejing*, for example, rather than being seen as mutually exclusive possibilities, it is maintained that "existence and nonexistence give rise to one another" 故有無相生. Furthermore, the Zen Buddhist use of language greatly influenced by the paradoxicality of the *Prajnaparamita Sutras* in maintaining that form is emptiness or nirvana is coterminous with samsara and, vice versa, is characterized by the continuous oscillation between affirmation and negation, which serves to destabilize and reorient the conventional function of language.

An intriguing anecdote from Japanese culture highlighting the significance of nothingness involves the warrior Hosokawa Shigeyuki, who became a Zen priest when he retired as daimyō of Sanuki Province. A prominent scholar-monk visited Shigeyuki, and the aging warrior told the guest that he wished to show him a landscape that he had painted on a recent trip to Kumano and other scenic spots on the Kii peninsula. When the scroll was opened there was nothing but a blank sheet of paper. The monk, struck by the emptiness of the painting, offered these words of poetic praise: "Your brush is as tall as Mount Sumeru,/ Black ink is enough to exhaust the great earth;/ The white paper, as vast as the void that swallows up all illusions."<sup>79</sup>

#### CROSS-CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

Nothingness as expressed in the Mu Kōan further resonates with countless varieties of mystical speculation concerning nonsubstantive metaphysics unimpeded by the ordinary distinctions of being and nonbeing stemming from

both Eastern and Western schools of thought. These include the Brahmanic standpoint of *Neti, Neti* (Not this, Not that) expressed in the *Upanishads* when attempting to define the concept of Atman, as well as the legacies of Neo-Platonism, Kabbalah, and Sufism in the Abrahamic traditions, which stress the paramount experience of the abyss or *Ungrund* (literally “no ground”) that cannot be conveyed in words but only realized intuitively. The ineffable state must be experienced on the way to realizing the true nature of reality as an insubstantial Godhead beyond conceptualization and unimpeded by ordinary distinctions. Based on this, a variety of Western mystical thinkers ranging from Meister Eckhart, Nicholas of Cusa, and Angelus Silesius to Schneur Zalman have been compared to Zen, as well as other examples of Asian thought.

Yet another interesting and useful perspective on Mu takes into account various contemporary cross-cultural standpoints, many of which were undoubtedly influenced by Asian philosophy. These examples range from the phenomenological philosophy of Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre, both of whom emphasize the concepts of *Nichts* and *Neant* in their respective ontological ruminations, to the absurdist writings of Lewis Carroll, the poststructuralist thought of Roland Barthes, and the comparative contemplative reflections of Thomas Merton. According to an intriguing kōan-like anecdote about nonbeing by Carroll, whose Humpty Dumpty claims the ability to make words work for him rather than the reverse, “‘Take some more tea,’ the March Hare said to Alice, very earnestly. ‘I’ve had nothing yet,’ Alice replied in an offended tone, ‘so I can’t take more.’ ‘You mean you can’t take LESS,’ said the Hatter: ‘it’s very easy to take MORE than nothing.’”<sup>80</sup>

Furthermore, James Joyce once remarked near the end of his career, “My eyes are tired. For over half a century, they have gazed into reality where they have found a lovely nothing.”<sup>81</sup> His biographers noted that interviewing Joyce was “like trying to open a safe without the combination,” an enigmatic standpoint resembling the quixotic approach of Zen masters. Also, in commenting in the introduction to the first volume of his *Complete Plays* on his short works *Landscape* and *Silence*, Harold Pinter says of transcending language:

There are two silences. One when no word is spoken. The other when perhaps a torrent of language is being employed. This speech is speaking of a language locked beneath it. That is its continual reference. The speech we hear is an indication of that which we don’t hear. It is a necessary avoidance, a violent, sly, anguished or mocking smoke screen which keeps the other in its place. When true silence falls we are still left with echo but are nearer nakedness. One way of looking at speech is to say that it is a constant stratagem to cover nakedness.

The paradoxical words and demeanor of Carroll, Joyce, and Pinter appear to be reflective of the traditional injunction to “speak of Zen without speaking of Zen.” Or, to cite a Bruce Springsteen lyric in “Jungleland” evoking the

unobtrusive and detached role of poetic observation, “And then the poets down here, don’t write nothing at all/ They just stand back and let it all be.”

The significance of the Mu Kōan might also be examined in light of other instances of Western cultural expressions of nothingness or the de-centeredness of the universe in the schools of thought of American Transcendentalism, Dadaism, and Existentialism. Some elements of these examples are directly or indirectly influenced by Asian culture. The notion of nothingness has been compared to such across-the-board approaches as the emphasis on silence in the 4’33” musical composition of John Cage, who studied Zen with D. T. Suzuki, or the feeling of desperation canonized in the Beat literature of Allen Ginsburg’s prose-poem *Howl* and Bob Dylan’s rhapsody to societal exasperation, “Desolation Row.”<sup>82</sup> While cultivating a transcendent awareness of non-being and the value of nothingness over and above orthodox views of existence, all of these expressions seek to explore yet avoid the extremes of nihilism, or negation seen as an end in itself in connection with Nietzschean skepticism or world-weariness, and relativism, which may lead to antinomian forms of behavior. Their aim in embracing nothingness is to overcome the conventional antinomies of pessimism and optimism.

The examples in mysticism and literature reflect a subjective component, but Mu can also be examined in light of Whitehead’s holistic metaphysics and Einstein’s quantum physics, among other objective or scientific philosophical discourses. According to a recent discussion in *A Universe from Nothing: Why There Is Something Rather Than Nothing* by physicist Lawrence Krauss, “But something *from* nothing, physicists are finding, may be the ultimate secret of the universe, since ‘The surprising fact is that we live in a universe that has all the characteristics of being created from nothing.’” He argues, “Science has made so much progress that we are having our faces pressed to the glass to see this reality.”<sup>83</sup> While the emphasis in scientific investigation is to strive for impartiality, for Einstein, who once declared that “God does not play dice” and published essays about his thoughts on cosmic religion, personal views regarding the origins and structure of the universe became central to his overall intellectual enterprise.<sup>84</sup> This shows the inseparability of internal and external aspects of nothingness and negation.

#### PERSONAL AND IMPERSONAL PERSPECTIVES IN NISHIDA

In modern Japanese thought, the Mu Kōan is closely associated with the non-dual metaphysical view of nothingness expressed in the philosophy of seminal Kyoto school thinker Nishida Kitarō. To a large extent, Nishida’s thought, rooted in Zen meditation and also influenced by prominent examples of Western philosophy and mysticism, represents a watershed in combining elements of subjectivity and objectivity in appropriating Mu. As Michiko Yusa explains in an intellectual biography, Nishida’s philosophy reflects his own

odyssey in working with the Mu Kōan. Early in his career path, Nishida spent several years struggling mightily with this case, which had been assigned to him during his first intensive meditation session (*sesshin*) while he was studying at Myōshinji temple in Kyoto in 1897. During a summer retreat a few years later held in Wakayama prefecture under the tutelage of master Setsumon, who gave him the Dharma-name Sunshin (Momentary Mind) that was later used to sign his calligraphy, Nishida would sometimes skip his private audience (*sanzon*) altogether. Despite the relaxed atmosphere of the countryside setting, he recorded in a journal that this was “because he was having a hard time with his *kōan* ‘*Mu*’ and had nothing to say to the master. His analytical and conceptual mind stood in the way of his *kōan* practice.”<sup>85</sup>

Apparently, Nishida could not help but think logically about the implications of whether or not the dog has Buddha-nature. This level of thought presupposes a dichotomy between the subject and the object, and thus does not, according to Yusa’s account, touch the vitally living reality whether it is a dog’s or a person’s, since this realm is *before*, in an ontological rather than chronological sense, the duality of “it has” and “it has not.” “What deludes me is the temptation to think,” Nishida wrote in his diary. Seeing that Nishida was stuck and could not at that stage resolve his *kōan* studies, the mentor switched the disciple’s meditative focus to the “sound of one hand,” a case that was devised by Hakuin as an alternative focus for introductory study. On the same day this occurred, in learning that his good friend “Mitake passed his *kōan*, which annoyed him in no small degree, Nishida’s diary reads: ‘Mitake, saying something like he passed his *kōan*, proudly went home.’”<sup>86</sup>

Based in large part on his ability to critically integrate continental philosophy and psychology with insights from traditional Asian thought, especially Zen, by the 1910s with the publication of *A Study of Good (Zen no kenkyū)*, Nishida established himself as the leading thinker of the innovative approach that was later designated the Kyoto school (Kyoto Gaku-ha). Nishida makes a fundamental distinction between levels: absolute nothingness, which stands beyond the dichotomies of yes and no, or presence and absence; and relative nothingness, for which conventional oppositions still apply. In conjunction with this distinction, and also to avoid having the absolute dimension be seen as overly abstract, Nishida identifies the ultimate level of reality with the notion of a discrete place (*basho*) based on a Platonic concept, or the field through which nothingness becomes manifested.

In borrowing traditional Zen terminology while developing his own uniquely modern cross-cultural philosophical vocabulary, Nishida shows that absolute nothingness appears here and now in the concrete particulars of everyday existence.<sup>87</sup> Through the influence of post-World War II followers like Nishitani Keiji, Hisamatsu Shin’ichi, Abe Masao, and Ueda Shizuteru, who were all aligned with and/or practitioners of the Rinzai *kōan* curriculum, the notion of the place of absolute nothingness frequently has been incorporated, directly

or indirectly, into numerous commentaries on case records including the Mu Kōan. For Nishitani, realization of the case is coterminous with manifesting the truth of absolute subjectivity or the “standpoint of subjective nothingness” (*shutaiteki mu no tachiba*).

From this perspective, any seeming contradiction of having both Yes and No answers to the same question, as in the Dual Version, is overcome so that Zhaozhou’s Mu response is not to be understood as an assertion of one view or its opposite. Nevertheless, it seems clear that the implication for Kyoto school and related interpretations is that if, in the final analysis, one side is to be selected over the other it is Mu or negation that easily wins the day more so than U or affirmation. The following chapters demonstrate that this conclusion is not necessarily appropriate for understanding the complex textual and theoretical history of the development of the Mu Kōan tradition.

## Fightin' Like Cats and Dogs

### METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON DECONSTRUCTING THE EMPHATIC MU

#### On Deconstructive Strategies

Even though the term “Mu” seems to represent transcendental negation that is not limited by the polarity of assertion and denial in a way that epitomizes Zen’s thoroughgoing iconoclastic and obstacle-shattering attitude toward cogitation and rhetoric, an understanding of the case’s multifarious inferences is often shrouded in orthodoxy and convention through the reification of the notion of nothingness. Given the intricacy of Zhaozhou’s approach to Zen dialogues and the complexity of the issue of the Buddha-nature of nonhuman sentient beings, as well as the ways the case was hotly debated by competing cliques in the highly competitive environment of twelfth-century Chinese society, it must be asked anew whether the Mu-only reply constitutes the whole story of why this dialogue is considered so crucial to Zen training.

Based on wide-ranging research in preparing to write this volume, it became apparent that there are many discrepancies and exceptions to conventional understandings of the case’s roots, meaning, and applications for Zen training. The sources for and implications of the original kōan records in addition to disagreements about their impact and value for religious life are not always well documented or thoughtfully examined, largely because partisan polemics tend to infuse the field of study. A number of recent prominent scholarly investigations have made considerable progress in uncovering and clarifying some of the issues, but these works tend to fall short by presupposing a polarized pattern of endorsing correct versus incorrect interpretations that echo or reinforce sectarian diatribes.

In response to such shortcomings, this is the first of two chapters that undertake a deconstruction of the Ur Version. The current chapter focuses on methodological observations and reflections regarding possibilities for overcoming obstacles to an objective historical understanding of the Mu Kōan caused by one-sided perspectives, which are the product of a straight-line narrative stressing that there was an inexorable trajectory resulting in the conclusive endpoint

of Watō practice. To accomplish this, I establish a multilateral hermeneutics for interpreting the long and winding road, rather than direct path, of the case's formation and development that encompasses the complexity of diverse semantic, regional, and cultural influences on sectarian discord within the kōan tradition.

The next chapter highlights various textual and biographical as well as linguistic deconstructive elements. Even when the discussion is limited to the *Gateless Gate's* truncated dialogue, a translation based on the Watō method is not necessarily clear-cut. Completing the deconstruction of the Ur Version sets the stage for a reconstruction, carried out in the fifth chapter, of the Dual Version that should be recognized as a legitimate alternative rendition reflecting a distinct approach to rhetoric and meditation. Finally, chapter 6 discusses and evaluates the overall significance of juxtaposing the two main versions of the Mu Kōan for interpreting the meaning of Zhaozhou's dog dialogue.

#### SOURCES AND RESOURCES

My reconsideration of the case emerges from the same probing spirit of self-critical inquiry that led an anonymous monk to put forward to Zhaozhou the question regarding a dog's Buddha-nature. However, the ancient monk sought spiritual guidance by cloaking his own existential angst in a seemingly abstruse theoretical query about doctrine that displaced yet called attention to his burning personal pursuit of enlightenment. The aim of the current study, on the other hand, is to develop a methodological approach that departs from and overcomes particular standpoints tending to skew objective scholarship. This is done to uncover multifarious elements of the historical and textual background of the Mu Kōan, as well as various appropriations, including possible misunderstandings no longer fettered by—but without disregarding—the impact of sectarian discord.

In undertaking such an effort, I am guided in part by the cautionary note of John Maraldo, a scholar of Japanese philosophy who is, in turn, influenced by Paul Ricoeur's view of the relation between interpreter and source materials as a matter of the reader "becoming-text." For Maraldo, it is imperative to see the words of Zen masters neither as expressing timeless truth nor as part of a fabricated rhetoric of immediacy thought to rise above scrutiny. Zen discourse also should not be viewed as a matter of philosophical abstraction detached from a living tradition that continues to generate modes of theory and practice. Rather, it is necessary to investigate and engage in ongoing dialogue with the "temporal grammar of [a Zen] text that indicates an occurrence taking place within a present: the mutual presence to one another of the quoted speaker/actor and his audience."<sup>1</sup> This contradictory standpoint of absorbed impartiality—or, conversely, detached participation in classic and contemporary worldviews—enables this researcher to stand apart and stay neutral, while

also remaining intimately involved and engaged with the diversity of source materials.

Modern studies of traditional Zen Buddhist texts have available, for the first time, many kinds of research tools and scholarly perspectives that facilitate an illuminative archaeology of knowledge, which excavates diverse yet overlapping layers of writings and modes of thought. These vast resources range from rediscovered or reconstructed manuscripts to comprehensive digital collections that provide ready access to manifold traditional lines of interpretative materials cutting across social, linguistic, and historical boundaries. Based on the richness and flexibility of these newer research tools that support critical yet constructive investigation, during the past several decades there has developed a significant corpus of revisionist literature reassessing the origins, development, and spread of Zen, as well as the role this religious institution has played in various East Asian societies.<sup>2</sup> This extensive body of work, encompassing textual hermeneutics and sociopolitical analysis, is crucial reading for any current description or recounting of the tradition.<sup>3</sup> The outlook and methods thus represented must be acknowledged in examining the Mu Kōan, a topic that, for the most part, does not seem to have benefited as yet from many of the innovative trends in recent scholarship.

Moreover, some important aspects of scrutinizing Zen literature will likely remain cut off from fully reliable or irretrievably lost sources. As has been said about studies of traditional texts in a very different cultural setting, scholarly attempts at retrieving misplaced materials or depleted meanings must reckon with a fundamental obstacle. This impediment pertains to the distance created through the dissemination of various editions of a work over the course of time, a condition that tends to foster “innumerable forgettings, disappearances, recoveries, and dismissals.”<sup>4</sup> In light of the sense of the absence or lack of all of the appropriate writings required for a thoroughgoing study of the Mu Kōan, how can we gauge and verify the authority of sources that would ensure a level of objectivity required for an impartial examination of various editions, some of which were available for years but only recently have gained attention?

A flip side of this methodological issue is another concern about studying the Mu Kōan in relation to the matter of subjective realization. Some participants in meditative rituals may argue that a historical hermeneutic reading of Zen Buddhism, which functions as a still-active albeit greatly adapted religious school, can and should be challenged by followers committed to taking part in forms of training that claim to maintain continuity and consistency with traditional ideologies, including the key-phrase method. It has been duly asked whether academic research, while valuable to a point, is in the end helpful or detrimental to ascertaining the experiential significance of kōan praxis.

From the standpoint of scholarly studies, the objective and subjective concerns involved in conducting research are linked. Contemporary studies of the Mu Kōan are often infused with support for a specific standpoint in a way

that is at times hidden while lurking beneath the surface, but in other instances is openly proclaimed and asserted or perhaps stands in some combination of being concealed and revealed. Because of the special role it has played for generations of trainees, it seems that the Mu Kōan more or less has stayed off limits amid the significant advances that have transpired in deconstructive studies of so many other aspects of the Zen textual and institutional tradition.

Therefore, it must be recognized that the endeavor of challenging commonly held viewpoints concerning the case may undermine or defy received standpoints as an unintended or, in some instances, an intended byproduct of research. Despite apparent hindrances to pursuing scholarship in Zen studies based on the questionability of some of the sources, as well as the applicability of historical methods, my intention is to persevere in trying to create a more complete and well-rounded picture of Mu Kōan discourse that is neither delimited by prior commitments and presuppositions nor insensitive to the constraints of fully accessible source materials or the aspirations of nonacademic practitioners.

However, the main methodological impasse is based not so much on the seemingly incommensurable paradigms of “the historian and the believer,”<sup>5</sup> but rather, in breaking past this barrier, on the gap that emerges between historical studies and comparative thought, which continues to impede current approaches to Zen. While philosophical interpretations of the Mu Kōan are bound to be misleading without a firm grasp of historical issues, conducting history in a way that is distanced from taking into account the fuller doctrinal ramifications seen in broad theoretical perspectives is also necessary, though not sufficient for developing a full understanding of the meaning of the case. In what follows, I will identify some of the causes of misappropriations and then formulate a method for rectifying the gridlock by coming to terms with—through reconciling, but without trying to eradicate—the paradigmatic divergences between historiographical and philosophical studies of classic Zen texts and the traditions of belief and practice perpetuated in their name.

#### TO MU OR NOT TO MU

In clarifying the importance of what is at stake in attempting to mount a comprehensive study of the Mu Kōan, let us consider the following analogy to the controversies about the case: There is no doubt that the most famous line in all of English writing is, “To be or not to be, that is the question,” which occurs at the beginning of Hamlet’s immortal soliloquy from Act 3, Scene 1. If one were to extract and repeat this line as an abbreviation of the speech or the entire play, or even of Shakespearean authorship more generally, it could evoke the meaning of the whole corpus of work without any further need for reading the remainder of the discourse. This is similar to the way the key-phrase functions as a kind of self-deconstructing catalyst; in this instance, understanding

Hamlet's opening line conjures the entire play's structure, as well as the author's intent, just as Mu is said to capture the state of mind of Zhaozhou and the intention underlying Zen training.

It is also interesting that the expression of Shakespeare, who in the play *Much Ado About Nothing* makes a pun on the words "nothing" and "noting," as a form of gossip, since they were pronounced the same at the time, happens to touch base philosophically with the kōan's theme of existence vis-à-vis nonexistence. Consider, for example, this paraphrase of the inquiry expressed in *Hamlet*: "To have or not to have (Buddha-nature), that is the question." This recalls another case that inspired a number of Zen masters, including both Yuanwu and Dahui: "To be and not to be are like wisteria vines clinging to a tree" 有句無句，如籐依樹。

What if, however, the *Hamlet* line would turn out not to have been written by Shakespeare himself, or at least not in the exact wording, but to have been interposed into the script at a later date? To further consider the issue of possible inconsistency from a different angle, perhaps the Bard did compose this line but saw it only as an integral part of the longer passage, the rest of which should not be so easily removed without causing the meaning to get lost; that is, Hamlet's speech was not intended to be reduced to a single punch-line, no matter how compelling it might seem. Or, from the reverse angle, what if Shakespeare did use the line as a kind of key-phrase, but there are additional differing or competing versions and variations that have been long overlooked or misunderstood? There is certainly some basis for highlighting variability and the need for verifiability in that "To be, or not to be, aye there's the point"—asserting "point" rather than stressing "question"—appears in a posthumous version of the play. Also, in some productions the speech becomes a monologue because Claudius and Gertrude remain behind on stage to spy on Hamlet.

Let us go further and suppose that, although one school of thought has insisted on just quoting the first line of the soliloquy while dispensing with the rest of the speech or even the whole play altogether, there was a less frequently cited—yet, in the end, equally important—edition of the passage that was a little longer and more complicated than the condensed version but perhaps conveyed nearly the opposite effect by apparently supporting a different philosophical outlook. The question for Hamlet was whether to continue to exist or not, but maybe he really meant something else. For example, we could imagine there might be a version that reads, "To be rather than not to be" as an affirmation rather than a choice, or perhaps, "To be and not to be" as a deliberate contradiction, and that each of the possibilities could contain a supplemental comment or conversation that further complexifies its meaning.

How about if there were two different interpretations based on distinct versions of the passage, each with supporters among various producers, directors, performers, and critics who argued vigorously for their own and against the other side's view, while charging their rivals with defying orthodoxy so that

there was so much excitement in regard to the controversy that the contrasting approaches were deliberately misrepresented in the heat of the contest? Because of this, the main example of an alternative version of the passage was continually ignored or repudiated through less than careful argumentation, or was considered a form of heresy with its roots deliberately set aside or forgotten. Or, how about if one side claimed that the other, seemingly opposite although in some ways overlapping standpoint was simply a variation of its counterpart view that could easily be neglected or subsumed without sacrificing literary or philosophical integrity?

We can also take the step of speculating that, given all of the varieties, maybe there is a circumstance whereby Hamlet's famous line was not really that important for understanding Shakespeare anyway, since he wrote many other prominent passages (for example, the Buddhistic "Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player, / . . . full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing"), and this was but one more. Or, perhaps, in the final analysis, Shakespeare's role as a writer was not as crucial as might be imagined among colleagues in the world of Elizabethan theater, in which playwrights and critics alike generally ranked him below Ben Jonson and others, or may have seen him as a less than original hack or even a plagiarizer. As shown in the recent film *Anonymous*, Shakespeare's authorship remains contested in some quarters, especially since he mysteriously left no manuscripts or books in his own hand and barely produced any works during his last ten years.<sup>6</sup>

All of these critical reflections and much more populate the scholarly situation when exploring the significance of the Mu Kōan, which is why seemingly outdated or partial perspectives need to be re-examined. The kōan has stirred a multitude of controversies, including disputes derived from straw-man or red-herring issues that appear to be misguided for diminishing a focus on more compelling and complex issues related to Zen theory and practice. Stereotypical views of the case and its supposed function as a nondiscursive vehicle for transcending thought and words are open to challenge and possible reinterpretation, or replacement, through a sustained historical hermeneutic investigation of diverse textual and intellectual developments. Providing materials and methods for this deconstructive project is designed to present for further consideration a clearer picture of the ramifications of the case. This task is intended to disrupt intellectual complacency in a thoughtful fashion, but not necessarily to distract or detract from anyone's own commitment to the Mu Watō as a mainstay of doctrine or the primary component of a distinctive spiritual path.

### **On Overcoming the Straight-Line Narrative**

The concern treated here is not about the Emphatic Mu per se, or its proponents, but with what happens when this viewpoint is presented in a way that

tends to either blur or exaggerate discrepancies between the Ur and Dual versions, as well as their respective visions of the content and implications of the case. An underlying reliance on a straight-line narrative portrays the key-phrase in terms of the inevitability of the consummation of ideological trends set in motion prior to Zhaozhou and waiting to be fulfilled and disseminated via the works of Dahui and followers. What are the reasons for this problematic outlook and the possibilities for decoupling the Mu Kōan from being wedded to a single interpretative framework?

To accomplish the task of simultaneous deconstruction of misleading views and reconstruction of historical developments of the literary tradition and its ramifications for clarifying Zen thought, it is important to be aware that typical studies of the Mu Kōan fall into a somewhat unproductive pattern based on two sometimes separable yet mutually reinforcing methodological fallacies. The first fallacy is a view of Timelessness, which claims that the Emphatic Mu functioning as the main example of the key-phrase method is an eternal verity standing apart from the flow of history and is, therefore, immune to scholarly investigation or intellectual scrutiny. Any hermeneutic challenge that may be raised by a critic or skeptic tends to be dismissed as the voicing of one who is not skilled properly in meditation and unqualified to comment. This approach is evident not only in the writings of many Zen practitioners who have been trained in the kōan-investigation technique but also in the background or intent of some academic works.

The second fallacy apparent with the straight-line narrative is the Trajectory Thesis, which suggests that when the historical unfolding of Zen texts is closely examined, it appears that the Mu Kōan was imminent based on a reference in a prominent text supposedly from the 840s attributed to Huangbo, which was well before the time Zhaozhou would have been likely to utter Mu. Three centuries later, Mu was further developed by Wuzu as a predecessor to Dahui, whose views were supported by a host of successors in East Asia. This outlook tends to conflate ideology with historicity by making questionable or spurious assertions concerning the textual origins and ritual significance of the case.

Two types of misconception that are corollary to the Trajectory Thesis include (1) unilateralism, which maintains that there was an inevitable and inexorable progression toward abbreviation in Zen discourse that sought to reduce to minimal effect any use of verbiage culminating in the emphasis on the one-word barrier Mu, so that exceptions to this rule are generally not mentioned or are deemed obstructive or anomalous; and (2) bilateralism, which sharpens the focus on the Ur Version by contrasting it based on an implicit assumption of superiority with seemingly opposing approaches derived from sectarian and other lines of demarcation. Both of these trends wrap their discussion of the case in an unreflective replay of bitter Southern Song–dynasty disputes among factions in which the Emphatic Mu standpoint generally prevailed. Analyzing the shortcomings of these options helps to clarify and reorient some of the

principal reasons for the dominance of the Ur Version and, thereby, reinvigorate the Dual and other versions of the case that have been overlooked.

#### DAHUI'S SEEMINGLY INORDINATE INFLUENCE

In a tradition known for nonorthodoxy expressed through disingenuously blasphemous rhetoric, as well as a high degree of pan-sectarian accord during the Northern Song (although rivalries always flared up), it appears that the trend toward a one-sided focus on the Ur Version taken in opposition to rival standpoints is primarily due to Dahui's insistence in the Southern Song on adhering to the practice of *kōan*-investigation that was adopted and refined by later leaders in China, Korea, and Japan. Without trying to scapegoat the venerable Song master, whose accomplishments are profoundly important and consequential for all factions of Zen, in his monograph *How Zen Became Zen*, which examines debates regarding meditative techniques related to the Mu *Kōan*, Morten Schlütter shows that Dahui fiercely attacked the Caodong school's silent-illumination method for its supposed lack of dynamism by maintaining that quiet contemplation leads to a mental state that is like "dry wood, stone, wall, a piece of tile, or a pebble." Therefore, Schlütter argues, "Dahui was the first and foremost thinker to break the code of harmony that the Chan school had been able to maintain throughout the earlier part of the Song."<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, according to Schlütter, the impact of this controversy continues to weaken attempts at objective and impartial inquiry that Dahui "had an enormous influence on later ages. Much scholarship, both traditional and modern, has been devoted to Dahui's teachings, often more or less advocating Dahui's viewpoint. But few scholars have looked at the teachings of the twelfth-century Caodong tradition in any detail or tried to determine the extent to which the attacks by Dahui and others reflected actual Caodong doctrine."<sup>8</sup> As Schlütter comments, Dahui's sectarian outlook has been adopted unreflectively by numerous contemporary researchers. Even if their studies represent very sophisticated scholarly examinations of the origins and implications of the key-phrase method, it becomes problematic when researchers portray this technique alone as representing historical and doctrinal truth, rather than standing as one of the diverse ideological perspectives that were competing with each other in the classical period. An unfortunate effect of Dahui-based controversies has been to create and perpetuate a legacy of divisiveness. By sustaining and supporting apparent ideological winners while disregarding or disparaging the losers, this approach continues to circulate partisan attitudes embedded in conventional views of the case, so that contrasting or dissenting minority voices are not afforded their fair share of consideration and are often treated with a thinly veiled air of dismissiveness.

In that vein, William Bodiford critiques the approach in Robert Buswell's monumentally influential studies, first published in the 1980s, of how the

key-phrase method initiated by Dahui was appropriated by Jinul's Korean Zen. Even though his writings were considerably more advanced in sophistication and depth than previous works on kōans, Bodiford argues, "Buswell's detailed and meticulous scholarship can be seen as reinforcing the interpretations of D. T. Suzuki [in the 1930s] and Ruth Fuller Sasaki [in the 1950s]. In their own ways, the essays by each of these writers portray the development of Keyword Meditation [Watō] as a high point not only in the history of Chan, but in the development of East Asian Buddhism overall."<sup>9</sup>

The unilateral tendency reinforced at different stages of modern scholarship results in the monotone quality underlying different kinds of recent works on the Mu Kōan designed for both academic students and lay practitioners. These studies have in common an unacknowledged predisposition to take for granted the authenticity and merits of the Ur Version, but without an appropriate consideration of its origins and variety of renditions, as this issue has either not been considered or gets suppressed because it may seem to undermine Watō-based belief.

The promotion of a unilateral standpoint may well be apropos to the case of Korea, particularly the Jogye Order, for which the key-phrase has long been the standard technique to a far greater extent than in China and Japan, where there has been much more variability. Despite a rich Korean Seon literary tradition, kōan practice is mainly a matter of training with the Watō/Hwadu method rather than developing the kind of multivalent rhetorical pyrotechnics that characterizes much of the Chinese and Japanese commentarial writings. Nonetheless, in Korea there are considerable differences of opinion between Jinul, Hyesim, and Taego, as well as among more recent leaders of the Jogye Order.

However, examinations of Korean training methods based on the Mu Kōan become misleading when the history of Chinese Chan texts is read retrospectively in terms of representing a discursive arc resulting in the Dahui-Jinul approach as a logical outcome of ideological and literary forces operating within the kōan tradition from its inception. These tendencies were supposedly destined to culminate in a specific outlook that became the norm in Korea.<sup>10</sup> Interpretative problems are compounded when the scholarly trend of depicting the history of kōans in China, which may be applicable from a Korean standpoint, is also applied to a Japanese historical perspective for which the sense of straight-line trajectory seems particularly inappropriate. When a unilateral approach is followed, the tremendous diversity of materials in traditional sources concerning the question of whether the dog—or other sentient beings like cats, cows, worms, and trees, in addition to insentient beings like stones, mountains, and rivers—does or does not have Buddha-nature is left unattended.

## CLASSIC DISPUTES REFLECTING BILATERALISM

The main alternative to unilateralism that has been regularly pursued from the era of Song writings to current scholarship is a bilateral approach, which has certain advantages in highlighting differences and discrepancies, but in the final analysis is similarly undermined by shortcomings in providing a somewhat unrepresentative image that is borrowed, consciously or not, from traditional sectarian polemics. Bilateralism pays particular attention to the controversy between kōan-investigation and silent-illumination, although not necessarily by considering holistically the full historical context of the debate. Explaining the strengths and overcoming the weaknesses of these anachronistic tendencies as a means of portraying Mu Kōan discourse is a complex matter that calls for a brief reappraisal of classic controversies seen in light of contemporary appropriations.

Kōan collections were first formed in the early eleventh century through verse and prose commentaries on encounter dialogues culled from transmission of the lamp records, and the formation of interpretative styles developed rapidly in Song China before spreading to Korea and Japan. Four trends are particularly noteworthy.<sup>11</sup> First, classic kōan compilations were *summative* of the main teachings and pedagogical styles of then-current Chan lineages that originated in the Tang dynasty. Second, emphasis was placed on the *transformative* qualities, rather than literal meaning, of the exchanges being highlighted for promoting the religious quest. Third, weight was also given to the *interactive* role of examinations of encounter dialogues in that the collections were usually the result of sermons presented by a commentator to his disciples, who had the opportunity to question or challenge the master's interpretations that were refined and polished through editing before being recorded. Fourth, one of the main aims of a master's discussions with followers that were included in some commentaries was to come up with *alternative* responses to the core queries of the dialogues that were justified by drawing out interpretations embedded in the source passage's way of thinking. This practice was helpful in stimulating and testing a trainee's level of understanding of the case by forcing him to make it his own, so to speak, through highly original and creative forms of expression reflecting authentic self-awareness and a true sense of inner peace.

The expansion of the kōan tradition was accelerated and vibrant, and quickly climaxed less than a century after the initial eleventh-century collections with the publication of the *Blue Cliff Record* at the dawn of the Southern Song dynasty. This compilation with seven multiple and intertwining layers of poetic and narrative and capping-phrase commentary for each case is a transcription of nearly fifteen years of sermons expressing reflections by Yuanwu based on cases originally selected by Xuedou and commented with enigmatic verse remarks.

The Xuedou text representing the standpoint of the Yunmen school, which was the most prominent stream at the time before being quickly eclipsed by the Linji school, was probably completed by 1038 but is no longer extant as an autonomous entity and is known only through serving as a core part of the *Blue Cliff Record*. Yuanwu's lectures were delivered from around 1112 to 1125 when he resided at the Blue Cliff Cloister at Lingquan monastery on Mount Jia and other temples, and they were compiled and published a few years later by some of his disciples. In incorporating extensive prose commentary, Yuanwu generally recasts hagiographical anecdotes culled from transmission of the lamp records, which focus on lineage trees, as well as recorded sayings collections offering narratives that deal with an individual master's style of teaching, in addition to allusions to materials from pre-Chan or non-Buddhist Chinese literary classics, such as art of war, classic poetry, or folklore compilations.

This model of commentary was emulated by many interpreters from various Chan streams, especially Wansong of the Caodong school in the early thirteenth century. But within a period of less than a decade after Yuanwu's text appeared, Dahui was already in the process by the mid-1130s of disassembling and overturning the discourse's main feature that stressed rhetorical eloquence through his advocacy of the path of parsimonious expression and the reduction or elimination of thought. Dahui's enlightenment experience based on working with kōan cases took many arduous years of training to achieve, and this frustration caused him to question the merits of a literary approach. The transition occurred at the time Dahui was exiled for political reasons to Fujian province in southeastern China, where he preached to a largely lay audience and to monks attracted to literary Chan, silent-illumination, and/or Pure Land *nianfo* recitation practices.

By condensing kōan records into a digestible formula while rejecting literary flourish with the implicit assumption that the absolutism of the Ur Version trumps the relativism of the Dual Version, Dahui claimed the mantle of being the true arbiter of dynamism in Chan meditation. Dahui's critique particularly targeted members of the Huanglong stream of the Linji school, including his former friend, monk-poet Juefan Huihong. Since mind for Dahui represents the roots of enlightenment and words are merely the branches, it is essential not to conflate the significance of these components by overemphasizing the erudition required for literary approaches to expressing Chan insight.

Despite the intrasectarian focus of much of the discord that took place within the Linji school, many interpreters envision Yuanwu as a precursor of Dahui, who they see mainly as an opponent of the Caodong school, so that Yuanwu gets associated with that rivalry as well. Silent-illumination was apparently supported by Hongzhi, a highly valued friend-yet-rival of Dahui whose approach to interpreting kōans in relation to contemplation was attacked with acrimony. Dahui also severely criticized Hongzhi's Caodong colleague, Qingliao, who instructed followers to sit in their rooms as if in "a ghostly cave."<sup>12</sup> Even when

Caodong monks cite the Emphatic Mu rather than the Dual Version, this is done, according to Dahui's facetious remarks that mock his rivals' inability to implement contemplation within the realm of daily activities, with the goal of achieving a passive sense of tranquility through "sweeping out their minds" by, in a caricature of Caodong school rhetoric, "balancing Mu on the tip of their nose."<sup>13</sup>

Both Ishii Shūdō and Morten Schlütter demonstrate persuasively that Hongzhi and Qingliao, among many other prominent Caodong monks, probably did embrace a view of serene and silent contemplation in at least some of their teachings, so that a sense of binary opposition between factions is not altogether misleading. Schlütter further documents that there was competition between the Linji school emphasis on Mu as exemplary of the key-phrase method and the Caodong school's primary emphasis on another kōan, "What is the self before the empty eon?"<sup>14</sup> This controversy shows that both schools utilized a particular catchphrase to stimulate spiritual awakening, but the Caodong case appears to highlight the role of original enlightenment and the experience of returning to the source rather than achieving dynamism in the present moment. This discrepancy serves to solidify and exacerbate the lines of sectarian division.

At the same time, it is clear that there really was no unified designation for a school of thought that endorsed silent-illumination in any kind of straightforward opposition to kōan-investigation, so that the scorn heaped by Dahui's camp fell on an unclear, though much abused, target. Unlike Dahui, Hongzhi never declared himself for a particular viewpoint and against a competing approach. Although the term "silence" (Ch. *mo*; Jp. *moku*) is prevalent in his writings, Hongzhi mentions silent-illumination infrequently. The main example is a famous verse on the topic that was rewritten by his Japanese descendent, Dōgen, in the "Zazenshin" fascicle precisely to highlight the importance of dynamic activity as an integral part of meditation.<sup>15</sup> Dōgen's critique of passivity, interestingly enough, recalls Dahui's criticisms. Dōgen does not use the term silent-illumination in either a positive or negative way, even though some of his notions such as just-sitting (*shikan-taza*) or practicing zazen-only in terms of the oneness of cultivation-realization (*shushō ichinyō*) may appear to resemble his predecessor's standpoint with intended modifications.

How did Chan's literary trend culminate and then peak so quickly by giving way to an overwhelming emphasis on kōan-investigation, and where does the Dual Version fit into the picture in relation to silent-illumination, since this rendition of the case generally is left out of bilateral-based discussions? It appears that with Dahui's rejection of the role of literature, the kōan tradition's initial emphasis on eloquence had reached the point of no return. Refined rhetoric was still maintained in many quarters, since from the standpoint of social-professional mobility producing verse was considered *de rigueur* for advancement in both the monastery system and the imperial

court. Nevertheless, prominent key-phrase supporters in the Yuan dynasty, like Gaofeng and Zhongfeng, ruled the day in defining Watō's (non)discourse as crucial for the attainment of awakening due to the inspirational role of doubt triggered by the shortcut approach with its emphasis on the transcendence of language.

As Ding-hwa Hsieh points out, Xuedou (and, to a large extent, Yuanwu) in addition to Juefan and others in the Northern Song emphasized the merits of poetry for expressing spontaneous insight into the nature of Zen realization. Wumen of the Linji-Huanglong stream recognized the value of verse, but in the *Gateless Gate* he transformed poetry into a tool for expressing the merits of the key-phrase method instead of creatively evoking imagery and wordplay as ends in themselves. "Compared to Xuedou," Hsieh argues, "Wumen seems to use poetry more as a pedagogical tool to help Chan practitioners find the crucial word or phrase of a Chan *gong'an* than as a literary device to display his personal understanding of the *gong'an*'s import."<sup>16</sup>

#### RINZAI VERSUS SŌTŌ IN JAPAN

Song-dynasty sectarian contests are certainly more than an archival remnant from the past because they continue to inspire vital areas of discussion and, at times, discord. As Schlütter remarks, "part of the reason the conflict [between Dahui and Hongzhi]... is still keenly remembered today is that its memory has been kept alive in Japanese Zen."<sup>17</sup> In many contemporary accounts, the competition gets reduced to a simplistic either/or model or binary system of this-versus-that view, which is not true to history since it is unclear that the Caodong school in China, let alone the Sōtō sect in Japan, ever actually endorsed silent-illumination. Since the time of demands made by the Tokugawa shogunate's high degree of supervision over all Buddhist sects, which were required to define their respective positions of religious theory and practice without overlapping those of other schools, the retrospective contrasting of Chan branches has been sharpened and perpetuated.

Both the Song and Edo debates took place in similarly competitive religious environments and sociopolitical settings, whereby government oversight regulated religious movements and threatened various kinds of punishment for those that seemed subversive or challenging to authority. Hakuin's attacks on the Sōtō sect were initiated for many of the same reasons that were evoked centuries before regarding the relation between literature and meditation, as well as the issue of sudden versus gradual enlightenment. A school associated with one standpoint was obligated to disavow (and, therefore, effectively criticize) the views of rival schools. The notion that the Rinzai sect's approach had to be portrayed in stark contrast to the Sōtō sect became such a prominent item in the shared discourse of the era that many of the similarities linking the schools were overlooked or disregarded.

As illustrated in a contemporary manga-like introductory book on Buddhism that is fairly typical of how the field presents itself today, *kōan*-investigation associated with the Rinzai sect is portrayed by a figure meditating while facing the interior of the hall (that is, in front of colleagues) and is said to meet frequently with his master to test his proficiency in solving an assigned *kōan*.<sup>18</sup> Silent-illumination associated with the Sōtō school, particularly as supposedly endorsed by Eihei-ji temple's approach to training, is represented by a meditator who in facing the outer wall practices contemplation but without necessarily contemplating a case record.

The implication of the diagram, with its implicit value judgment recalling twelfth-century Chan debates, may suggest that the Japanese Rinzai method is dynamic and engaged while the Sōtō technique is passive and aloof, just as Dahui and his Linji followers once claimed in regard to the Caodong school. However, the impression given that somehow the Sōtō sect has never explored or endorsed the study of *kōans* is altogether misleading. *Kōan* study was a major component of the school's teaching, especially for Dōgen and a host of medieval commentators of *Shōmono* literature, which includes various kinds of exegesis ranging from poetry to more esoteric styles of discourse.<sup>19</sup> An emphasis on interpreting case records was maintained in the Sōtō sect until it was interrupted by Edo-period impediments. That trend has been somewhat reversed in recent decades in that *kōan* studies have been renewed by Sōtō scholars in the postwar period, albeit in piecemeal fashion.<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, rehearsals of the conflict between *kōan*-investigation and silent-illumination as the key to understanding the significance of the Mu *Kōan* are based in large part on rehashing the way that Dahui portrayed the contest in setting up a straw man, or a standpoint that may have had no real supporters so that it was very easily demonized and refuted. This model gets infused with overlays of Song and post-Song schismatic developments applied to contemporary Zen. A legacy of the classic controversies is that scholarly studies in Japan and the West today presumptively and retroactively inject inherited polemics into an examination of Song China.

### Long and Winding Path toward Unraveling the Trajectory Thesis

The goal of overcoming the effects of Timelessness and the Trajectory Thesis motivates my attempt to develop an innovative multilateral methodology by trying to build on and enhance the efforts of Schlütter and other recent scholars in analyzing anew and reassessing the basis and ramifications of twelfth-century Chan conflicts. This approach seeks to dig out from under the avalanche of support for the Ur Version and allow for the apparent imbalance or partiality to be corrected, while also staying attuned to legitimate reasons for continuing to present bilateral discrepancies. Working through these issues is carried out

without expecting to find straightforward causal answers to thorny hermeneutic questions yet resisting simplistic acquiescence to the view that studies of Zen are bound to remain part of an unapproachable and unresolvable mystery.

To clarify the struggles confronted and opportunities offered in developing this approach, I will briefly re-create the meandering path encountered while conducting research for this book. At first taken aback by the overwhelming support for the Emphatic Mu, at the same time I was equally surprised, albeit from a different angle, with lacunae in some recent publications by Chinese and Japanese scholars in regard to the history of the development of kōans associated with Chan lineages. One might expect that just about any work on Zen published in East Asia would feature Zhaozhou as an important ancestor, and that writings on the life and teachings of this master should certainly highlight the role of the Mu Kōan as the premier example of his style of expression. However, this assumption is not borne out, and the reasons for omissions demand additional reflection on both the state of modern research and the classical period it seeks to analyze.

For example, most Japanese books dealing with transmission of the lamp narratives that include a section on Zhaozhou touch very briefly on the Mu Kōan since it is not included in the *Jingde Record*, and a recent volume on Zhaozhou in an important new series covering various Chan masters has just a handful of pages on the case.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, an entire volume on the history of the Chan school published in China barely even mentions Zhaozhou, citing his name only once in a memo in the margin.<sup>22</sup> However, that instance did not really startle me since this was a work on lineages, and although he was an important product of the Hongzhou school who spawned some disciples, as opposed to some of his lineal contemporaries Zhaozhou did not create a lasting legacy of followers according to Chan genealogical trees.

I consulted a much more detailed volume on kōans published in Taiwan that also pays little mind to the case of the dog.<sup>23</sup> What explains the lack of coverage of Zhaozhou and the Mu Kōan in these examples of East Asian scholarly works since, as has been pointed out, Zhaozhou is one of the key figures in the kōan tradition with more cases attributed to him than any other master? Is this some kind of collective oversight? I do not think so, but rather feel that it is probably because the case is not so important for understanding Zhaozhou's teachings as is usually presumed, since the typical view of the kōan tradition has often been skewed by an unrepresentative overemphasis on the key-phrase technique.

Another important Japanese study of the Mu Kōan that provides a more complicated but still rather perplexing picture is *Mu no tankyū: Chūgoku Zen (Investigations of Nothingness: Chinese Chan)* by Yanagida Seizan and Umehara Takeshi, which was originally one of a dozen volumes in a series on East Asian Buddhism that appeared in the late 1960s and was reprinted a few years ago in a handy paperback edition. Umehara was then a professor

at Ritsumeikan University specializing in classical Japanese Buddhism and a philosopher who acknowledged in the preface that he was greatly influenced by Kyoto school thinkers, including Nishida Kitarō and D. T. Suzuki. Yanagida, who then taught at Kyoto University, was becoming well known in international scholarly circles for his careful and probing historical analysis of textual sources after having published a seminal study of early Chan, as well as an edition of writings attributed to Bodhidharma as the first of a state-of-the-art twenty-volume series on the records of Chinese Chan ancestors.<sup>24</sup>

Prior to Yanagida's pioneering historical work, studies of Chan/Zen tended either to have a strictly sectarian orientation or to represent the opposite problem often attributed to Suzuki-style studies—a “lump sum” approach that blurred schismatic discrepancies by failing to distinguish between subfactions or to analyze nuanced variations in their respective socio-historical contexts. To disentangle and de-essentialize the morass of history, Yanagida undertook a methodical step-by-step chronological examination that highlighted the formative role of the Northern school, as well as the need to base Chan studies on the transmission of lamp records as the primary (quasi- or pseudo-)historical sources. Yet, Yanagida was also eventually criticized for mystifying Chan's origins by not taking fully into account records and resources outside of the orbit of Buddhist textuality and, thus, creating a somewhat more mythological than historiographical approach.

Yanagida concludes the first part of *Mu no tankyū* by promoting the role of the Mu Kōan as the culmination of the school's beliefs and the key to Chan views of ineffability or nonreliance on words. Interestingly enough, he points out that while the version of the dialogue from the *Gateless Gate* is best known, an earlier version in the record of Wuzu has the negative response followed by an ironic comment on the dog's karmic awareness; this is a dialogue found in other sources including the *Record of Zhaozhou*. Yanagida furthermore shows that the case was not included in the collection by Xuedou and is, therefore, missing from the *Blue Cliff Record* derived from this work, an important omission since Yuanwu also does not cite the Mu Kōan in his recorded sayings. It is significant that in Yanagida's account there is no mention of the “Yes” (Ch. You, Jp. U) response attributed to Zhaozhou in the *Record of Serenity's* Dual Version, with its poetically evocative capping phrases that probably became the basis for extensive interlinear commentary filled with inventive wordplay in Dōgen's “Buddha-nature” fascicle. This reveals a persistent oversight of one of the two main renditions of the case while celebrating the Ur Version.

#### MAYBE, MAYBE NOT

Reacting to the overabundance of some kinds of resources accompanied by deficiencies in other types of literature on the Mu Kōan has caused me to feel that there is a disconnect in regard to the textual materials and methodological

perspectives with which most readers are familiar. I have noted that Iriya Yoshitaka and Ishii Shūdō are not alone in challenging the mainstream interpretation in response to the variation and variability in versions and commentaries on Zhaozhou's dog. Their comments are echoed by a leading contemporary Rinzai commentator, Akizuki Ryūmin, whose views are multifaceted in numerous publications, as well as by Sōtō scholar Ishii Seijun.<sup>25</sup> Ishii Seijun, former president of Komazawa University, was inspired to write a book on kōan interpretations largely because he felt that a singular view of Mu is rather partial and unbalanced in valorizing dominant voices of the tradition that tend to absolutize the case. In addition, modern Taiwanese Chan master Hsing Yun, who presents the U response in Chinese with an exclamation point (as in 有!), highlights the coexistence of dual replies of Yes-No 有無二字, or what he refers to as the "Yes Thesis and No Thesis" 說有說無.<sup>26</sup>

These scholars and practitioners indicate that various contrary, dissenting, or conflicting outlooks, which are justifiable and appropriate to interpreting traditional sources, tend to be unintentionally—or, in some cases, deliberately and with argumentative design and disputatious purpose—marginalized, silenced, or suppressed. Robert Sharf points out, "For just as Chan masters promise, 'Zhaozhou's dog' turns out to be the key that unlocks the entire *gong'an* tradition."<sup>27</sup> But, Sharf further suggests that the "(t)he modern understanding of *gong'an* practice is inordinately influenced by contemporary Rinzai monastic training."<sup>28</sup>

Given these remarks, I concur with the main thrust of a recent comment by Jin Park concerning Korean approaches to the Mu Kōan, which argues that "Zen Buddhism has been hibernating in a conservatism created by the inability to cope with changing times while, at the same time, letting the radical liberalism inscribed in Buddhist doctrine... deteriorate with time."<sup>29</sup> The emergence of a new "revolutionary spirit" is called for by Park. My understanding of this analysis suggests that the solution for the sense of decline necessitates that we avoid endorsing a particular meditation technique since such an outlook, if misunderstood or misappropriated, can lead to a new kind of orthodoxy that obfuscates distinctions and variations.

As another prominent Japanese scholar of Chinese Chan sources, Ogawa Takashi, argues in a recent book on the intellectual history of kōans, understandings of various cases have never been static or uniform but in each and every instance have evolved and transformed over the course of time as affected by various elements of cultural influence.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, the way a case is understood today does not necessarily reflect how it was seen in earlier stages. The problem with the tendency to interpret kōans as a transcendent truth is that this approach extracts the source dialogues from the context of meaningful correspondence between questioner and respondent, as well as multitudinous layers of commentary that gathered around their initial exchange.

In particular, Ogawa refutes the tendency in much of Zen scholarship to presuppose a latent structure that reduces the meaning of kōan records in stereotypical ways by defying the original and realistic scenario in which the active word of the living people who engaged in dialogue actually took place. He points out that most attempts to present a comprehensive Asian philosophy reflect a formalization that occurred in the Song dynasty with the Linji-Yangqi faction's systemized notion of kōan-investigation. Therefore, the universalization of kōan interpretation based on the key-phrase standpoint was not necessarily an expected product of the classical age, but rather can be identified with Dahui's teachings.

Ogawa uses the analogy of the chessboard in the game of *go*, whereby the interaction between the stones should be viewed holistically as a function of the board in its entirety and not simply in terms of individual pieces seen in relation to each other. In analyses of kōans guided by Dahui's standpoint, however, Song-dynasty kōan collections are looked upon as uprooted and disconnected fragments, just as stones on the *go* board when removed from their original context may be objectified and treated in abstract terms based on supposedly overriding patterns.

In seeking to overcome deficiencies found in many contemporary studies of classic debates that echo traditional sectarian polemics, Morten Schlütter's *How Zen Became Zen* attempts to break out of the molds of both unilateralism and bilateralism. His method aims for "a more complete and nuanced understanding of the split itself and the causes and conditions surrounding [the schism]."<sup>31</sup> This approach, which is supported by other commendable scholarly advances on both sides of the Pacific, moves into the arena of multilateralism that "draws upon a wide range of primary sources, including government manuals, official histories, commemorative inscriptions for monasteries, funerary inscriptions for Chan masters, essay collections, travel descriptions, and private letters, as well as many different kinds of Buddhist sources."<sup>32</sup>

Schlütter argues that the division between the Linji and Caodong schools was greatly affected by political changes in the Southern Song, as all parties were made anxious due to "confiscations of monastery lands, the restrictions on ordination, and the diminishing number of monastery conversions, together with the persecution that Buddhism underwent at the end of the Northern Song. . . ."<sup>33</sup> Schlütter's examination thereby takes into account, from a neutral descriptive standpoint, the broader historical context of ideological debates, especially in light of the interaction of Buddhist thinkers with scholar-officials whose support (or lack) was crucial for the success (or failure) of the religious institution during the Song dynasty. He evaluates, for example, the issue of whether and to what extent Dahui may have developed kōan-investigation specifically as a convenient training device for an audience of lay literati, who did not have the time or wherewithal for proper meditation. Schlütter and other

scholars show how variations in regional and cultural manifestations in Song China are reflected in diverse uses of terminology that determine formations of sectarian ideology, which have had an impact on the discourse embedded in commentaries on the Ur and Dual versions of the Mu Kōan.

Schlütter's work is like another study connecting Chan intellectual with Chinese sociopolitical history regarding the formation and function of the records of dialogues, Albert Welter's *Monks, Rulers, and Literati*,<sup>34</sup> among additional examples of recent multilateral research. By analyzing diverse kinds of sources, these works go a long way toward achieving a constructive methodological compromise through a balanced and even-handed weighing of traditional rhetoric with current historical criticism. Both books reflect a mature handling of complex textual materials in a seasoned and reasonable fashion as part of a critical analysis that does not pass judgment in a way that might diminish the value of the tradition.

This trend indicates that a full-throttle methodology needs to appreciate how the development of kōan literature was largely an inventive response to the sociopolitical environment and the sense of yearning for spirituality on the part of scholar-officials, coupled with the struggle for winning their loyalty by rival schools preoccupied with a sense of being overseen by government supervision of all religious movements.<sup>35</sup> In the long run, for those open to exploring possibilities and variations, the use of historical studies as applied to Chan Buddhism leads to a far greater, rather than lesser, degree of philosophical appreciation of the multiple functions of kōan records.

To ensure an understanding of the complexity of the nexus of diverging yet interwoven and sometimes complementary perspectives, works by Schlütter and Welter probably should be read alongside Mark Halperin's *Out of the Cloister*, which covers similar territory from the standpoint of the lives and writings of Song literati rather than works of or about Buddhist monks who interacted with the cultured elite.<sup>36</sup> Halperin points out some discrepancies in accounts of the period. On the one hand, literati promoted or, in some cases, were among Chan leaders, and often wrote introductions and other materials on behalf of the collections of the masters, so that their works may be construed as endorsing a particular ideological standpoint. However, Halperin shows that while in their non-Chan writings the literary elite expressed a strong interest in meditation, these works did not reflect an attempt to become embroiled in schismatic Chan debates. Therefore, scholar-officials probably need not be evoked as defenders of the faith or contributors to binary ideological oppositions.<sup>37</sup>

### **On Developing Multilateral Historical Hermeneutics**

The preceding analysis demonstrates that while a bilateral approach to sectarian conflicts is by no means entirely inaccurate, any discussion that starts

and stops with this view may fall short of revealing the full picture because it tends to aggravate simplistic representations of the unfolding of complex historical developments and ideological discrepancies, as well as underlying interconnections between seemingly opposed factions. Therefore, an analysis based on re-creating the polarized paradigm of opposition involving two hardened standpoints locked in a stubborn standoff—of Yes versus No, north versus south, or Dahui's Linji school kōan-investigative dynamism versus Hongzhi's Caodong school silent-illuminative quietism—reverts to partisanship by diverting from a careful focus on the roots of ideological discord.

The way out of the dead end of unilateralism, which sees a single trajectory while ignoring any other side, and of bilateralism, which posits a one-dimensional contrast between apparent opponents that are not enabled to engage in constructive dialogue, is to develop a multilateral approach. By stepping back from sectarian conflicts to examine complex issues regarding the Mu Kōan located at the crossroads of diverse historical and intellectual trends, multilateral historical hermeneutics opens the door to a wide-ranging analysis of variations and gradations of shifting rhetorical and philosophical standpoints expressed in different versions of the case.

My goal is to further the methodological advances of recent scholars concerning multicultural and multiregional perspectives in the spirit of Zen's own insistence on self-critical understanding. Multilateralism builds upon but goes beyond the scope of a focus limited to the religious and cultural setting of controversies in the 1100s in China by looking reflexively at both diachronic and synchronic dimensions of the tradition extending through centuries of developments that invariably infiltrate and affect our retrospective understanding of classic debates.

When a diachronic or longitudinal dimension is considered in that the tradition is seen to involve numerous thinkers in at least three countries extending chronologically and conceptually from the end of the eleventh through the early thirteenth century and well beyond this period, the resulting research based on this exploratory method avoids a replay of traditional partisan controversy with its harsh polemics.<sup>38</sup> Instead, it creates a holistic and inclusive interpretative standpoint that is sensitive to the remarkable array of differences and nuances that have unfolded via many schools of thought that were developed against the background of several national and cultural historical settings.

Moreover, multilateralism helps overcome a disjuncture between the seemingly incommensurable paradigms of the historian and the philosopher. As opposed to the pronouncements of a believer who may be wedded to a particular doctrine, hermeneutic inquiry explores and evaluates the Mu Kōan even-handedly by challenging and re-evaluating older patterns of thought in light of their sociopolitical context yet without discounting the role of personal experience or metaphysical reflections in shaping the case discourse. This approach highlights the variation and variability, multiplicity and plurality, and

particularity and peculiarity, rather than unanimity and monotony with polarity and rigidity, regarding the origins and unfolding of the Mu Kōan tradition.

Alternative discourses, including ambivalent and noncommittal as well as expansive or assertive tones in addition to different sorts of negative responses to the case's core question, all of which reflect a broad range of interpretative perspectives and literary styles of exegetical commentary, are no longer suppressed or dismissed. Competing viewpoints are enabled to coexist in their respective settings so that each is examined through critical comparative studies. Manifold historical contexts and rhetorical voices, at once intersecting and conflicting while also demonstrating continuities and discontinuities, stand in proximity but without cutting off constructive debate in light of the legacy of discord and disputation.

In sum, kōan literature is a fluid and flexible set of discourses that demands a methodology suitable to understanding its diverse sources and resources. To return briefly to the Shakespearean analogy as applied to the case of Zhaozhou's dog, it seems preferable to leave suggestive and supple the possibilities for reading, translating, interpreting, and performing the central passage in the Hamlet soliloquy by recognizing discordant layers of interpretation instead of insisting on conventional appropriations of one technique set in contrast to others in a way that reproduces incommensurable paradigms.

An innovative methodological outlook provides an investigation of how Zen discourse varies greatly and in unexpected ways, across diverse social, historical, and theoretical boundaries, thus enabling a recapturing and reconstructive reflection on the textual basis and doctrinal import of various versions of the Mu Kōan. By acknowledging that the case is a moving target in that there remain numerous thought-provoking issues and diverging discourses regarding shifting views of the record's provenance and sense of authority seen in light of disparate ways it has been appropriated, a multilateral analysis encompasses the following hermeneutic components:

- (1) The multifaceted role of Chan textual semantics, such as multiple terminologies used to refer to varying sorts of dialogues and different styles of commentary
- (2) Interactive regional variations that affect intellectual exchanges and cross-fertilization among those areas within China where Chan exerted a strong presence
- (3) Diverse cultural manifestations, including literary and folklore elements based on associations of priests with literati and other Buddhist and non-Buddhist influences
- (4) Transnational sectarian factions affecting the spread of the kōan tradition to Korea and Japan, where it was extended and modified in ways that impact our view of China

- (5) Sequential historical epochs and substages that reflect developments in Northern and Southern Song societies, as well as key transitions subsequent to these periods.

#### MULTISEMANTIC ANALYSIS: APPROPRIATING CRITICAL WORDS

One of the main components of multilateralism involves understanding and interpreting appropriately the complexity of Chan semantics that, in Song sources, is characterized much more by the variety of usages of critical terms than by any kind of systematic approach. “Kōan/gongan” is not a fixed verbal unit or precise terminology in that multiple words are used to depict various aspects of the function and meaning of what is today considered to be case records. A modern scholar counts over twenty terms used in different texts in context, sometimes interchangeably yet at other times in some degree of contrast, with the sense of “kōan.”<sup>39</sup> The full number of such examples may well be far greater than this.

Furthermore, relations among a variety of terms that can refer to a kōan record or to one of the styles for commenting on a case is complicated and evolving. Since there was little sense of the codification of terminology in the formative period of the tradition, custom or habit of usage tended to prevail, but this may lead to confusing results in interpreting the meaning of concepts when they are appropriated or analyzed from academic and nonacademic (practitioner) perspectives. Before jumping to a conclusion concerning the significance of an expression just from spotting its usage in a passage, there needs to be a thorough investigation of Chan writings and their relation to other sources from various historical periods. Nuances of meaning and implication need to be recognized, teased out, and accounted for or else important distinctions will get blurred or divergent ideas conflated. This part of the hermeneutic project is crucial for analyzing Watō Versus Kattō in relation to their respective rhetorical and commentarial styles.

The following lists, which cite some of the many examples and, thus, represent a partial classification of all the possible entries, include terms used in first-level texts (the early phase of compiling kōan cases in the Northern Song) and second-level works (commentaries in prose and poetry created in the Southern Song and subsequent periods). First-level expressions for kōan-related discourse culled from early transmission records include:

- 古則 (Ch. *guze*, Jp. *kosoku*), old or paradigmatic cases, or precedents
- 勘辨 (Ch. *kanbian*, Jp. *kanben*), records of spiritual contests, or the testing of rivals

- 行錄 (Ch. *xinglu*, Jp. *gyōroku*), accounts of pilgrimages, travels, and exchanges
- 機 (Ch. *ji*, Jp. *ki*), activity, as used in compounds like encounter dialogue (機緣問答)
- 話 (Ch. *hua*, Jp. *wa*), stories of dialogues in a generic rather than technical sense<sup>40</sup>
- 一轉語 (Ch. *yizhuanyu*, Jp. *ittengo*), pithy words that trigger spiritual transformation

Second-level expressions include specific kinds of interpretations or appropriations:

- 舉古 (Ch. *jugu*, Jp. *kyoko*), bringing up a precedent case to discuss with disciples
- 舉前話 (Ch. *juqianhua*, Jp. *kyozenwa*), picking a prior exchange for discussion
- 拈古 (Ch. *niangu*, Jp. *nenko*), explaining an old case through prose remarks
- 頌古 (Ch. *songgu*, Jp. *juko*), regularized styles of verse comments on an old case
- 代語 (Ch. *daiyu*, Jp. *daigo*), a master substituting his own answer for a case's reply
- 著語 (Ch. *zhuoyu*, Jp. *jakugo*), capping phrases often derived from replacement words
- 話頭 (Ch. *huatou*, Jp. *watō*), the specialized compound for extricated key-phrases
- 葛藤 (Ch. *geteng*, Jp. *kattō*), entangling vines suggesting the complications of cases

Additional examples include refined styles of commentary often borrowed from literary methods or musical criticism, since verse comments used in Chan are derivative of songs and odes that were originally performed and incorporated into Buddhist and non-Buddhist writings:

- 評唱 (Ch. *pingchang*, Jp. *hyōshō*), atomized interlinear comments on verse remarks
- 擊節 (Ch. *jijie*, Jp. *gekisetsu*), lit. “keeping the beat” in remarking on prose writings
- 上堂 (Ch. *shangtang*, Jp. *jōdō*), formal sermons by the abbot in the Dharma Hall
- 小參 (Ch. *xiaocan*, Jp. *shōsan*), informal sermons given on an impromptu basis
- 入室 (Ch. *rushi*, Jp. *nyūshitsu*), discourses with monks invited to the abbot's quarters

We can also consider third-level terminology referring to the training process that may have been initiated in the Northern Song but probably was standardized centuries later in Japan:

- 参 (Ch. *can*, Jp. *san*), generic term for practice including kōan training and meditation
- 独参 (Ch. *ducan*, Jp. *dokusan*), interviews with the master to demonstrate insight
- 拶所 (Ch. *zansuo*, Jp. *sassho*), peripheral queries to check a disciple's understanding

Therefore, the definition of what constitutes a kōan cannot be boxed into any one category or set of expressions. An understanding of history and function needs to delineate (1) the discrete literary unit of cases, which are interpreted in relation to (2) various dialogues forming their core, as well as (3) hagiographical anecdotes regarding a master's life and teachings. The analysis also takes into account as a dependent but separable genre the second level of exegesis expressed through (4) diverse styles of prose and poetic commentaries that embellish the meaning with rhetorical flourish, which results in (5) ritual practices for inspiring and verifying the level of a follower's spiritual attainment. These kinds of discursive devices and training methods must be continually adjusted to the multifarious circumstances of each of the main schools' sub-branch or sublineage approaches to authentic Zen praxis.

To cite another set of expressions reflecting a variety of meanings, there are several terms related to capping phrases in kōan literature, including *zhuoyu* (Jp. *jakugo*), still the most common term for this type of phrase; *xiayu* (Jp. *agyō*), or “to give a replacement word”; *yizhuanyu* (Jp. *ittengo*), or “one turning word”; and *bieyu* (Jp. *betsugo*), or “a response to a kōan that differs from an answer already given by someone else.” The term *daiyu* (Jp. *daigo*), which was being used in transmission texts from the middle of the tenth century, assumed a more technical meaning as “an answer given on behalf of another person” (i.e., when a monk in a recorded dialogue cannot answer the master's question).<sup>41</sup>

In Japanese Zen, several additional terms became current, such as *sego*, referring specifically to phrases that originated in Japan. These include *heigo*, or “ordinary Japanese expressions taken from daily life rather than published anthologies”; *zengo*, or “a phrase that presents only one aspect of a kōan”; *hongo*, or “a phrase that caps a kōan in a final or comprehensive manner”; *omote no go*, or “surface words” used to “comment from a conventional standpoint”; *sura no go*, or “inner words” that were used to “comment from an absolute standpoint”; and *sōgo*, or “combined words,” which are supposed “to express the integration of the ultimate and the conventional.”

The flip side of semantic complexity, whereby multiple words can have a single reference but with varying nuances and implications, is that a particular term can be used in different ways so that, once again, there should be no quick assumptions made in regard to a fixed meaning. For example, the “hua” (words) that is part of “huatou” or “kanhua,” such that the latter two terms are more or less synonymous or used interchangeably, suggests in Dahui’s standpoint a particular phrase that is extracted from a dialogue to become the topic for meditation, but that is by no means always the case. If “hua” appears independently or even when it is used with the suffix “tou” (lit. “head”), it can also have a broader or more generic meaning that refers to the whole story or dialogue or, perhaps, a kōan case, but not necessarily the kind of abbreviated version that is favored by the Watō method. A failure to recognize the diversity of textual usages may lead to mistranslations and misrepresentations of different aspects of the kōan tradition, especially in suggesting the now largely discredited idea that the key-phrase, as such, was supported by precursors of Dahui, such as Wuzu or Yuanwu, who may have occasionally used the expression but did not actually intend it to be understood according to the highly specialized usage that was subsequently developed.

#### MULTIREGIONAL ANALYSIS: FIVE DIRECTIONS

One of the main factors in forming a holistic view of classical Zen discourse related to the Mu Kōan is to take into account the full extent of the regions of China that have played an important role in supporting the development of kōan records and various styles of interpretation. The conventional bilateral view can be characterized as “From Hongzhou to Hangzhou.” This reflects a historical and geographical transition from the arising of the Hongzhou school located in Jiangxi province south of the Yangzi River that was developed in the eighth and ninth centuries by Mazu and his lineage, including Baizhang, Huangbo, and Linji, as well as Zhaozhou, to the dominance of the city of Hangzhou. As the Southern Song capital located in Zhejiang province to the east, Hangzhou housed the Five Mountains temples where Dahui along with Hongzhi, Rujing, and Wumen all served as abbots. Dōgen visited these sites during the same decade that the *Record of Serenity* and *Gateless Gate* were being composed, along with the creation of Hyesim’s Korean kōan collection, thus highlighting the transnational dimension of Zen in the early thirteenth century.

According to the view emphasizing southern and eastern sectors of the country, the Northern school had already died out with the advent of the sixth patriarch, and in a dramatic reversal of cultural stereotype, the Southern school had become dominant. The supposedly stark contrast between illumined northerners and barbaric southerners that draws on age-old biases is evoked yet reversed in an anecdote involving Huineng that evokes the southernmost area of China,

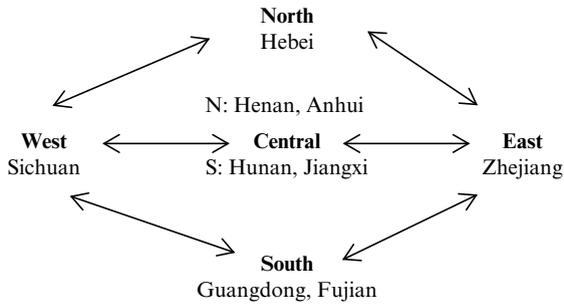


FIGURE 3.1 *Regional Interactions Affecting Chan Discourse.*

known as “Men from Lingnan have no Buddha-nature.” This case is discussed extensively by Dōgen in the “Buddha-nature” fascicle as affirming the status of southerners in that “no” (wu/mu) is not merely negative but paradoxically indicates the positivity of universal spirituality.<sup>42</sup>

While the relation between northern and southern regions was being developed in connection to the east, provinces in the west where esoteric Buddhist influence from Tibet was strongly felt were not considered particularly relevant for understanding the spread of Chan. However, the bilateral approach of looking first at the north versus south rivalry in early Tang, and then at south-to-east transitions during the Northern Song, overlooks several key aspects that call for a rethinking of Chan regionalism vis-à-vis centralization. These elements must be seen to encompass in diverse ways, as free of stereotype as possible, complex exchanges and constructive interactions, as well as competitive factionalism that took place among various Chan streams. These relations affected the formation of the kōan tradition transpiring in at least five directions of China, including northern, central, and western in addition to southern and eastern zones (or six directions, if we consider north-central and south-central as distinguishable), as in Figure 3.1. The diagram demonstrates that Chan ideologies and styles of commentary have been generated in different areas in China reflecting approaches in regions located at both the center and the peripheries of the geopolitical system.

Any emphasis given to a particular place largely depends on whether Chan functioned more as an insurgent movement during the Tang dynasty, when it was concentrated below the Yangzi River (or in the Jiangnan area); as a splintered set of factions in the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms (907–960) period, during which the power of local commissioners over religious movements was increasing with decentralization; as an established sect in the Northern Song dynasty facing the renewed grip/support of imperial authority; or as a more tenuous, marginalized cult during the Southern Song, when intellectuals and sociopolitical outliers were frequently banished as far from the capital as possible.

A prominent example of multiregionalism is that Linji and Zhaozhou, two of the main masters associated with the views of the Tang-dynasty Southern school regarding the function of encounter dialogues as an irreverent and illogical means for realizing sudden enlightenment, spent their periods of abbacy in temples located north of the Yellow River in the vicinity of what is now the city of Shijiazhuang near Beijing in Hebei province. The irony is that a couple of the most famous representatives of the Southern school based in central Jiangxi province (so that, from a geographical standpoint, the designation of “south” may be more applicable to the Yunmen stream in Guangdong province) were located elsewhere, although both trained with the Hongzhou (i.e., southern) school masters, Huangbo and Nanquan, respectively.

As Albert Welter shows, the decentralized aspect of Chan during the Five Dynasties era took on different faces in the Wuyue (Zhejiang), Min (Fujian), and Nan (Guangdong) regions that were further subdivided into local districts. This is crucial for understanding the reincorporation and unification of all political and cultural manifestations by the central authorities under the banner of the Northern Song.<sup>43</sup> At that time, Zhejiang province began to gain prominence for supporting the most prestigious temples in the Chan and Tiantai (the latter as a legacy of Tang dynasty) schools of Buddhism. Central Anhui province, which is where Dahui was born, was also the temporary residence of such diverse figures crucial for Mu Kōan discourse as Yuanwu and Wansong, who dwelled a century apart in the Yellow Mountains (Huangshan) range.

Some of the leaders most closely associated with the supposedly eastern-based Chan literati culture during the Northern Song dynasty were from the western area of Sichuan province, where there was a remarkably high level of literary productivity. Sichuan was the home of eminent poets Zhang Yue (who was posted there) in the Tang and Su Shi in the Northern Song, as well as the site of the 983 publication of the so-called Chengdu *Tripitaka*, the first printed collection of Buddhist canonical texts. Three of the earliest Chan schools examined by Zongmi were associated with Sichuan, including the all-important Hongzhou lineage that reared Zhaozhou’s use of lip Zen and spread the movement to Jiangxi and beyond. As previously mentioned, Sichuan luminaries include three of the great Northern Song Chan literary masters: Xuedou, one of the first commentators on kōan cases who combined earthy colloquialisms with elegant classical verse; Wuzu, Yuanwu’s eminent mentor who contributed to lettered Chan; and Yuanwu, who bypassed his own lineage to use Xuedou’s verses as the basis for the *Blue Cliff Record*, perhaps because of a sense of regional affinity or affiliation.<sup>44</sup>

In addition, both Yuanwu and his foremost disciple Dahui spent time living in southern provinces due to banishment arising from being on the wrong side of political conflicts in a turbulent and transitional era of history. Yuanwu helped to continue the spread of the Linji school to Hunan and Jiangxi in

south central China. However, he never resided in prestigious Zhejiang, which was to become home to the capital city around the time of his retirement and return to Sichuan. Dahui was abbot of several Zhejiang temples, including Mount Tiantong, where his Caodong school rival Hongzhi had presided for many years, and Mount Jing, where he twice served as leader at the behest of imperial authorities. The network of Southern Song Five Mountains temples enjoying significant imperial patronage and productive interactions with literati was located in the vicinity of Hangzhou and nearby sites where many former Tiantai monasteries had recently converted to the Chan school. Temples close to the port city of Ningbo east of Hangzhou were receiving visitors from abroad, such as Eisai and Dōgen from Japan, who reported seeing Korean and other foreign monks practicing there.

In a literary example of multiregional interactions in case 69 of the *Blue Cliff Record*, three disciples of Mazu's Hongzhou school, including Nanquan along with Guizong and Magu, travel to the Tang capital in Chang'an to meet the National Teacher Zhong. Also known as Nanyang Huizhong (Jp. Nan'yō Echū), Zhong was a Vinaya master who had practiced Chan meditation for forty years and became the advisor to emperors in addition to having met Huineng. In the narrative, the pilgrims are nervous about their chances of seeing and being approved by Zhong. According to the opening section of Yuanwu's prose remarks:

There was a time when Mazu's teaching was flourishing in Jiangxi province, Shitou's way of practice was current in Hunan province, and National Teacher Zhong's way was influential in Chang'an. The latter had personally met the sixth ancestor [Huineng]. At that time, of those in the south who raised their heads and wore horns, there was nobody who did not want to visit his temple and enter into his room. Otherwise, they would feel ashamed. These three travelers wanted to pay respects to National Teacher Zhong, but in the middle of the route they enacted a scenario of defeat.<sup>45</sup>

當時馬祖盛化於江西。石頭道行於湖湘。忠國師道化於長安。他親見六祖來。是時南方擎頭帶角者。無有不欲升其堂入其室。若不爾。為人所恥。這老漢三箇。欲去禮拜忠國師。至中路。做這一場敗缺。

Although the National Teacher's influence based in the capital seemed to go beyond the realm of his locale due to his various prestigious associations, the travelers are bound by their localized affiliation with a particular stream of the Hongzhou lineage that gave rise to the Linji school as opposed to Shitou's stream that fostered the Caodong school. The brief narrative is enhanced by realizing that Zhong was known for his rejection of Mazu's lineage, as well as several other streams. He considered Hongzhou factionalism a vehicle for fracturing the unity of Chan by resulting in antinomian tendencies, thus resembling Zongmi's critique of Mazu for destroying sutras and concentrating

training efforts on a belief in “Mind is Buddha,” while brashly overlooking the needs of all sentient beings.

A passage from case 12 in the *Blue Cliff Record*, which is also found in case 15 in the *Gateless Gate*, further highlights the need for a Chan monk to seek universal truth by going beyond connections with particular places or locative spaces for study and practice. Yuanwu discusses an exchange in which Yunmen asks Dongshan Shoushu where he had spent the summer retreat, and when the disciple answers by mentioning a certain temple in Hunan province that he attended for a specified set of dates, the master scolds him by threatening thirty blows (or sixty, in some versions) and instructing him to enter the meditation hall. Later, Dongshan inquires about the basis of his deficiency and Yunmen replies, “You rice bag! From Jiangxi to Hunan, and still you carry on this way!”<sup>46</sup> On hearing this reprimand, Dongshan is enlightened and promises to build a hut in the remote mountains. That site would constitute a utopian (literally, “no, or without, place,” or *u-topos* in Greek) realm that is seemingly far removed from any sense of being fixed at a particular site in that it could exist anywhere and at any time, but happens to be located somewhere.

To sum up some of the main examples of research questions reflecting different aspects of regionalism that are pertinent to understanding the Mu Kōan: How were styles of interpretation and practice affected by Zhaozhou’s abbacy in northern Hebei province, despite the fact that his teaching represented a hallmark of the so-called Tang Southern school? What impact did Yuanwu’s origins in western Sichuan province and abbacy in Hunan province, while he did not serve a phase in Zhejiang, have on his contribution to the role of literary Chan? Moreover, did Dahui’s period of exile to southeastern Fujian province in addition to his abbacy in Zhejiang province and Hongzhi’s long-standing sojourn near the capital in Hangzhou help to determine the formation of their respective discourses? Or, is there an essential transregional Chan teaching that surpasses local manifestations and forms of expression?

#### MULTICULTURAL ANALYSIS: LITERARY INFLUENCES

It follows from looking at examples of division and discord, as well as cross-over and overlapping connections as an outgrowth of interactions among five or more regions, rather than just two at a time seen in a conflictive bilateral model, that Buddhism’s close relations with the literati class was crucial for the success of Chan. The origins and implications of the Mu Kōan are inseparably linked with how the utility of cases functioning within Zen monasticism was connected to the overall cultural context that promoted literary interpretations, especially involving the role of scholar-officials and other lay or irregular followers in China and, to a lesser extent, in Japan and Korea.

Beginning in the eleventh century, the aesthetic ideals and forms of creative production of the growing class of literati were infused into kōan commentaries

through the styles of regulated but abbreviated four-line verse (*jueju*) requiring tonal and rhyming patterns in addition to other rhetorical rules governing form and content. Also, stylized prose remarks (*pingchang*) on previous verse comments were used in the *Blue Cliff Record* (Yuanwu's remarks on Xuedou) and the *Record of Serenity* (Wansong's remarks on Hongzhi). Dahui deliberately designed the key-phrase method as a direct reaction against the aesthetic approach since literary flourish was looked upon in the new sociopolitical environment of the Southern Song as an idle occupation, even though lettered Chan would still be maintained among both Linji and Caodong lineages for many years. At the same time, it is clear that proponents of literature disregarded the Ur Version either by not commenting on the Mu Kōan at all, as with Yuanwu, or by focusing their commentary on the Dual Version, as with Hongzhi.

In addition to the remarkable influence of highbrow poetics despite the fact that many secular writers did not fully appreciate Chan verse from a literary perspective, there was also considerable impact received from another important aspect of Song Chinese culture that can be referred to as middlebrow literature. This source material encompasses some forms of poetry in addition to other kinds of sayings and anecdotes related to folklore and legends regarding human interactions with dogs and cats, as well as water buffalo, vines, trees, and other kinds of sentient beings that play a role in Zhaozhou's discourse. Such beings, perhaps ironically so, can be considered to possess Buddha-nature in that they truly know, or perhaps have transcended caring about, reality by exhibiting qualities of self-sacrificing compassion or roguish attitudes indifferent to conventional behavioral standards.

Furthermore, the case concerning a dog's spiritual quality is grounded in an admiration for what canines contributed to temple life by guarding and protecting the temple. Cats and dogs were both prized by Chan monastics for their loyalty and efficiency in chasing noxious pests, such as rats or other rodents who might otherwise eat stockpiles of rice, or by scaring off intruders who threatened to attack or steal from the monastery grounds. An understanding of the Cat Kōan must take into account that Chinese secular poetry of the Song period "seems to abound in eulogies to cats," which in turn influenced later generations of Japanese Five Mountains (Gozan) poets who traveled to the mainland or were in direct contact with Chinese visitors.<sup>47</sup> Monks often got affectionate about their companionship and praised an affectionate kitty.<sup>48</sup>

It was sometimes said in Chan that the sound of a cat purring or a dog barking, like that of a donkey braying or other mundane natural sounds like a pebble striking a stick, could help spark the enlightenment experience for someone who needs one more seemingly trivial stimulus, like putting just a drop into a cup full of liquid so that it spills over. Yet, Chan records, while appreciative of the positive qualities and occasionally allowing for the wise and loving canine, do not reflect a simplistic praising of animals, which also exhibit the seemingly

inferior behavior of growling and prowling unproductively or not knowing how to control and discipline their actions. Dōgen was once instructed by mentor Rujing that “Abbots and others at many temples nowadays keep cats, but this is truly not permissible and is the conduct of the unenlightened.”<sup>49</sup>

An example of a tongue-in-cheek expression regarding the feline involves Juefan’s enlightenment, which occurred when he was asked to comment on a verse by Fengzue: “Five white cats, claws large and sharp,/ Raised in the monastery to exterminate vermin./ Clearly, in the method of seeking safety by climbing a tree to hide./ You must avoid leaving behind a testamentary promise to one’s sister’s sons (i.e., nephews who do not have the same surname and thus are outside one’s lineage).”<sup>50</sup>

In an example of canine-based sarcasm, *Wumenguan* case 6 says, “[Buddha] makes what is pleasing into something distasteful, and hangs up the head of a sheep but sells the meat of a dog”<sup>51</sup> 壓良爲賤縣羊頭賣狗肉. Note the irony that dog meat is sometimes euphemistically called “fragrant meat” (香肉 *xiangrou*) or “mutton of the earth” (地羊 *diyāng*), although there may also be instances in which it is highly valued. Also, bewildered monks are compared to dogs seen as scavengers chasing after clods rather than real prey or bricks tossed randomly, while foolish or demonic clerics are supposed to be thrown to the dogs or hunted down in the way a dog bites into a pig. The story of Dahui’s enlightenment experienced under the watchful eye of Yuanwu features a comment on a dog that cannot help but try to lick hot oil while knowing better.

An additional instance dealing critically with the role of dogs appears in a remark by Wansong on Hongzhi’s verse comment on the Dual Version of the Mu Kōan in the *Record of Serenity*, which indicates, “Noisily, they get caught up in disputes.” According to the capping phrase on this line that uses onomatopoeia for the sound growling dogs make, “Fighting over and gnawing at rotting bones—crunch! snap! howl! roar!”<sup>52</sup> In item 209 in his *Record*, Zhaozhou compares disciples who remain attached to selfhood, rather than attaining freedom from this delusion, to the sorry behavior of “a mad dog that is always trying to get more and more to eat”<sup>53</sup> 似獵狗相似。專欲得物喫。

In a sardonic commentary on a dog’s behavior involving a kōan associated in part with Zhaozhou that appears as case 96 in the *Blue Cliff Record*, Yuanwu explains the significance of a line in Xuedou’s verse, “A gold Buddha does not pass through a furnace;/ Someone comes calling on Zihu.”<sup>54</sup> Yuanwu tells the story that master Zihu used to set up a sign on his outside gate saying, “Zihu has a dog: above, he takes off people’s heads; in the middle, he takes off people loins; below, he takes off people’s legs. If you stop to talk to him, you’ll lose your body and life.” Whenever a visitor approached, Zihu would immediately shout, “Watch out for the dog!” and as soon as the monk turned his head, he would immediately return to the abbot’s room. “But tell me,” Yuanwu asks rhetorically, “why could he not bite Zhaozhou?”

Furthermore, a common Chan saying reads, “Zihu’s ferocious dog no longer has teeth”<sup>55</sup> 紫胡獐狗已無齒. This recalls the biblical account in I Kings 21, which indicates that, like Jezebel, King Ahab’s blood would be licked by dogs while other evildoers would have their bodies eaten by them.<sup>56</sup> In that vein, Yunmen said of a wayward monk, “If I had seen what he did at that time, I would have killed him with a single blow and handed him to the dogs to eat”<sup>57</sup> 我當時若見，一棒打殺，與狗子喫却。

Dogs are criticized from yet another angle in the following Chan dialogue in which a priest named Huitang, who has just recuperated from a minor illness, speaks with a distinguished government official named Xia Yi Gongli, who inquires about the Buddhist path:

When Xia Yi arrived, he said to Huitang, “When a person meets the myriad things, are his feelings or lack of feelings the same, essentially?” At that time there was a dog asleep under a fragrant wood table, so Huitang took a length of rod and beat the dog, and also beat the fragrant wood table saying, “This dog has feelings that are coming out, yet the fragrant wood table inherently is without feelings, so as for feelings or non-feelings, how can you make them come from the same essence?” Xia was unable to respond.<sup>58</sup>

According to this passage, the worthless dog is struck without a second thought given to the matter, yet in a comment that is sardonic considering the brutal circumstances, the animal is said to have more feelings than other kinds of beings and is, thus, valuable and noteworthy. In any event, when it comes to Buddhature, Wuzu suggests that a dog “has a hundred thousand times more than a cat!”<sup>59</sup> 也勝貓兒十萬倍。

#### MULTIFUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS: RESOUNDING IDEOLOGICAL VOICES

Multifunctionalism refers to the fact that, from around 1000 to 1300, fractious ideologies based on sectarian and/or national identities were frequently advocated adamantly or perhaps modified modestly, or even changed drastically, due to shifting allegiances of individuals and groups traversing and transferring between conceptual divisions and geographical borders. Rather than viewing this activity in terms of the conventional bilateral emphasis on Linji’s kōan-investigation versus Caodong’s silent-illumination, multilateralism stays alive to the interplay between diverse lineal elements within Chan, as well as influential modes of theory and practice absorbed from outside the religious movement. Examples of crossing boundaries among Chan branches include Yuanwu borrowing from Xuedou of the Yunmen stream while archrivals Dahui and Hongzhi, who may have had radically differing views of the Mu

Kōan, remained cordial and shared monastic resources in the Hangzhou area's Five Mountains temple network.

Chan discourse never developed in isolation but was interactive with the theories of the Tiantai school concerning the relation between sentient as well as insentient beings and Buddha-nature reinforced by indigenous folklore and shamanistic beliefs in animism. Rivalry with Pure Land *nianfo* practice, which resembled the key-phrase technique as a tool for polishing mental concentration, was also a major factor affecting Chan development from the Song through the Ming dynasties to the current era. Furthermore, early Chinese texts, such as the Confucian *Analects* (*Lunyu*) and Daoist works promoting “quiet talks” (*qingdan*), helped define the style of encounter dialogues, while the thriving Southern Song Neo-Confucian tradition challenged Chan's approach to fostering the self-fulfillment of literati through understanding ultimate reality in connection with the phenomenal world. All of these competing yet complementary standpoints, which borrowed from and critiqued one another in regard to the role of language and rhetoric relative to spiritual realization, greatly affected the contours of Mu Kōan debates.

Another important aspect of the intellectual world of Chan/Seon/Zen was the interaction of Chinese sources with Korean and Japanese commentators, who appropriated and creatively translated/interpreted voluminous texts imported from the mainland. For example, the *Patriarch's Hall Collection*, which was lost for centuries and reconstructed in Chinese in the twentieth century based on a rediscovered Korean edition, remains crucial as the main document available for understanding the mid-tenth-century Chinese Chan monastic institution. Transnational trends were much more than a one-way movement from China outward since non-Chinese leaders of schools formed in Korea and Japan were not just passive observers or recipients of transmission. Innovative thinkers such as Jinul, Dōgen, and Daitō actively provided outlooks that have contributed to the shaping of long-term discussions, as well as areas of discord concerning how to interpret the Mu Kōan and other cases.

Interpretations of the key-phrase method by Jinul and followers resound through centuries of commentaries in both Korea and China. Dōgen's accounts of his travels to the mainland at the outset of his career in *Hōkyōki* and related works, such as the “Transmission Documents” (“Shisho”) and “Face-to-Face Transmission” (“Menju”) fascicles of the *Treasury of the True Dharma-Eye*, in addition to his extensive appropriations of kōan commentaries through introducing vernacular Japanese rhetorical techniques, are crucial for understanding the Southern Song Chan network of temples and its literary formulations. Furthermore, Daitō's capping phrase commentary kept afloat an appreciation for the *Blue Cliff Record* in medieval Japan.

In fact, the outsiders' outlooks are sometimes so influential that a problematic hermeneutic tendency emerges when their views or those endorsed by disciples are read backward into accounts of Chinese Chan history, such that

textual and ideological lines get conflated or blurred. It is, therefore, necessary from the standpoint of contemporary scholarship to try to distinguish clearly the dissemination of primary works from appropriations by secondary or tertiary exegetes.

#### MULTIEPOCHAL ANALYSIS: CASCADING IMPACT

The cumulative effect of the various components of a multilateral approach is to be able to examine the history of Zen discourse no longer seen as a consecutive series of invariably linked events and speech acts leading conclusively to a single endpoint, as in unilateralism, or to an unresolvable opposition between superior and inferior views, as in bilateralism. Instead, multilateralism reveals the cascading impact of unplanned yet conditionally interrelated stages and styles of interpretation that reverberate through one another over the course of time, as current views at any given moment in history helped to reshape how legacies were appropriated from the past and molded for the future. The main contribution of the historical hermeneutic process is to highlight disjunctions and incongruities in Mu Kōan discourse that transpired between Northern and Southern Song sources and to apply this analysis to later periods across the boundaries of countries and divisions of cultural milieu affecting sectarian institutions and corresponding modes of thought.

Northern Song compilers of transmission narratives promoted the imperially authorized view of Chan as the quintessential teaching in harmony with Buddhist scriptures yet unthreatening to Neo-Confucian orthodoxy and conducive to the spiritual attainments, as well as secular aspirations of unaffiliated (or cross-aligned) literati. Supposedly free of reliance on text and doctrine, Chan claimed to promote spontaneity and ingenuity, especially through poetic expressions that appealed to scholar-officials.

Transition to the Southern Song, as much a cultural as a political phenomenon, contributed to curtailing the flourishing of literary embellishment in Chan writings that stemmed in part from an east-west (Sichuan-Zhejiang) axis of intellectual creativity. This shift encouraged the arising of a more straightforward and streamlined approach to kōan practice aimed at Dahui's lay followers in the south. That group was less sophisticated in the poetic arts and was increasingly focused, perhaps for the first time in Chinese history, on gaining a sense of individual spiritual attainment in their everyday lives rather than on the cultivation of aesthetic refinement as an end in itself. Yet, literary engagement was kept alive in the cloisters of Chinese Chan and Japanese Zen temples.

To pinpoint in granular fashion developmental changes including the expansion and/or contraction of literary expressions involved in Mu Kōan discourse, the following outline divides the Song dynasty into six phases of approximately half a century each:

## Northern Song

**Creating**, 960–1010, transmission records that do not include the Mu Kōan  
**Securing**, 1010–1060, early stage of commentaries, also without the Mu case  
**Expanding**, 1060–1127, commentaries perhaps cite Dual and Ur versions

## Southern Song

**Reacting**, 1127–1180, the new key-phrase method elevates the status of the Ur Version

**Repeating**, 1180–1230, comments in *Gateless Gate* (Ur) and *Record of Serenity* (Dual)

**Transmitting**, 1230–1279, transmission to Korea (Ur) and Japan (both Ur and Dual)

The list of stages highlights the extent to which the Mu Kōan expressed in various renditions was a product not of the Northern Song, when Chan prospered with official support by adopting an inclusive standpoint characterized by an absence of sectarianism, but of the Southern Song, when Chan had become an institution fragmented by partisan polemics that adopted an attitude of exclusivity. This undermines the notion of a timeless quality or an inevitable trajectory leading directly to the hegemony of the Emphatic Mu.

Looking beyond the developments that transpired during the Song dynasty, multilateral hermeneutics highlights key features of the main historical stages connected to the formation and dissemination of the Mu Kōan from the Tang dynasty to the modern period. This tentative and partial list of cascading phases provides an overview of the longitudinal unfolding of the tradition as part of an examination of some of the main epochal shifts reflecting the diversity of perspectives and possible directions for promoting Mu Kōan discourse.

**Formative** (ninth century), the life and times of Zhaozhou's teachings that responded to queries and articulated views about the spirituality of sentient and insentient beings

**Developmental** (tenth to eleventh centuries), Northern Song Chan texts do not include references to the dog dialogue, which is later attributed to Zhaozhou

**Summative** (twelfth century), Southern Song Chan and the creation of the Ur and Dual versions of the Mu Kōan in relation to styles of commentary and meditative practice

**Transmissive** (thirteenth century), Mu Kōan discourse is transferred in varying ways to Korea and Japan and becomes firmly established in those new cultural settings

**Disseminative** (fourteenth to sixteenth centuries), further developments in all three countries related to ongoing variations of interpretations and applications of the Mu case

**Revivalist** (seventeenth to nineteenth centuries), revivals and reforms of kōan literature and practice among diverse factions in East Asia, including syncretism with Pure Land recitation

**Modernist** (twentieth to twenty-first centuries), developments reflecting the global spread of Zen, including scholarly studies contributing yet also in some ways delimiting the diversification of ideological trends regarding Mu Kōan discourse.

## Cats and Cows Know That It Is

### TEXTUAL AND HISTORICAL DECONSTRUCTION OF THE UR VERSION

#### Four Hermeneutic Angles

By relativizing the significance of the mainstream interpretation based on the Watō approach, which presumes that the case represents an emphatic view of nothingness attributed exclusively to the intentionality of master Zhaozhou, this chapter undertakes a deconstruction of the Ur Version and consequent reorientation of the significance of the Mu Kōan from four interlocking hermeneutic angles. These angles include (1) textual hermeneutics, or rethinking questions about the provenance and diversity of versions of the source dialogue, including questionable or alternative renditions of the exchange; (2) theoretical hermeneutics, by looking critically at the doctrinal background of several related kōan records dealing with the universality of Buddha-nature seen in relation to sentient beings; (3) intellectual historical hermeneutics, through examining issues in the spiritual biography of Zhaozhou, especially in terms of his ironic views regarding the doctrinal content of the *Nirvana Sutra*, as well as a generally noncommittal style of responding to Zen encounters; and (4) linguistic hermeneutics, or assessing the syntax and grammar of the Ur Version's rhetorical structure in light of different renderings in modern Chinese and Japanese in addition to English that are often misleading.

The textual hermeneutic approach provides a critically edited listing of as many variant and associated versions of the Mu Kōan as possible to demonstrate the multiplicity of renditions that can lead to unconventional readings and forms of practice. This section covers over a dozen examples that are separated into several subdivisions, including negative in addition to positive replies and examples of alternative responses that represent important variations. To prepare for writing this part of the chapter, I examined a comprehensive listing that includes a total of approximately four hundred citations or comments on the Mu Kōan. This section contains a couple of prominent cases of dubious or replacement versions of the case that are sometimes evoked in traditional sources or by contemporary scholars to try to give legitimacy to the key-phrase

method as having originated prior to the advent of Dahui's Watō approach. An analysis of these passages contributes to the argument that the Ur Version was very likely an invention of Dahui, or at least it cannot convincingly be demonstrated to have been used before his technique was started and began to spread widely.

The section on theoretical hermeneutics critically surveys the role that Chan thinkers played in Chinese Mahayana Buddhist doctrinal debates concerning sentient and insentient beings in relation to the all-pervasiveness of Buddha-nature. This helps to create a conceptual context for providing a list of dialogues on topics that explore more or less the same theoretical territory as the Mu Kōan. These examples include a conversation regarding a dog attributed to Weikuan that is followed by Zhaozhou's repartee concerning a cypress tree, in addition to Changsha's discussion of a divided earthworm plus Nanquan's remarks on the possible knowledge of cats and cows and Shoushan's response to a query on the ability of living beings to be aware of Buddha-nature. When added together, what do these expressions indicate about Zen discourse in terms of the questions of the awareness (or lack) of ultimate reality by sentient beings, and to what extent do the various dialogues confirm, refute, or divert attention from the conventional view of the Mu Kōan as the primary example of the key-phrase method?

The third hermeneutic angle for deconstructing the Ur Version takes a close look at the life and teachings of Zhaozhou by analyzing additional examples of dialogues included in his recorded sayings or other texts attributed to the Tang master. This is carried out to evaluate how important the Mu Kōan, which appears in his *Record* in deviance from the Ur Version, may or may not be for understanding Zhaozhou's overall outlook regarding Zen theory and practice. What are the master's own views, to the extent that this can be determined, especially considering his famous studied ambivalence, in regard to the doctrine of the Buddha-nature of living beings as expressed in the *Nirvana Sutra* and promulgated by other schools of Tang Chinese Buddhism, particularly the Northern Chan school? How are we to assess his general style of responding to inquiries in a prototypical Zen fashion that is open-ended through using paradoxical or tautological replies while avoiding ideological commitments or assertions, as well as negations that might seem partial or one-sided?<sup>1</sup>

After revealing the multiplicity of sources and perspectives for understanding the early history and development of Mu Kōan discourse, the fourth hermeneutic element focuses on a linguistic analysis of some of the problematic issues of translation and interpretation involved with the Ur Version. This is analyzed in light of contemporary embellishments in both modern Asian and Western studies that may affect the way the case is rendered into English and understood by readers who do not have access or knowledge of the original sources. Even when limited to a focus on the most succinct version of the dialogue, it seems that many translations tend to smuggle a particular presupposition or bias about

what the case is supposed to infer. For example, a modern Chinese version suggests that Zhaozhou's response was uttered "without reflection or hesitation," which may capture the condition of the dialogue but expresses a dynamic that is not indicated in the source passage and should probably be accompanied by a disclaimer stating that it represents an interpretation rather than pure translation. This example shows that the basic meaning of the oft-cited truncated rendition is not as a clear-cut "unapologetic denial,"<sup>2</sup> to cite one scholar's expression, in that the Ur Version's dialogue can be apprehended in variable ways.

The impact of these four aspects of deconstruction demonstrates that the notion of the key-phrase in the philosophy endorsed by Dahui, Jinul, Hakuin, D. T. Suzuki, and Sheng Yen, among many other classic and contemporary thinkers, is by no means an automatic or inevitable outcome of a historical trajectory building up to a specific endpoint. Even though trying to determine Zhaozhou's intentions is a matter of speculation, by looking at differing versions in light of his approach to responding in encounter dialogues, including cases referring to the spiritual awareness of sentient and insentient beings in relation to Buddha-nature, there is no compelling reason to believe that Zhaozhou wished to endorse the Watō-based view of transcendental nothingness as opposed to the multiperspectival relativism of the Dual Version and Kattō-based interpreters. Therefore, the Ur Version should not remain fixed as the sole means of interpreting the function of the Mu Kōan.

An argument opposing my hermeneutic approach suggests that any scholarly effort is, in the final analysis, irrelevant to understanding the Mu Kōan because the Ur Version's emphasis on negation lies beyond the matter of textual variance or the issue of intentionality attributed to Zhaozhou or any other commentator, for that matter.<sup>3</sup> Regardless of what the case actually says or was probably originally—understood in a chronological rather than ontological sense—meant to convey, the non-notion of Mu transcends all historical or conceptual considerations.

In response to such a possible challenge, this chapter highlights the variability of standpoints to dissuade translators and interpreters from endorsing misrepresentative impressions about the Emphatic Mu. In the spirit of Jizang's "deconstructing what is misleading and revealing what is corrective" (*poxie xianzheng*),<sup>4</sup> I hope to initiate a transition from what is considered tried and true by reawakening and critically reassessing traditional debates from a creative outlook unfettered by sectarian bias. Such a shift in perspective is able to generate a more diversified set of discourses about the case record seen in the context of complex historical and cultural settings that have contributed to forming the structure and expanding its sets of meaning. Beyond that limited goal stands the potential for an ongoing reconsideration and re-evaluation of kōan collection commentaries with wide-ranging implications for interpreting various modes of thought that are evident in the full development of the interpretative tradition.

### Textual Hermeneutics: Multiple Renditions of the Mu Kōan 無公案

This section offers a catalogue of over a dozen versions of the case, which are listed according to several categories, including those featuring negative and positive responses (note that examples of a combination of replies constituting the Dual Version will be featured in the next chapter), plus dubious renditions that supposedly appeared prior to Dahui and alternative versions in which one of the main components of the dialogue is altered or has a substitution:

- Negative Responses: (a) Ur Version, or No without dialogue; (b) No with Dialogue 1; and (c) No with Dialogue 2 (the distinction between the first and second versions of the dialogue is explained later)
- Positive Responses: (d) Via Chang'an; (e) Yes without Dialogue; and (f) Yes with Dialogue
- Dubious Precedents: (g) Spurious Huangbo Passage; and (h) Questionable Wuzu Passages
- Alternative Versions: (i) Substitution for No response; (j) Replacement for “Awareness of Karma” Response; (k) Further comments on “Awareness of Karma” Response; (l) Integration of Wu/Mu and Nianfo/Nembutsu; and (m) a couple of medieval Sōtō Zen *kirigami* (切り紙 lit. “paper strip”) kōan comments

The reader is asked to note several qualifications in considering these lists. First, the text of the Ur Version (a) has been mentioned previously but is repeated for the sake of compiling a comprehensive set of citations. The second caveat is that a few of these versions, including (c), (e), and (f), are hypothetical in that these form part of another, longer rendition that has been isolated for the purpose of highlighting what could plausibly have been used in the classic collections even if it is not found as such. The third qualification is that most of the versions appear in various texts with slight deviances in phrasing or syntax that are often not particularly significant. On the other hand, each bit of nuance of tone or shift of meaning in different versions may have an impact on our understanding of the ramifications of the case record, as will be discussed in the final section of this chapter.

#### NEGATIVE RESPONSES

This subsection covering three different renditions with negative responses highlights two main points. The first is to show that, as argued previously, the *Gateless Gate*'s one-dialogue rendition in (a) seems to represent a truncated version of the two-part dialogue that appears in both (b) and (c). However, since it is difficult to determine which of these renditions—the one-part dialogue or the two-part dialogue—would have appeared first in the twelfth century, it could

be posited that (b) and (c) are an extension of (a). In any event, it is clear that none of these versions is found in eleventh-century texts regarding the life and teachings of Zhaozhou and that Dahui and his followers, including Women, used (a) almost exclusively and probably created a misleadingly inflated impression of its priority for interpreting the Mu Kōan in terms of chronology and meaning.

The second point demonstrated by these examples is that the follow-up dialogue is variable. Dialogue 1 in (b), which insists that “all buddhas above and bugs below without exception have Buddha-nature,” is the version attributed to the recorded sayings of Zhaozhou. Dialogue 2 in (c) is nearly identical to the Weikuan dog dialogue, which first appeared in the *Jingde Record* a century and a half earlier and alludes to the passage from the *Nirvana Sutra* asserting that “all beings without exception have Buddha-nature.” The meaning does not appear to be affected very much by this variance in wording, but it is important to see that although Dialogue 2 probably appeared in the earlier kōan records, Dialogue 1 was more commonly used in various Song texts. In contrast to the exchanges that form version (b), which is included in the *Record of Zhaozhou* along with other key texts like the thirteenth-century *Five Lamps Merged Into One* and *Records of Pointing to the Moon* (Ch. Jijuelu, Jp. Shigetsumoku) of 1602, version (c) with Dialogue 2 is generally not found as a stand-alone passage, but almost always is embedded in one of the examples of the Dual Version. The versions are:

**(a) Ur Version or No without Dialogue** (*Gateless Gate* 1)

A monk asked Zhaozhou, “Does even a dog have Buddha-nature or not?,” and he said, “No.”<sup>5</sup>

僧問趙州。狗子還有佛性也無。州云無。

**(b) No with Dialogue 1** (*Record of Zhaozhou* 132)

Because Zhaozhou was asked by a monk, “Does even a dog have Buddha-nature or not?,” the master said, “No.” The monk said, “All the buddhas above and bugs below without exception have Buddha-nature, so why is it that a dog does not have it?,” and the master said, “This is because it has awareness of karma.”<sup>6</sup>

趙州因僧問。狗子還有佛性也無。師曰無。曰上至諸佛下至螻蟻。

皆有佛性。狗子為甚麼卻無。師曰。為伊有業識性在。

**(c) No with Dialogue 2** (hypothetical)

A monk asked Zhaozhou, “Does even a dog have Buddha-nature or not?,” and Zhaozhou said, “No.” The monk said, “All sentient beings without exception have Buddha-nature, so why is it that a dog does not have it?,” and Zhaozhou said, “This is because it has awareness of karma.”

僧問趙州。狗子還有佛性也無。州云無。僧云。一切眾生皆有佛性。

狗子為什麼卻無。州云。為伊有業識在。

## POSITIVE RESPONSES

The following list of three positive renditions demonstrates that according to the recorded sayings of Zhaozhou, an affirmative response to the query about a dog having Buddha-nature is just as likely and plausible a reply as the Emphatic Mu, which is overwhelmingly the center of meditative and scholarly attention. This point, which is generally either not acknowledged or is accepted but then overlooked or suppressed, has far-reaching implications for interpreting the Mu Kōan through an undermining of the hegemony of the Watō method that is reinforced by the variety of versions included here and in the next sections of this chapter.

However, there are a couple of important caveats to be taken into account in examining these passages. One is that, in contrast to what is to be found in the Dual Version, according to his recorded sayings text Zhaozhou does not literally reply “Yes” to the identical question to which he has responded “No” in version (a) earlier, in addition to (b) and (c), both of which include the follow-up exchange. Nevertheless, affirmation is clearly, albeit obliquely, implied in (d) by the saying that every home reaches to the capital of Chang’an, which was a fairly typical Tang Chan locution used to suggest the universality and open-endedness of spiritual capacity. The second stipulation is that, other than that one instance, I have seen no evidence that the positive responses, either without a follow-up dialogue as in (e) or with one in (f), function in classic Zen literature as discrete literary units, since these versions are always a part of one of the examples of the Dual Version. The versions are:

**(d) Via Chang’an** (*Record of Zhaozhou* 363)

[A monk] asked, “Does even a dog have Buddha-nature or not?,” and the master said, “The door of every house reaches to Chang’an.”<sup>7</sup>  
問。狗子還有佛性也無。師云。家家門前通長安。

**(e) Yes without dialogue** (hypothetical)

A monk asked Zhaozhou, “Does even a dog have Buddha-nature or not?,” and Zhaozhou said, “Yes.”  
僧問趙州。狗子還有佛性也無。州云有。

**(f) Yes with dialogue** (hypothetical)

A monk asked Zhaozhou, “Does even a dog have Buddha-nature or not?,” and the master said, “Yes.” The monk said, “Since it already has [Buddha-nature], why does it enter into this skin-bag?,” and the master replied, “It knows better yet willfully chooses this transgression.”  
僧問趙州。狗子還有佛性也無。師曰有。曰既有。為什麼入這皮袋裏來。師曰。知而故犯。

## DUBIOUS PRECEDENTS

One of the main issues highlighted by the variability shown in these lists of different versions of the case is the question of provenance: When did the Mu Kōan originate and which version preceded the others? Does the comparison of renditions reinforce or undermine the notion of the priority of the Ur Version? With nearly all examples of Chan dialogues attributed to Tang masters, the earliest known records are from the Northern Song transmission of the lamp texts. But this is only a small part of the story because the Mu Kōan is not cited in these works and appears differently than the Ur Version in the recorded sayings of Zhaozhou, which were published relatively late and probably only after other renditions of the case were already circulating.

The initial appearance of the Ur Version—Mu without the follow-up dialogue—was in the recorded sayings of Dahui, who cites it beginning in 1134 or shortly thereafter and, as mentioned, then goes on to include nearly forty citations in all, with nearly two thirds of these from the last five sections of the thirty-volume recorded sayings. The reason for this is that those volumes contain letters written to lay practitioners, suggesting that the key-phrase method was used primarily to target the needs of nonclerical practitioners rather than monks. The number of citations is far more than is found in any other single commentator's writings, including those of Wumen, who mentions the Mu Kōan five times. However, the dog case is not included in some of Dahui's texts, like the *Arsenal* (Ch. *Dahui wuku*, Jp. *Daie buko*), thereby reinforcing the notion of layperson focus for Watō practice.

Both classical and contemporary exponents of the key-phrase method have tried to claim early examples of references to the Ur Version that would confirm its legitimacy prior to Dahui and, therefore, beyond being an invention of Southern Song Chan. However, several supposed predecessor texts have been shown by recent scholarship to be altogether spurious, as in the first example below that is falsely attributed to Huangbo (Jp. *Ōbaku*), or highly questionable, as in a passage by Yuanwu's mentor Wuzu that is presented by Dahui apparently to justify the Emphatic Mu standpoint.

Citations of the passage from the *Record of Wanling* (Ch. *Wanlinglu*, Jp. *Enryōroku*) falsely attributed to Huangbo, an important representative of the Hongzhou school as the mentor of Linji who died forty years before Zhaozhou and nearly three hundred years prior to the development of Dahui's key-phrase method, reveal the problem that emerges when attempts at historicism are derived from apologetics and may do more to obfuscate than to clarify. If authentic, this text could support the view of a timeless truth, or at least a truth extended over a greater time frame of several centuries, but it is now clear that the passage represents a later emendation that was inserted into a Ming dynasty version of the Huangbo text to try to buttress and substantiate retrospectively otherwise questionable truth-claims about Watō.<sup>8</sup> The passage includes an

extended set of wording in regard to the unwavering diligence required to contemplate the term “Mu” that was not otherwise used before the Southern Song dynasty.

**(g) Spurious Huangbo Passage** (*Record of Wanling*)

[Huangbo instructs]: You should investigate the kōan, “A monk asked Zhaozhou, ‘Does even a dog have Buddha-nature or not?’ and Zhaozhou said, ‘No.’” The disciple then left and investigated the word No all day long. He observed this practice whether walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, while changing clothes or eating meals, or when relieving himself. He kept watch over the word No for thought after thought with unwavering diligence. Over the course of days and months, he was so deeply involved that he lost himself. Suddenly, his mind blossomed in an abrupt disclosure. He realized the expedient means of the buddhas and ancestors. No longer was the truth from the tongues of other monks hidden from him, and he could for the very first time speak out for himself in regard to Bodhidharma coming from the west, the waves arising without wind, the World Honored One [Sakyamuni] holding up a flower, and the scene of a dramatic reversal.<sup>9</sup>

若是箇丈夫漢。看箇公案。僧問趙州。狗子還有佛性也無。州云無。但去二六時中看箇無字。晝參夜參行住坐臥。著衣吃飯處。阿屎放尿處。心心相顧。猛著精彩。守箇無字。日久月深打成一片。忽然心花頓發。悟佛祖之機。便不被天下老和尚舌頭瞞。便會開大口。達摩西來。無風起浪。世尊拈花。一場敗缺。

**(h) Questionable Wuzu Passages**

To explain the various examples cited in this section, in the early twelfth century Wuzu briefly commented on the Mu Kōan, including a couple of verse remarks, such as one featuring the image of the sword that was cited in chapter 2 and another about cats and dogs in (h)a. However, it appears that Dahui tries in (h)b to trumpet the role of his mentor’s mentor as an early proponent of the key-phrase method by casting Wuzu’s remark as an antiliterary comment on Zhaozhou’s negative response with Dialogue 2, despite the inconclusive ending evoking the Dual Version in (h)c that goes against the grain of Watō-based absolutism. The verse in (h)d offers a comment on the Weikuan dialogue, cited in full later, which is similarly open-ended. Therefore, the idea that Wuzu was a proponent of the use of the Ur Version in a way that is compatible with kōan-investigation is not tenable. These are the Wuzu passages:

**(h)a.** The master ascended the hall and said: “Does even a dog have the Buddha-nature or not? Anyway, a dog has a hundred thousand times more than a cat.”<sup>10</sup> He stepped down.

上堂云。狗子還有佛性也無。也勝貓兒十萬倍。下座。

**(h)b.** According to Dahui: A monk was queried, “Wuzu said, when asked about Zhaozhou’s ‘a dog has no Buddha-nature; ‘Still it has a hundred thousand times more than a cat,’ so what of this?’” The monk said, “The wind is blowing and the grass is growing.” The master said, “Let us not talk falsely. Now what are you going to do?” The monk was speechless, and the master said, “Learning through words will knock you off course.”<sup>11</sup>

問僧。五祖道趙州狗子無佛性。也勝貓兒十萬倍。如何。僧云。風行草偃。師云。爾也不亂說。卻作麼生會。僧無語。師云。學語之流。便打出。

**(h)c.** The master [Wuzu] commented, “All of you in the assembly, how will you understand that the old monk [Zhaozhou] simply held up the word ‘No.’ If you can penetrate this one word, then nobody in the whole world will be able to challenge you. How will you all penetrate this? Have any of you penetrated and understood it? If so, come forth for all to see. I do not want you to say Yes, I do not want you to say No, I do not want you to not say Yes or to not say No. What will you say? Take care.”<sup>12</sup>

上堂舉。僧問趙州。狗子還有佛性也無。州云無。僧云。一切眾生皆有佛性。狗子為什麼卻無。州云。為伊有業識在。師云。大眾爾諸人。尋常作麼生會。老僧尋常只舉無字便休。爾若透得這一箇字。天下人不柰爾何。爾諸人作麼生透。還有透得徹底麼。有則出來道看。我也不要爾道有。也不要爾道無。也不要爾道不有不無。爾作麼生道。珍重。

**(h)d.** (Wuzu’s verse comment on the Weikuan—not the Zhaozhou—dog dialogue)

The monk asked for comments on this question,

And Jingzhao (Weikuan) gave his answers.

Loudly singing of homecoming,

A cool breeze fills everywhere in the six directions.

拈卻這僧問。去卻京兆答。浩歌歸去來。清風遍六合。

#### ALTERNATIVE VERSIONS

This subsection provides five representative examples from among many dozens of instances in which later (thirteenth century and beyond) commentators take the liberty to alter the kōan by drawing on the notion of “replacement words” that became the basis of capping phrases by substituting a current master’s variant phrasing—and possible slight change in meaning—for one of the components of the original case record, particularly for responses but also in some instances for the wording of the core queries. Making the kinds of alterations that are evident here is not considered to constitute a misreading of the

text, just as citing the source passage faithfully is not thought of as a form of plagiarism. In both kinds of examples—either displaying creativity or adhering strictly to the original—the encounter dialogue is seen as a topic to be reraised and reinterpreted open-endedly. Therefore, any instance of repetition and/or modification of phrasing may be considered to reassert, extend, and enhance or to cast doubt upon, deny, and refute the meanings that are believed to be indicated in the initial version.

The first example (i) deletes the simple negation of the Mu response and offers in its place a naturalist image that is used frequently in Chan dialogues in responding to—or, perhaps, reacting against—the main inquiry with a form of expression that Watō proponents would likely reject as a distraction. Is the implication of this cryptic lyricism somehow the same as Mu in avoiding or reorienting the significance of the question, or is it decidedly different? A variant on this new phrasing from *Collection of Zen Entanglements* is, “The Buddha’s teaching was straight (or direct), so why do the ancestors sing a crooked tune?”<sup>13</sup> The second instance (j) both modifies and gives a different answer to the follow-up inquiry (the main inquiry is not included in this brief text) about why a dog does not have the same spiritual quality that all other beings are said to possess. The third example (k) provides an additional comment to Zhaozhou’s response that the dog has awareness of karma. To cite another case featuring a similar alternative response, the posing of the question of why the dog does not have Buddha-nature is presented as, “All spirits that are active without exception have Buddha-nature. . . .”<sup>14</sup> 働含靈皆有佛性.

Moreover, the comments in (l) by a Yuan-dynasty Linji school master integrate the Mu Kōan and other cases with recitation of the Buddha’s name as a means of resolving doubt that was a major influence on the famous late Ming reformer Yunqi Zhuhong.<sup>15</sup> This position was considered but, in the end, refuted by Hakuin, who argues, “When I say that the ‘Mu’ (*wu*) and the Myōgō (*nāmadheya*, or Buddha-name, or Nembutsu) are of the same order, I must not forget to mention that there is some difference between the two as regards the time of final experience and the depth of intuition. For those Zen students of the highest capacity who wish to stop the leakage of dualistic imaginations and to remove the cataract of ignorance nothing compares to the effectiveness of the ‘Mu.’”<sup>16</sup>

The final item in this section includes two examples (m) of *kirigami* comments in the form of circular diagrams by an anonymous medieval Sōtō school master, typifying the way this genre provides illustrations that offer various alternative interpretations that do not deal in straightforward fashion with the title or content of the source dialogue but instead seek to evoke its inner meaning through indirect communication. In this instance, the reader, without understanding the background, would probably not be able to recognize that the diagrams refer to the Mu Kōan, which, along with the entire *Gateless Gate* collection, was the most popular resource for commentaries in the broader

category of *Shōmono* literature that includes several different commentarial subcategories.<sup>17</sup>

**(i) Substitution for “No” Response** (Liangfeng Dongyuan, in *Five Lamps Merged Into One* vol. 12)

A monk asked Zhaozhou, “Does even a dog have Buddha-nature or not?” The pine tree is straight, but its needles are bent.<sup>18</sup>

僧問趙州。狗子還有佛性也無。松直棘曲。

**(j) Replacement for “Awareness of Karma” Response** (*Record of Hengchuan*)

“All wiggly things without exception have Buddha-nature, so why is it that the dog does not?” A bottle gourd hangs on the wall.<sup>19</sup>

螻蟻。皆有佛性。狗子為甚麼卻無。壁上掛個胡蘆。

**(k) Comment on “Awareness of Karma” Response** (Dayu Zhi, in *Records of Ancient Worthies* vol. 25)

A monk asked Zhaozhou, “Does even a dog have Buddha-nature or not?,” and Zhaozhou said, “No.” The monk said, “All sentient beings without exception have Buddha-nature, so why does a dog not have Buddha-nature?” Zhaozhou said, “This is because it has awareness of karma.” The master said, “Answering yes or answering no are like two sides of same die. What do you have to say about that today?”<sup>20</sup>

僧問趙州。狗子還有佛性也無。州云。無。僧云。一切眾生皆有佛性。為什麼狗子無佛性。州云。他有業識性在。師云。說有說無。也好兩彩一賽。如今作麼生道。

**(l) Integration of Wu/Mu with Nianfo/Nembutsu** (Zhiche Duanyun, in *Chan School Collection on Resolving Doubts*, Ch. *Chanzong jueyiji*, Jp. *Zenshū ketsugishū*)

Whether you study the word “No” [of the Mu Kōan], or whether you study your original face, or whether you investigate reciting the name of the Buddha (*nianfo*), although the kōans are different the doubt that is being investigated is the same.<sup>21</sup>

或有參無字者。或有參本來面目者。或有參究念佛者。公案雖異疑究是同。

**(m) Two Kirigami Comments** (anonymous medieval Sōtō master)

Figure 4.1 includes two examples of illustrative remarks on the meaning of the Mu Kōan, produced by an anonymous monk, of countless *kirigami* records created in Sōtō Zen Buddhism during late medieval and early Edo periods that have been catalogued by recent research projects.<sup>22</sup>

### Theoretical Hermeneutics: Five Related Cases

The list of cases provided in this section of the chapter covers five dialogues reflecting the Southern school’s approach, which can be considered either

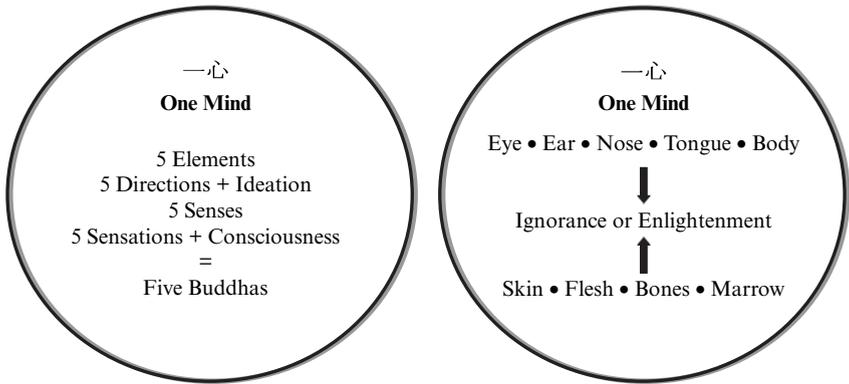


FIGURE 4.1 Two Kirigami Records.

to supplement or undermine the Mu Kōan’s view of the universality of Buddha-nature. In each of these records, the matter of the capacity of all beings to have or to know Buddha-nature is discussed or alluded to by various masters. These include dialogues involving Zhaozhou (on the cypress tree) in addition to other Tang ancestors, such as Weikuan (dog) a generation before and Changsha (earthworm), a contemporary disciple of Nanquan, plus Nanquan himself (cats and cows) along with Shoushan (beings in general) from several generations after Zhaozhou in the tenth century.

DOCTRINAL DISPUTES REGARDING SENTIENT AND  
INSENTIENT BEINGS

The Mu Kōan and these related cases can best be understood in the context of profuse doctrinal disputes among Chan and other Tang Buddhist factions. The kōan records are notable for conjuring—while clarifying or, in some cases, further mystifying—the essence of a longstanding scholastic controversy introduced in chapter 2 by positioning themselves in the considerable crossfire between opposing views of whether the *Nirvana Sutra*, especially the Northern or long edition, endorsed the notion that sentient or living and insentient or nonliving beings possess the Buddha-nature.<sup>23</sup>

During the early stage of doctrinal disputes, a belief in the universality of Buddha-nature was reinforced by de-anthropocentric or naturalistic tendencies in autochthonic folklore expressed through shamanistic beliefs in animism also embraced by some forms of Daoist ritual. These views became mixed with morality stories in the genre of *jataka* legends imported from India in which the Buddha was said in his previous lives to sometimes take on animal forms in fables that teach wayward humans an ethical lesson, along with Chinese folktales highlighting the human qualities including interactions with particular people undertaken by shape-shifting beasts and hybrid creatures or other

mythical beings. From a very different yet complementary metaphysical perspective, Zhuangzi asserted that the Dao is found in tiles and shards, ants and grass, and even piss and shit—instances of everyday reality covering examples of civilization versus nature, as well as a range from the exquisite yet poignant to the commonplace and even the scatological and absurd.

Much of this holistic outlook was integrated into Buddhist theory and practice through the notion of sympathetic resonance (*ganying*) between people and diverse manifestations of the numinous presence of nature, such as the spiritual reverberation (*qiyun*) of stones and other inanimate objects, whereby all beings were in harmony with humans while reflecting or even surpassing the level of spiritual attainment of people. Furthermore, various kinds of hermits and pilgrims emphasized that mountains and deep forests represented the valorization of the natural world as the site of reclusion that is conducive or even necessary for attaining the contemplative awareness needed to attain a wholly pure soteriological experience.

Whereas de-anthropocentric approaches often featured a strong element of supernaturalism and mythology, such conceptual trends were contradicted and at times adamantly refuted by anthropocentric tendencies in more pragmatic or this-worldly oriented traditions of Chinese thought. A prime example is the Confucian emphasis on the merits of loyalty and filial piety that are unique to humanity as reflective of the highest spiritual principles. In addition, some Buddhist perspectives stress the priority of the individual person's quest for and attainment of enlightenment, as well as ongoing cultivation and preaching of the virtues of the Dharma over and above any metaphysical doctrine that dilutes a focus on the need for authentic existential realization.

Both de-anthropocentric and anthropocentric elements were apparent in scholastic debates about the all-pervasive quality of Buddha-nature. In the early fifth century, Daosheng had begun to reverse orthodoxy that was based on the earlier or short edition of the *Nirvana Sutra* by emphasizing that even the karma-stricken, base, and deluded beings known as *icchantika* do not lack but, rather, possess ultimate reality as a potential to be activated. Furthermore, all insentient beings share the Buddha-nature as well, so that dull rocks would nod their heads (so to speak) when they heard a Buddhist master preaching the Dharma.

A century and a half later, Jingying Huiyuan stressed a common “ground” (Ch. *tudi*, Jp. *tochi*) encompassing all things, sentient and insentient, but he also focused on the difference between having Buddha-nature as a possession, which is relevant for all kinds of beings, and knowing one has it, which is primarily available to humans, although this quality can also be applied to other sentient but not insentient beings. Huiyuan thus made a complicated distinction between a person—or possibly another sentient being—knowing of Buddha-nature as a capacity through awakening by eliminating ignorance and the Buddha-nature that can become known, which suggests a potential that,

once realized, is able to overcome the difference between humans and nonhumans, as well as sentient and insentient beings.

Even though Huiyuan did not quite assert that insentient beings possess ultimate reality, in the early seventh century Jizang argued that the dualistic classification of various categories of beings is itself an empty ideation, thereby implying that even grasses and trees in addition to sticks and stones can be considered to have Buddha-nature.<sup>24</sup> However, as influenced by Huiyuan, Jizang, and a number of later thinkers also evoked the theory of two truths, or of knowledge of reality functioning on absolute and relative levels, to show that all beings are fundamentally the same in terms of sharing unconditional reality. But, they are practically differentiable and divisible into separate categories in terms of analyzing the possibilities for realizing spiritual attainment. That is, only sentient beings can know about their mental delusions and also are capable of realizing that they have Buddha-nature.

However, the Huayan thinker Fazang in the seventh century and, more emphatically, the Tiantai thinker Zhanran in the *Adamantine Scalpel* a century later strongly defended an affirmation of the Buddha-nature encompassing the insentient without exception by obliterating any and all distinctions involving classifications of beings. This argument, which had a tremendous influence on early Chan thought, maintained that the notion of two truths is just one more artificial construction from the standpoint of the no-mind (Ch. *wuxin*, Jp. *mushin*) that constitutes the transcendental ground encompassing the dichotomies of sentience and insentience, or existence and nonexistence. For Zhanran, any viewpoint that falls short of this affirmation represents a dispensable skillful means rather than an expression of truth.

From the Chan side of the debates, the pre-Huineng fourth ancestor Daoxin and fifth ancestor Hongren both supported insentient beings as existing in a kind of meditative state based on their absence of ordinary understanding that reflects a deeper level of nonconceptual awareness, a view that was also highlighted by the Northern and Ox-Head Chan schools. Hongren even went so far as to assert that inanimate things feature the thirty-two marks of enlightenment known as the characteristics of Sakyamuni Buddha. In a related example, early Tang master Farong, known as the “St. Francis of Zen,” settled in a rock cave in the side of a cliff near a famous monastery on Mount Niutou, and his sanctity reportedly caused birds to appear with offerings of flowers.

This approach was severely criticized by sixth ancestor Huineng’s successor Shenhui, whose phenomenological approach influenced by the school of Yogacara Mind-only philosophy in the *Lankavatara Sutra* emphasized the function of human consciousness in the attainment of enlightenment. Several generations later, Huangbo made a scathing criticism of the notion of insentient beings having Buddha-nature in the *Essentials of Mind Transmission* (Ch. *Chuanxin fayao*, Jp. *Denshin hōyō*). Furthermore, Dazhu Huihai (Jp. Daishu Ekai) argued, “For if insentient beings were buddha, then living people would

be inferior to the dead. Even dead monkeys and dead dogs would be superior to a living person.”<sup>25</sup> It should be noted that because Hongren’s role as the predecessor to the sixth ancestor was so important for sectarian polemics, it seems that his original view affirming the Buddha-nature of insentient beings was modified to reflect the opposite standpoint of denying this principle in the *Platform Sutra*, and that revisionist outlook was also incorporated into biographical passages in Song transmission of the lamp texts including the *Jingde Record*.

Nevertheless, the de-anthropocentric tendency did not die out, and a couple of generations following Zhaozhou, National Teacher Nanyang Huizhong said that Buddha-nature is all-pervasive and permeates everywhere without partiality, limitation, or exclusion, as is evident from sayings in sutras like “a single mote of dust or grain of sand contains all dharmas.” Therefore, insentient beings can be considered not only to cultivate but also to be able to actively preach the Dharma. As some of Huiyuan’s predecessors asserted, from a certain perspective, having no sentience puts those beings more in accord with enlightenment in that they do not seek to express a deluded sense of ownership through using terms like “I,” “me,” and “mine.”

This standpoint was supported by Dongshan Liangjie (Jp. Tōzan Ryōkai) a couple of generations before Huiyuan in a prominent exchange concerning insentient beings preaching the Dharma with his mentor Yunyan (Jp. Ungan), who was a contemporary of Zhaozhou, which is included in numerous kōan collections, such as the *300 Case Treasury* 148. During the Song dynasty, the notion of resonance and reciprocity between humans and all natural beings was maintained and celebrated in some circles. For example, it was asked of poet Su Shi’s awakening experienced during an all-night vigil in the midst of a beautiful landscape, about which he wrote a prominent verse cited by Dōgen,<sup>26</sup> whether in the final analysis it was the person who was enlightened when seeing the wondrous mountains and rivers or the mountains and rivers that were enlightened on the occasion of the meditator sitting in peaceful contemplation.

Returning to Tang debates regarding the universality of Buddha-nature that no doubt helped to shape the Chan understanding of ultimate reality in connection to the phenomenal world, the dawn of the highly distinctive approach of Mazu’s Hongzhou lineage was marked by a dramatic shift from engaging directly in doctrinal disputes through discursive debates to the kind of puzzling repartee in regard to particular concrete phenomena or circumstances that became the core literary unit of the encounter dialogue. The dialogical perspective made its point not through citing the authority of scripture but by using paradox and absurdity to support freedom from an attachment to dogma, while also refusing either to endorse or refute any standpoint or promote a medial or transcendental position.<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, de-anthropocentric trends were evident in Chan stories or verse celebrating the longevity of the pine and bamboo trees and the renewability of

the plum blossom or the imperturbability of the cypress tree, in addition to the inert, silent perfection in expressing no-mind of sentient beings like a frog or insentient beings like a scarecrow. However, the anthropocentric tendency prevailed in ironic narratives casting doubt on the spiritual function of trickster animals, such as foxes or serpents, as well as nonliving things that became animated with magical attributes including mountains that walked, sticks that crushed wild beasts, or fly-whisks that flew to the heavens and back.

To deflect with a sense of irreverence and blasphemy any possible attachment to metaphysical assertions or supernatural beliefs in the ability or inability of sentient or insentient beings to have or to know Buddha-nature, Zen encounter dialogues compared enlightenment to a cake in *Blue Cliff Record* case 77 and the Buddha to three pounds of flax in *Blue Cliff Record* case 12 or, as inspired by Zhuangzi, to a dried shit-stick in *Gateless Gate* case 21. According to Zhaozhou, when asked what the one to which the myriad things return does itself return to, he said, “I made a robe of seven-pounds of cloth.”

Another example, in this instance mocking a focus on mundane particularity, is found in *Blue Cliff Record* case 79, which explores what happens when the notion of the ever-circulating sounds of Buddha is taken too literally:

A monk asked Touzi, “It is said, ‘All voices are the voice of Buddha.’ Is this true or not?,” and Touzi said, “It is true.” The monk said, “Master, then this must be true of your loud farts.” Thereupon, Touzi hit him. Again the monk asked, “‘Coarse words and fine phrases invariably return to the first principle.’ Is this true or not?,” and Touzi said, “It is true.” The monk said, “May I call the reverend a donkey?” Thereupon, Touzi hit him.<sup>28</sup>

僧問投子。一切聲是佛聲。是否。投子云是。僧云。和尚莫豕沸碗鳴聲。投子便打。又問。麤言及細語皆歸第一義。是否。投子云是。僧云。喚和尚作一頭驢得麼。投子便打。

According to this case, on two occasions the questioning monk outsmarts the master, whose use of corporal punishment in this instance does not represent a model of one-upmanship but, rather, reveals the untenable nature of his stubbornly held ideological position.

In another dialogue that was said to have taken place between two pre-Tang monks, which could not have been historically the case based on their difference in ages, Elder Bao sent a messenger to Great Master Si asking, “Why don’t you come out from the mountains to teach sentient beings? What is the point of being so proud?” Great Master Si replied, “Buddhas in the three times all have been swallowed by me with one gulp. Is there any sentient being that needs me to teach?” According to Xuedou’s remark stemming from over half a millennium after the original exchange, “What a shit smell!”<sup>29</sup> 有麼屎臭氣. In contrast to Bao, Xuedou seems to indicate that withdrawal from teaching sentient beings is a deficiency, although this outburst may suggest more of an

endorsement of literary Chan than a commitment to the principle of universal spirituality.

Therefore, when considering the Chan background for the formation of Mu Kōan discourse, de-anthropocentric tendencies suggest that the meaning of the case is that the dog does not ask about its enlightenment. However, this incapacity can also indicate that the canine achieves a continuing state of awakening in that not-knowing (reflecting knowledge of No) is a higher form of knowing. On the other hand, anthropocentrism indicates that the real point is not to consider the case of the dog as anything but a meaningless diversion that in the end should lead ironically to a refocusing with great intensity on the truly productive spiritual concern underlying the monk's query, "What concerns me and my own quest for attaining enlightenment?"

#### FIVE DIALOGUES

Each of the cases in the following list, which is presented in chronological order, convey a practical flavor in asking whether it makes sense to suggest that the human and nonhuman realms are equal and identical. The dialogues deal with mammals, both domesticated (dogs and cats) and beasts of burden (cows) in (1) and (2), as well as invertebrates (a split earthworm) in (4) in addition to plants (cypress tree) in (3), plus a more general query in regard to all living beings in (5).

##### (1) Weikuan on Dog (*Jingde Record* vol. 6)

A monk asked Chan master Weikuan, "Does the dog have Buddha-nature or not?," and the master said, "Yes." The monk said, "Does the reverend also have it or not?," and the master said, "I do not." The monk said, "All sentient beings without exception have Buddha-nature, so why is it that the reverend does not?," and the master said, "I am not the same as all sentient beings." The monk asked, "If you are not a sentient being, then are you a buddha or not?," and the master said, "I am not a buddha." The monk said, "Then what kind of thing is [Buddha-nature]?,", and the master said, "It is not a thing." The monk said, "Can it be seen or thought of?," and the master said, "If you think 思 of it you will not be able to understand it, and if you know 議 of it you will not be able to grasp it. That is why it is called incomprehensible [不可思議 literally "cannot be thought or known"]."<sup>30</sup>

問狗子還有佛性否。師云有。僧云。和尚還有否。師云。我無。僧云。一切眾生皆有佛性。和尚因何獨無。師云。我非一切眾生。僧云。既非眾生是佛否。師云。不是佛。僧云。究竟是何物。師云。亦不是物。僧云。可見可思否。師云。思之不及議之不得。故云不可思議。

**(2) Nanquan on Cats and Cows** (*Record of Serenity* 69, with Wansong's capping phrases)

Nanquan instructed the assembly by saying, "All the buddhas of the triple world do not know that it is (just because they do know that it is), while cats and white cows actually do know that it is (just because they do not know that it is)."<sup>31</sup>

南泉示眾云。三世諸佛不知有(只為知有)。狸奴白牯卻知有(只為不知有)。

**(3) Zhaozhou on Cypress Tree** (*Record of Zhaozhou* 305)

[A monk] asked, "Does even a cypress tree have Buddha-nature or not?," and the master replied, "Yes." [The monk] said, "Then, when will it become a buddha?," and the master said, "When the sky falls to the earth." [The monk] said, "When will the sky fall to the earth?," and the master responded, "When the cypress tree becomes a buddha."<sup>32</sup>

問。柏樹子還有佛性也無。師云有。云。幾時成佛。師云。待虛空落地。云。虛空幾時落地。師云。待柏樹子成佛。

**(4) Changsha on Earthworm** (*300 Case Treasury* case 20)

Zen Master Jingcen of the Changsha district was once asked by the Minister Zhu, "When you cut a worm in two pieces, both of them move. I wish to ask in which part does the Buddha-nature abide?," and the master said, "Do not have deluded thoughts." The minister said, "What do you make of both parts moving?," and the master said, "Understand it is just that the wind and fire have not dispersed." The minister did not answer. The master called the minister, and the minister responded. The master said, "Is this not the minister's original life?," and the minister said, "There cannot be a second person in charge apart from the one that answered." The master said, "I cannot call the minister his highness." The minister said, "If I did not give any answer to the reverend, would not that represent your disciple being the person in charge?," and the master said, "It is not just a matter of answering or not answering this old monk. From beginningless kalpas, this matter has been at the root of [the samsaric cycle of] birth and death." Then he offered a verse: Students of the way are not aware of the truth,/ They only are aware of their past consciousness./ This is the basis of endless birth and death,/ The deluded call it the original person.<sup>33</sup>

長沙景岑禪師、因竺尚書問、蚯蚓斬為兩段、兩頭俱動。未審佛性在阿那箇頭。師曰、莫妄想。書曰、爭奈動何。師曰、會即風火未散。書無對。師却喚尚書。書應諾。師曰、不是尚書本命。書曰、不可離却即今祇對有第二箇主人公也。師曰、不可喚尚書作今上也。書曰、與麼則總不祇對和尚、莫是弟子主人公否。師曰、非但祇對不祇對老僧、從無始劫來、是箇生死根本。乃示頌云、學道之人不識真、祇為從前認識神。無始劫來生死本、癡人喚作本來人。

**(5) Shoushan on Knowing** (*Pointing to the Moon* vol. 23)

A monk asked Shoushan, “All sentient beings have Buddha-nature, so why are they not aware? Shoushan said, “They are aware.”<sup>34</sup>

問首山。一切眾生。皆有佛性。為甚麼不識。山云。識。

In addition to these cases, in the “Buddha-nature” fascicle prior to the discussion of the Mu Kōan, Dōgen cites and explains several dialogues regarding the relation of sentient beings to universal spirituality. These include Qian’s assertion that “All sentient beings have Buddha-nature” and Guishan’s view that “All sentient beings have no Buddha-nature,” in addition to Baizhang’s view that “‘Have’ and ‘not have’ both slander Buddha-nature.” These expressions collectively at once embrace and deny the all-encompassing quality of ultimate reality.

## ON HAVING, KNOWING, AND POSSIBLY REALIZING

Reading between the lines based on a historical hermeneutic approach in a way that is required for interpreting all kōan records, these five dialogues evoke complicated doctrinal issues through an emphasis on probing the matter in ambiguous ways without forming any conclusion rather than determining a standpoint by making a discursive judgment. Cases (1), (3), (4), and (5) begin with the question of whether beings have Buddha-nature and turn toward issues of “knowing” it in relation to “becoming” Buddha, whereas case (2) deals directly with the issue of knowledge in a way that is also implied in (1) and (4). Although having and knowing are the primary areas of concern, there is also expressed here at least a hint of the question of whether all beings are capable of full spiritual realization of their innate Buddha-nature through attaining enlightenment.

However, further implications regarding practicing and cultivating or expressing and preaching the Dharma are not explored in these cases, in contrast to doctrinal debates from the time of Daosheng through Tang poetry to Song commentaries on Su Shi’s verses seven centuries later. More significantly, in none of these instances do we find something like an Emphatic Mu reply to the core query; instead, there is a decidedly inconclusive quality in the various kinds of responses and rejoinders. Therefore, it must be asked whether or not, in the final analysis, these comments convey the same message as the Ur Version seems to suggest.

To consider the previously cited cases in order, case (1) appears to be the earliest example in Song Chan records of explicitly asking the question of whether a nonhuman sentient being such as a dog has Buddha-nature, although the repartee quickly turns to the matter of a particular type of person—the accomplished Chan master—with the suggestion that there is no possibility for ordinary seeing and thinking that is relevant to the impenetrable mystery of

enlightenment. Case (2), which is based on a Nanquan saying that provides an important historical context for understanding Zhaozhou's record in which master and disciple also dealt with the instance of the water buffalo in a couple of dialogues to be discussed later, treats the issue of knowledge by creating a paradox in which true knowing is not knowing and knowing is not true knowing. Which state in the end is more valuable—that of humans or other types of sentient beings?

In case (3), which raises the issue of not only having and knowing but also becoming or realizing Buddha-nature, the circular reasoning of Zhaozhou's record recalls the final section (243) of Yoshida Kenkō's *Essays in Idleness* (*Tsurezuregusa*). According to this Kamakura-era anecdote, an eight-year-old boy asks his father the meaning of Buddha, and the reply is that this is "what a man grows into . . . after being taught by a Buddha," who also, it is said, "grew into it by the instruction of a previous Buddha."<sup>35</sup> The child presses on in regard to what happened to the very first Buddha who began this teaching, and the father says that he "fell down from heaven or perhaps sprang up from the earth." Sometime later, the father enjoys a laugh with friends while confessing that he was embarrassed by the son's naive yet probing questions and knew he could not answer them convincingly. By remaining ironic and noncommittal, the father was careful not to give in to a temptation to provide a misleading speculative reply. Is the attitude of non-sequitur-like progression in what seems to be an impossible, meandering response reflective of Weikuan's outlook as well, so that yes really means no? Or not? In other words, does circular reasoning tighten the trap of conceptuality or provide a vehicle for release?

The third case in the list is interesting because the main image evokes another famous kōan that appears in item 12 of the *Record*, in which Zhaozhou responds to a monk's query concerning why Bodhidharma came from the west by saying simply, "The cypress tree standing in the courtyard." When the monk retorts, "Do not instruct in terms of objects in the environment," Zhaozhou denies that he was falling back on that level of reasoning as it would imply a duality between internal subjectivity and external objectivity. The exchange concludes with the master being asked the same question and repeating the key-phrase, which must have either befuddled once again or released the monk from his obstacles to understanding.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, in item 47 in Zhaozhou's *Record*, the reply that the cypress tree stands in the courtyard is used to answer the inquiry, "What is the self?"

Case (4), the most complicated narrative in this group, offers a deliberately convoluted dialogue between a Chan master and his lay follower, who is a government minister, which in some ways comes closest to a complex doctrinal debate as the official keeps trying to draw the teacher into a more discursive arena. In this record, the issue of the Buddha-nature being possessed by the two parts of an earthworm that has been cut in half and continues to move becomes the springboard for a discussion, not of sentient beings, but of

selfhood and whether there is an original or fundamental layer of the person that is not necessarily affected by the comings and goings taking place on the surface level of activity.

Changsha's didactic prose and poetic comments seem to label the dualistic standpoint a delusion. But the question remains whether there is a distinction between having and knowing that one has Buddha-nature, as well as between knowledge and a sense of knowing that one knows, since this gap may seem true to common sense but would represent another insidious level of dualism creeping into the discourse. Finally, case (5), which Fenyang included in his list of eighteen paradigmatic dialogues as the eleventh example dealing with the role of "questioning a sutra" (in this instance, the *Nirvana Sutra*), suggests an irony regarding knowing that recalls case (2) and leaves the reader not being sure whether unknowing is loftier than knowledge or if this reflects an absurdity or perhaps another hidden polarity.

### **Intellectual Historical Hermeneutics: Zhaozhou as a "Free Spirit"**

Let us consider how much can be learned about the approach to the Mu Kōan from examining the case in the context of the master's life and teaching. Textual historical evidence indicates that Zhaozhou did not actually express the truncated Ur Version or, if he had, it is likely he would have said something additional as part of a follow-up dialogue and also would have made positive and perhaps circular or inconclusive remarks in response to the core query. One basic issue is that Zhaozhou was not necessarily known for a special emphasis on the notion of nothingness. In looking at various examples of the use of specialized words in some prominent Buddhist writings, in a recent biography that is part of a series on Chan masters, Okimoto Katsumi shows that negative terminology, including "Mu," appears frequently in the *Record of Zhaozhou*, but only slightly more so than the positive term "U" and far less than basic terms like "teacher" and "ask." Interestingly, the prevalence of negation is a good bit higher in the recorded sayings of Linji and in the *Lotus Sutra* than in Zhaozhou's recorded sayings.<sup>37</sup>

Given these discrepancies and contingencies, can the Emphatic Mu still seem to be a likely outcome of Zhaozhou's overall approach, or is it instead an anomaly or even aberration that was endorsed by later thinkers, especially Dahui and his multitude of vocal followers? What, if this could ever be determined decisively, was the intention of the original utterance(s) of Zhaozhou? Perhaps Zhaozhou's teaching in regard to Buddha-nature is better appreciated as yet another example in kōan literature equating two sides of the coin, especially since it is not clear which of his replies, negative or positive, would have come first or whether the sequence even matters.

## FREE SPIRIT

The title of Okimoto's volume, *Jōshū: Hyōhyō to Zen o ikita tatsujin no azayakana fūkō* 趙州一瓢瓢と禅を生きた達人の鮮やかな風光, or *Zhaozhou: Vivid Portraits of a Master Who Lived Zen as a Free Spirit*, indicates how the master at once epitomizes and stands apart from the mainstream Chan movement of his era. He was unattached to specific notions or theories and continually sought to illuminate and release all those whom he encountered from their fetters—like Mazu's famous disciple Baizhang, whom Zhaozhou once visited and who was the ancestor best known for initiating the disciplinary notion of monastic rules based on the principle that “a day without work is a day without eating.”

Zhaozhou led an austere and thoroughly unpretentious lifestyle in refusing artifice or aggrandizement while maintaining a rigorous schedule of manual labor in the rice paddies. Furthermore, according to item 439 in the *Record*, based on an ironically strong-willed sense of self-deprecation, the master refused to kowtow to elite government or military officials as he remained firmly in his seat when they visited his temple, even though he readily stood up for midlevel guests and proudly went to the front gate to greet the poor and meek.

Zhaozhou was also quite similar to other Tang masters in his uncompromising method of testing and exposing phonies and fakers, who might try to pass off a superficial understanding or a mere appearance of adhering to rites and routines as an authentic experience of enlightenment. Zhaozhou was always able to see through and reveal his interlocutors' flaws and deficiencies with panache and bravado, while also admitting his own failings with humility and regret. However, in contrast to the radical and, at times, antinomian approach found among Mazu's lineage, including Nanquan's deed of ruthlessly cutting the cat prized by two sets of monks, Zhaozhou did not carry out the wild and unruly acts of striking disciples by hand or stick, a function that was still being used by Danxia and others as late as the Northern Song either as punishment or to deliver a psychological wake-up call.

Instead, Zhaozhou's pedagogy exerted more or less the same effect of releasing and liberating followers from impediments through using the technique of lip Zen, whereby the choice of words was so concise and precise that it created an aura of spiritual purity around his mouth and tongue. Zhaozhou had a knack for an on-the-ground approach in that he could take up the matter of just about any person, object, or situation in the immediate vicinity, as with the cypress tree in the courtyard, and turn it into a basis for encounter dialogue. Known for his paradoxical and perplexing utterances rather than the shouts and slaps that characterized many of his contemporaries' teaching methods, Zhaozhou is said to have taken part in more kōan cases that are prominently recorded in major collections than any other Tang dynasty Zen monk, except

perhaps Yunmen, who often praised his senior colleague.<sup>38</sup> Zhaozhou spent the last forty years in Hebei province, near both Linji's monastery and the temple compounds of Mount Wutai in nearby Shanxi province where many pilgrims went in pursuit of visionary experiences of the bodhisattva Manjusri (Ch. Wenshu, Jp. Monju).<sup>39</sup> Yunmen, whose temple was located in the southernmost Guangdong province, advised disciples to consult with Zhaozhou as the main representative of Zen "in the north," whereas, he said, Xuefeng in Fujian province was the leading teacher "in the south."

Despite being acknowledged as one of the greatest teachers featured in so many kōan records, because of the remote location of his temple where he manifested a rigorous commitment to self-discipline that was open to having exchanges with different kinds of people but resisted taking in many newcomers or novice monks on a permanent basis, Zhaozhou had relatively few followers at any given time (around twenty at the most, it appears), and he left only a relative handful of Dharma-heirs (thirteen or fourteen). When compared to other masters of the era who trained dozens of followers yet whose teachings might appear to have had less impact on the development of Chan overall, Zhaozhou did not found a long-lasting lineage, perhaps as a consequence of being such a demanding teacher in a remote location. Therefore, his name remains relatively obscure in some historical scholarship even though his teachings were very highly valued by all the enduring Zen schools.

#### ZHAOZHOU'S LIFE IN FOUR SEASONS

Based on Okimoto's biography and related materials, the following discussion of Zhaozhou covers his life seen in terms of four main periods from the time of his initial awakening through his aged abbacy; his training style, which was characterized by ongoing open-endedness through an attitude of always learning while always teaching; the pedagogical method he used that was grounded in large part on the deliberately inconclusive notion of "more than 7, but less than 8," which means about the same as "being at sixes and sevens"; and his view of sentient beings, which, it seems fair to say, was neither here nor there in that he engaged any given topic with a sense of irony that explores yet does not endorse particular ideological standpoints.

Okimoto elaborates on how Zhaozhou functioned as a free spirit throughout the "Four Seasons" (*shiki*), or four major stages of his career that can be pieced together by examining sources such as transmission of the lamp records and the *Record of Zhaozhou*, although this collection's origins and early history are uncertain. The text of Zhaozhou's recorded sayings, supposedly initially compiled and edited by Wenyuan at the time of the master's death, is attributed to a 953 version by Huizong fifty-six years after that, but neither of these is extant. The modern Japanese edition, published by Akizuki Ryūmin, is based on a late Ming edition from 1602,<sup>40</sup> which drew from a two-volume version

TABLE 4.1 Zhaozhou Biography and Sources

Year	Timeline	Age	Phase
778	Born in northern countryside of Shandong province		Season I
796	Studies with Nanquan, successor to Mazu, Anhui province	18	Season II
834	Nanquan dies, Zhaozhou enters three-year period of mourning	56	Interim
838	Travels extensively, meets renowned and obscure masters	60	Season III
857	Begins abbacy at Guanyin cloister in Hebei province	80	Season IV
897	Dies leaving thirteen or fourteen heirs; record collected by Wen Yuan	120	

Year	Main Texts
952	<i>Ancestor Hall Record (Zutangji)</i> —no Mu Kōan record
953	<i>Record of Zhaozhou (Zhaozhoulu)</i> , ed. Huizong (not extant)—two dog dialogues
988	<i>Song Record of Eminent Monks (Song kaoseng chuan)</i> —no Mu case
1004	<i>Jingde Transmission Record (Jingde chuandenglu)</i> —no Mu case
1036	<i>Tiansheng Transmission Record (Tiansheng kuangdenglu)</i> —no Mu case
1138	<i>Records of Ancient Worthies (Guzunsu yulu)</i> with <i>Zhaozhoulu</i> —not Ur Version
1144	Reissue of <i>Guzunsu yulu</i> —not Ur Version
1267	Another release of <i>Guzunsu yulu</i> (main extant edition)—not Ur Version

contained in the *Record of Ancient Worthies* (vols. 13 to 14), a compendium of numerous masters' records probably stemming from the twelfth century that is sometimes dated as late as 1247, although it could have been published as early as 1138.

According to the timeline and sources listed in Table 4.1, Zhaozhou's background and upbringing in the countryside area of Shandong province in northeast China led to his early entrance into the monkhood. Although the reasons for his interest in pursuing the Dharma during the initial season are unclear, he must have had a high aptitude for such studies and demonstrated a precocious and dedicated motivation while under the tutelage of his local mentor, under whom he gained an initial awakening experience. This process compelled Zhaozhou to travel widely to seek out a second authentic and more prominent teacher who would guide him to spiritual fulfillment.

The next season began around the age of eighteen when Zhaozhou managed to contact and to prevail through dogged (pun intended) persistence in conjunction with spontaneous ingenuity in enlisting the mentorship of Nanquan, a disciple of Mazu who had previously studied Huayan thought. As reflected in a dialogue included in the opening passages of the *Record*, Zhaozhou's witty repartee in an auspicious exchange that almost seemed like it was predestined, which is a theme found in many Chan hagiographies about a disciple finding his mentor, was able to convince Nanquan of the novice's potential for greatness.

The teacher immediately instructed the head monk to give his new disciple a special seat in the Monks Hall of the monastery compound.<sup>41</sup> Zhaozhou soon left for a visit to his first teacher, whom he had heard took over a new temple, saying, “a child of your house has returned,” but this mentor sent the student back to Nanquan for more advanced training.<sup>42</sup>

The second season continued as Zhaozhou spent nearly forty years studying with Nanquan in Anhui province until the time of the teacher’s death. Not much is known about his life during this phase, since less than a dozen of the 525 entries in the *Record* are dialogues between master and disciple. This group includes the dialogue that became the Cat Kōan and a couple of other prominent exchanges dealing ironically with the role of nonhuman sentient beings, especially the water buffalo. The remainder of this text represents Zhaozhou’s own later teachings that were collected from dialogues and verses that were created mainly during the last half of his life.

After Nanquan passed away, Zhaozhou apparently observed the traditional mourning period lasting three years. Following this temporary phase, he began the third season at age sixty. Instead of inheriting Nanquan’s monastery, and while acting as if a much younger man, he set off for twenty years of itinerancy by vigorously pursuing innovative approaches to training and testing his degree of insight through dialogues with luminary masters, such as Mazu’s disciples Baizhang and Huangbo. During this stage, Zhaozhou probably encountered many different established Zen teachers and also interacted with other kinds of priests, recluses, and pilgrims, as well as a variety of irregular and lay practitioners in addition to public ministers and officials.

The fourth season represented the final forty years of the master’s life, beginning at the age of eighty, that were spent heading Guanyin-yuan cloister, a small temple where he was installed as abbot that is located east of the town of Zhaozhou near modern Shijiazhuang, a couple of hours by train south of Beijing. There, along with Linji, Zhaozhou became a leader of the minority sector of Zen that was situated north of the Yellow River in Hebei province (not to be conflated with the Northern school of Chan that was prominent a couple of centuries earlier before the ascendancy of Huineng).

The Hebei location was notable for being on the pilgrimage route for monks and other travelers, such as Zhang Shangying a couple of centuries later, seeking to visit the spiritually powerful temple sites on Mount Wutai, although this activity was fiercely criticized by Linji and other Chan masters for representing a distraction from an emphasis on meditation. Several dialogues in the *Record* deal with the theme of whether Chan monks should be encouraged or even allowed to travel there in anticipation of visionary experiences that might go against the grain and detract from an emphasis on sitting meditation while contemplating kōans or performing chores on the temple grounds. Zhaozhou’s responses are characteristically ambiguous and do not make clear whether he denied or accepted the trek.

Another interesting dialogue regarding Zhaozhou's leadership is item 490, which documents Zhaozhou's visit to the nearby temple of Linji where he finds his counterpart—unsurprisingly—in the midst of performing mundane chores and not much interested in making small talk. According to this record, Zhaozhou very quickly outsmarts and dismisses the rival. Needless to say, in the text of the Linji recorded sayings, this anecdote is included but the roles are reversed so that Linji comes out the winner of the brief exchange involving a sense of competition and one-upmanship.<sup>43</sup>

As shown in Figures 4.2 and 4.3, Zhaozhou's cloister was also situated near the famous Zhaozhou Bridge, which still stands as a kind of secular altarpiece to the advancement of premodern technology. This structure is supposedly the country's oldest stone bridge, although the Chinese had built passages over waterways and other engineering feats such as canals and irrigation tunnels since at least the ancient Zhou dynasty two thousand years before. It was perhaps the longest-standing open-spandrel stone segmental arch bridge in the world at the time. Credited to the design of a craftsman named Li Chun, the passage was constructed in the years 595–605 to cross the Xiao River, and it was also referred to as the Safe Crossing Bridge (*Anji qiao*) or the Great Stone Bridge (*Dashi qiao*).<sup>44</sup>



FIGURE 4.2 Location of Zhaozhou's Temple.



FIGURE 4.3 *Zhaozhou Stone Bridge.*

*Photograph by Steven Heine.*

Several Zhaozhou dialogues play off the fact that many visitors came to the area not to study Zen but to use or simply to see and admire the craftsmanship of the bridge that was a tourist attraction. In an example in item 331 that expresses an injunction to gain further insight through sustained practice, a monk asks, “For a long time I have heard about the famous stone bridge of Zhaozhou, but coming here I saw only a common wooden bridge,” and the master says, “You saw only the wooden bridge, but you have not seen the stone bridge of Zhaozhou.” The monk says, “What is the stone bridge of Zhaozhou?” and the master says, “Cross over! Cross over!”<sup>45</sup> A similar exchange in item 332 starts the same way, but Zhaozhou’s final response is, “Horses cross over, donkeys cross over.”<sup>46</sup> These dialogues once again reveal the master’s on-the-ground yet noncommittal approach to teaching.

#### TRAINING STYLE: ALWAYS LEARNING WHILE ALWAYS TEACHING

Since the vast majority of his teachings are from the last half of his life, according to some accounts Zhaozhou’s career really started—or, at least, began anew—with the advent of the third season when, at age sixty, he set out on a path of itinerancy for two decades before settling into permanent abbacy.<sup>47</sup> Zhaozhou’s emphasis on intertwining the modes of forever learning and incessantly teaching as ongoing activities is encapsulated by one of the master’s most famous sayings uttered as he first headed off after mourning the death of Nanquan for three years: “After that phase, the master travelled to every

corner of the nation carrying his own water jug and staff. He would always say, 'If there is a child of seven years who knows better than me, I will ask for their teaching. If there is a person who is a hundred years old who is not as good as me, I will instruct them.'"<sup>48</sup>

The lists presented in Table 4.2 show that the dialogues contained in the *Record* and related sources mainly during the final two seasons feature Zhaozhou encountering a wide variety of established masters or teachers, as well as a host of anonymous initiates and lay or irregular practitioners, in addition to secular figures of both higher and lower social ranking. Furthermore, his emphasis on concrete phenomena found Zhaozhou remarking on sacred objects like a pagoda, robe, or drum or everyday things like a mirror, radish, or stone, along with a bridge and tea, plus sentient beings such as cat, dog, water buffalo, or cypress tree.<sup>49</sup> He also treated monastic topics like sutra reading, precepts, and other forms of religious ritual and practice, as well as the daily cycle of twenty-four hours and anticipation of death. All of these entities and themes are not put forward as a matter of externality outside the subject but of weaving together an understanding of selfhood in intimate connection with all aspects of reality.

Beginning at the age of eighty, for forty years Zhaozhou spiritually guided monks along with ordinary people and those in loftier positions. As a sign of austerity and humility, since he never sent out letters soliciting donations, his Monks Hall was not large and lacked both a chamber for temple officers in the front and a washstand in the rear part of the structure. One time, it was said, the leg on Zhaozhou's meditation platform broke so he simply tied a piece of charred firewood to it with some rope and went on for years using this for

TABLE 4.2 Zhaozhou's Encounter Dialogue Partners

Masters	Monastics
Baizhang	Cook
Daowu	Monks
Dongshan	New arrivals
Guishan	Novices
Hanshan (Mount Tiantai)	Priests
Huangbo	Irregulars
Huanzhong	Bridge viewers
Linji	Foreigners (Koreans)
Puhua	Hermits
Shuyu	Itinerant monks
Touzi	Kings and generals
Yanyang	Lay pilgrims
Yueshan	Mount Wutai seekers
Yunju	Old men
Xuefeng (indirect)	Travelers
Wenyuan (disciple)	Women and grannies

his training and practice. The temple officers wished to replace the leg, but Zhaozhou would not permit it.

On the one hand, as indicated in *Blue Cliff Record* 9, Zhaozhou remained open and flexible by giving in response to the query “Who is Zhaozhou?” a deceptively simple list of entries in the four directions: “East gate, south gate, west gate, north gate”<sup>50</sup> 東門、南門、西門、北門。However, like many other Tang Chan ancestors, Zhaozhou did not mince words when it was necessary to challenge or reprimand a trainee for a lack of diligence or insight. One day, according to item 382 in the *Record*, a monk asked Zhaozhou, “I have come with nothing. What do I do in such a case?” and the master replied, “Throw it away.” The novice inquired as a rejoinder, “I said I came with nothing, so what do you expect me to throw away?” Apparently growing impatient with the line of inquiry the master said, “Then hurry and take it away,” and the monk was enlightened. Here is evidence of Zhaozhou’s playful yet thought-provoking use of the notions of nothingness and negation.

Lest we dwell upon his veneer of inscrutability and inapproachability, the first of Zhaozhou’s twelve verse compositions on the daily cycle of Zen activities (one for every two hours of the day) reflects an abandoning of arrogance coupled with an expression of self-deprecating, penitent awareness: “The cock crows in the early morning./ Sadly, I am aware as I rise how worn out I feel./ I have neither a skirt nor a shirt, just this semblance of a robe./ My loincloth has no seat and my pants, no opening./ On my head are five pecks of grey ashes./ Originally intending to practice to help to save others./ Who would have known that, instead, I would become so elusive?”<sup>51</sup> 雞鳴丑。愁見起來還漏逗。裙子褊衫箇也無。袈裟形相些些有。禪無腰。禪無。頭上青灰三五斗。比望修行利濟人。誰知變作不唧溜。

#### PEDAGOGICAL METHOD: MORE THAN 7 BUT LESS THAN 8

Zhaozhou was long recognized and celebrated as perhaps the most creative and innovative of all Tang masters since he contributed over thirty different original cases to four major kōan collections, as shown in the listings in Table 4.3, in addition to dozens of other dialogues that are not included in the *Record* or these collections but are featured in various examples of Chan commentarial literature and training methods. Aside from the Mu Kōan, which is included in three of four main collections (the *Blue Cliff Record* was produced a century before the other three), the most important cases attributed to Zhaozhou are the Cat Kōan, which appears in all four texts; in three texts each appear “Cypress tree standing in the courtyard” in response to a question about why Bodhidharma came from the west, “Go wash your bowls” as instruction for an overly eager novice, and “Great death” in a dialogue with Touzi.<sup>52</sup>

In many of the dialogues, Zhaozhou’s responses are notable for giving very different or sometimes even opposite answers to identical prompts. In addition

TABLE 4.3 Kōans Attributed to Zhaozhou in Major Collections

<i>Blue Cliff Record</i> (12 Cases)	31 Encounters old woman Mount Wutai
2 Real way is not difficult	37 Cypress tree in the courtyard
9 Four gates	<i>300 Case Treasury</i> (17 + 6 Cases)
30 Big radishes	[3] Nanquan's water buffalo
41 Great death	11 Mind lost in confusion
45 Seven-pound cloth robe	[19] Nanquan's ordinary mind is the Way
52 Stone bridge	46 Four gates
57 I alone am holy	67 Go wash your bowls
58 No answer	74 Chanting the sutras
59 Quoting the sentence	80 There is Buddha, there is not Buddha
[63]-64 Cat kōan (2 parts)	114 Dog's Buddha-nature (Dual Version)
80 Newborn baby's consciousness	119 Cypress tree in the courtyard
96 Three turning words	133 Encounters old woman
<i>Record of Serenity</i> (5 + 2 Cases)	135 Tiles and a jewel
[9] Cat kōan	136 Great death
10 Encounters old woman Mount Wutai	138 Brightness and darkness
18 Dog's Buddha-nature (Dual Version)	[181] Cat kōan
39 Go wash your bowls	[195] Nanquan's Dao is not outside things
47 Cypress tree in the courtyard	233 Three times says have a cup of tea
[57] Not one thing	239 Loading and unloading
63 Great death	[258] Nanquan sees Buddha, sees Dharma
<i>Gateless Gate</i> (5 + 2 Cases)	277 Carry it with you
1 Dog's Buddha-nature (Ur Version)	281 Encounters two hermits
7 Go wash your bowls	[283] Xuefeng's old valley stream
11 Encounters two hermits	288 Four elements, five skandhas
[14] Cat kōan	291 Holding firmly heaven and earth
[19] Nanquan's ordinary mind is the way	

The + and [...] symbols refer to cases in which Zhaozhou's role is prominent but not primary.

to the dialogues with two hermits in *Gateless Gate* case 11, in items 242, 255, 256, and 267 in the *Record*, when three monks ask the same question, "What is the one word (of Zen)?" Zhaozhou replies variously: "Yes?" in addition to "I am not deaf" and "Say something!" among other responses. In other contexts, Zhaozhou often made the same statement no matter what was done or said or regardless of circumstance. In addition to the "Go drink a cup of tea" dialogues, when a monk asks in item 216 in the *Record*, "What is multiplicity?" Zhaozhou replies, "One, two, three, four, five," a phrase he had learned from Nanquan in item 5 that was supposed to have saved him—along with the showing of the availability of a ladder—from falling down a well.<sup>53</sup> In a follow-up dialogue the monk asks, "What is the condition of the state of not relating to multiplicity?" and the master says once again, "One, two, three, four, five," a remark that appears in other dialogues.<sup>54</sup>

Yet, Zhaozhou does not fall into the trap of mindless repetition since he often answers the same queries, such as “Why did Bodhidharma come from the west?” or “Who is Zhaozhou?” with fresh responses each time. Instead, he deliberately conflates yes and no, right and wrong, or positive and negative signifiers as appropriate to the trainee in ways that seem to approximate the relativism of the Dual Version. However, by frequently mentioning the importance of using only one word rather than reading all of the sutras or engaging in extensive debate, he may also be taken to support, at least in part, key-phrase absolutism.

Zhaozhou’s outlook has been characterized as suggesting that the formula for every reply is to express “more than 7, but less than 8” 七上八下,<sup>55</sup> an idiom that in English means being at sixes and sevens or in a perturbed state of mind. Therefore, the master plunges his followers into a Watō-like state of doubt by showing that words are never completely correct. Yet neither are they altogether wrong in conveying a response that captures a partial sense of truth, which in the final analysis must be based on a self-generated realization of spiritual awareness beyond any particular phrasing. The befuddling quality of Zhaozhou’s expressions serves as a useful tool for inspiring a disciple to stop relying on previous or exalted verbal models and to start thinking—or to stop thinking, or to start the contemplative process of not-thinking—for himself.

#### ON SENTIENT BEINGS: NEITHER HERE NOR THERE

Zhaozhou was one of the main leaders in directing a focus away from abstraction by finding meaning in and through particular phenomena of concrete reality, whether this is reflected in a cup of tea, a cypress tree, a stone bridge, a cloth robe, a piece of excrement... or a furry four-legged creature. Overarching theoretical questions in regard to the meaning of Buddha and Buddha-nature, as well as the reason for Bodhidharma coming from the west, play a major role in dialogues attributed to Zhaozhou, whose responses consistently demonstrate that he is not attached to a specific view of doctrine or to the authority of scripture in regard to the status of sentient beings. The outlook of focusing on everyday things—yet without forging a commitment to a view of affirmation, negation, or any possible combination—undergirds Zhaozhou’s comments related to the issue of the universality of spirituality.

For example, item 209 in the *Record* (also *Blue Cliff Record* 96) is a sermon in which Zhaozhou says, “A metal Buddha cannot pass through a furnace, a wood Buddha cannot pass through fire, and a mud Buddha cannot pass through water. The true Buddha sits within you. Bodhi, nirvana, suchness, and Buddha-nature are like clothes stuck on the body, and, as such, are to be referred to as attachments. If you do not ask about them, they are

not attachments. Where then can true reality be found?" A few passages later Zhaozhou comments:

When I [lit. "this old monk"] met Reverend Yueshan, he said, "If there is someone who questions me, I will teach him to shut his yap (lit. "dog mouth")!" I also say, "Shut your yap!" To grasp the self is corrupt, and to let go of the self is pure. Like the case of a hound dog always trying to get more and more to eat, where can the Buddha Dharma be found?<sup>56</sup>  
 老僧見藥山和尚道。有人問著。但教合取狗口。老僧亦道合取狗口。  
 取我是垢。不取我是淨。一似獵狗相似。專欲得物喫。佛法向什麼處著。

In similar fashion, the following dialogue from the *Chan Collection of Prose Remarks* (Ch. *Zongmen niangu huiji*, Jp. *Zenmon nenko isshū*) vol. 16, which is not contained in the *Record*, mocks any reliance on words found in scriptures: Zhaozhou asks the meditation leader who had just given a sermon, "Which sutra are you talking about?" and the leader replies, "The *Nirvana Sutra*." Zhaozhou says, "I want to ask whether you have grasped the meaning of that passage," and the leader answers, "I have." Zhaozhou then takes his foot and bounces it up and down while whistling a random tune and asks, "What was the meaning of that?" The leader replies, "There is no such meaning in the *Nirvana Sutra*," and Zhaozhou retorts, "What a foolhardy fellow you are! Five hundred strong men are lifting up a rock, yet you still do not get the point."<sup>57</sup>

This degree of skepticism is also reflected in Zhaozhou's view of a spiritual quality innately possessed by all sentient beings, as suggested in half a dozen dialogues in the *Record* that evoke references to a water buffalo. The first three instances are among the small group of exchanges with Nanquan. In the initial example from item 3, Zhaozhou asks his teacher, "Where does a person who knows what there is to know go to?" and Nanquan says, "They go to be a water buffalo at the house of a lay person at the foot of the mountain." Zhaozhou says, "I am grateful for your instruction," and Nanquan replies, "At midnight last night, the moonlight came through the window."<sup>58</sup> Although this clearly facetious dialogue seems to result in the attainment of enlightenment, the next example involves another tongue-in-cheek instruction by Nanquan to an attendant to bring a water buffalo into the bathtub, which ends with Zhaozhou grabbing his teacher by the nose and pulling him along while Nanquan protests and calls out, "That's it, you big oaf!"<sup>59</sup>

A third example further highlights Zhaozhou's mock disdain as Nanquan says, "Nowadays it is best to live and work among members of a different species from us." Zhaozhou, however, thinks otherwise and says, "Leaving alone the question of 'different,' let me ask you what is 'species' anyway?" Nanquan then puts both of his hands on the ground, as if he were a four-legged creature (which could be a water buffalo or a dog). Approaching from behind, Zhaozhou tramples him to the ground and then runs into the Nirvana Hall

crying, “I repent. I repent.” Nanquan, who appreciates being one-upped, says that he does not understand the reason for this act of contrition. So he sends for an attendant to ask the disciple what he is confessing to and Zhaozhou replies, “I repent that I did not trample him twice as hard!” Thereafter, it is said, the master esteemed and admired his prize pupil more than ever.<sup>60</sup>

The message of dispensing with any serious consideration of the spirituality of sentient beings is further reinforced in a couple of cases in which Zhaozhou sardonically responds to the question of why Bodhidharma came from the west by saying, “We’ve lost the cow from the pen”<sup>61</sup> 欄中失卻牛, or “The water buffalo has given birth to a child; take good care of it”<sup>62</sup> 水牯牛生兒也好看取. It is in this context that, in one of the versions of the case concerning a dog having Buddha-nature or not, Zhaozhou answers to the negative. But is that all—or, conversely, as much—as was intended by the one word “Mu”?

### Linguistic Hermeneutics: Ur Version Redux

The deconstruction of the Ur Version based on the Watō method seen as the exclusive correct understanding of the Mu Kōan has been heretofore undertaken in this and the previous chapter in terms of textual and historical studies and can now be carried out through a linguistic hermeneutic examination of the main passage. This method shows that the syntactical structure of the deceptively simple question-and-answer exchange, along with some aspects of its recorded variants, does not necessarily lead to the straightforward and unambiguous conclusion of endorsing the Emphatic Mu reflecting supreme negation. It could just as easily be taken to represent a bit of irony or the disclaiming of doctrinal views altogether in support of a relativist standpoint in a way that seems closer to both the intent and content of Zhaozhou’s teachings as expressed in numerous other dialogues.

#### O MY WORD

The following word-by-word analysis of the meaning and grammar of the Ur Version adheres to some of the discussion provided in an informative Internet blog produced by Mark Bykoski, although by considering multiple versions of the text some of the points offered here differ from what he suggests.<sup>63</sup> The main theme of the examination is to show that the Mu response is not necessarily a special word that has been inserted by Zhaozhou to make a grand philosophical statement or to establish a religious ritual. Instead, it represents a rather ordinary response that could and probably should be taken to imply something much more modest yet open-ended in scope.

Below is a list of each of the eighteen characters (with four compounds) in one of the main variants of the Ur Version, along with Chinese (including Pinyin tones) and Japanese pronunciations and English translations:

趙州和尚因僧問。狗子還有佛性也無。師曰無。

趙	Zhào	Jō	name of an ancient state in China
州	zhōu	shū	state, region; compound = name of master
和	hé	o	peace
尚	shàng	shō	esteem; compound = master, reverend, high priest
因	yīn	in	because, reason, when
僧	sēng	sō	monk (derived from <i>samgha</i> )
問	wèn	tou	ask
狗	gǒu	ku	dog
子	zǐ	shi	[suffix for nouns]; compound = dog
還	hái	kan	even, also
有	yǒu	u	yes, have, is
佛	fó	butsu	Buddha
性	xìng	shō	nature; compound = Buddha-nature (Jp. busshō)
也	yě	e	[word separating clauses], also, or
無	wú	mu	no, not have, is not
師	shī	shi	teacher
曰	yuē	iwaku	say; 州云 = [Zhao]zhou says (yún/un)
無	wú	mu	no, not have, is not

Looking closely at this breakdown of the case record indicates several areas of questionability that may lead to possible misleading results in translating the passage. One area in the first sentence involves the character 因, which means “because,” or perhaps “when,” yet does not appear in many Chinese versions and is also left out of numerous English renderings. This is unfortunate in that the term plays an important role in highlighting an on-the-ground or nontheoretical approach and “may serve the purpose of pointing out that Zhaozhou’s statement concerning the dog and Buddha nature are made in the context of the monk asking the question.”<sup>64</sup> In other words, it was not the case that Zhaozhou just happened to notice a dog lying down or lurking in the compound and then decided to address the assembly with his thoughts, let alone make a bold and emphatic pronouncement concerning the Buddha-nature (or, rather, the lack of this quality) in regard to nonhuman sentient beings. “Rather, he responded to a monk’s question on a specific occasion.”<sup>65</sup> Another area of concern in the second sentence involves the character 還, or “even,” which again is often left untranslated but is useful in suggesting a nuance regarding doctrinal debates. The interlocutor may be suggesting that speculation about universal spirituality is incredulous or stretches the imagination too far.

While these two issues concern subtleties in the original text that often go unnoticed, the following modern Chinese rendering (extracted from a rendering

of the Dual Version) indicates what happens when there is an embellished approach that may add unnecessary and distracting elements to the text, which are underlined in both the original and my translation.

有一位學僧問趙州禪師道：「狗子有佛性也無？」趙州毫不考慮地回答道：「無！」 *There was a novice monk who asked Zen master Zhaozhou, “Does a dog have Buddha-nature or not?,” and Zhaozhou without a moment of reflection immediately replied by saying, “Mu!”*<sup>66</sup>

The main problem is that this version, which is echoed in other modern East Asian and English renditions, suggests a feature of Zhaozhou’s response that may or may not be relevant but certainly goes beyond what is evident in the source passage. Moreover, the Western grammatical elements with punctuation inserted into Chinese sentences, including quotation marks in addition to a question mark and an exclamation point, contribute to a gloss that may reveal an ideological bias on the part of the translator. At least, it shows that his effort has been greatly affected by conventional interpretations and, therefore, does not provide the contemporary reader with direct access to the classical text.

#### ON TRANSLATING THE DUAL VERSION

Before returning to an analysis of the concluding and most important segments of the Ur Version, for which the meaning of the articulated negative response needs clarification, let us consider a couple of other problematic aspects of the Dual Version and its rendering into modern Chinese, Japanese, or English. A seemingly minor but important issue for assessing the impact of the Dual Version is the segue passage into the second set of dialogues, which uses the word 又 in both classical and contemporary sources. This term can mean either that the same monk asks “again” the question or that “another” monk makes the identical inquiry. The significance of distinguishing between these options is that the latter reading could be more true to the grammatical structure in highlighting that Zhaozhou replies differently based on the perceived needs of the interlocutor. In any event, both readings indicate that the question was not put to rest the first time and probably kept popping up among various followers of Zhaozhou.

An additional point concerning the Dual Version involves slightly different wording in some parts of the passage. For instance, the standard version of the response, “This is because it has awareness of karma,” contains seven characters 為伊有業識性在, but the version that Dōgen cites in “Buddha-nature” has six characters 為他有業識在. Dōgen leaves out the character for “nature” 性 near the end of the phrase, which tends to de-substantialize the notion of

karmic consciousness. Also, the second character used is slightly different, perhaps because the transcription has been altered by later editors.

In both instances, the meaning of the first two characters seems to be “it” in referring to the dog. However, Dōgen’s innovative parsing that goes against the grain of the original Chinese syntax indicates that the first two characters suggest “dependence” (literally, “because of others”) as an independent component of the phrase, so that his reading emphasizes how Zhaozhou’s reply is linked to negation yet intertwines endlessly with some level of affirmation:

The expression, “Because it is dependent on awareness of karma,” means that although “because it is dependent” is “has awareness of karma” and “has awareness of karma” is “because it is dependent,” the dog is no and Buddha-nature is no. Awareness of karma is not understood by a dog, so how could a dog attain Buddha-nature? Whether [dog and Buddha-nature] are considered as a unity or as separate, the effect of awareness of karma continues from beginning to end.<sup>67</sup>

In another example, a common version for the answer to the follow-up question to the positive reply, “It knows better but willingly transgresses,” contains four characters 知而故犯, but there are other instances with six more or characters 為他知而故犯; note that the first two characters here are identical to the first two in the response about karmic awareness as cited by Dōgen.

In considering embellishments in the full transcript of the following modern Chinese rendering of the Dual Version, additional areas of discrepancy with the original are underlined:

有一位學僧問趙州禪師道：「狗子有佛性也無？」趙州毫不考慮地回答道：「無！」學僧聽後不滿，說道：「上自諸佛，下至螻蟻，皆有佛性，狗子為什麼卻無？」趙州禪師解釋道：「因為牠有『業識』存在的緣故。」又一學僧問趙州禪師道：「狗子還有佛性也無？」趙州禪師答道：「有！」另一學僧也不滿這個答案，所以就抗辯道：「既有佛性，為什麼要撞入這個臭皮囊的袋子裡？」趙州禪師解釋道：「因為牠明知故犯！」<sup>68</sup>

After the Mu reply this version suggests, “Upon hearing this, the novice monk was not satisfied and expressed it by saying...,” and in response to the second query Zhaozhou “explained by saying...[that] the reason for this being the case (is because it has awareness of karma).” Furthermore, in the final exchange after hearing the positive reply, the novice monk “is not satisfied with this response to the case, and says to the contrary...” the question about why the dog appears in the skin-bag. Although these embellishments do not appear to alter the basic meaning of the passage in any significant way, they may be considered unnecessary and somewhat misleading.

“NO” AS A SIGNIFICANT SIGNIFIER

The most important grammatical area of concern for deconstructing conventional readings of the Mu Kōan that are based on the notion of the Emphatic Mu involves two elements: first, the last two characters 也無 of the second sentence of the Ur Version indicating “or not,” which is not included in many English translations, and second, the final one-character response, the meaning of which must be clarified in terms of its relation to the “or not” ending of the previous sentence’s question. As Bykoski points out:

The monk’s question is formed by a positive statement (“Even a dog has Buddha nature”), which is followed by a negation of the verb (“not have”). This is a common grammatical construction for forming questions in Chinese. The question tag does not really need to be translated, but it is rendered here as “or not” in order to convey the literal sense. The most common and concise way to answer in the negative is to state the negation of the verb extracted from the question itself, which is what Zhaozhou does here.<sup>69</sup>

In other words, the negative reply given by Zhaozhou is a very ordinary and straightforward yet concise answer to the query, “Does the dog have it or not?” and translating the character Wu/Mu in this context does not require or demand extraordinary treatment through punctuation or formatting. The sole reason the reply would be capitalized is because it is the first and only word in the sentence, not because its meaning is so special. Christoph Harbsmeier shows that classical Chinese uses over a dozen words for negation, with the most common examples being *bu* 不 and *fei* 非, and with 無 representing but one of the various options.<sup>70</sup> However, the reply of wu/mu is generally used in connection with questions involving the use of you/u 有, so that its appearance here is not surprising and, given the context, is a rather routine response that need not be reified or isolated.

Unfortunately, typical renderings “may create the impression that [Zhaozhou’s] answer is not translatable . . . [or] that the monk asks his question in ordinary language, and then Zhaozhou replies with this strange word *mu* from out of the blue.”<sup>71</sup> Therefore, translations with Chinese or Japanese pronunciations, such as “Wu” or “Mu,” or an exclamation point like “No!” or “Mu!” or multiple “u’s” to suggest that the answer was shouted forcefully, all defy a strict rendering. They tend to convey a sense that there is something unusual about the master’s utterance when it could well be seen as a purposefully predictable response to the monk’s quotidian query, while also making a point indirectly in regard to the need to steer clear of misconceptions of Buddha-nature.

Probably all parties in the debate concerning the case’s meaning can agree that Zhaozhou’s use of the negative signifier seeks to demonstrate an

incompatibility or dysfunctional quality of the query so as to disrupt the habit of conceptual thinking and dislodge the interlocutor from the mundane polarity of affirmation and denial. The master's reply functions as a verbal device or word widget indicating that the question itself is counterproductive by exposing the fundamental ignorance that generates the inquiry. The answer conveys a sense of "What's the use in asking, since trying to make sense of the matter is like raking leaves on a windy day?" There is also a "Don't bother me" undertone in that the master is fatigued with mediocrity and quickly losing patience since he does not cotton to fools. This reinforces the need for the inquirer to embark on a spiritual reorientation away from the query about a nonhuman sentient being and toward the one authentic question that any earnest truth seeker should be asking, which concerns nothing other than how to realize one's own enlightenment.

## Dogs May Chase, But Lions Tear Apart RECONSTRUCTING THE DUAL VERSION OF THE “MOO” KŌAN

### Sectarian Discourses and Rhetorical Refinements

The main goal of this book is to develop a multilateral methodology that rectifies the apparent imbalance whereby the Emphatic Mu remains dominant in presentations of the kōan about whether a dog has Buddha-nature, while the Expansive Mu is usually kept in the background. The Dual Version is relegated to importance only in terms of examining a small handful of texts that are seen as viable yet isolated from and not necessarily germane to conventional discourse regarding this case. Or, in some presentations, the ambivalence of this rendition's positive mixed with negative replies to the core query is considered to be subsumed under the banner of the all-encompassing absolutism of transcendental nothingness.

The hegemony of the Ur Version is challenged by many of the citations and thematic issues that were analyzed in the previous chapter showcasing variant and alternative renderings and understandings, or exceptions and exemptions from mainstream views. Attributions of the key-phrase approach to masters who taught prior to Dahui's abrupt shift away from literary Chan in 1134—as in the ninth-century writings of Huangbo, who died before the period of Zhaozhou's abbacy, or the early twelfth-century work of Wuzu, whose views on the Mu Kōan were brief yet varied—have been exposed as spurious or dubious precedents to the Watō method by recent scholarship. In addition, there seems to be a basic ambiguity embedded in the outlook of Zhaozhou and other masters who wrestled with the question of the universality of Buddha-nature in their encounter dialogues or commentaries.

To put the question of the importance of the Emphatic Mu in perspective given the overall vastness of sources, despite the hundreds of citations of the case in the primary and supplementary Chan Buddhist canons it appears that remarks on the Mu Kōan when added together still form only a relatively tiny portion of the overall commentarial materials. This allotment seems to be at odds with the overwhelming attention that this case is accorded by Watō

proponents. Among the texts that do refer to the kōan, the Ur Version was not the only edition evoked, and when it was cited, many times the interpretations differed significantly from the key-phrase method. Furthermore, numerous masters who favored the Watō also endorsed other kinds of practices, such as following the precepts or syncretism with *nianfo/nembutsu* recitation. Even the views of Dahui, who did not mention the Mu Kōan in some texts like the *Arsenal*, along with those of his followers, are more nuanced or varied in a number of instances than the straight-line narrative suggests, especially with regard to instructing lay followers vis-à-vis requirements for monastic training.

The antidote to a disproportionate focus is to adjust an overemphasis on the Emphatic Mu based on the Ur Version by paying new, but not exclusive, attention to the Expansive Mu standpoint derived from the Dual Version, which also is not a static rhetorical unit but appears in diverse renditions and exegeses. The intention is not to reverse priorities or replace the mainstream version with an alternate edition, but to capture the complexity of the textual history and thought of the Mu Kōan so as to overcome partiality based on sectarian legacies and allow for an exploration of a variety of possible interpretations from diverse sources. Mu Kōan textuality is, thereby, seen to encompass both of the major renditions that represent overlapping yet conflicting areas of discursive interaction.

To analyze and adjudicate the relation between the Ur and Dual versions and their respective religious visions, it is necessary to consider two inseparable sets of hermeneutic issues. One involves sectarian affiliation in terms of the matter of which lineages support each of the versions, and why, and also the extent to which there are crossover commentaries, especially Linji school support for the Dual Version. Given the long history of ideological disputes, the other main issue is concerned with Watō Versus Kattō in terms of how language and literature are considered to function either as a vehicle for or as an impediment to the attainment of awakening seen in connection with meditative practices, as well as an understanding of the meaning of negation in relation to affirmation.

#### NOT BY SECT ALONE

A recent book by Japanese Sōtō researcher Ishii Seijun is a prominent example of contemporary scholarship that, in a brief but compelling passage, seeks to point out and revive the importance of understanding the Dual Version in the *Record of Serenity* and other sources. In a section titled “Does a dog have Buddha-nature: Two types of answers,” this rendition is juxtaposed with other editions.<sup>1</sup> Ishii, thereby, demonstrates the need to assess the two main versions of the case in relation to one another rather than as separate or independent textual entities that happen to deal with common issues. He argues both for overcoming a neglect of their interconnectedness from chronological

and theoretical perspectives and for seeing the Dual Version as representing a distinct interpretative approach that challenges the priority and authority of the Emphatic Mu.

Because proponents of the Ur Version were primarily Linji/Rinzai school monks and interpreters of the Dual Version were for the most part Caodong/Sōtō school adherents, or so it is said, Ishii's argument may be seen as a modern example, whether acknowledged or not, that is influenced by factional conflicts that probably played a major role in determining traditional appropriations of the case. The initial clearly defined appearance of the Dual Version in the Chan canon seems to have been as part of a sermon by Qingliao on the relation between having or being and not having or nonbeing that was perhaps first presented in the 1130s, possibly just a few years just before or after Dahui's apostasy. Shortly thereafter, the Yes-No version was taken up by Hongzhi and Wansong, as well as Dōgen's "Buddha-nature" fascicle.

Beginning in the 1130s, Qingliao and Hongzhi were severely criticized by Dahui, although not specifically for their use of the Dual Version but rather for their supposed endorsement of silent-illumination. A century later in Japan, in the context of discord about the extent to which fledgling Zen factions along with other newer forms of Buddhism were either supported or disregarded by the still-dominant Tendai church, Dōgen tried to turn the tables by questioning the authenticity of Dahui's enlightenment experience. This was, in part, because the attack helped to undermine some of his Japanese colleagues from the proscribed Daruma school who were aligned with Dahui's lineage. Dōgen suggests his own scathing, albeit indirect, critique of the Watō approach in "Self-Fulfilling Samadhi" ("Jishō zanmai") and other fascicles from the *Treasury of the True Dharma-Eye*.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the background of sectarian disputes during the greatest period of partisan clash in the history of Zen lasting from the 1130s to the 1240s, buttressed by additional discord during the Edo period, would appear to contribute to the transition of emphasis from the Ur to the Dual Version in Ishii's examination of the Mu Kōan nearly eight hundred years later.

By taking a closer look at the history of the sources, this assessment turns out to be based on misleading assumptions, since there was a strong cross-sectarian element among monks representing both schools who appropriated the Ur and Dual versions of the Mu Kōan from the classic to the early modern period. By presenting poetic comments in a side-by-side arrangement, the *Jeweled Compendium* vol. 19 is perhaps the best representative of traditional sources that juxtapose the two renditions instead of using one or the other, or blurring the distinction between them. This text contains about a dozen verse comments on the Dual Version that are listed first, and a number of these are by Linji monks. In addition, it features over thirty verses on the Ur Version, some by Caodong monks, plus two verse comments on Weikuan's dog dialogue (Wuzu is notable for commenting on both this passage and what became the

Ur Version). However, the *Jeweled Compendium* is a compilation only, which means that no analytic comments are provided to help put in perspective an understanding of when and why supporters emerged for each version. The text does indicate that the Dual Version gained proponents among the Linji and Caodong schools during the Song through the Yuan to the early Ming dynasty, but it is left to the reader's imagination to discern the relevance of that rendition of the Mu Kōan and its significance relative to the Ur Version.

Another example of cross-factionalism discussed previously is that Dōgen's mentor Rujing gave one of the most eloquent endorsements of the Ur Version, while Dōgen also supported this standpoint in a frequently cited passage in *Guidelines for Studying the Way* that was written during an early phase of his career before he began citing the Dual Version. Furthermore, there is an anomaly whereby the Ur Version was prominent in medieval and early modern Japan primarily through Sōtō sect's *Shōmono* literature, including examples of *kiri-gami* remarks on the Gateless Gate, whereas the Dual Version was kept alive in the early Edo-period Rinzai text *Collection of Zen Entanglements*. Moreover, one of the first modern challenges to the hegemony of the Ur Version was raised by Japanese scholar Iriya Yoshitaka of Kyoto University, whose work is primarily associated with examining the Linji/Rinzai school.

Such instances of crossover are rare in Korea, where the Watō/Hwadu method prevailed in a more or less uniform fashion, although not without some exceptions, discrepancies, or variations. In the very first and still most prominent Korean collection probably initially published in the 1240s, the *Explanations of Prose and Poetic Comments in the Zen School*, in which Hyesim's preliminary collection of 1125 cases was expanded by Gag'un to include a total of 1,463 cases, the Dual Version is cited along with extensive Chinese remarks that are further explained by Gag'un's comments. Although this rendition is cast in the context of the key-phrase method—for example, the title is given as “Zhaozhou's ‘Mu’”—the use of the Dual Version seems to go against the grain of Jinul's exclusive focus on the Ur Version and highlights the degree of variability during the classic period of textual development.

#### CONTRASTING ROLES FOR RHETORIC IN MU KŌAN TEXTS

An important implication of juxtaposing the two main versions of the Mu Kōan is to recast the conventional sense of twelfth-century disputes from having a strictly sectarian basis and bias to being grounded instead on ideological discrepancies regarding the role of rhetoric in Zen discourse and the related question that cuts across all streams and factions of whether or not literary flourish is productive or detrimental to awakening. From this perspective, the main difference that emerges between expositors of the Ur and Dual versions is not so much a matter of lineal affiliation or types of meditation as it reflects distinctive styles of interpretation, or of Watō Versus Kattō.

Those who favor the Watō method focus on the significance of one word, which is often compared to a powerful instrument that can decisively clear out delusions, such as a mighty sword, fiery sun, iron mallet, or hair-splitting knife. By virtue of a stress placed on the Emphatic Mu, there is little need for additional remarks, which would prove counterproductive to spiritual attainment. However, the Watō method is based not only on the abbreviated quality of the Ur Version that is subjected to minimalist interpretation by extracting the word “Mu” from the core dialogue as an indicator of transcendental negation and object of contemplation. What makes the Emphatic Mu so powerful is more than an emphasis on the single syllable, however much this is celebrated. Rather, it gains a compelling quality from additional elaborations expressed through personal accounts of the overcoming of maladies and the manifesting of wisdom in one’s own behavior and comportment, in addition to examples of theoretical reflections on absolute nothingness. Therefore, various forms of rhetoric are used in connection with Watō, but in a somewhat different way than the typically cryptic yet allusive poeticizing of Northern Song and later kōan commentaries, such as the *Blue Cliff Record*.

The structure of the Dual Version is, by definition, more complex than the Ur Version in containing four separate subdialogues, each with two parts each (Q indicates question, and R reply), according to the following paraphrase:

1. Q1: Does the dog have it?
2. R1: No.                      Ur Version stops here
3. Q2: Why not?              *Record of Zhaozhou* includes this.
4. R2: Karmic awareness.
5. Q3: Again, does the dog have it?      Dual Version continues
6. R3: Yes.
7. Q4: Then why become a dog?
8. R4: A matter of choice.

The main function of commentaries on the Dual Version occurs through the innovative use of interlinear hermeneutics employed by various interpreters from diverse lineages, so that up to each of the eight discrete discursive items can become a topic for remarks usually tinged with ironic imagery or implication and consisting of varying lengths and degrees of complication. In some instances the commentary covers four sets of questions/answers, and in others it is limited to just the two core dialogues, or items 1–2 and 5–6. Depending on the interpreter’s predilections toward the function of literary elements in Chan discourse, this interpretative process gives rise to different types of elaborate rhetorical refinements that characterize the Kattō approach of the Expansive Mu.

In contrast to the key-phrase approach, commentaries on the Dual Version generally extend and expand the dialogues through the creative use of literary imagery via suggestiveness and wordplay grounded on poetic and

mythical legacies embedded in the literary traditions of China, both high- and middle-brow, rather than with speculative remarks about the relative value (or lack) of sentient beings. This style of rhetorical appropriation highlights a multiplicity of ramifications undermining any fixation with either negation or affirmation.

For example, Dahong Baoen, who died in 1111, wrote two verses that refer to the Yes or “has [Buddha-nature]” and the No or “hasn’t [Buddha-nature]” responses. One of the poems concludes, “A single phrase rumbles like thunder before the wind,/ The toad in the well croaking in the middle of the night sounds just like a roar.”<sup>3</sup> According to the ingenious explanation by Gag’un that even-handedly assesses positive and negative replies, “the phrase ‘has’ has ‘has’ and has ‘hasn’t’” 有句有有有無 and also “the phrase ‘hasn’t’ doesn’t have ‘has’ and doesn’t have ‘hasn’t’” 無句無有無無. Gag’un comments that “outside of ‘has Buddha nature’ there is no ‘doesn’t have Buddha nature’” 有佛性外, 無無佛性也, and he further remarks that both sides represent the “middle way” 中間.

Despite boundary-crossing examples, sectarian considerations can by no means be dismissed altogether from evaluating the two versions of the Mu Kōan. The most important examples of interlinear commentary on the Dual Version are by a Southern Song Chinese and a Kamakura Japanese proponent of the Caodong/Sōtō faction in the early thirteenth century. While compelling for influences exerted on both schools, the era of extensive exegeses of this rendition of the case was relatively short-lived and for the most part did not continue past the fifteenth century. This coincided with the lessening of the peak level of rhetorical embellishment influenced by literati culture, along with commensurate shifts in patterns of patronage and practice that affected Zen institutional structures during the early modern periods of Qing-dynasty China and Edo-era Japan. In other words, the decline of Dual Version commentaries in part reflected the diminished or changed role of the Caodong/Sōtō school vis-à-vis the Linji/Rinzai school’s claim of Watō study as the crucial element of its approach. In Korea, the Dual Version was no longer used as a topic for commentary after the remarks by Gag’un on Hyesim’s original collection.

Nevertheless, even though it turns out that partisan stereotypes are, to some extent, reinforced after all, this does not mean that the conventional opposition of kōan-investigation standing in conflict with silent-illumination is the most accurate or thorough model for understanding the context of the disputative contrast. I argue that even while taking into account sectarian factors, the issue of different meditation styles is a red herring, although not to be totally overlooked, compared to debates about language and literature.

The next two sections of this chapter will briefly review examples of variations on the Dual Version and also examine the form and content of diverse commentaries from different lineages in China, Japan, and Korea. This sets the stage for an in-depth analysis in the final sections of the styles of interlinear commentaries in the *Record of Serenity* and Dōgen’s texts.

### Variations on the Dual Version

The following seven variations, which represent some combination of positive and negative responses to the question about a dog possessing Buddha-nature, show that the Dual Version is by no means a singular textual unit. The variety of mixed responses includes (a) Yes and No without Dialogue; (b) No and Yes without Dialogue; (c) Yes and No with Dialogue 1 (as discussed in the previous chapter); (d) Yes and No with Dialogue 2 (also previously mentioned); (e) No and Yes with Dialogue 1; (f) No and Yes with Dialogue 2; and (g) Dōgen's No-Yes version with Dialogue 2. As with renditions of the Ur Version cited in chapter 4, some of these examples are hypothetical or are pulled out of a longer prose or poetic commentary.

There are several kinds of discrepancies among editions of the Dual Version that are generally based on three main variables: one is whether the positive response comes first, as in (a), (c), and (d), or the negative response precedes affirmation, as in (b), (e), (f), and (g); the second is if the passage provides just the basic positive and negative responses, as in (a) and (b), or also includes follow-up dialogues to each response, as in the other five examples; and the third disparity is whether Dialogue 1, as in (c) and (e), or Dialogue 2, as in (b), (f), and (g), is used as a rejoinder to the negative response to the main query. There are also some additional minor differences in the way the queries are posited. Even though this degree of variability could be seen as a kind of inconsistency that detracts from a renewed focus on the Dual Version, it actually enhances the basic argument for prioritizing relativism in that the fluidity and flexibility of these editions show that there is no fixed response or static manner of discourse. This is especially relevant when the Expansive Mu is considered along with examples listed in chapter 4 revealing a lack of uniformity in the not-so-unvarying Ur Version.

Several of the passages mentioned later appear in the writings of Dōgen. The first, (a), from the *Extensive Record*, is one of numerous sources for the stripped-down Dual Version featuring just the two main dialogues without follow-up, while (b) is a variation that reverses the sequence of responses as found in several works. Other Dōgen passages are (f), which is from the *300 Case Treasury* that contains the full Dual Version with the “Yes” response coming first as in Hongzhi's rendition (d) that appears in the *Extensive Record*; and (g), which is the edition used in the “Buddha-nature” fascicle that reverses the order of Zhaozhou's responses. This version is composed in a hybrid Sino-Japanese format with Japanese verb endings and prepositions used in the narrative, although not in the case of the core Zhaozhou dialogues that adhere to the original Chinese. It is important to note that in the source text, the sentences from the kōan record do not appear consecutively because they are interrupted by Dōgen's interlinear commentary, but here I have strung them together without including these remarks as if the passage were a cohesive unit.

The meaning in Dōgen's hybrid version is not necessarily different from what is expressed in the Chinese texts. However, in the interlinear interpretative sections that will be discussed more fully later, he manipulates some critical words and phrases in light of Japanese pronunciations or syntax that may well break Chinese grammatical rules to comment creatively by drawing out the ironic implications of the Mu Kōan, particularly in regard to the relation between negation and affirmation.<sup>4</sup> For example, with each question and each response in the four-part dialogue of the Dual Version, Dōgen remarks on the intentionality of Zhaozhou's utterances in ways that may or may not be recognizable to a typical reader of modern (as opposed to classical) Chinese or Japanese.

**(a) Yes and No without Dialogue** (*Dōgen's Extensive Record* 3.226)

A monk asked Zhaozhou, "Does even a dog have Buddha nature or not?" and Zhaozhou said, "Yes." Again a [or another] monk asked, "Does even a dog have Buddha-nature or not?" and Zhaozhou said, "No."<sup>5</sup>  
 僧問趙州。狗子還有佛性也無。州云有。又僧問。狗子還有佛性也無。州云無。

**(b) No and Yes without Dialogue** (*Jeweled Compendium* vol. 19)

A monk asked Zhaozhou, "Does even a dog have Buddha nature or not?" and Zhaozhou said, "No." Again a [or another] monk asked, "Does even a dog have Buddha-nature or not?" and Zhaozhou said, "Yes."<sup>6</sup>  
 僧問趙州。狗子還有佛性也無。州云無。又僧問。狗子還有佛性也無。州云有。

**(c) Yes and No with Dialogue 1** (*Jeweled Compendium* vol. 19)

A monk asked Zhaozhou, "Does even a dog have Buddha nature or not?" and Zhaozhou said, "Yes." The monk said, "Since it already has [Buddha-nature], why does it enter into this skin-bag?" and Zhaozhou replied, "It knows better yet willfully chooses this transgression." Again a [or another] monk asked, "Does even a dog have Buddha-nature or not?" and Zhaozhou said, "No." The monk said, "All the buddhas above and bugs below without exception have Buddha-nature, so why does a dog not have it?" and Zhaozhou replied, "This is because it has awareness of karma."<sup>7</sup>

僧問趙州。狗子還有佛性也無。州云有。僧云。既有。甚麼卻撞入這箇皮袋。州云。爲他知而故犯。又有僧問。狗子還有佛性也無。州曰。無。僧云。曰上至諸佛下至螻蟻。皆有佛性。狗子爲什麼卻無。州云。爲伊有業識在。

**(d) Yes and No with Dialogue 2** (*Record of Serenity* 18, *Dōgen's Extensive Record* 9.73)

A monk asked Zhaozhou, "Does even a dog have Buddha nature or not?" and Zhaozhou said, "Yes." The monk said, "Since it already has [Buddha-nature], why does it enter into this skin-bag?" and Zhaozhou said, "It knows better yet willfully chooses this transgression." Again

a [or another] monk asked, “Does even a dog have Buddha-nature or not?,” and Zhaozhou said, “No.” The monk said, “All sentient beings without exception have Buddha-nature, so why does a dog not have it?,” and Zhaozhou replied, “This is because it has awareness of karma.”<sup>8</sup>

僧問趙州。狗子還有佛性也無。州云有。僧云。既有。甚麼卻撞入這箇皮袋。州云。爲他知而故犯。又有僧問。狗子還有佛性也無。州曰。無。僧云。一切眾生皆有佛性。狗子爲什麼卻無。州云。爲伊有業識在。

**(e) No and Yes with Dialogue 1** (*Collection of Zen Entanglements* 49)

Because Zhaozhou was asked by a monk, “Does even a dog have Buddha-nature or not?,” the master said, “No.” The monk said, “All the buddhas above and bugs below without exception have Buddha-nature, so why does a dog not have it?,” and the master replied, “This is because it has awareness of karma.” Again a [or another] monk asked, “Does even a dog have Buddha nature or not?,” and the master said, “Yes.” The monk said, “Since it already has [Buddha-nature], why does it enter into this skin-bag?,” and the master replied, “It knows better yet willfully chooses this transgression.”<sup>9</sup>

趙州因僧問。狗子還有佛性也無。師曰無。僧云。曰上至諸佛下至螻蛄。皆有佛性。狗子爲什麼卻無。師曰。爲伊有業識性在。又問。狗子還有佛性也無。師曰有。曰既有。爲什麼入這皮袋裏來。師曰。知而故犯。

**(f) No and Yes with Dialogue 2** (*300 Case Treasury* 114)

Because Zhaozhou was asked by a monk, “Does even a dog have Buddha-nature or not?,” the master said, “No.” The monk said, “All sentient beings without exception have Buddha-nature, so why does a dog not have it?,” and the master replied, “This is because it has awareness of karma.” Again a [or another] monk asked, “Does even a dog have Buddha nature or not?,” and the master said, “Yes.” The monk said, “Since it already has [Buddha-nature], why does it enter into this skin-bag?,” and the master replied, “It knows better yet willfully chooses this transgression.”<sup>10</sup>

趙州因僧問。狗子還有佛性也無。師曰無。僧云。一切眾生皆有佛性。狗子爲甚麼卻無。師曰。爲伊有業識性在。又問。狗子還有佛性也無。師曰有。曰既有。爲什麼入這皮袋裏來。師曰。知而故犯。

**(g) Dōgen’s Sino-Japanese Version** (“Buddha-Nature” in *Treasury of the True Dharma-Eye*)

A monk asked the Great Master Zhenji of Zhaozhou, “Does even a dog have Buddha-nature or not?,” and Zhaozhou said, “No.” The monk said, “All sentient beings without exception have the Buddha-nature, so why does a dog not have it?,” and Zhaozhou replied, “This is because

it has awareness of karma.” There was a monk who asked Zhaozhou, “Does even a dog have the Buddha-nature or not?” and Zhaozhou said, “Yes.” The monk said, “Since it already has [Buddha-nature], why does it enter into this bag of skin?” and Zhaozhou replied, “It knows better yet willfully chooses this transgression.”<sup>11</sup>

趙州眞際大師にあると僧ふ、狗子還有佛性也無。趙州いはく、無。僧いはく、一切衆生皆有佛性、狗子爲甚麼無。趙州いはく、爲他有業識在。趙州有問僧、狗子還有佛性也無。趙州いはく、有。僧いはく、既有、爲甚麼却撞入這皮袋。趙州いはく、爲他知而故犯。

### Assorted and Sundry Interpretations of the Dual Version

This section provides translations along with a brief analysis of several types of generally lesser-known commentarial materials on the Dual Version that are important examples of literary flourish through prose, poetic, and/or hybrid capping phrase remarks on various components of the rendition’s subdialogues. The sources cited here include a handful or representative samples of different styles of classic Chinese remarks, several of which are further explained in Korean or Japanese Rinzai collections. These comments were proffered by monks stemming from both the Caodong and Linji schools (several authors could not be identified in terms of lineage, but the majority of those cited are no doubt Linji monks). The principle of variation and variability should also not be overlooked in Korea since Jinul, Hyesim,<sup>12</sup> and Gag’un, in addition to commentators from later periods such as Taego, each had their own vision of the role of language and the question of relativism.<sup>13</sup>

#### EARLY COMMENTS ON THE DUAL VERSION

As indicated, the earliest known commentary that deals specifically with a citation of the Dual Version is by early twelfth-century Caodong school monk Qingliao in a formal prose sermon, and this was soon followed by a verse comment as part of an informal talk by Hongzhi. Both of these texts may have been constructed shortly before or perhaps around the same time as Dahui’s initiation of the Watō. There were important predecessor comments, including the verses mentioned previously by Dahong, a Linji school monk, composed at the beginning of the 1100s.

Qingliao’s prose remarks were part of a discourse delivered in the Dharma Hall on the topic, “Being (You/U) itself is Nonbeing (Wu/Mu), and Nonbeing itself is Being”<sup>14</sup> 有即是無無即是。The phrasing follows the paradoxical construction of the classic saying highlighted in the *Heart Sutra*, “form is emptiness,

emptiness is form.” This kind of transcendental logic, referred to in Japanese as *soku-hi* 即非, asserts a contradictory sense of identity beyond all conventional distinctions that greatly influenced the notion of absolute nothingness articulated by Nishida and other twentieth-century Kyoto school thinkers.

The Dual Version is evoked by Qingliao in the context of clarifying the meaning of this paradoxical saying. In the opening remarks of the sermon, he points out that trying to understand the relation between seemingly opposite categories of affirmation and negation can become an impossible obsession, like grappling with the perennial question of whether the chicken or the egg came first. The nature of speech is empty and the categories of being and nonbeing are nothing but mere words, yet when uttered they become the basis for endless differentiation. It is thoroughly unproductive to get confused and distracted by whether being causes nonbeing or nonbeing arises from being. By speculating on this dilemma, “You go to hell as fast as an arrow” 入地獄如箭.

After citing a variation of the Dual Version that features the positive reply followed by the negative one, Qingliao says he realizes that “many of his brothers today” spend their time pondering why it was that Zhaozhou replied “Yes” the first time the question about a dog’s Buddha-nature was asked and “No” the second time. He argues that the crux of the matter is not to prioritize one of these responses over and above the other but, rather, to grasp the interplay between being or existence and nonbeing or nonexistence. Any other way of thinking invariably creates suffering. That is why, instead of dwelling on something imponderable, at the end of the sermon Qingliao cites the ancient words from the *Book of Odes*, “Falling flowers and chirping birds are all [manifestations] of spring”<sup>15</sup> 落花啼鳥一般春, as an indirect and noncommittal lyrical comment that at once sidesteps and fulfills an understanding of the main topic.

In contrast to the Watō approach for which there is only one correct answer, the Qingliao passage establishes a model that explores possibilities based on relativism without being committed to any particular side, while maintaining that comprehending the interconnectedness of replies is necessary for developing a true understanding. His approach seems to accord with the kōan “Being and nonbeing are like vines entangling a tree,” which led to Yuanwu’s enlightenment experienced under the tutelage of Wuzu, as well as Dahui’s main breakthrough achieved by studying with Yuanwu, who disclosed his own personal trials and tribulations in struggling with Zen maladies triggered by this case.

In terms of style, Qingliao does not evoke personalization but instead offers a prose discussion that is rather dry and straightforward while only hinting at poetic irony with his final comment. The allusion to traditional natural imagery functions as a kind of capping phrase in relation to the general rhetoric of the passage. In retrospect, this manner of commenting can be seen as opening the door for the Expansive Mu approach becoming associated with the Dual Version in a way that borrows heavily from the discourse of the *Blue Cliff Record* and related collections.

Around the time that Qiangliao's sermon was delivered in the 1130s—and it is impossible to determine whether and to what extent they may have influenced one another directly—Hongzhi, who mentions the term *huatou/watō* occasionally in his recorded sayings text but never in a technical sense, cites the Dual Version two times. One appears in his verse commentary collection to be discussed in detail later in this chapter. Another instance is in an informal sermon (Ch. *xiaocan*, Jp. *shōsan*), which was usually delivered in the evening in the Abbot's Quarters, containing a verse that is also incorporated by Wansong into the prose section of his commentary on the case. According to the poem extracted from Hongzhi's sermon:

Zhaozhou said Yes,  
 Zhaozhou said No;  
 A dog's Buddha-nature,  
 Is being analyzed all over the world.  
 Blushing is not as good as being direct,  
 When the mind is true the words used are always to the point.  
 One hundred and twenty year-old Chan uncle –  
 Through encountering him even donkey manure looks like a pearl.<sup>16</sup>  
 趙州道有。趙州道無。狗子佛性。天下分疏。面赤不  
 如語直。心真必定言麤。七百甲子老禪伯。驢糞逢人換眼珠。

The relativism of the Expansive Mu is stated at the outset of the verse, and the implication from the rest of the poem is that either the positive or negative answer can be thought of as a direct expression from the master and is, in its own way, correct or capable of transforming what is most base and coarse into the most elevated and refined. The reference to Zhaozhou as being an aged Chan uncle literally indicates that he lived for “700 cycles” of the Chinese calendar, which adds up to about 120 years.

The poem does not appear to provide a rationale for associating Hongzhi's approach to the Mu Kōan with the role of silent-illumination, which may or may not represent a different side of his thinking. What, then, is the real basis for Dahui's criticisms of Qiangliao and Hongzhi? The following passage that deals with the polarity of being and nonbeing indicates that Hongzhi sees Mu not as an absolute truth to be contemplated without conceptualization but as an expression springing forth from the continuously unfolding state of enlightenment: “It is not realized by no-mind (Ch. *wuxin*, Jp. *mushin*) or known with-mind (Ch. *youxin*, Jp. *ushin*). Because it circulates freely throughout the veins and speech of the unbounded true person, there is no place it does not penetrate.”<sup>17</sup> Seen in this context, the contestation between twelfth-century Linji and Caodong factions would not primarily involve different modes of contemplation but rather the issue of whether awakening is sudden and complete, as Dahui suggests, or an ongoing matter of cultivating enlightened awareness, as supported by Hongzhi and more explicitly by Dōgen's notion of the oneness of practice and realization.

An important Linji school source from the middle part of the eleventh century included in the Korean collections by Hyesim and Gag'un is the record of Tianyi Yihuai, a Dharma heir of kōan commentator Xuedou in the Yunmen lineage, whose sayings are preserved as part of the *Supplementary Records of the Sayings of Ancient Masters* (*Xu guzunsu yulu*, Jp. *Zoku kusonshuku goroku*). In commenting on the Fox Kōan, which also appears as *Record of Serenity* case 8 and *Gateless Gate* case 2 where the verse commentary suggests the inseparability of the opposites of obscuring and not obscuring the law of causality<sup>18</sup> as one of many examples in which there are contradictory answers to the same question, Tianyi writes:

In fact, a monk asked Zhaozhou, “Does even a dog have Buddha-nature or not?,” and Zhaozhou said, “No.” Again a [or another] monk asked, “Does a cypress tree have Buddha-nature or not?,” and Zhaozhou said, “Yes.” “If he did say this, Zhaozhou must also be a wild fox.”<sup>19</sup>

祇如僧問趙州‘狗子，還有佛性也無？’州云‘無。’又問‘栢樹子，還有佛性也無？’州云‘有。’若恁麼道，趙州亦須作野狐。

Another early Linji school commentator, Yuwang Jiechen, remarks of Zhaozhou, “But he can still bark at the moon on a clear night” 猶能向月吠晴空, which alludes to an ancient saying, “In the fall dogs bark and in the spring cocks crow”<sup>20</sup> 中秋犬吠, 春日鷄鳴。

#### ADDITIONAL POETIC COMMENTS

The examples of poetic comments on the Dual Version cited in this section are taken with one exception (a verse by Caodong monk Cheng Kumu) from Linji school masters in China. The first five verses appear in the *Jeweled Compendium* commenting on a rendition that presents a negative answer first, with Dialogue 1 (“bugs below and Buddha above”), which is followed by the positive reply’s set of dialogues.<sup>21</sup> A couple of these poems are also included in Gag’un’s *Explanations of Prose and Poetic Comments in the Zen School*.

The first two examples in this selected group represent encomia for how Zhaozhou handled the inquiries about the dog by spontaneously revealing the relativity of positive and negative responses that, like all apparent oppositions, are contained in an all-encompassing whole that can only be viewed from the lofty lookout of spiritual awakening. The first verse is by Pu Rongping: “Yes and No are two parts of a pair,/ Zhaozhou had no equal in his generation;/ Try ascending the gates of the sea to gaze out from a high perch,/ Over tens of thousands of rivers and streams spill into eastern waters”<sup>22</sup> 有無雙放復雙收。趙老機關世莫儔。試上海門高處望。千江萬派盡東流。The next example by Yangtong Xiu hints at personalization, but in this instance it is the process of disentangling through contradictions rather than affirming transcendental nothingness that leads to awakening: “When young and studying the mysteries

of our school,/ I always got stuck on whether [a dog] has or does not have [Buddha-nature]./ While the Old Buddha was purely golden, who today can distinguish forms?/ Confusion springs from quick-witted ones who compete over their reluctance to know”<sup>23</sup> 少年學解味宗途。老倒依還滯有無。古佛純金誰辨色。惑為機智競躊躇。

While the aforementioned verses suggest that Zhaozhou’s dual responses of Yes, it has, or No, it has not, both contain an element of truth even though, in the latter days, few can know this while they squabble in factional fashion, the next few verses all give a tongue-in-cheek comment indicating that there is some degree of errancy in whatever Zhaozhou articulates. In a poem by Cishou Shen, Zhaozhou is held up to disingenuous ridicule such that even the dogs—understood either literally or as a metaphor for unruly monks—are laughing at him in an empty chamber of the monastery:

Once Zhaozhou’s mouth made these unfounded remarks,  
Who could distinguish right from wrong?  
He had to endure hearing so much laughter of the dogs,  
Who, in the dead of night, started barking in the vacant hall.<sup>24</sup>  
趙州口裏有雌黃。句下誰人見短長。堪笑幾多逐塊狗。夜深無故吠虛堂。

The next example by Benjue Yi highlights the absurdity of the question about the spirituality of a canine, which is surely irrelevant to the restless human quest for truth: “The dog has no Buddha-nature; the dog has Buddha-nature;/ We are ever heading off in opposite directions,/ But one arrowhead cannot reach two targets./ Even with its awareness of karma, this is still, after all, only a dog”<sup>25</sup> 狗子佛性無。狗子無性有。從來只向兩頭走。未能一鏃破雙關。業識依前還作狗。 Another verse by Layman Yuezhai, whose comments are often included in numerous classic collections even though little is recorded about his life, combines a sense of ridicule with a complimentary attitude toward the ancient master: “Zhaozhou turned an official seal upside down,/ The sun sets and the path runs out, so he turns back./ He shoots a tiger that isn’t real and (the arrow) quickly sinks all the way to the feathers./ Suddenly a dot made by mistake becomes a fly”<sup>26</sup> 趙州倒用司農印。日暮途窮且逆行。射虎不真俄沒羽。忽然誤點却成蠅。

The following poem by Cheng Kumu indicates that trainees who get lost in the superficiality of the intoxicating smell of incense cannot find truth even when it is manifested because they have become lost in the tendrils of discriminative consciousness: “Saying it has or does not have uses up all of the words./ Urged time and again not to turn our heads,/ Following the whiff of incense we are in hot pursuit,/ As emptiness causes light reflected in water to grow dark in autumn”<sup>27</sup> 道有道無無剩語。千呼萬喚不回頭。尋香逐氣隨他去。空使流光暗度秋。

Ironically, this Caodong school verse expounds on the merit of no words. In a final example of poetic commentary on the Dual Version, medieval Japanese Rinzai master Ikkyū explores in back-to-back verses the relativity of positive

and negative responses while inconclusively remarking on the hollowness of both possibilities: “If I say ‘it exists’, people all think it exists –/ although it answers, perhaps it does not exist, the mountains echo./ If I say ‘it doesn’t exist’, people all think it doesn’t exist –/ although it answers, perhaps it does exist, the mountain echo.”<sup>28</sup>

#### VARIOUS CAPPING PHRASE COMMENTS

As further prelude to examining the use of interlinear commentary by two prominent Caodong/Sōtō masters, the next several examples all show Linji monks introducing capping phrase remarks on various components of the Dual Version. The first two instances from the recorded sayings of master Yuansou Xingduan deal with the two core dialogues of the stripped-down edition of the Dual Version, or parts 1–2 and 5–6 out of the total of eight items:

The master ascended the hall and took up the case in which a monk asked Zhaozhou, “Does the dog have Buddha-nature or not?,” and Zhaozhou said “No.” Again a [or another] monk asked Zhaozhou, “Does the dog have Buddha-nature or not?,” and Zhaozhou said “Yes.”

The Master said, “If nonexistence is taken to be the ultimate (Skt. *atyantam*), then why would Zhaozhou assert existence in response to the second question? If existence is taken to be the truth, why would he assert nonexistence in response to the previous question? Whoever is able to ensnare Zhaozhou will gain everything on earth below and heaven above.”<sup>29</sup>

上堂，舉僧問趙州：“狗子還有佛性也無？”州云：“無。”又僧問趙州：“狗子還有佛性也無？”州云：“有。”師云：“若以無為究竟，後來因甚道有？若以有為諦當，前面因甚道無？者裏捉敗趙州，許你天上天下。”

Note the following alternative rendering of the first two sentences of the second paragraph: “If the answer is really ‘No,’ then why did he say ‘Yes’ the second time? If the answer is really ‘Yes,’ then why did he say ‘No’ the first time?”

In another instance, Yuansou comments on the two main parts of the Dual Version by reversing the sequence of responses in the capping phrases and also offering a final ironic prose comment about Zhaozhou’s ability:

A monk asked Zhaozhou, “Does even a dog have Buddha-nature or not?,” and Zhaozhou said, “No.” Swift like a long sword from the sky, and blunt as an iron hammer without a cavity.

Again a [or another] monk asked Zhaozhou, “Does even a dog have Buddha-nature or not?,” and Zhaozhou said, “Yes.” Blunt as an iron hammer without a cavity, and swift like a long sword from the sky.

You clever fellow, use this sideways and turn it upside down and you will gain everything on earth below and in heaven above. Or, maybe that is all the one-hundred-and-twenty-years-old blind man will hold in his bare hands.”<sup>30</sup>

僧問趙州：“狗子還有佛性也無？”州云：“無。”快如倚天長劍，鈍似無孔鐵槌。僧又問趙州，“狗子還有佛性也無？”州云：“有。”鈍似無孔鐵槌，快如倚天長劍。伶俐漢，橫拈得去。倒用得行，一任天上天下。其或未然，且向七百甲子老瞎禿手中乞命。

In an example of third-level commentary (or a master's comments on a previous master's remarks on the case) that becomes a crucial element of Expansive Mu discourse, Gag'un explains the lines of a verse (in italics) by Yuwang with these capping phrase comments: *A single drop muddles the thousand rivers*: this means “Yes, it has Buddha-nature.” *One blow of the hammer opens myriad holes*: this means “No, it does not have Buddha-nature.”... *The moon is alone and coral grows on the jili tree on Mt. Tiantai*: Mt. Tiantai refers to “No, it does not have Buddha-nature”; corals refer to “Yes, it has Buddha-nature”<sup>31</sup> 一滴混千江者，有佛性也；一鎚開衆竅者，無佛性也...月輪孤，天台柳栗長珊瑚；天台則無佛性，珊瑚則有佛性也。

A more complex approach to the use of capping phrases is by Yuan-dynasty monk Hengchuan, who comments in narrative fashion on four parts of the Dual Version, 1–2, 3–4, 5–6, and 7–8, topped off with some allusive concluding remarks:

During a sermon, a monk asked Hengchuan what Zhaozhou meant when he was asked if a dog has Buddha-nature or not and said, “No,” and Hengchuan let out a great laugh. The monk said, “I do not understand why you are laughing,” and Hengchuan said, “I am laughing because you are a slow-witted lacquer bucket [of ignorance].”

The monk again asked, “Zhaozhou was also asked, ‘All sentient beings have Buddha-nature, so why not the dog?’ and Zhaozhou said, ‘This is because it has awareness of karma.’ Is this really true or not?” Hengchuan said, “What is there about this that is not really true?”

The monk again asked, “Another time Zhaozhou was asked if a dog has Buddha-nature or not, and he said, ‘Yes.’ Zhaozhou was a 120 year-old master, so why would he have given both responses?” Hengchuan replied, “Chan elders everywhere are like this.”

The monk again asked, “When Zhaozhou was asked why the dog enters into a skin-bag, he said, ‘It knows better but chooses this transgression.’ Please, master, explain this clearly.” Hengchuan said, “[It is as if you are saying] ‘Look at how many Zen stories I have memorized!’”

Hengchuan said, “The Bird’s Nest Monk picked a worn thread from his robe and blew on it into the wind, and his attendant was awakened and left.”<sup>32</sup> Then he held up his staff and said, “Beyond the sky, the clouds end. In the grass, the snakes are startled.”<sup>33</sup>

上堂。僧問。有問趙州。狗子還有佛性也無。州云無。此意如何。師大笑一聲。問和尚一笑。某甲莫曉。師云。笑你漆桶不快。問又問。一切眾生。皆有佛性。為甚狗子無佛性。州云。為伊有業識在。還端的

不。師云。有甚不端的。問。又有問。狗子還有佛性也無。州云有。趙州年七百甲子。為甚有兩箇舌頭。師云。老人家。偏是如此。問。又問。因甚入這皮袋。州云。知而故犯。請和尚明示。師云。我暗了多少。乃云。鳥窠吹布毛。侍者悟去。拈拄杖云。天外雲斷。草裏蛇驚。

Hengchuan's comment at the end of the fourth paragraph makes the point, which would also be endorsed by Watō proponents, that a mechanical or rote-learning approach will never cover for a lack of one's own inner understanding of truth. The last paragraph opens by referring to a famous Tang-dynasty monk, Daolin, who meditated while sitting in a tree for long periods and was so adroit that he could split a hair just by looking at it without even needing to use a sword, which was the practice used by accomplished monks.

Also, in the following brief prose comment that indirectly conjures the Dual Version by referring to contradictory ideological elements, Hengchuan writes, "Since people become buddha, the saintly grasp feelings, and since people go to hell, the ignorant grasp feelings. Ignorance and saintliness are thoroughly pure. People are buddhas, buddhas are people. Sentient beings have no Buddha-nature, and insentient beings have Buddha-nature. All distinctions are delusion"<sup>34</sup> 上堂。從人至佛。是聖情執。從人至地獄。是凡情執。凡 聖淨盡。人即是佛。佛即是人。有情無佛性。無情有佛性。總是妄見。

Another example of capping phrases in this series is the recorded sayings of Duanqiao Miaolun, who breaks down six of the subdialogues into components, 1–2, 3 (variation of Dialogue 1), 4, 5–6, 7, and 8, by using an intricate weaving of remarks on the opposing replies in a way that recalls the Yuansou passage cited previously:

During a winter solstice sermon a monk inquired, "Remember when a monk asked Zhaozhou, 'Does even a dog have Buddha-nature or not?,' and Zhaozhou said, 'No.' What does that mean?" Answer: A sword that kills, and a sword that gives life.

[The monk] continued, "All wiggly things without exception have the Buddha-nature, so why is it that the dog does not?" Answer: You can sell a treasure to a blind foreigner.

[The monk] continued, "Zhaozhou said, 'This is because it has awareness of karma, right?'" Answer: When the ocean dries up you can finally see the bottom, but when a person dies you still do not know their mind.

[The monk] continued, "Again a [or another] monk asked, 'Does even a dog have Buddha-nature or not?,' and Zhaozhou said, 'Yes.'" Answer: A sword that gives life, and a sword that kills.

[The monk] continued, "If it already has, then why does it enter into this skin-bag?" Answer: Hounds may chase after them, but lions will tear people apart.

[The monk] continued, "Zhaozhou said, 'It knows better but willingly transgresses, right?'" Answer: If you trust fully the straight

within the straight, then who will distinguish what is good from what is not good?”<sup>35</sup>

冬至上堂。僧問：“記得僧問趙州《狗子還有佛性也無》州云《無。》此意如何。”答云：“殺人刀活人劍。”進云：“蠢動含靈，皆有佛性。因什麼狗子無？”答云：“賣寶撞著瞎波斯。”進云：“趙州道：《為伊有業識在。響？》”答云：“海枯終見底，人死不知心。”進云：“僧又問：《狗子還有佛性也無？》”州云：《有。》”答云：“活人劍，殺人刀。”進云：“既有，因什麼入者皮袋？”答云：“韓獹逐塊，獅子咬人。”進云：“趙州云，知而故犯響？”答云：“盡信直中直，誰防仁不仁？”

In addition, a Linji school commentator whom Gag'un says has views that are essentially the same as what is expressed in Hongzhi's two verses on the case, Guangling Xizu, once asked the members of his assembly to explain Zhaozhou's contradictory responses:<sup>36</sup> A monk in the assembly called out, “When the masters of our tradition speak, they react according to circumstances by saying, ‘No it doesn't have,’ or by saying, ‘Yes it has.’” 衆中道‘宗師家出語，臨時應用，說無也得，說有也得。’ Then the master cautioned, “When they say ‘No, it doesn't have’ they are attached to ‘No it doesn't have.’ When they say ‘Yes it has’ they are attached to ‘Yes it has.’ This is not as good as setting it all aside.” 說無時着無，說有時着有，不若都盧撥在一邊。

The seventeenth-century Japanese *Rinzai Collection of Zen Entanglements* features the Dual Version in case 49, even though it is referred to by the Watō-based title, “Zhaozhou's ‘Mu,’” and this is followed by six cases that resemble the kinds of checking questions associated with key-phrase training methods.<sup>37</sup> These records include:

Case 50, Buddha Straight, Ancestors Crooked: The Buddha's teaching was straight. Why do the ancestors sing such a crooked tune?

Case 51, A Verse on Zhaozhou's “Dog”: Chouyan Liaoyun of Wuzhou wrote the following verse on the Mu Kōan: Zhaozhou's dog has no (mu) Buddha-nature;/ Endless green mountains are hidden in the ancient mirror./ The barefoot Persian came to China,/ Eight-armed Nalakūvara followed the true teaching.”

Case 52, Zhongfeng's “Mu”: Zhongfeng Mingben asked, “What was the reason that Zhaozhou said ‘Mu?’” This is called “The eight-word question of Zhongfeng” or “The question of why he said what he did.”

Case 53, Dahui's “Mu”: Dahui Zonggao said, “Just work diligently on Zhaozhou's ‘Mu.’”

Case 54, Before the Monk Asked about Buddha-Nature: A man of old said, “Before the monk asked about Buddha-nature, before Zhaozhou answered ‘Mu’—what about then?”

Case 55, Penetrate It Thoroughly: An ancient worthy said, “Penetrate it thoroughly!”

### Capping Phrase Commentary in the *Record of Serenity*

Case 18 of the *Record of Serenity* represents the longest and most sustained commentary on either of the two main versions of the Mu Kōan. Here, Wansong provides prose and capping phrase remarks for item 2.18 from Hongzhi's selected cases with verse comments in the latter's recorded sayings in a way that resembles Yuanwu's literary relation to Xuedou in the *Blue Cliff Record*. Like Yuanwu and other commentators, Wansong develops the notion of using various kinds of third-level interpretations to enhance the Expansive Mu approach.

In considering the importance of this source, it is necessary to keep in perspective that, despite its role as one of the most prominent and detailed uses of the Dual Version, this is just one of one hundred case records included in the collection and there is only one other reference to the case in Hongzhi's recorded sayings, a verse comment cited earlier. In both instances, Hongzhi bases his remarks on the Yes-No rendition with Dialogue 2 that is reversed in many other examples, including Dōgen's "Buddha-nature" (No-Yes with Dialogue 2) and the *Jeweled Compendium* (No-Yes with Dialogue 1).

Wansong's capping phrases dealing with each and every line in the case and verse are translated in parenthesis. The case starts off with Wansong's introductory prose comment, which establishes a relativist standpoint by comparing the ambiguity embedded in the kōan to a gourd floating in the water that can be seen from multiple perspectives since pushing it down causes it to bob up and turning it toward the light can make it seem either ugly or jewel-like. In capping phrase commentary on the main case, Wansong indicates that giving a positive or a negative response neither adds to nor subtracts from an understanding of the meaning of the kōan:

A monk asked Zhaozhou, "Does a dog have Buddha-nature or not?" 僧問趙州。狗子還有佛性也無。(Good luck chasing after that clod). (攔街趁塊)

Zhaozhou said, "Yes." 州云有。(Still nothing was added). (也不曾添)

The monk said, "Since it already has [Buddha-nature], why does it enter into this skin-bag?" 僧云既有。為甚麼卻撞入這箇皮袋。(I have to confess that I don't have all the answers). (一款便招。自領出頭)

Zhaozhou said, "It knows better but willingly transgresses." 州云為他知而故犯。(Hold on, don't you admit to that yet). (且莫招承不是道爾)

Again a [or another] monk asked, "Does a dog have Buddha-nature or not?" 又有僧問。狗子還有佛性也無。(They were born of one mother ["the apple does not fall far from the tree"]). (一母所生)

Zhaozhou said, "No." 州曰無。(Still nothing was subtracted). (也不曾減)  
The monk said, "All sentient beings have Buddha-nature. Why is it that the dog does not?" 僧云一切眾生皆有佛性。狗子為什麼卻無。(That silly dog chases after a sparrow hawk). (憨狗趁鷄子)

Zhaozhou said, “This is because it has awareness of karma.” 州云為伊有業識在。(As so many times before, he took the opportunity to wrap up the case). (右具如前據款結案).<sup>38</sup>

Wansong’s point of view expressed in the capping phrases as third-level commentary that complements yet may differ from the standpoints of both Zhaozhou and Hongzhi does not offer much praise for the inquiring monk by calling him a silly dog who mindlessly chases after worthless or uncatchable or, in the case of the hawk, dangerous prey. In the end, the capping phrase comments acknowledge the invaluable role of Zhaozhou in settling the case, not because of either the “Yes” or the “No” reply, but based on the accumulation of answers and comebacks that both address the queries and purposefully leave the reader dazed and confused. The basis of Wansong’s ideology is that there is not any fixed truth because some degree of untruth or errancy pervades all manner of thought and phrasing. At the same, all error discloses some element of what is true. Therefore, any example of verbiage functions as a skillful means or a provisional standpoint that is subject to being overturned.

However, in prose remarks, Wansong’s view somewhat resembles that of Dahui in remarking that Hongzhi’s expression was based on the fact that he felt like he could not avoid applying more moxa to burn away a scar on sore flesh. Furthermore, Zhaozhou’s “Yes” reply is considered a poison that counteracts poison, which is a typical Watō saying about Mu, whereas the “No” reply seen in combination with the positive response shows that, although it seemed like Zhaozhou had no way out from the predicament of needing to answer the question the second time it was asked, he somehow managed to escape from the trap. At the same time, Hongzhi’s goal, according to Wansong, is to enable the trainee to be able to meet directly with (or grasp the inner meaning of) Zhaozhou for himself.

Wansong continues his prose remarks by citing Xuedou’s paradoxical comment that one contains many phenomena yet two has no duality, thereby reinforcing the standpoint of contradiction. This view is conveyed by the opening lines of Hongzhi’s poem regarding the relativity of affirmation and negation that are contained, according to the capping phrase, as parts of a ball or as a single clod or lump, opposite replies rolled into one entity but apparently in an irregular and disjointed fashion. A few lines later, the verse praises Zhaozhou for making a presentation that sets all options out in a straightforward and uniform way, even if the significance is not well understood by the chattering monks who go chasing after elusive slogans:

The dog has Buddha-nature; the dog does not have Buddha-nature.  
狗子佛性有。狗子佛性無 (Beaten into a ball or melted into a clod).  
(打做一團鍊做一塊)

A straight hook catches fish that are willing to get caught. 直釣元求負命魚  
(Those monks today are all dead). (這僧今日合死)

Wandering pilgrims follow the smell looking for incense. 逐氣尋香  
雲水客 (The aroma comes into their nostrils, but still they miss it).  
(穿卻鼻孔也不知)

Noisily, they get caught up in disputes. 嘈嘈雜雜作分疏 (Fighting over  
and gnawing at rotting bones—crunch! snap! howl! bark! *aichaihaofei*).  
(競齧枯骨啞噪吠)<sup>39</sup>

With [thoughts] clear and open, 平展演 (If they hadn't been deceiving  
each other all along, the chatter would've piped down). (沒蹺欺休廝諫)  
[Zhaozhou's mind is as] broad as the universe. 大鋪舒 (When talents are  
lofty, the speaking sounds so superb). (材高語壯)

Can you blame him for not being so careful at the start? 莫怪農家不慎初  
(As soon as a single word is uttered, it can't be pulled back even by a  
four-horse carriage). (一言出口駟馬難追)<sup>40</sup>

Even though jade may have its flaws, it is still a piece of jade. 指點瑕疵還奪璧  
(A clever thief steals without leaving any trace). (白拈巧偷)

The King of Qin did not realize what Lin Xiangru was doing.  
秦王不識藺相如 (Although it's right in front of him, he keeps walking  
by). (當面蹉過).<sup>41</sup>

As with Dahui in addition to Yuanwu and many other Chan masters from the period, Wansong's primary aim is to refute any kind of mechanical expression that reveals a trainee grasping at vapors or seizing ineffectively upon false solutions without genuine regard for the way Zhaozhou's open-ended and even-handed standpoint provides access to truth no matter which option is articulated, positive or negative or mixed. As with fish that all too readily take the bait instead of struggling to stay free or hunting dogs that fail to chase after the real prey, the ignorant and unfaithful are easily led astray to wander aimlessly yet restlessly amid their endless babble.

To further illustrate problems inherent in rote learning, there is an anecdote in which master Guizong challenges a classical scholar who claims proudly to have mastered all twenty-four styles of calligraphy. Yet the scholar is unable to recognize a dot drawn in the air by Guizong representing the first stroke for the character "always" 永 that is used as a model for writing because it contains all of the elemental stroke patterns. In another example in which he is asked to explain the meaning of Chan by a secular official who is interested in going beyond the three Buddhist vehicles and twenty-four branch teachings, Guizong raises a fist but the inspector cannot grasp this simple yet profound symbolic gesture.<sup>42</sup>

The last two lines of Hongzhi's verse also highlight the pedagogical style of the Kattō approach in which references and allusions to obscure legends cause readers to scratch their head before making a leap of understanding to get the point. This section, which is explained in some detail in Wansong's prose comments, refers to an anecdote in the *Historical Records* in which the messenger Lin Xiangru is sent

by his ruler to exchange for fifteen cities a precious jade that is given to the King of Qin, who immediately shows the jewel off to all his attendants and concubines. When Xiangru sees the entourage crying out, “Long live the King,” he realizes that the monarch has no intention of ceding the land, so he decides to trick the king by asking for the jade to show its flaw. Instead, once he gets it back in his hands Xiangru puts the ornament between his head and a pillar while threatening to smash and damage both his own body and the precious commodity.

After hearing a lecture from Xiangru about the value of integrity and trust, the king apologizes and has a map drawn for the handover as requested, but then Xiangru hides the jade in his sleeve and makes off with it while the monarch is distracted and the messenger still gains the desired land for his ruler. Wansong comments in the prose section that Zhaozhou first gives and then takes away, just like Xiangru. That is, the ancient Chan master does not endorse yet does not deny, since all expressions convey some degree of truth as well as untruth. In his explanatory notes, Gag’un cites the phrase “If all of you can have complete faith, then your eyes are under your brows”<sup>43</sup> 諸人若信得及。依舊眼在眉毛下, which indicates that Chan realization is based on equanimity rather than getting thrown off stride by taking up one side or the other in a way that usually leads to an impasse.

### **Interpretative Remarks in Various Dōgen Writings**

The Expansive Mu approach to kōan discourse emerged at an early turning point in the history of the transmission of Chan, as initiated by Northern Song monk-poets and perpetuated by Hongzhi and Wansong, who followed the literary path of Yuanwu more so than the latter’s own disciple Dahui. The Kattō standpoint draws on the inventive and irreverent verbal punches and counter-punches that characterize so many encounter dialogue records, which reflect a rich variety of rhetorical techniques to convey the intricacies of paradox and contradiction mixed with pragmatism and realism. This approach emphasizes that language should be understood as a hermeneutic vehicle for expressing enlightenment, so that ongoing investigation and articulation of the multiple layers of meaning embedded in dialogues enhance the spiritual experience lasting through an ongoing phase of postrealization cultivation.

#### **DŌGEN’S EXPANSIVIST APPROACH**

The Kattō outlook was refined and transformed by Dōgen, who injected into his commentaries on kōans innovative rhetorical styles including extended philosophical puns based on Japanese pronunciations of Chinese words. The role that Dōgen played at the beginning of the thirteenth century in introducing

to Japan the corpus of kōan literature that he had studied under Rujing at Mount Tiantong, where Hongzhi had been abbot a little over half a century before, is somewhat parallel to Jinul's role in receiving and defining for Korean Seon followers the transmission of Zen.<sup>44</sup> However, Dōgen strongly disagrees with Dahui and thus reaches a conclusion that is nearly opposite to that of his Korean counterpart, who embraced the Watō technique, by stressing in the “Entangling Vines” (“Kattō”) fascicle of the *Treasury of the True Dharma-Eye* that language should be continually explored as a process of “disentangling vines through the intricate play of entangled vines.” Rather than stressing the response of “No” as supreme, apparently derived from Hongzhi's citations, Dōgen primarily reflects on the Dual Version. In *Extensive Record* 4.330 he argues, “Whether you say ‘Yes’ or ‘No,’ either one is slander. If the person were to ask ‘What?,’ at the very moment of his speaking he would be hit with my stick.”<sup>45</sup>

In the “Buddha-nature” fascicle, which I have divided into fourteen sections according to Tables 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 to highlight his expansive commentary on the function of Mu and related notions regarding the basic Mahayana doctrine of Buddha-nature, Dōgen scathingly criticizes proponents of the key-phrase method.<sup>46</sup> To sum up in a paraphrase of his devastating diatribe that borrows from Dahui's style of partisanship in attacking opponents, Dōgen rails against “heretics, Hinayanists, beasts, or a pack of devils who defile the Dharma but cannot understand it in their wildest dreams because they have stopped making any genuine effort and completely miss the point, like those who think they can taste a painted rice-cake (*gabyō*).”<sup>47</sup>

Dōgen's approach is based on the view that each and every aspect of the universe in its daily activity preaches the Dharma verbally or nonverbally, and in the “Mountains and Rivers Sutras” (“Sansuikyō”) fascicle he maintains that “mountains and rivers themselves are the sound of the sutras.” His interpretative stance is a deliberately meandering scenic route that seems to be striving for a middle way between sacramentalism and iconoclasm, metaphor and criticism, or mythos and logos. Dōgen maintains the necessity of perpetually “expressing the Way” (*dōtoku*) through “disclosing mind/disclosing nature” (*sesshin sesshō*) and consistently affirms rather than denies the efficacy of all forms of discourse including anecdotes, parables, metaphors, and logical analysis as essential means of revealing the experience of enlightenment. In “Explaining a Dream within a Dream” (“Muchūsetsumu”), he suggests that metaphorical words are not merely “figures of speech” (*hiyu*) but the “true form of reality” (*shohō jissō*).

Dōgen's expansionist approach is expressed in *Extensive Record* 2.128, where he cites a story in which Danxia, an important monk in the Caodong lineage, points out that master Deshan, from whom the Yunmen and Fayan lineages were descended, said to his assembly, “There are no words or phrases in my school,

TABLE 5.1 Dōgen's "Buddha-nature" Divided into Fourteen Sections

Source	Master	Citation	Dōgen's Teaching
1 NS 27	Sakyamuni	"All sentient beings have Buddha-nature without change"	"Have" should be "whole-being Buddha-nature" that is in flux
2 LH 7 (NS 18)	Buddha	"If the time arrives, Buddha-nature will appear" (Baizhang)	Buddha-nature manifested here and now
3 XCL 1, JCL 23	Asvaghosa	Samadhi and six supernal powers reliant on Buddha-nature	Nondependency of Buddha-nature
4 JCL 1	Fourth–fifth Ancestor	"What is your name?" "Buddha-nature"	No-Buddha-nature is emptiness-Buddha-nature
5 JCL 3	Fifth–sixth Ancestor	"People of Lingnan have no Buddha-nature"	Nothingness-Buddha-nature not affected by direction
6 JCL 5	Huineng	"Impermanence, not permanence" of Buddha-nature	Impermanence-Buddha-nature equals permanence
7 JCL 1*	Nagarjuna	"Buddha-nature is neither large nor small"	Distinctions/appearances are like a "painted rice-cake"
8 LH 7 <sup>1</sup>	Qian	"All sentient beings have Buddha-nature"	Being-Buddha-nature encompasses sentient/insentient
9 LH 7 <sup>1</sup>	Guishan	"All sentient beings have no Buddha-nature"	No-Buddha-nature is not impeded by temporality
10 TKL 9	Baizhang	"'Have' and 'not have' both slander Buddha-nature"	Nothingness-Buddha-nature is beyond disparagement
11 TKL 9	Baizhang	"Buddha-nature not hindered by life or death"	Neither clinging to nor escaping from samsara
12 TKL 8, JCL 8	Nanquan (NS)	"Meditation and wisdom are clearly seeing Buddha-nature"	Twenty-four hours of the day manifests Buddha-nature
13 HL 2.18, LH 6 <sup>2</sup>	Zhaozhou	"'Dog does not have' and 'Dog does have' Buddha-nature"	Dog-Mu and Buddha-nature-Mu underlie both Mu and U replies
14 LH 6, JCL 10 <sup>3</sup>	Changsha	"Does an earthworm cut in two have Buddha-nature?"	"Undispersed wind and fire" is not mere coming and going

\*This section of the fascicle is anomalous in that it includes an account of Dōgen's personal experiences of the "round full moon" at Mount Ayuwang in 1223 and 1225, which he visited on two occasions while taking time off from the summer retreat at Mount Tiantong.

<sup>1</sup> *Mana Shōbōgenzō* 115, *Eihei Kōroku* 9.39.

<sup>2</sup> *Gakudōyōjinshū*, *Mana Shōbōgenzō* 114, *Eihei Kōroku* 3.226, 4.330, 6. 429, 9.73.

<sup>3</sup> *Mana Shōbōgenzō* 20, *Eihei Kōroku* 4.328 7.509, 9.65.

HL = *Hongzhi lu* 宏智錄 (宏智禪師語錄) NS = *Nirvana Sutra* 涅槃經

JCL = *Jingde chuangdeng lu* 景德傳燈錄 TKL = *Tiansheng guangdeng lu* 天聖廣燈錄

LH = *Liangde huiyao* 聯燈會要 (宗門聯燈會要) XCL = *Xu chuangdeng lu* 續傳燈錄

and also not a single Dharma to offer to people."<sup>48</sup> Danxia comments, "He was endowed with only one single eye . . . [but] in my school there are words and phrases (*goku*). . . The mysterious, profound, wondrous meaning is that the jade woman becomes pregnant in the night." According to Dōgen, this saying did not go far

TABLE 5.2 Structural Analysis of “Buddha-Nature”

<u>Shitsuu</u> (Whole being) <u>Uji</u> (Being-time) nikon and kyōryaku	I. “All sentient being without exception have Buddha-nature. Tathagata abides forever without change.” a. Without exception have the Buddha-nature ( <i>shitsuu bussō</i> ) b. Without change ( <i>mu u henyaku</i> ) c. Is nonexistent ( <i>mu</i> ), yet existent ( <i>u</i> ), and is change ( <i>henyaku</i> ) d. “. . . root, stem, branch, and leave are still, without differentiation, Buddha-nature as the same whole being.”
<u>Jisetsu</u> (Temporal occasion)	II. “If you wish to know the Buddha-nature’s meaning, you should watch for temporal conditions. If the time arrives, the Buddha-nature will manifest itself.” a. “The way to watch for temporal condition is through temporal conditions.” b. Should watch for ( <i>tōkan</i> ) is just seeing. c. If the time arrives ( <i>jisetsu nyakushi</i> ), the time is already right here ( <i>jisetsu kishi</i> ). d. “There has never yet been a time no arrived. There can be no Buddha-nature that is not Buddha-nature manifest right here.”
<u>i</u> (Dependence)	III. “The forming of mountain, rivers, and the earth is all dependent on the Buddha nature.” a. All dependent ( <i>kai-i</i> ) b. Depending whole ( <i>i-zen</i> ) c. Whole dependence ( <i>zen-i</i> )
<u>U</u> (Being) <u>Mu</u> (No or nothingness) <u>Kū</u> (Emptiness) <u>Shō</u> (Name/nature)	IV. “What is your name?” . . . “You say no (Buddha-nature) because Buddha-nature is emptiness.” a. What is your name—your name is What (I am thus, You are thus too). b. There is a name ( <i>shō soku u</i> )—name is being. c. “Each piece of no is a touchstone to articulate emptiness; emptiness is the power articulating no. . . The emptiness of ‘emptiness is emptiness’ is a piece of rock in emptiness.”
<u>Muga</u> (Insubstantiality or nonself)	V. “People of Lingnan have no Buddha-nature. How could you attain Buddhahood?” a. “The Buddha-nature is always manifested simultaneously with the attainment of Buddhahood.” b. “The nothingness of various nothing must be learned in the nothingness of no-Buddha-nature.” c. It is not the case that man has substance, and has a north and south, but that the Buddha-nature is devoid of substance without north or south.
<u>Mujō</u> (Impermanence)	VI. “Impermanence is in itself Buddha-nature. Permanence. . . discriminates. . . .” a. “Preaching, practicing, and realizing of impermanence by the impermanent themselves all must be impermanent.” b. Permanence is the sense of “prior-to-turning” ( <i>mi-ten</i> ). c. Enlightenment, because it is the Buddha-nature, is impermanent; because it is impermanent, is the Buddha-nature.
<u>Shingen</u> (Manifesting body) <u>Gyō</u> (Activity) <u>Setsu</u> (Explaining) <u>Ji</u> (A single moment) <u>Gabyō</u> (Painted rice-cake)	VII. “That itself is the form of the sage Nagarjuna manifest the Buddha-nature (just like the round full moon). With it, he is teaching us.” a. Trikāya is not a temporary manifestation of Transformation body, but “this very body of ours is manifesting a round moon shape.” b. Personal one-to-one transmission. c. “The Buddha-body is the manifesting body, and there is always a body manifesting Buddha-nature. . . [F]our elements and five skandhas is a moment-to-moment expression of the manifesting body.”

<u>Ushin</u> (Mind)	VIII. “All sentient beings have Buddha-nature.” a. Sentient beings all are being Buddha-nature. b. Because they (grass and trees, states, and lands) are mind, they are sentient beings.
<u>Mu</u> (No, negation, nothingness)	IX. “All sentient beings have no Buddha-nature.” a. To preach that sentient beings have or have not the Buddha-nature is equally to slander Buddha, Dharma, Samgha. b. It is not that sentient beings are from the first endowed with the Buddha-nature; even though you see the Buddha-nature, it is not something to appear now for the first time (not prior to or at the conclusion of practice). c. “All Buddhas have no Buddha-nature.” X. “‘Have’ and ‘not have’ both slander Buddha-nature.” a. No disparagement of universal spirituality
<u>Shōji</u> (Life-and-death)	XI. “Negotiating life, it is not held back by life. Negotiating death, it is not hindered by death.” a. Do not cling to life or dread and abhor death—realize that both are a combination of various conditions being manifested before your eyes, and utilize a way to complete and unrestricted freedom. “The essential is attained when you are not depending on a single thing throughout the twenty-four hours.” a. “Because not depending on a single thing is within the twenty-four hours, it is the Buddha-nature clearly seeing.”
<u>Jūnji</u> (Twenty-four hours of daily being-time) Myōken (Clear seeing)	XII. “You have to realize that Huangbo has the capacity to subdue tigers.” a. “Clearly seeing Buddha-nature, the Eye is opened; Buddha-nature clearly seeing, the Eye is lost.”
<u>Gōsshiki</u> (Karmic awareness)	XIII. “Does a dog have the Buddha-nature or not?” a. “You should be aware that this ‘deliberately transgressing’ may, as such, contain concealed within it the daily activity constituting the emancipated body of suchness.” b. “Although his existence as karmic awareness is existence for the sake of other, it is dog-Mu and Buddha nature-Mu.”
<u>Fūka-misan</u> (Undispersed wind and fire)	XIV. “What about the movement?” “It is just undispersed wind and fire.” a. “Undispersed wind and fire bring the Buddha-nature out into manifestation. . . . It is the Dharma preaching Buddha. Even the time of dispersal must be Buddha-nature being, Buddha-nature Mu. Even the time of undispersal must be being Buddha nature, no Buddha-nature.”

enough because, “Although Danxia spoke in this way . . . (i)n my school *there are only words and phrases* (*yui goku* 唯語句) [emphasis added],” thereby supporting the unity of Zen and language that is expressed with a more sustained though partisan argumentation in “Mountains and Rivers Sutras” and elsewhere.<sup>49</sup>

The interpretative approach of the *Treasury of the True Dharma-Eye* is dependent on, but distinct from, various kinds of Song Chan writings. To retrace briefly the considerable literary connections, the texts that first appeared in the eleventh century—especially transmission of the lamp histories and recorded sayings—contain hagiographical elements borrowed from other kinds of Chinese Buddhist collections treating the lives of eminent monks by

TABLE 5.3 Overview of Positions Refuted and Supported by Dōgen

Misconceptions	Overcome in Terms Of
<b>Anthropocentric</b>	Shitsuu (whole being)
<b>A possession</b>	Mu (no or nothingness)
<b>Exclusively sentient</b>	Shin (mind)
<b>Idealistic</b>	Kū (emptiness)
<b>Cosmological</b>	Shingen (manifesting body)
<b>Potentiality</b>	Gyō (activity)
<b>Teleological</b>	Jisetsu kishi (time is here); shōji (life-death)
<b>Ineffable</b>	Setsu (explaining)
<b>Substance</b>	Muga (insubstantiality); Kū (emptiness)
<b>Eternal</b>	Mujō (impermanence)
<b>Transcending moral causation</b>	Gōsshiki (Karmic awareness)
<b>Transcending phenomena</b>	I (dependence)
<b>Self-limitations of absolute</b>	Ji (a single moment)
<b>Reality (vs. Illusion)</b>	Gabyō (painted rice-cake)
<b>Recently emerged</b>	Kyōryaku (passage)
<b>Original, timeless, beginningless</b>	Nikon (right now); Jūniji (24 hours)
<b>Mere coming and going</b>	Fūka-misan (undispersed wind and fire)
<b>Attainable</b>	Shō (name/nature)

focusing on the ineffable truth embodied by the charismatic personality of a great master who carefully initiates a chosen successor.<sup>50</sup> The *Blue Cliff Record*, *Record of Serenity*, *Gateless Gate*, and other kōan compilations are centered on interpreting a number of traditional cases, which are usually encounter dialogues culled from one of the previously developed genres, to which are added extensive prose and verse commentaries alluding to related anecdotes, parables, and legends. A feature shared by Dōgen's *Treasury of the True Dharma-Eye* and the major collections is an emphasis on admonishing disciples against the traps and pitfalls of misinterpreting cases through a faulty appropriation of silence leading either to an overabundance or a paucity of interpretative discourse.

Unlike the multilayered style of Song commentaries that interpret a particular core dialogue surrounded by prose, poetic, and capping phrase remarks, the literary structure of the *Treasury of the True Dharma-Eye* revolves around doctrinal themes for which various cases and related sayings are summoned as part of the remarks on the main topic. Nearly every fascicle sets up a key Mahayana or Zen notion of philosophy or practice and uses various cases and sutra passages, which are generally overlooked by Chan collections that see themselves as outside the scriptures, as sources for elaborating on the meaning and significance of doctrine. Thus, the dialogue that constitutes the core literary unit of a kōan record around which comments revolve is subsidiary in Dōgen's novel and creative interpretative standpoint referred to here as the "hermeneutics of intrusion." In contrast to Wansong's remarks on the Dual Version, Dōgen does not use capping phrase

comments in “Buddha-nature” as he developed other innovative ways of commenting on kōan records in the *Treasury of the True Dharma-Eye*.<sup>51</sup>

In addition to its highly refined literary quality borrowed, in part, from Japanese rhetorical techniques, Dōgen’s writings reflect some degree of influence from Abhidharma or sastra literature in its use of line-by-line analysis exploring some of the metaphysical and psychological implications of doctrine. The fluidity and open-endedness of Dōgen’s informal sermons, originally delivered to a small ring of disciples and later edited and published, makes the text less conservative in structure than the major kōan collections in that it allows for or even demands taking license with tradition in accord with the spirit and intention of the Tang masters’ original (supposedly) spontaneous utterances.

#### AFFINITIES WITH ZHAOZHOU

Dōgen’s various citations and interpretations of the Mu Kōan are by no means simple or one-sided as these comments unfolded in various and, to some extent, apparently conflicting or contradictory ways throughout his career, although there may well be a consistent viewpoint underlying diverse rhetorical elements. To put in perspective the significance of Dōgen’s interlinear remarks on the Dual Version in “Buddha-nature,” which was composed in 1241 or about midway between his return from gaining enlightenment in China in 1227 and his death in 1253, we must take into account a number of ideological and textual factors highlighting Dōgen’s view of Zhaozhou’s style of teaching, including the Mu Kōan’s approach to the issue of nothingness. When seen in combination, these factors help to create a crucial conceptual context for understanding how Dōgen appropriates the case.

It is clear that Dōgen enjoyed a special relationship with Zhaozhou’s works, including several dialogues that are not included in the canonical version of the Tang master’s recorded sayings, which Dōgen cites several dozen times: the *300 Case Treasury* has nearly two dozen examples of citations, the *Treasury of the True Dharma-Eye* features Zhaozhou’s dialogues in at least fourteen fascicles,<sup>52</sup> and the *Extensive Record* also contains numerous references throughout the collection.

The last section of “Entangling Vines” evokes Zhaozhou as a precursor for embracing the notion of literary embellishment. Of a famous dialogue in which Bodhidharma tries to choose a successor by requesting that each of his four main disciples demonstrate his or her (one was a nun) knowledge of Zen enlightenment, the typical view is that the monk who remains silent, Huike, has the deepest understanding as he is anointed the second ancestor. Like Dōgen, however, in item 93 of the *Record* Zhaozhou finds truth, as well as untruth, embedded in every one of the four responses without an evaluative ladder being presumed. Instead of seeing a hierarchy leading from the use of metaphor reflecting skin as the most superficial element through the flesh and bones of indirect communication as somewhat deeper and ultimately to the marrow of

reticence, which is profoundly true and ultimately real, the Tang Chinese and Kamakura Japanese masters agree that trainees must realize that if they “do not get the skin” they will also not get the marrow, but at the same time getting the marrow requires not abandoning the skin.<sup>53</sup>

In addition to the Mu Kōan, which is cited by Dōgen seven times in four different texts composed over the course of nearly twenty years, the next favorite dialogue features Zhaozhou replying “cypress tree standing in the courtyard” to a monk’s query about why Bodhidharma came from the west. This case is referred to on six occasions by Dōgen, including the *300 Case Treasury* case 119 and an entire fascicle in the *Treasury of the True Dharma-Eye* titled “Cypress Tree” (“Hakujushi”). The latter text cites a number of other sayings, including a poem in which Zhaozhou confesses, “Thinking of those who’ve left home in this realm,/ How many could there be with an abbacy like mine?! An earthen bed with a tattered reed mat./ An old elmwood headrest with no cover at all./ At the icon, I don’t burn the incense of Arsaces./ In the ashes, I just smell the odor of cow dung”<sup>54</sup> 思量天下出家人、似我住持能有幾、土榻牀破蘆發、老榆木枕全無被、尊像不燒安息香、灰裏唯聞牛糞氣。

Zhaozhou’s cypress tree dialogue is also cited three times in the *Extensive Record*, and each of these instances demonstrates a distinct interpretative style. For example, 9.45 features three verse comments including one that reads, “A monk once asked old Zhaozhou about the way./ And he only spoke of the cypress tree standing in the courtyard./ His words in the end are quite marvelous./ Still I regret the delay in hearing about the ancestor’s intention”<sup>55</sup> 有僧問道趙州老、只道庭前柏樹枝、端的之言雖是妙、但恨祖師來意遲。 This suggests, probably in a tongue-in-cheek fashion, that Zhaozhou can be faulted for not giving a more direct reply to the question.

The next two examples express capping phrase comments—a style rarely used in Dōgen’s corpus—to comment on two main features of the dialogue: the incongruity of Zhaozhou’s reply and the fact that he repeats the phrase when challenged by his inquirer not to teach simply in terms of objects found in the external surroundings. In 7.488, Dōgen remarks that students who misunderstand Zhaozhou’s words “are as numerous as rice, sesame, bamboo, and reeds,” and he concludes by offering a naturalistic verse remark regarding the ineffable quality of Zen transmission:

Now suppose someone asked me, “What is the meaning of the Bodhidharma coming from the west?” I would say: Crossing over the remote blue waves for three years. Suppose he said, “Master, do not instruct people in terms of objects in the environment.” I would say: I am not instructing people in terms of objects in the environment. Suppose he again asked, “What is the master’s expression that does not use objects to guide people?” I would say: How could blinking the eyes at Vulture Peak

be a special occasion?/ Breaking into a smile has never ceased./ Four or five thousand willows and flowering trees along the street./ Twenty or thirty thousand musicians sitting in the balconies play string and wind instruments.<sup>56</sup>

今有人問永平、如何是祖師西來意。向他道、蒼波迢迢涉三周。他若道、和尚莫以境示人。須向他道、吾不以境示人。他又問、如何是和尚不以境人底道。祇向他道、靈山瞬目豈時節、微笑破顏尚未休、四五千條華柳巷、二萬座管絃樓。

Also, in 8.9s, a *shōsan* or informal sermon given at the winter solstice that is cited here in full, Dōgen provides capping phrases as replacement words for every line of the original case, including questions to and answers by Zhaozhou, and concludes once again with an emphasis on naturalism:

A monk asked Zhaozhou, “What is the meaning of Bodhidharma coming from the west?” Dōgen said: Your tongue is my tongue.

Zhaozhou said, “The cypress tree standing in the courtyard.” Dōgen said: It is difficult to reveal directly the function of dynamic activity, but [Zhaozhou] offered the ten-thousand-year-old Chan style of teaching for the sake of this follower.

The monk said, “Master, do not instruct people in terms of objects in the environment.” Dōgen said: He is forcing his eyes to try to see the North Star [behind his head].

Zhaozhou said, “I am not using objects to instruct.” Dōgen said: Without any sounds in the branches, the breeze carries the spring color.

The monk [again] asked, “What is the meaning of Bodhidharma coming from the west?” Dōgen said: Next year again there will be new branches profusely blooming; the spring wind never rests.

Zhaozhou said, “The cypress tree standing in the courtyard.” Dōgen said: Who can face this and still catch fish and shrimp? Today, I have something else to say. Do you not want to hear it? After a pause Dōgen said: In the cold of winter, I know the meaning of the green pine, and now I plant its spiritual root on the mountain peak.<sup>57</sup>

冬至小參。拳。僧問趙州、如何是祖師西來意。師云、舌頭是吾舌頭。州云、庭前柏樹子。師云、覲面難呈向上機、家風萬古為人施。僧云、和尚莫以境示人。師云、剛突眼睛看北斗。州云、吾不以境示人。師云、不鳴條風帶春色。僧云、如何是祖師西來意。師云、明年更有新條、撩亂春風卒未休。州云、庭前柏樹子。師云、誰向這頭魚鰕。今雖恁麼、更有永平道取、要聽麼。良久云、歲寒知得青松意、又把靈根峰頂栽。

This passage, especially in the final comment, suggests that only direct personal understanding can solve the meaning of the case since truth is invariably shifting and provisional yet is actualized through concrete circumstances.<sup>58</sup>

## MULTIPLE CITATIONS OF THE MU KŌAN

Although Dōgen is best known for the “Buddha-nature” fascicle, in which he examines the notion of universal spirituality in relation to negation and nothingness from nearly every imaginable angle, including the Dual Version of the Mu Kōan, throughout his collected works he actually uses a couple of different renditions of the case with various interpretations. These include those favored by Dahui and Hongzhi, as well as variations. Table 5.4 shows the seven instances of Dōgen’s references by listing the text and its date of composition, along with a brief overview of which version and type of comment is included. Note that Dōgen does cite the Mu-only response on two occasions—the first and sixth—but the latter example contains the follow-up dialogue found in Zhaozhou’s *Record*. When referring to the Dual Version, he is somewhat inconsistent regarding the sequence of the positive and negative responses, as well as whether or not the complete or partial version is cited.<sup>59</sup>

In the first text in which Dōgen cites the case early in his career before the later development of his distinctive style of Zen pedagogy, the approach seems to resemble Dahui’s when he comments, as mentioned in chapter 2, that since Mu is ungraspable, “I suggest that you try letting go!” A year later, however, the *300 Case Treasury* cites the full Mu and U dialogues by reversing the Hongzhi sequence, and this rendition serves as the basis for the commentary in “Buddha-nature.” Just a year after that, as part in the collection of verse comments included in the *Extensive Record*, in case 9.73 the U and Mu dialogues are cited according to Hongzhi’s order and are followed by two verses that depart significantly from Dahui by relativizing the positive and negative responses to the main question. According to one of the poems, “The whole body is a dog, the whole body is Buddha. . . ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ are two Buddha natures. . . This is really like Samadhi without thought.”<sup>60</sup>

Japanese scholarship generally considers the kōan collections in the *300 Case Treasury*, which includes cases with no commentary, and the *Extensive Record* vol. 9, which includes ninety cases with four-line verse commentary, to have been textual experiments in which Dōgen considered ways of interpreting case records in preparation for the more complex commentarial approach

TABLE 5.4 Dōgen’s Citations of the Mu Kōan

Text by Year	How Case Is Cited
1. Gakudōyōjinshū (1234)	Mu response only, which “cannot be grasped”
2. Mana Shōbōgenzō 114 (1235)	Mu and U full dialogues, basis for “Busshō” version
3. Eihei Kōroku 9.73 (1236)	U and Mu full dialogues, with two verse comments
4. Shōbōgenzō “Busshō” (1241)	Mu and U full dialogues, with interlinear commentary
5. Eihei Kōroku 3.226 (1247)	U and Mu abbreviated, with brief prose comment
6. Eihei Kōroku 4.330 (1249)	Mu only and dialogue, with brief prose comment
7. Eihei Kōroku 6.429 (1251)	Mu and U alluded, with verse comment

adopted a few years later in the *Treasury of the True Dharma-Eye*, the bulk of which was composed in the early to mid-1240s. Kawamura Kōdō and Ishii Shūdō, two of the leading specialists in studies of the formation of the *Treasury*, both argue that the composition of this text grew out of the *300 Case Treasury* and *Extensive Record* because it refers to many of the same dialogues in that Dōgen was seeking to forge a new literary structure that would express his novel approach to the use of kōans in Zen training.<sup>61</sup> The “Buddha-nature” fascicle, composed in 1241, half a decade after the two compilations of kōans, features a mature interpretative approach by providing complex interlinear commentary on the Mu and U dialogues.

Meanwhile, Dōgen’s last three uses of the case appear rather late in his career as sermons in the *Extensive Record*. In 3.226 from 1247, he cites stripped-down versions of the U and Mu dialogues (that is, only with “Yes” and “No” responses) and comments ironically in a way that evokes one of Wuzu’s verses by referring to cats: “Buddha-nature has a nose to grasp, but a dog does not have a horn [to hold]. [With Buddha-nature] not avoiding entry into a skin-bag, cats give birth to cats.”<sup>62</sup> Two years later, in a sermon recorded in *Extensive Record* 4.330 from 1249, Dōgen says that he recalls the full Mu dialogue (but without citing the “Yes” response) and comments on relativism by suggesting that Zhaozhou’s negative answer was offered as a skillful means. Finally, in *Extensive Record* 6.429 from 1251, the sermon alludes to yet does not actually quote both responses and includes a verse commentary on the illusory quality of all discourse.<sup>63</sup> It is noteworthy that additional sermons in the *Extensive Record* include citations of kōans also cited in the “Buddha-nature” fascicle, such as 9.39 on Guishan’s “All living beings have no Buddha-nature” and 7.509 on Changsha’s earthworm dialogue.

#### DŌGEN’S HERMENEUTICS OF INTRUSION IN “BUDDHA-NATURE”

As the longest and most complex fascicle in the *Treasury of the True Dharma-Eye* and the one with the most sustained and consistent argumentation concerning a single doctrinal topic although, like most other fascicles, it does not have a systematic sequential organization, “Buddha-nature” offers a vivid demonstration of constructive and deconstructive elements. In his discussions of the Mu Kōan and related cases, Dōgen’s interpretative method departs from the approaches of both Dahui and Hongzhi/Wansong and is quite distinctive in consistently challenging and changing the dialogues under discussion to create inversions of conventional interpretations.

Whereas Dahui further contracts the abbreviated version of the kōan to highlight the power of doubt generated by the single syllable “Mu,” Dōgen’s Kattō-based approach emphasizes the power of disclosure so as to intrude upon and alter the multiple meanings and implications of the Dual Version.

Dōgen rethinks and rewrites the case along with other anecdotes and dialogues through a dazzling display of inventive reversals, ingenious puns, and dialectical formulas, thereby not allowing a reader to be trapped or limited to a fixed position. In the end, there is no distinction between right and wrong, or winner and loser; or rather, everyone who scores a triumph also suffers defeat, and vice versa. Even more so than his Caodong predecessors, Dōgen justifies the truth that is at least partially expressed by apparent deficiencies and questions the merit of so-called victors, who like Huike in the skin, flesh, bones, marrow dialogue may be judged to fall short of a full understanding.

While emphasizing the parity of affirmation and negation, Dōgen does not overlook the critical and subversive aspect of language whose foundation is the insubstantiality of nothingness, or no-Buddha-nature (*mu-busshō*), a notion he prefers to the denial of Buddha-nature (*busshō-mu*) or the termination of discussion in regard to the implications of doctrine. Yet, each time Dōgen speaks of the merits of Mu, he quickly reverses himself and relativizes this standpoint through an emphasis on U. Therefore, by the time he deals with the Mu Kōan in the thirteenth section of the “Buddha-nature” fascicle, he has already extensively commented on and defused various misconceptions, an effort that serves as a crucial basis for his way of interpreting the Zhaozhou dialogue (or four subdialogues). Viewing the case record as part of a rich textual tradition is diametrically opposed to Dahui, who insists on extricating Mu from any sort of intellectual or historical context that might represent a deadly distraction.

The groundwork is thus laid for Dōgen’s hermeneutics of intrusion, which represents a transgressive discourse aimed at transcending stale interpretations by transmitting the essential ingredients underlying diverse standpoints through employing the following interpretative elements: the comprehensive scope of citations, an atomization of key passages, introducing multiperspectival standpoints, creating inversions of ordinary meaning, and developing imaginative ways of encroaching on the conceptual space of source dialogues. After offering a sweep of Mahayana Buddhist and Zen approaches regarding the topic of Buddha-nature along with a detailed investigation of particular phrasings coupled with a variety of views of negation that foster discursive reversals, Dōgen takes license to rework the exchanges themselves. He modifies the core conversations by making suggestions and countersuggestions in the spirit of a Tang master’s irreverent creativity aimed at enhancing the contemporaneous significance of the case for disciples who were at the time in training under his tutelage.

### Comprehensive Scope

The comprehensive scope of “Buddha-nature” refers to the abundance of citations, references, and allusions developed from the Chan Buddhist canon

filtered through his own reflections and speculation. Dōgen functions as a textual historian or a one-man fountain of knowledge who disseminates Chan literature, which is turned upside down and pulled inside out by the remaining hermeneutic elements. Dōgen examines over a dozen dialogues concerning causality, temporality, language, life and death, illusion, and practice in regard to the notion of universal spirituality. Beginning with the famous opening passage in which he twists on its head the *Nirvana Sutra* passage implying that Buddha-nature is a possession that one “has” (U) by showing that 有 (like 無) has a double meaning and can also suggest that one “is” or, more holistically, indicates “being-Buddha-nature,” Dōgen refutes numerous fallacies. He repudiates views that hypostatize Buddha-nature either as an objectifiable entity or a supramundane perfection, a teleological goal or a prior possession, a phenomenon evolving in time or a realm that is beginningless and eternal, and a reality beyond illusion or an idealistic projection.

These delusions tend to either identify truth with the ordinary world or presuppose a realm beyond concrete existence, thereby violating the middle path. Dōgen seeks to subvert and surpass delusions with positive notions encompassing a unity of opposites, such as *shitsuu* 悉有, or “whole-being,” which overcomes the conflict between anthropocentrism and otherworldliness; *shingen* 真現, or the “manifesting body” (overcoming cosmology versus substantiality); *gyō* 行, or “activity” (teleology versus potentiality); *setsu* 說, or “symbolic disclosure” (ineffability versus reason); *mujō* 無常, or impermanence (time versus eternity); *i* 衣, or “dependence” (causation versus liberation); and *gabyō*, or the “painted rice-cake” (reality versus illusion).

### Atomization

Through the atomization of words and phrases made in his interlinear comments, Dōgen also serves as a linguist/grammarian/philologist and poet who zeroes in on particular passages with a rhetorical flair and razor-sharp analytic precision that reflects his crucial role at the historical crossroads of transforming Song Chan texts through the incorporation of Japanese pronunciations, as well as indigenous literary devices and related forms of expression. The primary theme that emerges underlying various repudiations and revisions is the fundamental issue of the nothingness of Buddha-nature. Of the fourteen sections in the fascicle, over half deal directly with this topic, including the commentary on the Mu Kōan in the penultimate section. In laying the basis for examining the dog dialogue, Dōgen develops a detailed focus on diverse meanings of Mu, embracing while sublating the notions of denial, negation, nonexistence, nihility, and emptiness in terms of the direct and immediate yet continuing experience of no-Buddha-nature.

Mu is one of the multiple ways of expressing the notion of no-Buddha-nature, which must not be absolutized but, rather, explored through alternative possibilities and associated views of negation that, Dōgen says, cause a “reverberating echo circulating through Zhaozhou.” He argues, “The words, ‘no [or: nothingness] Buddha nature (*mu busshō*),’ are discussed far beyond the ancestral chamber of the Fourth Ancestor. They originated in Huangmei, and circulated to Zhaozhou and were taken up in Dayi [Guishan]. You must unfailingly concentrate on the words ‘no Buddha nature’”<sup>64</sup> 無佛性の道、はるかに四祖の祖室よりきこゆるものなり。黄梅に見聞し、趙州に流通し、大滌に擧揚す。無佛性の道、かならず精進すべし、越超することなかれ。

In his analysis of several dialogues that took place between the fourth and fifth Chan ancestors, Dōgen maintains that the nothingness of no-Buddha-nature is the primary concern pervading Zhaozhou’s Mu, which is not a matter of denial in that emptiness is the foundation of expressing no. On the other hand, no-Buddha-nature does not merely represent an ironic confirmation since the categories of affirmation and negation must be subverted and broken through. In hearing mention of the doctrine of universal spirituality, Dōgen maintains, the average person fails to consider what it truly means and remains preoccupied with “such things as the existence or non-existence of Buddha-nature.” He stresses that to comprehend the truth of no-Buddha-nature, “one must not think of it in terms of the nothingness of being and nothingness, and ask instead, ‘What is the very Buddha-nature?’”

The same is true for an atomized focus on U that Dōgen shows literally means “having” but philosophically implies “being” in a sense that is beyond the dichotomies of possession and absence, or acquisition and loss. In highlighting Zhaozhou’s affirmative response, Dōgen argues that the doctrine of being-Buddha-nature (*u-busshō*) is not a possession or an inherent potentiality that exists in contrast to no-Buddha-nature. Of Zhaozhou’s U, he writes, “. . . it is not the ‘has’ posited by the Sarvastivadans [an early Buddhist school of ‘realism’]. . . . The being of Buddha is the being of Zhaozhou. The being of Zhaozhou is the being of the dog. The being of the dog is being-Buddha-nature”<sup>65</sup> この有の様子は、教家の論師等の有にあらず、有部の論有にあらざるなり。すすみて佛有を學すべし。佛有は趙州有なり、趙州有は狗子有なり、狗子有は佛性有なり。

### Multiperspectivism

Dōgen also demonstrates agility with putting forth multiple perspectives through exploring dissimilar or even conflicting and contradictory readings of various cases. This outlook embodies a Nietzschean theoretical facility, which

was in turn influenced by Buddhist thought, of never acquiescing to a particular standpoint without considering complementary and competitive points of view. The initial query of the Mu Kōan, “Does the dog have Buddha-nature or not?” is generally seen as an unfortunate idle, speculative question begging to be rebuffed or dismissed about whether a being that lacks self-reflective consciousness possesses the potential to be enlightened. But Dōgen comments, “The meaning of this question must be clarified. It neither asks whether the dog has or does not have Buddha-nature. It is a question of whether an iron [enlightened] man 鉄漢 continues to practice the Way.” As Robert Aitken puts it in his Rinzai-oriented commentary, “The monk sitting before Zhaozhou cannot acknowledge his own Tathagata. At a deep level he is asking, ‘Do I really have Buddha-nature as they say?’”<sup>66</sup> Dōgen further remarks that this question is so disturbing and penetrating that Zhaozhou is taken aback and at first feels threatened and blunders his way into poisonous territory, an image that could also be interpreted to refer to the way the master outsmarts the naïve novice who is trapped in the complication of words.

When the query is somewhat stubbornly restated by the disciple as “All sentient beings have Buddha-nature, so why not the dog?” Dōgen argues, “The real meaning of this is, if all sentient beings are nothingness (mu), then Buddha-nature must be nothingness, and the dog must be nothingness as well. The real meaning is such, the dog and Buddha-nature manifest nothingness as such[ness].” That is, Dōgen rereads the question “Why does not the dog have it?” as the statement “the dog is such nothingness” or “the dog is no-[Buddha-nature].” By elevating rhetoric beyond the conventional distinction of truth and error, the supposedly deluded question is coterminous with the master’s enlightened response and discloses a wellspring of nothingness-as-suchness from which all expressions derive.

This approach to interpretation can also be referred to as “hermeneutics beyond slander” in that all views, whether representing truth or untruth, are allowed to stand conterminously. Dōgen disputes Baizhang, who suggests that freedom from extreme views is gained through the denial of each standpoint by saying that “to preach sentient beings have . . . or do not have the Buddha-nature slanders Buddha.” In contrast, Dōgen argues, “Despite such disparagement, you cannot avoid explaining something. . . . Although it slanders, is the Buddha-nature disclosed, or not? If the Buddha-nature is disclosed, it is penetrated by the teacher and at the same time it is heard by the listener.”<sup>67</sup> This view of affirming the need for discourse ironically complements the seemingly opposite notion that whether one says Yes or No to the question about the dog slanders the Dharma. There is no set position regarding the use and/or abandonment of words and phrases to express the meanings of Buddha-nature, which can and should be analyzed from every possible perspective.

### Inversion

The inversion of conventional readings of the source record is accomplished whereby Dōgen becomes a kind of postmodern Dadaist who makes use of the alchemy of words, to cite a Rimbaud phrase, to flip back and forth by diverting and discontinuing or cutting off or extending the path of any given discourse. Dōgen suggests that the Mu response to the question of the dog's Buddha-nature is perplexing and subject to diverse interpretations. Mu has various negative implications, including but not limited to, "What a foolish question for the Buddha-nature is not a possession and a dog cannot be enlightened," and from a very different angle that is similar to Watō, a diamond cutting or lion's roaring silence that puts an end to all manner of speculation. Mu can also paradoxically indicate an affirmation in that there is no Buddha-nature apart from concrete existence symbolized by the dog and from the standpoint of emptiness the dog and each and every phenomenon in the universe manifests Buddha-nature.

According to Dōgen, Zhaozhou answered both Mu and U because these terms are interchangeable yet distinct ways of expressing no-Buddha-nature. In addition, Dōgen interprets in positive terms Zhaozhou's ironic reply, "This is because it has awareness of karma." The approach suggested by Hongzhi/Wansong greatly affected Dōgen's apparent contention that the Watō method—not specifically refuted by any of these Caodong/Sōtō masters—creates subtle yet devastating dichotomies between means and end, practice and realization, and illusion and truth. Since causality is inseparable from noncausality, and vice versa, affirming the dog's awareness of karma and its consequences indicates that the problem of the dog's Buddha-nature is oriented in terms of "the nothingness of the dog and the nothingness of Buddha-nature." The phrase (*kushi-mu Busshō-mu nari* 狗子無、佛性無なり) can also be read as "no-dog and no-Buddha-nature," "dog-nothingness and Buddha-nature-nothingness," or "dog-Mu and Buddha-nature-Mu."

### Intrusion

These rhetorical elements reveal Dōgen surveying different approaches to Buddha-nature so that he can isolate and analyze examples of Zhaozhou's response in a way that captures multiple meanings and encompasses paradoxes and conceptual reversals. Disruptive discursive techniques contribute to and converge in the hermeneutics of intrusion that delve further into and alter the source dialogue itself as Dōgen transmutes any and all words and phrases through modifying, sometimes overtly and in other instances with a beneath-the-surface subtlety of expression, the original wording but not the intention of the kōan case record. This approach is demonstrated by the way

Dōgen transforms a seemingly innocent phrase, “Since it has,” in the monk’s retort to Zhaozhou’s positive response, “Since it already has [Buddha-nature], why does it enter into this skin-bag?” This is the same “since,” used here as an affirmation, that is evoked in some of Dahui’s Watō-based passages to highlight, ironically enough, what he considers to be a recognized truth that there is no Buddha-nature since the phrasing is understood in a negative sense.

Dahui suggests, “Since it [the dog] has 既有 [Ch. *jiyou*, Jp. *Kau*] no [or: does not have] Buddha-nature, as Zhaozhou has stated.” Thus, disciples should “simply pick up this statement of ‘No’ as in ‘the dog has no Buddha-nature,’” because “it is necessary to use only the one character Mu [in training],” as “this functions as a sword that extricates from the path of life and death so that when illusions arise you only need the word Mu to cut through them.”<sup>68</sup> Note that in this sequence of remarks there is an avoidance of the implications found in the Dual Version, which includes as part of one of the subdialogues, “Since it has . . .,” rather than “does not have,” the Buddha-nature. The significance of this deviation from the Expansive Mu rendition, as Dōgen brings out in his interlinear commentary, is that it loses sight of Zhaozhou’s style of expression, which indicates ontological rather than physical time. There is an original condition that precedes and is, thus, unfettered by the contradiction of neither strictly having nor not having a primordial spiritual endowment.

Dōgen’s interpretation of the full “Yes” subdialogue indicates, “This monk asks whether Zhaozhou’s response refers to what is currently existing, previously existing, or already existing 既有.” Dōgen suggests that “since it has,” or “since it is,” must be broken down to distinguish it from other temporal indicators, that is, from the ordinary sense of past as opposed to present or of present in contrast to future. Here, he endorses a view of primordial temporality that is discussed in numerous other fascicles, especially “Being-Time” (“Uji”), by making a claim that “already existing might seem to indicate one of several forms of existence, but in fact already existing shines alone.” Thus, “since”-cum-already-existing now refers to a foundational level of being-time surpassing divisions. Therefore, Zhaozhou’s phrasing is not a mere pointer to, but is synonymous with, the truth of Buddha-nature.

Dōgen then questions whether “already existing should be understood as something that enters into or does not enter into [a skin-bag],” since this discrepancy implies a duality of spiritual and physical dimensions, which he considers to be misleading. The very words “entering into,” he suggests, are superfluous because there is no distinction between immanence and transcendence, or manifesting and not manifesting in the flesh. In any event, “the act of entering into this skin-bag is not committed erroneously or in vain” and can help lead to an awakening in that mundane existence is inseparable from nirvana.

By asserting the unity of spiritual and physical realms, Dōgen maintains, “The treasure concealed in the daily activity of liberation is concealed in self

and others.” Alluding to a passage from the *Jingde Record* vol. 2, he admonishes, “Having referred to [concealment], this is not intended to mean that you are not yet free of ignorance. That would be like someone who puts a donkey in front of a horse!” To foster multiple perspectives that are liberating in that they each touch base with the meaning of Buddha-nature, by alluding to an obscure passage attributed to Yunju from the *Essential Lamps Merged* (Ch. *Liandeng huiyao*, Jp. *Rentōeyō*) vol. 22, Dōgen asserts, “Even if you have a partial, half-way understanding of the Buddha Dharma that has long been in error for days or even months on end, it still cannot be anything but the dog entering into a skin-bag.

Furthermore, in his analysis of this part of the U dialogue, Dōgen remarks that knowing better yet willfully choosing transgression is a common colloquial expression that had become known in Chan circles through Zhaozhou’s utterance, but “it is none other than being-Buddha-being.” He then alludes to a saying attributed to Shitou in the *Jingde Record* vol. 30 by asserting, “If you want to know the Undying Man in his hermitage, you must not leave your own skin-bag!” In addition, Dōgen indicates in typical paradoxical fashion that “‘It knows better yet willfully chooses this transgression’ is not necessarily ‘entering into a skin-bag,’ and ‘entering into a skin-bag’ is not necessarily ‘It knows better yet willfully chooses this transgression.’”

#### TALKIN’ MOO KŌAN BLUES

As another intriguing example of the method of intrusion used in the “Buddha-nature” fascicle, Dōgen addresses with humor and irony the issue of the multiple implications of Mu as negation or nothingness when he cites Huangbo’s comment, “No, not at all.” This brief statement is perhaps made out of false modesty in response to a query posed by the elder monk Nanquan, who was Zhaozhou’s mentor, about whether the master has realized the state of clear seeing that is characteristic of attaining enlightenment. In this entry, which appears in the fascicle just prior to the examination of the intricacies of the Mu Kōan, Dōgen mentions a dialogue cited from the *Tiansheng Extensive Lamp Record* (Ch. *Tiansheng guangdenglu*, Jp. *Tenshō kōtōroku*) vol. 8, in which Guishan asks Yangshan if Nanquan was not too slippery for Huangbo and Yangshan responds, “No way” 不然, because, since Huangbo has the capacity to subdue tigers, he could surely be able to dispense verbally with Nanquan.

According to Dōgen’s creative interpretation of the exchange based on his understanding of colloquial Chinese as expressed through the disingenuous humility conveyed both by and about Huangbo:

Huangbo said, “No, not at all” 不敢. In Song China, when a person is asked about some talent or ability he may possess, even if he wishes to acknowledge the ability he answers, “No, not at all.” Hence, the words

“No, not at all” do not literally mean, “No, not at all.” We must clarify what it means to utter this utterance. Even if we are dealing with a true master, or even if the master is Huangbo himself, when he speaks he has no choice but to utter, “No, not at all.” “When a water buffalo appears, ‘Moo, Moo’”<sup>69</sup> 一頭水牯牛出來道哞哞 is what it must utter. [The water buffalo] can only utter 哞哞 this kind of utterance. If you want to grasp the meaning of the utterance, you yourself must try to utter this utterance!<sup>70</sup> 黄檗いはく、不敢。この言は、宋土に、おのれにある能を問取せらるるには、能を能といはんとても、不敢といふなり。しかあれば、不敢の道は不敢にあらず。この道得はこの道取なること、はかるべきにあらず。長老見處たとひ長老なりとも、長老見處たとひ黄檗なりとも、道取するには不敢なるべし。一頭水牯牛出來道哞哞なるべし。かくのごとく道取するは道取なり。道取する宗旨、さらに又道取なる道取、こころみに道取してみるべし。

In citing the Dōgen passage in English in relation to other relevant or allusive citations from Chan sources, there appears to be something gained in the multiple transitions and translations because the sound made by the animal to the American ear just happens to form a homophone with the Japanese pronunciation of “No.” This example suggests that saying one thing while meaning another—or not—is the essential ingredient of what can perhaps best be called... the “Moo Kōan” as part of the Expansive Mu approach.

Dōgen concludes this extensive commentarial passage with a brief verse in which he remarks on a Guishan poem about Huangbo: “A single snare throughout the twenty-four hours of the day,/ Relying and not relying are like entangling vines (*kattō*) that depend on a tree:/ In the heavens and all of heaven, after this there were no more words”<sup>71</sup> 籬籠一枚、時中十二、依倚不依倚、如葛藤倚樹。天中及全天、後頭未有語なり。 In considering this expression, which links Dōgen to implications found in the rhetoric of both Yuanwu promoting discourse and Dahui railing against it, the Watō and Kattō standpoints in the end tend to agree on the need to maintain a lofty silence or—more crudely put—to shut their yaps for a change. Otherwise, that ol’ dog of a special transmission outside the scriptures just won’t hunt.

## When Is a Dog Not Really a Dog?

OR, YES! WE HAVE NO BUDDHA-NATURE

### **Critical Juxtaposition of the Ur and Dual Versions**

A critical yet creative hermeneutic juxtaposition of the Ur and Dual versions of the Mu Kōan is made possible by recovering and reviewing the respective renditions as more or less equitable literary units within the vast array of kōan collection commentaries. Rather than giving priority to one edition in a way that marginalizes the alternative seen through its lens, these texts can stand now side by side amid a myriad of versions and interpretations. They form part of the overall discourse of the case record in which an anonymous monk's seemingly naïve query in regard to a dog's Buddha-nature evokes a complex doctrinal dispute about whether or not nonhuman sentient beings possess universal spirituality. An even-handed comparative analysis of the two main versions helps clarify crucial issues regarding the formation and unfolding of the kōan tradition with wide-ranging implications for rethinking and reassessing Zen's textual history, as well as theoretical rationale used in support of particular practice techniques.

### THE RELATION BETWEEN BILATERALISM AND MULTILATERALISM

The primary methodological concern underlying the juxtaposition is that a focus limited to the Emphatic Mu interpretation may cause a stereotyping and denigrating of rival standpoints. This tendency reflects bilateralism, whereby a certain view of truth is placed on a pedestal and contrasted with its apparent opposite, which is said to encompass deadly flaws or deficiencies that impede and prevent rather than foster an experience of enlightenment. Opponents are unjustifiably demonized, and their texts are sometimes destroyed or practices forbidden. The bilateral outlook was initiated in the Southern Song by Dahui (as inherited from Northern versus Southern school debates in the early Tang) and reinforced by many followers in China, Korea, and Japan who endorsed competition between kōan-investigation associated with the Linji school's Ur Version and silent-illumination linked to the Caodong school's Dual Version.

Bilateralism has been undone and overcome in the current study through establishing an open-ended and flexible multilateral methodological framework. While the polarity between the Linji and Caodong schools certainly occurred, it was probably not based primarily on differences in meditation practice in that silent-illumination was never a formalized standpoint but a straw man set up for sectarian purposes. Multilateralism, by contrast, offers an agile approach that breathes new intellectual life into assorted perspectives that shaped the formation of *kōan* texts by examining semantics and syntax, sects and regions, and transnationalism and transhistoricism. These outlooks reveal a much more complicated pattern in Song and subsequent interpretative materials produced by Zen authorship in China, Korea, and Japan.

Although there appears to be an overwhelming uniformity among various Emphatic Mu sources embracing a common emphasis on the need to concentrate on *Watō* throughout twenty-four hours every day without distraction, there is actually a considerable degree of diversity and complexity in the discursive quality of writings about the meaning of negation in relation to the religious quest. Despite the apparent minimalism and simplicity of the Ur Version that highlights the need for silence by ending all complications of thought and speech, the term “Mu” is used in extended personal narratives and other kinds of commentarial materials, such as metaphysical reflections on nothingness. According to these records, debilitating anxiety generated by profound self-doubt results from a sense of the emptiness of all conceptual constructs, and through the sustained training of a dedicated and determined practitioner the ball of doubt is transformed and ultimately leads to a dramatic breakthrough to awakening.

Although it is impossible to provide precise dating for many of the texts with a high degree of certainty, it is likely that the Dual Version was cited in commentaries with crossover support beginning in the late eleventh century and, thus, preceded the Ur Version. Therefore, the stereotype of seeing the Dual Version as an exclusive expression of the Caodong/Sōtō school’s silent-illumination in contrast to the Linji/Rinzai school’s *kōan*-investigation does not provide an accurate portrayal of the development of Chan during the twelfth century.

Despite obvious discrepancies in terms of the content of the case and the discursive style of interpretations, the Yes-No rendition has often been regarded as a mere byproduct or offshoot of the Ur Version that appears to reinforce the key-phrase method. As some exponents of the Emphatic Mu would claim, since “Mu is not really mu” (that is, the absolute level of nothingness is not to be conflated with or reduced to the status of relative nothingness), then *Watō* can include both positive and negative constructions in that the negation of being, or nonexistence, at once encompasses and transcends the affirmation of being, or existence. Yet, Ueda Shizuteru, the leader of the Kyoto school after the death of Nishitani Keiji in the 1980s, has said, “However radically the negation may be implemented, Nothing is nonetheless not the only final word of Zen Buddhism.”<sup>1</sup>

A careful investigation of variants of the Dual Version indicates that according to the Emphatic Mu standpoint, for which sets of apparent opposites are reconciled by virtue of transcendental negation, the Yes and No responses are not contradictory but are fundamentally the same, since the No reply eclipses and subsumes the Yes reply. Mu functions as an ideological trump card that can never lose out to any other notion or response because it is all-encompassing and all-purposive, but that sense of the identification of contrasting answers is not necessarily applied to the Yes response. This is a caveat that suggests a partiality or one-sidedness lurking within the Watō approach by favoring nothingness, nonbeing, and negation over and above existence, being, and affirmation, an outlook that creates a subtle dualism on another level of discourse.

From the standpoint of the Expansive Mu as understood by means of a detailed examination of various sources beyond apparent indicators of sectarian, cultural, and national divisions, the reason that the Dual Version contains two different, seemingly opposite responses to the queries of the monk—or of two different monks asking the same question, depending on how the passage is interpreted—is not because one side of the coin (whether Mu or U) is to be sublated through the other side. Rather, the Kattō approach seeks to continue to explore the plurality of perspectives without limitation or leaning.

The accumulated effect of the historical and textual elements of a deconstructive analysis of the Ur Version points away from the uniformity of one-sided sectarian explanations that elevate the Emphatic Mu while disregarding marginal approaches. When looked at collectively, manifold presentations and interpretations of the Mu Kōan demonstrate the variety and variability of versions and visions, which undermines a fixation with any single, supposedly all-encompassing approach to interpreting the case set in competition with one or more rival views. Simplistic sectarian polarities are untenable. Attention is thereby shifted toward recognizing the factors of multiplicity that are evident in the history of ideologies and interpretative styles. While religious practitioners are, of course, free and encouraged to pick and choose whichever approach seems most effectively suited to their spiritual needs and aspirations, from the standpoint of scholarly research it is no longer appropriate to endorse a particular rendition of the case as superior without taking fully and fairly into account variations and alternatives.

The Expansive Mu maintains that a very significant role in interpreting the case is played by the follow-up queries embedded in the Dual Version, as well as interlinear, especially capping phrase, comments on each of the four sub-dialogues. As noted, one of these appears in the *Record of Zhaozhou*, which does not contain the Ur Version (or Mu-only rendition), as well as many other classic texts including one of Dahui's collections. The content of this version rests in between that of the Ur and Dual versions. From the perspective of the Expansive Mu, both Mu and U responses are allowed to stand on their own while also being held in contrast in a way that recalls the Heideggerian notion of

“difference,” which highlights the unity of disparity within sameness or identity containing discrepancies.<sup>2</sup>

The sense of relativism that is crucial to the Dual Version can be plucked from being relegated to obscurity by Watō proponents and then recovered and re-established to serve as a methodological model for interpreting the relation between the various renditions of the case. A juxtaposition of the two main Mu Kōan records at once highlights some of their basic similarities or associations and reveals a number of the disparities or distinctions between editions and the respective religious ideas they reflect and embody. Each approach is useful if not taken to an extreme or considered supreme but instead treated as part of the multilateral hermeneutic method.

Sizing up the connections and disconnections between the two versions brings us back to the methodological issue of bilateralism in conjunction with multilateralism. The remainder of this chapter first revisits the merits and demerits of bilateralism as a means of understanding traditional debates, so long as the sense of contrast between viewpoints is rescued from strictly sectarian perspectives and considered fluid and flexible. Then, the chapter shows how multilateralism functions as an appropriate method of evaluating the history of Zen ideology by discussing hermeneutic lessons learned from juxtaposing the Ur and Dual versions for explaining the role of encounter dialogues that form the core literary unit of various renditions of the Mu Kōan, as well as the vast majority of case records. The final section on the impact of a multilateral methodology deals with textual standpoints, in terms of examining the structure and function of kōan collections in the context of comparative exegetical literature; historical perspectives, by surveying and clarifying the epochal developments of the kōan tradition; and theoretical implications, through considering the matter of sentient and insentient beings that are said to partake of Buddha-nature in relation to manifold levels of nothingness.

### **Bilateralism Revisited: Reductionist versus Expansionist Approaches**

Whither bilateralism? Even though it proves to be partial and not sufficient or completely satisfactory for capturing the development of Mu Kōan discourse, a bilateral approach is not entirely useless since there is some historical basis for polarization in that schismatic divisions certainly did take place. Once its drawbacks are acknowledged, bilateralism can remain a useful tool to keep in the methodological chest to account, although in ways that generally diverge from traditional standpoints, for binary oppositions between different styles of interpreting kōan commentaries and the notions of truth they seek to convey. If handled critically through a recognition of how it remains rooted in sectarian conflicts—which, when left undetected, detracts from the goal of attaining objectivity in modern scholarship—bilateralism can serve as an instrument or

even necessary starting point for highlighting some of the main ways that classic disputes continue to inform and shape contemporary access to an understanding of the case record.

### SPEECH AND SILENCE

In trying to extricate from deficiencies caused by an overreliance on sectarian polarities through recasting ideological discrepancies in terms of a common conceptual structure based on the use of live words, let us sharpen the focus to cover two styles of Chan discourse that emerged during the Southern Song: reductionist and expansionist. The problem that lay at the heart of this critical intellectual historical turning point concerned the role of language in a religious movement based on nonreliance on words and letters. The question was whether verbal expression could be used as a means of disengaging from discursive entanglements and enhancing spiritual realization or should instead be seen as an attachment inevitably diverging and detracting from the attainment of enlightenment perpetually in need of being discarded.

The distinction between live and dead words as first advocated by Dongshan Shouchu helped to navigate a middle way between overdependence on speech or silence. Each of the main Song-dynasty thinkers claimed to support the use of words that are vibrant and alive to convey the essence of Chan realization since these articulations represent the expressions of active and creative buddhas. This way of using language is greatly preferred over dead words, which represent rhetoric articulated for its own sake without sufficient regard for promoting the spiritual quest. The notion of live words was based in part on the Daoist sense of imaginative discourse in light of the mystical need for silence. As Zhuangzi wrote to a disciple in chapter 27, goblet words “give forth new meanings constantly. . . . When nothing is said, everything is equal. But words and this original equality are not equal to each other. Thus it is that I speak only non-speech. When you speak non-speech, you can talk all your life without ever having said a word, or never utter a sound without ever failing to say something.” Or, to cite a paradoxical Japanese saying, one way or another all Zen thinkers favored the use of “words that negate words” (*kotoba wo hitei suru kotoba*).

Just as quickly as the formation of intricately crafted and eloquent kōan collections began to flourish in the early twelfth century, a significant conceptual crossroads became apparent. The *Blue Cliff Record* was an instant classic recognized as a pinnacle of elegant Chinese Buddhist writing. Each case is accompanied by extensive multilayered commentaries that explore diverse possibilities for using irony, obscure allusions, paradox, wordplay, and numerous literary conceits both to express and trigger the heart of the awakening of insight. The seven-layer construction of the *Blue Cliff Record*, which is emulated or even surpassed by the *Record of Serenity* and other works from the period,<sup>3</sup> includes

an introductory remark to the main case (in 80 of 100 instances) followed by prose and verse comments plus capping phrases. The text was challenged and apparently destroyed by its author's main disciple,<sup>4</sup> and at this juncture the kōan tradition spawned two nearly opposite approaches regarding the role of language relative to attaining realization.

#### APOPHATIC REDUCTIONISM

The approach advocated by Dahui that was imported to Korea and Japan is the apophatic path of reductionism. This features the supralinguistic understanding of Mu based on an absolute view of the Ur Version by evoking the key-phrase method as a shortcut path for heightening yet ultimately overcoming a ball of doubt through attaining sudden realization without regard for literary embellishment.<sup>5</sup> In a highly competitive and conflictive environment, Dahui and the Linji-Yangqi stream probably felt constrained and threatened by the reinvented and reinvigorated Caodong lineage, which seemed to have died out by the eleventh century but was brought back to life by Furong Daokai and his third-generation follower Hongzhi, in addition to other styles of religious practices both within and outside of Buddhism. Dahui also sought to dispel the growing influence on literati of the straightforwardness of the *nianfo* practice of Pure Land Buddhism while responding to Neo-Confucian thinkers who accused Chan rhetoric of obscurantism and impracticality. He probably instilled much of these concerns into his attacks on silent-illumination.

Based on the notion of the Zen of “no words,” which minimizes the use of verbiage and highlights the opposition between rhetoric and meditation, the Watō method exhausted the limits of language through a focus on a single syllable yet also composed scores of writings about the merit of the usages of this term. A main example of the apophatic approach is the list of “ten defects,” or deficient ways that detract from seeing the Mu Kōan as the primary example of the key-phrase method because they focus on the conventional sense of vacuity or nonexistence in opposition to being or existence.<sup>6</sup> There are several different iterations of the defects. According to a Korean version, the refutation of deficiencies includes (1) no opposition of “is” or “is not,” (2) Zhaozhou’s Mu is not nothing, (3) no principles or theories, (4) do not resolve the key-phrase by making it an object of intellectual inquiry, (5) gestures by the teacher are not indications about the meaning of the key-phrase, (6) the key-phrase is not a matter of skillful means, (7) do not conflate a state of vacuity with genuine realization, (8) do not engage with sense objects, (9) do not rely on words quoted from the scriptures or other teachings, and (10) do not remain in a deluded state waiting for enlightenment to happen.

Dahui’s camp understands the key-phrase not as a skillful means for evoking a loftier view of abstract truth beyond worldly engagement, but as a poison to counteract poison or a way of fighting the fire created by verbal exercise with

the more potent flame of a single nonword that puts an end once and for all to any reliance on words.<sup>7</sup> The reductionist standpoint is symbolized by the stark yet elegant simplicity of the calligraphy by Kazuaki Tanahashi on the cover of this book.

### CATAPHATIC EXPANSIONISM

The other Chan approach that had its roots in Tang discourse and was further advanced by Song cultural developments is the cataphatic path of expansionism established by twelfth-century poets Su Shi and Xuedou, and perpetuated by Yuanwu, who were from Sichuan province, and also by Hongzhi, Wansong, and Dōgen in the Caodong/Sōtō school, as well as the Japanese Rinzai monk Daitō, among many others from diverse lineages. The path of rhetorical flourish that is based on the efficacy of literary expression also endorsed by Juefan Huihong and Zhang Shangying, both of whom were closely associated with Yuanwu and Dahui, highlights an elaborate and thought-provoking approach to the exegesis of kōan texts. This was severely criticized by Dahui for promoting what he feels is a static view of religious practice in violation of the principles of ineffability and spontaneity.

Song Chan kōan collections sought to embrace literary Buddhism by emulating the classics with a regularized rhetorical form while demonstrating an individualistic style of expression that captures the inventive spirit of Tang Chan literary masters. These writings cultivated an aesthetic taste preferred by literati, who stood in eager pursuit of a soteriological experience based on self-realization. The creative tendency of Song commentaries emerged from an earlier phase when sixth patriarch Huineng's evangelical advocate Shenhui was able to utilize the symbols of ritual politics so that a scholarly audience could be persuaded about the merits of the growing movement.

Subsequent Chan teachers, as Mario Poceski points out, “were successful in presenting their doctrines and traditions in ways that appealed to the spiritual predilections and horizons of expectation of elite segments of Tang society.”<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, “Cultivated literati and officials of the imperial bureaucracy—including many of the leading figures in the Tang’s intellectual, literary, and political spheres—were key supporters of various Chan teachers and the monastic groups associated with them, as well as main recipients of their teachings in their oral and textual forms.”<sup>9</sup>

From the standpoint of a regional analysis, some of the roots of the literary style of the major kōan collections can be traced back to influences stemming from the Longmian area in Anhui province, where in the eleventh century a monk named Baiyun (who occupied a mountain temple by that name) helped to develop the use of verse comments on kōan cases accompanied by prose remarks on poetry. Baiyun enjoyed a tremendous following of monks representing various Chan streams, including the Linji and Yunmen, as well as

Caodong, lineages, and he at once entertained, instructed, inspired, and challenged them with his rhetorical skills. Among the followers was Wuzu along with precursors of Hongzhi. According to an analysis of this period, “Their poetic exchanges reveal that poetry had become an integral part of monastic life. For the literati, poetry had long been an essential form of communication; clerics also made poetry their leisure pursuit as well as a medium of Chan dialectics. To earn the respect of their lay followers, Chan monks had to be both good writers and scholars of literature.”<sup>10</sup> Out of this context, the origins were formed of the brief *songgu*-style verse comments on cases that were further developed by Xuedou.

The advocacy of literary Chan during the Northern Song led to eloquent iterations in novel ways of calls to unify “Chan and the teachings” (*Chanjiao*) or to “practice Chan upon the foundation of the teachings.” These trends included a revival of scriptural studies fostered by the first appearance of published editions of the canon based on new printing technology, as well as the general rise in education and erudition during the Song dynasty. This resulted in the creation and categorizing of numerous kinds of Chan chronicles, compendia, and catalogues, many of which incorporated prolific tracts of commentaries on public cases that borrowed from the regularity and rhythmic quality of the ode-based roots of poetic composition, in addition to prose styles of remarks appropriate to the task of capturing and evaluating the rhyming of verse. The expansionist standpoint is highlighted by the calligraphy in Figure 6.1 by Su Shi, “unlimited treasury amid not one thing” 無一物中無盡藏 (note that the character “Mu” appears twice in this phrase and that neither meaning is strictly positive or negative).



FIGURE 6.1 *Su Shi Calligraphy.*

## DOUBT VERSUS DISCLOSURE

At this stage of the discussion, we might consider intensifying rather than rejecting bilateralism through contrasting the power of doubt with the power of disclosure to accommodate the disparity between apophatic reductionism stressing the word to end all words in opposition to cataphatic expansionism emphasizing the flexibility of elaborate wording. The Watō method is similar to the contemplative prayer recommended by the anonymous author of the medieval English contemplative text *The Cloud of Unknowing*, who argues that “it is quite sufficient to focus your attention on a single word such as sin or God (or another one you might prefer) and without the intervention of analytical thought allow yourself to experience directly the reality it signifies. The one syllable prayer is like crying out ‘help!’ or ‘fire!’”<sup>11</sup> But, the author of *The Cloud* warns, “Do not use clever logic to examine or explain this word to yourself nor allow yourself to ponder its ramifications. . . . I do not believe reasoning ever helps in the contemplative work. That is why I advise you to leave these words whole. . . . When you think of sin, intend nothing in particular but only yourself, though nothing in particular in yourself either.”<sup>12</sup>

In some ways, Dōgen’s approach to the case of whether the dog has Buddha-nature has an affinity with Dahui’s, especially when he suggests that “this syllable Mu has that power of the sun to melt rocks.”<sup>13</sup> Both thinkers avoid seeing Mu in an ordinary sense in opposition with being or existence, but Dōgen attains nonattachment through formulating new doctrines. His approach maintains that there is no poison to curtail and no fire to douse since all forms of expression, from lofty rhetoric to everyday idiomatic locutions, contain some version of the truth and therefore should be examined and expanded upon to the fullest extent.

For Dōgen, the freedom of transcending discourse lies in awareness that discourse itself is an ongoing process of transcendence. As he writes in the following Japanese verse, which intentionally undermines and reverses the conventional meaning of its title, “No reliance on words and letters,” by emphasizing continual communication rather than silence: “Not limited/ By language/ [Dharma] is ceaselessly expressed;/ So, too, the way of letters/ Can display but not exhaust it.”<sup>14</sup> While Dōgen seems to concur with the refutation of some of the ten defects by not thinking of Mu in terms of the puzzling categories of Yes and No, in other instances he clearly violates other rules that Watō followers have decreed based on absolutizing Mu as a state that is equivalent to Buddha-nature.

Dōgen’s critique of the Watō approach thus reflects several concerns. Philosophically, he seeks to establish firmly the middle way that encompasses the oneness of means and end, practice and realization, activity and anticipation without any subtle gap separating these apparent opposites. Psychologically, Dōgen emphasizes the interplay of thought and thoughtlessness to open up

all possible approaches to enlightenment experience. From the standpoint of religious language, he values the deconstructive function of metaphor and symbol as semantic and nonsemantic modes of disclosing the no-thing-ness of nothingness.

The Kattō-based argument appears to be: Is it reasonable or even desirable to use words such as Mu (or, in *The Cloud*, “sin” or “God”) that are loaded with so many levels of meaning and implication reflecting the historical development of doctrine only to defeat thought and discourse? Isn’t it preferable to explore the polysemy of such words while remaining free from commitment to any particular meaning? This is the “language of Samadhi,” or the liberating and playful (*asobiteki* 遊び的) expressions of awakened consciousness.<sup>15</sup> Subversion extricates from obstacles in a sense parallel to Jacques Derrida’s view of the repletion of language: “Its freedom is to exploit every latent connection, every associative bond, every phonic, graphic, semiotic, and semantic link, and every relation of whatever sort which exists among signifiers, in order to set forth the power of repetition in all its productivity, inventiveness, and freedom.”<sup>16</sup>

In summing up areas of historical and theoretical debate, Table 6.1 provides a brief revisionist bilateral overview of the distinctions between two different versions and visions of the Mu Kōan in relation to other aspects of Zen discourse and practice.

The last entry is particularly significant because Watō is associated with an emphasis on awakening as an end in itself attained through an informative source of teaching, whereas Kattō endorses ongoing practice after the initial event of spontaneous awareness via postrealizational continuous reflection on puzzles and paradoxes.

TABLE 6.1 Bilateral Comparison of Zen Styles

Version	Ur (Mu)	Dual (Mu-U)
<b>School</b>	Linji	Caodong
<b>View</b>	Lettered Chan	No-Word Chan
<b>Audience</b>	Lay plus Monastic	Monastic mainly
<b>Expression</b>	Apophatic	Cataphatic
<b>Language</b>	Reductionist	Expansionist
<b>Literature</b>	Distraction	Embellishment
<b>Meditation</b>	Kōan-investigation	Silent-illumination
<b>Means</b>	Doubt	Disclosure
<b>Pathway</b>	Shortcut	Scenic Route
<b>Transcendence</b>	Absolutism	Relativism
<b>Learning</b>	Unknowing	Erudition
<b>Pedagogy</b>	Direct Instruction	Enigmatic Dialectic
<b>Attainment</b>	Sudden Realization	Postrealization cultivation

## Re-Establishing Multilateralism

While the previous discussion based on bilateralism enriches the methodological options for developing a hermeneutics of the Mu Kōan, stopping here would not take us out of the impasse of assessing contradictory views derived from sectarian debates. Bilateralism has a compelling justification that cannot be easily denied since the history of polarized breakdowns of competing, conflicting, and contradictory standpoints is abundant. However, in the final analysis, multilateralism prevails because the interpretative situation is far too complex to be reduced to oppositions of positivity or negativity, activity or passivity, or speech or silence in ways that represent a throwback to traditional contrasts that were greatly affected by sociopolitical forces. Delving further into multilateralism calls for reorienting and reinvigorating—but without going as far as reinventing—the critical analysis around central ideological themes regarding textuality, historicity, and philosophy that are shared by all participants in kōan debates.

In light of Ueda's comment relativizing the significance of nothingness, it should be noted that the Ur and Dual versions, which both contain truth and untruth, are compatible in the sense that no Zen thinker ever renounces language and expression altogether as detrimental to the spiritual quest since Watō proponents wrote voluminous works, just as no Kattō proponent embraces language and the embellishments of rhetoric without reservation and wariness of its potential to distract and constrain the pursuit of enlightenment. Therefore, in studies of the Mu Kōan and related literature, the goal is to remain open to strains of multiplicity and variability yet without losing sight of binary pairings when this represents a fair and applicable assessment.

### TEXTUAL HERMENEUTICS

To evoke another textual tradition as a means of clarifying differences between apophatic and cataphatic standpoints in Zen in terms of how they fulfill the standard of expressing live words, the structure of kōan collections in their intricacy and complexity can be compared to the “wraparound” commentary of the Jewish Talmud. A typical Talmudic page features numerous layers of exegesis in explicating an important passage contributed by different thinkers over various stages of history. A critical term or saying may be placed near the upper center of the page, with three or more levels of commentary surrounding it. The image in Figure 6.2, taken from the facsimile of an antique printing of an annotated scroll edition of the *Record of Serenity*, resembles the Talmud's multilayered quality.

The image of a representative page selected from the Hebrew text shows the potential for moving in the direction nearly opposite to that



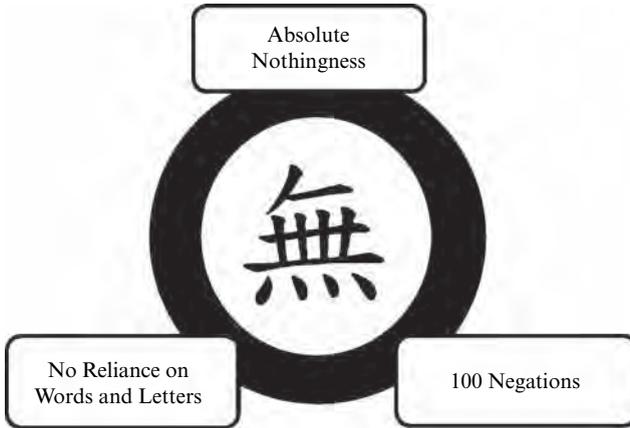
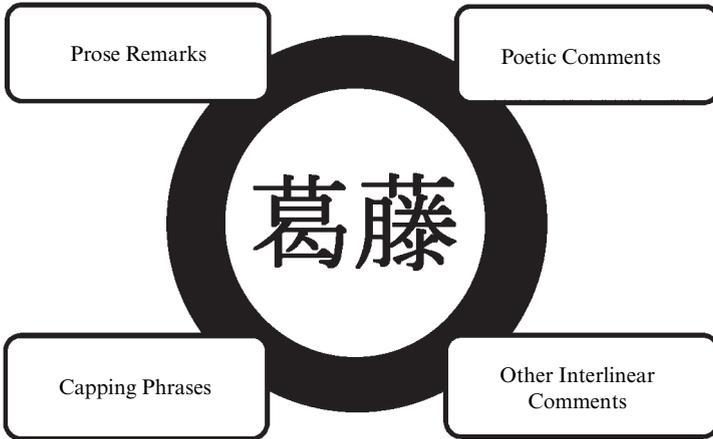
FIGURE 6.2 Record of Serenity Case 18 (Mu Kōan).

of increasing elaborate commentary. For example, a main term cited in a Talmudic passage—(law)—is the first word of a sentence that is set to stand apart from the rest of the material and, thus, indicates the capacity to focus extensively, or in some instances exclusively, on a particular term or phrase while relegating the rest of the passage to secondary status. That possible emphasis corresponds to the approach used by Dahui, who came to reject his mentor’s complex view of language by promoting a single-minded focus on Mu as a shortcut to awakening.

In light of the cross-cultural comparison of textual structures, which of the two basic Zen outlooks seems to be more true to the ideal of realization conveyed through live words? Or is that the wrong question to be asking, since it can lead to a replay of traditional sectarian discord? The image in Figure 6.3, which was cited in chapter 2 as exemplary of the Watō approach that delimits commentary yet alludes to various views of negation, is now contrasted with the expansive approach of “Kattō,” located in the center of Figure 6.4, which encourages the embellishment of interpretative remarks.

Both of these textual templates can be encompassed by the diagram in Figure 6.5, which highlights the importance of considering the primacy of encounter dialogues for fulfilling the function of live words. Interpretative standpoints related to practice methods are now seen as variations on a central, unifying theme.<sup>17</sup>

Regardless of which view of Song dynasty approaches is supported, some contemporary commentators may look back and find that the sayings of Tang

FIGURE 6.3 *Mu in Circle*.FIGURE 6.4 *Kattō*.

masters are the only true live words, and that nearly all of the literary developments that took place during the later period represent a form of dead words. Any particular understanding of what constitutes live or dead words can easily be eclipsed by another earlier or subsequent standpoint, or turned on its head through a subtle interpretative move or collateral reading that strikes a new chord. Furthermore, there are many different variations and complexities of elucidation involved in each of the perspectives.

#### HISTORICAL HERMENEUTICS

Because of the accelerated pace of Chan textual and ritual developments during the Song, there was a rapid transformation of kōans from products of rhetorical creativity to the performance of a ceremonial or formal ritual by

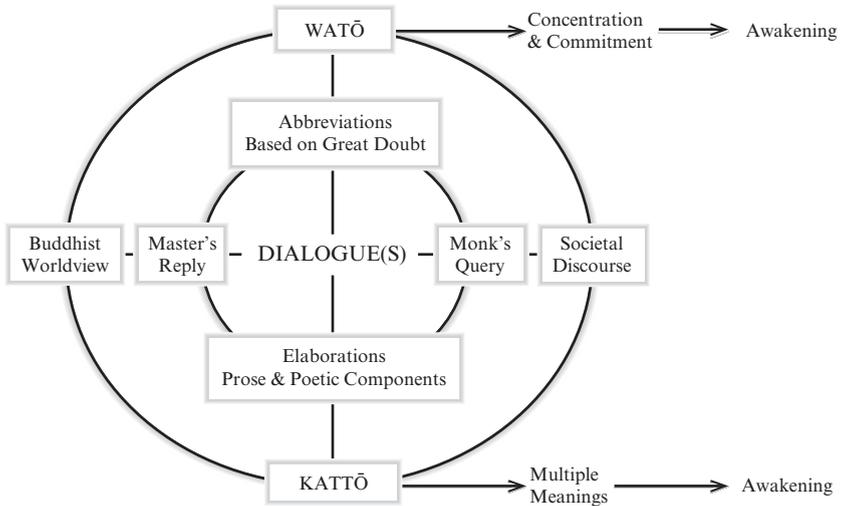


FIGURE 6.5 *Textual Hermeneutics of the Mu Kōan.*

enacting and re-enacting classic narratives based on dialogical exchanges. The formation of kōans as a literary device was greatly influenced by the public records of the courts, as well as narratives told about legal investigations. These accounts took delight, often conveyed through paradoxical whimsy, in unusual and shocking episodes of flagrant violations of law and exceptional or anomalous attitudes, since conventional and habitual forms of behavior have little pedagogical value.

After a decline in patronage was being observed, the Watō method was developed and Mu was wielded as a spiritual instrument to gain support among the laity. This transition altered the general function of kōans into a catechistic exercise that, according to some historians, is something else altogether from its roots.<sup>18</sup> In this context, the kōan became a scripted device to be memorized, even while almost all commentators consistently warned against the pitfalls of rote learning. The shift took place so quickly and was then affirmed so radically that historiographical accounts of the period easily get blurred or distorted.

A phenomenon found in many types of discourse, Buddhist and non-Buddhist, is that a thinker might insist on the purity of a particular opinion accompanied by disdain for rival standpoints in repudiating the approaches of close colleagues or even his own teacher. This is seen in the example of discord between Yuanwu and Dahui, as well as between the latter and Hongzhi. This conflict is comparable to the break between Hōnen and Shinran in regard to the role of *nembutsu* recitation while establishing two different schools of Pure Land Buddhism (Jōdo and Jōdo-shin) in Japan nearly a century later. That rift took place during the Kamakura era’s emphasis on religious “selection” (*sentaku*), whereby adherents were expected to choose an exclusive path

to enlightenment. In conflictive settings, compromise is often thought to be inappropriate and corrupt.

At the same time, other figures in the tradition may see the merit of openness and tractability and invite syncretism and synthesis. Some thinkers sought to harmonize and unify the literary and no-word approaches, or to find underlying connections between kōan-investigation and silent-illumination within Zen schools or—across sectarian boundaries—between the key-phrase method and *nianfo/nembutsu* recitation, as well as Zen-style meditation and esoteric forms of ritual practice. That kind of intrastream and extrastream fluidity is one of many factors that shows how a bilateral approach can be useful to a point but remains incomplete by conflating ideology with history and allowing apologetics that revolves around misleading binary oppositions while overlooking variations in discourse to interfere with an impartial historical hermeneutic analysis.

Bilateralism generally rears its head in accounts of Southern Song Chan discourse. Despite considerable variability in his approach to kōans during the different phases of his career, in addition to questions about whether he addressed primarily a monastic or literati audience, Dahui's legacy for generations of adherents has been a firm and consistent view that stands in direct contrast with Hongzhi. Because of high-pitched partisan rhetoric in twelfth-century China, as well as eighteenth-century Japan, there is often a misimpression that Dahui and therefore the entire Linji school stood exclusively for the use of kōans, whereas Hongzhi and the entire Caodong school stood one-sidedly against it, or that the former's approach was innovative and dynamic and the latter's quietist and withdrawn from engagement (or vice versa).<sup>19</sup>

By dealing with debates about the Mu Kōan in terms of triangulating the approaches in China-Korea-Japan that unfolded over the course of several centuries, meaningful conclusions that are quite different from those implied by bilateralism can be drawn but without necessarily excluding some of the either/or implications that remain valid. This serves to broaden the intellectual historical context while also sharpening the focus on specific teachings through clarifying points of opposition and connection between reductionist and expansionist standpoints.<sup>20</sup>

For example, Yuanwu, the great literary embellisher, is also sensitive to the issue of the limitations of language. According to his discussion of Xuedou's verse comment on the first case in the *Blue Cliff Record*, which deals with the dialogue in which Bodhidharma tells the emperor that there is “no merit” accrued for good deeds and that he has “no name”:

Those who have eyes see that [Xuedou] uses only four lines of verse to settle the whole case by picking up this and considering that, or praising here and bashing there. Generally, verse comments explicate Chan just by using a meandering approach while prose comments solve a kōan through remarking on its overall meaning, and that is all. But here Xuedou pinches hard and does not let go. . . .<sup>21</sup>

若是具眼者看他一拈一掇一褒一貶只用四句拈定一則公案。大凡頌古只是繞路說禪拈古大綱據款結案而已。雪竇與他一撈...

Other renderings of this passage stress that it highlights a basic difference between poetic and prose commentary, with the latter playing a superior role, or that both styles have a positive function in evoking Chan enlightenment. A careful reading suggests that, at the outset of his collection, Yuanwu emphasizes the innate deficiencies of commentarial discourse, whether poetry or prose, while also showing how appropriate language, as in the verse commentary by Xuedou, is necessary and useful for expressing insight into the meaning of kōan cases.

While Yuanwu's approach to the role of language is less clear-cut than might be expected, Dahui's views of discourse in relation to meditation are complicated by the fact that he developed the key-phrase method in competition with representatives of other Buddhist schools for the affiliation of elite lay practitioners. Scholar-officials sought the freedom that Chan spirituality promised but were often unable to make a commitment to the discipline that this required. However, a concern for literati affiliation was not always shared either by Dahui's own followers or those of rival movements. With regard to the issue of meditative practice primarily involving monastic practitioners, it is possible to see the approaches of kōan-investigation and silent-illumination as having a common goal. Both techniques were concerned with moderating the excesses of anti-intellectualism and dependence on rationality as they struggled to find the balance for generating an experience of "movement within stillness" 靜中動 (*seichūdō*), or vice versa.

Dahui's diversified approach is in part reflected in the multifaceted thought of the followers of Jinul, who was influenced by the Watō only in the final phase of his life, or from 1209 to 1210, after years of engaging with Huayan thought, as well as the teachings of Zongmi. Jinul continued Dahui's path of supralinguistics with Mu as the primary example of exhausting discourse while revealing direct involvement with live words—as opposed to the supposed meaning in dead words—as realization of the "mystery of mystery" (Ch. *xuanzhong xuan*, Kr. *hyoenjunghyoen*).<sup>22</sup> Since Jinul's focus was on the monks who were most highly advanced in spiritual development, he did not express concern for the spirituality of nonmonastics that was such a key motivation for Dahui.

In compiling a list of hundreds of cases with prose and verse remarks, Hyesim followed Jinul's pattern of putting a greater emphasis on the catalytic quality of doubt, which results in the attainment of sudden enlightenment supported by gradual cultivation. Like Taego a century and a half later, Hyesim did not generally make use of the rhetorical flourish of the *Blue Cliff Record*, but he did compose commentaries based on an extensive familiarity with Chinese Chan literary sources to highlight the sequential developmental stages in the psychology of contemplation. Gag'un incorporated a dimension of Song-style interpretations by citing and explicating Chinese Chan prose,

verse, and capping phrase remarks on cases selected by Hyesim and those he added to the collection, so it is not a surprise that when these explications vary from orthodoxy he is criticized for overscrutinizing cases in a way that recalls lettered Chan.

Hyesim's approach has had a lasting impact on subsequent periods of Seon lineages, which trace themselves back to Taego, including revivalist trends in the modern period that emerged after centuries of the suppression of Buddhism by Confucian rulers. For much of its history, Seon thinkers were primarily concerned with counseling monks in training and did not have a strong interest in appealing to nonmonastics. But this emphasis has been significantly encouraged in the modern period and continues to evolve and become more complex and varied. Outreach to laypersons has emerged as a critical evangelical tool, once again in a highly competitive environment in which Christianity has replaced Confucianism as the main rival to Buddhism.

In considering the transmission to Japan, although Hongzhi is labeled a proponent of silent-illumination, his literary production closely resembles that of Dahui's teacher, Yuanwu, and greatly influenced but was not necessarily followed in kind by Dōgen. Just as Jinul was by no means a Korean clone of Dahui, Dōgen's approach is quite different than that of his Chinese ancestor.<sup>23</sup> It is misleading to try to understand Dōgen as an heir to silent-illumination since his mentor Rujing was a member of the Caodong school three generations after Hongzhi or because Dōgen joined the polemical battle by occasionally criticizing Dahui more harshly than his Chinese predecessors. Although he reverentially referred to Hongzhi as an "Old Buddha," the term apparently first used by Yunmen in regard to Zhaozhou, Dōgen's relation to both Dahui and Hongzhi is complex. He at once praises and critiques both of them in various contexts, so that it is important to consider the time and place of the citations and/or refutations in light of other aspects of discursive production at different points in his career.

Seeing Dōgen in strictly sectarian terms fails to appreciate the full significance of his hermeneutics of intrusion in the "Buddha-nature" fascicle, which alters the grammatical structure of Chinese passages of the Dual Version that Dōgen cites and comments on in Japanese, while evoking a complex web of intertextual relations to his Chinese forerunners and rivals.<sup>24</sup> The Sōtō sect's founder—a designation that apparently came into play decades after his death through the efforts of the evangelical syncretist, Keizan, since Dōgen himself disputes sectarian labels—uses interpretative techniques somewhat comparable to, yet rather distinct from, the sophistication of capping phrase commentary.

While the primary emphasis revolves around prominent figures in China, Korea, and Japan during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it is important to note that the capping phrase technique was employed by fourteenth-century Rinzai master Daitō, an heir to the Yangqi/Yōgi stream. Although Daitō primarily deals with cases from the *Blue Cliff Record*, he also engages the Mu Kōan based on the *Record of Zhaozhou's* version of the case (with the Mu

response plus follow-up dialogue), rather than either the Ur or Dual versions, which was rather unusual for that time. In subsequent stages of the Japanese medieval period in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, both Rinzai and Sōtō abbots generally commented through public sermons and various other styles of exegesis on the Ur Version derived from the *Gateless Gate*, the most frequently cited text for both schools despite the Edo-period convention that it was exclusively for the Rinzai sect.<sup>25</sup>

During the early modern era, Hakuin returned to following the lead of Dahui by frequently using the phrase “A great awareness (*taigo*) is only possible amid great darkness or mass of doubt (*taigi*).” Like his Song predecessor, Hakuin was not ecumenical as he violently criticized rival viewpoints, including Bankei’s “Unborn Zen” (*flushō Zen*), Ungo’s Nembutsu Zen, or Dōgen’s “just sitting,” especially by referring to the latter as a “blind priest living in nothingness only” or “the evil party of silent meditation.”<sup>26</sup> This legacy very much affects discourse on the Mu Kōan today by continuing to rehabilitate Song-based sectarian divisions as if this model was unaffected by diversity.

Hakuin’s views are multifarious, however, and his notion that after attaining enlightenment one must be wary of falling prey to the traps of both having delusion-in-awareness (*gochū no mei*) and awareness-in-delusion (*meichū no go*) closely resembles a similar passage in Dōgen’s “Genjōkōan” fascicle about the inseparability of seemingly opposite realms of perception. The goal of supporting the role of postrealization cultivation in the quest for enlightenment, while refuting the temptation to rest on one’s laurels after a sudden flash of insight, was supported by Dōgen, Daitō, and Hakuin in varying ways, although there were many differences between these giants.

As suggested by the flowchart in Figure 6.6 that outlines ideological influences streamlined to highlight the main turning points, none of the perspectives

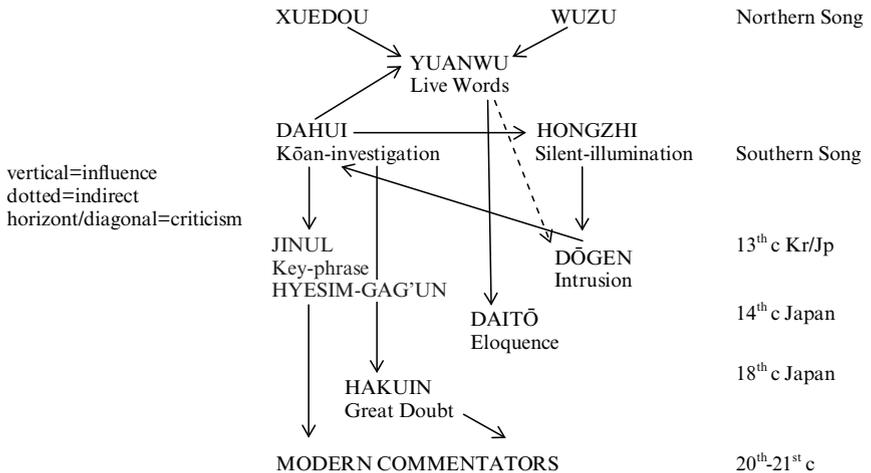


FIGURE 6.6 Flowchart of the Mu Kōan Tradition.

represented by the names and notions of leading Zen thinkers are locked and immovable. All of these standpoints reflect off and cannot be fully understood without reference to the others. Each is to some degree fluid and open to transitions and recoveries either by acknowledging ways in which they are vulnerable and need to respond to criticism or showing they may have more in common with supposed rivals than is indicated by convention.

Needless to say, the illustration in Figure 6.6 is tentative and preliminary, and there are many gaps that need to be filled in, particularly concerning the roles of Yuan-dynasty Linji monks Gaofeng Yuanmiao and Zhongfeng Mingben, who emphasize the constructive role of doubt in the use of the key-phrase method, as well as Hengchuan, whose comments on the Mu Kōan are far more ambivalent. Also, in fourteenth-century Korea, Taego stresses the role of Mu as a matter of an intensely personal experience, like Wumen and colleagues in China a century or more earlier but with somewhat differing styles of interpretation. In addition, Rinzai monks in medieval Japan such as Daiō and Musō highlight the concept of *genjōkōan*, or the realization of enlightenment in everyday life, a doctrine generally associated with Dōgen, whereas Sōtō monks comment on a variety of kōan texts including the *Gateless Gate* associated with their rival school.

Table 6.2 depicts conceptual stages in the overall development of the Ur versus Dual versions. When taken as a complement to Figure 6.6, the table reveals somewhat further the complexity and diversity of the tradition over the course of a thousand years.

TABLE 6.2 Historical Overview of Mu Kōan Tradition

Stage	Century	Version	Vision	Audience
Formative	Ninth	Pre-Zhaozhou	Ambivalent	Monks
Developmental	Tenth–eleventh	Varied	No one path	Literati
Summative	Twelfth	Ur (key-phrase)	Emphatic Mu	Laypersons
Transmissive	Thirteenth China	Ur (and Dual)	Ball of Doubt	Monks
	Thirteenth Japan	Ur and Dual	Expansive Mu	Monk-poets
	Thirteenth Korea	Ur Only	Intensive Mu	High monks
Disseminative Revivalist	Fourteenth– sixteenth	Ur	Personal Mu	Monks
	Seventeenth China	Ur linked to Nianfo	Syncretism	Literati
	Eighteenth Japan	Ur vs. Nembutsu	Stages of Devel.	Monks
Modernist	Twentieth China	Ur	Key-phrase	Monks
	Twentieth Taiwan	Ur	Key-phrase	Monks
	Twentieth Korea	Ur	Sudden	Monks and lay
	Twentieth Japan	Ur	Absolute Mu	Scholar-priests
	Twentieth West	Ur	Personal	Practitioners

## THEORETICAL HERMENEUTICS

Another important interpretative issue concerns whether historical findings should be used to raise a challenge to the truth-claims based on the Ur Version or should be considered, in the final analysis, irrelevant for understanding the religious meaning of the key-phrase method. It is at this hermeneutic juncture that the important methodological choice to be made by scholars is not so much between historical or nonhistorical, or philosophical or nonphilosophical modes of inquiry, but between apologetics and skepticism. Both of these alternatives, despite there being some benefits of each in terms of producing insight into the significance of the text, can all too easily succumb to fallacies that tend to conceal rather than open up the diversity within the tradition.

Healthy skepticism introduced by modern research methods into contemporary discourse about the Mu Kōan standing at the other end of the spectrum from apologetics, which may conflate history and ideology, shows how the dialogue in which a faceless monk questions his wise master about the status of the ultimate reality of a dog probably derived from complex doctrinal debates. These controversies were peculiar to Chinese Buddhist animistic trends in regard to whether or not all sentient in addition to insentient beings possess the Buddha-nature as an endowment and can indeed attain—or even, in their own unique way, preach about the attainment of—Buddhahood.

Although it is beneficial to see the Mu Kōan in light of its theoretical context, and it is no doubt a distortion to overlook this background, it would also do an injustice to reduce the case to a mere doctrinal schism rather than highlighting the role the kōan plays in the existential quest for a resolution of individual spiritual goals. Whether or not any and all beings have Buddha-nature, the primary aim of the case is not to support a theoretical argument about the status of nonhuman (whether sentient or insentient) spirituality, but to bypass that concern by zeroing in on whether the aspiring yet self-deprecating monk himself, who is all too aware of his bestial ignorance about karmic transgressions, has the capacity to attain enlightenment.

In that vein, the template in Figure 6.7 that was created to try to capture the diversity and plurality of voices in the world of Zen kōan hermeneutics can be used as a model for constructive and innovative integration of disparate analytic modalities.<sup>27</sup>

All of the examples cited under “Form,” such as “mountain,” “cypress tree,” or “cat,” are taken from cases in the records of Zhaozhou, and other key-phrases like “three pounds of flax” or “sesame-seed rice-cake” could have also been used, to cite just a few of the dozens of instances attributed to various masters. Zhaozhou is said to have once informed his disciples that any and every object in the surroundings, whether sentient or insentient, can become a vehicle for articulating truth without resorting to the use of objectivity conceived of in dualistic fashion as the opposite of subjectivity.<sup>28</sup> The categories

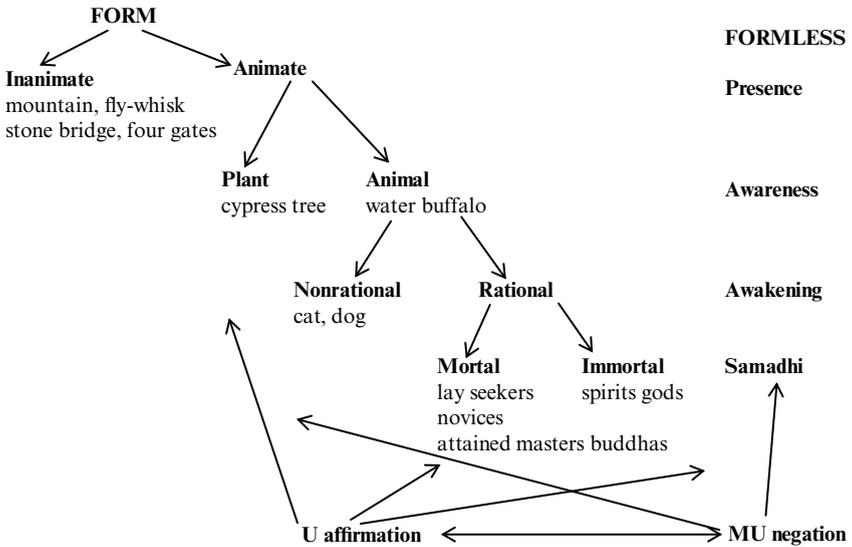


FIGURE 6.7 *Interrelationality of Form-Formless in Zhaozhou's Dialogues.*

under the heading “Formless” refer to possible degrees of self-understanding attainable by the respective level of beings, including presence for sentient beings, awareness for animals, awakening for rational beings, and Samadhi for immortals, such as buddhas or spiritual beings who transcend the distinctions of life and death.

This comprehensive standpoint that integrates living and nonliving, and unenlightened and enlightened beings in terms of the interplay of form and formlessness functioning at various discursive levels does not reduce the case to a single line of interpretation. The goal of Figure 6.7 is to allow various meanings of Mu to stand out rather than to be suppressed, while also disclosing its complex—at once supportive and destabilizing—relation to other levels of discourse implied by the U response seen in a way that draws out textual history yet is not limited to this dimension and is greatly inspired by philosophical hermeneutics. Without detracting from the key-phrase approach based on transcendental negation, the figure shows how there arises alternative standpoints reflecting affirmation, as well as diverse intermediary perspectives, such that the dog’s Buddha-nature is neither affirmed nor denied (nor both nor neither).

A related hermeneutic matter to be retrieved from sectarian stereotypes involves the meaning of Mu as constituting the epitome of absolute nothingness.<sup>29</sup> Mu captures in a single syllable key concepts of Buddhist thought regarding *via negativa* and transcendence, including the Buddha’s silence about unedifying questions and Madhyamika dialectical negation, as well as the Mahayana doctrine of emptiness, in addition to Daoist notions of nonbeing

and nothingness. On the most superficial level, Mu represents a simple negation or “No” in regard to a pointless question from a disciple who clings stubbornly to misconceptions. From another perspective, this response can also be understood ironically as a way of deferring an obviously misguided question toward an affirmation of the universality of Buddha-nature. In this sense, “No” means “Yes,” since all beings including the dog possess spirituality. Or, the response can suggest a sidestepping of the question by not allowing oneself to be boxed in, thus suggesting “neither Yes nor No,” which points toward Dōgen’s view. The term “Mu” is a useful means—or a “sharp sword,” to cite Wuzu’s verse comment—to shut down the logical thinking and show the way to the ultimate transcendence of discourse, as in Watō practice.

Both the reductionist and expansionist approaches would agree that Mu reflects a state beyond existence and nonexistence. The question becomes, Does the absolute Mu encompass and embrace or reject and repudiate the relativity of the concepts of being and nonbeing? To address this issue, Table 6.3 distinguishes between several different levels of nothingness that function in relative and absolute realms, which are presented in reverse order.

On the relative level, nothingness is the gateway to an experience that surpasses conceptual attachments. After undergoing a transformative turning point through plunging into the abyss—as in the *Gateless Gate*’s injunctive in case 46 to take a leap from the top of a 100-ft. pole—on the absolute level, Mu represents the ineffable unity of a single all-encompassing reality.

### **Not-So-Final Conclusion, Or No! We Have Buddha-Nature**

To conclude by dealing with the following question regarding textual studies based on historical hermeneutics of Zen, “Is there a consistent pattern to records regarding Zhaozhou’s views on whether the dog has Buddha-nature or not?,” the appropriate answer would, of course, be nothing other than an emphatic, “Mu!” If he were located in Miami, Zhaozhou might respond to the question by saying, “No, sí,” literally “No, yes,” which ironically means “of course.” Or, to paraphrase a recent American presidential contender, it could be said in support (or refutation) of the master that “Zhaozhou actually did speak out for the dog having Buddha-nature before he spoke out against it.” Or, maybe this famously consistent inconsistency should be stated in reverse, but it is certainly not meant to imply that Zhaozhou is a mere flip-flopper in the conventional sense.

One of the main values gained by working with Chan/Zen sources like the Mu Kōan is to apply the rich variety of unrestricted interpretative approaches they represent directly to the task at hand. The ideological open-endedness of case records encourages and enhances the adoption of a methodological standpoint whereby all possible vantage points ranging from belief, which

TABLE 6.3 Multiple Levels of Nothingness

## RELATIVE

## (a) Ontological

- Objective: Absence or vacuity
- Subjective: Loss or lack

## (b) Epistemological

- Nullification and negation of unedifying questions that should stop being asked because they rely on false premises

## (c) Existential

- Objective: Dread of unknown or fear of abyss (*ab-grund*)
- Subjective: Great Doubt of anxiety based on double-bind experiences

## ABSOLUTE

## (a) Existential

- Subjective: Great Death by shattering impasse through self-extrication
- Objective: Realization of nonduality and nonattachment

## (b) Epistemological

- Awareness beyond bonds of presence-absence, being-becoming, continuity-discontinuity, illusion-reality, subject-object, seer-seen

## (c) Ontological

- Subjective: Intuitive grasp of ungraspable or explaining the unexplainable
- Objective: Transcendental void beyond the image of empty space

seeks to remain true to the tradition (perhaps coming at the expense of unfairly reducing disputation), to historical criticism, which can lead to casting doubt (though perhaps by sacrificing existential depth), are perpetually explored and examined. At the same time, fixations with any particular theoretical model are continually cast aside as additional evidence or alternative perspectives come into the light, as with the nine-turn bridge featured in Asian gardens or the eight-view (Ch. *bajing*; Jp. *hakkei*) landscape art of China and Japan.

Several modern commentators have noted that, by looking at the different versions of the Mu Kōan in Zhaozhou's record, there seems to be an arbitrary quality to the responses. As Robert Sharf suggests, "Does a dog have buddha-nature? It depends on what day it is,"<sup>30</sup> and John Wu remarks, "If the same question were put to Zhaozhou for the third time, he might well have answered, 'Yes and no!' Yes, that is, in one sense, and No, in another sense,"<sup>31</sup> to which it could be added that a fourth occasion might have yielded "Neither yes nor no." Or, to cite a Bob Dylan lyric in the blues song "Nettie Moore," "It's either one or the other, or neither of the two."

In another intriguing modern pop culture example of saying one thing while meaning another, or of not being at all sure of what to say, according to the 1920s hit song, "Yes! We Have No Bananas": "When you ask [the shopkeeper] anything, he never answers 'no'/ He just 'yes'es' you to death, and as he takes your dough/ He tells you 'Yes, we have no bananas/

We have-a no bananas today.’’ Perhaps it could be said that Dahui, along with Wumen’s 20 Mu’s, just “no’s” you to death, so that instead of “Yes! We have no Buddha-nature,” according to this view it should be “No! We have Buddha-nature.”

This situation is a little like the final scene of the original film version of *Inherit the Wind*, in which the unbelieving defense lawyer Henry Drummond (based on the famous Clarence Darrow, as played by Spencer Tracy) strides gracefully from the courtroom following the so-called Monkey Trial while carrying side-by-side copies of the Bible and Darwin, after nihilist reporter E. K. Hornbeck mockingly calls him “The Atheist who believes in God.”<sup>32</sup> Therefore, the ongoing endeavor of historical hermeneutics of Zen discourse, or of explicating Chan by interpreting old cases, is, to cite Yuanwu’s commentary on the first case in which Bodhidharma tells the emperor there is “no merit” to good works, a “roundabout, meandering path (*raolu*).” A “long and winding road” can have as many detours as serendipitous discoveries on the nonlinear way to engaging and disentangling or re-entangling the multiple meanings of voluminous classical, medieval, and modern sources.<sup>33</sup> This enables a wholehearted appreciation for juxtaposing and continually reflecting upon the meaning and



FIGURE 6.8 *Zen Mountain Pathway.*

significance of both sides of the coin—or all aspects of the sphere—without partiality or bias.

The drawing in Figure 6.8<sup>34</sup> that accompanies an early modern commentator's discussion of Dōgen's "Buddha-nature" fascicle dramatically shows the steep and narrow path that must be surmounted to gain a holistic overview. Such a seemingly all-encompassing perspective, which can be gratifying from both impersonal methodological and personal spiritual standpoints, yet is also limited in that even the Buddha is said to be constrained by a kind of tunnel vision. If the loftiness of the ascent devolves into random and arbitrary selectivity that reveals the one-sidedness of nihilistic or antinomian tendencies, one may become nothing better than, to cite Yuanwu's capping phrase in the first line of *Blue Cliff Record* 4, "A board-carrying fellow who is a wild fox spirit"<sup>35</sup> 擔板漢野狐精.

However, if pitfalls and drawbacks are overcome, then holistic awareness may shine through that is able to survey and critically examine all possible standpoints without interruption or interference, while remaining unattached and uncommitted to any particular view. For Dahui and followers, Zhaozhou's Mu reply is seen as not supporting either side, or both, or neither, or proposing an unattainable medial position as an abstract potentiality cut off from practical realization. The same could be said of U-Mu for Dual Version advocates. In that sense, the divisions along with acrimony that seem to separate Watō Versus Kattō perspectives can be surpassed and yet left unsuppressed by taking into account the circular reasoning, according to the venerable Zhaozhou, whereby the cypress tree becomes buddha when the sky falls and the sky falls when the cypress tree becomes buddha.

## { NOTES }

### Chapter 1

1. Akizuki Ryūmin, *Zen mondō: kōan-e monogatari* (Tokyo: Chōbunsha, 1976), p. 41. See also Akizuki Ryūmin, *Mumonkan o yomu* (Tokyo: PHP Kenkyūsho, 1990); Hirata Takashi, trans., *Mumonkan* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1983); and Nishimura Eshin, trans., *Mumonkan* (Tokyo: Iwanami bunko, 1995). For discussions of the case in light of the kōan tradition, see Akizuki Ryūmin, *Zen no kotoba* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1981); Misao Mori, “*Mu*” no shisō (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1969); Nagai Masashi, *Zen no kotoba* (Tokyo: Nagaoka shoten, 2007); and Yanagida Seizan and Umehara Takeshi, *Mu no tankyū: Chūgoku Zen* (Tokyo: Kadokawa, 1969).

2. John Daido Looi, *Two Arrows Meeting in Midair: The Zen Kōan* (Mt. Tremper, NY: Dharma Communications, 1994), in the chapter on “Chao-chou’s Mu: *Gateless Gate*, Case 1.”

3. Sheng Yen, *Shattering the Great Doubt: The Chan Practice of Huatou* (Boston: Shambhala, 2009), p. 15; he also says that, although there are many possible examples of abbreviated kōan cases that might be used in his lectures and training methods, like a pizza shop that specializes in a particular flavor or topping, “at this store the only thing we sell is *wu*,” p. 142.

4. When he began to write the text known as the *Verse Comments on One Hundred Cases* (Ch. *Xuedou baize songgu ji*, Jp. *Setchō hyakusoku juko shū*) that is no longer extant and is only known through the content of the *Blue Cliff Record*, Xuedou is thought to have been living on Cuiweifeng temple at Lake Dongting in northern Hunan province. This site was a former Daoist retreat and locale of ancient poet Qu Yuan, whose name means the “abode of fairies and immortals” and who was converted to Buddhism, and is also known as the site of the original Dragon Boat Festival race originated to appease the dragon deity living in the bottom of the water. However, the text was probably completed sometime after 1022 (or perhaps as late as 1038), when he had moved to Mount Xuedou in Zhejiang province (an area formerly known as Mingzhou) to become abbot of the famous Zisheng si temple (he spent the rest of his life there). A modern Japanese translation of the text is Iriya Yoshitaka, Kajitani Sōnin, and Yanagida Seizan, eds., *Setchō juko, Zen no goroku 15* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1981). Also, Xuedou Chongxian 雪竇重顯 is to be distinguished from a twelfth-century Caodong school monk, Xuedou Zhijian 雪竇智鑑, who was the predecessor to Dōgen’s mentor, Rujing, and stayed near Hangzhou.

5. Jason Protass, “Vegetables and Bamboo: Medieval Poetic Criticism of Buddhist Monastic Poetry,” Unpublished paper presented at Kyoto Asian Studies Group, April 24, 2012.

6. The term *Shōbōgenzō* (Ch. *Zhengfayanzang*) was previously used in a major kōan collection by Dahui that was produced in 1146 in addition to several other Song Chan texts. Dahui’s work consists of 661 cases with capping phrase and brief prose comments and may have inspired Dōgen to use this title for his collections of 300 cases in Chinese and vernacular Japanese sermons.

7. Whereas the *Shōbōgenzō* mixes vernacular Japanese commentary with citations of Chinese sources, both the *Mana Shōbōgenzō* and the *Eihei kōroku* were composed in Chinese literary style.

8. See Beata Grant, *Mount Lu Revisited: Buddhism in the Life and Writings of Su Shih* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994).

9. The *Blue Cliff Record* stayed out of circulation for decades until the original text, or a version of it, was eventually recovered around 1300 and restored based on existing manuscripts—although no doubt there were considerable additions and corruptions—through a painstaking effort that demonstrated how strong an interest remained in studying the collection.

10. See Arthur Koestler, *The Lotus and the Robot* (New York: Harper Colophon, 1960), especially the chapter on “A Stink of Zen.”

11. This assertion is repeated in a number of texts in Chinese (the preface to the *Blue Cliff Record*), Korean (the collection by Hyesim), and Japanese (the capping phrases of Daitō), as well as by modern commentators; for example, see Heinrich Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism: A History, Volume I: India and China* (New York: Macmillan, 1988), p. 246. The *Jingde Record*, which consists of 30 fascicles first compiled in 1004 by Daoyuan of the Fayān (Jp. Hōgen) stream of the Linji school and published a few years later in 1009 under imperial supervision with a new introduction by poet Yang Yi, was incorporated into the official Buddhist canon in 1101. The compilation includes over four times the number of eminent monks than its predecessor texts, including the *Ancestors Hall Collection* of 952, and these narratives became the main source of encounter dialogues for the early kōan collections.

12. Huang Yun-chung, *Chanzong gongan tixiangyong sixiang zhi yanjiu* (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju yinxing, 2002), p. 81.

13. *Blue Cliff Record* case 12 on “Dongshan’s three pounds of flax” includes a capping phrase that refers to the “valley embracing the echo,” an evocation of soundless sound in a tradition in which there are accounts of how particular resonances or noises, whether majestic, such as waterfalls, or mundane, like the “ping” of a pebble striking bamboo, lead to the attainment of enlightenment; in T 48:152c. However, in the prose comment on case 16 of the *Gateless Gate* on “When the bell sounds,” Wumen remarks that “In studying Zen, you should not be swayed by sounds and forms. Even though you attain insight when hearing a voice or seeing a form, this is simply the ordinary way of things. Don’t you know that the real Zen student who commands sounds, controls forms, is clear-sighted at every event and free on every occasion? Granted you are free, just tell me: Does the sound come to the ear or does the ear go to the sound?” 大凡參禪學道、切忌、隨聲逐色。縱使聞聲悟道、見色明心也是尋常。殊不知、納僧家、騎聲蓋色、頭頭上明、著著上妙。然雖如是。且道、聲來耳畔、耳往聲邊; T 48:295a.

14. Another modern example of a kōan-like saying is a Bob Dylan lyric from the song “Ballad in Plain D,” in which the narrator, who is tormented in being jilted by a lover, says he is often asked by friends, “How good does it feel to be free?” and he responds, “so mysteriously,” “Are birds free from the chains of the skyway?”

15. Arthur Braverman, *Living and Dying in Zazen: Five Zen Masters of Modern Japan* (New York: Weatherhill, 2003). No engagement with the Mu Kōan is mentioned in these accounts, although the one master discussed in the book who is a member of the Rinza school does deal with the abstract notion of sentient beings and spirituality.

16. The text was brought to Japan in the 1250s by Shinchi Kakushin, who had spent six years studying in China.

17. Zhaozhou's reply to the query about a dog's Buddha-nature seems to reinforce suspicions concerning the relevance of abstract doctrine for enabling concrete religious experience. This doubt recalls the criticism by Soren Kierkegaard, the founder of existentialist thought in nineteenth-century Europe, of Hegelian philosophical dialectics that he claims led to metaphorical "castles built in the air" based on an overemphasis on metaphysical speculation. As Kierkegaard points out, nobody actually occupies such fanciful edifices.

18. Garma C. C. Chang, *The Practice of Zen* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959).

19. See, in particular, Yanagida and Umehara, *Mu no tankyū*; and D. T. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, Second Series (London: Rider and Company, 1953), pp. 98–127.

20. Philip Kapleau, *The Three Pillars of Zen* (New York: Doubleday, rpt. 1980), p. 69.

21. Stefano Mui Barragato, "Reflections on the *Wumenkuan*"; <http://www.treetopzen-center.org/Reflections%20on%20the%20Wumenkuan.pdf> (accessed November 20, 2011). According to Robert H. Sharf, the Sanbōkyōdan, a postwar laicized Zen movement associated with the teachings of Yasutani Haku'un and colleagues in Japan that spread to the West and often involves the practice of current or former Catholic priests, "reduced the complex doctrinal, devotional, and ethical teachings of Buddhism to a relatively simple meditation practice involving the repetition of the syllable *mu*"; see "Sanbōkyōdan: Zen and the Way of the New Religions," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 22/3–4 (1995): 417–458 (437). Sharf notes that those who pass the Mu Kōan by achieving an experience of *kenshō*, usually after expending considerable time and effort, receive a ceremony acknowledging their attainment and move ahead to a curriculum of around six hundred cases, whereas those who repeatedly fail must endure a repentance rite and start the practice all over again.

22. Figure 1.1 is an Edo print in Akizuki, *Zen mondō*, p. 45. Another drawing cited is a traditional image by Sengai reproduced in Robert Aitken, trans., *The Gateless Barrier: The Wu-Men Kuan (Mumonkan)* (New York: North Point Press, 1991), p. 8 (courtesy of Idemitsu Museum); and a third is a modern drawing by Alexander Holstein, *Pointing to the Moon: 100 Zen Koans from Chinese Masters* (Tokyo: Tuttle, 1994), p. 37. The verse written on the Sengai drawing with its ironic naturalism is translated by Norman Waddell as "Dog, Buddha Nature./ Don't say he doesn't have it!/ Don't say Mu!/ A stiff spring wind has risen,/ rattling the gourds on the east wall."

23. Natsume Sōseki, *Ten Nights' Dreams*, trans. Loretta R. Lorenz (London: Soseki Museum, 2000), pp. 7–8.

24. *Ten Nights of Dreams*, dir. Akio Jissoji et al. (2007).

25. Judyth Weaver, "Getting to Mu"; <http://www.judythweaver.com/getting-to-mu/> (accessed July 10, 2010).

26. This seems to suggest an emphasis on exercises for breathing from the *hara* that were introduced into Rinzai training techniques during the Edo period from Chinese influences, primarily by the Ōbaku school, and were supported by Hakuin.

27. As indicated in the essay by Gerry Shishin Wick, "Give Yourself Away to Mu," in *The Book of Mu: Essential Writings on Zen's Most Important Koan*, eds. James Ford and Melissa Blacker (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2011), p. 251 (Robert Aitken cited six u's in *The Gateless Barrier*, and Loori has occasion to use twenty-one). The key-phrase approach is used almost exclusively in the essays included in *The Book of Mu*; for my review of the work, see "Does a Dog Have Buddhanature? Well, Yes and No," *Buddhadharma* (Spring 2011). For my review of recent Japanese studies of the Mu Kōan, see "Yes! We Have No Buddha-Nature: Three Recent Publications on Zen Dialogues," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 37/2 (2010): 367–376.

28. The four works are, respectively: Sung Bae Park, *One Korean's Approach to Buddhism: The Mom/Monjit Paradigm* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009); Sheng Yen, *Shattering the Great Doubt*; and Hakuyu Taizan Maezumi and Bernard Glassman, *On Zen Practice: Body, Breath, and Mind* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2002). Another recent example is Ruben L. F. Habito, *Living Zen, Loving God* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004), pp. 1–6.

In addition, note that two prominent recent scholarly works commenting extensively on the Mu Kōan do not mention the Dual Version even a single time: Morten Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen: The Dispute Over Enlightenment and the Formation of Chan Buddhism in Song-Dynasty China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008); and Robert H. Sharf, “How to Think with Chan *Gong'an*,” in *Thinking With Cases: Specialist Knowledge in Chinese Cultural History*, eds. Charlotte Further, Judith T. Zeitlin, and Ping-chen Hsiung (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), pp. 205–243.

29. See Akizuki Ryūmin, ed., *Jōshuroku* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1972); this is vol. 11 of *Zen no goroku*, the renowned twenty-volume set on seminal Chinese Chan texts, and is based on a text first edited by Suzuki Daisetsu and Akizuki Ryūmin, *Jōshū zenji goroku* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1964). According to Albert Welter, “Zhaozhou was probably the first master in Chan to have the term *yulu*, or recorded sayings, attributed to his collected dialogues, as the impulse to edit, evaluate, and publish *yulu* materials became strong at the beginning of the Song... The origins of *Zhaozhou yulu* are closely tied to the restoration at Lu shan. The text was edited by Xixian Chengshi (?-991?), a contemporary of Yanshou and Daoyuan, and a disciple of Fayan Wenyi's student, Baizhang Daochang. Chengshi was the teacher of Huanglong Huinan (1002-1069), and it is on the basis of these connections that Yanagida proposes that the inspiration for the Huanglong lineage was directly related to earlier success of the Fayan lineage”; in “The Textual History of the *Linji lu* (Record of Linji): The Earliest Recorded Fragments”; [http://www.thezensite.com/ZenEssays/HistoricalZen/welter\\_Linji.html#note10](http://www.thezensite.com/ZenEssays/HistoricalZen/welter_Linji.html#note10) (accessed February 14, 2011).

30. Asian detective stories may have been an early influence on nineteenth-century Western writers, including Edgar Allan Poe and Arthur Conan Doyle, who began to develop the genre based on the keen observational skills of investigators. The Asian model involves an official who is a detached observer of the crime scene, but in twentieth-century America there developed the “hardboiled” style of detective whose own life is turned inside out through the process of investigation.

31. Sharf, “How to Think with Chan *Gong'an*,” pp. 208–210; by citing the Yuan-dynasty explications by Sanjiao Laoren and Zhongfeng Mingben, Sharf discusses public and private record keeping and commenting on dialogues in light of the pattern of legal precedents.

32. Chan's own penal code, according to monastic rules traditionally attributed to Baizhang (Jp. Hyakujō), the *Baizhang qinggui* (Jp. *Hyakujō shingī*) called for banishment from the monastic community and the destruction of the former monk's clothes and possessions as the harshest kind of retribution for an unforgivable transgression, such as robbery, murder, misuse of supernal powers, or sexual indiscretion.

33. T 48:153a.

34. I am reminded of a recent Japanese mystery film, *Kirin to tsubasa (Wings of Kirin)*, dir. Nobuhiro Doi (2012), which is part of the *Shinsanmono (Newcomer)* detective series.

35. Ishii Shūdō, “The *Wu-men Kuan (Mumonkan)*: The Formation, Propagation and Characteristics of a Classic Zen Kōan Text,” in *The Zen Canon: Understanding the Classic Texts*, eds. Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright (New York: Oxford University Press), p. 230.

36. See John R. McRae, “The Story of Early Ch’an,” in *Zen: Tradition and Transition*, ed. Kenneth Kraft (New York: Grove, 1988), pp. 125–139; and John R. McRae, *Seeing through Zen: Encounter, Transformation, and Genealogy in Chinese Chan Buddhism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

37. The *Ancestors’ Hall Collection’s* record of Zhaozhou does include the dialogue “Does a cypress tree have Buddha-nature?”

38. Wuzu was one of the few later (Northern Song) masters to have kōan cases attributed to him, including four in the *Gateless Gate* (35, 36, 38, 45).

39. Wu Yansheng, ed., *Zhaozhouliu xiaozhu jiping* vol. 1 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2008), pp. 211–269. In his kōan collection, the *Zhengfuyanzang*, Dahui also cites the case of whether a cypress tree has Buddha-nature; X 67:586b.

40. Dogs do seem to demonstrate consciousness of wrongdoing and a willingness to correct their behavior when it meets with disapproval. However, modern studies have shown that canines do not join a small group of animals that includes apes, dolphins, and elephants in addition to humans that exhibit signs of self-awareness, such as the ability to distinguish oneself from others (dogs are unable to recognize themselves in a mirror, for example).

41. For a discussion of Dōgen’s comments in *Shōbōgenzō zuimonki* 1.6, see Douglas K. Mikkelsen, “Who Is Arguing about the Cat? Moral Action and Enlightenment According to Dōgen,” *Philosophy East & West* 47/3 (1997): 383–397.

42. The Sengai drawing referred to is in Aitken, *The Gateless Barrier*, p. 96 (courtesy of Idemitsu Museum); and two drawings are in Okimoto Katsumi and Takenuki Kenshō, *Zengo hyakka* (Tokyo: Tankosha, 1998), pp. 164–165. The Sengai verse with the drawing as translated by Aitken reads, “Cut one, cut all –/ why just the cat?! The head monks of the two halls;/ even Wang the Old Master.”

43. Alfred Birnbaum, Riku Kanme, and J. C. Brown, *Zen for Cats: Teachings of the Zen Cat Masters* (New York: Weatherhill, 1993), p. 22. See also *The Tao of Pug* by Wilson the Pug with Nancy Levine (New York: Viking Studio, 2003).

44. Sharf, “How to Think with Chan Gong’an,” p. 225.

45. A common theme in Chan’s competition with earlier Mahayana Buddhist schools such as Tiantai or with Daoism was the taking over of sacred space, especially mountain temples that were reconfigured both conceptually and in terms of infrastructural components for Chan monastic training. There was also a similar give-and-take with Confucian academies whereby the main hall of the educational facility would be turned into a Chan Dharma Hall (Ch. *fatang*; Jp. *hattō*) as the site for an abbot’s public discourse that used or commented on kōans. See Linda A. Walton, *Academies and Society in Southern Sung China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999).

46. See Dahui *Pujue Chanshi nianpu*, in *Dai Nihon zokuzōkyō* vol. 8 (Kyoto: Zōkyō shoin, 1902–1905); this is a year-by-year chronological biography of Dahui that is also included in J 01:793a–807b.

47. *Chan zong songgu lianzhu tongji*, in X 65:592b (XZJ 115: 236a); this verse by a monk who was a close associate of Su Shi is also cited along with other examples of his works by Juefan Huihong in the *Forest Record* (Ch. *Linjianlu*, Jp. *Rinkanroku*).

48. *Gateless Gate*, in T 48:293a. Note that Japanese scholars often include an exclamation point, as in 無! (Mu!)—see, for example, Akizuki Ryūmin, *Kōan: Jissenteiki nyūmon* (Tokyo: Chikuma bunko, 1987), p. 261.

49. *Record of Serenity*, in T 48:238b–c; see also *Dōgen zenji zenshū*, eds. Kawamura Kōdō et al. (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1988), vol. 4 (of 7 vols.), p. 232 (9.73); and Taigen Dan Leighton

and Shohaku Okumura, trans., *Dōgen's Extensive Record: A Translation of the Eihei Kōroku* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004), p. 586.

50. X 65:592b-c (XZJ 115: 236a-b) contains a dozen verses dealing with a version of the Mu Kōan featuring the negative response to a dialogue that mentions “bugs below” before the positive response and includes, interestingly enough, the seemingly misplaced *Gateless Gate* verse. Following the Dual Version, nearly three dozen poetic comments on the Ur Version are included.

51. Ishikawa Rikizan, “Transmission of *Kirigami* (Secret Initiation Documents): A Sōtō Practice in Medieval Japan,” in *The Kōan*, eds. Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 233–242.

52. Thomas Yūhō Kirchner, trans., *Entangling Vines: Zen Koans of the Shūmon Kattōshū* (Kyoto: Tenryū-ji Institute for Philosophy and Religion, 2004).

53. See, for example, the “The King Sends for Saindhava” (“Ōsaku sendaba”) fascicle in Dōgen’s *Treasury of the True Dharma-Eye*.

54. T. Griffith Foulk, “The Form and Function of Kōan Literature: A Historical Overview,” in *The Kōan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*, eds. Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 15–45 (41).

55. Caifang Zhu, “Buddhism in China Today: The Example of the Bai Lin Chan Monastery,” *Perspectives* 4/2 (June 30, 2003): 2 (of 10). Jeff Shore, a close disciple of Fukushima, tells a different version, although he did not attend the ceremony, in which the shout was more modest and was performed by some of the Japanese monks in attendance rather than by the rōshi himself. The variability of versions of a recent historical event takes on *Rashōmon*-like proportions of discrepancy and distortion.

56. Zong-qi Cai, *How to Read Chinese Poetry: A Guided Anthology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); in discussing the verse “The Kudzu Vines Grow Longer,” Cai explains that in odes that were sung during traditional wedding ceremonies in China, the vines indicated in a very productive sense the role of entwinements growing between bride and groom, as well as new and fruitful linkages with in-laws and the entire families. Emotional bonds and ties are represented by the luxuriant leaves and flowers, as well as the succulent berries or grapes of extensive vinery that can also be utilized due to its unusual shape and size as a rope, as a ladder, or for some other useful function. The legacy of this imagery contrasts with the common use of the term referring to the disturbing conflicts and complications of entanglements, which evokes the fact that in rain forests strong and destructive vines can encircle and suck the life out of a tree so that it collapses. For a detailed discussion of the imagery associated with the *getengkattō* with regard to Buddhist doctrine, see Robert M. Gimello, “Marga and Culture: Learning, Letters, and Liberation in Northern Sung Ch’an,” in *Paths to Liberation: The Mārga and Its Transformations in Buddhist Thought*, eds. Robert E. Buswell, Jr., and Robert M. Gimello (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992), pp. 371–438 (405 and 432 n.99). Another work that deals with literary influences within Chan discourse is George Albert Keyworth, III, “Transmitting the Lamp of Learning in Classical Chan Buddhism: Juefan Huihong (1071-1128) and Literary Chan” (PhD dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 2001), which cites a text that refers to the act of taking “writing and make it as beautiful and brilliantly shining,” p. 150.

57. As Joseph D. Parker suggests, “The ideal expression of Zen Buddhism was found in the playful poetic, prose, and artistic expression in the very midst of the samsaric world,” in *Zen Buddhist Landscape Arts of Early Muromachi Japan (1336–1573)* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), p. 133.

58. As a strong indicator of transsectarian and transnational connections, William M. Bodiford shows, in several tables providing a list of the number of citations of Chinese Chan and Japanese Zen masters using key terms associated with various kinds of *gongan* interpretation, that Yuanwu and Dōgen along with Nampo Shōmyō (1235–1309, a.k.a. Daiō Kokushi)—in contrast to Dahui along with Mugaku Sogen (1226–1286, a.k.a. Bukko Kokushi), who fled Mongol rule in China to become the founding priest of Engakuji temple in Kamakura in 1282 at the behest of Hōjō Tokimune—have a strong affinity in using the term *xianchenggongan/genjōkōan*; in “Keyword Meditation and Detailed Investigation in Medieval Japan,” in *Ganhwa Seon: Illuminating the World, Conference Proceedings* (Seoul: Dongguk University Press, 2010), pp. 118ff.

## Chapter 2

1. See, for example, Miriam Levering, “Ch’an Enlightenment for Laymen: Ta-hui and the New Religious Culture of the Sung” (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 1978); Robert E. Buswell, Jr., *The Korean Approach to Zen: The Collected Works of Chinul* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983); and John Daido Looi, ed., *Sitting with Koans: Essential Writings on Zen Koan Introspection* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2006), which includes several articles dealing with Hakuin. There are over a dozen viable translations of the *Gateless Gate* available, including several versions cited here by Robert Aitken, Thomas Cleary, Zenkei Shibayama, and Kōun Yamada, among numerous other examples. Dahui’s letters appear in J. C. Cleary, trans., *Swampland Flowers: The Letters and Lectures of Zen Master Ta-Hui* (Boston: Shambhala, rpt. 2006).

2. X 65:593a.

3. Victor Sōgen Hori, “Kōan and Kenshō in the Rinzai Zen Curriculum,” in *The Kōan*, eds. Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 295–296.

4. T 47:582a.

5. Cited in J. C. Cleary, *A Buddha from Korea: The Zen Teachings of Taego* (Boston: Shambhala, 1988), p. 10.

6. X 83:647a.

7. T. H. Barrett, “The Monastery Cat in Cross-Cultural Perspective: Cat Poems of the Zen Masters,” in *Buddhist Monasticism in East Asia: Places of Practice*, eds. James Robson, James A. Benn, and Lori Meeks (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 107–124; see also Aaron Herald Skabelund, *Empire of Dogs: Canines, Japan, and the Making of the Modern Imperial World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011). There are positive images of dogs in modern Japan, including the famous statue located outside Shibuya Station of Hachiko, commemorated for his remarkable loyalty, which has become a renowned landmark for people to meet. Also, I recently saw a picture of a studious-looking dog wearing a suit and glasses in a Berlitz ad saying, “Teaching English carefully. That’s my job.”

8. T 48:294b.

9. X 68:88a. According to these three dialogues, one day two monks came to study Chan and Zhaozhou asked one of them, “Have you ever been here?” The monk said, “Yes,” and Zhaozhou said, “Go drink a cup of tea.” Another monk answered, “No, I have not been here,” and Zhaozhou said, “Go drink a cup of tea.” The abbot then wondered, “Why do you have the monks drink tea no matter whether they have been here or not?” and Zhaozhou answered, “Go drink a cup of tea.” In a similar case, a monk came to study Zen with a master who welcomed him by pouring tea water into a cup without stopping even when the vessel

was full. The monk interrupted by saying, “Master, the cup has been filled,” and the teacher said, “You are just like the cup, filled with your ideas; if you do not empty yourself, how can I teach you Zen?”

10. See Yanagida and Umehara, *Mu no tankyū*.

11. Akizuki, *Kōan*, p. 201.

12. Verse commentaries on kōans combine some of the style of traditional Buddhist *gatha* as a type of metered and often rhythmic poetic verse in the ancient Indian languages of Pali and Sanskrit with traditional Chinese odes (Ch. *song*, Jp. *ju*) that were often sung or chanted during ritual ceremonies. This contributes to the regulated and rhyming qualities of Chan verse commentaries.

13. Ishii Shūdō, “The *Wu-men Kuan (Mumonkan)*,” in *The Zen Canon*, eds. Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 230; the verse is cited with an exclamation point after each word. See also X 69:364c as part of the *Record of Wumen* (Ch. *Wumen heshang yulu*, Jp. *Mumon oshō goroku*) vol. 2. In effect, Wumen is saying, “No, No, A Thousand Times No! (I’d rather die than say Yes!),” as in the Depression-era song in which Betty Boop turns down a gift of jewelry that is offered by a villain. Wumen also wrote a poem about his experience with the Mu Kōan: “A thunderclap under the clear blue sky/ All beings on earth open their eyes;/ Everything under heaven bows together;/ Mount Sumeru leaps up and dances”; in Aitken, *The Gateless Barrier*, p. 4.

14. Adapted from Tomura Haroaki, *Mumonkan* (Tokyo: Shimoda shuppan, 2009), frontispiece.

15. Robert E. Buswell, Jr., “The Transformation of Doubt (*Yiqing*) into a Positive Emotion in Chinese Buddhist Meditation,” in *Love and Emotions in Traditional Chinese Literature*, ed. Halvor Eifring (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2004), pp. 225–236.

16. J 01:807a; as suggested by Miriam Levering and Morten Schlütter based on several of their recent conference presentations.

17. J. C. Cleary, *A Buddha from Korea*, pp. 65 and 188–189.

18. Victor Sōgen Hori, *Zen Sand: The Book of Capping Phrases for Kōan Practice* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003), p. 32.

19. Habito, *Living Zen, Loving God*, p. 5.

20. The *huangyang* is a plant in the boxwood family that allegedly grows only an inch a year. Here it is an image for being stuck in a partial awakening with nothing at work inside to move one further along the path. Miriam Levering notes this definition from *Zengaku daijiten*, p. 145b, and *Zengojiten*, p. 473a. An alternative rendering is “seat of thorns.”

21. T 47:883b.

22. Another translation is, “They both come down together,” which appears in case 87 in Thomas Cleary, trans., *Book of Serenity: One Hundred Zen Dialogues* (Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Press, 1990), p. 372.

23. T 47:883b. Yuanwu’s query concerning the tree falling down was apparently based on Shushan’s (Jp. Shūzan) inquiry regarding a case that was presented to Lan’an (Jp. Rannan), who gave him no response other than laughter that felt like a dagger in evoking a sense of vicious sarcasm.

24. J 01:793a–807b.

25. X 67:625a.

26. Zhu Xi’s remarks on the approach to commentary literature are surprisingly close to the description of the use of *gongan* in the context of Song-dynasty Chan: “In this sort of intense, concentrative engagement with the classics, the words of the sages are, in Zhu’s

language, to be ‘chewed’ over with their flavor fully ‘savored,’ so that their true taste might be known”; in Daniel K. Gardner, “Confucian Commentary and Chinese Intellectual History,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 57/2 (1998): 397–422 (406).

27. T 48:293a. The meaning of the image of “wumenguan” given by Mazu of the Hongzhou lineage, according to Zongmi’s *Records of the Mirror of the School* (Ch. *Zongjinglu*, Jp. *Shūryōroku*): “No gate is the Dharma gate, which is also said to be the gate of emptiness” 無門為法門。亦名空門; in T 48:418b.

28. Juhn Young Ahn, “Malady of Meditation: A prolegomenon to the study of illness and Zen” (PhD dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 2007), pp. 14–15, in chap. 1 on “Getting Sick over Nothing (*wu*).”

29. Ahn, “Malady of Meditation,” p. 161.

30. Ahn, “Malady of Meditation,” p. 165; T 47:918a.

31. *Ibid.*

32. See Jeffrey Shore, *Zen Classics for the Modern World* (Darby, PA: Diane Publishing, 2011), p. 10, in regard to diseases of the intellect, such as quiet meditation, suppression, emptiness, speculation, engaging spirits, acting out, asceticism, self-indulgence, putting on airs, and so forth.

33. J. C. Cleary, *Zen under the Gun: Four Zen Masters from Turbulent Times* (Boston: Shambhala, 2010), p. 59.

34. *Ibid.*

35. T 48:1099a-c; in Yunqi Zhuhong’s *Advancing through the Chan Gate* (*Changuan cejin*), a late Ming work that highlights many examples of training with the Mu Kōan but also, unfortunately, perpetuates the fallacy that it was originally cited by Huangbo, a misimpression to be deconstructed in chapter 4; see also Ahn, “Malady of Meditation,” p. 235. For a translation of the Zhuhong text, see J. C. Cleary, *Meditating with Koans* (Freemont, CA: Jain Publishing, 1992).

36. Ahn, “Malady of Meditation,” p. 207; T 48:1099c.

37. T 48:1099c; see Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, p. 115, a work that also discusses several other trainees with similar experiences, including two successive disciples in the Wuzu-Mengshan lineage.

38. T 48:178c.

39. Sharf, “How to Think with Chan *Gong’an*,” p. 209; he points out, “There is, to my knowledge, no conclusive evidence of the pre-Song use, if any, of the term *gong’an* in a Buddhist context,” p. 207. However, in the ninth century, Muzhou Daoming (a.k.a. Chen Zunsu), a disciple of Huangbo who became the teacher of Yunmen, used such sayings as “It is an obvious case, but I spare you thirty blows” or “Guilt is written all over your face,” sometimes evoking the term *xiancheng gongan* (Jp. *genjōkōan*), as well as epithets like “clever thief” or “pickpocket” used in a double-edged sense to refer to those who could rob the foolish through their way with words or who had such little understanding they tried to cover up the fact that, in the end, they were no better than petty crooks.

40. T 48:139b-c; Sharf, “How to Think with Chan *Gong’an*,” p. 328 n.19, in which the author notes, “My translation is based on the *Songban jisha dazang jing* edition, 37:419, register c, line 1-420, register a, line 12.”

41. Heinrich Dumoulin, “The Song Period: A Time of Maturation,” in *Sitting with Koans*, p. 34 (with minor revisions).

42. T 47:922a-b.

43. See Buswell, *The Korean Approach to Zen*, pp. 337–338 and 373–374.

44. X 70:606b; see also Pei-yi Wu, *The Confucian's Progress: Autobiographical Writings in Traditional China* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 77.

45. T 47:828b.

46. See Christoph Anderl, “Chan Rhetoric: An Introduction,” in *Zen Buddhist Rhetoric in China, Korea, and Japan*, ed. Christoph Anderl (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 1–94, for the suggestion regarding Yuanwu. It is important to determine whether Yuanwu is a supporter of literary Chan far removed and antithetical to and, thus, an opponent of Dahui, or instead is a precursor consistent with and even subsumed by the outlook of Dahui, such that the latter’s burning of the *Blue Cliff Record* could be seen as a natural outcome of ongoing abbreviation in Chan textuality, to which Yuanwu himself partly contributed.

47. T 48:1036b-c.

48. Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism*, p. 249.

49. Cited in Thomas Cleary, “Introduction to the History of Zen Practice,” an appendix to Yamada Kōun, trans., *The Gateless Gate* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004), p. 260 (with minor revisions).

50. T 47:921a and 942a.

51. Morten Schlütter has shared an unpublished conference presentation, “On the History and Evolution of Kōan Introspection in Chinese Chan,” in which he also notes that the Pure Land style of kōan-investigation was in the Ming and later periods thought to have started with Qingliao of the Caodong tradition.

52. *Ibid.*; also, “Furthermore, the kōan introspection that Dahui invented became a standard meditation technique in Chinese Chan, even in the Caodong tradition that had been the target for his criticism of silent illumination. . . . I have not really found any evidence of a softening approach to kōan introspection in the later Chan school. Except for maybe during the late Song and Yuan dynasties, even the Caodong tradition toed the line laid down by Dahui.”

53. T 47:901c-902a.

54. T 47:886a.

55. As translated in Ishii Shūdō, “Yakuchū Daie *Fukaku Zenji hōgo* (zoku) (jō),” *Komazawa Daigaku Zen kenkyūsho nenpō* 4 (1993): 20–62 (48)—these are taken from the general sermons included in *Dahui pushuo*; T 47:481c.

56. Stephen Addiss, Stanley Lombardo, and Judith Roitman, eds., *Zen Sourcebook: Traditional Documents from China and Korea, and Japan* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2008), pp. 214–215.

57. Philip B. Yampolsky, *The Zen Master Hakuin: Selected Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), p. 33. Note that this statement by Hakuin paraphrases a remark appearing in a letter in *Dahui shu*, in T 47:918c; see Miriam Levering, “Dahui Zonggao (1089-1163): The Image Created by His Stories about Himself and His Teaching Style,” in *Zen Masters*, eds. Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 91–116.

58. James Baskind, “Mortification Practices in the Ōbaku School,” in *Essays on East Asian Religion and Culture*, eds. Christian Wittern and Shi Lishan (Kyoto: Nishiwaki Tsuneki Editorial Committee, 2007), pp. 149–176 (159).

59. T 47:666bc; for a slightly different rendering of the Wuzu verse, see Thomas Cleary, trans., *No Barrier: Unlocking the Zen Kōan* (New York: Bantam, 1993), p. 2.

60. David Pollack, trans., *Zen Poems of the Five Mountains* (New York: Crossroad, 1985), p. 24.

61. X 65:592c.

62. X 65:593b.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

65. J. C. Cleary, *A Buddha from Korea*, p. 99 (with minor revisions).

66. X 65:593a.

67. Cited in Kenneth L. Kraft, *Eloquent Zen: Daitō and Early Japanese Zen* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992), p. 195 (I have kept the translation of the *kōan* but changed to Pinyin for consistency and also made minor formatting changes overall).

68. See He Yansheng, *Dōgen to Chūgoku Zen* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2000).

69. T 48:127b; also in Kagamishima Genryū, ed., *Nyōjō goroku* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1983), p. 282.

70. *Dōgen zenji zenshū* vol. 5:33-34; see also Yūhō Yokoi, trans., *Zen Master Dōgen: An Introduction with Selected Writings* (Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1976), p. 56.

71. X 72:653a.

72. T 48:139a.

73. T 48:164a. Another example is Dōgen's first published essay, *Discerning the Way* (*Bendōwa*), which asserts that one instant of meditation covers all beings at all times and that engaging a single dharma authentically is a gateway to knowing all dharmas.

74. Sung-Bae Park, *One Korean's Approach to Buddhism: The MomlMomjit Paradigm* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009).

75. Robert E. Buswell, Jr., *Zen Monastic Experience* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 157–158.

76. Hori, "Kōan and Kenshō in the Rinzai Zen Curriculum," pp. 290–291; and Akizuki Ryūmin, *Kōan* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1987), pp. 259–264.

77. In addition, Nishida and other Kyoto school thinkers have been attacked by social critics for possibly subverting ethics during World War II when they may have refashioned a philosophy of nothingness in support of imperial militarism and supernationalism by identifying the absolute with the empty space of the imperial palace garden located at the center of Tokyo on the grounds originally occupied by the shogun's castle as the embodiment of despotic power.

78. Hans-Rudolf Kantor, "'Right Words Are Like the Reverse'—The Daoist Rhetoric and the Linguistic Strategy in Early Chinese Buddhism," *Asian Philosophy* 20/3 (2010): 283–307 (288).

79. Translator William Scott Wilson has suggested this from his book, *The One Taste of Truth: Zen and the Art of Drinking Tea* (Boston: Shambhala, 2013), p. 5.

80. See Pinhas Ben-Zvi, "Lewis Carroll and the Search for Non-Being," *The Philosopher* 90/1 (2002); <http://www.the-philosopher.co.uk/alice.htm> (accessed June 3, 2010). To cite a couple of recent examples from American pop culture that resemble Mu as used in the *kōan*: several Bob Dylan songs from the late 1960s, including "Too Much of Nothing" and "Nothing Was Delivered"; the *Seinfeld* TV show "about nothing" during which characters discuss seemingly mundane affairs without a conventional plot; and The Fugs' nihilistic anthem to the tune of an old Hebraic prayer, which reprises the term "nothing" while chanting continuously the days of week in English, Yiddish, and Spanish followed by a cast of characters and list of ordinary activities and events that lead to "nothing nothing nothing nothing/ lots and lots of nothing/ nothing nothing nothing nothing nothing/ lots of it/ nothing!/ Not a God

damn thing.” This recalls a Hasidic saying that is sometimes recited in prayer, “I do not know anything at all” (*Ani lo yodea klum*). An Italian saying has been cited in American pop culture about “the sweetness of doing nothing” (*dolce far niente*). Yet another, very different angle of connection to Zen nothingness is through the thought of modern physics, such as Stephen Hawking, who argues in a way that at once supports and undermines traditional Western *ex nihilo* theology that the created universe “came from nothing” (see n.82 below).

81. Louis Menand, “Silence, Exile, Punning: James Joyce’s Chance Encounters,” *The New Yorker* (July 2, 2012), p. 71.

82. See Steven Heine, *Bargainin’ For Salvation: Bob Dylan, A Zen Master?* (New York: Continuum, 2009).

83. Dan Vergano, “‘Universe from Nothing: Big Bang Was a Bargain,’” *USA Today*; <http://www.usatoday.com/tech/science/columnist/vergano/story/2012-02-04/lawrence-krauss-univers-e/52951768/1> (accessed February 4, 2012).

84. Max Jammer, *Einstein and Religion: Physics and Theology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

85. Michiko Yusa, *Zen & Philosophy: An Intellectual Biography of Nichida Kitarō* (Honolulu: University Hawaii Press, 2002), p. 69. The term “nothing” used here seems to be an unintentional pun.

86. *Ibid.* In a conversation in November 2012, Yusa explained that the term for “passing” a *koan* literally means “penetration” 透過 (Ch. *touguo*, Jp. *tōka*).

87. Nishida Kitarō, *Last Writings: Nothingness and the Religious Worldview*, trans. David Dilworth (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), which includes Nishida’s final essay, “Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan,” or “The Logic of Place and the Religious Worldview.”

### Chapter 3

1. John C. Maraldo, “Negotiating the Divide of Death in Japanese Buddhism: Dōgen’s Difference,” *Essays in Japanese Philosophy* 7 (2010): 89–121, especially p. 114 n.45. Maraldo draws from Paul Ricoeur, “On Interpretation,” in *Philosophy in France Today*, ed. Alan Montefiore and trans. Kathleen McLaughlin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 175–197; this represents a poststructuralist hermeneutics also suggested by Roland Barthes and others indicating that one’s being engaged with text is no longer seen as a matter of separate, discrete entities standing apart since the reader is constantly commenting and often intruding upon or distorting a work through either expanding the horizons or restricting its expression based on his or her own partiality.

2. Some of these works include Bernard Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Charles Wei-hsun Fu and Steven Heine, eds., *Japan in Traditional and Postmodern Perspectives* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995); James W. Heisig and John C. Maraldo, eds., *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School, & the Question of Nationalism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995); Jamie Hubbard and Paul L. Swanson, eds., *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: The Storm over Critical Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997); Brian Victoria, *Zen at War* (Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1997); John R. McRae, *Seeing through Zen* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Steven Heine, *Zen Skin, Zen Marrow: Will the Real Zen Buddhism Please Stand Up?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Alan Cole, *Fathering Your Father: The Zen of Fabrication in Tang Buddhism* (Berkeley: University of California Press,

2009); and Christopher Ives, *Imperial-Way Zen: Ichikawa Hakugen's Critique and Lingering Questions for Buddhist Ethics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009).

3. There appear to be four waves or stages in postwar scholarship: the first in the 1950s through 1970s based on works by D. T. Suzuki and Ruther Fuller Sasaki emphasized translations based on sectarian standpoints; the second in the 1980s based on publications by the Kuroda Institute and other academic presses produced more accurate renderings from the standpoint of Buddhist textuality; the third in the 1990s highlighted postmodern social and historical criticism of the tradition; and the fourth, current wave is derived from objective and impartial historical studies.

4. Stephen Greenblatt, "The Answer Man: An Ancient Poem Was Rediscovered—And the World Swerved," *The New Yorker* (August 8, 2011): 28–33 (28).

5. See Van Harvey, *The Historian and Believer: The Morality of Historical Knowledge and Christian Belief* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, rpt. 1996).

6. See James Shapiro, *Contested Will: Who Wrote Shakespeare?* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 2010); and Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005).

7. Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen*, p. 142.

8. Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen*, p. 143.

9. William M. Bodiford, "Keyword Meditation and Detailed Investigation in Medieval Japan," p. 97.

10. See Hyewon Kang, "The Origin and Practice System of *Ganhwa Seon*," *International Journal of Buddhist Thought & Culture* 6 (2006): 229–241. Here, the formation of *Ganhwa Seon* is traced back to the Tang and Song dynasties in China and, from the evidence mustered, both Yuanwu and Hongzhi are somehow considered to be early proponents of this standpoint.

11. The term *gongan* was not used as such before the Song, or it meant something based on the legal model, such as guilt, indictment deserving of punishment, or judgment delivered at a magistrate's desk as the results of records of criminal cases were assessed.

12. Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen*, p. 173; he notes that Caodong monk Weizhao also railed against the usage of language but in a way that was different from some of his peers' criticisms.

13. Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen*, p. 182.

14. Morten Schlütter, "'Before the Empty Eon' versus 'A Dog Has No Buddha-Nature': Kung-an Use in the Ts'ao-tung Tradition and Ta-hui's Kung-an Introspection Ch'an," in *The Kōan*, eds. Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 168–199.

15. See the discussion in Carl Bielefeldt, *Dōgen's Manuals of Zen Meditation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

16. Ding-hwa Hsieh, "Poetry and Chan 'Gong'an': From Xuedou Chongxian (980-1052) to Wumen Huikai (1183-1260)," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 40 (2010): 48–70 (65), which looks at several cases, including "Juzhi's finger," "Neither the mind nor the Buddha," and "Dongshan's three pounds of flax," in addition to the Cat Kōan. See also A. V. Grimstone, "Introduction" to *Two Zen Classics*, trans. Katsuki Sekida (Boston: Shambhala, rpt. 2005), p. 20, who notes that Xuedou's poems "are literary productions in their own right, often of great beauty, and their translation cannot be simply a matter of providing a literal rendering of their content."

17. Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen*, p. 182.

18. Zen (Tokyo: Natsumesha, 2005), p. 111.
19. For discussion of *Shōmono* literature, see Andō Yoshinori, *Chūsei Zenshū bunseki no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kokusho inkōkai, 2000); and Ishikawa Rikizan, “Transmission of *Kirigami* (Secret Initiation Documents).”
20. See Steven Heine, ed., *Dōgen: Textual and Historical Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).
21. Okimoto Katsumi, *Jōshū: Hyōhyō to Zen wo ikita tatsujin no azayakana fūkō* (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 2008), p. 214.
22. Liu Changjiu, *Zhongguo Chanzong* (Beijing: Guangxi Shifan Daxue chubanshe, 2005).
23. Huang, *Chanzong gongan tixiangyong sixiang zhi yanjiu*.
24. Yanagida Seizan, ed., *Daruma no goroku* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1969).
25. See Akizuki, *Kōan*, pp. 199–206; Yanagida and Umehara, *Mu no tankyū*, pp. 339–342; Ishii Seijun, *Zen mondō nyūmon* (Tokyo: Kadokawa gakugei shuppan, 2010), pp. 104–111; and Tanabe Shoji, *Mu: Zen mondō nyūmon* (Tokyo: NHK, 2004), pp. 213–220.
26. “Hsing Yun Hua 2: Gouzi Foxing,” also expresses it another way 一說「有」, 一說「無」; <http://www.book853.com/show.aspx?id=314&cid=53&page=87> (accessed July 10, 2011).
27. Sharf, “How to Think with Chan *Gong’an*,” pp. 210 and 231.
28. Ibid.
29. Jin Y. Park, “Zen Language in Our Time: The Case of Pojo Chinul’s Huatou Meditation,” *Philosophy East and West* 55/1 (2005): 80–98 (95).
30. Ogawa Takashi, *Goroku no shisōshi: Chūgoku Zen no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2011); in March 2012 Albert Welter kindly shared with me his at-the-time unpublished review of this volume.
31. Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen*, p. 3.
32. Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen*, pp. 4–5.
33. Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen*, p. 52.
34. Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).
35. Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen*, p. 175; Schlütter sums up this deconstructive method by maintaining that “political, social, and economic factors of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries had a decisive impact on the development of Chinese Chan Buddhism, without which there could have been no Zen in East Asia as we now know it.”
36. Mark Halperin, *Out of the Cloister: Literati Perspectives on Buddhism in Sung China 960-1279* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), which shows that literati contributed to Chan texts but also considers what they expressed independent of this connection. See also Robert M. Gimello, “Marga and Culture”; and Richard John Lynn, “The Sudden and the Gradual in Chinese Poetry Criticism: An Examination of the Ch’an Poetry Analogy,” in *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought*, ed. Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), pp. 381–428.
37. Halperin, *Out of the Cloister*, p. 110.
38. As will be shown, a focus on the *kōan*-investigation approach advocated by Dahui of the Linji branch in opposition to Hongzhi’s Caodong school-based silent-illumination method may give the impression that the latter school stresses quietude and silence rather than verbal expression; however, in the case of considering Dōgen in addition to Dahui, it is actually the former, who was greatly influenced by Hongzhi in interpreting the Mu *Kōan*, who stresses the power of language. Note that Dōgen, particularly in sermons

collected in the *Extensive Record*, praises yet is sometimes rather critical of his Caodong predecessor as he often is with his mentor Rujing. See the discussion in the translator's "Introduction" to *Cultivating the Empty Field: The Silent Illumination of Zen Master Hongzhi*, trans. Taigen Daniel Leighton with Yi Wu (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1991), pp. xxix–xl.

39. Huang, *Chancong gongan tixiangyong sixiang zhi yanjiu*, pp. 58–60; see also Foulk, "The Form and Function of Koan Literature."

40. Araki Kengo, in translating *Daie sho* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobo, 1969), uses "huatou" for all instances of "hua," but there are passages in Dahui's records in which "hua" or even "huatou" may best be read simply as "story" or as "kōan."

41. Kenneth L. Kraft, *Eloquent Zen: Daitō and Early Japanese Zen* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992), pp. 132–133; see also William M. Bodiford, *Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), pp. 146–149.

42. According to the dialogue, when Huineng comes to train for the first time at a temple located in the northerly area as a "man from Lingnan," who supposedly has "no Buddha-nature" because southerners are considered barbarians, he responds, "With people, there may be south and north, but how could this apply to the matter the Buddha-nature?" and this truth is acknowledged by the master. Dōgen argues that the phrase can be taken to confirm Huineng's possession of universal spirituality in that the young illiterate monk who went on to become the acclaimed sixth ancestor and precursor to the mainstream Southern school does have the Mu of Buddha-nature. He writes, "We should recognize the fact that speaking and hearing of 'no buddha nature'—this is the direct path to 'making a buddha.' Therefore, the very moment of 'no buddha nature' is itself 'making a buddha.' Those who have not yet seen or heard, who have not yet spoken of, no buddha nature have not yet made a buddha" 無佛性の道取聞取、これ作佛の直道なりといふことを。しかあれば、無佛性の正當恁麼時、すなはち作佛なり。無佛性いまだ見聞せず、道取せざるは、いまだ作佛せざるなり。This kōan is also alluded to through another dialogue concerning Huineng that is included as case 59 in Dōgen's *300 Case Treasury* collection.

43. Welter, *Monks, Rules, and Literati*, p. 10.

44. Ding-hwa Evelyn Hsieh, "Yuan-wu K'o-ch'in's (1063–1135) Teaching of Ch'an *Kung-an* Practice: A Transition from the Literary Study of Ch'an *Kung-an* to the Practice *K'an-hua* Ch'an," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 17/1 (1994): 66–95.

45. T 48:198c.

46. T 48:153b.

47. Barrett, "The Monastery Cat in Cross-Cultural Perspective," p. 111 (citing a translation by David Pollack).

48. *Zen*, cover art.

49. *Ibid.*

50. Miriam Levering, "A Monk's Literary Education: Dahui's Friendship with Juefan Huihong," *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 13/2 (2000): 379–380. Dahui wrote, "The five white cats had no cracks./ They waited for an idle moment to dart out and scare people./ They would roll over and jump (cavort) a hundred thousand times./ He (Fengxue) coolly observed them, and made them a topic of conversation./ As I now understand, I can play about with it a little./ Let him (Kewen) like it or let him scold./ Moreover, I laugh at the old man in the tree./ He can only climb up the tree; he can't get down."

51. T 48:293c.

52. The full passage will be discussed in detail in chapter 5.

53. X 68:83b.

54. T 48:219a-220a.

55. *Collected Works of Korean Buddhism* vol. 7-1 (*Gongan Collections I*), ed. John Jorgensen and trans. Juhn Y. Ahn (Seoul: Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism, 2012), p. 171.

56. On the other hand, this suggests that the unclean and unworthy canine—as indicated by the passage “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine” (Matt. 7:6)—were at least allowed inside the gates of the holy city. A colleague in Biblical studies has pointed out Tobit 6:2, in which Tobit’s son Tobias is setting out on a long, dangerous journey accompanied by a guide (the angel Raphael, actually, but Tobias and Tobit do not know that). Just as they are leaving, his dog runs out after him and then accompanies him on his journey. The dog is not an important part of later developments in the story but does appear again in 11:4, which says, “And the dog went along behind them.” This insignificant detail seems to have behind it the image of dog as man’s best friend, a notion otherwise very rare in the ancient Near East (and Far East).

57. X 69:507c.

58. Keyworth, “Transmitting the Lamp of Learning in Classical Chan Buddhism,” pp. 342–343.

59. T 47:660a.

## Chapter 4

1. Youru Wang, *Linguistic Strategies in Daoist Zhuangzi and Chan Buddhism: The Other Way of Speaking* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

2. See chapter 1, note 44.

3. Steven Heine, “Four Myths about Zen Buddhism’s ‘Mu Koan,’” OUPBlog (April 28, 2012); <http://blog.oup.com/2012/04/four-myths-about-zen-buddhisms-mu-koan/>.

4. See Alan Fox, “Self-reflection in the Sanlun Tradition: Madhyamika as the ‘Deconstructive Conscience’ of Buddhism,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 19 (1992): 1–24.

5. T 48:293a; note that Japanese scholars often include an exclamation point, as in 無! (Mu!)—see, for example, Akizuki, *Kōan*, p. 261.

6. X 68:81a.

7. X 68:86a.

8. Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen*, p. 114: “This passage is clearly a quite late addition, however, since the Song editions of the *Wanling lu* do not include it.” The spurious passage referencing the Mu Kōan appears in T 48:387b, which follows a later, probably Ming rather than Song edition attributed to Huangbo. In addition, as Robert E. Buswell, Jr. points out that even Song texts are suspect in “The ‘Short-cut’ Approach of K’an-hua Meditation: The Evolution of a Practical Subitism in Chinese Ch’an Buddhism,” in *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought*, ed. Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), pp. 367–368 n.83: “Scholars have sometimes suggested that the first Ch’an usages of the term *kung-an* appear in stories concerning Huang-po Hsi-yün (d. ca. 850) and his disciple Ch’en Tsun-su (780?-877?), citing works by Furuta Shōkin and Miura and Sasaki (*Zen Dust*, 153-154 n. 9). Both of these references appear, however, in literature from the Sung period (*Wu-chia cheng-tsung tsan*, ZZ 2/8/5/458a2, and *Ching-te ch’uan-teng lu*, T 51.291b17), so it remains unclear when the term was first used to refer specifically to a Ch’an exchange.”

9. T 48:384a; and T 48:387b.

10. T 47:660a.

11. T 47:850b.

12. T 47:665b-c; also, Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen*, p. 115.

13. Kirchner, trans., *Entangling Vines*, p. 30 (case 50).

14. Wu, *Zhaozhoulu xiaozhu jiping*, p. 222.

15. See Jiang Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute: The Reinvention of Chan Buddhism in Seventeenth-Century China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

16. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, p. 195.

17. Bodiford, *Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan*, pp. 148–162.

18. X 80:251a.

19. X 71:0200c.

20. X 68:167b.

21. T 48:1015c. This late Ming-dynasty text contains a lengthy discussion of the Mu Kōan in relation to *nianfo* recitation, and also deals with other key-phrases like “the ten thousand things return to the one, to what does the one return.” An interesting implication of the cited passage is that “kōan” is a larger category encompassing the linguistic turn of key-phrase, the psychological notion of original face, and the ritual of *nianfo*.

22. See Ishikawa Rikizan, *Sōtōshū sōden shiryō no kenkyū* vol. 2 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2001), pp. 758–759.

23. See Sharf, “How to Think with Chan *Gong’an*,” pp. 210–224; and William Henry Grosnick, “The Zen Master Dōgen’s Understanding of the Buddha-nature in Light of the Historical Development of the Buddha-nature Concept in India, China, and Japan” (PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin at Madison, 1979), which includes an annotated translation of “Buddha-nature,” one of nearly a dozen English versions now available. As Hyewon Kang points out, in China this view became integrated with the notion of original enlightenment (Ch. *benjue*, Jp. *hongaku*), or the possession by sentient beings of enlightenment as their basic nature. This is not something to be obtained externally as a distant goal or as part of a gradual purifying process, for it exists in full reality here in the present moment, and therefore sentient beings need only to awaken to it. Kang says, “This is a concept expressed commonly in scriptural works of East Asian provenance, such as the *Dai-sheng-qi-xin-lun* (*Mahayanasraddhotpada-Sastra; Awakening of Mahayana Faith*, T 32.No.1666-1667) and the *Yuan-jiao-jing* (*Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, T 17.No.842). It is due to this East Asian origin that there are no direct Indic terms indicated as sources for the concept, which in turn offers support to the argument for the East Asian provenance of such texts”; in “The Origin and Practice System of *Ganhwa Seon*,” *International Journal of Buddhist Thought & Culture* 6 (2006): 229–241 (236).

24. See Jacqueline Stone, *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003), p. 29ff; in Japan, one of the central debates in the Tendai school was whether “grasses and trees become buddhas” (*sōmoku jōbutsu*) as seen in relation to original enlightenment thought (*hongaku shisō*). Dōgen seems to vary in his writings about the efficacy of this doctrine. Sometimes he stresses the universality of the moment-to-moment process of arising and perishing, or emergence, abiding, change, and extinction in relation to arousing the aspiration for enlightenment (*hosshin*), practice, cultivation, and realization, and at other times he emphasizes that only humans have the capacity to seek awakening; see the fascicles “The Nature of Dharmas” (“Hōsshō”) and “Sentient Beings Preaching the Dharma” (“Mujō seppō”) in the *Treasury of the True Dharma-Eye*.

25. Cited in Sharf, “How to Think with Chan *Gong’an*,” p. 220.

26. The verse reads, “The sounds of the valley streams are Buddha’s long, broad tongue;/ The forms of the mountains are his pure body./ At night I heard the myriad sutra-verses uttered/ How can I relate to others what they say?”

27. See Sharf, “How to Think with Chan *Gong’an*,” p. 225.

28. T 48:205c.

29. T 48:671b-c; cited by Yi-hsun Huang, “Chan Master Xuedou and His Remarks on Old Cases in the *Record of Master Xuedou at Dongting*,” *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 22 (2009): 69–96 (88).

30. T 51:255a; also appears in the *Wudeng huiyuan* vol. 3.

31. T 48:270b; in this passage, “that it is” could also be rendered as “what it is.”

32. X 68:84c; Akizuki, *Jōshuroku*, pp. 130–131.

33. *Dōgen zenji zenshū* vol. 5:136; vol. 4:88–90 (#509) and vol. 4:226 (#65); also in *Jingde Record*, T 51:275c; *Zen Lamp Compendium* (Ch. *Zongmen liandeng huiyao*, Jp. *Shūmon rentōeyō*), ZZ 136:538a-b; and *Essentials of Zen Transmission* (Ch. *Zongmen tongyaoji*, Jp. *Shūmon tōyōshū*) in *Zengaku tenseki sōkan* 1:79c-d7.

34. X 83:647a.

35. Donald Keene, trans., *Essays in Idleness: The Tsurezuregusa of Kenkō* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967; rpt. Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle, 1981), p. 201.

36. X 68:77c.

37. Okimoto Katsumi, *Jōshū: Hyōhyō to Zen o ikita tatsujin no azayakana fūkō* (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 2008), pp. 156–158.

38. Perhaps Yunmen is cited so frequently in the *Blue Cliff Record* because Xuedou was a monk in this lineage, whereas Zhaozhou trained fourteen disciples but did not leave behind a sustained lineal following. For Yunmen’s references to Zhaozhou, which compare him to Xuefeng “in the south,” see Urs App, *Master Yunmen: From the Record of the Chan Teacher “Gate of the Clouds”* (New York: Kodansha, 1994), pp. 122, 129, and 148. In regard to the significance of regionalism in the development of Chan as discussed in chapter 3, particularly the role of Sichuan province in fostering the literary styles of native sons Xuedou and Yuanwu, who rose to prominence in Zhejiang and Hunan provinces, respectfully, see Ding-hwa Hsieh, “Yuan-wu K’o-ch’in’s (1063-1135) Teaching of Ch’an *Kung-an* Practice: A Transition from the Literary Study of Ch’an *Kung-an* to the Practice *K’an-hua* Ch’an,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 17/1 (1994): 66–95; and Yi-Hsun Huang, “Chan Master Xuedou and His Remarks on Old Cases.”

39. Dialogues about Mount Wutai appear in items in Zhaozhou’s *Record*, including 458 and 504, as well as 464, with the latter also included as case 31 in the *Gateless Gate*.

40. This text is used as the basis for Akizuki, *Jōshūroku*.

41. X 68:76a.

42. *Ibid.*

43. X 68:89b; in item 440 (X 68:87b), Zhaozhou also makes dismissive comments when asked about Linji. See also Thomas Yuho Kirchner, ed., *The Record of Linji*, trans. Ruth Fuller Sasaki (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008), pp. 39 (item 17) and 305–306. Some of the transmissions of the lamp texts, such as the *Tiansheng Extensive Lamp Record*, follow the Linji record’s version, while others, such as the *Five Lamps Merged into One*, adhere to the Zhaozhou record’s version. Zhaozhou’s *Record* also mentions the irregular practitioner Puhua, who is well represented in Linji’s recorded sayings.

44. According to legend, the famous pre-Tang engineer Lu Ban built the bridge in a single night and one time when spirits traversing overloaded it, he went into the water to devise a way to support the structure.

45. X 68:85b.

46. Ibid.

47. In the “Cypress Tree” (“Hakujushi”) fascicle, Dōgen indicates that Zhaozhou’s career actually starts at this stage rather than showing that this is the third part of his career. It is unclear whether this would have been a commonly held misunderstanding at the time in that available records may have been limited; or perhaps Dōgen misread, deliberately or not, the historical account of Zhaozhou’s life.

48. X 68:76a.

49. Zhaozhou’s realism can be contrasted with Nanquan’s idealism expressed in a dialogue preserved in *Gateless Gate* 19 when the mentor says, “The Way does not belong to knowledge, nor does it belong to non-knowledge. Knowledge is illusion, and non-knowledge is beyond discrimination. When you get to the Way without doubt, you are free like the vastness of space or an unfathomable void, so how can you explain it by yes or no?” Wumen remarks that even though the disciple was enlightened, he “must continue his pursuit thirty more years to exhaust the meaning,” and the prose comment takes us to naturalism: “A hundred flowers in spring, the moon in autumn,/ The cool wind in summer and winter’s snow./ If your mind is not clouded with things,/ You are happy at any time”; T 48:295b.

50. T 48:149a.

51. X 68:90.

52. According to Ishii Shūdō, *Chūgoku zenshū wa: Mana Shōbōgenzō ni manabu* (Kyoto: Zen bunka kenkyūsho, 1988), p. 438, there are five Zhaozhou dialogues included in Dōgen’s verse comments in *Extensive Record* vol. 9: case 13, “Sitting immovably without speaking” (from *Zongmen liandeng huiyao* vol. 6); 21, “Four gates” (*Dahui yulu* vol. 8); 43, “Sitting one sees, standing one sees” (*Zongmen tongyaoji* vol. 4); and 45, “Cypress tree in the courtyard” (*Zongmen tongyaoji* vol. 4); in addition to 73, “Dog’s Buddha-nature” (*Hongzhilu* 2.18).

53. X 68:77b.

54. X 68:83a.

55. “Qi shang ba xia”; <http://www.minghui-school.org/school/article/2008/10/3/73608.html> (accessed July 11, 2011).

56. X 68:83b.

57. X 66:94c; the original text reads:

趙州問座主講什麼經。主曰涅槃經。州曰問一段義得麼。主曰得。州以腳向空趨一趨。吹一吹。曰是什麼義。主曰經中無此義。州曰脫空讓語漢。此是五百力士揭石義也不識。

58. X 68:77b.

59. X 68:77b. In a similar account found in item 481 in the *Record* (X 68:89a), Zhaozhou asked a monk, “Where have you come from?” The monk said, “From the south,” and the master said, “Who has been your companion?” The monk said, “A water buffalo,” and the master said, “You’re a good monk, why did you make a beast your companion?” The monk said, “Because there are no distinctions,” and the master said, “Forgetting that I don’t approve, come and take me as a companion in place of that beast.” Additional references to water buffalo are contained in the *Record*, including item 492, which refers with dripping sarcasm to “500 honorable priests” as being nothing more than “500 water buffalo.”

60. X 68:77b.

61. X 68:84c.

62. X 68:83a.

63. Mark Bykoski, “Zhaozhou said, ‘It does not’”; <http://justthis.austinzcenter.org/2009/05/dog-from-wumenguan.html> (accessed January 17, 2012). He also has a blog on the Dual Version in the *Record of Serenity*; <http://justthis.austinzcenter.org/2012/03/dog-from-congronglu-mark-bykoski.html> (accessed January 19, 2012).

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid.

66. “Xin Yun Hua 2: Gouzi Foxing”; <http://big5.jiexieyin.org/show.aspx?id=2765&cid=0&page=87> (accessed February 5, 2012).

67. *Dōgen zenji zenshū* vol. 1:40.

68. “Xin Yun Hua 2: Gouzi Foxing”; <http://big5.jiexieyin.org/show.aspx?id=2765&cid=0&page=87> (accessed February 5, 2012).

69. Bykoski, “Zhaozhou said, ‘It does not.’”

70. Christoph Harbsmeier and Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China* vol. 7.1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 107–110.

71. Bykoski, “Zhaozhou said, ‘It does not.’”

## Chapter 5

1. Ishii Seijun, *Zen mondō nyāmon*, pp. 104 and 100.

2. *Dōgen zenji zenshū* vol. 1:196–207.

3. *Collected Works of Korean Buddhism* vol. 7-1, pp. 470–472.

4. See Hajime Nakamura, *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples: India, China, Tibet, Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1964).

5. *Dōgen zenji zenshū* vol. 3:152.

6. X 65:592c.

7. X 65:592b.

8. T 48: 238b–c; see also *Dōgen zenji zenshū* vol. 4:232 (*Dōgen’s Extensive Record*, p. 586).

9. Kirchner, trans., *Entangling Vines*, p. 29 (case 49, with different translation).

10. *Dōgen zenji zenshū* vol. 5:188.

11. *Dōgen zenji zenshū* vol. 1:39–40.

12. According to an account, once Jinul brought up Zhaozhou’s key-phrase “a dog has no Buddha-nature” and questioned his students about the ten maladies of contemplation delineated by the Dahui. The congregation had no response. But Hyesim replied, “A person with three kinds of maladies can comprehend its purport.” The State Preceptor asked, “Where does a person with three kinds of maladies breathe out?” Master Hyesim struck the window once with his hand. The State Preceptor laughed heartily and Jinul praised Hyesim and told him he now knew he had a worthy successor and was prepared to die, even though this gesture may have seemed antithetical to Jinul’s own pedagogical style; in *Collected Works of Korean Buddhism* vol. 2 (*Chinul: Selected Works*, ed. and trans. Robert E. Buswell, Jr. (Seoul: Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism, 2012), pp. 31–32. Also, after a section that discusses the Fox Kōan, which is the second case in the *Gateless Gate* and the eighth in the *Record of Serenity*, Hyesim lists various interpretations that link the discussion with Yes-No answers offered by Zhaozhou: “No” with regard to a dog’s Buddha-nature, and “Yes” with regard to a cypress

tree's Buddha nature 祇如僧問趙州 狗子 還有佛性也無 州云無。又問柏樹子還有佛性也無 州云有; in Han'guk Pulgyo Cheonso, ed., *Collected Works of Korean Buddhism* vol. 5:186b-c (thanks to Jin Park for pointing out this passage, case 184 in Hyesim's work).

13. For example, even while following the key-phrase method, modern commentator Seongchul asks, "Why did master Zhaozhou say Mu?" which is exactly the kind of question that Dahui would have refuted; in Ryan Bongseok Joo, "Gradual Experience of Sudden Enlightenment: The Varieties of Ganhwa Seon Teachings in Contemporary Korea," in *Ganhwa Seon: Illuminating the World, Conference Proceedings* (Seoul: Dongguk University Press, 2010), p. 229.

14. X 71:787c.

15. For another use of the phrase in a poetic comment on another case, see X 65:590c.

16. T 48:239a; and J 32:197b.

17. In Ogawa Kōkan, *Chūgoku nyoraizō shisō kenkyū* (Tokyo: Nakayama shobō, 1976), p. 446.

18. See Steven Heine, *Shifting Shape, Shaping Text: Philosophy and Folklore in the Fox Kōan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999).

19. In *Collected Works of Korean Buddhism* vol. 7-1, p. 332 (I left their punctuation of the source passage, but altered the translation on p. 330.) Also, Gag'un says of Tianyi's remark when asked to interpret another commentary on the Fox Kōan while using the term *kattō* in a pejorative sense of complicated entanglements: Tianyi said, "Let us consider those who have commented on the case," and Gag'un adds, "Why does the case set up [an apparent dichotomy between] 'falling into causality' and 'not falling into causality' [two key-phrases from the kōan]? None of the many entangling words or the many kōans they produce are able to capture this relation" 且識取前話者, 前話何曾有落因果, 不落因果? 許多葛藤下, 多引公案, 皆不出此義; cited on p. 332 (with significantly revised translation).

20. T 51:259c; from the *Jingde Record*.

21. The text cited is the *Jeweled Compendium* vol. 19 (X 65:592b).

22. X 65:592b.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. X 65:592c.

26. *Collected Works of Korean Buddhism* vol. 7-1, p. 480.

27. Ibid.

28. Addiss et al., *Zen Sourcebook*, p. 205.

29. X 71:523a.

30. X 71:530a.

31. *Collected Works of Korean Buddhism* vol. 7-1, pp. 484–485 (with revisions).

32. The Bird's Nest Monk (a.k.a. Daolin), so called because he meditated while sitting in a treetop, had an attendant who brought him water and ran errands for six years but threatened to leave because the monk had not taught him any Dharma. So, by blowing on the mundane item and thereby circulating it, the monk showed that the Dharma is everywhere and the disciple was enlightened; after this, the term "worn thread" 布毛 became synonymous with the Dharma.

33. X 71:181c; see also J. C. Cleary, *Zen under the Gun*, p. 31.

34. X 71:183b.

35. X 70:56b-c (I have included the kind of punctuation found in modern Chinese editions such as Wu, *Zhaozhou lu xiaozhu jiping*).

36. *Collected Works of Korean Buddhism* vol. 7-1, pp. 481–482 (with revisions).

37. Kirchner, trans., *Entangling Vines*, pp. 29–31; I have changed “Wu” to “Mu” and taken off exclamation points following Mu.

38. T 48:238b-c.

39. The effect of the characters is to create onomatopoeia for the sound of growling dogs.

40. Note that this seems derived from a passage in the *Analecst* (*Lunyu* 論語) of Confucius 一言既出，駟馬難追.

41. T 48:238c.

42. See *Collected Works of Korean Buddhism* vol. 7-1, pp. 381ff.

43. This saying is found in the *Record of Serenity* 48; T 48:239a.

44. Dōgen is known for his scathing critique of Dahui in the “Self-Fulfilling Samadhi” (“Jishō zammai”) fascicle, where he goes so far as to question Dahui’s enlightenment, and elsewhere, especially “Disclosing Mind, Disclosing Nature” (“Sesshin sesshō”); but he also occasionally praises the Chinese master for his dedication and perseverance, and apparently borrows the title of *Shōbōgenzō* (Ch. *Zhengfayanjang*) from one of his kōan collection of 661 cases.

45. *Dōgen zenji zenshū* vol. 3:214; *Dōgen’s Extensive Record*, p. 301.

46. The delineation of fourteen sections is not indicated in the text itself but is based in part on the analysis by Takashi James Kodera, “The Buddha Nature in Dōgen’s *Shōbōgenzō*,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 44 (1977): 267–298. See also the following works where I have previously dealt with materials comparing Dōgen and Dahui while focusing on the “Buddha-nature” fascicle, written some time before I recently completed additional textual and historical research: “Does the Kōan Have Buddha-Nature? The Zen Kōan as Religious Symbol,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 58/3 (1990): 357–387; and *Dōgen and the Kōan Tradition: A Tale of Two Shōbōgenzō Texts* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994). See also as one of numerous English translations, Norman Waddell and Masao Abe, trans., *The Heart of Dōgen’s Shōbōgenzō* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), pp. 60–96.

47. In the “Painted Rice Cake” (“Gabyō”) fascicle, Dōgen inverts the meaning of the term, which usually refers to illusion, by saying that “only a painted rice-cake satisfies hunger.”

48. *Dōgen zenji zenshū* vol. 3:72–74; *Dōgen’s Extensive Record*, pp. 152–155.

49. See Hee-Jin Kim, “The Reason of Words and Letters,” in *Dōgen Studies*, ed. William R. LaFleur (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), pp. 54–83.

50. See John R. McRae, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch’an Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), pp. 73–100.

51. In fact, this interpretative style is limited in Dōgen’s corpus to just a small handful of the Sino-Japanese (*kanbun*) sermons in the *Extensive Record*.

52. Dōgen cites Zhaozhou extensively in the following fourteen fascicles as included according to the numbering scheme in the seventy-five-fascicle version of the *Treasury of the True Dharma-Eye*: 3 “Buddha-nature” (“Busshō”); 9 “Ancient Buddha-mind” (“Kobusshin”); 16 “Sustained Exertion” (“Gyōji”); 28 “Praying and Gaining the Marrow” (“Raihaitokuzui”); 30 “Reading the Sutras” (“Kankin”); 33 “Expressing the Way” (“Dōtoku”); 38 “Entangling Vines” (“Kattō”); 40 “Cypress Tree” (“Hakujushi”); 41 “Triple World Is Mind-Only” (“Sangai yuishin”); 56 “Seeing Buddha” (“Kenbutsu”); 59 “Everyday Life” (“Kajō”); 60 “Thirty-seven Methods of Realization” (“Sanjūshichihon bodai bunpō”); 73 “Reading Other’s Minds” (“Tajintsū”); 74 “A King Requests Saindhava” (“Ōsaku sendaba”). Other masters frequently

cited by Dōgen include Bodhidharma, Dongshan, Huike, Huineng, Linji, Mazu, Nanyue, and Yuanwu, in addition to Sakyamuni and Mahakasyapa, as well as predecessors Hongzhi and Rujing, who receives by far the greatest number of citations.

53. *Dōgen zenji zenshū* vol. 1:420.

54. As translated by Carl Bielefeldt; <http://scbs.stanford.edu/sztp3/translations/shobogenzo/translations/hakujushi/pdf/translation.pdf> (accessed September 27, 2012; originally in X 68:90c).

55. *Dōgen zenji zenshū* vol. 4:212; *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, p. 565.

56. *Dōgen zenji zenshū* vol. 4:68–70; *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, pp. 433–434.

57. *Dōgen zenji zenshū* vol. 4:120; *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, p. 514.

58. As a symbol of particularity, both Dōgen and Zhaozhou (items 37–39 in the *Record*) refer to the notion of *saindhava*, in which a king has faith in a trusty servant who knows to bring him exactly what he wants, whether salt, water, a bowl, or a horse, without needing to be asked or prodded.

59. See Kagamishima Genryū et al., eds., *Dōgen no in'yō goroku no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Sōtōshū shūgaku kenkyūsho, 1995), pp. 282–284.

60. *Dōgen zenji zenshū* vol. 4:232; *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, pp. 586–587.

61. See Kawamura Kōdō, *Shōbōgenzō no seiritsu shiteki no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1987); Ishii Shūdō, *Chūgoku Zenshūshi wa*; and Steven Heine, *Did Dōgen Go to China: What He Wrote and When He Wrote It* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). Also, Ishii Seijun has shown that the *Shōbōgenzō zuimonki*, a collection of informal sermons from this era that highlights numerous *kōan* cases, should also be included in the analysis.

62. *Dōgen zenji zenshū* vol. 3:152; *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, p. 231.

63. *Dōgen zenji zenshū* vol. 4:14; *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, pp. 381–382.

64. *Dōgen zenji zenshū* vol. 1:19.

65. Citations here and following of Dōgen's analysis of the Mu *Kōan* in “Buddha-nature” are from *Dōgen zenji zenshū* vol. 1:39–41.

66. Aitken, *The Gateless Barrier*, p. 11.

67. *Dōgen zenji zenshū* vol. 1:21.

68. T 47:896a; see also T 47:903c.

69. This saying, possibly attributable to Guishan, rhymes *niu* (牛 water buffalo) and *ou* (𪛗 moo), which adds to the inventive spirit.

70. *Dōgen zenji zenshū* vol. 1:37–38.

71. *Dōgen zenji zenshū* vol. 1:39.

## Chapter 6

1. Ueda Shizutera, “Silence and Words in Zen Buddhism,” *Diogenes* 170, 43/2 (1995): 1–21; [http://www.thezensite.com/ZenEssays/Philosophical/Silence\\_and\\_Words.html](http://www.thezensite.com/ZenEssays/Philosophical/Silence_and_Words.html) (accessed October 4, 2012).

2. Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, rpt. 2002).

3. Thomas Cleary, “Introduction to the History of Zen Practice,” in Yamada, trans., *The Gateless Gate*, pp. 247–268.

4. As discussed, by the time of Dahui's ministry to lay followers in the mid-1130s, Chan was becoming less powerful and more uneasy in its role as a monastic institution supported

by imperial authorities, yet its distinctive form of spiritualism coupled with a novel view of monasticism based on following “pure rules” (Ch. *qinggui*, Jp. *shingi*) as delineated in the 1103 text, the *Chanyuan qinggui* (Jp. *Zen'en shingi*), which recognized the temple abbot as a living buddha, was spreading rapidly among scholar-officials in the capital and various regions throughout China.

5. Buswell, “The ‘Short-cut’ Approach to K’an-hua Meditation,” pp. 352–356.

6. Kusan Sunim, Martine Batchelor, and Stephen Batchelor, *The Way of Korean Zen* (Tokyo: Weatherhill, 2009), pp. 69–72.

7. In another example of the critique of literary Chan, which is criticized for using rhetoric as an end in itself rather than a means of pointing to the moon that is symbolic of enlightenment, Faxiu chided Huang Tingjian about the voluptuous and enticing diction (*yanyu*) of the latter’s poetry, which he noted was so popular that men vied with one another to transmit it. When Huang laughed and asked if retribution for this might put him “in the belly of a horse,” Faxiu responded that karmic retribution for using seductive words to excite the sensual and desirous minds of people would not be limited to equine rebirth, so that Huang should rather fear rebirth in hell itself; see Gimello, “Marga and Culture,” p. 391.

8. Mario Pocesi, *Ordinary Mind Is the Way: The Hongzhou School and the Growth of Chan Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 10.

9. Ibid.

10. An-yi Pan, *Painting Faith: Li Gonglin and Northern Song Buddhist Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), p. 27.

11. William Johnston, ed., *The Cloud of Unknowing* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1973), p. 94.

12. Ibid.

13. *Dōgen zenji zenshū* vol. I:39.

14. Steven Heine, *The Zen Poetry of Dōgen: Verses from the Mountain of Eternal Peace* (Mt. Tremper, NY: Dharma Communications, 2004), p. 114.

15. Katsuki Sekida, trans., *Two Zen Classics: Mumonkan and Hekiganroku*, ed. A. V. Grimstone (New York: Weatherhill, 1977), p. 99. On the other hand, a Samadhi of words (*koutou sanmei* 口頭三昧), Watō-proponent Zhuhong says, is just another way of tricking yourself.

16. John D. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 142.

17. This illustration is adapted from Ouyang Yizhang, “‘Zhaozhou wu’ de yuyan fuhao jiedu” [“Deciphering the Linguistic Signs of ‘Zhaozhou’s Wu’”], *Pumen Xuebao* 14 (2003): 1–28 (23).

18. Sharf, “How to Think with Chan *Gong’an*,” p. 235.

19. Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen*, p. 173. Schlütter notes that Caodong monk Weizhao railed against the usage of language in a way that was different from some of his peers.

20. Another example of triangulation that is important for understanding the formation of Zen in Japan involves Dōgen’s ideological relations with Dainichi Nōnin, founder of the Daruma school, and Eisai, founder of the Rinzaï sect in the early Kamakura period. Both Dōgen and Eisai criticized Nōnin for his lack of following the precepts, although the Sōtō and Rinzaï patriarchs disagreed about the relation between discipline and other forms of practice including zazen meditation. See Bernard Faure, “The Daruma-shū, Dōgen, and Sōtō Zen,” *Momumenta Nipponica* 42/1 (1987): 25–55; and Steven Heine, “Dōgen and the Precepts,

Revisited,” in *From Ancient India to Modern America: Buddhist Studies in Honor of Charles S. Prebish*, eds. Damien C. Keown and Mavis Fenn (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), pp. 11–31.

21. T 48:141a. It is interesting to note that Xuedou’s verse does not seem so inventive in pretty much simply retelling the narrative of the dialogue.

22. Park, “Zen Language in Our Time,” p. 85. The threefold mystery includes mystery in the essence, mystery in words, and mystery in the mystery.

23. It should be noted that the matter of “kanna Zen” in Japan, where localized adaptations were continually being made, does not necessarily mirror the case of “kanhua Chan” in China, where the Linji lineage, specifically the members of the Yangqi collateral lineage, were the major proponents of this type of Chan practice; see Keyworth, “Transmitting the Lamp of Learning in Classical Chan Buddhism,” p. 526.

24. See discussions in the “Introduction” to *Cultivating the Empty Field*, pp. xxix–xl; and Steven Heine, “Dōgen, Zen Master, Zen Disciple: Transmitter or Transgressor?” in *Zen Masters*, eds. Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 117–146.

25. See the discussion of Japanese *rinka*, or provincial temples that converge Rinzai and Sōtō lineages, in Bodiford, *Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan*.

26. Eshin Nishimura, “Practical Principle of Hakuin Zen Examined in the Text by His Disciple Tourei-zenji”; [http://kr.buddhism.org/zen/koan/eshin\\_nishimura.htm](http://kr.buddhism.org/zen/koan/eshin_nishimura.htm) (accessed June 30, 2011).

27. This table is loosely adapted from Ouyang, “‘Zhaozhou wu’ de yuyan fuhao jiedu,” p. 14.

28. X 68:77c. Buddhist commentators of the period, for example, often referred to stone used for steles or other carvings, as well as other inanimate forms of nature, as having a “spirit resonance” (*qiyun*) or sympathetic quality.

29. Akizuki, *Zen mondō*, see chapter on “Inu to Tōyōteki Mu,” pp. 45–47.

30. Sharf, “How to Think with Chan *Gong’an*,” p. 236; he also argues, “This ‘no’ is not, in the end, a denial of buddha-nature to dogs so much as it is a rhetorical strategy for eluding the conceptual trap laid for him—Zhaozhou must neither affirm nor deny the doctrine of Buddha-nature and at the same time must avoid postulating a third ‘transcendent’ position,” p. 226.

31. John C. H. Wu, *The Golden Age of Zen* (Taipei: United Publishing Center, 1975), p. 142.

32. Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee, *Inherit the Wind* (New York: Ballantine Books, rpt. 2007).

33. T 48:141a.

34. *Shōbōgenzō Busshō*, ed. Hashimoto Ekō et al. (Tokyo: Shisetsusha, 1998), p. 38.

35. T 48:143b. The epithet, “board-carrying fellow,” refers to the notion that even a buddha bears an obstruction to his view of reality, although there is a contrary notion that an enlightened being can sprout an eye on the top of his head; and “wild fox spirit” draws on folklore of the mischievous and duplicitous shape-shifting creatures.

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{ SINO-JAPANESE GLOSSARY }

**Terms**

- asobiteki 遊<sup>び</sup>的  
bajing/hakkei 八景  
basho 場所  
benjue/hongaku 本覺  
bieyu/betsugo 別語  
bingzhong gongfu 病中工夫  
botsunyū 没入  
bu 不  
busshō 佛性  
busshō-genzen 佛性現前  
busshō-mu 佛性無  
can/san 參  
Chanjiao 禪教  
Chanshi/Zenji 禪師  
daiyu/daigo 代語  
diaoju 掉舉  
diyang 地羊  
dongzhong gongfu 動中工夫  
dōtoku 道得  
ducan/dokusan 獨參  
ershi wu/nijū mu 二十無  
fatang/hattō 法堂  
fei 非  
fo/butsu 佛  
foxing/busshō 佛性  
fūka-misan 風火未散  
fushō Zen 不生禪  
gabyō 画餅  
ganying 感應  
genjōkōan 現成公案  
geteng/kattō 葛藤  
gochū no mei 悟中口迷  
gongan xiaoshu/kōan shōsetsu 公案小說  
gongan/kōan/kongan 公案  
gōsshiki 業識  
gou/ku 狗

- gufu/kobutsu** 古佛  
**guze/kosoku** 古則  
**gyō** 行  
**hai/kan** 還  
**he/o** 和  
**heigo** 平語  
**henyaku** 變易  
**hiyu** 比喻  
**hongo** 本語  
**honsoku** 本則  
**hosshin** 法身  
**hua/wa** 話  
**huatou/watō/hwadu** 話頭  
**hunchen** 昏沈  
**huoju/katsuku/kwalgu** 活句  
**i** 衣  
**i-zen** 衣全  
**ji/ki** 機  
**jiaowai biechuan buli wenzi/kyōge betsuden furyū monji** 教外別伝  
**jjie/gekisetu** 擊節  
**jsetsu kishi** 時節到來  
**jsetsu nyakushi** 時節若至  
**jiyuan wenda/kien mondō** 機緣問答  
**jueju** 絕句  
**jugu/kyoko** 舉古  
**jūnji** 十二時  
**juqianhua/kyozenwa** 舉前話  
**kai-i** 皆依  
**kana** 仮名  
**kanbian/kanben** 勘弁  
**kanbun** 漢文  
**kanhua Chan/kanna Zen/ganhwa Seon** 看話禪  
**kattō** 葛藤  
**kenshō** 見性  
**kirigami** 切り紙  
**kotoba wo hitei suru kotoba** 言葉を否定する言葉  
**kū** 空  
**kū-busshō** 空佛性  
**kungbing/kūbyō** 空病  
**kushi-mu busshō-mu nari** 狗子無佛性無なり  
**kyōryaku** 經歷  
**meichū no go** 迷中の悟  
**mi-ten** 未轉  
**mo/moku** 默  
**mozhaō Chan/mokushō Zen/mukjo Seon** 默照禪  
**mu busshō** 無佛性

**Mu Kōan/Wu Gongan** 無公案  
**mu u henyaku** 無有變易  
**Mu Watō** 無話頭  
**mu-busshō** 無佛性  
**muga** 無我  
**mujō** 無常  
**mujō-busshō** 無常佛性  
**nianfo/nembutsu** 念佛  
**nianfo [zhe] shi shui** 念佛[者]是誰  
**niangu/nenko** 拈古  
**nikon** 而今  
**niu** 牛  
**omote no go** 表の語  
**ou** 呬  
**pingchang/hyōshō** 評唱  
**poxie xianzheng** 破邪顯正  
**qingdan** 清淡  
**qinggui/shingi** 清規  
**qiyun** 氣韻  
**raolu** 繞路  
**rinka** 林下  
**rōshi** 老子  
**ru ren yinshui lengnuan zizhi** 如人飲水冷煖自知  
**rushi/nyūshitsu** 入室  
**sanzen** 參禪  
**sassho** 撈所  
**sego** 俗語  
**sekishu no onjō** 赤手の音声  
**seng/sō** 僧  
**sentaku** 選択  
**sesshin** 攝心  
**sesshin sesshō** 說心說性  
**setsu** 說  
**shang/shō** 尚  
**shangtang/jōdō** 上堂  
**shangzhi/jōchi** 上智  
**shi/shi** 師  
**shikan-taza** 只管打坐  
**shiki** 四季  
**shin** 心  
**shingen** 真現  
**shitsu-u** 悉有  
**shitsu-u-busshō** 悉有佛性  
**shō soku u** 姓即有  
**shohō jissō** 諸法實相  
**shōji** 生死

**shōmono** 抄物  
**shushō ichinyō** 修證一如  
**shutaiteki mu no tachiba** 主体的無の立場  
**siku/shiku/sagu** 死句  
**sōgo** 総語  
**soku hi** 即非  
**song/ju** 頌  
**songgu/juko** 頌古  
**sura no go** すらの語  
**taigi** 大疑  
**taigo** 大悟  
**tōkan** 當觀  
**touguo/tōka** 透過  
**tōyōteki Mu** 東洋てき無  
**tudi/dochi** 土地  
**u-busshō** 有佛性  
**wen** 文  
**wen/tō** 問  
**wenzi Chan/monji Zen** 文字禪  
**wu (martial arts)** 武  
**wu/mu** 無  
**wunian/wunen** 無念  
**wuwei/mui** 無為  
**wuxiang/muso** 無相  
**wuxin/mushin** 無心  
**wuzhu/mujū** 無住  
**wuzi/muji** 無字  
**xianchang/gemba** 現場  
**xianchenggongan/genjōkōan** 現成公案  
**xiaocan/shōsan** 小參  
**xiayu/gyō** 下語  
**xing/shō** 性  
**xinglu/gyōroku** 行錄  
**xingzhu zuowo/gyōjū zaga** 行住坐臥  
**xuanzhong xuan/hyoenjunghyoen** 玄中玄  
**yanyu** 谚語  
**ye/e** 也  
**yin/in** 因  
**yiqing/gisei/uijeong** 疑情  
**yizhuanyu/ittengo** 一轉語  
**you/u** 有  
**youxin/ushin** 有心  
**yuanxiang/ensō** 円相  
**yue/iwaku** 曰  
**yui goku** 唯語句  
**yulu/goroku** 語錄

**zadu** 雜毒  
**zansuo/sassho** 拶所  
**zazen** 坐禪  
**zengo** 前語  
**zen-i** 衣全  
**zettai mu** 絕對無  
**zheng** 正  
**zhou/shū** 州  
**zhuoyu/jakugo** 著語  
**zi/shi** 子

## Names and Titles

**Abe Masao** 阿部正雄  
**Akizuki Ryūmin** 秋月龍珉  
**Anji qiao** 安濟橋  
**Ayuwang** 阿育王  
**Baiyun** 白雲  
**Baizhang** 百丈  
**Baizhang qinggui/Hyakujō shingi** 百丈清規  
*Bendōwa* 辨道話  
**Benjue Yi** 本覺一  
*Biyānlù/Hekiganroku* 碧巖錄  
**Bodhidharma/Damo/Daruma** 菩提達磨  
*Busshō* 佛性  
**Caodong/Sōtō** 曹洞  
**Chan/Zen/Seon** 禪  
**Chang'an** 長安  
**Changsha/Chōsha** 長沙  
*Changuan cejin* 禪關策進  
*Chanlin baoxun/Zenrin hokum* 禪林寶訓  
*Chanyuan qinggui* 禪苑清規  
*Chanzong jueyijil/Zenshū ketsugishū* 禪宗決疑集  
*Chanzong songgu lianzhu tongji/Zenshū juko renjutsū shū* 禪宗頌古聯珠通集  
**Cheng Kumu** 成枯木  
*Chuanxin fayao/Denshin hōyō* 傳心法要  
**Cishou Shen** 慈受深  
*Congronglù/Shōyōroku* 從容錄  
**Dahong Baoen** 大洪報恩  
*Dahui Pujue Chanshi nianpu/Dahui Fukaku Zenji nenbu* 大慧普覺禪師年譜  
*Dahui shul/Daie sho* 大慧書  
*Dahui wukul/Daie buko* 大慧武庫  
*Dahui yulu/Daie goroku* 大慧語錄  
**Dahui Zonggao/Dahui Sōkō** 大慧宗杲  
**Daitō** 大燈

- Daitokuji** 大德寺  
**Danxia** 丹霞  
*Daodejing* 道德經  
**Daolin** 道林  
**Daosheng** 道生  
**Daowu** 道悟  
**Daruma** 達磨  
**Dashi qiao** 大石橋  
**Dayi** 大滙  
**Dayu Zhi** 大愚芝  
**Dazhu Huihai/Daishu Ekai** 大珠慧海  
**Dilun** 地論  
**Dōgen** 道元  
**Dongshan Liangjie/Tōzan Ryōkai** 洞山良价  
**Dongshan Shouchu/Tōzan Shusho** 洞山守初  
**Dongting** 洞庭  
*Dōtoku* 道得  
*Eihei kōroku* 永平広録  
**Engakuji** 円覚寺  
**Farong** 法融  
**Faxiu** 法秀  
**Fayan/Hōgen** 法眼  
**Fazang** 法藏  
**Fengxue** 逢雪  
**Fenyang/Fun'yō** 汾陽  
**Fo Yinyuan** 佛印元  
**Fukushima Keidō** 福島慶道  
**Gag'un** 覺雲  
*Gakudōyōjinhshū* 学道要心集  
**Gaofeng Yuanmiao** 高峰原妙  
**Goryeo** 高麗  
**Guangling Xizu** 廣靈希祖  
**Guanyin/Kannon** 觀音  
**Guishan** 馮山  
**Guizong** 歸宗  
**Gushan Gui** 徑山杲  
*Guzunsulul/Kosonshukuroku* 古尊宿語錄  
*Gyōji* 行持  
**Hakuin** 白隱  
*Hakujushi* 柏樹子  
**Hangzhou** 杭州  
**Hanshan** 寒山  
**Hengchuan** 橫川  
**Hisamatsu Shin'ichi** 久松 真一  
**Hōjō Tokimune** 北条時宗  
*Hōkyōki* 寶慶記

- Hongren** 弘忍  
**Hongzhi/Wanshi** 宏智  
*Hongzhilul/Wanshiroku* 宏智錄  
**Hongzhou** 洪州  
**Hosokawa Shigeyuki** 細川茂之  
*Hosshō* 法性  
**Hsing Yun** 星雲  
**Huangbo/Ōbaku** 黃檗  
**Huanzhong** 寰中  
**Huayan** 華嚴  
**Huike** 慧可  
**Huineng** 惠能  
**Huitang** 暉堂  
**Hyesim** 慧諶  
**Ikkyū** 一休  
**Iriya Yoshitaka** 入矢義高  
**Ishii Seijun** 石井清純  
**Ishii Shūdō** 石井修道  
**Jia** 夾  
**Jiangnan** 江南  
*Jijuelul/Shigetsuroku* 擊節錄  
*Jin'gangbeil/Kingōhai* 金剛錘  
**Jingcen** 景岑  
*Jingde chuandenghul/Keitoku dentōroku* 景德傳燈錄  
**Jingshan Gao** 疏山如  
**Jingying Huiyuan** 淨影慧遠  
**Jinul** 知訥  
*Jishō zammai* 自証三昧  
**Jiyan Ran** 即菴然  
**Jizang** 吉藏  
**Jogye** 曹溪  
*Jōshū: Hyōhyō to Zen o ikita tatsujin no azayakana fūkō*  
 趙州一瓢瓢と禅を生きた達人の鮮やかな風光  
**Juefan Huihong** 覺範慧洪  
**Juzhi** 俱胝  
*Kajō* 家常  
**Kamakura** 鎌倉  
*Kana Shōbōgenzō* 仮名正法眼藏  
*Kattō* 葛藤  
**Keizan** 瑩山  
*Kenbutsu* 見佛  
**Kenchōji** 建長寺  
*Kinkakuji* 金閣寺  
*Kirin no tsubasa* 麒麟の翼  
*Kobusshin* 古佛心  
**Kyoto Gaku-ha** 京都学派

- Lan'an/Rannan** 懶安  
**Lanxi Daolong/Rankei Dōryū** 蘭溪道隆  
**Li Chun** 李春  
*Liandeng huiyaol Rentōeyō* 聯燈會要  
**Liangfeng Dongyuan** 涼峰洞淵  
**Lin Xiangru** 蔺相如  
**Linji/Rinzai** 臨濟  
**Linji-Huanglong/Rinzai-Ōryō** 臨濟黃龍  
**Linji-Yangqi/Rinzai-Yōgi** 臨濟楊岐  
**Linjianlu/Rinkanroku** 林間錄  
**Lingquan** 靈泉  
**Longmian** 龍民  
**Lu Ban** 魯班  
**Lunyu** 論語  
**Magu** 麻谷  
*Mana Shōbōgenzō* 真名正法眼藏  
**Mazu/Basō** 馬祖  
**Mengshan** 蒙山  
*Menju* 面授  
**Mingzhou** 明州  
**Mishima Yukio** 三島由紀夫  
*Mu no tankyū: Chūgoku Zen* 無の探求中国禪  
*Muchūsetsumu* 夢中說夢  
*Mujō seppō* 無情說法  
**Musō** 夢窓  
**Myōshinji** 妙心寺  
**Nanquan/Nansen** 南泉  
**Nantang Xing** 南堂興  
**Nanyang Huizhong/Nan'yō Echū** 南陽慧忠  
**Nanyue** 南嶽  
**Natsume Sōseki** 夏目漱石  
*Niepan jing/Nehan kyō* 涅槃經  
**Nishida Kitarō** 西田幾多郎  
**Nishitani Keiji** 西谷啓治  
**Niutou** 牛頭  
**Nōnin** 能忍  
**Ōbaku** 黃檗  
**Ogawa Takashi** 小川隆  
**Okimoto Katsumi** 沖本克己  
*Orategama* 遠羅天釜  
*Ōsaku sendaba* 王索仙陀婆  
**Pu Rongping** 普融平  
**Puhua** 普化  
**Qian** 齋安  
**Qinglao/Shōyrō** 清了  
**Qinguo** 奏國

**Qu Yuan** 屈原

*Raihaitokuzui* 拜得骨造

**Rujing/Nyojō** 如淨

**Sambōkyōdan** 三宝教団

*Sanbyakusoku Shōbōgenzō* 三百則正法眼藏

*Sangai yuishin* 三界唯心

**Sanjiao Laoren** 三教老人

**Sanjūshichihon bodai bupō** 三十七品菩提分法

**Sanlun** 三論

*Sansuikyō* 山水經

**Sengai** 仙厓

*Seonmun yeomsongjip/Chanmen niansongji* 禪門拈頌集

*Seonmun yeomsong seolhwal/Seonmun yeomsong shuohua* 禪門拈頌說話

*Shanfang yehua* 山房夜話

**Shaoshi Mu** 少室陸

**Sheng Yen** 聖嚴

**Shenhui** 神會

**Shinchi Kakushin** 心地覺心

**Shinzanmono** 新參者

*Shisho* 嗣書

**Shitou** 石頭

*Shōbōgenzō/Zhengfayanzang* 正法眼藏

*Shōbōgenzō zuimonki* 正法眼藏隨聞記

**Shoushan/Shuzansh**

**Shushan/Shūzan** 疎山

*Shūmon kattōshū* 宗門葛藤集

**So Sahn** 西山

**Song** 宋

*Song gaosengzhuàn/Sō kōsoden* 宋高僧傳

**Su Shi** 蘇軾

**Sunshin** 寸心

**Suzuki Daisetsu** 鈴木 大拙

**Taego** 太古

*Tajintsū* 佗心通

**Tang** 唐

*Tiansheng guangdenglul/Tenshō kōtōroku* 天聖廣燈錄

**Tiantai/Tendai** 天台

**Tiantong** 天童

**Tianyi** 天衣

**Tōfukuji** 東福寺

**Touzi/Tosu** 投子

*Tsurezuregusa* 徒然草

**Ueda Shizuteru** 上田 閑照

**Uji** 有時

**Umehara Takeshi** 梅原武

**Wan'an/Ban'an** 萬安

- Wanlinglul/Enryōroku* 宛陵錄  
**Wansong/Banshō** 萬松  
**Weikuan/Ikan** 惟寬  
**Weilin Daopei** 爲霖道霈  
**Wenshu/Monju** 文殊  
**Wenyuan** 文苑  
*Wudeng huiyuan/Gotō egen* 五燈會元  
**Wumen/Mumon** 無門  
*Wumen heshang yulul/Mumon oshō goroku* 無門和尚語錄  
*Wumenguan/Mumonkan* 無門關  
**Wushan/Gozan** 五山  
**Wutai** 五臺  
**Wuzu Fayan/Gosō Hōen** 五祖法演  
**Xia Yi Gongli** 夏倚公立  
**Xiangrou** 香肉  
**Xinwen Tanben** 心聞曇贲  
**Xu Yun** 虛雲  
*Xuedou baize songgu jil/Setchō hyakusoku juko shū* 雪竇百則頌古集  
**Xuedou Chongxian** 雪竇重顯  
**Xuedou Zhijian** 雪竇智鑑  
**Xuefeng/Seppō** 雪峰  
**Yamada Mumon** 山田無文  
**Yanagida Seizan** 柳田青山  
**Yangshan** 仰山  
**Yangtong Xiu** 圓通秀  
**Yasutani Haku'un** 安谷量衡  
**Yiyan Jian** 夷菴鑿  
**Yuansou Xingduan** 元叟行端  
**Yuanwu Keqin/Engo Kokugon** 圓悟克勤  
**Yueshan** 樂山  
**Yuezhai** 悅齋  
*Yume jūya* 夢十夜  
**Yunju** 雲居  
**Yunmen/Unmon** 雲門  
**Yunqi Zhuhong** 雲棲祿宏  
**Yunyan/Ungan** 雲巖  
**Yuwang Jiechen** 育王介謨  
*Zazenshin* 坐禪箴  
*Zen mondō nyūmon* 禪問答入門  
*Zen no kenkyū* 善の研究  
**Zhang Shangying** 張商英  
**Zhang Yue** 張說  
**Zhanran** 湛然  
**Zhantang Wenzhun** 湛堂文準  
**Zhaozhou Congshen/Jōshū Jūshin** 趙州從諗  
*Zhaozhoulu/Jōshūroku* 趙州錄

*Zhengfayanzang/Shōbōgenzō* 正法眼藏

**Zhiche Duanyun** 智徹斷雲

**Zhiyi** 智顛

**Zhongfeng Mingben** 中峰明本

**Zhuangzi** 莊子

**Zihu** 紫胡

**Zisheng si** 資聖寺

*Zongjinglul/Shūryōroku* 宗鏡錄

*Zongmen liandeng huiyaol/Shūmon rentōeyō* 宗門聯燈會要

*Zongmen niangu huijil/Zenmon nenko isshū* 宗門拈古彙集

*Zongmen tongyaojil/Shūmon tōyōshū* 宗門統要集

**Zongmi** 宗密

**Zuqin** 祖欽

*Zutangjil/Sōdōshū* 祖堂集

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### Abbreviations

CBETAChinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association (<http://www.cbeta.org>) 中華電子佛典協會 is the source for:

- J *Dai Nihon zokuzōkyō* 大日本續藏經  
T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經  
X *Xu zangjing* 續藏經

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*Jin'gangbei* 金剛錚 T 46, 1932  
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