

EMPTY-HANDED, BUT NOT EMPTY-HEADED

Dōgen's *kōan* strategies

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According to a frequently cited passage in the *Eiei Kōroku*, Dōgen returned to Japan from his travels in China in fall 1227 “empty-handed” (Jpn. *kūshu-genkyō*); that is, without having collected the material artifacts of Buddhism – such as icons, sūtras, relics, and regalia – that preoccupied so many of the other Japanese monks who visited China.¹ Instead, he came back only with his experience of awakening and understanding of the dharma. Echoing Dōgen’s own claims, Hee-Jin Kim writes, “Unlike other Buddhists who had previously studied in China, Dōgen brought home with him no sūtras, no images, and no documents. His sole ‘souvenir’ presented to his countrymen was his own body and mind, his total existence, which was now completely liberated and transformed. He himself was the surest evidence of Dharma.”²

Yet Dōgen’s literary records show that on his return he was by no means empty-headed (although he may have had a head full of emptiness). Indeed, Dōgen came back to Japan with a remarkable familiarity and facility with diverse genres of Zen writings – *kōan* collections, recorded sayings texts, transmission of the lamp hagiographies, and monastic regulations – that he used critically and creatively in his sermons and other works. Dōgen’s great and profound knowledge of Chinese Chan literature, especially *kōan* records, is symbolized by the legend of the “One Night Blue Cliff Record” (Jpn. *Ichiyā Hekiganroku*) that he supposedly copied, guided by the Hakusan deity, just before he left China. The question of the authenticity of the “One Night Blue Cliff Record” has been much debated. It is clear that the reporting of this event developed in Dōgen hagiographies at a rather late date, thus tending to deny the veracity of the account.³ Yet a *Blue Cliff Record* manuscript probably in Dōgen’s own hand, long kept secret and held for centuries by the Sōtō sect, was inspected by D. T. Suzuki and others in modern times. Although it differs in the sequence and some of the wording

of the cases from conventional versions of the text, it is clearly the same *Blue Cliff Record*.⁴ The impact of the legend – whether or not he actually ever copied the *Blue Cliff Record* – is to highlight the fact that Dōgen deserves primary credit for introducing the *kōan* tradition to Japan. This was expressed through a variety of texts he produced in the first half of the thirteenth century, which was just after the peak period of the creation of *kōan* collections in Song China.

The real proof of Dōgen's mastery and importation of the *kōan* tradition of Song China is his extensive and creative use of dozens of *kōan* cases throughout his collected writings, especially the *Shōbōgenzō* and *Eihei Kōroku*.⁵ The use of *kōans* by Dōgen after his return to Japan can be analyzed in terms of several stages leading up to the development of a uniquely innovative approach to *kōan* interpretation.⁶ One of his earliest works, the *Shōbōgenzō* "Genjōkōan" fascicle, written as an epistle to a lay disciple from Kyushu in 1233, uses *kōans* in two distinctive ways. First, its title highlights the doctrine that appears in some Song texts about the "clear cut" (Jpn. *genjō*) *kōan*, or the true meaning of *kōans* disclosed in everyday practice, although this notion is not explicitly discussed in the main body of the fascicle. Second, "Genjōkōan" cites a relatively obscure *kōan* case on the relation between waving a fan and the circulation of the wind at the conclusion of the fascicle as a way of illustrating a philosophical argument about the inseparability of everyday activity and fundamental reality.

Some of Dōgen's other early writings, such as "Bendōwa" (1231), "Fukanzazengi" (1233), and "Gakudōyōjinshū" (1234), however, do not cite or refer to *kōan* cases. In the first eight years of his career following his return from China there is little evidence of a strong interest in *kōans* or an indication of what was about to happen. But, beginning in the mid-1230s, Dōgen became immersed in transmitting and interpreting *kōans* for his Japanese monks, although this may have been inspired in part by the arrival of the Chinese monk Jakuen, who had been his Dharma brother at Tiantong temple in China. In 1235 Dōgen produced the *Mana Shōbōgenzō* (or *Shōbōgenzō sanbyakusoku*) collection of more than three hundred *kōans* without commentary, and in 1236 he produced a collection of four-line verse commentaries (Jpn. *juko*) on ninety cases included as the ninth volume of the *Eihei Kōroku*.⁷ He also cited numerous *kōans* and related anecdotes in the *Shōbōgenzō zuimonki* record of his teachings collected by Ejō between 1236 and 1238.⁸

At this early juncture, Dōgen's approach to interpreting *kōans* was not particularly novel or unique, although one finds flashes of innovation in the *juko*, or verse, commentaries in the *Eihei Kōroku* as well as the prose commentaries in the *Shōbōgenzō zuimonki*. The following example, "A snake appears in the relic box," is a *kōan*-like anecdote from the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* that Dōgen comments on to deliver a message regarding the appropriateness of devotional rituals and morality:

A monk was always carrying around with great reverence a golden image of the Buddha and other relics. Even when in the assembly hall or dormitory, he constantly burned incense to them and showed his respect with prostrations and offerings. One day the Zen master said, “The Buddha image and relics that you are worshiping will be of no use to you later.” The monk disagreed.

The master continued, “This is the handiwork of demons. You must get rid of these items at once.” The monk grew indignant and started walking off. The master called after him, “Open your box and look inside.” When the upset monk stopped and looked in the box, he found a poisonous snake coiled inside.⁹

The narrative culminates in a compelling element of melodrama and surprise when the true identity of the snake is revealed to the monk. The supernatural appearance of the snake is evoked, deliberately yet ironically in *setsuwa*-fashion, to defeat an attachment to a devotional ritual that has become merely superstitious. This approach to overcoming illusion is an example of “using poison to counteract poison,” to cite a prominent Zen saying about the function of *kōans*.

This case also has important implications for understanding the role of rituals in Zen, especially with regard to worship of the Buddha in various halls in the monastic compound. The basic aim in the development of the Zen school’s approach to religious training was a transition from attachment to devotion and worship to practice of meditation and contemplation. There was also a transition from venerating images of the Buddha as an otherworldly symbol of enlightenment to respecting and honoring the temple abbot or master as a concrete, here-and-now, this-worldly appearance of a “living Buddha.” These transitions also involved a shift from the buddha hall as the primary site in the monastery to the dharma hall, where the master delivered his daily round of sermons. The rules attributed to Baizhang call for eliminating the buddha hall from the Zen monastic compound and replacing it with the dharma hall alone. Dōgen’s commentary is rather neutral. His own temple, Eihei-ji, had both a buddha hall and a dharma hall. Dōgen is by no means entirely dismissive of the devotional worship of images and relics, which he admits have value in representing the power of the Buddha and delivering the devotee from the effects of evil karma. Yet he also argues, “expecting enlightenment by worshiping icons is an error that leads you into the hands of demons and poisonous snakes.”

It seems clear that the texts of the mid-1230s – the *Mana Shōbōgenzō*, *Eihei Kōroku*, and *Shōbōgenzō zuimonki* – served a preparatory function in creating a vast repository of *kōan* cases that had been culled from at least a dozen of the major Chinese *kōan* anthologies, recorded sayings, and transmission of the lamp collections, especially the *Zongmen tongyao zhi*¹⁰ (Jpn. *Shūmon tōyōshū*).¹¹ By 1240, Dōgen’s unique approach became evident in

many of the fascicles of the *Shōbōgenzō*, and throughout the decade he continued to interpret in often innovative and insightful ways dozens of cases in the sermons of both the *Shōbōgenzō* and the *Eihei Kōroku*. Several *Shōbōgenzō* fascicles, originally delivered as informal *jishu*-style sermons, are devoted largely or in some cases entirely to one or several specific *kōan* cases. These include “Kokyō” on “Mazu polishing a tile,” and other cases dealing with the image of a mirror; “Kattō” on “Bodhidharma’s ‘skin, flesh, bones, marrow’”; “Busshō” on “Zhaozhou’s ‘Mu’,” among other *kōans*; “Daishugyō” and “Jinshin inga” on “Baizhang and the wild fox”; “Mitsugo” on “Śākyamuni holding up a flower”; and “Osaku sendaba” on “The King asks for *saindhava*.” Also, many of the *Eihei Kōroku* passages, delivered as formal *jōdō*-style sermons, deal extensively with *kōan* cases.

In many instances, *Shōbōgenzō* fascicles treat lesser known or relatively obscure passages of encounter dialogues (Jpn. *kien-mondō*) cited from transmission of the lamp histories as *kōan* cases, as in “Raihaitokuzui” on “Moshan opens her mouth”; “Dōtoku” on “A hermit’s ‘The mountain torrent runs deep, so the ladle is long’”; “Sesshin sesshō” on “Dongshan’s ‘Disclosing mind, disclosing nature’”; “Ikkyū myōjū” on “One luminous pearl”; “Jinzū” on “Guishan turns his face to the wall”; “Tajinzū” on “The Tripiṭaka monk claims to read others’ minds”; and “Kankin” on “Zhaozhou reciting the sūtras.” Dōgen’s intensive discussions of previously obscure cases, or cases beyond the scope of the standard Song *kōan* collections, expands the definition and the range of what constitutes *kōan* records. Dōgen was eager to introduce the lexicon of Chinese Chan literature (expressing the teaching of his Chan lineage) so quickly and dramatically at this critical juncture in the history of Zen Buddhism in Japan, and he took the liberty of selecting encounter dialogues he considered particularly relevant for his audience.

At the same time, in doing this, Dōgen’s texts served not merely as a static repository of both well known and lesser known *kōans*. Perhaps the major feature of Dōgen’s approach to this body of literature is his vigorous and sustained interpretive effort to modify the rhetorical and narrative structures of numerous *kōans* and thereby to alter the outcome and meaning of these cases. For example, according to Dōgen, Huangbo did not deserve to slap Baizhang in the epilogue to the “fox *kōan*,” Mazu was correct in sitting still to become a buddha in “polishing a tile,” and Huike’s response was not superior to the other disciples of the first patriarch in “Bodhidharma’s ‘skin, flesh, bones, marrow’.” Dōgen’s hermeneutic method lessens the gap between a case as a textual paradigm and the interpretive process, as well as between the winner and loser of the encounter. His approach, which turns the structure of cases upside down and inside out, does violence to conventional readings. These revisionist interventions parallel the unsettling gestures of slapping, shouting, cutting, and leaping that are often contained in *kōan* narratives, and thereby extends and refines the game of one-upmanship that

pervades the encounter dialogue genre.¹² For Dōgen, the loser may well be the winner and the winner often wins by losing, yet losing is not really winning. Or, the winner may really lose by winning, or no one either wins or loses – in the end, either no contestant, or at the other extreme everyone involved, is at once both correct and/or incorrect.

An example of Dōgen's method is his reading of "Huangbo's single staff,"¹³ which is based on the symbolism of the Zen staff. According to this case, Huangbo said while giving instructions to the assembly, "The ancient Venerables of all directions are all located on the tip of my staff," and one of the monks prostrated himself. Some time later, this monk went to the place where Dashu was staying and told him about what Huangbo had said. Master Dashu remarked, "Huangbo may have said that, but has he actually met all the Venerables in the ten directions?" The monk returned to Huangbo and told him about Dashu's comment. Huangbo reaffirmed his position: "What I previously said has already become famous throughout the world."

Some time later master Langyan remarked, "Dashu seemed to have excellent perception but he was really blind. The single staff of Huangbo could not be broken even if everyone in the world chewed on it." In other words, Langyan is skeptical of Dashu's critique of Huangbo. However, in his characteristic approach of rewriting encounter dialogues the way he feels they could or should have developed, Dōgen challenges and suggests reversing Langyan's critical comments.¹⁴ Agreeing with Dashu, Dōgen asks, "Why didn't Langyan say, 'Huangbo's staff can be broken as soon as everyone in the world sets about trying to break it'?"

When Dōgen intercedes and alters the rhetoric or the narrative of a *kōan* in order to drastically reinterpret the outcome of the case, what is the underlying point he is trying to make about what a *kōan* means and what are the techniques he uses to make his argument? What is the relation between his style or methods and the conclusions or aims of his interpretation? Does he, in the final analysis, support a position of radical relativism and the indecipherability of truth claims? An analysis of various examples of Dōgen's strategies indicates that there does not appear to be a single, underlying aim or agenda, such as promoting a philosophy of relativism. Instead, he reinterprets *kōans* to support several different didactic and metaphysical positions concerning the doctrines, rituals, and practices of Zen monastic life.

Rhetorical and narrative strategies

Dōgen uses a variety of strategies to alter the rhetorical and/or narrative structure of *kōans* in order to provide a way to diverge from the conventional interpretations of the case. The most extreme example is when Dōgen deftly rewrites the case of Mazu polishing the tile. In the original version

Mazu appears to be struggling to gain enlightenment when he is criticized by his teacher Nanyue for prolonged sitting in meditation, which is likened to the attempt to make a mirror by polishing a tile.¹⁵ But in Dōgen's version he is already enlightened at the time of their conversation. This reverses the conventional interpretation that Mazu is foolhardy in his vain effort to sit in *zazen*, an approach that emphasizes sudden awakening and the futility of continual cultivation. According to Dōgen:

When polishing a tile becomes a mirror, Mazu becomes a buddha. When Mazu becomes a buddha, Mazu immediately becomes Mazu. When Mazu becomes Mazu, *zazen* becomes *zazen*. That is why the tradition of making a mirror by polishing a tile has been perpetuated through the bones and marrow of the ancient buddhas. That being the case, there is an ancient mirror [Jpn. *kokyō*] by virtue of the act of polishing [a tile].¹⁶

Dōgen's rewriting of the case justifies his emphasis on the practice of just-sitting as the unity of practice-cultivation, and enlightenment (Jpn. *shushō ittō*), and his method illustrates the interconnectedness of interpretive style and substance, as well as philosophy and polemics.

Dōgen uses two main rhetorical techniques: atomization, which involves breaking down key passages into their basic linguistic components of individual *kanji* or *kanji*-compounds and analyzing or rearranging the lexical components of speech;¹⁷ and capping phrases (Jpn. *jakugo*), which is the composition of brief, pithy, and allusive commentaries on particular words or passages in *kōan* cases.¹⁸ An example of a capping phrase is a two-line *kanbun* verse Dōgen wrote as a comment on the contradictory sayings attributed to Mazu in two *kōans* dealing with the doctrine of Mind as an indicator of fundamental reality, one asserting that "Mind itself is Buddha" and the other offering the negation "No Mind, no Buddha."¹⁹ According to Dōgen's verse:

"Mind itself is Buddha" – difficult to practice, but easy to explain
 "No mind, no Buddha" – difficult to explain, but easy to practice.²⁰

The method of atomization is seen in several prominent *Shōbōgenzō* fascicles, especially "Sesshin sesshō," "Shinfukatoku," "Sokushin zebutsu," and "Muchū setsumu." In this approach Dōgen twists and turns the meaning of words by taking them out of their original context, and then isolating and changing or reversing their meaning, followed by reinserting them back into the *kōan* narrative now seen in a new conceptual light. A key example focuses on a case known as Dongshan's "Disclosing mind, disclosing nature," in which Dongshan reveals an affinity with death. This *kōan* is included in Dōgen's *Mana Shōbōgenzō* case number 62²¹ and is also the

basis of an entire *Shōbōgenzō* fascicle, Kana *Shōbōgenzō* “*Sesshin sesshō*.”²² The *kōan* record revolves around several subtle wordplays. One time when Dongshan was traveling with Shenshan Sengmi, whose name literally means “mountain god,” he pointed to a roadside temple and said, “There is someone inside the temple who is disclosing mind, and disclosing nature.” The way this transpires suggests a mysterious intuition that connects Dongshan to the preacher in the chapel. The term used for “disclosing” (Jpn. *setsu*) can also be translated as “explaining,” “preaching,” or “giving discourse,” and the terms “mind” (Jpn. *shin*) and “nature” (Jpn. *shō*) are often used interchangeably to refer to the fundamental level of reality.

Shenshan responds “Who is it?,” which could be interpreted as a simple, innocent question or could be rendered as the philosophical declarative “It is who.” Here “who” would be a positive name for the open quality of unimpeded, ultimate identity, beyond attachment or identification. Using a common interrogative in such a positive sense is a strategy not uncommon in Zen *kōan* discourse, and especially for Dōgen. Dongshan then says, “When I just heard your simple question, elder brother, I attained a state of perfect death,” indicating a condition of deep meditation beyond the dichotomy of life and death. Shenshan asks, “Who is disclosing mind, and disclosing nature?,” which, again, could be understood as a declarative, “The one disclosing mind and disclosing nature is who.” In response to the question Dongshan says, “It is he who is alive within the realm of death.”

In his extensive commentary on this relatively obscure case, Dōgen continues the wordplay through an atomization that divides the act of disclosure into four categories represented by his characteristic literary technique of changing the order of characters in a four-character phrase: “disclosing mind of no person,” “no person disclosing mind,” “disclosing mind is itself the person,” and “this person itself is disclosing mind.” Because of his religio-philosophic views and perhaps in line with a sectarian agenda, Dōgen praises the handling of Shenshan’s questions by Dongshan (one of the founders of his Sōtō lineage). Dōgen criticizes Linji (founder of the rival Rinzai sect) for reifying a duality between mind and nature, in which mind represents evanescent individuality and nature symbolizes substantive universality.

Dōgen’s approach to altering the narrative structure of *kōans* involves interceding in or extending the original narrative as well as presenting a demythological interpretation of supernatural elements in the narrative. An example of interceding in the narrative structure is found in Dōgen’s interpretation of the following case, “A Hermit’s ‘The mountain torrent runs deep, so the ladle is long’”:

A monk built a hermitage at the foot of Mount Xuefeng and lived there for many years practicing meditation but without having his head shaved. Making a wooden ladle, the solitary monk drew and drank water from a mountain torrent.

One day, a monk from the monastery at the top of the mountain visited the hermit and asked, “What is the meaning of Bodhidharma’s coming from the West?” The hermit responded, “The mountain torrent runs deep, so the handle of a wooden ladle must be appropriately long.” The monk reported this to the master of Xuefeng temple, who declared, “He sounds like a strange character, perhaps an anomaly. I’d better go at once and check him out for myself.”

The next day, master Xuefeng went to see the hermit while carrying a razor and was accompanied by his attendant monk. As soon as they met he said, “If you can express the Way, I won’t shave your head.” On hearing this, the hermit at first was speechless. But then he used the ladle to bring water to have his head washed, and Xuefeng shaved the hermit’s head.

Verse commentary

If someone asks the meaning of Bodhidharma coming from the West,
 It is that the handle of a wooden ladle is long, and the ravine is just as deep;
 If you want to know the boundless meaning of this,
 Wait for the wind blowing in the pines to drown out the sound of *koto* strings.

This *kōan* is cited in the *Eihei Kōroku*,²³ and is also included in the *Mana Shōbōgenzō*.²⁴ Although it does not appear in the major Song *kōan* collections, the case is contained in a wide variety of sources including other transmission of the lamp records, especially the *Zongmen tongyao zhi*²⁵ and the *Zongmen liandeng huiyao*,²⁶ as well as the *Zhengfa yanzeng* (Jpn. *Shōbōgenzō*) *kōan* collection of master Dahui. In addition to citing it in the *Eihei Kōroku* and *Mana Shōbōgenzō* collections, Dōgen discusses the case in several Kana *Shōbōgenzō* fascicles, including “Gyōji,” “Bodaisatta shishōbō,” and especially “Dōtoku.”

In an extensive discussion in *Shōbōgenzō* “Dōtoku,” Dōgen characteristically alters the significance of the hermit’s status by remarking that Xuefeng should not and would not have asked or expected the irregular practitioner to “express the way” (Jpn. *dōtoku*), unless he already knew that the hermit was enlightened. Unlike his interpretation of a case cited below in which he asserts the literal meaning of the dialogue that refutes the Tripiṭaka monk’s supranormal powers, this time Dōgen reverses the literal standpoint in both the *Eihei Kōroku* verse commentary and the Kana *Shōbōgenzō* prose commentary by arguing that the hermit should not be considered a *pratyekabuddha* (a buddha who remains in seclusion and does not teach the dharma) and should be acknowledged for his authentic spiritual status.

Although Dōgen accepts the hermit's authenticity, he also agrees that the silent response indicates the superiority of Xuefeng despite the hermit's considerable spiritual attainment. Xuefeng earns the right to be testing and domesticating the hermit. The *Eihei Kōroku* verse commentary steers away from endorsing or disputing the spiritual powers of the irregular practitioner, who has been adopted through the master's administration of the tonsure into the legitimate Zen lineage.

Another approach to altering the narrative structure is the technique of demythologization, which changes the focus and direction of the reading of the text. As used in this context, demythologizing refers to the conceptual process of seeing through the mythical, legendary, or fantastic imagery in a *kōan* record, and focusing on the inner meaning or existential significance underlying the symbolism, which may on the surface seem to support the existence of a mythological realm. This approach is seen in Dōgen's interpretation of "Guishan turns his face to the wall," another rather obscure *kōan* that became the basis for a lengthy discussion in the *Shōbōgenzō*. The original case deals with the interpretation of a master's dream by two disciples:

Guishan was lying down one day when he was approached by Yangshan with a question. The master, still lying down, turned his back to Yangshan. Yangshan asked, "Why do you behave like that with one of your disciples?" As the master started to stand up, Yangshan went to leave the room. The master called out, and Yangshan turned his head. The master said, "Let me tell you about a dream. Please listen." Yangshan lowered his head and listened to the master's dream. The master said, "Please interpret the dream for me." Yangshan took a bowl of water and a towel to the master. The master scrubbed his face, and then sat for a while.

Then Xiangyan came into the room. The master said, "Just now Yangshan demonstrated a supreme ability in supranormal powers. This ability is not like that of the Hinayanists." Xiangyan said, "I was in the other room, but I clearly perceived this." The master said, "Now it's your turn to interpret." Xiangyan made a cup of tea and brought it to the master.

Then the master said, "You two disciples have supranormal powers that are beyond the abilities of Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana.

This *kōan*, which was contained in *Jingde chuandeng lu*²⁷ and other transmission of the lamp records such as the *Zongmen tongyao ji*²⁸ and the *Zongmen lian-deng hui-yao*,²⁹ is cited in *Mana Shōbōgenzō*³⁰ and is also discussed extensively in the Kana *Shōbōgenzō*.³¹ Unlike other *kōans*, such as "The sermon from the third seat"³² in which Yangshan's dream of bodhisattva realms is fanciful and mythical, the responses to the dream imagery alluded

to here has an esoteric quality. Guishan's dream, whose contents are unstated but that Yangshan is asked to interpret, becomes the basis for a possible intuitive, occult connection between master and disciple, who are especially known for their strong emotional attachment as the core members of the Gui-Yang house or lineage. The content and nature of the dream itself is never disclosed, and this heightens the sense of mystery and uncertainty surrounding the oneiric experience as well as Yangshan's interpretation of it.

The challenge and responses, however ironic, occur in the context of a tradition in which it was taken for granted that masters and disciples enjoyed a distinctive intuitive bond. In some of the more prominent examples, second patriarch Huike was led to find Bodhidharma by the vision of a spirit, Juzhi established his connection with the master who taught him the One Finger method through a dream, and Dōgen was led to discover his mentor in China by a dream that took place at a time of disillusionment when he was on the verge of returning prematurely to Japan. Yet in *Kana Shōbōgenzō* "Jinzū" Dōgen offers a thoroughly demythological interpretation of the current case by arguing that the so-called supranormal powers are minor abilities compared to the genuine mystical insight of a disciple receiving transmission into the teachings of his master. Dōgen evokes the saying attributed to Layman Pang that genuine supranormal powers are nothing other than "carrying water and chopping wood."

The case of "Deshan and the woman selling rice cakes" is an example of an interpretation at once extending the narrative structure and atomizing the rhetorical structure. The *kōan* itself is based on a pun. The ordinary term for rice cakes is *dian xin*, but the literal meaning of *dian xin* is "mind refreshment." The case deals with Deshan's comeuppance at the hands of an elderly lay woman:

Deshan was traveling to the south in search of the Dharma when he came across a woman on the roadside selling refreshments and asked, "Who are you?" She responded, "I am an old woman selling rice cakes." He said, "I'll take some rice cakes." She said, "Venerable priest, why do you want them?" He said, "I am hungry and need some refreshments (Ch. *dian xin*, Jpn. *ten-shin*)."

She said, "Venerable priest, what are you carrying in your bag?" He said, "Haven't you heard I am 'King of the Diamond Sūtra'? I have thoroughly penetrated all of its levels of meaning. Here I have my notes and commentaries on the scripture."

Hearing this the old woman said, "I have one question. Venerable priest, may I ask it?" He said, "Go ahead and ask it." She stated, "I have heard it said that according to the Diamond Sūtra, past mind is ungraspable (Ch. *xin pu hua de*, Jpn. *shinfukatoku*), present mind is ungraspable, and future mind is ungraspable.

So, where is the mind (Ch. *hsin*, Jpn. *shin*) that you wish to refresh (Ch. *dian*, Jpn. *ten*) with rice cakes? Venerable priest, if you can answer, I will sell you a rice cake. But if, venerable priest, you cannot answer, I will not sell you any rice cake.”

Deshan was struck speechless, and the old woman got up abruptly and left without selling Deshan a single rice cake.³³

Dōgen’s commentary tries to reverse the conventional understanding by criticizing the woman as well as Deshan. Dōgen points out that while Deshan thought that he was “checking out” the old woman, it turned out that she had checked him out and found him wanting. He challenges Deshan for not asking in response to her query, “I cannot answer your question, what would you say?” But Dōgen then suggests that she should have said, “Venerable priest, if you cannot answer my question, try asking me a question to see if I can answer you.” He is quite critical of the old woman as well as those who automatically praise her handling of Deshan. According to Dōgen, it is not clear that the woman is enlightened – she is a marginal figure who can challenge Zen monks, but should not be considered the equal of a Zen master. Here Dōgen seems reluctant to sanction the authority of a laywoman. However, in his interpretation of a story in the *Shōbōgenzō* essay “Raihaitokuzui,”³⁴ he praises a nun, and attacks monks who deny her abilities, or legitimacy.

Through a combination of atomization and narrative extension, Dōgen argues that Deshan should have said, “If you say so, then don’t bother to sell me any rice cakes.” Or, to be even more effective, he could have turned the tables on the woman by inquiring, “As past mind is ungraspable, present mind is ungraspable, and future mind is ungraspable, where is the mind that now makes the rice cakes used for refreshment?” Then, the woman would confront Deshan by saying, “You know only that one cannot refresh the mind with a rice cake. But you do not realize that the mind refreshes the rice cake, or that the mind refreshes [or liberates] the mind.” And just as Deshan is feeling overwhelmed and bewildered she would continue, “Here is one rice cake each for the past ungraspable mind, the present ungraspable mind, and the future ungraspable mind.” If he should fail to reach out his hand to take the rice cakes, she should slap him with one of the cakes and say, “You ignorant fool, don’t be so absent-minded.” Dōgen concludes by arguing, “Therefore, neither the old woman nor Deshan was able to adequately hear or express the past ungraspable mind, the present ungraspable mind, or the future ungraspable mind.” Yet, despite Dōgen’s playful, probing critique of the old woman, it seems clear that she has prevailed over the monk with one of the most effective puns in the history of Zen literature, which is replete with diverse styles of wordplay, punning on the ordinary word for rice cakes, *dian xin*, literally meaning “mind refreshment.”

On reinterpreting the outcome of *kōan* narratives

In reinterpreting and reversing the conventional reading of the *kōan* cases, what is Dōgen's point? Does he espouse an underlying philosophy of relativism, in which the outcome of every case can invariably be examined from diverse perspectives with no clear winner in the contest? Or do we find a different approach advocated for each of the cases, so that in some instances a winner can be upheld, although this may vary from the conventional view? In other words, in the *kōan* tradition itself, apparent "winners" and "losers" may not actually be so, and in Dōgen's commentaries conventional views of *kōan* "victors" are often further undercut. But does Dōgen's approach to *kōans* have a single main agenda or a variable series of references?

My analysis suggests that Dōgen's approach can be understood in terms of two overriding and interrelated themes: didactic concerns with moral and ritual issues in the monastic system, including communal labor, asceticism, continual cultivation, gender, and the role of scriptures and sermons; and metaphysical concerns with crafting a doctrine of nonduality or the equalization of all views based on the notions of emptiness and the use of expedient pedagogical means. Some of the conclusions Dōgen seeks to show are evident in the cases cited above; for example, his support for an irregular practitioner, critique of the female opponent of Deshan, advocacy of demythology, and refutation of a reliance on silence over scriptures. The cases cited below reveal more fully diverse components of Dōgen's approach to reinterpreting the outcome of encounter dialogues.

A key example of didacticism is found in Dōgen's interpretation of an obscure case, "Nanquan sweeping on a mountain," emphasizing a "let us cultivate our garden" ethic that evokes Baizhang's "no work, no food" injunction:

One day Nanquan was doing his chores and sweeping work on the mountain. A monk approached him and asked, "Tell me the way to get to Mount Nanquan." Nanquan raised his sickle and said, "I bought this for thirty cents." The monk retorted, "I did not ask about the price of the sickle. What I asked about was the path to Mount Nanquan."

Nanquan said, "Now, let me get back to chopping down weeds."

Verse commentary

The novice came and went on Mount Nanquan,
But, in trying to reach the peak, he had a wonderful experience,
He heard Nanquan's remark about the sickle and it affected him
deeply,

We should keep listening to this dialogue for years to come.³⁵

This *kōan* focuses on the importance of communal labor in the self-definition of the Southern school during its formative period in Tang China. A wandering monk – referred to in the verse commentary as a “novice” (literally “water and clouds”) – sees Nanquan and, apparently without recognizing him, asks the way to the master’s mountain. His asking for the mountain means the same as if he were asking for the person. The monk does not expect that an abbot would be engaged in manual labor, and so he does not realize that he has just met the master he is looking for. When the monk does not get the point of Nanquan’s initial response that emphasizes the importance of working hard with simple tools, the master dismisses the wanderer and gets back to his chore of chopping down weeds. Note that the master’s indirect reproach is not the kind of harsh verbal or physical reprimand one might expect, and the last line of the case might be interpreted as Nanquan seeing some awareness in the monk. Dōgen’s verse commentary suggests that the monk was affected, and probably did have an experience of sudden awakening stemming from this encounter.

Dōgen’s highlighting of yet another obscure *kōan*, “Xuansha’s ‘One luminous pearl,’” focuses on the role of an irregular monk and the issue of demythologization in a case characterized by the winning of a game of one-upmanship over paradoxical expressions by a forest ascetic:

A priest asked master Xuansha Zongyi of Fuzhou district, “I have heard that you often say, ‘The whole universe in ten directions is one luminous pearl.’ How are we to understand the meaning of this?” Xuansha replied, “The whole universe in ten directions is one luminous pearl. What is the point in trying to understand the meaning?”

The next day Xuansha asked the priest, “The whole universe in ten directions is one luminous pearl. How do you understand the meaning of this?” The priest said, “The whole universe in ten directions is one luminous pearl. What is the point in trying to understand the meaning of this?”

Xuansha taunted him, “I see you have been struggling like a demon in the cave of a black mountain.”³⁶

According to traditional accounts, Xuansha throughout his career wore a patched robe made of coarse fiber that he mended but never replaced. With a minimum of formal training he eventually became the successor of Xuefeng and was known for his single-method teaching based on the phrase “one luminous pearl,” which means that there is a jewel amid the dusty world of *saṃsāra* or that the *saṃsāric* world itself has a bright, jewel-like quality. The reference to the cave of demons, whether implying supernaturalism or anti-supernaturalism, or praise or criticism of the monk’s attitude, must be understood in terms of an awareness that caves were the likely lair

of Xuansha, the forest ascetic. Dōgen's Kana *Shōbōgenzō* demythological prose commentary stresses a nondual outlook that legitimates the irregular practitioner, as in "Dōtoku" and *Eihei Kōroku*,³⁷ by asserting, "Forward steps and backward steps in a demon's black mountain cave are nothing other than 'one luminous pearl'."

In his interpretation of the obscure "Nanquan is greeted by the Earth-deity," Dōgen employs both a demythologization and a remythologization to argue for the need for continuing practice in a sectarian context:

Nanquan happened to be traveling through a vegetable garden when the monk charged with stewarding the garden came prepared to greet him. Nanquan said, "I usually travel without being noticed. How is it that you were prepared to receive me?" The monk replied, "Because last night the Earth-deity [or protector-spirit of the monastery compound] informed me you would be coming by."

Nanquan said, "I must be lacking in the power of spiritual cultivation. That is the only explanation for why the Earth-deity saw me." The monk said, "But you have already attained great wisdom. I do not understand why the Earth-deity could have seen you coming."

Nanquan thought, "I'd better go and make an offering of rice to the Earth-deity."

Verse commentary

He once traveled freely, his presence unnoticed by others;
 He could not be distinguished from a god or demon;
 But finally caught, he confessed that he had lost his spiritual power,
 Though in the beginning his comings and goings were far from any
 crowd.³⁸

The discursive function of the case, whether mythological or demythological, lies in the context in which it is cited and interpreted. For example, when used in transmission of the lamp texts such as the *Jingde chuandeng lu* it contributes to the genealogy of the master by establishing the authenticity of his credentials. The case is also mentioned in Dōgen's "Gyōji" fascicle, the closest his *Shōbōgenzō* writings come to the transmission of the lamp genre. He retells the history of his lineage in light of the doctrine of "sustained *zazen* practice" (Jpn. *gyōji*) which has the spiritual power to support buddhas and sentient beings, heaven and earth, self and other. Early in the fascicle, Dōgen refers to masters Jingjing and Yizhang as being notable because they cannot be perceived by the native gods. Then he contrasts Nanquan, who has been spotted, with Hongzhi, before whom a local deity is literally stopped in its tracks. The god's feet will not budge,

recalling the “immovable robe” in the legend of Hui-neng’s escape from his opponents.³⁹

On the one hand, Dōgen seems to be scoring a sectarian point on behalf of Hongzhi, a predecessor of his mentor Rujing, while denigrating a master from a rival Rinzai lineage. Up to this stage, Dōgen is operating within, though at the same time refashioning, the standard mythological framework. But he then rationalizes demythology by commenting that the real meaning of being seen or not seen lies not in supranormal power in the literal sense, but in the perpetuation of authentic discipline. This requires an ongoing process of detachment from, or casting off, conventional pursuits. Yet even Dōgen’s turn to an anti-supernatural interpretation reveals an assumption of the efficacy of the indigenous spirit world. His verse commentary in the *Eihei Kōroku* version is basically noncommittal about – but certainly does not deny – the issue of supernatural realms or qualities involved here.

In highlighting and interpreting “Moshan opens her mouth,” Dōgen returns to the issue of gender as also seen in “Shinfukatoku” discussed above and “Kankin” discussed below. The case emphasizes the role of a female practitioner who appears superior in both rank and wisdom to her male disciple:

Zhixian was sent by his master, Linji, to study with Moshan. On their first meeting she asked, “Where have you come from?” Zhixian answered, “The Mouth of the Road” (the literal meaning of the name of his village). Moshan retorted, “Then why didn’t you close your mouth when you came here?” Zhixian prostrated himself and became her disciple.

Some time later he challenged her by asking, “What is the Summit of the Mountain” (the literal meaning of the name Moshan)? She replied, “The Summit of the Mountain cannot be seen.” “Then who is the person on the mountain?,” he demanded. “I am neither a male nor a female form,” she responded. “Then,” he asked, “why not transfigure into some other form?” “Since I am not a fox spirit, I cannot transfigure.”

Once again Zhixian bowed and decided to serve as supervisor of Moshan’s temple garden for three years, proclaiming her teaching the equal of Linji.⁴⁰

There are other versions of the narrative in various transmission of the lamp records that have different outcomes and ways of treating the question of whether the monk in the end defers to the authority and superiority of the nun, whose wisdom in denying both the ultimacy of gender discriminations and the need for spiritual transformations is expressed in ingenious wordplay.⁴¹

Dōgen devotes a complete fascicle of the *Shōbōgenzō* to the case of Moshan and related anecdotes about the role of nuns. While he is critical of some of

the “Zen grannies” who are lay and perhaps occult practitioners, as in his commentary on Deshan and the rice-cake, he defends Moshan, who is ordained, and severely attacks monks who reject the authority of women as “ignorant fools who deceive and delude secular people” and therefore “can never become bodhisattvas.” Dōgen comments that he was struck by the “skin, flesh, bones, marrow” transmission story of first patriarch Bodhidharma, who interviewed four people, including a woman, before selecting his successor by transmitting his marrow, and Dōgen supports Moshan’s authority.

However, several factors call into question whether Dōgen is entirely consistent in his acceptance of a lineal model for women. First, in other fascicles, particularly “Shukke kudoku” written late in his career, he tends to consider nuns unequal to men. Also, even in “Raihaitokuzui,” he makes ironic references that might be interpreted as undercutting his support for women. For example, he announces that legitimate teachers can be found “whether man or woman, ancient or modern, stone pillars or shapeshifting foxes.”

One of Dōgen’s favorite cases, “Baizhang meditates on Daxiong peak” is used as a vehicle to enunciate his own views on monastic rituals, especially the priority of sermons: “A monk asked Baizhang, ‘What is the most extraordinary thing?’ Baizhang said, ‘Sitting alone on Daxiong Peak.’ The monk bowed, and Baizhang hit him.”⁴² This case gained prominence because it served as a topic for important commentaries by Dōgen and his Chinese mentor Rujing. Rujing reconsidered the leading query and rewrote the response as “It is only to eat rice in a bowl at Jingzu si temple on Mount Tiandong.” He thereby shifted the focus from solitary *zazen* to everyday activities, as well as from Mount Baizhang to his own mountain temple.

Dōgen reflected on this case at least five times in his works. In the earlier writings, the Kana *Shōbōgenzō* “Kajō” and “Ho-u,” he cites Rujing’s comments approvingly. But during a later sermon, Dōgen spontaneously rewrote the case by raising his staff, then throwing it down, and stepping off the dais. Elsewhere he comments on the value of wielding the Zen stick, which metaphorically encompasses all aspects of reality.⁴³ According to the record of the sermon, “Dōgen said, ‘I would answer by raising high my stick at Daibutsuji temple in Japan,’ and he put the stick down and stepped off the dais.” Several years later, he again rewrote the case with the remark that the most extraordinary thing is delivering sermons at Eiheiji temple, saying “I [Eihei abbot] will go to the lecture hall today.”⁴⁴ Finally, he asserts, “It is attending *jōdō* [dharma hall] sermons on Kichijōzan [Eiheiji].”⁴⁵ This is intriguing in that Dōgen is primarily known for his emphasis on *zazen* meditation through the doctrine of “just sitting” (Jpn. *shikan taza*) rather than for delivering sermons, whereas Baizhang is known for stressing sermons in his monastic rules text, which makes little mention of the need for sitting meditation. On the other hand, Dōgen often praised

Rujing for his charismatic sermons, and Dōgen himself gave nighttime sermons that became the Kana *Shōbōgenzō* “Kōmyō” and “Shohō jisso” fascicles.

While the *kōans* discussed above focus on moral issues such as communal labor, continuing practice, and attitudes regarding gender, Dōgen’s reading of “The Tripiṭaka monk claims to read others’ minds” delivers a message about the role of supranormal powers in monastic life and also points to a philosophical doctrine of relativism:

The Tripiṭaka master Daer came to the capital all the way from India and proclaimed, “I have the Dharma-eye that reads others’ minds.” Emperor Daizong ordered the National Teacher Huizhong to put him to a test. When the Tripiṭaka monk saw the National Teacher he at once bowed and stood to his right side.

The National Teacher said, “Do you have the power to read others’ minds?” The monk responded, “No, far from it.” “Tell me where I am right now.” “You are a National Teacher. How can you see the boat race in the West River?”⁴⁶

Dōgen refutes what evolved as the typical interpretation – which seems to reverse the overt meaning of the dialogue – that the Tripiṭaka monk’s first two answers are actually correct and that even the silent response in the third part of the dialogue may be considered acceptable. Dōgen considers several commentaries by leading masters that justify why the Tripiṭaka master was silent at the end of the encounter. For example, he discusses Zhaozhou’s remark that the Tripiṭaka monk did not see the National Teacher in the third question because the master “was standing right on the monk’s nostrils” and was therefore too close to be perceived. He also considers another comment that the National Teacher had gone into a state of profound absorption (Skt. *samādhi*) and was imperceptible to the monk. According to Dōgen, all of these are convoluted ways of trying to reconcile the monk’s inability, and he returns to a literal reading of the case.

Dōgen maintains an iconoclastic view with several components. According to Dōgen, supranormal powers do not lead to and are not really the result of enlightenment, and therefore they are not comparable in merit to everyday activities and simple chores, such as chopping down weeds. Also, reading minds is symbolic of intuitive insight, which is beyond having or not having powers, and knowing about others is actually based on self-knowledge. Therefore, reading the mind of another can only take place on the basis of “reading one’s own mind” (Jpn. *jijintsū*), or realizing one’s true nature. The first two lines of Dōgen’s verse commentary refer to similar situations of mindreading in other Zen dialogues or Chinese Buddhist anecdotes, and the final lines reiterate the National Teacher’s critique of Daer as someone who is fundamentally deceptive.

Dōgen's interpretation of the "The World Honored One ascends the high seat" uses atomization in support of the equalization of all viewpoints:

Pointer

A single lute string is plucked and he can name the whole tune. Such a person is hard to find even if you search for a thousand years. Like a hawk chasing a hare, the race goes to the swiftest. He expresses the universe of discourse in a single word, and condenses a thousand great worlds into a speck of dust. Is there anyone who can live the same way and die the same way, penetrating each and every hole and crevice? Now consider this.

Main case

One day the World Honored One took the high seat to preach the Dharma. Mañjuśrī struck the gavel and said, "Clearly understand the Dharma of the King of Dharma. The Dharma of the King of Dharma is just like this."

Then the World Honored One got down off his seat.

Prose commentary (selected passage)

This took place before the World Honored One had raised the flower. From the beginning at Deer Park to the end at Hiranyavati River, how many times did he need to use the jeweled sword of the Diamond King? At this particular time, if there had been someone in the assembly with the true spirit of a patch-robed monk and with a supreme understanding, then it would have been possible to later avoid the sticky situation of having to raise the flower.⁴⁷

Like numerous other commentaries on this case, including the *Biyān lu* and *Congrong lu*, Dōgen's discussion deals with the notion of *saindhava*, which evokes an ancient Sanskrit story of a king who asked his retainer for four items, a wash, a meal, a drink, and a ride, and is given in an immediate, intuitive response: water, salt, a chalice, and a horse, respectively. *Saindhava* refers to an intuitive connection between master and disciple, but the commentaries caution against understanding this in a literal or facile way. The *Biyān lu* mentions another *kōān*:

When a monk asked Xiangyan, "What is the king asking for *saindhava*?" Xiangyan said, "Come over here," and the monk went. Xiangyan said, "Don't be such a fool!" The monk later asked Zhaozhou, "What is the king asking for *saindhava*?" Zhaozhou got off his meditation seat, bent over, and folded his hands.

Dōgen cites this account and also tells the irreverent story of Nanquan, who saw his disciple coming and decided to up the ante about *saindhava* by commanding him, “The pitcher is an object. It contains some water. Bring the water over to this old priest without moving the object. But the monk brought the pitcher to the master and poured water all over him.” Dōgen distances himself from the ritual implications to monastic protocols and propriety, and comments exclusively on the metaphysical significance of this act, “We must study the water in the pitcher and the pitcher in the water. Was it the water that was being moved, or was it the pitcher that was being moved?”

Tours, détours, rétors

Dōgen’s interpretation of the following *kōan*, “Zhaozhou recites the sūtras,” demonstrates many of the elements previously discussed, including the strategies of atomization, narrative intercession and extension, and conclusions based on reinterpreting the meaning of ritual in light of the doctrines of relativism and multiperspectivism:

In the district of Zhaozhou, an old woman sent a message to the master with a donation and a request that he recite the entire collection of Buddhist sūtras. Hearing of this, the master stepped down from his seat and walked around the chair one time. Then he said, “I have finished reciting the collection of sūtras.”

The messenger returned to the old woman and told her what happened with Zhaozhou. The old woman said, “I asked Zhaozhou to recite the complete collection of sūtras. Why did he recite only half the sūtras?”⁴⁸

The main question Dōgen considers is whether Zhaozhou is really in the wrong, and how this affects our understanding of the role of recitation rituals in the monastic routine. He reverses the conventional interpretation of the case. Dōgen says that Zhaozhou walking around his chair really did represent the whole of the Buddhist sūtras, whereas the old woman was merely lost in her concern for the relative number of scriptures recited. At the same time, in contrast to this line of interpretation that is critical of the woman, Dōgen also suggests that perhaps the old woman really wanted to see Zhaozhou walk around the chair backwards, or in the opposite direction, to expose his appreciation of absurdity.

“Kankin” also contains several other versions of the narrative culled from the transmission of the lamp records. In one version master Shenchao of Mount Dasui in Yizhou also walks around the chair. But this time the old woman is criticized for not saying, “I asked him to recite the entire collection of the sūtras. Why did the master worry himself so much?” In another version, master Dongshan Wuben first bows to the messenger who returns

the bow, but then he walks around the chair with the officer and asks the officer if he understood. When the messenger replies “no,” Dongshan says, “Why can’t you understand that I have read a sūtra with you?” In a fourth version, Dōgen relates how his Chinese mentor Rujing, who was once asked to read a lengthy sūtra and deliver a sermon, drew a big circle in the air with his fly-whisk and said, “Now I have read it for you!” Then he cast away the fly-whisk and descended from the dais.

In the rest of the “Kankin” fascicle Dōgen spends time outlining and analyzing the precise way the ritual of sūtra reading is to be conducted, including minute details about preparing and serving food as well as the time and place for the reading. But he also discusses other dialogues that highlight the futility and absurdity of the ritual. These are the reversals and re-reversals, the *tours*, *détours*, *retours* (turns, de-turns, returns) that characterize the use of *kōans* in the Dōgen tradition. In one example that is particularly intriguing for its irreverent tone, master Yüeh-shan is known for forbidding the recitation of sūtras, yet one day is discovered reading a sūtra himself. When asked by a disciple why he is doing precisely what he does not allow others he responds, “I am only trying to cover my eyes with the sūtra!”

Dōgen does not have one fixed purpose, strategy, or methodology behind his reversals and re-readings of the *kōan* “scriptures.” In the variety of his playful commentaries, he exhibits a range of innovative interpretive techniques aimed at exposing new meanings or facets in the classic stories.

Notes

- 1 *Eihei Kōroku* 1.48 in *Dōgen zenji zenshū*, 7 vols., Kawamura Kōdō et al., eds, Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1988–1993, 3:34, according to the Monkaku edition (in the Manzan edition this passage appears in *Eihei Kōroku* 1.1).
- 2 Hee-Jin Kim, *Dōgen Kigen – Mystical Realist*, 1975, rev. 3rd edn, with new foreword, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004, p. 46.
- 3 Satō Shunkō, “Hakusan shinkō to Sōtō-shū kyō shi,” 20-part series, *Sanshō*, 1990–1991, pp. 556–575.
- 4 Daitō, who was said to have copied the *Jingde chuandeng lu* in forty days, “must have been aware that he was not only transcribing the history of Zen but participating in it as well.” Kenneth Kraft, *Eloquent Zen: Daitō*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993, p. 48.
- 5 Kagamishima Genryū, ed., *Dōgen in’yō goroku no kenkyū*, Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1995.
- 6 Some of the discussions of cases also appear in Steven Heine, *Opening a Mountain: Kōans of the Zen Masters*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- 7 Taigen Dan Leighton and Shohaku Okumura, trs, *Dōgen’s Extensive Record: A Translation of the Eihei Kōroku*, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004, pp. 537–598.
- 8 Ishii Seijun, “*Mana Shōbōgenzō* no seiritusu kansuru issiken: ‘Eihei juko,’” *Kōshōji goroku to no naiyō taihi o chūshin toshite, Sōtōshū shūgaku kenkyūjō kiyō*, 8:53–67.

- 9 *Shōbōgenzō zuimonki* (hereafter SZ), vol. 2 record 1, in *Dōgen zenji zenshū* (hereafter DZZ), 7 vols, Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1988–1993, 7:64.
- 10 *Zongmen tongyao zhi*, photo-fascimilie edition held in Komazawa University Library collection of Zen Buddhist texts.
- 11 Ishii Shūdō, *Sōdai Zenshūshi no kenkyū*, Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1987.
- 12 This recalls – yet contrasts with – the kind of ritual violence examined in Maurice Bloch, *Prey into Hunter: The Politics of Religious Experience*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- 13 *Mana Shōbōgenzō* case 91 (DZZ 5:172).
- 14 *Eihei Kōroku*, vol. 1 record 12 (DZZ 3:10).
- 15 *Jingde chuandeng lu* (Jpn. *Keitoku dentōroku*) vol. 5, T. vol. 51, no. 2076.
- 16 *Mana Shōbōgenzō*, 83, and Kana *Shōbōgenzō* “Kokyō” (DZZ1:237–239).
- 17 See Bernard Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991, pp. 113–114; and Hee-Jin Kim, “The Reason of Words and Letters: Dōgen and *Kōan* Language,” in William R. LaFleur, ed., *Dōgen Studies*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985, pp. 54–82.
- 18 Daitō was especially known for his use of capping phrases; see Kraft.
- 19 *Wumenkuan* (hereafter WMK, Jpn. *Mumonkan*), T. vol. 48, no. 2005, cases 30 and 33.
- 20 *Eihei Kōroku* (DZZ), 10.63c.
- 21 DZZ, 5:158–160.
- 22 DZZ, 1:449–456.
- 23 *Eihei Kōroku*, vol. 9, case 71 (DZZ 4:230).
- 24 *Mana Shōbōgenzō*, case 183 (DZZ 5:218).
- 25 *Zongmen tongyao zhi*, vol. 8.
- 26 *Zongmen liandeng huiyao*, in the supplemental collection, *Xu zangjing* (vol. 136), vol. 3.
- 27 *Jingde chuandeng lu*, vol. 9, T. vol. 51, no. 2076:265c.
- 28 *Zongmen tongyao ji*, vol. 4.
- 29 *Zongmen lian-deng hui-yao*, vol. 7.
- 30 *Mana Shōbōgenzō*, case 61 (DZZ 5:158).
- 31 Kana *Shōbōgenzō*, “Jinzū” fascicle (DZZ 1:392–402).
- 32 WMK 25, and *Zongrong lu* (Jpn. *Shōyōroku*) 90, T. vol. 48, no. 2004.
- 33 This *kōan* is cited in the prose commentary section of *Bīyan lu* case 4 (T. vol. 48, no. 2003:143b–144c), and is discussed as the main topic of the Kana *Shōbōgenzō* “Shinfukatoku” fascicle (DZZ 1:82–86), on the “Ungraspable Mind.”
- 34 DZZ 1:302–315.
- 35 *Eihei Kōroku*, vol. 9, case 81 (DZZ 4:238).
- 36 This *kōan* is cited in *Mana Shōbōgenzō*, case 15 (DZZ 5:132), and is included with extensive commentary in the Kana *Shōbōgenzō*, “Ikkyū myōjū” fascicle (DZZ 1:76–81).
- 37 *Eihei Kōroku*, 9.71.
- 38 This *kōan*, originally contained in several of the transmission of the lamp records including *Jingde chuandeng lu* vol. 8 (T. no. 51:257c), is cited in *Eihei Kōroku* vol. 9 case 63 (DZZ 4:224). This case appears in the record of master Hongzhi (T. no. 48:34b), the original compiler of the cases that appear in the *Congrong lu* collection. It is also included in *Mana Shōbōgenzō* case 19 (DZZ 5:134), and is discussed extensively in Dōgen’s Kana *Shōbōgenzō* “Gyōji,” part I (DZZ 1:145–170).
- 39 WMK, case 23.
- 40 This *kōan*, which originally appeared in *Jingde chuandeng lu* vol. 11 (T. no. 51:289a), is cited in the Kana *Shōbōgenzō* “Raihaitokuzui” fascicle (DZZ

- 1:302–315), and it is also included in abbreviated fashion in Dōgen’s *Eihei Kōroku* vol. 9 case 32 (DZZ 4:202).
- 41 Miriam Levering, “Dōgen’s *Raihaitokuzui* and Women Teaching in Sung Chan,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 21/1 (1998), 77–110.
- 42 *Biyan lu*, 26 (T. vol. 48:166c–167b).
- 43 *Eihei Kōroku*, 2.148 (from 1245).
- 44 *Ibid.*, 5.378.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 6.443 (from 1251).
- 46 This *kōan*, which originally appeared in *Jingde chuandeng lu* vol. 5 (T. no. 51:244a), is cited in Dōgen’s *Eihei Kōroku* vol. 9 case 27 (DZZ 4:198–200) and it is also the main subject of the Kana *Shōbōgenzō* “Tajinzū” fascicle (DZZ 2:41–252).
- 47 This *kōan*, originally contained in *Jingde chuandeng lu* vol. 11 (T. no. 51:283b) and other transmission of the lamp records, is cited from *Biyan lu* case 92 (T. no. 48:216b–216c). It is also included in *Congrong lu* case 1 (T. no. 48:227c–228b), *Mana Shōbōgenzō* case 141 (DZZ 5:200), and the *kōan* collection of master Dahui. In addition, this case is discussed extensively in Dōgen’s Kana *Shōbōgenzō* “Osaku sendaba” fascicle (DZZ 2:253–258).
- 48 This *kōan*, which appears in transmission of the lamp records on Zhaozhou’s teachings, is cited in *Mana Shōbōgenzō* case 74 (DZZ 5:164) and it is also discussed briefly in Dahui yulu vol. 9 and more extensively in Dōgen’s Kana *Shōbōgenzō* “Kankin” (DZZ 2:320–342).