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Emerging from Nonduality

Kōan Practice in the Rinzai Tradition since Hakuin

MICHEL MOHR

RECENT DEBATES on methodological issues applied to Buddhist studies¹ have both multiplied the approaches at our disposal and refined our perceptions of the domain under study by questioning some common convictions about the nature of the Buddhist tradition. The first steps in this direction have been critical assessments of how the tradition has presented itself as well as how many Westerners have wanted to interpret and epitomize it. However, this useful task of analyzing the tradition and its reception by the scholarly and nonscholarly audience leaves us with a number of new difficulties. For example, some interpreters have overlooked crucial issues in historical criticism by focusing instead on a questioning of the centrality of “awakening” in Buddhism, as if the word itself cannot be used without quotation marks, perhaps to show that nobody really gives credence to the “mystical claim” implied in what is actually a technical term used in a variety of ways in the source materials.²

The key historical issue in examining the Zen schools is based on a realization that the field of study is not as clearly divided into separable denominations as textbooks would suggest. It is more likely that the different sectarian units have actually overlapped and interacted for centuries, so that sectarian consciousness is a phenomenon whose crystallization in Japan in its present form can be attributed at least partially to post-Meiji developments.³ For instance, the establishment of a “chief abbot system” (*kanchōsei*) in June 1873, which was then modified several times, represents the culmination of the institutional setting that is often attributed retrospectively to the Tokugawa era. Since 1876 this system has included the three Zen denominations: Sōtō, Rinzai, and Ōbaku; the Rinzai sect being later further divided into the present fifteen branches, each with its own administration.⁴

At any rate, although sectarian categories often fail to do justice to what actually happened or to account for the interwoven relationships among priests, Japanese Buddhist studies is still dominated by works that deal with only one particular school. This is especially the case for research on the figures who used *kōans* in their practice during the Tokugawa period. Despite the widespread image of *kōan* practice as the distinguishing feature of Rinzai, one cannot fail to notice that important Sōtō lineages also used *kōans* extensively. One example is the scholarly oriented lineage of Tokuō Ryōkō (1649–1709), represented in the fourth generation by the poet Daigu Ryōkan (1758–1831). The direct influence Tokuō had received from Ōbaku priests is still evident in his third-generation heir, Tetsumon Dōju (1710–1781), the ninth abbot of Entsūji. Tetsumon composed in particular a collection of *kōans* entitled *Tenchian hyakusoku hyōju* (*Verses and Commentaries on One Hundred Cases [by the Abbot] of Tenchian*), which was printed in 1771.⁵ This text, typical of such anthologies, obviously has been read by Ryōkan and might even have inspired his *Hokkesan* (*Hymn to the Lotus Sūtra*).⁶ In the succeeding years, however, *kōan* practice was largely expunged from the Sōtō school through the efforts of Gentō Sokuchū (1729–1807), the eleventh abbot of Entsūji, who in 1795 was nominated abbot of Eihei-ji. Gentō's effort to "purify" his lineage of foreign influence seems to have contributed to Ryōkan's decision to leave Entsūji and choose a life of wandering.⁷

Although comprehensive studies on *kōans* in all three Japanese Zen sects are needed, this chapter will focus on the so-called "revival of the Rinzai school," credited to Hakuin Ekaku (1686–1769) and his followers, in order to highlight the fact that several distinctive orientations existed within the Rinzai tradition, especially in the theoretical background synthesized by Hakuin's line. Spotlighting this neglected aspect of Rinzai lineages will also entail asking to what extent the changes that occurred during the eighteenth century can be attributed to the work of a single person or in which respects they were produced by a conflux of historical circumstances.

Since we will be looking at some of the Tokugawa developments of a tradition that is still alive, the "filter" provided by contemporary interpretations must be examined. One might recall that religious congregations making extensive use of *kōans* constitute groups preserving an oral tradition. From this perspective, anthropological approaches deserve our attention, for they strive to describe what is generally lacking in textually based analysis: a live context.⁸ Therefore this survey will be based on three sources of information: (1) documents left by Hakuin and his direct descendants, (2) the few published texts that describe the sequence of *kōans*,⁹ and (3) observations from fieldwork.¹⁰

We will concentrate here on the specific tools called "*kōans*" and thus will travel the following course. After outlining the historical background concerning shifts in the meaning of the word "*kōan*," I will examine three events in the Tokugawa period that triggered innovation in the way training was con-

ceived. A closer look at kōan practice will then lead to reflections on its somatic implications, its educational dimension, and its emphasis on the process of “going beyond” (*kōjō*).

Shifts in the Meaning of the Word “Kōan”

The Present Japanese Monastic Context

The word “kōan” has now become fully Anglicized, since there is no satisfactory translation.¹¹ Interpretations that emphasize paradox seem to overlook the cardinal purpose of this verbal device, which is presently used in the monastic context¹² as a specific tool for communication between teacher and student. It might be simpler to apprehend the way a kōan is dealt with by comparing it to a screen. This screen, on which students can focus their mind, serves as a surface onto which to project their understanding, called *kenge*. In their search for a “solution” to the problem presented by a kōan, at some point students are commonly advised to avoid *kenge* that fall into explicative discourse or general consideration: each *kenge* has to be sharp, inducing a definite impression in both the person who produces it and the teacher who takes it in.¹³ Such an expression of the *kenge* during private consultation (*sanzen*)¹⁴ subsequently allows the teacher to look at the meaning exposed on the screen, helping him to appreciate the depth of the student’s meditative absorption or the factors hindering his or her progress. The teacher will in turn offer feedback, often verbal, in accordance with the student’s state of mind or what he or she has expressed. This screen analogy is a very rough delineation of how such “topics” are concretely handled, a task that will be touched upon in the section concerning the somatic dimension of kōan practice. Although this analogy fails to account for how kōans function as catalysts for doubt, it is helpful as a first approximation.

It must also be noted that different kōans sometimes operate in distinctive ways and that using the word “kōan” as a generic term may be confusing. In addition, the use of kōans in the Japanese Rinzai tradition appears to be quite different from the Korean method, in which “Korean Sōn meditators keep the same *hwadu* (C. *hua-t’ou* J. *watō*) throughout their careers, trying continually to deepen their sensation of doubt.”¹⁵ Within the mainstream Japanese Rinzai tradition,¹⁶ where kōans belong to a multifaceted curriculum, it is first necessary to distinguish between “main cases” (*honsoku*) and “peripheral cases” (*sassho*).¹⁷ Today most students begin their kōan practice by struggling either with “the word *mu*” (*muji*) or with “the sound of one hand” (*sekishu onjō*) kōan. Both are “main cases” that help condense existential doubts into one specific question, and months or years can be needed to solve the interrogation it implies, which is similar to a quest for one’s fundamental identity. Once the kernel of one of these “main cases” has been discovered, the teacher directs

his students to examine “peripheral cases,” thus assisting them to apprehend their own comprehension from different angles without sticking to a single view. Then, when the complete range of peripheral cases associated with one main case has been exhausted, the student is instructed to work on a new main case. For example, Tōin alludes to 48 secondary cases associated with “the sound of one hand” *kōan*.¹⁸

These peripheral cases often take the form of direct challenges that arouse the spirit of the practitioner, such as “try to pass through the eye of a needle” (*hari no mizo o tōtte miyo*).¹⁹ Such questions sometimes have a comical dimension, such as “try to hide yourself inside a pillar” (*hashira no nakani kakurete miyo*) or “try to save a ghost” (*yūrei o saido shite miyo*).²⁰ Hakuin himself indicates that “once [someone] has succeeded in hearing the sound of one hand, it requires [further] scrutiny” (*sensaku ari*), and he follows by enumerating some of the probes he used, such as “Mount Fuji being inside a pocket-sized medicine case” (*inrō nai ni fujisan ari*).²¹

Besides the aforementioned contour of the meaning of the word “*kōan*,” one must note that it has not always been used in such a way. Changes in the historical context brought new understandings to this term, although its evolution obviously does not strictly follow the historical periods, which are mentioned in the next sections only as convenient reminders.

T'ang and Sung Dynasties

A quick review of T'ang dynasty sources shows that the word *kung-an* (Chinese pronunciation of *kōan*) was used in the vernacular with a meaning quite different from the one it takes in later texts. In *The Recorded Sayings of Layman P'ang*, for example, it can be rendered as “the point of your remark,”²² whereas it takes a much more specific and weightier meaning in later records. The sayings of Yün-mēn Wēn-yen (864–949) also provide several early instances of the term “*kōan*” being used toward the end of the T'ang to mean a “case” including the juridical nuance, but still being devoid of associations with the contemplation of “test cases” often borrowed from ancient dialogues.²³

In relation to the inner transformations associated with Ch'an practice, it is widely known that the technical term *chien-hsing* (J. *kenshō*) came to be used toward the end of the T'ang, after the publication of the *Platform Sūtra*, whose existence is attested at least since 847.²⁴ What is less known is that this term, often translated as “seeing into one's own nature,” is already defined in early sources as an expression of nonduality:

QUESTION: How do you get to see the nature?

TA-CHU: Seeing is nothing else than nature, impossible to see without nature.²⁵

Because the distinction between the verb (to see) and its object (the nature) introduces a dichotomy, it seems better to keep the term *kenshō* untranslated. In the Japanese context, insight into the first kōan is labeled *kenshō*, which corresponds to a turning point in one's training. However, there are considerable variations in the impact of this inner transformation, depending on each individual. In a sermon given on December 4, 1994, Daigu Sōkō (Morinaga 1925–1995) Rōshi commented on the expression “true understanding” (*chen-cheng chien-chieh*, J. *shinshō no kenge*) that appears in *The Sayings of Lin-chi*.²⁶ He confessed, “What I am eagerly waiting for in the consultation room is for someone to come in possessed by an irrepressible joy [*osaerarenai hodo no yorokobi*]; I am not looking for an answer to the kōan.” If we take this statement in reverse, it also implies that practitioners may find the right answer to a kōan without being overwhelmed by its discovery. One notorious instance is the case of Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945), who inscribed in his diary on August 3, 1903:

In the evening consultation, [my understanding of] the word *mu* was acknowledged [*muji o yurusaru*]. However, I was not so delighted [*hanahada yorokobazu*].²⁷

Victor Hori also observes: “The remarkable point of the kōan method is that with concentrated effort, monks regularly do start to penetrate the kōan usually within six months of their arrival in the monastery” (1994, p. 29). As Hori says, his description aims first at “demystifying the notion of ‘mystical insight,’ ” and “The entire monastery kōan curriculum operates on the assumption that beginning monks start with a slight insight which further training systematically deepens and makes intelligible” (1994, p. 6, n. 1).

Regarding this question of the “intensity” of a first breakthrough, Ta-hui stresses the idea that “at the footing of great doubt inevitably lies great awakening.”²⁸ In other words, release is proportional to the preceding distress, although both ultimately are illusory from the perspective of intrinsic awakening.²⁹ This is not to say that doubt is equivalent to distress, since it implies a positive side (the capacity to mobilize the energy of the whole being), but rather suggests that release is somewhat conditioned by the process that leads to it. “Great doubt” further expresses an affirmation of the necessity to fall temporarily into a state “similar to trying to gulp down a ball of hot iron, which you cannot spit out either.”³⁰ This function of the kōan is especially valued in the Korean setting, where “all *hwadus* are considered to be simply an expedient means of producing the doubt.”³¹

In any event, while insisting on the necessity of the primary change of perspective accompanying *kenshō*, the Rinzai tradition of the Tokugawa period cautiously warns against attachment to this turn. As we shall see in section on “Going Beyond,” the accent is put on the need to never be satisfied with incomplete achievements or the refinement of one's understanding and its thorough integration into daily behavior.

*From the Chinese Sung to the
Japanese Kamakura Period*

Among documents attempting to give a definition of the kung-an, the *locus classicus* remains a passage from the teachings given by Chung-feng Ming-pen (1263–1323), which dates back only to the Yüan dynasty.³² An even more recent commentary of the *Ch'an-lin pao-hsün*,³³ the *Ch'an-lin pao-hsün yin-i* completed in 1635, has provided Japanese commentators with a handy simile, which forms the bulk of the *Zengaku daijiten* entry on “*kōan*” (p. 303a–b).³⁴ The Chinese commentary explains the two-character compound “kung-an” by expanding it to the five-character expression “case documents [for examination] by the official magistrate” (*kung-fu chih an-tu*).³⁵ Actually, this is just a remolding of the above-mentioned teaching of Chung-feng Ming-pen³⁶ and does not tell us anything about the way these cases were selected or used by the teachers.

Besides this elementary formulation, only limited concrete evidence can be gathered from earlier Chinese Ch'an sources on how kung-ans were used as a practical method in the teacher–disciple encounters. For instance, the scanty instructions contained in the *Ch'an-men kwei-shih* (*Regulations of the Ch'an Approach*, included in *Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu* completed in 1004) mention only the practice of “entering the [abbot's] room and requesting [his] guidance” (*ju-shih ch'ing-i*). The consultation apparently was left up to the dedication of the student, and the text does not spell out the importance given to it or describe how it was accomplished.³⁷ Even the more elaborate *Ch'an-yüan ch'ing-kuei* (*Pure Rules of the Ch'an Monasteries*), which has a preface dated 1103 and contains later additions, does not deal extensively with the contents of private consultations, although they appear central to practice. In the section devoted to “entering the [abbot's] room,” it describes only formal behavior. When the acolyte has completed the preparation:

The person who enters the room turns [toward the abbot] to salute him with folded palms [*wen-hsün*], while [other] monks advance in order, their hands superposed on the chest [*ch'a-shou*]. Do not proceed before [the others, since it would] affect the thoughts of the monks. Enter through the right side of the gate of the abbot's quarter. First lift your left foot [to enter]; when you are in front [of him] and have finished saluting him with folded palms, rotate with hands superposed on the chest, then salute with folded palms on the southwestern corner of the master's chair and remain standing. Saluting again with folded palms first, give vent to what you have to express [*t'u-lu hsiao-hsi*]. Avoid speaking for a long time or indulging in worldly idle talk, which would make other monks wait. When you have finished expressing yourself, withdraw with folded palms and make a prostration in front [of the abbot].³⁸

The text goes on to give other minute instructions about how to behave properly, but this description is striking in its lack of emphasis on what is sought

through such meetings with the teacher. Of course this document belongs to the genre of monastic regulations, making it more akin to a set of administrative rules than to a meditation treatise.³⁹

Nevertheless, the author of this work, Ch'ang-lu Tsung-tse (n.d.), was a seventh-generation descendant of Yün-men; it is thus implausible that this lineage would not have been using kung-ans, especially since the kung-an anthology *Pi-yen lu* had been composed by his predecessor Hsüeh-tou Ch'ung-hsien (980–1052). In this particular Yün-men school, the blending of Ch'an practice with Pure Land teachings apparently became widespread around the Northern Sung,⁴⁰ but still it does not account for the muteness of Ch'ang-lu Tsung-tse concerning the use of kung-an at his time. As Martin Collcutt remarks, omitting a mention of some aspect of practice could also be interpreted as an indication that this aspect of monastic life was obvious:

The *Ch'an-yüan Code*, likewise, does not specify times for meditation. We can perhaps assume from this silence that meditation practice was still sufficiently dedicated to need no special regulation.⁴¹

Among the monastic rules texts, the only one so far to mention kung-ans explicitly is the *Ch'ih-hsiu Pai-chang ch'ing-kuei* (*Pai-chang Code Compiled on Imperial Decree*), a relatively late work completed between 1336 and 1343.⁴²

Aside from references to kung-an practice in monastic codes, the transformation experienced during the Sung dynasty, especially in the circle of Wu-tsu Fa-yen (1024–1104)⁴³ and his followers, appears to have played a cardinal role in developments that reached Japan and Korea. The movement led by Fa-yen's successors, which was centered around Huang-mēi-shan in Hupeh, succeeded in receiving the patronage of the last emperor of the Northern Sung, Hui Tsung (reign 1100–1125). His heir to the throne of the Southern Sung, Kao Tsung (reign 1127–1162), further marked the confidence of his dynasty in this Ch'an lineage by awarding the title Yüan-wu Ch'an-shih to K'o-ch'in (1063–1135), Fa-yen's successor. What had momentous consequences for the subsequent transmission to Japan was the activity of the next successor, Ta-hui Tsung-kao (1089–1163), whom Hakuin took as a model in his efforts to revive the Tokugawa Rinzai lineage.

In comparison with other Sung teachers, Ta-hui gives more explicit descriptions of practice. In particular, his *Letters* provide a firsthand account of how lay practitioners were advised to handle the kung-an.⁴⁴ Ta-hui's emphasis on sharpening the spiritual inquiry while engaged in secular labor represents a significant departure from teachings centered on the purely monastic environment. This emphasis on integrating spirituality with secular activity was later also stressed by Hakuin when he addressed the lay community. In his *Orategama*, Hakuin writes that "Master Ta-hui too said that [meditative] work in movement is infinitely superior to that in stillness."⁴⁵

Hakuin's words are faithful to the spirit of Ta-hui, who frequently used the expression "[meditative] work" (C. *kung-fu*, J. *kufū*) to stress the necessity of "not letting the [meditative] work be interrupted,"⁴⁶ that is, carrying it through in all activities. However, it does not appear in the works of Ta-hui with this exact wording. Ta-hui says in one of his *Letters*:

Precisely if you like stillness and dislike agitation it is appropriate to exert your force (or to make a constant effort). When you clash head-on against agitation with the state [acquired in] stillness, the force [you exert] is infinitely superior to what [is obtained by sitting] on a bamboo chair or a cushion.⁴⁷

The word for "agitation," *nao* in Chinese, suggests a noisy and busy environment, and Ta-hui writes to a layman, alluding to the activities of a person involved in public affairs. It is worth noticing that Ta-hui often addressed a Neo-Confucian audience. The difference with Hakuin's use of the word "movement" is admittedly minor, and the intention of the author is not betrayed, but the fact that Hakuin attributes to Ta-hui a sentence that he has himself devised is indicative of the liberty he sometimes takes with the Chinese tradition. Divergences between the Korean and Japanese Rinzai traditions, which both take Ta-hui as their paragon, show that the interpretation of Ta-hui's teachings represents a core issue for their respective understandings of *kōan* practice.

In this regard, one cannot fail to notice that transformations occurring within the Chinese Ch'an context itself are presumably not foreign to this cleavage. The Ming priest Yün-ch'i Chu-hung (1535–1615), for instance, showed considerable respect for Ta-hui's accomplishments. In his *Chu-ch'uang erh-pi*, Yün-ch'i uses Ta-hui to illustrate his comments on "great awakening and small awakening" (*ta-wu hsiao-wu*):

According to the lore, the venerable Ta-hui [Tsong]-k'ao [underwent] great awakening eighteen times, [his] small awakenings being countless.⁴⁸

Whether this represents Yün-ch'i's original interpretation or reflects Ta-hui's own understanding is a debate that is beyond the scope of this chapter. What is most interesting for our inquiry is that Hakuin and two of his disciples, Tōrei Enji (1721–1792) and Reigen Etō (1721–1785), mention this story, which otherwise appears only in the writings of Yün-ch'i.⁴⁹ They thus show their familiarity with Ming Buddhist thinkers, although they occasionally criticized Yün-ch'i.⁵⁰ This example is one limited illustration of the fact that, despite the Tokugawa Rinzai claim that it represents the unadulterated Sung Ch'an tradition, the Japanese clergy had in fact assimilated consciously or unconsciously many features characteristic of the Ming Buddhist developments.

From the Kamakura to the Tokugawa Period

There is little point in attempting to retrace in a few lines the history of Zen lineages spanning more than five centuries, but several events deserve attention because they are crucial for understanding changes that occurred prior to and at the beginning of the Tokugawa era.

Among the successive waves of transmission that reached Japan during the Kamakura period, the branches of Ch'an stemming from Wu-tsu Fa-yen and his disciples were the principal lines imported by the pioneers. Three varieties of kōans, namely *richi* (principle), *kikan* (functioning), and *kōjō* (going beyond), are already mentioned in the writings left by priests who journeyed to China, such as Enni Bennen (1202–1280, Shōichi Kokushi) and Nanpo Jōmyō (1235–1309, Daiō Kokushi).⁵¹ Although Chinese sources do provide isolated examples of these technical terms, the returning Japanese monks' eagerness to clarify the teachings they had received seems to have given a special flavor to these expressions, which are for the first time arranged in such sequential categories. Aside from the comment that certain kōans correspond to certain stages of cultivation, this early classification can nevertheless hardly be considered a "system."⁵²

It must be noted here that traditional accounts tend to underline the continuity between the Sung Ch'an lineages and their Japanese counterparts, this continuity being one of the foremost arguments to support their legitimacy. This claim, however, points to issues that have not yet been resolved. In particular, it is well-known that among the 24 early transmissions of Ch'an lineages reaching Japan,⁵³ only the branch of Nanpo Jōmyō (*Daiō ha*) survived beyond the nineteenth century. This means that, although fifteen branches of the Rinzai school formally exist, they actually are all emanations from the Myōshinji line.

There is another unavoidable problem concerning the two key persons at the origin of this transmission: Hsü-t'ang Chih-yü (1185–1269) and his Japanese disciple Nanpo Jōmyō. Philological research has demonstrated that the document traditionally regarded as the spiritual certification bestowed by Hsü-t'ang on Nanpo cannot possibly have been written by Hsü-t'ang.⁵⁴ Several explanations of the oddity of this document can be offered. In particular, I have suggested that Nanpo's disciple Sōtaku Zetsugai (d. 1334) might have created or misinterpreted the certificate in order to highlight the eminence of his master.⁵⁵ There is no question about the authenticity of Nanpo's travel to China or his disciple relationship with Hsü-t'ang,⁵⁶ but the forged certificate does spotlight a general propensity to adorn the chronicles of the pioneers. In any case, the authoritative and homogeneous character of this lineage increasingly appears to have been inflated through the toil of Nippō Sōshun (1368–1448), the thirty-sixth abbot of Daitokuji and the reviver of Myōshinji; this priest is now recognized even by Rinzai scholars as the author of several counterfeit "transmission of the Dharma certificates" (*inkajō*) hitherto attributed to his predecessors.⁵⁷

Despite the haziness surrounding early developments of this blend of the Japanese Rinzai tradition, Daitokuji and Myōshinji unequivocally took advantage of the political, social, and economic changes that were reshaping religious institutions after the civil wars of the Ōnin era (*Ōnin no ran* 1467–1477). In short, the fortunes of these two lineages, which had not participated in the pomp of the official temples (*gozan*) after Daitokuji withdrew from this system in 1431, were completely reversed. They went from outsider status to authoritative status.

Additionally, it should be mentioned that in the Rinzai context the use of the word “monastery” (*sōdō* or *senmon dōjō*) as a special place for training monks goes back only to the eighteenth century. Around the fifteenth century, monastic compounds like Daitokuji or Myōshinji were still merely a complex of temples, in which practice generally depended on each abbot. It is only much later that the challenge of the Manpukuji presence, and the new religious policy posted by the eighth shōgun Yoshimune, known as the reforms of the Kyōhō era (1716–1735),⁵⁸ appear to have galvanized the Rinzai clergy. As a result, Tōfukuji, whose buildings had been spared from the devastation of civil war, was the first monastery to establish (in 1729) retreat periods devoted to collective practice (*kessei*).⁵⁹ In the same process, Hakuin’s private initiative led to the construction of Ryūtakuji in Mishima, inaugurated in 1761, with Tōrei reluctantly accepting the post of abbot.⁶⁰ It was only in 1787 that Hakuin’s disciple Shikyō Eryō (1722–1787) succeeded in launching Enpukuji in Yawata, the earliest “officially approved monastery” (*kōnin sōdō*) of the Myōshinji branch,⁶¹ just before his death.⁶² Shikyō was one of the many monks who came from the lineage of Kogetsu⁶³ to join Hakuin.

Going back to the pre-Tokugawa epoch, despite a relative lack of dynamism in monastic life, the sixteenth century saw a spectacular broadening in the lay support of both the Daitokuji and Myōshinji lines, which gradually came to dominate the Rinzai temple network. On the other hand, regardless of their relative success, temples associated with these lines evidently did not escape the consequences of the unification of the country following Ieyasu’s seizure of power in 1600. Among the many changes that particularly marked the Rinzai milieu almost from the beginning of the Tokugawa, a few are especially important for delineating the backdrop against which its premodern transformation took place.

Three Events That Forced Innovation

Tightening the Grip on Buddhist Schools

The first series of events is closely associated with institutional history. Shortly after the beginning of his reign, Ieyasu issued several official ordinances (*hatto*) meant to secure firmer control over Buddhist temples, which were expanded under the rule of his successor, Hidetada. This set of regulations, known as

the ordinances of the Keichō (1596–1615) and Genna (1615–1623) eras, are thought to reveal in particular the influence of Ishin Sūden (1569–1633) on Ieyasu and his son. Sūden, a Rinzai priest from the Nanzenji Branch who acted as the personal secretary for the first three Tokugawa shōguns, has often been depicted as the “*éminence grise*” of the Bakufu.⁶⁴ Although Ieyasu had formally retired, beginning in 1605 he was still assuming the control of the government, and it is a fact that Sūden was employed by Ieyasu in 1608, first to handle diplomatic correspondence. From 1610, Sūden began to arbitrate religious affairs, soon gaining the collaboration of Itakura Katsushige (1545–1624), who also held various key positions, such as Governor of Kyoto (*Kyōto shoshidai*). After Sūden’s death, the Bakufu resolved to nominate in 1635 a specialized Magistrate of Temples and Shrines (*jisha bugyō*), a move intended to control clerical intrigue.⁶⁵ These developments during the early Tokugawa show one side of the intertwining of Buddhism and politics, which was systematized in the following decades. Other events, overlapping the borders of the emerging Japanese “nation,” also played a decisive role in shaping the features of Zen schools.

Emergence of the Ōbaku Lineage

The second aspect to consider is the shock associated with the coming to Japan of Chinese monks who claimed to represent the authentic Rinzai tradition. Following the fall of the Ming dynasty in 1644, and the gradual consolidation of power by the new Manchu rulers, a considerable congregation of Chinese clerics chose to emigrate to Japan. In the first wave of newcomers to Nagasaki in 1651 were several priests such as Tao-che Ch’ao-yüan (1602–1662, J. Dōja Chōgen). Tao-che left lasting traces in Japan by certifying the awakening of Bankei Yōtaku (1622–1693) and exerting influence on other Sōtō and Rinzai reformers.⁶⁶ These priests could benefit from the support of the already well-established Chinese community, with figures who had settled in Japan before the collapse of the Ming dynasty. I-jan Hsing-jung (1601–1668, J. Itsunen Shōyū),⁶⁷ who came to Nagasaki in 1641 as a merchant and took the tonsure three years later, was particularly instrumental in welcoming his fellow countrymen. He is also credited with sending repeated invitations to Yin-yüan Lung-ch’i (1592–1673, J. Ingen Ryūki) and convincing him to make the journey to Japan in 1654.

Different speculations concerning the motivation that led Yin-yüan to accept the invitation have been formulated, but it is clear that the political dimension played a decisive role. Among those who resisted the Manchus and militated for restoring the Ming, the activity of Cheng Ch’eng-kung (1624–1662, known as Kuo-hsing-yeh by his peers and as Coxinga by the Dutch) is well appreciated, but his connection with Yin-yüan has not yet received the attention it deserves. Born Chinese with a Japanese mother, Cheng combined a

flourishing shipping business with piracy, and in 1661 he succeeded in ousting the Dutch from Taiwan. His death the following year prevented him from realizing his dream of retaking the Chinese continent and marked the end of the resistance against the Manchus. A point that is most interesting for the history of Japanese Buddhism is that Cheng provided the ship that brought Yin-yüan to Nagasaki. It seems that Cheng hoped that Yin-yüan would convince the Bakufu to offer military assistance to his troops.⁶⁸

Whatever the complicated military and political circumstances that had brought Yin-yüan to Japanese soil, the religious consequences of his arrival were enormous. Especially since the opening of Manpukuji in 1663, the very presence of Ōbaku monks, who considered themselves exemplars of the authentic Rinzai tradition, represented an unprecedented challenge to the existing Japanese Rinzai lineages. Although an incentive toward reforms had been emerging since the beginning of the seventeenth century, especially within the Myōshinji branch, the growing popularity of Ōbaku turned it into an emergency. One of the most conspicuous aspects of these interactions can be seen at the level of monastic regulations. The 1672 publication of the *Ōbaku Codes* (*Ōbaku shingi*)⁶⁹ led a few years later to a reaction from Myōshinji, in the form of a new set of regulations composed by Mujaku Dōchū (1653–1745), the *Shōsōrin ryakushingi*, which appeared at the beginning of 1685 and is still used as the basis of monastic conduct.⁷⁰ Areas where the influence of—or the reaction to—Ōbaku left an imprint on Japanese Buddhism are manifold, and its impact even reached the fields of Japanese cultural techniques, such as printing and painting. Regarding the way kōans were treated by Ōbaku teachers, no explicit information remains that allow us to distinguish the extent of differences with the Japanese Rinzai tradition. What is known is that an important change took place around the time of Ryōchū Nyoryū (1793–1868), who was appointed thirty-third abbot of Manpukuji in 1851. Ryōchū, though formally belonging to the Ōbaku lineage, was actually a product of Hakuin's line, having received his certification from Takujū Kosen (1760–1833).⁷¹ Since then, it appears, kōan practice at Manpukuji has retained some of its typical Ōbaku flavor while being modeled mostly on its Rinzai equivalent.⁷²

Manpukuji was, however, not the only source of dissemination of this new transplant of Chinese Buddhism. Nagasaki retained a prominent role in exchanges with the continent, while other areas in the Kyūshū region became important centers marked by the Ōbaku style. In this regard, the close relationship unfolding between Tao-che Ch'ao-yüan and Kengan Zen'etsu (1618–1697)⁷³ had enduring consequences. Kengan was later the teacher of Kogetsu Zenzai (1667–1751), a Rinzai priest whose influence spread throughout the western half of Japan. This flowering of a new blend of Rinzai teachings in the Kyūshū area had further consequences for the modern evolution of this school when the line of Kogetsu in the West commingled with the line of Hakuin in the East, especially after the demise of Kogetsu.

Partial Fusion of Kogetsu's and Hakuin's Lines

The development of an Ōbaku-influenced current that later merged with the still marginal group of Myōshinji monks following Hakuin is the third major event to consider before we turn to the subject of reforms attributed to Hakuin. Hakuin himself consulted the venerable Ōbaku teacher Egoku Dōmyō (1632–1721) at a critical phase in his practice. The meeting of the 29-year-old Hakuin with Egoku, who was already 82, represents a crucial event in Hakuin's biography which has not yet received the attention it deserves.⁷⁴

Conversely, once Hakuin had gained some degree of recognition, priests from other schools, including Ōbaku, came to seek his guidance. An outstanding example is Kakushū Jōchō (1711–1790), who in 1786 became the twenty-second abbot of Manpukuji. He first consulted Hakuin in 1749 to resolve doubts he had concerning the teaching of “five positions” (*goi*) and subsequently contributed to introducing Hakuin's style into the Ōbaku lineage.⁷⁵ His role was pivotal in that he succeeded the last Chinese abbot of Manpukuji, Tach'eng Chao-han (1709–1784, J. Daijō Shōkan) and his nomination marked a shift in the policy of the Bakufu, which seized the occasion to restrict the abbacy to Japanese priests.⁷⁶ Hakuin also had acquaintances among Sōtō priests, and in the same year that Kakushū Jōchō consulted him, Hakuin also met, for example, the young Genrō Ōryū (1720–1813).⁷⁷ Genrō is known for his *Tetteki tōsui* (*The Iron Flute Blown Upside Down*), a kōan collection edited by his disciple Fūgai Honkō (1779–1847), who also added his own capping phrases (*jakugo*).⁷⁸

Thus a wide conjunction of circumstances converged in the direction of reforms well before the rise of Hakuin to the status of a “reformer.” As to the particular figure of Hakuin, the movement he came to represent embodies dynamics that included Ōbaku influence and later incorporated the flood of monks coming from the line of Kogetsu.⁷⁹ These are some of the Buddhist factors that marked the movement led by Hakuin. In the next section we will see that Hakuin's personal interests extended beyond the Buddhist sphere.

Somatic Implications of Kōan Practice

We have already noted that kōan practice takes its significance from a specific context involving the encounter between teacher and disciple. Private consultations generally take place daily, or even more frequently during the intensive periods dedicated exclusively to *zazen*⁸⁰ known as *sesshin*. For practitioners residing in a temple or a monastery the everyday activities also include manual labor (*samu*), chanting or reading sūtras (*kankin*), in addition to *zazen* and sometimes the ritual begging for alms outside the monastic compound (*taku-hatsu*). Ideally the mind remains focused on the kōan while these activities are being carried out, in the manner described above by Ta-hui and Hakuin in their respective treatment of “[meditative] work.”

But how does it happen in concrete terms? This facet of practice is related partly to the perception of the mind-body that appears to have been widespread in the Buddhist milieu, and in Japanese society at large.⁸¹ Despite the gradual adoption of Western medical science, illustrated by the first human corpse dissection performed in 1754 by Yamawaki Tōyō (1705–1762) and his assistants, or the general anesthesia of a patient in 1805 by Hanaoka Seishū (1760–1835), learning about the body, especially before the eighteenth century, obviously was informed by Chinese medicine. As is well known, the pivotal concept of Chinese medicine is the idea of “vital energy” (*ch'i*, *J. ki*), circulating within the soma and in the outside world. This perception of the person not only in terms of a body-mind, but as an entity participating in a sphere of vital energy extending beyond the boundaries of an isolated “body,” proves to be indispensable for understanding the legacy of meditation schools.

Now how does this concept apply to scrutinizing *kōans*? The technical term used today for “handling a *kōan*” is the compound *nentei*, which often appears in Chinese sources with the sense of “raising [a problem].”⁸² The relationship between this compound and the use of *kung-an* already emerges in the *Wu-chia cheng-tsung-tsan* (*Hymns to the Authentic Principle in the Five Schools*), a text completed in 1254. In its section on Mi-an Hsien-chieh (1118–1186) this anthology relates how Mi-an one day “raised the case of the old lady burning the hermitage,⁸³ and said: ‘In the monastery we are lacking people who handle (*nien-t’i*) this *kung-an*.’ ”⁸⁴

In the Japanese context, the works of Hakuin contain at least one clear example where the author mentions “handling the word *mu* of Chao-chou.”⁸⁵ Handling a *kōan*, however, does not imply simply mobilizing the mind. Hakuin stresses that it involves the whole person:

Straighten your spine and adjust your body evenly. Begin by contemplating the count of your breaths [*susokkan*]. Among the innumerable *samādhis* this is the unsurpassable one. Having filled your lower-abdomen [*tanden*] with vital energy [*ki*], take one *kōan*. [Thus,] it is essential to cut the very root of life.⁸⁶

The sequence given here is not arbitrary, the successive adjusting of the body, breath, and mind is one of the features shared by all Japanese Zen schools and is also fundamental to the Chinese tradition.⁸⁷ What appears original here is Hakuin’s explicit use of the terms *tanden* (center of energy in the lower-abdomen) and *ki* (vital energy), a vocabulary closely associated with that in Taoist practices and Chinese medicine before becoming part of the general Chinese worldview. The other striking characteristic of this text is its mention of *susokkan* (contemplating breath-counts). Concerning the use of such concepts, Hakuin’s taste for Taoist classics is acknowledged in most of his writings. He liked, for example, to quote from the *Su-wēn* (*Simple Questions*),⁸⁸ saying that when the sage is “composed and satisfied in nothingness, true vital energy follows him; innate nature and spiritual force being preserved within,

from where could illness come?"⁸⁹ This peculiarity in his discourse reflects his personal history, which was marked by serious illnesses, but also represents an attempt to clarify the fundamentals of Rinzai practice in a way that would appeal to a broader audience than the traditional elite. While Taoist concepts had only reluctantly been used by Chinese Buddhists, it is conceivable that by Hakuin's time they had gained a new prestige, especially after exchange with China became restricted. In any event, Hakuin chose to use a literary artifice to transmit Taoist inklings about health, breathing, and the care of vital energy, by borrowing the enigmatic character of a hermit called Hakuyūshi.

The surname of Hakuyūshi designated the contemporary figure of Ishikawa Jishun (1646–1709), a disciple of the poet Ishikawa Jōzan (1583–1672). Hakuin first pretends to have met Hakuyūshi through the latter's commentary on Hanshan's poems, the *Kanzanshi sendai kimon*, published in 1746.⁹⁰ However, the narration of his encounter with Hakuyūshi is definitely fiction, although from Hakuin's perspective there seems to be no intent to deceive his readers. With his customary sense of humor, he might have assumed that the message was clear enough when he wrote that Hakuyūshi was more than 180 or 240 years old.⁹¹ Furthermore, the title of the work *Yasenkanna*, in which he expanded this story, probably constitutes an allusion to the "night boat of Shirakawa" (*Shirakawa yobune*), a synonym for talking knowingly about nonexistent matters.⁹² Finally, Hakuin explicitly confesses his stratagem in the postface to *Yasenkanna*, dated 1757, saying that this work "has not been *set up* (*mōkuru*) for those gifted persons who have already realized [the essential] in one hammer stroke."⁹³

In that quotation Hakuin suggests that *susokkan* is the foundation upon which practitioners should handle their kōan. This instruction, still followed in contemporary practice, aims primarily at circumventing the tendency to tackle the kōan through analytical thinking.⁹⁴ Systematic counting of exhalations from one to ten first helps the mind focus on a bodily function and remain occupied by devoting some energy to sustaining the uninterrupted succession of numbers. It also serves to activate the circulation of vital energy that will in turn sustain the dynamic of the posture, until the distinction between the consciousness that is counting and the breaths that are counted fades away. Once the basic technique⁹⁵ of *susokkan* has been mastered to a certain extent, the practitioner is usually given a kōan, often with the recommendation to work on the kōan "with the belly, and not with the head," applying what has been learned through *susokkan*. This might appear strange to readers unfamiliar with the technique, but the handling of a kōan (*nen-tei*) in the front of one's consciousness with the support of vital energy originating from the *tanden* is usually taken for granted in the Japanese monastic context. One could say that the circulation of energy⁹⁶ activated by the bellows of breathing takes over from discursive consciousness and allows one to maintain a certain degree of awareness of the kōan while being engaged, for instance, in manual labor.

For Hakuin, promoting this practice as “the unsurpassable samādhi” also meant returning to the very roots of Indian Buddhism. One of the sources of inspiration Hakuin acknowledges in his writings is Chih-i (538–597) and his main treatises on meditation,⁹⁷ but, like many reformers, Hakuin also strove to return to the foundations of the Buddhist tradition to reinvigorate his own school. His frequent mention of the Āgamas indicates that he was looking at early sources to find a way to rejuvenate Rinzai teachings.⁹⁸ The correlation of Hakuin’s own sermons with the Āgamas, however, often remains ill defined.⁹⁹ Additionally, despite the emphasis Hakuin put on *susokkan*, he did not explicitly formulate how this related to the early Buddhist practice of *ānāpāna-sati* (S. *ānāpāna-smṛti*), a task modern interpreters have undertaken.¹⁰⁰ Dating from the Tokugawa period, the only clear attempt to enlarge the practice of *susokkan* to a pan-Buddhist dimension including Indian sources seems to be the voluminous *Commentary of the Ch’an-ching* by Tōrei.¹⁰¹ In this work Tōrei argues that the kōan practice advocated in his Rinzai lineage is an adequate adaptation of practices such as the contemplation of the breath or the contemplation of the horrible (*aśubhā-bhāvanā*, J. *fujōkan*, a practice involving visualization of the different stages of the decomposition of a corpse), which were still widespread at the time of Hui-yüan (334–416), the author of the preface to the *Ch’an-ching*.

The Educational Dimension

Let us now make one last digression from the Zen Buddhist context to examine briefly some issues related to kōans from the perspective of the science of education. Caleb Gattegno (1911–1988), who began his career as a mathematician, apparently is still not a well-known educator in the West, where the works of Piaget or Montessori are more commonly discussed. What makes Gattegno’s contribution relevant to our survey is the cardinal importance he accorded to awareness. The word “awareness” can have any of several meanings, but Gattegno uses it in an original way to indicate the smallest unit of measurement for learning—each “discovery” made by the learner (in his French writings he uses the phrase *prise de conscience*). In this sense, our daily functioning could hardly take place without repeated “awareness.”¹⁰² Consider the following two lines:

$$4 + 3 \times 6 = 42$$

$$4 + 3 \times 6 = 22.$$

A first reading of these formulas might make us feel uneasy until we realized that something was missing: a set of parentheses would resolve the problem! This example shows a casual awareness, which results from the resolution of a

problem that might have been set up deliberately so that beginners in mathematics could understand the usefulness of parentheses.¹⁰³ Yet an awareness can also open onto a totally new apprehension of reality, or even change the orientation of one's life. Gattegno stresses in particular the importance of "awareness becoming aware of itself"¹⁰⁴ as a field of study.

Gattegno's discoveries about how learning takes place resulted partly from his observation of early childhood and from his study of mechanisms involved in the acquisition of language. Careful investigation of how consciousness apprehends the unknown led him to formulate a comprehensive approach to teaching, which rejects purely theoretical constructs and always returns to the question, "How does it work in the learner's mind?" Gattegno expresses this perspective by saying that for teaching to become realistic, it has to be subordinated to learning.¹⁰⁵ Educators must use their skills to mobilize the presence of their students here and now, the aim always being to "force awareness." This is how Gattegno envisions this exigency:

Awareness is neither automatic nor constant. In fact, most people go through life only aware of a very small fraction of what could have struck them had they been uniformly and constantly watchful. There are, therefore, two meanings to "forcing awareness." One is concerned with what we do to ourselves, and the other with what can be done to us so that we become aware of what has escaped us, or might escape us.¹⁰⁶

Moreover, Gattegno came to the meaningful conclusion that "education of awareness is the only possible and the only worthwhile education."¹⁰⁷

This succinct picture of Gattegno's approach, also called the Silent Way, might sound familiar to readers acquainted with texts on Zen teachings. Yet I am not interested in establishing some shallow comparison, and Gattegno himself was careful "neither to claim any affiliation to a way of thinking with a venerable past, nor to enhance the Silent Way in a setting which brought Zen to life a long time ago."¹⁰⁸

The purpose in mentioning Gattegno's work is to invite reflection on the role of "awareness" in the function of kōans, an avenue that seems more promising than the frequently emphasized "experience."¹⁰⁹ As was asserted before, kōans direct students to work on different problems, although the contents are never stated explicitly beforehand, and they can thus be considered elaborate pedagogical tools.¹¹⁰ To express this more traditionally, kōans represent expedient means (*upāya*). One of their few common premises is that every problem, even the worst existential agony, carries its own solution. This is additionally supported by the basic Buddhist assumption of impermanence. Gattegno would simply say "there is always an entry into the problem."

Concerning the contents of the problem epitomized by a kōan, one might say that it carries both a universal and a personal dimension. The personal

dimension can be described in terms of projections by the person, who is hindered by her own history or issues that she might be facing at the time she receives a kōan. The universal dimension, although sometimes tinged with cultural premises, implies that there is a rationale behind the problem and that the kōan is not a nonsensical question devised to befuddle the student. Even though every *kenge* is “original,” since it bursts from an awareness reached through each disciple’s struggle, the amazing fact is that everyone finally falls upon a common truth, which could otherwise hardly be acknowledged by the teacher. When this happens, the teacher sometimes indulges in explaining how the new awareness that has just occurred and has been demonstrated in front of him relates with other elements.

An example should help make this point clearer. *The Sayings of Lin-chi* contains a popular passage describing four types of circumstances, known as “the four measures” (C. *ssu-liao-chien*, J. *shiryōken*). This teaching depicts distinctive situations in which subject (the practitioner) and object¹¹¹ (his environment, or the other party) are placed in different relationships:

- Sometimes one withdraws the person but does not withdraw the object.
- Sometimes one withdraws the object but does not withdraw the person.
- Sometimes one withdraws both the person and the object.
- Sometimes one withdraws neither the person nor the object.¹¹²

The Chinese verb “*to*,” translated here as “to withdraw,” refers to the negation or absence of negation of the protagonists in this strategical tetralemma.

Imagine that one evening you are coming home and you find a tiger crouched on your doorstep. You can choose to retreat carefully. Another choice might be to produce an unshakable confidence and ignore the tiger. The third situation might correspond to both of you vanishing, probably in this case as a result of surprise or terror. The last option here would amount to finding a *modus vivendi*, perhaps by succeeding in taming the tiger, so that your mutual presence would be affirmed. Besides its function as a Buddhist instructional device, this fourfold arrangement can be seen in light of the science of education as a sample of decisions the educator has to make when facing the problem of how to help students reach an awareness.

In the kōan curriculum followed by most Japanese Rinzai practitioners, these “four measures” are dealt with when the student is instructed to study key passages of *The Sayings of Lin-chi*. What is interesting from the pedagogical perspective is that an identical scheme had already been used in the peripheral cases assigned since the early stage of kōan study. In other words, enacting situations corresponding to the above four measures foreshadows the later understanding of this section of Lin-chi’s teachings. Such an architecture of the sequence in which kōans are given implies a long-range intent, apparently refined through centuries of trial and error in instructing students. Although the

actual order followed in giving kōans varies according to lineages or to different individuals in the same lineage, a fundamental common thread is the emphasis on “going beyond” (*kōjō*) and never resting on an awareness, even if one is left breathless by its contents.

Going Beyond: The Significance of “Kōjō”

Aside from its implications in scholastic Buddhism, the Chinese word *hsiang-shang* (J. *kōjō*) is a colloquial expression that was used around the T’ang dynasty, chiefly in Ch’an recorded sayings, with the meaning of “upward.”¹¹³ Following the later evolution of Ch’an lineages, and their transmission to Japan, this expression became a technical term associated with the advanced stages of practice. It is difficult to demarcate a precise timing for this shift in meaning, but a first step in this direction apparently had already been taken at the time of the Kamakura pioneers.

The next stage in the evolution of the understanding of *kōjō* coincides with the Tokugawa Rinzai transformations, since Hakuin and his disciples continually underlined the need to master this phase of practice. For example, Zenso Tenkei (n.d.) writes in a preface to Hakuin’s work *Sokkōroku kaienfusetsu* (*Introduction to the Sayings of Hsü-t’ang*) dated 1743: “After penetrating unexpectedly the [arcane] of the activity in favor of people [taught by his teacher] Shōju Rōnin, [Hakuin] always used the ironhanded method of going beyond when instructing others.”¹¹⁴

Likewise, Tōrei Enji in his major work, *Shūmon mujintōron* (*Treatise on the Inexhaustible Lamp of Our Lineage*),¹¹⁵ gives a detailed exposition of what is meant by “going beyond.” The ten chapters of this treatise can be divided into three parts.¹¹⁶ The first part consists of the first four chapters. Chapters 1 to 3 constitute a kind of “preparation” for the fourth chapter on “true realization.” This chapter brings about a turn, in the sense that awakening, which was first envisioned as a goal to reach, becomes manifest once the practitioner has overcome this major change of perspective. This transformation is described by the traditional metaphor of “great death”:

When the crucial moment (*jisetsu*) comes, everything crumbles at once: You will know what it looks like. This is what is called “Dropping the hands hanging from the cliff, and coming back to life after having expired.”¹¹⁷

After recounting the joy associated with this event, Tōrei warns against satisfaction that might impede further progress:

You, practitioners, don’t discontinue [your inquiry] by stagnating in the unique principle of *kenshō*!¹¹⁸

Far from being the terminus, this phase marks for Tōrei the beginning of real practice, actually “crossing the threshold” (*nyūmon*). Interestingly, Tōrei does not present the necessity of surpassing the first achievements of practice as being unique to Zen teachings. He quotes extensively from the sūtras to show that Buddhist classics imply a similar requirement. With this intent, Tōrei refers twice to the simile from the *Lotus Sūtra* in which the Buddha urges his traveling companions to advance further:

The place [where lies] the treasure is at close hand; do not linger in the magic city [*kejō*]¹¹⁹

Tōrei basically advocated the oneness or inseparability of Buddhist canonical teachings and the meditative approach (*kyōzen itchi*).¹²⁰ He advised, for instance, the regular reading of sūtras and canonical commentaries and comparing their teachings with one’s own comprehension. He adds: “If there are discrepancies with the sūtras and commentaries, [it signifies that] your comprehension is not only biased and dried up, but also shallow and sketchy!”¹²¹

Yet Tōrei had a precise idea about what made his school original. There are several passages in his treatise in which he enunciates this originality by identifying it with “going beyond.”¹²² In the second part of Tōrei’s treatise, chapters 5 to 9, each chapter presents a different theme, but the idea of “going beyond” stands as their common denominator, summed up by chapter 6, which is entitled “Going Beyond.” In contrast to the T’ang Chinese context, where this expression was used as an adverb or a preposition, by Tōrei’s time the word *kōjō* had become substantivized, as is also indicated by nominal variants such as the ironic saying “the tiny matter of going beyond” (*kōjō no shashi*), or the more suggestive “decisive move of going beyond” (*kōjō no ichi-jakusu*).¹²³ To make this point clearer, Tōrei even resorted to formulating his own new “doctrinal classification” (*hankyō*), inspired by the *Treatise of the Ten [Stations of the] Heart (Jūjūshinron)* by Kūkai (774–835),¹²⁴ and by the model found in Tendai doctrinal classifications. Not surprisingly, Tōrei places Zen teachings at the top of his hierarchy, just above the esoteric teachings characterized by “the heart of hidden splendor” (*himitsu shōgonshin*), and he qualifies the Zen superiority by its explicit formulation of “going beyond” (*kōjō*).¹²⁵ The third part of Tōrei’s treatise consists mainly of his discussion of the “diffusion” of the essential teachings beyond the borders of Buddhist sects. In an innovative manner, he reviews religions of which he was aware—Shintō, Confucianism, and Taoism—with a special emphasis on Shintō, which he knew best through personal acquaintance.¹²⁶

This summary description of Tōrei’s major work should have suggested an unambiguous picture of his principal theme: “going beyond” as the pivotal feature of Rinzai practice and doctrine. In comparison, he regarded *kenshō* as

not the single property of Zen-related lineages but rather belonging to all Buddhist schools and even shared by non-Buddhist religions:

In the teachings of the *kami*, of Confucius, or of Lao Tzu, it is by realizing first *kenshō* that one obtains to achieve [one's true nature], and it is by deepening all aspects of the Buddhist Dharma that one can say that [one's true nature becomes] fully actualized.¹²⁷ . . . Therefore, it is not only our school that founds itself on *kenshō*, [since] all the essential principles of other schools necessarily are founded on *kenshō*.¹²⁸

This perspective leaves us with a picture of Rinzai practice significantly different from that presented in most published accounts aimed at popularizing Zen teachings. Tōrei quickly shifts emphasis from the importance given to a first breakthrough to a heavier stress on the need to go further. This dimension, also generically known as “post-awakening practice” (*gogo no shugyō*), corresponds to an essential part of the kōan curriculum, not to say its main component. I used Tōrei's formulation of this dimension, because it is often more straightforward than the writings of his teacher Hakuin, but there is no doubt both of them laid emphasis on the same point. For instance, in a letter to his lay disciple, the doctor Ishii Gentoku (1671–1751), Hakuin describes the state of someone who has gone through a first breakthrough but still fails to gain real autonomy in regard to differentiations and activity:

When getting to the great matter of going beyond [taught by] the patriarchs, it is as if he were deaf or mute.¹²⁹

Here an objection might arise. As those conversant with the few publications introducing the Japanese “kōan system” know, their authors assert that the reorganization of the kōan curriculum attributed to Hakuin involves the extension of the three aforementioned categories (*richi*, *kikan*, and *kōjō*) into five successive types of kōans: *hosshin* (dharmakāya), *kikan* (functioning), *gossen* (verbal expressions), *nantō* (difficult to penetrate), and *kōjō* (going beyond).¹³⁰ These reports accurately describe trends that are used in most current monastic lineages, but their assumption of a perfect identity between kōan practice at the time of Hakuin and the *sanzen* as it is performed today is not supported by any clear evidence. In other words, they take for granted that the Rinzai tradition fundamentally has not been altered for three centuries.

Of course the existence of a continuity in this tradition is evident, but oversimplifications that neglect the historical context are insufficient. Given the seal of secrecy, which prevents disclosure of the contents of the dialogue taking place in the abbot's room, textual evidence cannot be the only criterion. It is nevertheless surprising to notice that no text by Hakuin or his direct disciples

mentions five categories of *kōan* that should be practiced in sequence. While the necessity of realizing one's true nature (*kenshō*) indeed is emphasized in Hakuin's writings, this emphasis is surpassed by the frequency of reiterated exhortations not to be satisfied by such realization. The *kōans* "difficult to penetrate" are, for example, cited as efficient tools for avoiding this danger of stagnation. In *Sokkōroku kaien fusetsu* Hakuin advises his students: "Individuals of strong resolve, you must fiercely mobilize your energy and see your nature once. As soon as you realize an unequivocal *kenshō*, drop it and resolve [this matter] by practice on the cases difficult to penetrate."¹³¹ According to this passage, *kenshō* (corresponding to *hosshin* *kōans* in the above categories) would appear to be directly followed by the *nantō* *kōans*.

Concerning the fact that neither Hakuin's nor his direct disciples' works mention an explicit sequence of *kōans*, two rationales could be offered to explain this silence. First, given the accent on oral transmission and direct guidance from teacher to disciple, Hakuin, even if he did actually use these categories to teach disciples, might have chosen not to commit such a rigid pattern to paper, since doing so could impede the optimal adaptation to individuals and circumstances. If written records of a particular sequence of *kōan* existed, they were noted down individually and these notes were not intended for public disclosure. However, such information about Hakuin's practices and those of his direct disciples has not been divulged yet, if it exists. Nevertheless, the idea commonly held by living teachers, attributing the paternity of these transformations to Hakuin, cannot be entirely discarded either, since results from information transmitted by the oral tradition.¹³²

Second, successors of Hakuin may have devised this sequence of *kōans*, drawing on their master's teachings. Here again, the lack of documents precludes a definite conclusion. Proceeding by negative elimination, it is possible to ascertain that nothing close to a "system" appears in Tōrei's writings. As was mentioned before, his central treatise does describe in detail the stages on the path of cultivation but carefully avoids delineating a rigid structure of the way *kōans* should be used. The date of publication of Tōrei's treatise, 1800, therefore allows us to contend that at least until the end of the eighteenth century Rinzai teachers avoided formulating anything resembling a system with a definite set of *kōans*. They presumably resorted to some types of blueprints for their own purposes, but the danger of falling into stereotyped patterns of teaching apparently prevented them from leaving public traces of these resources.

A prominent matter of concern, which goes beyond the scope of this chapter, is the extent of transformations that occurred in the Rinzai clergy during the last 70 years of the Tokugawa period and after the Meiji Restoration.¹³³ One might wonder in particular to what extent the crucial concept of "going beyond" survived the Meiji transition. Although this question remains open,

the contemporary voice of Kajitani Sōnin Rōshi (1914–1995) suggests some degree of continuity in that regard, since he maintained that the aim of the whole kōan “system” is to avoid stopping halfway by being satisfied with one’s accomplishments—in other words, to go beyond.¹³⁴

Conclusion

The diverse facets of kōan practice described here have presented a complex picture which challenges the common image of a homogeneous Rinzai tradition. Considerable shifts in the interpretation of key terms should caution us to avoid quick generalizations and to refer always to a specific historical context, especially when referring to “kōans.” Areas in which the dynamics inherent to the various branches of the Rinzai sect interacted with political events, or with other schools, have indicated that the “reform movement” credited to Hakuin and his followers also must be situated in this broader context, which was generally inclined to direct and indirect interactions with the Ōbaku movement that were an important and often overlooked catalyst for change within Rinzai lineages.

Discussing the specific contribution of Hakuin and his followers in the Tokugawa transformation of Rinzai teachings necessarily involves taking into account the angle of “somatic implications.” The abundant background from which Hakuin derived his inspiration suggests a much wider intellectual profile than what is usually credited to Tokugawa Buddhist thinkers. The dynamism demonstrated by Hakuin and his disciples in their systematic “takeover” of most Japanese Rinzai monasteries within a few decades presumably is not unrelated to the insistence they placed on breathing and vital energy and their rejection of the use of kōans as a literary exercise.

A brief excursion into the field of education has allowed us to stand back from the purely Buddhist context for a moment and suggested that we might examine the function of kōans from the perspective of “awareness” (in the sense defined by Gattegno). This concept furnishes a tool for envisioning the transformations of consciousness accompanying practice while avoiding the pitfalls associated with the inevitable discourse on “Zen experience.” In that regard, the above indications should also have provided some evidence that the idea of “a Rinzai emphasis on *satori* as a once-and-for-all goal to be reached in the future,” still often heard, is a groundless misconception. Cultivation pursued in this tradition, at least as it is presented by its major Tokugawa proponents, intends precisely the opposite: constantly going beyond a first awareness of nonduality and aiming at integrating this insight into daily life until no trace of transient exalted states remains.

NOTES

1. I am thinking in particular of publications inspired by postmodern approaches and of those touched by the so-called “Critical Buddhism” current. Reflections on method applied to Buddhist studies in general can be found in particular in Ruegg (1995) and Gomez (1995), while the state of the field concerning Ch’an studies is reviewed in Foulk (1993a). Concerning “Critical Buddhism” and its reception by Japanese and Western scholars, see the volume edited by Hubbard and Swanson (1997). A reaction against reductionist interpretations is found in Kirchner (1996).

2. I shall use the word “awakening” rather than “enlightenment,” because it is a more felicitous rendering of the Sanskrit *bodhi*. “Enlightenment” also seems to suggest a stronger contrast between darkness and light than the idea of sliding naturally from sleep to wakefulness.

3. This represents the outcome of a long process beginning in the Kamakura period. Tokugawa developments are discussed in Mohr (1994).

4. Statistical data on the number of temples, priests, and believers for each branch or each school can be found in the yearly publication *Shūkyō nenkan*, edited by the Bunkachō. Its 1995 (Heisei 7) edition describes the Zen schools on pp. 72–73, and its edited translation forms appendix C in Mohr (1997, pp. 767–774).

5. ZGD, p. 896c–d.

6. This text has been edited by Nakamura Sōichi (1987). For the hypothesis of a relation between Tetsumon Dōju’s work and Ryōkan’s redaction of the *Hokkesan*, see Yanagida (1989, p. 105).

7. Yanagida (1989, p. 263).

8. Such an approach has been successfully followed in Ueda (1983) and Hori (1994).

9. I shall in particular mention three kōan collections published by Akizuki Ryōmin: *Gasenshū* (Collection of Tiles and Keepnets), anonymous (Akizuki 1979, pp. 259–324); “Ekkei—Kasan ka shitsunai kōan taikai” (“The Kōan System in the Sanzen Room of the Ekkei-Kasan Lineage”), based on a manuscript list of kōans (*anken*) in the line of Kasan Genku (Suga 1838–1917), (Akizuki 1987, pp. 257–332), and “Hakuin ka kōan Inzan Bizen ha: Shitsunai issantō” (Kōan under Hakuin, the Bizen Branch in Inzan’s Lineage), (Akizuki 1986). I will not mention the more famous anonymous *Gen-dai sōjizen hyōron* (*Criticism of Today’s Mock Zen*) or its English translation by Yoel Hoffmann, which not only are full of inaccuracies but also could be harmful to inexperienced practitioners. The charges found in this book, first published in 1916, mostly lack justification and seem to be the product of an embittered monk who sought revenge for his negative experience. Rikugawa Taiun (1886–1966) has done justice to this polemic text in his *Shinzenron* (About Authentic Zen, posthumous work published in 1968), see pp. 225–292.

10. In several areas of the history of thought, such as that of sectarian consciousness, we cannot deny the existence of gaps between patterns emerging during the Tokugawa period and today’s perception of the same categories. The contents of kōan practice, however, are often viewed by the clergy as a product of the tradition’s continuity, a claim that adds significance to fieldwork. For example, Thomas Kirchner, a Rinzai monk, claims that “For better and for worse, the methods and goals of Zen teaching have remained largely the same as they were in the Tokugawa period—the same Inzan and Takujū teaching lines continue, the same kōan systems are used, and the same basic texts and interpretations shape the direction of monastic training” (Kirchner 1996, p. 49). Although *sanzen* practice suggests a reasonable amount of continuity, it can also

be examined from the perspective of the slight mutations that necessarily followed the post-Hakuin evolution of the Rinzai school. In my opinion, positing a working hypothesis that circumspectly challenges this basic assumption of continuity might better encourage research centered on what happened between the eighteenth century and today.

11. To take just one example, the *Longman Dictionary of the English Language* (1991 edition) gives the following definition of “koan” (p. 878): “A paradox to be meditated on that is used to train Zen Buddhist monks to abandon reason and develop intuition in order to gain enlightenment [J. *kōan*, from *kō* public + *an* proposition].” This definition contains at least four inaccuracies: (1) The expressions used in *kōans* are not necessarily paradoxical; (2) this practice is not limited to monks, and many laypersons engage in it; (3) the goal of *kōans* is certainly not to “abandon reason,” and many texts warn against “irrational understanding” (*muri no e*); (4) the purpose of this practice is not only “to gain enlightenment” (it would be more precise to speak of rediscovering enlightenment) but, as will be emphasized in this chapter, to go beyond it. The dictionary’s explanation of the compound *kōan* by the simple combination of the two characters that compose it is also erroneous. On the accepted etymology, see the discussion later of *kung-fu chih an-tu*, or “case documents.”

12. The “monastic context” refers here to a place dedicated to practice, which might be an ordinary temple or a Zen center. Likewise it is not restricted to monks but obviously includes laypersons.

13. Technically the “inner state” expressed through each *kenge* is often depicted by the Buddhist term *kyōgai*. Its Sanskrit equivalent *gocara* first designated a pasture (for cows) before being used as a technical term for the “objects” that can be apprehended by consciousness, sometimes also translated as its “sphere” or “range” (Edgerton 1953, p. 215a). Within the Sino-Japanese context, it is often understood as alluding to the fact that such an inner state is the outgrowth of cultivation, differing from a mere transitory “state of mind” and rather carrying the quality of a “cultivated field.”

14. Consultation in the teacher’s room (*sanzen*) generally is divided into the usual individual consultation (*dokusan*), which is optional, and the consultation for all practitioners in turn (*sōsan*), which is compulsory and held on the first, fourth, and seven days of the intensive periods of meditation (*sesshin*).

15. Buswell (1992, p. 158). For the definition of *hwadu* (J. *watō*), as the “essential theme” or “critical phrase” of the *kōan*, see also Buswell (1992, pp. 150–151).

16. An exception would be the perspective of Hisamatsu Shin’ichi (1889–1980), who instructed his students to work on “the fundamental *kōan*” (*kisoteki kōan*).

17. The word *sassho* literally indicates an action that presses someone to react, which is used to test (*tamesu*) her understanding. To my knowledge this expression does not appear in Chinese sources. The commentary on case 28 in *Pi-yen lu* uses the close compound *ai-tsa-ch’u* (J. *aisatsu no tokoro*), meaning “hitting home” or “pressing hard” (T 48 no. 2003, p. 169a09; see the entry on *aisatsu* in Koga 1991, p. 5). In Japanese, since the word *aisatsu* already had the meaning of “a salutation” in the Tokugawa period, the compound *sassho* may have become necessary later (see for instance HZS, edited by Gotō, vol. 5, p. 53). One of the few written examples of the use of *sassho* in the sense of a “peripheral case” appears in a passage of *Zoku kinsei zenrin sōbōden*; it describes how Shinjō Sōsen (Kobata, then Sakagami [1842–1914] reached a breakthrough after hearing a bird singing at dawn. When he entered the consultation room of Gisan Zenrai (1802–1878), “[Gisan] gave him a sequence of peripheral cases, but Sōsen’s answers were just flowing” (Obata 1938, vol. 3, p. 334). The absence of this

compound in earlier sources, including HZS, suggests late origins. On the other hand, the verb *sasshite iwaku*, with the meaning of “say for testing,” frequently appears in HZS (for example in vol. 1, p. 58).

18. Iida (1943, pp. 23–26).

19. Akizuki (1986, no. 86, p. 170). The character used by Akizuki for *mizo* is a phonetic approximation (*ateji*). The proper compound is in the *Kokugo daijiten*, p. 2268e.

20. Akizuki (1987, no. 19, p. 263 and no. 22, p. 264).

21. HZS, vol. 1, p. 261. Based on this, one concrete formulation of the question asked to the student is “try to take out Mount Fuji from the second layer of a pocket-sized medicine case!” (*inrō no nijūme kara fujisan o dashite miyo*), found in Akizuki (1986, no. 94, p. 171).

22. Iriya (1973, pp. 200–202); Translation by Sasaki et al. (1971, p. 55).

23. T 47 no. 1988, pp. 547a12, 551c29, and 570c09. Two of these three passages are translated by App (1994, pp. 107 and 143).

24. Yanagida (1976, p. 459). This is the year Ennin (794–864) presented to the court his catalogue of texts brought back from China. It mentions the *Platform Sūtra* (T 55 no. 2167, p. 1083b07–b08) and constitutes safer evidence than the Tun-huang manuscripts, the dates of which are uncertain.

25. This passage appears in *Tun-wu yao-mēn* (*The Essential Gate to Immediate Awakening*), attributed to Ta-chu Hui-hai (n.d., a successor of Ma-tsu Tao-i). It is included in T 51 no. 2076, p. 443a20–a21; see also Hirano (1970, p. 186). A similar dialogue takes place earlier in the same text, T 51 no. 2076, p. 247c09–c12; Hirano (1970, p. 138).

26. This expression occurs several times in *Lin-chi lu*, T 47 no. 1985, pp. 497b01, 497c26, 498b23, 498b25, 498c04, and 502c15. It has been variously translated as “true insight” (Sasaki 1975), “true and proper understanding” (Watson 1993b), or “la vue juste” (Demiéville 1972).

27. Ueda, ed. (1996, p. 269).

28. T 51 no. 1998A, p. 886a27. This sentence also figures in the teachings of Hakuin, with a slight alteration, without mentioning the author (HZS vol. 2, p. 414).

29. Debates about whether the philosophy of intrinsic awakening (*hongaku shisō*) is or is not a Japanese innovation seem to have neglected an obvious bit of evidence: the Korean tradition. Since the Korean perspective on this question seems to be the same as its Japanese equivalent, speculation about the Japanese originality appears quite sketchy (see Buswell 1992, p. 152).

30. Commentary on the first case in *Wu-men kuan* (*Gate without Barriers*), T 48 no. 2005, p. 293a04–a05.

31. Buswell (1992, p. 158).

32. Translated in Miura (1965, pp. 4–7, and 1966, pp. 4–7).

33. A text completed in 1185, which is included in T 48 no. 2022. The passage suggesting “they quote the kung-ans of the ancients and request their disciples to appraise them” is a critique of such behavior, found on p. 1033b21–b22.

34. ZGD relies on the work of Mujaku Dōchū (1653–1745), who provides all main sources in his *Zenrin shōkisen* (*Zengaku sōsho* edition, pp. 606–607) and *Kattō-shū* (*Zengaku sōsho* edition, pp. 957–958).

35. HTC 113, p. 264b05–b10. See also the separate definitions of *kung-fu* and *an-tu* in Morohashi’s *Daikanwa jiten*, vol. 2, p. 40c–d no. 1452–652 and vol. 6, p. 328c no. 14762–57. For the compound *kung-fu*, Hucker proposes the more rigorist translations “Three Dukes” or “Ducal Establishment” (1995, p. 292b no. 3426).

36. MZ 60, p. 193a018–b02.
37. T 51 no. 2076, p. 251a15.
38. Kagamishima et al. (1972, p. 67).
39. Foulk even considers “entering the [abbot’s] room” in this context to represent a mere ceremony (1993b, pp. 181–182).
40. Kagamishima et al. (1972, p. 4).
41. Collcutt (1981, pp. 142–143).
42. This mention is found in T 48 no. 2025, p. 1154a06. For the date of completion of this text, I have followed Yanagida (1976, p. 501).
43. The birthdate of Wu-tsu Fa-yen is not known with certainty, but I have followed Ishii (1987, pp. 229 and 566).
44. The original is accessible in the edition included in the *Recorded Sayings of Ta-hui* (T 47 no. 1998A, pp. 916b–943a) and in the abridged version included in *Chih-yüeh lu* (HTC 143, pp. 676b–736). The former has been edited by Araki (1969a), and the latter has been partially translated by Cleary (1977).
45. HZS vol. 5, p. 111. See also Izuyama (1985, pp. 35 and 38, n. 6) and Yampolsky (1971, p. 33).
46. See for instance the *Recorded Sayings of Ta-hui* (T 47 no. 1998A, p. 868c22).
47. *Ta-hui shu* (T 47 no. 1998A, p. 918c21–c23; Araki 1969a, p. 25).
48. *Chu-ch’uang erb-pi* (The Second Volume of Writings by Chu-ch’uang [surname adopted by Yün-ch’i]), p. 64a of the Japanese woodblock edition of 1653 (Shōō 2), kept in the Sekisui Fund of the Zen Bunka Kenkyūsho at Hanazono University. This text is also included in the more comprehensive *Collection of Dharma [Sayings] by Yün-ch’i (Yün-ch’i fa-hui)*. Concerning this author see Araki (1969b and 1985), and Yü (1974 and 1981).
49. This story is found in Hakuin’s *Itsumadegusa* (HZS vol. 1, pp. 193–194 and 226) and *Yasenkana* (HZS vol. 5, p. 364), in Tōrei’s *Shūmon mujintōron* (T 81 no. 2575, p. 587c02; translation in Mohr 1997, p. 163), and in Reigen’s *Dharma Talks (Kaisan Reigen) oshō hōgo zatsushū*, HZS vol. 8, p. 53).
50. This is in particular the case of Tōrei, who reprinted in 1762 (Hōreki 12) the *Ch’an-kuan-ts’-e-chin (Exhortation to Proceed through the Ch’an Gates)*, a work by Yün-ch’i. He did so in memory of the inspiring effect this text had had on his master Hakuin. The postface by Tōrei contains a virulent critique of Yün-ch’i (T 48 no. 2024, p. 1109a20–c13).
51. See for example T 80 no. 2544, p. 20b17–b20 for Enni, and *Zenmon hōgoshū* vol. 2, p. 438 for Nanpo.
52. Chinese antecedents of the words *richi* and *kikan*, and the views of Musō Soseki (1275–1351) on this question, are discussed in Yanagida (1985, pp. 578–586). Haskel presents another facet of the early Japanese patterns of kōan study (1988, pp. 52–99).
53. The 24 transmissions of Zen lineages (*Zenshū nijūshi ryū*) include 10 branches founded by Japanese monks and 14 established by Chinese immigrants. They begin with Myōan Yōsai (1141–1215) returning to Japan in 1191 after his second trip to China and conclude with Tung-ling Yung-yü (J. Tōryō Eiyō 1285–1365), who arrived in 1351. This traditional list, which is far from exhaustive, was compiled at the beginning of the Tokugawa. It is reproduced in ZGD, p. 689b.
54. Iriya (1985). Further comments on this in Mohr (1997, n. 928).
55. This clue is supported by the appendix to the sayings of Hsü-t’ang, which bears the signature of Sōtaku (T 47 no. 2000, p. 1062a10).

56. Yanagida has given a clear account of this encounter within the tense context of the Kamakura period, marked by the threat of a Mongol invasion and the rise of Nichiren nationalism (Yanagida 1959).

57. Katō (1995).

58. On these reforms, see the monograph by Ōishi (1995).

59. Katō (1969, p. 256).

60. Nishimura (1982, p. 180).

61. Katō (1969, p. 261). The date given by Katō, sixth year of the Tenmei era, twelfth month, eighth day, conforms with HZS vol. 8, p. 261 or p. 289, with the day added. This corresponds to January 26, 1787 (or 1786 without taking into account the gap between lunar and solar calendars), and not to 1768, as misprinted in his article.

62. Shikyō died on the March 12, 1787 (seventh year of the Tenmei era, first month, thirty-third day), HZS vol. 8, p. 268. Curiously, there is no mention of this event in Tōrei's biography, although Tōrei lived until 1792.

63. Akiyama (1983, p. 153). Shikyō was a disciple of Kogetsu's successor, Kangan Kaikai (d. 1744), whose biography is included in *Kinsei zenrin sōbōden* vol. 2, pp. 160–163.

64. Tsuji (1944–1955, vol. 8, p. 260) and Takenuki (1989, p. 183). A whole chapter of Tsuji's monumental work is devoted to Sūden's biography (1953, vol. 8, pp. 26–88).

65. Tsuji (1944–1955, vol. 8, pp. 29–32). This function existed during the Kamakura and Muromachi periods, but its establishment by the Tokugawa Bakufu began in 1635 (Kan'ei 12, see Takayanagi and Takeuchi, *Kadokawa nihonshi jiten*, pp. 432 and 1148).

66. The role played by Tao-che is partially described in Ogisu Jundō (1958, pp. 34–35); See also Schwaller (1989, pp. 8–10). For Tao-che's dates and other invaluable references see OBJ, p. 263.

67. OBJ, pp. 17b–18b.

68. See Ono (1987) and Takenuki (1993, pp. 424–426).

69. T 82 no. 2607.

70. T 81 no. 2579. The preface and publication were completed in January 1685 (first year of the Jōkyō era, twelfth month).

71. ZGD, p. 995d, OBJ, pp. 388a–89a, and Murase (1982, pp. 72–77).

72. Personal communication from Rev. Tanaka Chisei, Chief Executive of the Ōbaku Culture Research Institute (Ōbaku Bunka Kenkyūsho).

73. Kengan Zen'etsu died on January 8, 1697 (ninth year of the Genroku era, twelfth month, sixteenth day, see ZGD, p. 672c–d, and OBJ, p. 106a–b).

74. *Itsumadegusa*, HZS vol. 1, p. 182; Katō (1985, p. 137); Rinoie (1981, pp. 217–222); Waddell (1983, p. 109).

75. Katō (1985, pp. 228 and 231, n. 16), OBJ, pp. 59b–60b. This episode is also mentioned in *Keikyoku sōdan*, HZS vol. 1, p. 144.

76. OBJ, p. 60a.

77. Rikugawa (1966).

78. This text has been partially translated into English as *The Iron Flute* (Senzaki 1964). *Tetteki tōsui* is found in *Sōtō-shū zensho: juko*.

79. Fourteen important figures among Hakuin's prominent disciples had first practiced under Kogetsu before joining the ranks of Hakuin (Akiyama 1983, p. 153).

80. *Zazen* is another word that should, as much as possible, remain untranslated, since the character “za” of *zazen* is often understood in the sense of an inner unmoving “seated” posture. Akizuki asserts this point in his encouragement to practice every-

where: “Because it is not only *zazen* with legs folded that is *zazen*” (1986, p. 160). The term “seated zen” coined by Bielefeldt does not appear satisfactory either (1995, p. 198).

81. Analysis of this aspect can for instance be found in Yuasa (1987) and in the volume by Kasulis et al. (1993).

82. Koga (1991, p. 370b).

83. This case, known in Japan as “basu shōan,” is included in *Lien-teng hui-yao* 29, HTC 136, pp. 930b17–931a02, and in *Wu-teng-hui-yüan* vol. 6, HTC 138, p. 226a17–b02.

84. HTC 135, p. 952b03.

85. *Usenshikō*, HZS vol. 6, p. 144.

86. *Rōhatsu jishu*, teachings by Hakuin written by Tōrei. T 81 no. 2576, p. 615a22–a25, and HZS vol. 7, p. 233. This text, recited in the monasteries every year on the occasion of the December *sesshin*, can be considered the Tokugawa Rinzai reformulation of the rules for *zazen*.

87. See Bielefeldt (1988).

88. This is the first part of *The Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic (Huang-ti nei-ching)* followed by the *Ling-shu (The Spiritual Pivot)*, considered to be “the acupuncturist's bible.”

89. *Huang-ti nei-ching su-wēn*, first fascicle, second section, edited by Jen Ying-ch'iu (1986, p. 8). Compare with the translation by Veith (1966, p. 98). This passage is quoted in the third volume of *Itsumadegusa* (HZS vol. 1, p. 221), twice in the first volume of *Kanzanshi sendai kimon* (HZS vol. 4, pp. 108 and 116), and in *Yasenkanna* (HZS vol. 5, p. 359).

90. HZS vol. 4, p. 109.

91. Three or four sexagesimal cycles, as mentioned in *Yasenkanna* (HZS vol. 5, p. 350).

92. For the details, see Izuyama (1983, p. 114).

93. HZS vol. 5, p. 365. See also Katō (1985, p. 21). The expression “realized in one hammer stroke” is common in Chinese Ch'an sources. See, for instance, the *Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu*, fascicle 15 (T 51 no. 2076, p. 319b09–b10). Koga (1991, p. 18a).

94. Contemporary descriptions are given in Osaka (1969, pp. 129–134), Ōmori (1972, pp. 63–71), and Ueda (1993, pp. 235–240).

95. *Susokkan* is “basic” in the sense that it is necessary to acquire some familiarity with this mediation technique at the beginning, but it remains an essential tool at all stages. People who have completed their kōan training eventually return to *susokkan*.

96. Most teachers of the Ch'an or Zen Buddhist traditions have been careful not to present the circulation of vital energy as a goal in itself, in particular to distance themselves from Taoist teachings. However, parallels between *zazen* and the Taoist technique of the “small celestial revolution” (*hsiao-chou-t'ien*) are quite obvious. These analogues, and mutual borrowings from both traditions, need further investigation.

97. Chih-i's biography is mentioned in *Keisōdokuzui*, HZS vol. 2, p. 105; *San'in shi-shūjo sendai kimon*, HZS vol. 4, p. 9; *Kanzanshi sendai kimon*, HZS vol. 4, p. 332; and *Orategama*, HZS vol. 5, p. 168. Chih-i's main work, the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*, is referred to chiefly in *Itsumadegusa*, HZS vol. 1, p. 220, in *Orategama*, HZS vol. 5, pp. 108 and 118, and in one of Hakuin's letters, HZS vol. 6, p. 445. Hakuin appended to his *Kanrin'ihō* a key section of the introduction to the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* by Kuan-ting, which he entitled “Endonshō” (“The Chapter on Perfect and Sudden [Calming and Contemplation]”). This section corresponds to T 46 no. 1911, pp. 1c23–2a02 and is included in HZS vol. 4, p. 379. See the lecture by Yamada Mumon (Taishitsu Mumon 1900–1988) (1974)

and the translation by Donner and Stevenson (1993, pp. 112–114). A brief commentary on the same section by Tōrei, with capping phrases added, is also found in HZS vol. 8, pp. 419–422. Hakuin also mentions the *Hsiao-chih-kuan* in HZS vol. 5, p. 359.

98. We find for example, mentions of the Āgamas in *Itsumadegusa*, HZS vol. 1, p. 220, in *Keisō dokuzui*, HZS vol. 2, p. 117, and in *Kanzanshi sendai kimon*, HZS vol. 4, pp. 106, 115, and 137. In this last allusion, Hakuin considers the Āgamas to be expedient means intended to simplify Buddhist teachings that were too arduous in their first expression, but he evidently considers them to be the Buddha's words. In another text full of irony, the *Anjin hokoritataki* (*Dusting off the Heart in Peace*), he even ventures to compare these teachings to a “mass credit sale on cheap articles” (*yasumono urikake*) (HZS vol. 6, p. 245).

99. It is in particular the case of his “soft-butter method” (*so o mochiuru no hō*), a relaxation technique which Hakuin describes as if it were from the Āgamas (*Kanzanshi sendai kimon*, HZS vol. 4, p. 115, and *Yasenkana*, HZS vol. 5, pp. 358 and 361). To date no similar passage in the Āgamas has been located.

100. See, for instance, the publications by Muraki Hiromasa (1979, 1985, 1988) or Kamata Shigeo (1996).

101. Commentary of the *Ta-mo-to-lo ch'an-ching* (T 15 no. 618) entitled *Darumataren zenkyō settsūkōsho*. This text, first published in 1784, remains only in the form of a woodblock edition. One of the few original copies is kept at the Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūsho in Kyoto.

102. Although unusual in English, the plural “awarenesses” is common in the writings of Gattegno.

103. I am indebted to Dr. Roslyn Young for this example, and for many insights into Gattegno's approach, received during a workshop in Osaka in October 1996.

104. Gattegno (1987, p. 38).

105. Gattegno (1973, p. 132; 1987, p. 168).

106. Gattegno (1987, p. 210).

107. Gattegno (1973, p. 130).

108. Gattegno (1985, p. 3).

109. I have sought to show some of the limitations inherent in the word “experience” applied to Buddhist awakening, due in particular to its vagueness (Mohr 1993).

110. Mentioning the educational aspect of kōans is not new: “The selection of pithy sayings from the ancient records to be used *pedagogically* as kung-an, or “test cases” was a Sung innovation.” (Foulk 1993b, p. 148, italics are mine).

111. The character *ching* is a common Chinese translation for the Sanskrit *visaya* or *ālambana*, which designate the objects of the mind (Nakamura Hajime 1981, p. 238).

112. *Lin-chi lu*, T 47 no. 1985, pp. 497a22–a23; compare my translation with that of Sasaki (1975, p. 6), Watson (1993b, p. 21), and Demiéville (1972, p. 51).

113. Iriya (1986, pp. 81–82). Nagao, although he acknowledges that no Sanskrit term corresponds to this concept, argues that “the basic connotation was already developed rather elaborately in Indian Mahāyāna” (1991, p. 202). Ueda has given his own interpretation of “ascent” and “descent” (1983).

114. HZS, vol. 2, p. 365. See also Tokiwa (1988, p. 10). Preface not included in Waddell's translation (1994c).

115. T 81 no. 2575. First woodblock edition was printed in 1800. Complete French translation is in Mohr (1997).

116. These divisions do not appear in the original text. For the details of the analysis that brought me to identify three main sections, see Mohr (1997, pp. 81–91). I may

just suggest here that Tōrei uses the threefold scheme that is usually applied to commentaries of sūtras, an introduction (*jobun*), the main purpose (*shōshūbun*), and the part dealing with diffusion (*ruzūbun*), a format he uses in other works.

117. T 81 no. 2575, p. 588a13–a14. An example of this classical expression is found in *Pi-yen lu*, case 41, with a slightly different wording, T 48 no. 2003, p. 179a12.

118. T 81 no. 2575, p. 589c27.

119. T 81 no. 2575, p. 587a25. The same image is used in a different context on p. 603b04. Tōrei does not mention his source, since he gives a free narration of the original passage. The Buddha's utterance in the *Lotus Sūtra* reads: "The place [where lies] the treasure is at close hand: this city is not real, it is only [a mirage that] I made up" (T 9 no. 262, p. 26a24; compare with Watson 1993a, p. 137).

120. I mention the more commonly known expression of *kyōzen itchi*, but Tōrei uses here the compound *fugō*, which also indicates coincidence (T 81 no. 2575, p. 590a14).

121. T 81 no. 2575, p. 590a14–15.

122. The four most relevant passages establishing this distinctiveness are found in T 81 no. 2575, pp. 582c02–c06, 584c09–c11, 592c24, and 600b28–b29.

123. Main instances of this compound are found in T 81 no. 2575, pp. 581b08, 583b18, 584c10–c11, and 584c13. The expression *ichijakusu* derives from "a move" in the Chinese chess game (see the entry *itchaku* in Koga 1991, p. 15).

124. The complete title of this work is *Himitsu mandara jūjūshinron*, T 77 n° 2425. The same classification is also included in Kūkai's *Precious Key to the Secret Treasury* (*Hizōhōyaku*, T 77 no. 2426).

125. More details on this in Mohr (1997, pp. 102–106).

126. Tōrei was most familiar with *Watarai Shintō*, into which he was initiated. His interpretation of the "primordial chaos" (*J. konton*, Ch. *hun-tun*) as related to *kenshō* is unique, to my knowledge. I analyzed some of its implications (Mōru 1995). Recent English translations of most of the original texts have appeared in Teeuwen (1996).

127. T 81 no. 2575, p. 603c13–c14.

128. T 81 no. 2575, p. 603c28–c29.

129. Included in *Keisō dokuzui*, HZS vol. 2, p. 175. There are dozens of other examples of the use of the word *kōjō* by Hakuin. What makes this letter especially interesting is that it is addressed to a layperson. On the whereabouts of this doctor, see Katō (1985, p. 181, n. 1).

130. A detailed exposition of these categories can be found in Akizuki (1985, pp. 138–188, and 1987, pp. 77–109), Miura (1965 and 1966, pp. 46–76), and Shimano (1988). These categories generally are further followed by the *kōans* dealing with the *goi* (five positions), *jūjū kinkai* (the ten essential precepts), and *matsugo no rōkan* (the last barrier).

131. HZS vol. 2, p. 389. See also Mineo (1977, pp. 97–100) and Tokiwa (1988, p. 52). Compare with the translations in Miura (1965 and 1966, p. 58) and Waddell (1994c, pp. 29–30).

132. This idea is, for example, clearly expressed by Kajitani Sōnin (1914–1995), former abbot of Shōkokuji, who stated that Hakuin "created (*tsukutta*) a *kōan* system" including five categories (1968, p. 263).

133. The 1998 special issue of the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* is centered on this topic.

134. Kajitani (1968, p. 266).

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Abbreviations

- HZS *Hakuin oshō zenshū*. 8 vols. Gotō Kōson and Mori Daikyō, eds. Tokyo: Ryūginsha, 1934–1935 (reprint 1967).
- MZ *Manji zōkyō*, Kyoto 1902–1906, pagination is given for the Taiwanese reprint *Wan cheng tsang-ching*. Taipei: Hsin-wen-feng, n.d.
- OBJ *Ōbaku bunka jinmei jiten*. Ōtsuki Mikio, Katō Shōshun, and Hayashi Yukimitsu, eds. Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 1988.
- ZGD *Zengaku daijiten*, new ed., *Zengaku daijiten hensansho*, ed. Tokyo: Taishūkan, 1985.

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