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## MIRIAM LEVERING

### Dōgen's *Raihaitokuzui* (礼拝得髓) and Women Teaching in Sung Ch'an

As is well known, Dōgen Kigen Zenji 道元希玄禪師 (1200-1253), the founder of Japan's Sōtō 曹洞 Zen movement, spent five years visiting and studying at a number of Ch'an monasteries in China. After he returned from Sung 宋 China in 1227 as an heir to Ju-ching 如淨's Dharma, he stayed for a few years at Kenninji 建仁寺, the Tendai 天台 temple where he had originally become a disciple of the Zen teacher Myōzen 妙全. Around 1230 he moved to a small hermitage in Fukakusa 深草, and there his circle of students began to form. At his hermitage in Fukakusa in 1235 and 1236 Dōgen raised money to build a Monks' Hall (*sōdō* 僧堂), a characteristically Sung Ch'an style training hall, and subsequently changed the name of his temple there to Kōshōji 興聖寺. In 1243, for reasons he never revealed in extant sources, Dōgen left Kōshōji and led his disciples into the mountains of Echizen 越前, where with the help and protection of warrior-class patrons he built a new monastery.

Although we do not know a lot about Dōgen's early efforts to collect a group of students during the thirteen years that he taught at what became Kōshōji, there is evidence that his community of disciples and donors included nuns. In 1231 he wrote a Dharma instruction to a nun, Ryōnen 了然, whom he addressed and praised as a serious practitioner. In 1234 a nun named Egi 懷養 joined his community as one of a group of Daruma-shū 達磨宗 disciples. Both Ryōnen and Egi reappear in records we have from his Echizen 越前 period, which suggests that they remained in Dōgen's circle for a good long time. The Daruma-shū group to which the nun Egi belonged also included the monk Ejō 懷奘, who between 1235 and 1237 wrote down excerpts of Dōgen's talks and responses to questions, forming a text called the "Record of Things Heard" (*J. Zuimonki* 隨聞記). One exchange in this text features an unnamed nun asking Dōgen a question, which suggests that at Dōgen's teaching sessions nuns attended.<sup>1</sup>

1. Scholars have suggested caution in using the *Zuimonki* 隨聞記 as a source for Dōgen's biography. Whether that doubt should extend to this particular piece of evidence that Dōgen had nuns in his sangha I am not able to judge.



Dōgen had women financial supporters as well: in 1237 the aristocratic nun Shōgaku 正覺尼 donated a lecture hall for Kōshōji.<sup>2</sup>

In 1240, during this Kōshōji period, Dōgen also delivered a sermon later included in his *Shōbōgenzō* 正法眼藏 entitled *Raihaitokuzui* 礼拝得髓 (Bowing [to the Teacher] and Obtaining the [Teacher's] Marrow). The sermon begins with the theme of how to choose a teacher and how to obtain the teacher's marrow, his or her most profound teaching, namely, awakening. But it becomes in large part a sermon on how awakened nuns and lay women, though lower in status in the sangha than awakened monks, are worthy of being honored by monks and lay men and are worthy of being their teachers.

Some scholars have suggested that for Dōgen, as for the founders of others of the new Kamakura 鎌倉 Buddhist groups such as Shinran 親鸞 and Nichiren 日蓮, an interest in welcoming women as practitioners and establishing a doctrinal position that assured them of eventual salvation could have been a way of differentiating himself from the world of Shingon 眞言, the Vinaya school and Tendai, with their policies of asserting male superiority and excluding women from their practice realms (Mt. Kōya 高野山, Kūkai 空海's Shingon practice center, is a well-known example).<sup>3</sup> There is no question but that in this sermon Dōgen was critical of the attitudes and practices relating to women that he found current in Japan in a way that radically took on established practices. Whatever his motivation, the sermon must indeed have had a differentiating effect.<sup>4</sup>

2. On the subject of women in Dōgen's sangha, see TAJIMA Hakudō, *Dōgen Keizan ryō Zenji no nisōkan* (Nagoya: Sōtō-shū Kōtō Nigakurin Shuppanbu 1953); TAJIMA Hakudō, *Sōtō-shū nisōshi* (Tokyo: Sōtōshu Nisōdan Honbu [Sanyo Sha] 1955); ISHIKAWA Rikizan, "Chūsei Bukkyō ni okeru ni no isō ni tsuite: toku ni shoki Sōtō-shū kyōdan no jirei o chūshin to shite", *Komazawa Daigaku Zenkenkyūjo nenpō* 3:141-53 (March, 1992). In English see Paula Kane ROBINSON ARAI, *Zen Nuns: Living Treasures of Japanese Buddhism*, unpublished Ph.D dissertation Harvard University, 1993.

3. ISHIKAWA Rikizan, "Chūsei no Bukkyō ni okeru ni no isō ni tsuite (jo)," p. 141-42. ISHIKAWA cites HOSOKAWA Ryōichi, "Seirinji sōji to ni" in *Tsukui to oshie*, series *Josei to Bukkyō* 2, April 1989 on this point, an essay I have not had an opportunity to examine. On Dōgen's own failure to transcend the traditional "three followings and five hindrances" framework for viewing women, see ISHIKAWA Rikizan, "Dōgen no 'Nyoshin fujōbutsu ron' ni tsuite – juni kanbon *Shōbōgenzō* no seikaku o meguru oboegaki", *Komazawa Daigaku Zenkenkyūjo nenpō* 1: 88-123 (March 1990).

4. It is interesting, though, that the section of the sermon that includes Dōgen's

Other scholars have suggested that Dōgen's real purpose in giving this sermon was to make the point that true students of the Way would be willing to take *him* as a teacher: indeed, as *the* true teacher of Buddhism in Japan.<sup>5</sup> After all, even though Dōgen claimed aristocratic birth, he himself at the time was also of low status in some ways. His social origins, marred perhaps by illegitimacy, had been insufficient to enable him to rise high in the Tendai school hierarchy. In moving from Kenninji to the small retreat in Fukakusa he had abandoned the support and protection of the Tendai establishment. Further, in 1240 he apparently had no powerful patron among the Kyōto aristocrats. The monks who joined Dōgen at Kōshōji similarly cut themselves off from the traditional route to monastic fame and leadership. They may indeed have been low-status monks: As William BODIFORD points out in his study of early Sōtō Zen, "many of Dōgen's early sayings seem addressed especially to the lower economic class of monks who lacked the luxury of devoting all their time to scholastic study."<sup>6</sup>

This line of interpretation may have some plausibility. Certainly Dōgen's own lack of unambiguously high status is one context we should not forget as we listen to this sermon. Yet to suggest that Dōgen was talking about awakened women solely in order to talk indirectly about himself would in my view be to take this line of interpretation too far. For one thing, an important fact that we should also not forget is the presence of women in his early sangha: it is possible, even likely, that the audience listening to this sermon was not exclusively male. As mentioned above, there is evidence that Dōgen's community of disciples included women. Even though in the *Raihaitokuzui* Dōgen seems to be addressing male students, as he talked he may have had in mind some woman or women whom he could recommend as teachers, or some members of his audience

attack on the practice of forbidding women from entering certain temples seems not to have been included in the version of the *Shōbōgenzō* 正法眼藏 that circulated before the eighteenth century; it was found at Eiheiji 永平寺 in the *Secret Shōbōgenzō*. Perhaps Dōgen's followers had reasons for not wanting to distance their struggling movement so radically from the established sects.

5. This suggestion was made by Morten SCHLÜTTER at a conference on Sung Buddhism held at the University of Illinois in April 1996.
6. William M. BODIFORD, *Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism no. 8, 1993), p. 25. Much of my summary of Dōgen's career in Japan after his return from China, and my suggestion that Dōgen was not a high-status monk, are indebted to BODIFORD's account on p. 22-26.

whom he knew to be personally interested in the question of whether women could become awakened and teach.<sup>7</sup>

Yet another line of interpretation, one that puts religious insight and the doctrines related to it at the center of the discussion of a sermon by this man who has in modern times been widely thought to be a religious genius, rests on the observation that both the logic of Ch'an and Zen thought and the insight approved of in the school radically challenge any kind of essentialist dualism.<sup>8</sup> This point is expressed well by Paula ARAI. ARAI writes:

Just three years before he left for Echizen, [Dōgen] wrote this impassioned text in the spring of 1240 in order to extinguish the errors of those who harbor incorrect thoughts about women and the Dharma. He writes with conviction, yet there is a hint of incredulity that serious students of the Dharma have not yet realized the meaning of the fundamental teaching that 'all existents *are* Buddha-nature'.<sup>9</sup>

ARAI points out that a radical non-dualism was Dōgen's fundamental understanding and teaching during this time. This radical non-dualism led Dōgen to reinterpret in 1241 in an essay entitled *Busshō* 佛性 the famous statement of the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* that "all sentient beings have the Buddha-nature" to read "all existents are Buddha-nature". Should we be surprised that one whose mind dwelt on (or in) non-duality would discuss the implications of this non-dualism for eradicating a highly dualistic and unproductive way of constructing one's world that he could see everywhere around him in the prevailing gender construction?

In this essay I would like to bring to the reader's attention an additional historical point to consider in understanding why Dōgen preached the *Raihaitokuzui*, namely, the way in which women's ability to master and teach the fundamental insights of Ch'an Buddhism had been represented

7. In the texts of Sung China one can usually find a close correlation between a master's mention of the possibility of a woman becoming awakened through Ch'an study and the recorded presence of a woman either as intended audience for a letter or poem in which the point is made or as sponsor of the sermon in which the point is made.
8. See my "The Dragon Girl and the Abbess of Mo-shan: Gender and Status in Ch'an Buddhist Tradition", *JIABS* 5.1 (1982): 19-35, and LEVERING, "Lin-chi Ch'an and Gender: the Rhetoric of Equality and the Rhetoric of Heroism", in José Ignacio Cabezón ed., *Buddhism, Sexuality and Gender* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press 1992), pp. 137-56.
9. ARAI, *Zen Nuns*, p. 83.

to him during his five years as a Ch'an student in Sung China. This aspect of his experience and its implications have not received adequate attention from scholars of women in Japanese Buddhism or from scholars of Dōgen. This is no doubt because the degree to which Sung Ch'an practice, and Sung Ch'an representations of Ch'an practice, were in fact welcoming to women students and teachers, and were in fact different from Japanese Buddhist practice with respect to women, have heretofore not been adequately explored in detail by historians of Chinese Ch'an and Japanese Zen.<sup>10</sup>

It is obvious to any reader of his written records that Dōgen's sense of his own authority rested in part on his experience abroad. In his sermons and essays he often presented himself to his audience as one who knew how Ch'an/ Zen in particular and Buddhism in general was authentically practiced because he had seen what was done in Sung China.<sup>11</sup> What Dōgen represented in the *Raihaitokuzui* as Ch'an rhetoric and practice with respect to women are similarly represented in the texts of Sung Ch'an. A close reading of Ch'an texts from the Five Dynasties and the Sung periods suggests that by the time of Dōgen's visit to China, what Dōgen advocated with respect to women accorded in large part with what was in fact being represented in China as Ch'an practice.<sup>12</sup> This suggests that we need to give some weight to the fact that for five years Dōgen

10. Although my approach here is historical, and my argument here will be an historical argument, I see it as compatible with a view that there is awakening, that what one is awakened to is a radically non-dualist way of seeing the world, and that this would influence one's views on the significance of social constructions of gender.
11. See BODIFORD, pp. 12-14. Scholars have sometimes doubted the accuracy of Dōgen's representations of matters in China, particularly when they are made in a highly polemical context. I would like to suggest that in this sermon to the extent that we can check them Dōgen's depictions were faithful to Southern Sung representations of Ch'an practices.
12. An influential school of thought in Japanese scholarship, particularly within the Sōtō sect, has portrayed Dōgen as faithfully transmitting some "pure Ch'an" from China to Japan. This school has interpreted Dōgen's thought as developing ideas found in China and in Chinese texts, and has directed attention away from Dōgen's Japanese background. I do not wish to ally myself uncritically with that kind of interpretation. It would be a mistake to overlook in our interpretations Dōgen's formative background in Japanese culture as well as in Tendai and Japanese Zen, and to pay insufficient attention to the Japanese world that formed the context for his teaching.

practiced Sung Ch'an, and learned much about how the Chinese Ch'an tradition represented itself to itself, whom Ch'an communities included, and how Ch'an practices were carried out. It is perfectly possible, given what was being said and sometimes done in China, that when Dōgen returned home, Japanese attitudes and practices in relation to women students of Buddhism struck him as unlike those of the Ch'an he had seen abroad. He had formed his own identity around the notion that Sung Buddhism was different from Japanese Buddhism, and that he was a Buddhist as men in the Sung were Buddhists. His own growing sangha was to include some women, as he probably knew that the sangha of some Sung masters had done, and he wanted all his students to understand that in the Sung Ch'an Buddhism that he had practiced, awakening was what mattered most to a student, not gender.<sup>13</sup>

### *A Summary of the Raihaitokuzui*

The title of the sermon probably refers to the story of Bodhidharma's interviewing his four disciples as to their insight, and then saying to each, on the basis of his or her answer, "you have attained my skin," or flesh, or bones, or marrow. When asked to express his insight, his disciple Hui-k'o 慧可 merely bowed wordlessly, to which Bodhidharma replied, "You have attained my marrow." So perhaps the title of Dōgen's sermon should be translated, "[He] bowed and attained [Bodhidharma's] marrow." But the sermon also clearly refers to bowing not simply as an answer, but also as the formal act in which a disciple takes a master as his/her teacher. A large part of the sermon is about to whom it is appropriate to bow as one's teacher. Perhaps as he reflected on the story of Bodhidharma and his four disciples Dōgen was struck by the fact that one of them was a woman, the nun Tsung-ch'ih 總持. Perhaps this unusual element of the story was in part responsible for the striking turn that this sermon takes from simply emphasizing that one who seeks the Dharma will seek it from any awakened being, even one of low status, to emphasizing that one who understands the Dharma will understand that women can awaken to it, and will seek the teaching from an awakened woman.

13. As we shall see below, perhaps due to the enthusiasm of the convert, perhaps because as a Japanese he did not really understand how Chinese Ch'an teachers placed certain limits on their rhetoric, Dōgen was willing to go, in rhetoric if not in practice, even farther on this matter than his Chinese co-religionists had done in advocating that male students take awakened women as teachers.

Dōgen begins his sermon with the topic of the difficulty of finding a true teacher,<sup>14</sup> and the importance of dropping everything to study with such a teacher when found. The point he wishes to make is that true teachers may take any form: even a youth, a lay person, or a woman may be a true teacher. Thus in the second sentence of the sermon he says, “a true teacher has nothing at all to do with such characteristics as male and female and so on, but the teacher must be one who is a great man (大丈夫 Ch. *ta-chang-fu*, J. *daijōbu*), must be ‘such a person’ (i.e., one who is intimately acquainted with *satori* 悟)...”<sup>15</sup> A little further on he says, “Long ago [the great god] Indra honored a wild fox as his own master and sought the Dharma from him, calling him “Great Bodhisattva.” It had nothing to do with whether the teacher was in a high or low [noble or base] form because of past karma.”

Deluded people of high social status, age, seniority, monastic rank or accomplishment on the bodhisattva path, though, think that they cannot bow to those of lower status or rank and take them as their teachers, even if such lower ranking persons have acquired the Dharma. Dōgen offers a long list of telling examples. For instance, some think to themselves, “I am the chief of the monk officials who govern monastic affairs, so I

14. The term Dōgen uses might better be translated as a mentor or a guide: it is the same term that is used in China of teachers who direct one’s doctoral research. Not only does this teacher instruct you in some subject, she also guides you in your efforts to reach the goal. Hee-Jin KIM uses the term “guide” in his translation in his *Flowers of Emptiness: Selections from Dōgen’s Shōbōgenzō*, Lewiston NY: Edwin Mellen Press 1985.
15. The first part of this sentence is taken from the statement of Mo-shan Liao-jan to Chih-hsien that Dōgen quotes below. Chih-hsien’s question is, “What is the person in the mountain [i.e., Mt. Mo] like?” Her answer: “It is not [a matter of] male or female form and the like.” The second part of the sentence says that the teacher must be a *daijōbu* 大丈夫 (Ch. *ta-chang-fu*). The notes in the Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei edition of the *Shōbōgenzō* (vol. 81) cite the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, chūan 9, the *Ju-lai-hsing* chapter, which says, “If one is able to know that he has the Buddha nature, I say that he has the characteristics of a man (*chang-fu*). If there is a woman [who knows], then she is a man (*nan-tzu* 男子).” KIM’s translation of *ta-chang-fu* is interesting: “What counts is that the guide be a being of virtue.” This translation has an advantage in that it reflects the way in which Mencius reinterpreted the meaning of the term *ta-chang-fu* to mean not a hero of great physical strength or political power but rather a moral hero, a man of virtue. The third part of the sentence refers to the story discussed by Dōgen in his *Immo* 慇麻 fascicle, the statement that if you want to know “such a thing”, you must be “such a person”.



cannot bow to ordinary men and women, even if they have acquired the Dharma.” Others think, “I have reached a very high stage of the bodhisattva path, and I cannot honor nuns and the like, even if they have acquired the Dharma.” Dōgen points out that this is entirely the wrong attitude in one who truly seeks the Dharma. “When a nun (who as a nun ranks lower than any monk) who has acquired the Way, who has acquired the Dharma appears in the world (as an abbess), for the monk who seeks the Dharma and studies Zen to enter her assembly, bow to her in homage (as his teacher) and ask [her] about the Dharma is the mark of his excellence as a student. It [finding an awakened teacher] should be like finding drinking water when you are thirsty.”

Dōgen then tells the story of the monk Kuan-ch'i Chih-hsien 灌谿志閑's studying under the nun teacher Mo-shan Liao-jan 末山了然 as told in the *Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu* 景德傳燈錄 (hereafter CTCTL), which is given in full below. He ends by saying, “Chih-hsien's bowing and seeking the Dharma from Mo-shan 末山 showed the superiority of his determination [to attain the Way].” He then tells how a nun named Miao-hsin 妙信 became the provisions manager of the ninth century master Yang-shan Hui-chi 仰山慧空 (807-883)'s monastery, because the monks at the monastery agreed that she was the most qualified. Her duty was to attend to donors, donations and provisions, particularly of grain and food. Her cloister was apparently lower on the mountainside than the main compound that contained the Dharma Hall and Abbot's Quarters. She became the teacher of seventeen traveling monks from Szechwan who stopped for the night at her cloister on their way up the mountain to study with Hui-chi. This came about because in the evening as they were resting they had a discussion about the Sixth Patriarch's comment as recorded in the *Platform Sūtra* that “it is not the wind that moves, or the flag that moves, it is your mind that moves,” which she overheard. When her disparaging remarks about their discussion were reported to them, they did not brush them aside. Instead, “they were ashamed that they had not been able to speak [Dharma, as those who understood Ch'an would do],” and at once they put on their outer robes and performed the ceremonial etiquette appropriate to seeking an interview with a teacher. In the formal interview she said to them, ‘It is not the wind which moves, it is not the flag which moves, and it is not the mind which moves.’ When they heard this comment of hers, they had a realization, and made bows of thanks and became her disciples. Then they returned to Szechwan, since they

had found enlightenment and a teacher, and did not need to climb the mountain the next day to see Hui-chi.<sup>16</sup>

The moral Dōgen draws from these stories of Chinese monks who have taken women as their teachers is that the Japanese monks in his audience should do the same. Dōgen says, “When the abbot of the monastery and the senior monk with whom he shares his teaching seat are not around, you should ask a nun who has acquired the Way to teach you.” Don’t prefer a monk, even a senior monk, if he has not acquired the Way.

In support of his point that in China men Ch’an students take enlightened women as their teachers, he makes a more general observation:

“At present nuns enroll in the monasteries of the Sung. When one becomes famous for her attainment of the Dharma, and receives the imperial edict from the government officials appointing her abbess of a monastery for nuns, then at that monastery she “ascends the Hall.” (That is, she goes to the Dharma Hall in response to an invitation issued with great ceremony and ascends the high seat to teach by giving a sermon and answering questions, as the Ch’an teacher who is an abbot or who represents the abbot does on the most formal of teaching occasions.) All of the monastic community from the abbot down attend to hear her teaching, listening to the Dharma while standing formally in their positions. Among those who ask questions [of the woman master] about [old] sayings (*watō*, Ch. *hua-t’ou* 話頭) there are also monks. This is a long-established practice.”

Dōgen may have meant that the monastery at which the new abbess “ascended the Hall” was the one in which she had been enrolled when she heard the news, which most likely was a largely male monastery with a largely male assembly of students; or he may have meant that she “ascended the Hall” at the monastery to which she was now appointed abbess, which in the Sung as far as we know was always a convent of nuns. Or, as happened with male abbots on the occasion of their inaugural sermons, it may have been a third monastery, a large monastery in the neighborhood of the monastery to which she had been appointed. Holding the inaugural ceremony in a nearby larger monastery would be especially necessary if one’s new monastery were small, but in the case of males it seems to have happened even when the monastery to which one was appointed was quite large. But regardless of which of these Dōgen meant, he clearly means to tell his listeners that on this occasion of her first

16. I do not know of any occurrence of this story in an extant Chinese text.

sermon as abbess her assembled audience of students included all of the monks from the abbot down, and the questioners included monks. His point is clearly that in Sung China men students of Ch'an and members of the Ch'an lineage were willing to enact ritually the role of student in relation to a woman teacher.<sup>17</sup>

An important feature of this scene that Dōgen describes is that the woman teacher ritually takes the role of Buddha in relation to the assembled company as she takes her place on the high seat of the Dharma Hall, and as she speaks the Dharma from the standpoint of enlightened Mind. As we know, this contradicts the notion of the five hindrances that is found in many Mahāyāna texts, namely that a woman cannot in the present female body become a Buddha or any of four other important cosmic figures.

Dōgen solves this problem, as those in Sung China had done, by invoking the idea that an awakened woman should no longer be seen as a woman, for she is now something else, a *daijōbu* 大丈夫 (*mahāpuruṣa*), a teacher of gods and humans.<sup>18</sup> When he tells the story of Miao-hsin summarized above, his narrative has Yang-shan Hui-chi say to the other monks in recommending Miao-hsin for the position, "Although [Miao]-hsin Huai-tzu 妙信淮子<sup>19</sup> is a woman, she has the determined spirit (*shiki* 志氣) of a *daijōbu*." And immediately following his description of enlightened Sung nuns becoming abbesses, he says, "Because a person who has attained the Dharma is an authentic ancient Buddha, we should not greet that person in terms of what she once was. When s/he sees me, s/he receives me from an entirely new standpoint; when I see him/her, my reception of her/him is based entirely on today, [not on what she (or I) was in the past]. For example, in the case of a nun who has received the treasury of the true Dharma eye through transmission, if [the arhats of] the four fruitions, the pratyeka-buddhas, and even the (advanced bodhisattvas) of the three wise stages and of the ten holy states pay homage to her and seek the Dharma from her, she should receive their obeisance."<sup>20</sup>

17. I am indebted for help with this passage to Joan PIGGOTT of Cornell University and William BODIFORD of U.C.L.A.

18. Dōgen's usage parallels that of the Chinese original, *ta-chang-fu*, a "great hero" or a "great fellow".

19. "Huai-tzu" literally means "child, or son, of the Huai River" – perhaps a nickname for Miao-hsin because she came from the Huai River region.

20. My translation here is largely based on that of Hee-Jin KIM in *ibid.*, p. 290.

The reason of course is that she is not to be thought of primarily as a woman any longer, and thus lower than any man and any monastic; she is not to be thought of primarily a nun any longer, and thus lower in status than any monk; she is an awakened being, and thus from a Buddhist point of view higher than even arhats, pratyeka-buddhas and advanced bodhisattvas, and able to teach them.

Dōgen concludes the sermon as found in the seventy-five volume version of the *Shōbōgenzō* by alluding to the seven-year-old dragon girl of the “Devadatta” chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*. He says:

Even a seven-year old girl who practices the Buddha Dharma and is enlightene in it is the leader and guide of the fourfold sangha, the compassionate father of sentient beings. For instance, the *nāga* girl in the *Lotus Sūtra* achieved Buddhahood. Giving respect and homage to someone such as her is the same as giving it to all the Buddhas.”

Finally, in a long section often appended now to the *Raihaitokuzui* chapter as it appears in the seventy-five volume *Shōbōgenzō*, a section that in part continues the topic of how awakened women should be taken as teachers by men, Dōgen again points to the existence of awakened women in China and adds another example of a woman teaching a man.<sup>21</sup> He says:

When we look at the great country of the Sung (i.e., China) today, we see monks who seem to have refined their practice for a long time who know every grain of sand in the ocean [of teachings] but who still founder in the ocean of life and death. But there are women who visit a teacher, question him, make effort in their practice, and become the teachers of gods and humans. For instance, there was the old woman who would not sell her refreshments [to Te-shan 德山] but threw them away instead.

### *Women as Teachers in Chinese Ch'an*

In this essay, Dōgen is interested in persuading his listeners that men seeking out enlightened women as teachers, and women teaching men, are practices that reflect the deepest understanding of the Dharma, of the Buddhist understanding of what is real (what are the true realities, powers, and hierarchies in the universe), and what is important (the search for personal realization of Dharma; attainments of higher stages of the Path;

21. This long section addresses additional ill-founded views of women and Japanese practices that exclude women. It is not found in any of the texts of the seventy-five volume *Shōbōgenzō*, but was discovered in a 28-volume text called the *Secret Shōbōgenzō*.

awakening). But he conducts his argument in part by saying that in countries where Buddhist truth is really understood, true Buddhists understand that both men and women become enlightened. In those countries the most sincere seekers of awakening take awakened women as their teachers when they encounter them on their search. Thus he makes a historical argument as well as an argument based on his profound understanding of Buddhist doctrine and experience.

How convincing is Dōgen's argument that in the Buddhist and Ch'an tradition as a whole, and in the Ch'an of Sung China in particular, women attain awakening and their awakening is recognized, women teach, and men take them as their teachers?

Dōgen in his sermon supports his arguments by alluding to women attaining awakening and teaching in several distinguishable ways.

First, Dōgen suggests that in the Indian Buddhist understanding, by becoming a Buddha, one becomes a teacher of gods and men. This teaching activity can be assumed to be occurring even without specifying any concrete or institutionalized teaching relationships. Such is the case in the story of the *nāga* princess in the "Devadatta" chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*.<sup>22</sup>

Second, by bringing up the woman who will not sell her refreshments to Te-shan 德山, Dōgen touches on yet another type of teaching event represented in stories involving women, namely, women who have not mastered the tradition in great detail nonetheless teaching men by challenging them in Dharma combat, whether they want to be taught or not. Here men learn from women, but the relationship is not formal and never becomes so – the men do not take the women as their teachers.

Third, Dōgen mentions that in Sung China women undertake formally to teach as abbesses, and are commanded by the emperor to do so. When they receive the imperial order, they teach men. We have seen above how Dōgen says that in China when an enlightened woman is appointed abbess of a nun's monastery, she ascends the hall for a "Great Convocation" in a monastery and all the monastics, from the abbot (or abbots) on down, stand formally in their ranks to hear her teach the Dharma.<sup>23</sup>

22. Dōgen refers to the *nāga* girl both in the 75 volume version and in the 28 volume *Secret Shōbōgenzō* version.

23. Cf. T. GRIFFITH FOULK, "Myth, Ritual and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch'an Buddhism", in P. B. Ebrey and P. N. Gregory, eds., *Religion and Society in T'ang and Sung China*, University of Hawaii Press 1993, p. 177.

Fourth, women enter into formal teaching lineage relations with male students who seek to attain the Dharma from them, or who attain the Dharma from them. This continues the tradition from India of *guruparam-parā*, a student taking the master as his /her teacher in a formal lineage sense and vice versa. Dōgen cites two examples from Chinese Ch'an, the case of Chih-hsien taking the nun Mo-shan Liao-jan as his teacher, and the case of the seventeen monks from Szechwan who take the nun Miao-hsin as their teacher.

Dōgen may be mounting an historical argument, but his evidence seems to be primarily things that he himself could not have seen and heard with his own eyes. Mo-shan Liao-jan, the nun Miao-hsin, and the woman who would not sell her refreshments to Te-shan 德山 – none of these were contemporaries of Dōgen, or even of persons he might have known in China. Perhaps Dōgen felt that cases of women who taught who were associated with well-known male masters from the classical age of Ch'an would carry more weight with his audience than recent or contemporary cases. Knowledge of these representations of women teaching probably came to him through sermons and other forms of story-telling in China and through Chinese Ch'an texts. Through these forms Chinese Ch'an represented itself to itself, and to him.<sup>24</sup>

Even more than Dōgen, we are limited to the realm of representations. We cannot know what women who self-identified as Ch'an students and teachers were doing in China except through texts that come down to us. There are four kinds of texts that might contain evidence on this point: the records kept and the stories told within the texts of the Ch'an tradition itself; any epigraphs of memorial inscriptions (i.e., funeral inscriptions) that tell of a woman whom the writer identifies as a Ch'an practitioner or teacher; temple inscriptions for women's monasteries that one might find in epigraphy collections; and any stories about women Ch'an practitioners that may be written down by male literati in the *pi-chi* 筆記 literature (anecdote compilations) of the period. These can tell us about women who were identified by themselves or others as active in Ch'an practice. Only the first of these seem to contain stories that show women teaching Ch'an.<sup>25</sup>

24. It is noteworthy that Dōgen cites no evidence from Ju-ching's sangha or from other monastic communities he might have visited. The only statement that seems to be contemporary and relatively first-hand is the one about what women do when they receive the imperial command to become abbesses.

25. Other scholars have pointed out that a monastery could have the word *Ch'an* in

How do Sung Ch'an records represent awakened women teaching? These texts were unquestionably androcentric, compiled by men and for men. Women might have been doing a great deal that they themselves identified as Ch'an without having won attention or recognition by the male masters or the compilers of lineage histories. Women might well have been demonstrating awakened mind in domestic and monastic settings to which the men were paying no attention. But even these androcentric texts represent women in ways that corroborate [are similar to] Dōgen's representations of women becoming awakened and teaching in T'ang, Five Dynasties and Sung China.

What do the Sung Ch'an records show with respect to these various modes in which women are represented as teaching men (and each other)?

We will set aside the first category, which is in a sense doctrinal rather than historical, except to say that in Sung Ch'an records as in Dōgen's sermon the success of the *nāga* princess in profoundly understanding emptiness and becoming a Buddha is treated as an historical event, and a warrant for the belief that women can succeed in the study and practice of Ch'an and can teach Ch'an. We will return to this subject below.

its name without having an abbot or abbess who belonged to the lineage; so in the absence of a story that makes a link in terms of activity or mode of awakening, one cannot assume that a given nun or a given monastery is in fact teaching or practicing what we mean by Ch'an. FOULK argues that what Ch'an is in the Sung is a self-perpetuating group of men who put forth the myth of transmission of enlightenment through their lineage as a way to claim authority to be abbots of major monasteries, and the rhetorical style that they claimed that only those who had received Dharma-transmission in their lineage could authentically perform. A problem lies in the fact that mastery of Ch'an was ineffable, formless, such that only mind to mind recognition by a recognized master was regarded as authentic evidence that what one was practicing and teaching was in fact Ch'an. A story in a *pi-chi* or a memorial inscription may identify a person as a Ch'an nun, but unless recognition by a master acknowledged to be in the lineage is mentioned, one cannot assume that that person would in fact have been recognized as having belonged to the lineage. And unless the woman is mentioned in the Ch'an lineage records themselves, one really cannot be sure that the lineage would have recognized the awakening and teaching activity of this person. Like it or not, we have to see that the recognized teachers in this tradition had the power to identify the realization manifested by other persons in words or actions as genuine, authentic realizations. Their approval defined the lineage. And the authors and editors of the principal lineage texts, the genealogical histories, ratified the lineage as masters they favored and texts associated with these masters had constituted it.

In the case of the second category, there are a number of examples from the earlier Five Dynasties and Sung texts that parallel the story of Te-shan 德山 and the woman refreshment seller. The numbers of these stories grow in the later Sung texts. We cannot survey all of these here, but will offer a few examples.

There is another category (let us call it a fifth category) that is not touched on by Dōgen, but which does appear in the Sung genealogical records. Some women who do not formally become abbesses, and do not formally take on students, nonetheless enjoy a reputation for being enlightened, and are sought out by students (including, presumably, men). They are recognized in the later Sung genealogical “flame histories” as lineage heirs. One might suggest that in the Sung the wonderful T’ang stories of the “challenging women” of the second type preserved in the Sung texts modulate into a new, more elaborated image, that of the enlightened woman who lives on the margins of the Ch’an institutional world but nonetheless shares her awakened mind with students.

In the third case, that of awakened women being appointed abbesses of nuns temples and immediately being invited to ascend the hall and teach the whole monastic assembly, including of course the monks, we have no description of this practice outside of Dōgen’s sermon. But we do have some possible corroboration in the nun teacher Ting-kuang Miao-tao 定光妙道’s record.

With respect to the fourth category, it is worth while carrying out an historical inquiry into how and when the Ch’an texts known, compiled or composed in the Sung come to represent women becoming formal teachers of Ch’an as at least an imaginative possibility. As we shall see below, the earliest extant texts belonging to the groups of Ch’an practitioners that traced their lineages to Hui-neng 慧能, the Sixth Patriarch, do not represent women as teachers. We can date the moment in which woman as teacher becomes an imaginative possibility in the Five Dynasties and Sung Ch’an school texts by comparing the Mo-shan Liao-jan story in the *Chodang-chip* 祖堂集<sup>26</sup> with the same story in the *Ching-te-ch’uan-teng-lu* 景德傳燈錄 (CTCTL). It is in the Southern Sung Ch’an texts that we find signs that an imaginative possibility that has been resisted is becoming an accepted imagined reality, a social role that is accepted as a social fact. By the time of Dōgen’s visit to China, this transformation has occurred.

26. Ch. *Tsu-t’ang-chi*.



*Imagining Women as Formal Teachers of Ch'an: An Historical Survey*

What do the Chinese Ch'an texts read, written and compiled in the Sung reveal about how the possibility and present reality of women teaching Ch'an was imagined in the school?

*T'ang Texts*

To show the progression suggested above, let us begin with the earliest texts, where we find a picture discouraging to women. T'ang texts that might have been known and considered important in the Sung give little basis for imagining women as teachers in lineages tracing their authority to the Buddha through Bodhidharma.<sup>27</sup> The *Li-tai-fa-pao-chi* 歷代法寶記 of 774 C.E. tells a story of Bodhidharma transmitting his teaching to three students, Hui-k'o 慧可, Tao-yü 道育, and the nun Tsung-ch'ih 總持. This text was not known in the Sung, though it was used by Kuei-feng Tsung-mi 圭峯宗密 in preparing his *Chart of the Master-Disciple Succession of the Ch'an School* (*Chung-hua ch'uan-hsin-ti ch'an-men shih-tzu ch'eng-hsi t'u* 中華傳心地禪門師資承襲圖) written between 830-833, which in turn influenced Sung texts.<sup>28</sup> The *Pao-lin-chuan* 寶林傳 of 801, which was known in the Sung, tells a story of Bodhidharma transmitting his teaching to four students, among them again the nun Tsung-ch'ih, who is third in the order behind Hui-k'o.

This allows us to speculate that before 774 a community of women were known to be practicing and teaching in a Bodhidharma tradition. They had an important enough claim to membership in the lineage that it was told that their ancestress had studied with Bodhidharma and received his Dharma in the 6th century. But the story about Tsung-ch'ih and the other disciples embedded in the *Li-tai-fao-pao-chi* 歷代法寶記 and *Pao-lin-chuan* 寶林傳 texts does not actually give us a depiction of Tsung-ch'ih teaching. And the way this traditional story is added to, changed and glossed in subsequent texts known in the Sung beginning with Tsung-mi

27. I am leaving aside the textual and epigraphic evidence that women were active in Northern School Ch'an that Bernard FAURE has called to our attention, because it seems to make no impact on the Sung Ch'an lineage texts or on the sermons and letters of Sung Ch'an masters addressed to women. Cf. Bernard FAURE, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy*, Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press 1991, p. 243.

28. On this text, cf. Peter N. GREGORY, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press 1991, appendix II-6, p. 318.

宗密's *Chart* and continuing with the *Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu* 景德傳燈錄 compiled in 1004 and subsequent flame histories tends to emphasize the inferiority of the nun Tsung-ch'ih and the other two disciples' understanding as compared with Hui-k'o's, and to stress that the lineage was authentically transmitted only by a single ancestor in each generation between Bodhidharma and Hui-neng, the Sixth Chinese patriarch.<sup>29</sup> In the doctrinal statements and poems attributed to each of Bodhidharma's students in subsequent texts, Tsung-ch'ih's understanding is depicted as not a full Ch'an understanding, and Hui-k'o is insistently depicted as the only full heir to Bodhidharma's Dharma.<sup>30</sup>

Likewise, the Sung biographical traditions about Hui-neng depict a meeting with a nun, named Wu-chin-tsang 無盡藏. This story appears in a number of Sung texts, and probably in the Sung (and definitely in the Yuan) is included in the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*. In the *Sōkei daishi betsuden* 曹溪大師別傳 from the early ninth century,<sup>31</sup> the earliest extant text in which this story appears, the meeting occurs while he is on his way north before he meets his teacher Hung-jen, thus well before he has become a monk.<sup>32</sup> In the story Hui-neng goes to hear Wu-chin-tsang, the aunt of a new close male friend, recite the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* in the evenings. The fact that she is related to his close friend gives the intimacy in the Dharma that develops between them a certain plausibility. He begins to expound to her the meaning of what he hears. She shows him the text and asks him about the meanings of words. He says, "If you will read it to me, I will explain the meaning." She is surprised and skeptical that he can understand the meaning without being able to read the written words of the text. He teaches her that a deep

29. The *T'ien-sheng kuang-teng lu* 天聖廣燈錄, one of the flame histories that followed the CTCTL, demoted the nun Tsung-ch'ih to fourth place among Bodhidharma's heirs. A form of tidying up to make sure that women are represented as ranking below men? The CTCTL, though, remained the flame history that subsequent writers treated as authoritative.
30. It is interesting that Dōgen frequently brought this story up, and consistently interpreted it not as portraying a hierarchical ranking of different degrees of awakening or insight, but rather as the story of four awakened beings expressing awakened Buddha-nature in four different ways.
31. Despite the Japanese title, this is a Chinese text. The title was added when the text was found in Japan, apparently.
32. Much later texts change the placement of this story within Hui-neng's biography to after his awakening with Hung-jen 弘忍.

understanding of the Buddha Dharma is not something that depends on the knowledge of written words. She recognizes that he has a special understanding of the Way. Thus the story shows Hui-neng the lay illiterate teaching the literate nun about the meaning of the words in the text, thereby making the point that the understanding accessed by Ch'an awakening does not depend on literacy (which is, of course, one of the hallmarks of the monk or nun), much less on mastery of the difficult language of sūtras. Like a Buddha, Hui-neng as a result of his initial awakening even without being taught the meanings of the characters understands every word of the sūtras, as he claims in a comment often transmitted separately from the story itself but that offers his experience with the nun Wu-chin-tsang as evidence. The nun Wu-chin-tsang may have been a real person, but in the story she is a useful narrative device. It doubtless would have been more plausible to a T'ang audience to show a literate nun asking a lay man who turns out to be illiterate about the meanings of written words than it would have been to depict a monk in that role.

*The Five Dynasties Text Chodang-chip, "The Ancestor's Hall Collection"*

Our first stories in extant texts of women teaching in the lineages that Sung Ch'an recognizes as part of its ancestry, those that began with Hui-neng's Dharma-heirs Nan-yüeh Huai-jiang 南嶽懷讓 (677-744) and Ch'ing-yüan Hsing-ssu 青原行思 (660-740), begin with the *Chodang-chip* compiled by a Korean monk in 952.<sup>33</sup> In this text stories appear that fall under the second category described above, that is, stories in which women challenge men and teach them, in most cases not by invitation, and without a formal teacher-student relationship as a prerequisite or as a result.

Three stories that appear for the first time in extant texts in the *Chodang-chip* are good examples of our second category, the genre that is continued in the story of Te-shan and the woman who sells refreshments alluded to by Dōgen. The first is the story of the monk Kotī 俱胝 and the nun Shih-chi 實際.<sup>34</sup> Kotī is living in a small temple. The nun Shih-chi appears wearing her monastic bamboo traveling hat. She does not take it off when she reaches the main gate as Ch'an etiquette recorded in later

33. Chinese *Tsu-t'ang-chi*, Japanese *Sōdōshu*.

34. *Chodang-chip*, chuan 19, in *Fo-kuang ta-tsang-ching*, *Ch'an tsang*, published by Fo-kuang-shan, Kaohsiung (Taiwan) 1994, vol. 16, p.958.

texts requires, or even in the temple in the presence of her host.<sup>35</sup> Rather, she circumambulates him and says, "If you can say something I will take off my hat." He cannot. She starts to leave. He says, "It is getting late. Why don't you stay the night." She says, "If you can say something [that reflects your understanding], I will." Again he cannot answer, so she leaves. As the version of this story found in the *Chodang-chip* makes especially clear, his failure to acquit himself like a man and his being laughed at, made a fool of, by a nun cause him to realize that he has to seek a teacher.<sup>36</sup> He is about to leave his small temple when he learns in a dream that a male teacher is coming to see him. The story is primarily about the events that motivate him to seek awakening, but in this case those events involve a nun who not only bests him but who acts as his teacher by allowing him to encounter an awakened mind and by showing him what he needs to learn.

Another story that appears for the first time in the *Chodang-chip* is the story of three traveling monks who encounter a lay woman.<sup>37</sup> After some exchanges, she invites them to drink tea, but with the statement, "Please use your *siddhis*, your supernormal powers, to drink this tea." When the three do not dare to drink, she says, "Watch me manifest my supernormal powers," picks up the cups, and empties them.

The third story I want to mention that appears in the *Chodang-chip* is found in the entry for Huang-po Hsi-yün 黃蘗(槩)希運, Dharma heir of Pai-chang 百丈.<sup>38</sup> The story falls into the type in which a woman whom he has not taken as a teacher challenges a man by presenting him with her deeper awareness, and ends up teaching him, but the story is more

35. Cf. the *Ch'an-yüan ch'ing-kuei* 禪苑清規 section on traveling gear, where doffing one's traveling hat when one reaches the outer eaves of the main gate (*san-men* 三門) of the temple is prescribed, as well as doffing it whenever one meets someone on the road to whom one should bow. Cf. KAGAMISHIMA Genryu, *Yaku-chu Zen-en-shingi*, pp. 24-25. It may be anachronistic to read these details of etiquette back into the tenth century (the time of the text) or the ninth century (the putative time of the story), but the story does seem to require some similar etiquette to make sense.

36. In the *Chodang-chip* Koti says: "I am a monk (*śrāmaṇera*) and I was made fun of (or: "laughed at") by a nun." *Chodang-chip, chuan* 19, vol. 16, p. 958.

37. *Chodang-chip, chuan* 17, *Fo-kuang Ta-tsang-ching*, Ch'an-tsang, shih-chuan-pu, vol. 16, p. 829.

38. *Chodang-chip, chuan* 16, *Fo-kuang ta-tsang-ching*, Ch'an-tsang, shih-chuan-pu, vol. 16, p. 818-19.

revealing than the first two mentioned above. For Dōgen's purposes and for our own interest in Ch'an representations of women teaching it has a certain double-edged quality. In this story Huang-po is going door to door begging for food. An old woman refuses him from behind a screen, telling him that he is insatiable. He replies that since he has not had any food yet, how can she scold him as insatiable. She says, "Only this – surely you are insatiable." Seeing that he is not put off, and that his response has something unusual about it, she invites him in after all, and asks about his Ch'an studies. He is unable to dissemble, and reveals his understanding to her. She instructs him, and he gains a realization. He thanks her repeatedly and wants to acknowledge her formally as his teacher, but she refuses, saying, "I am a five-hindrances body, therefore I am not a vessel of the Dharma" – that is, I am a woman, and thus not suitable to be a teacher. She recommends instead that he go to see Pai-chang. The narrator comments: "Later people passed down the story that this woman when she was young studied Ch'an with the National Teacher Chung 忠國師."<sup>39</sup> Huang-po takes her advice and goes to see Pai-chang, whose Dharma he inherits.

In the *Chodang-chip*, which is a genealogical record of the lineage of Dharma-transmission, no woman has a genealogical entry of her own. And while women attain awakening and do the kind of teaching that the refreshment seller does for Te-shan, and in the case of Huang-po's old woman teacher a woman does even provide the karmic occasion for a monk student's awakening, there is little evidence in this text that a woman teaching Ch'an formally is an imagined possibility, much less a recognized social role. And while we have a male student willing to inherit the Dharma from a woman, it does not actually happen.

39. This "later tradition" looks like an instance of a recurring tendency to attribute the awakening of any awakened or otherwise remarkable woman to having been taught by some member of the male lineage. One might see this as a way of giving her authority and status within the lineage--or as a way of denying her any independent authority. National Teacher Chung's full name is Nan-yang Hui-chung 南陽慧忠.

*The Early Sung "Flame History" called the Ching-te-ch'uan-teng-lu 景德傳燈錄, "Records of the Transmission of the Flame [compiled in] the Ching-te Era"*

In the next genealogical record of the lineage's "transmission of the flame," the *Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu* of 1004, many of the stories from the *Chodang-chip* in which women figure also appear. But there is one change between the two texts which is very significant in the development of the tradition's imagining of women as teachers in the Ch'an lineage. It concerns the story of the encounter between Chih-hsien and the nun teacher Mo-shan Liao-jan, the story that Dōgen narrates. In the *Chodang-chip* the story appears in Chih-hsien's entry and is told as follows:

Chih-hsien arrived at the nun (*shih-ku* 師姑) Mo-shan's place.

The nun asked, "Where did you come from?"

Chih-hsien replied: "From the entrance (mouth) of the road."

The nun asked, "Why did you not cover it?" (that is, your traces)

Chih-hsien asked, "What is Summit mountain (Mo-shan) like?"

The nun replied, "Its peak is not exposed."

Chih-hsien followed up his question: "What is the person in Summit Mountain like?"

The nun said, "It is not male or female in appearance."

He followed up with, "Does it change (transform) or not?"

The nun answered, "It is not a ghost or a god. What should it change into (why should it change)?"

Chih-hsien approved (her answers, her insight).

In the CTCTL Mo-shan Liao-jan has an entry of her own, as a Dharma-heir of Kao-an Ta-yü 高安大愚. The story of Chih-hsien's exchange with her is told as follows:

When the monk Kuan-ch'i Chih-hsien was traveling from place to place [visiting various teachers] he came to the foot of the mountain. He said, "If this place is all right then I will stay; if not, then I will overturn the Ch'an platform." Thus he entered the hall. Liao-jan sent an attendant to ask, "Are you just traveling in the mountains or have you come for the Buddha Dharma?" Chih-hsien replied, "I came for the Buddha Dharma." Liao-jan then ascended the high seat (of the Ch'an teacher in the Dharma Hall). Chih-hsien took up the position of the student (came forward to start the inquiry).

Mo-shan Liao-jan asked, using a respectful form of address, "What place did you leave today?"

Chih-hsien replied, "I left the entrance to the road."

Liao-jan said, "Why didn't you cover it?"

Chih-hsien had no reply. For the first time he bowed and said, "What is Mo-shan (Summit Mountain) like?"

Liao-jan said, "It does not expose its peak."

Chih-hsien said, "What is the owner of Summit Mountain like?"

Liao-jan said, "It does not have male or female appearance."

Chih-hsien then shouted "Ho!" and said, "Why doesn't it transform itself?"

Liao-jan said, "It is not a god and it is not a ghost: What should it transform itself into?"

Chih-hsien at this submitted and worked as a gardener for three years.

In the *Chodang-chip* version, Chih-hsien interrogates Mo-shan Liao-jan, and approves her understanding. He is thus in the role of bestowing recognition of her awakening. In the CTCTL version Chih-hsien challenges her to see whether he should take her as his teacher. When he recognizes the superior insight behind her questions and answers, he stays and studies with her. For the first time in the extant literature of the lineages that were significant to the Sung, we have a story of a woman established as an abbess in the formal role of teacher who also establishes through this dialogue the legitimacy of her claim to Dharma-inheritance and teacher-hood within the Ch'an lineage. This is a significant step forward in the imagining of women as Ch'an teachers. If we take these differences between the two earliest extant texts in which the story appears as an indicator, the imaginative step occurs at the beginning of the Sung.

We should note that the entry for Mo-shan in the CTCTL includes more than the exchange with Chih-hsien. It includes two question and answer exchanges between Mo-shan and a monk or monks (*seng* 僧). Thus it is not just a place to lodge the story of Chih-hsien and Mo-shan. It is an entry for a teacher like many others, and one who teaches monks.

As signs of the incompleteness of this imagining, however a few other things about how women appear in the CTCTL need to be noted.<sup>40</sup> The

40. A glaring example of a woman for whom the CTCTL should have created a separate entry, if only under the "lineage unknown" category, is the woman postulant Ling (Ling Hsing-p'o 凌行婆). Her story appears in the entry for the male teacher Fu-pei Ho-shang 浮盃和尚 in the CTCTL. The entry begins with an encounter between Fu-pei and Ling Hsing-p'o. The rest of the entry offers Nan-ch'uan 南泉's comment that Ling had defeated Fu-pei, then her comment

story appears in Mo-shan's record, but not in Chih-hsien's, where the story of his awakening is told entirely in relation to Lin-chi 臨濟. And the CTCTL does not preserve all of the stories about awakened women teaching that appear in the *Chodang-chip*. For example, the story of Huang-po Hsi-yün's encountering an old woman whom he then wants to take for his formal teacher disappears entirely. The text merely says, "Someone suggested that he go to study with Pai-chang." And although other stories are narrated in the CTCTL in which awakened women figure (the story of Koti and Shih-chi appears in the CTCTL in a version very similar to that in the *Chodang-chip*, for example), no other woman appears as a lineage heir.

There is another story in the CTCTL that is in some ways the reverse of Huang-po's, the story of T'an-k'ung 譚空 and the nun. It presents a woman who wants to be a teacher, and monk who, at least as a challenge, tells her not to because she is a woman. A nun wants to "open the Hall," that is, become an abbess and a teacher. T'an-k'ung challenges with "As a woman there is no point in you 'opening the Hall'." She brings up the dragon girl who achieved Buddhahood at seven years old. He says, "The dragon girl had supernormal powers. What about you? Demonstrate a supernormal power for me." Though presumably the nun could have demonstrated awakened mind in a way that would have overcome T'an-k'ung's objection by showing that she is a Buddha, the fact that his challenge invokes ancient Buddhist ideas about the unsuitability of one who has a woman's body to be a Buddha or a teacher shows the way in which this idea is still present in the early eleventh century in China – as indeed it is always in the background in the Sung, as in Dōgen's sermon, when Ch'an men speak of encountering awakened women.

#### *Later Sung Texts:*

What the CTCTL's representation of Mo-shan as a lineage member began, Southern Sung texts, including flame histories beginning with the *Tsung-men Lien-teng hui-yao* 宗門聯燈會要 (hereafter *Lien-teng*) of 1183,

on Nan-ch'uan's comment, then another Ch'an monk's questioning her about her comment and her replies, then Chao-chou 趙州's comment on this encounter when it was told to him, followed by a number of exchanges between Chao-chou and Ling, including an exchange of poems. Fu-pei does not appear in the entry except in the initial encounter. It certainly seems that her awakened mind, rather than Fu-pei's, is the real subject of the entry.



continue. If Dōgen's interest in his sermon had been in demonstrating that women were recognized as Ch'an teachers in the Sung, and if he had had available to him the *Lien-teng* or the *Chia-t'ai p'u-teng lu* 嘉泰普燈錄 (hereafter *P'u-teng*), a flame history which had been presented to the emperor Ning-tsung and admitted to the Buddhist canon in 1204, or other Southern Sung texts on which the *P'u-teng* drew, he could easily have found convincing examples with which to persuade his audience.

We do not have space here to survey every single Sung text in which women are credited with teaching Ch'an. But some idea of how matters progressed can be gleaned from sketching the treatment of women Dharma-heirs in the Sung flame histories. These histories, after all, were the principal Ch'an texts that were presented to the emperor and included in the Sung Buddhist canon. More study needs to be done of the intentions and conceptions behind the selection and editing that shaped these compilations – some seem more interested in preserving anecdotes and literary productions in various genres, some seem more interested in constructing the lineage, though selectively, and some seem to intend to construct the lineages without leaving anyone out, though in fact they do leave people out. But they provide a useful indication of which stories, which words and authors of words, and which putative lineage members the Sung Ch'an movement regarded as important enough to be included in a record of their tradition.

Women lineage heirs with their own genealogical entries are not found in the *T'ien-sheng kuang-teng lu* 天聖廣燈錄 of 1036, which according to YANAGIDA Seizan stressed the heirs of Ma Tsu 馬祖 and the Sung expansion of the Lin-chi 臨濟 line and entered the canon under the emperor Jen-tsung. Nor are there women lineage heirs in the *Chien-chung ch'ing-kuo hsü-teng lu* 建中靖國續燈錄 of 1101, which according to YANAGIDA stressed the house of Yün-men 雲門.<sup>41</sup>

In the *Lien-teng* of 1183 the monk Wu-ming 悟明 united the "Three Flames of the Northern Sung," producing a geneologically arranged record of the words of teachers and Dharma-heirs in Nan-yüeh's lineage through the 17th generation and Ch'ing-yüan's through the 15th. The words that are karmic occasions of awakening and the questions and answers of more than 600 lineage heirs, including all of the awakening stories from Ta-hui Tsung-kao 大慧宗杲's *Cheng-fa-yen-tsang* 正法眼藏 collection,

41. YANAGIDA Seizan, "Zenseki kaidai", in *Zenke goroku* II, p. 478.

are included.<sup>42</sup> In this text Mo-shan Liao-jan has an entry of her own, and so do two women Dharma-heirs of Ta-hui Tsung-kao (1089-1163), Wu-cho Tao-jen Miao-tsung 無著道人妙總 and Ting-kuang Tao-jen Miao-tao 定光道人妙道.<sup>43</sup>

With this text another important milestone is reached in the representation of women teachers as Ch'an lineage members. One might say that whereas Mo-shan Liao-jan might have been included as an anomaly in the CTCTL, once Miao-tsung 妙總 and Miao-tao 妙道 are recognized as fully within the Ch'an lineage with the publication of the *Lien-teng*, the idea of women teaching Ch'an becomes much more imaginable. For unlike Mo-shan Liao-jan, Miao-tao and Miao-tsung are not figures from the remote past, but teachers whom many of the readers of the *Lien-teng* could have known. Miao-tao and Miao-tsung had been very active in Ch'an circles within living memory in 1183. (Miao-tsung is said to have died in 1170). A number of other texts from the period tell us a lot about both women. In the *Lien-teng* sermons and dialogues are recorded for both. Unlike Mo-shan Liao-jan, Miao-tsung and Miao-tao's records do not stress the issue of whether women can teach. They are simply presented as awakened women who are called upon by the imperial command to teach, and who accept it and perform well as teachers.

The next text, the *P'u-teng* of 1204 compiled by the monk Cheng-shou 正受 (1146-1208) takes an even larger step toward fully imagining women as teachers and lineage members. Whereas the earlier flame histories after the CTCTL strongly favored the stories of monks, the compiler of this text deliberately included the records of the awakening and teaching of royalty, nuns, and lay men and women. Sixteen awakened women have genealogical entries in this text, beginning with eight Sung women

42. YANAGIDA Seizan, in his "Zenseki kaidai" included in *Zenke goroku* II, suggests that though the material in the text is arranged genealogically, the compiler of this text was centrally interested in collecting *kung-an s* 公案 (*kōans*), rather than in recording events related to history of the tradition. Cf. p. 479a.

43. These last are among nine Dharma-heirs of Ta-hui Tsung-kao with entries in the text. Ta-hui Tsung-kao, who died in 1163, had repeatedly referred to Miao-tao and Miao-tsung as teachers and as Dharma-heirs in the sermons and letters that were published shortly after his death. Ta-hui Tsung-kao's circle of disciples no doubt had considerable influence on the composition of the *Lien-teng hui-yao* 聯燈會要, which was compiled by his third-generation disciple. The *Lien-teng hui-yao* is clearly selective in its inclusion of lineage members. Ta-hui Tsung-kao, for example, had far more students whose awakening he recognized and who were counted as Dharma heirs than the nine included in the *Lien-teng*.

whose awakenings and inheritance of the Dharma fall between those of Mo-shan Liao-jan and Miao-tao chronologically. In the eighth fascicle we have Wen-chao 文照, of whom more below; and Fa-hai 法海, a Dharma-granddaughter of Hui-lin Tsung-pen 慧林宗本 (1020-1099). In the ninth fascicle we have Hui-kuang 慧光, Dharma-heir of K'u-mu Fa-ch'eng 枯木法成. Hui-kuang in the spring of 1121 became the abbess of the Tung-ching Miao-hui-ssu 東京妙慧寺, a nunnery in the Northern Sung capital.<sup>44</sup> In the ninth fascicle we also find the nun Fo-t'ung Ta-shih 佛通大師, Dharma-heir of Shih-men Yüan-yi 石門元易 and Dharma-granddaughter of the Ts'ao-tung 曹洞 lineage master Fu-jung Tao-k'ai 芙蓉道楷 (1043-1118). In the tenth fascicle we have K'ung-shih Tao-jen 空室道人, Dharma-heir of Ssu-hsin Wu-hsin 死心悟新 (1043-1114); sometime between 1111 and 1117 she kept a bathhouse outside of the Pao-ning Monastery 保寧寺 in Chin-ling 金陵. In the eleventh fascicle we find Yü Tao-p'o 愉道婆, the only Dharma-heir of Lang-ya Yung-ch'i 瑯琊永起. In the fifteenth fascicle we have three women Dharma-heirs of Yüan-wu K'o-ch'in 圓悟克勤 (1063-1135), famous for authoring the final layer of commentary in the *Blue Cliff Record* and as Ta-hui Tsung-kao's teacher: Chüeh-an Tao-jen Miss Tsu 覺庵道人祖氏; Ming-shih Tao-jen 明室道人; and Fan Hsien-chun 范縣君, a widow. In the sixteenth fascicle we read of the nun teacher Hui-wen 慧溫, Dharma-heir of Fo-yen Ch'ing-yuan 佛眼清遠 (1067-1120), the Dharma-brother of Yüan-wu K'o-ch'in. Miao-tao, Miao-tsung, and the lay woman Lady Ch'in-kuo 秦國太夫人 (Chi shih 計氏), three Dharma-heirs of Ta-hui Tsung-kao, appear in the eighteenth fascicle, and Fa-teng 法燈, Dharma-heir of the nun Hui-wen, appears in fascicle twenty-one. Yuan-chi 圓機 and Ch'en Tao-p'o 陳道婆 appear in fascicle twenty-two. Thus in 1204 we find a significant number of women represented as Dharma-heirs and lineage members on the same basis as men in having brief biographies and their words recorded in a Sung flame history.<sup>45</sup>

From their records in the *P'u-teng* it is clear that nine attained formal positions as abbesses and teachers. It is perhaps significant, though, as

44. She received a purple robe and a Dharma-name from the emperor.

45. This is not surprising because in fact a number of less formal Ch'an school texts that appear before 1204 include stories about awakened women and about women teaching, thus providing ample material on which the *Chia-t'ai p'u-teng lu* could draw, as well as clear examples that show that women teaching as members of the Ch'an lineage was now fully imaginable. Examples include the *Yün-wo chi-t'an* 雲臥紀談 and *Lo-hu yeh-lu* 蘿湖野錄.

perhaps reflecting ambivalence on the part of the compiler or disagreement within the larger Ch'an community about the status of women teachers of Ch'an, that none of the women are listed with the title of *Ch'an-shih* 禪師 (J. *Zenji*).

This hesitation to give full recognition was corrected in the next flame history, the *Wu-teng hui-yüan* 五燈會元 (hereafter *Wu-teng*) of 1252, where the women who taught formally as abbesses are listed with the title *Ch'an-shih* 禪師. In this the most comprehensive of all of the flame histories to date, the sixteen women teachers and lineage heirs from the *P'u-teng* retain their places, and five more stories of awakened women that cannot be placed in the lineage are included at the end of the book.

Mo-shan Liao-jan was the first nun to be portrayed in Ch'an texts known in the Sung as doing what male teachers do – being an abbess, welcoming and challenging students in that role. The breakthrough that occurred in the CTCTL's version of Mo-shan's story was furthered in the *Lien-teng* and the *P'u-teng* and other Southern Sung non-flame history texts, which showed women performing in many ways the role of an enlightened Ch'an teacher. Women who became nuns (some before, some after their awakening) are portrayed as serving as abbesses, preaching sermons, and teaching by entering into dialogues and Dharma combat. They behave ceremonially as men teachers do, "ascending the Hall" as Buddhas to teach (*shang-t'ang* [ascending the Hall] sermons are recorded for Hui-kuang, Wen-chao, Miao-tsung, Miao-tao, Hui-wen, and Fa-teng). They leave the same kinds of marks on the world as men do: in the case of several of the women included the *P'u-teng* we are told that records of their sayings, activities and poems circulated in the world. (For example, K'ung-shih Tao-jen wrote a number of poems and had a record, called "Record on Clarifying the Mind," circulated; Ming-shih Tao-jen in 1141 sent her poems to a monk teacher who added a colophon and published them; and Miao-tsung's poetic comments on *kung-ans* 公案 of Hsüeh-feng I-ts'un 雪峰義存 (822-908) adorn the Mt. Hsüeh-feng temple gazetteer.) One, Miao-tsung, wrote a postface to an important Ch'an text, the *Unofficial Records* [written at] *Lake Lo* (*Lo-hu yeh-lu* 羅湖野錄). Hui-kuang saw her accomplishments recognized by the Emperor's inviting her to preach and awarding her a purple robe. Her accomplishments were recorded in a pagoda inscription composed by the literatus Han Tzu-tsang 韓子倉.<sup>46</sup>

46. The location of the pagoda was carefully recorded in the *Chia-t'ai p'u-teng lu*, but the inscription does not seem to be in any epigraphy collection.

Wen-chao was likewise awarded a purple robe by the emperor. Many of the women teachers died as Buddhas do, predicting the time of death, sitting in a crosslegged position and dying calmly in exemplary Buddhist fashion. The manner of their dying is noted in their biographies in the flame histories, in some cases with attendant signs of sainthood (the story of Ming-yin Hui-chao 明因慧照 is a conspicuous example).<sup>47</sup>

By multiplying examples and by giving the reader details with the ring of historical fact, the thirteenth century Southern Sung flame histories suggest that what was an imaginative possibility in the early eleventh century has become an accepted social reality. These texts show us the role of abbess and Ch'an teacher as a new social role available to women, which continues, as Beata GRANT has shown, into the eighteenth century.<sup>48</sup> Though the numbers involved were not large, the texts show us women taking up, even inventing, a new social role: not just a nun, not just a nun teacher, but a Ch'an nun teacher. A comment in the *Chia-t'ai* entry for Wen-chao shows how clearly the notion of a woman Ch'an teacher had been accepted by 1204. The reader is told that Wen-chao had become a nun at age 17, and had gone everywhere to seek out Ch'an teachers. "She obtained authentication of [the Ch'an teacher] Kan-lu [Chung-hsuan] 甘露仲宣's Dharma. The commandery governor Ch'en Shih-hsi 陳師錫 heard of her fame, ordered her to become abbess of Miao-shen 妙湛 temple in P'ing-chiang-fu 平江府 (the area centering on modern Su-chou). Later she changed temples five times, each time changing the nunnery from a Vinaya to a Ch'an institution. The Ch'an nunneries and monasteries in Wu 吳 (roughly equal to modern Kiangsu) really began with Wen-chao." Thus in the Wu area the nun Wen-chao as the Dharma-heir of a male Ch'an teacher made a series of nun's temples into Ch'an temples, and invented for herself and for other nuns in this important region a new social role.

47. The *Chia-t'ai* and *Wu-teng* do not tell the stories or record the words of all of the Sung women who have a good claim to be counted as lineage members and teachers--there are at least another ten about whom we know from other Southern Sung texts who could equally be included.

48. Beata GRANT, "Female Holder of the Lineage: Linji Chan Master Zhiyuan Xinggang (1597-1654)", *Late Imperial China*, vol 17 no. 2, Dec. 1996, pp. 51-76.

*Women teachers with Dharma-heirs:*

If Mo-shan is portrayed in the CTCTL as performing the role of a Ch'an teacher as male teachers perform it, she is not like some of them portrayed as having Dharma-heirs who are Ch'an lineage members. Chih-hsien is represented as her student, but not in the CTCTL as her Dharma-heir. We do not have a story that shows her providing the occasion for his attaining awakening. And he is not listed as her Dharma-heir.

In later Sung texts we do find some women with Dharma-heirs. For example, as mentioned above, the nun Hui-wen had a Dharma-heir, the nun Fa-teng. And the nun Tao-shen 道深 of the Western Capital, a direct Dharma-heir of Fu-jung Tao-k'ai, had two Dharma-heirs who are recognized as members of the lineage.<sup>49</sup>

*Concluding remarks on women as teachers*

In the scope of this essay we cannot do more than briefly sample what the records of women Dharma-heirs in and outside the flame histories tell us about how women left families, studied with teachers who welcomed women students, networked with each other, and became abbesses and Ch'an teachers in the Sung. We will have to reserve for another occasion the more precise mapping of the activities of women Ch'an teachers and the designation of their temples as Ch'an temples in time and space that would give us a more nuanced picture of this historical development. We are focusing here on when and how the possibility of women becoming Dharma-heirs and teaching Ch'an came to be imagined and constructed in the central texts of the lineage. Suffice it to say that there was certainly good evidence in the way the texts represented them to support Dōgen's claim that women were enrolling in Sung monasteries, attaining the Way, having their attainments recognized, and being appointed abbesses of nuns' temples, and that in his own lifetime it was recognized in China that what they were teaching through poems, dialogues and sermons was in fact Ch'an. That is to say, the role of woman Ch'an teacher formally teaching Ch'an to formally enrolled disciples at temples that are formally named Ch'an temples and having Dharma-heirs was fully imagined possibility in the representations of the lineage in China.

49. It is not entirely clear to me from their names that both Dharma-heirs were women.

*Women teaching men, Part I: Lay women, and women who have left families but are not nuns and abbesses*

But it is representations of awakened Ch'an women teaching men that would most closely provide a Sung Ch'an background for Dōgen's argument in his sermon. Where do we find such stories in the Sung Ch'an texts?

Stories about T'ang women and T'ang masters in which lay women challenge or teach monks or Ch'an students, exemplified by the story of the woman refreshment seller whom the sūtra-lecturer Te-shan 德山 (782-865) encounters that Dōgen mentions, seem to be a growing genre in the texts compiled or composed in the Sung. The story of Te-shan and the woman refreshments seller itself, which does not appear in the entries for Te-shan in the *Chodang-chip*, the *Biographies of Eminent Monks Compiled in the Sung* (*Sung kao-seng chuan* 宋高僧傳), or the CTCTL, is a featured *kung-an* in the *Blue Cliff Record* (*Pi-yen lu*) and appears to be well known in the Sung.<sup>50</sup>

The Sung texts also add many stories in which Sung women challenge men masters successfully, in some cases teaching them, in other cases merely demonstrating their equality with them as awakened beings. The stories of Miao-tsung's encounters with Ch'an masters, including the famous Ts'ao-tung master Chen-hsieh Ch'ing-liao 眞歇清子 and her ultimate teacher Ta-hui Tsung-kao, that are included in the *Precious Mirror of Humans and Gods* (*Jen-t'ien pao-chien* 人天寶鑑), show her putting these famous masters at a disadvantage and winning a reputation thereby. In one text there is a story in which Ta-hui's "First Seat" Wan-an Tao-yen 卍庵道顏 (1094-1164) at Ta-hui's urging seeks a Dharma-combat interview with Miao-tsung before she has become a nun. Wan-an 卍庵 is upset because Ta-hui has lodged her for the rainy season retreat in his abbot's quarters. When he goes to see her she meets the challenge and offers one of her own by appearing naked; she goes on to best him in the ensuing exchange. We might say that Ta-hui has cast her in the role of teacher for Wan-an, a role she takes up with great brilliance.<sup>51</sup>

50. Cf. ISHII Shūdō, *Chugoku zenshū shiwa: Shinji Shōbōgenzō ni manabu*, Kyoto: Zenbunka Kenkyūsho 1988, p. 460.

51. See my essay "Stories of Enlightened Women in Ch'an and the Chinese Buddhist Female Bodhisattva /Goddess Tradition", in Karen L. King, ed., *Women and Goddess Traditions in Antiquity and Today*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press 1997, pp. 137-76, especially pp. 152-61.

One of the most enjoyable of the stories of Sung women challenging men is the story of Yü Tao-p'o's meeting with Yüan-wu K'o-ch'in. Yü, whose profession was making donuts with her husband in Chinling, had attained an awakening due to the master Lang-ya's showing her Lin-chi's saying about the "true man of no rank." Later when Yüan-wu was approaching the teaching seat for his inaugural teaching session as abbot and master at Chiang-shan 蔞山 near Chinling, Yü Tao-p'o bounded forth from the assembly, gave him a shove with her body and disappeared back into the crowd. When Yüan-wu went the next day to see her at her house, she did not come out to greet him. Instead she shouted, "Such a yellow-mouthed little boy – and you say you are an abbot and a teacher!" Yüan-wu said, "Stop bragging so much, old woman, I've already recognized you." She then laughed heartily and came out to meet him.<sup>52</sup> After this many monks sought her out, and her challenges to them and the ensuing dialogues are recorded. It is never mentioned that she became a nun; nor is her husband ever mentioned again.

A minority of women in the Sung Ch'an records become nuns while still unmarried in their teens and twenties and pursue monastic careers. In many cases women have to find a way to leave marriages. In fact there seems to be more than one example of a pattern that as it is represented suggests a second imagined accepted life course for women Dharma-heirs in the Sung. Women who become interested in Ch'an often have married, but do their best to withdraw from family life. Sometimes in the biographies we are told that they are not allowed by their families to become nuns, though they are allowed to withdraw from marriages and return home. They study and practice at home, and go to see masters. On achieving awakening, they live on the margins of monastic life. They become famous for their awakening and many (including men no doubt) visit them to discuss Ch'an. They do not return to family life – we have no stories of women who live in families after their awakening and turn their wisdom to the benefit of marital relationships or family concerns. Late in life they may become nuns and abbesses. A good example of this pattern is the story of K'ung-shih Tao-jen. She comes from the family of an official, and marries the grandson of the chief minister Su Sung 蘇頌. Before very long she tires of her worldly life, returns to her parents' home and

52. For the lively rendering of this story I am indebted to Thomas CLEARY. Cf. "Kahawai Koans" in the journal *Kahawai: Journal of women and Zen*, vol. IV.1 (1982): 14.



asks to be allowed to become a nun. When this request is denied, she cultivates Buddhist study and practice at home. She reads Tu-shun 杜川順's *Contemplation of the Dharmadhātu*, has a realization, and expresses her understanding in poems. After her parents' death she follows her brother to his new official post, where she meets and has a Dharma exchange with Ssu-hsin. He approves her awakening. She later lives in Chinling, where she operates a bathhouse at a large Ch'an monastery. She posts poems on signs on the bathhouse that challenge all comers to demonstrate that they understand the meaning of dirt and washing before they may wash. One begins: "There is not a single thing, what would you wash? If there is a speck of dust, where does it come from?" Later she becomes a nun in Suchou.

In the Sung texts men are shown seeking out these women on the margins for conversation about Dharma at least as often as they are shown seeking out awakened nun teachers.

### *Women teaching men, Part II: Abbesses teaching men*

But what about stories about women formally teaching men within Ch'an institutional settings, which is after all what Dōgen is proposing in the *Raihaitokuzui*? Are the stories about Mo-shan the only examples in the Sung texts on which Dōgen could have drawn? The story of the Northern Sung nun Hui-kuang provides an example of a nun teaching publically in the presence of men, for she was invited to preach in a mixed assembly when she was invited along with monks to receive a purple robe from the emperor in a ceremony at the palace, and like them was invited to preach in the presence of the emperor and the assembled monastic and lay guests. Nonetheless, the texts we have do not portray nuns as regularly having men students, or show them regularly preaching to mixed audiences or to men. Nothing in the Chinese Ch'an records causes us to be surprised that Dōgen in his sermon seems to be able to adduce few stories that support his point.<sup>53</sup>

And what about Dōgen's account of nuns who are ordered to serve as abbesses being invited to ascend the Hall and teach in the monasteries in which they are enrolled, i.e., their training monasteries, occasions on which the whole assembly from the abbot on down stand formally to

53. There are a few other stories that involve interactions between nuns active in Ch'an and monks, in which the monk obtains profit from the nun's words.

receive teaching, and monks ask questions? The only confirmation of Dōgen's report on this that I can find in the Ch'an texts lies in the record for the nun teacher Miao-tao in the *Lien-teng*. The record of Miao-tao 妙道's first sermon begins with a monk (*seng* 僧) asking a question, "When your words do not extend to any affair and your words do not fit the truth – what about that?" She answers, "You fall into the hole before you have even defecated." And then she continues with a longer comment on the dilemma she faces in carrying out her role as a preacher of Dharma and being forced to use words.<sup>54</sup>

Dōgen's advice to his male students to take women as their teachers when the abbot and his assistant teacher, the First Seat, are not around, goes beyond anything that we find in the Sung texts, and, as suggested above, perhaps reflects both the logic of his non-dualism and the enthusiasm of a convert.<sup>55</sup> Were his Japanese students to have followed Chih-hsien's example *en masse*, at Dōgen's recommendation, the Zen sangha and its institutions would have looked quite different from the way Dōgen's Sung Chinese predecessors represented their own. Southern Sung Ch'an represented women as studying with male masters in male monasteries, and teaching in women's monasteries. It represented monks as seeking out enlightened lay women, or marginally monastic women, for Ch'an discourse. But Sung Ch'an was apparently far from being transgressive enough to represent itself as encouraging men to study with women formally. This would have had the effect of further integrating the male and female sanghas. Ch'an monks concerned, as perhaps Dōgen was not, with maintaining their established position at the center of elite religion would have been particularly unwilling to do this at a time when the state and its Confucian revivalist leadership wanted to enact a more complete

54. In the course of the sermon she calls herself *shan-seng*, the monk /monastic of this mountain, as a number of other women teachers in the records are represented as doing as well. Could nun students be represented as *seng* 僧 as well as *ni* 尼?

55. But on the other hand, Dōgen, in telling his audience that when they encounter a woman who has attained the way, they should see her in an entirely new light, which I interpret to mean not as the mere woman she was before but as the awakened one she is now, sounds a note also much sounded in the Chinese Ch'an texts. Sung masters repeatedly told their audiences such things as "you see her as a woman, but she is a great hero, a *ta-chang-fu*." Gender, or at least the gender distinction that affects how Buddhists see each other, apparently is something that has a certain fluidity. It can be transformed in the mind of the beholder, and it can be transformed from within.

separation between men and women.<sup>56</sup>

In the second, *Secret Shōbōgenzō* part of his sermon Dōgen says that his listeners should not forget that nuns are superior to lay people, even to lay men, in their practice and attainment of the Way. Dōgen asserts a Buddhist view of status over against a non-Buddhist view that might have been similar in both China and Japan, which would have seen any woman as inferior in status to any man. Dōgen in effect says, on the contrary, we Buddhists will continue to claim for women renunciant Buddhists that they are entitled to great respect from the lay world. Similarly, both Dōgen and many masters and texts in the Ch'an Buddhist world in China asserted, over against the current Confucian effort to confine women to the inner quarters, that there will continue to be a Buddhist claim that both monks and nuns can practice the Way, and that both monks and nuns can play a public role in exercising their proper function of teaching the Dharma. Both within the Buddhist monastic context as abbesses and teachers, and in a more ambiguous new role as informal teacher on the margins of monastic life. Those worthy to claim that role by virtue of their attainment of awakened mind are not merely women, as the secular and the Buddhist worlds see women, but are *mahāpuruṣas*, great Beings, bodhisattvas and Buddhas.

56. Early in the Sung the emperor, on the good Confucian grounds that the separation of men and women was an important principle, wanted to establish ordination platforms in nuns temples, so that nuns' ordinations could be held without the presence of monks. The monastic institution protested vigorously this departure from the Vinaya tradition in which monks were to have some involvement in the ordination of nuns. No doubt another unexpressed motive was to maintain control.