

Establishing the Identity of an Immortal: *The Peach Bud Collection* and Old Master Chen¹

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Introduction

What became the Japanese Ōbaku school 黄檗宗 was founded in the mid 17th century by Chinese monks from Fujian. They achieved an enormous feat in establishing a new school within the xenophobic policies of the Tokugawa Shogunate. The very success of the young Ōbaku organization was directly due to the favor of Tokugawa Ietsuna 徳川家綱 (1641-1680) and Emperor Gomizunoo 後水尾天皇 (1596-1680; r. 1611-1629), whose interest in the foreign monks redounded to lavish gifts of land, money, and other materials needed to establish the young school within the competitive milieu of Tokugawa Buddhism. One of the prime reasons for the interest in the Ōbaku monks and their young organization was that Chinese Buddhism had always represented the fount of the Japanese model, and the arrival of the late-Ming monks was an opportunity to study and experience the latest in the cultural and religious models of the Continent. This cultural cachet of the Ōbaku monks was their prime asset to which they made recourse throughout their history in Japan.

As we will see, it is suggested that Ōbaku monks in the generation following

¹ This paper is based on a longer version published as “A Daoist Immortal Among Zen Monks: Chen Tuan, Yinyuan Longqi, Emperor Reigen and the Ōbaku Text, *Tōzuihen*” in *The Eastern Buddhist* 42/2. In addition to be altered and abridged, analysis and translation not presented in the longer version is also included in this paper. This paper builds on preliminary research presented in *Bulletin of the Graduate School of Computer Science and Systems Engineering, Kyushu Institute of Technology (Human Science)* No. 24, March 2011.

the death in 1673 of Japanese Ōbaku founder Yinyuan Longqi (隱元隆琦, 1592-1673; Jp. Ingen Ryūki), attempted to forge a connection to the imperial house by making strategic use (or construction, as the case may be) of a text called *Tōzuihen* 桃藥編, in which a Daoist immortal is appropriated into a Japanese context. The *Tōzuihen* tells the story of the immortal Chen who was said to have presaged Yinyuan's arrival in Japan, and predicted that it would herald the birth of a new emperor, later understood to be Emperor Reigen 靈元天皇 (1654-1732; r. 1663-1687) who was born during the year Yinyuan arrived in Nagasaki (1654). The immortal, who originally appears as Chen Bo 陳博 (also known as Chen "No smoke" 無煙) is reinterpreted in the *Tōzuihen* to be none other than Chen Tuan 陳搏 (?-989), the well-known prophetic immortal born in the late Tang period. The background and possible reasons for this reinterpretation will be investigated below.

Owing to the nature of this text, which exists only in manuscript, is little known outside (or even inside) the Ōbaku school, and which is shrouded in mystery—perhaps much of it deliberate—we should probably make clear exactly what is true and what is myth. Of course between these two poles of established truth and probable myth will be much of which we are uncertain. It is hoped that the readers may arrive at their own conclusions based on the evidence presented.

We know that the text was compiled by Fujiwara Akimitsu 藤原韶光 (1663-1729)² and then presented to Reigen in 1705 as Reigen's preface to the work makes clear. While it certainly seems that the emperor did have an interest in the text, the

² Fujiwara was the clan name of Akimitsu, although his family name was Kadenokōji 勘解由小路. The Kadenokōji was a branch of the Hino 日野 line of the Northern Fujiwara. For more on this lineage, see Ichiko Teiji et al., eds., *Kokusho jinmei jiten* 5 vols. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993), 1:482d. In the *Kokusho jinmei jiten* the *Tōzuihen* (1705) is listed as one of Akimitsu's works. The *Tōzuihen* has three chapters attributed to Akimitsu, including the longest, the *Chinsen kōden* 陳仙広伝

Tōzuihen was never published, and likely did not circulate beyond those immediately concerned. On the Ōbaku side, Yinyuan, the founding patriarch of the Japanese Ōbaku school and one of the text's protagonists, dies thirty years before its presentation to Reigen. Although the text proclaims that it was written in response to the prognostication that Yinyuan received in 1652—two years before his arrival in Japan—it is not at all certain that Yinyuan was cognizant of, or even received a prophetic verse from Chen Tuan. Also, Yinyuan's relationship with the supposed immortal is unclear. An immortal with the surname Chen 陳 and the appellation “No Smoke” 無煙 appears in the works of Yinyuan, although he is not identified as Chen Tuan. The deliberate identification of these two figures is one of the themes found in the *Tōzuihen*. This will be investigated in greater depth below.

The *Tōzuihen* was presented to emperor Reigen in 1705 by a group of Ōbaku monks. The entire work is based on a calculated and creative interpretation of a short and cryptic verse that was said to have been pronounced by the immortal Chen while Yinyuan was still residing in Fujian. The verse runs:

Presented to the Huangbo monk [Yinyuan] on his journey to Japan: Even if I thoroughly chew the yellow root, my teeth are not cold. On this occasion it should be known that there is a pass for Zen [to flourish]. On the day that three thousand peach buds first burst forth, I will wait to eat in the company of the immortal.³

Although the passage is quite short and opaque, it became the kernel around

³ Kadenokōji 1705, 1:1.

which the whole basis for the production of the *Tōzuihen* was formed. These few lines were the only ones said to have been pronounced by the immortal and the rest of the work is primarily composed of commentary on them. It is interesting to reflect that the elaborate interpretation of Chen predicting Yinyuan's arrival as coinciding with the birth of Emperor Reigen is all based on this short and ambiguous poem.

One may question what might compel a group of Ōbaku monks to present such a work to an emperor—a text that tells a story which would have occurred over fifty years prior. It is not perhaps unreasonable to consider that when Emperor Go-Mizunoo died in 1680 and the young Ōbaku school lost its staunchest imperial supporter (Tokugawa Ietsuna, the other great Ōbaku supporter, also died in 1680), the Ōbaku monks made an attempt to further perpetuate imperial ties by means of the *Tōzuihen* in the hopes of securing their place in an increasingly uncertain future.

Chen Tuan: Background and Associations

What can be said with certainty is that there are a limited number of historical facts about Chen Tuan.⁴ While his historicism is not in contention, it was the legendary accounts and posthumous associations surrounding him that contributed to his lasting legacy. Those most conspicuous facts about Chen present him as an adept of *qi* 氣 (variously rendered as “pneuma,” “breath,” or “vital force”) control methods, a master of physiognomy (*xiangshu* 相術) for which he is credited with writing the classic, *Fengjian* 風鑑 (Mirror of Auras). These powers, one may suppose, were attained through his cultivation of inner alchemy, described thus in his biography: “[F]

⁴ For a biography of Chen Tuan as well as his place in history and legend, see Livia Kohn, “Introduction: The Life of Chen Tuan after the *History of the Song*” *Taoist Resources* 2.1 (1990): 1-7, and Kohn, “Chen Tuan in History and Legend,” *ibid.*, 8-31.

or more than twenty years he practiced absorption of cosmic energy and abstention from cereals, and only lived on several cups of wine every day.”⁵ Perhaps he is most patently associated with the formulation of the *Taiji tu* 太極圖, or Diagram of the Great Ultimate.⁶ Chen Tuan is also renowned as a fortune teller and is said to have met with Song Taizong 宋太宗 (r. 976-997) which resulted in Chen’s being viewed as the legitimizing saint of the new dynasty.⁷ An important distinction about the nature of the fortune telling should be drawn here. One of the major sources for Chen’s legend as a prophetic immortal is Yuan period drama, where he is portrayed as an accurate prognosticator not only of individual fortunes and destinies, but also of the fortunes of the State.⁸ These abilities, however, are owing to his knowledge of the *Yijing* or *Book of Changes*, as well as his ability to read the cosmic energy (*qi* 氣) of the person concerned, something which requires a personal appearance. In the case of the *Tōzuihen*, however, the immortal is portrayed as making prognostications as a spirit through the planchette, or divining stick. Other legends of Chen present him as a master of sleep meditation (*shuigong* 睡功), also called ecstatic sleep.⁹ In addition, he is linked with Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓, the late-Tang figure who became the patriarch of the Southern and Northern lineages of Daoism, and during the Ming period, the patron saint of spirit writing. We see that while Chen Tuan was a historical figure, he

⁵ Kohn, “Introduction: The Life of Chen Tuan after the *History of the Song*,” 2.

⁶ This is a rather complex discussion, and will not be pursued here. For a helpful summary on the origin and meaning of this diagram, see Fabrizio Pregadio ed. *The Encyclopedia of Taoism 2v* (London, New York: Routledge, 2008), 2:934-36.

⁷ *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*, 1:257-59.

⁸ Kohn, “Chen Tuan in History and Legend,” 24.

⁹ For more on what Livia Kohn translates as “ecstatic sleep” as well as a translation from Chen’s biography that details this practice, see Livia Kohn ed., *The Taoist Experience: An Anthology* (Albany: State University of New York, 1993), 271-76. For a translation of a Ming-dynasty text that purports to portray the sleep exercises of Chen Tuan, see Teri Takehiro, “Translation: The Twelve Sleep Exercises of Mount Hua,” *Taoist Resources* 2.1 (1990): 73-94.

gradually became increasingly deified, resulting in his status as a prominent Daoist immortal by the tenth and eleventh century.¹⁰

Chen Tuan's associations and status would have made him a natural choice as spiritual benefactor of the Ōbaku monks. During the Ming dynasty and still today, Chen is one of the most conspicuous of the Daoist immortals. Not only was he particularly identified with divinatory ability, but he also had patent associations with officialdom. He frequented the Song court and had close associations with figures of the government, a convenient characteristic which would not have been lost on the Chinese Ōbaku monks. It would seem, according to the *Tōzuihen*, that he also had a special connection with the Japanese imperial house.

Spirit Writing and Old Master Chen

A séance of spirit writing (*fujū* 扶乩) consists of using a planchette (*ji* 乩) as a medium in order for human beings to communicate with immortals or gods from the spirit world. The instruments and the performance of the *fujū* are described by Chao Wei-pang as follows:

Originally it was a sieve to which was attached a short stick. It was held generally by two persons at either side to trace characters on sand or ashes with the lower end of the short stick. The characters were supposed to have been produced by the gods. Now, in most cases, the sieve has been replaced by a stick about a yard long with a shorter bent stick coming out from the middle of one side at right angles to it. It is also held up by two persons, at one end by a man

¹⁰ Chen Tuan also became associated with a variety of Daoist longevity practices. For more on Chen, see *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*, 2:257-59.

with his left and at the other end by a man with his right hand, so that it traces characters on sand or ashes with the tip of the bent stick. Writings and pictures can be obtained also by fastening a brush to the short stick of the planchette. The writings and pictures are made on long sheets of paper instead of on sand... When the fu chi is performed, incense is first burned, spells are recited and a written charm to invite a god or goddess is burned. Sometimes the written charm is replaced by a piece of certain [sic] kind of yellow paper, which is called *piao* (表), and no spells are recited at all. When the god or goddess has been invited, some questions are asked, the planchette is held so as to move over the sand, and the god is supposed to answer by writing through it.¹¹

In addition to being a potent spiritual tool of the enfranchised, spirit writing was also a social activity that brought people together with the shared objective of communicating with transcendental beings to assuage the need for some guidance in matters beyond their control.

Spirit writing was first developed in China during the Song dynasty. Originally used as a form of divination by commoners, by the eleventh century spirit writing became centered on written messages from immortals and deified cultural heroes.¹²

¹¹ Chao Wei-pang, "The Origin and Growth of the Fu Chi," *Folklore Studies* 1 (1942): 9-10. This article records many interesting historical examples of the use of the *fujū*. In one, it relates how the Jiajing Emperor 嘉靖 (r. 1522-1566) built an altar for the immortals and even decreed penalties and rewards to his subjects according to the words given by the *fujū*. *Ibid.*, 10-11. For in-depth presentations of the place of spirit writing in modern Taiwan, see David K. Jordan and Daniel L. Overmyer, *The Flying Phoenix: Aspects of Sectarianism in Taiwan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 36-79; also Philip Clart, "The Phoenix and the Mother: The Interaction of Spirit Writing Cults and Popular Sects in Taiwan," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 25 (Fall 1997): 1-32.

¹² Jordan and Overmyer, *The Flying Phoenix: Aspects of Sectarianism in Taiwan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 36.

Although spirit writing in the form practiced by the Ōbaku monks is a Song development, rituals in which gods or supra-mundane beings were called down or channeled have been practiced in China since at least the Zhou dynasty (110-256 B.C.E.). The idea of divine inspiration as the basis for production of texts or otherworldly proclamations appeared early in the Daoist tradition and remained a prominent theme.¹³ Spirit writing was not a particularly Buddhist practice, and it is often perceived as belonging to Daoism or folk religion, although one stratum of the spirit writing population was comprised of literati elite, a group which did include Buddhist monks among its ranks. By the late Ming spirit writing séances had become a very common practice in which many literate Chinese (including monks) participated as a way to divine the future or have their questions answered. This particularly became the trend as the civil service examination system was being revived during the late Ming/early Qing, so that an emphasis on divination in regards to the success or failure in examinations became a central aspect of spirit writing séances.¹⁴ The demarcation between the spirit world and that of men had become fluid and exceedingly permeable, thus providing those with access to that realm a valuable and coveted skill that was also accompanied with considerable power.

Antecedent to the production of the *Tōzuihen*, there are several references in Yinyuan's works that make reference to an immortal (*xian* 仙) who is consulted by means of a divinatory willow stick, or planchette. These works include *Shizi yanzhi* 獅子巖志, *Huangboshan shizhi* 黃檗山寺志, and *Sanlai ji* 三籟集.¹⁵ This figure invariably appears as Chen Bo 陳博, sometimes preceded by his appellation, Wuyan

¹³ Ibid., 37.

¹⁴ Jordan and Overmyer, 40.

¹⁵ Guanchao Lin, "Ingen Ryūki to Nihon no kōshitsu: *Tōzuihen o megutte*" 隱元隆琦と日本の皇室: 桃葉編めぐって. *Ōbaku bunka* no. 123 (2002-2003) : 40.

無煙 (No-Smoke). In the seventeenth century gazetteer of Mt. Huangbo (*Huangboshan shizhi* 黃檗山寺志) of the Yongli era 永曆 (1647-1662), there are included a series of “Immortals’ Poems” 仙詩 which are attributed to Chen Bo of the Song period (*Song Chen Bo* 宋陳博).¹⁶ Thus far, all Chen Bo would appear to share with Chen Tuan is his surname and the fact that both took earthly form during the Song dynasty (although Chen Tuan was born in the late Tang). While Chen Tuan is historically associated with the practice of physiognomy (*xiangshu* 相術) and reading fortunes, particularly for high Song officials, in none of these contexts is he presented as a spirit who prognosticates through the planchette. Some commentators have taken Chen Bo to be a posthumous strand of the Chen Tuan legend, who has been “definitely identified” with him.¹⁷ Although it is difficult to establish with any certainty whether these two figures are indeed one and same, it will be instructive to see how the authors of the *Tōzuihen* dealt with this issue.

While references to the immortal’s name change are found throughout the *Tōzuihen*, there are three chapters of particular importance in regard to this issue. They are: *Senmei jigi* 仙名字義 by Gettan Dōchō 月潭道澄 (1636-1713), *Chin Haku Meiben* 陳博名弁 by Daichū Dōka 大中道圭, and *Shinshi no setsu* 識詩之說 by Daizui Dōki 大隨道機 (1652-1717). In addition, these three chapters are particularly

¹⁶ Duwang Xingyou 独往性幽 (J. Dokuō Shōyū; ?-1651-?). Duwang Xingyou, *Huangboshan shizhi* (Taipei: Xinwenfeng Chuban Gongsī, 1987), 121-22.

¹⁷ The whole passage runs: “In a completely different posthumous strand of Chen Tuan’s history, he takes the form of a prognosticating planchette spirit...who appears in the Chan community on Mount Huangbo (Huangbo shan 黃檗山, Fujian) and is transferred to Japan along with Yinyuan 隱元 (Jp.: Ingen, 1592-1673, the founder of the Ōbaku 黃檗 lineage of Zen Buddhism) in the seventeenth century. Definitely identified as Chen Tuan of the Song, he is venerated as a particularly powerful spirit and adopted successfully into a Buddhist environment, even changing his name to Chen Bo 陳博 (Chen, the Incense-Burner) and his appellation to Wuyan 無煙 (No-Smoke), signifying the complete extinction of all desires rather than the quest for immortality indicated by his Taoist, *Zhuangzi*-inspired names.” See *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*, 1: 259.

revealing about the character of the immortal, as they touch upon his nature and abilities as well as his relations with the Ōbaku monks and the imperial house. The translations of these chapters follow below.

Senmei jigū 仙名字義 by Gettan Dōchō 月潭道澄

During the Song dynasty, Master Chen Xiyi of Mt. Hua studied the profound teachings [of Daoism] through the ages and ripened in [his practice] of the way of the immortals. He was active teaching in southern Fujian province during the end of the Ming and beginning of the Qing dynasties. He was never seen in person although he descended during divination and manifested his spirit. This [phenomenon] cannot be easily measured. Master Chen's secular name was Tuan, with the appellation Tunan, the meaning of which was taken from Zhuangzi... Later, he changed his name to 'Bo' (博) [expansive] with the characters 'wuyan' (無煙) [no smoke]. It is thought that 'Bo' is none other than the Boshan incense burner [博山香爐].

Within the Boshan incense burner there is not a single speck of fragrant smoke. This is in other words the attainment of the way of the immortals, arriving at the great ceasing, the boundary of no-mind. The level of learning and great attainment [of Chen] means he attained the highest level [of the transcendental arts]. Long ago, at the time when the immortal Chen descended on Mt. Huangbo, it occurred at the time of Ancestor Yinyuan's journey to Japan.

Chen wrote a verse as a parting gift for [Yinyuan's] journey and predicted, before the event itself happened, that in Japan [Yinyuan's journey] would [corre-

spond to] the birth of a new emperor. Such a special affinity is truly a rare occurrence.

How could this have occurred if he [Chen] was not a true immortal? Also, formerly having heard the words of Yinyuan and Gaoquan, they said Daoist Master Zheng was originally from Fuzhou and first went to Nanjing with eighteen others where they studied the transcendental arts.

Among those people, only Zheng Sheng truly attained the way [of the transcendental arts]. His nature was pure and he was able to divine [Chen's] intentions. One day Zheng Sheng arrived at Mt. Huangbo. Gaoquan and several others were made to request that he channel the transcendent, [whereupon] the transcendent descended and composed a poem that also predicted the fortunes of the Ōbaku school.

At that time there was an old monk in Yinyuan's assembly. His name was Zizu (自足) and he resided at the Wansong hermitage. He was nearly seven shaku in height. His spirit was exceedingly strong and upright. On occasion he would issue from his hermitage and he would unhappily watch as the monks [in the assembly] would gather together to request [the appearance of] the immortal. He secretly thought to himself 'what kind of hindering god and homeless spirit has come here to deceive the Zen monks?' The immortal knew this and therefore wrote a poem that went: 'Although he is tall, he is not even one "jo" [in height]. Although he has wealth, he is boastful of [owning] a single ox skull, and on his body he wears an iron pillory.' The divination brush (stick) shook with the energy of the great rage [of the immortal]. Then he wrote 'Within three days a ti-

ger will be let loose and will be made to devour someone [of the assembly].’ Seeing this, the assembly did not know who this was referring to. They then took this matter to the Old Ancestor Yinyuan. Yinyuan laughed and said ‘This must refer to Zizu. Thinking about it, who else [besides Zizu] disparaged the immortals?’ When he came and inquired into this sure enough it was the case. The Old Ancestor Yinyuan said, ‘The immortals are exceedingly [subtle] spirits. They immediately know [the contents of] one’s mind and know who is denigrating them.’

One should quickly repent [if one has insulted an immortal]. Zizu then repented. The immortal said, ‘If it was not for the Old Master Yinyuan then I would still be angry at him [Zizu].’ Yinyuan said, ‘Immortals are supposed to demonstrate compassion to people and admonish the taking of life. How can it be that from the mere offense of a simple insult that you desired to let loose a tiger to eat people?’ The immortal Chen wrote in response saying, ‘This is only an intimidation [tactic].’

Already, when the Old Ancestor Yinyuan was going to go on a journey to Japan, he said to the immortal, ‘I don’t know if the Buddhist law can flourish in Japan.’ The immortal responded, ‘One day the Buddhist Law will certainly flourish. If you go east to Japan then I will certainly protect you and send you on your voyage. In the Northern Sea there is the [great] golden terrapin-dragon.’ After finishing saying this he then looked into his bowl and saw the pure water was boiling and splashing around his seat. Later, on his journey east [to Japan] there were gigantic fish, many tens of thousands in number which followed along with

the ship. All who witnessed it said that they had never seen anything like it before and that it must be [due to] the mysterious powers of the immortal. Here we humbly receive the imperial order and, in summarizing the meaning of the immortal's name, we responded to requests to include one or two of his exploits as well, which we humbly present to his highness [the emperor] for view.¹⁸

Chinhaku Meiben 陳博名弁 by Tōgen Daichū Dōka 桃源大中道圭

The master is of the Chen family from the Bo 亳 region, Zhenyuan. His name is Tuan, his nickname is Tunan. His title is Mr. Fuyao (Master of the Whirlwind), and his given title is Xiyi (Elder of the Inaudible and Invisible). He possessed great learning and talent and could [produce] secret elixirs. He lived during the end of the Tang dynasty and appeared again at the end of the Ming/beginning of the Qing dynasty. Although he was not seen in person, if one wanted to ask him [something], he would certainly [respond] through writing [as he] waited within the mountain forests. That is, riding a cloud he descended in accordance with the willow [divination] stick [through which] he entrusted his pronouncements on the good or ill fortune [of something]. All the words that comprised his response would move the sieve and brush which would then be recorded.

Obaku master, [Yinyuan] the National Teacher of Universal Illumination, by chance met Master Chen just at the time when Yinyuan was about to make the journey east [to Japan]. He asked him saying, 'I have recently received an invita-

¹⁸ Kadenokōji 1705, fasc. 1:18-20.

tion from Japan. I do not know if the Buddhist law can be [properly] practiced in Japan.' The immortal said 'It can. And it [your arrival in Japan] will coincide with the birth of a new emperor. One day the Dharma will certainly come to flourish [in Japan].' Then he made a verse as a parting gift [to Yinyuan]. Sure enough, the National Teacher's arrival in Japan coincided with the birth of a [future] emperor, namely, Emperor Reigen. The year corresponded to the third year of Shōo 承応 (1654). Japan and China are separated from each other by a myriad li [yet] this auspicious sign was divined even before it occurred.

It can be said to be attributable to the immeasurable [prescience] of the divine transcendent. When the emperor was born into the world, how could it [this news] not have spread over the land? In the spring of the fourth year of Genroku (1691) Emperor Reigen ordered the Imperial Prince Shōgaku [to court] and asked him about the matter of the immortal's spiritual abilities. Thereupon, our old master Bukkoku (Gaoquan) wrote down the details [of that event] and presented it to the emperor in accordance with the imperial command. When one thinks about it, the old master [Gaoquan] and master Nanyuan served the National Teacher [Yinyuan] during his days in China, and they intimately heard the details of his exchange with the immortal master [Chen].

Master Chen did not give [prophetic] verses only to the National Teacher [Yinyuan]. Formerly, he had a large number of poetic exchanges with the old master [Gaoquan]. Organizing and reading over those poetic verses they are now being put down on paper. Now, in the winter of 1697 [the emperor] ordered Sengai, Tetsugyū, Gettan and the various masters to each write an account. In

the spring of the following year Prince Shōgaku again transmitted the imperial order to have Doka (道圭) explain the meaning of the name change of master Chen from Tuan (搏) to Bo (博). From the time the young Dōka closely served the old master [Gaoquan] and heard an intimate account of the explanation [of the name change].

When the content in the *Muyuan Collection* was investigated, [it was seen] that Chen Zongshi's 陳宗師 [was given] the posthumous name Tuan (搏) but he later changed it to Bo (博). In the preface it says: 'As for the Adept Muyan, Chen Bo and Muyan are the names of his [respective] residences. Master [Chen] changed his name from Tuan to Bo, and changed his appellation to Wuyuan (No Smoke). It is thought that this has some other profound meaning. Originally the master was skilled in poetry and prose [and] he [composed] long poems or short compositions on everything his sentiment touched, enough to fill a volume. From time to time he exchanged poems with various masters from Mt. Huangbo in Ming China.

Generally, an immortal of this variety, similar to Laozi manifests in the world under a different name. In truth, it is very difficult to standardize the names. The immortals are all bodhisattvas of high station who because of great compassion for humanity, descend as heavenly beings and come forth. They [can] ascend to the status of emperor who rules with non-action over the hundred million trillion sentient beings and the four seas and the myriad nations. I humbly think that the emperor's [Reigen] auspicious [event] is indeed in accordance with the immortal's prophetic [poem]. He taught the way of Huaige and caused it to re-

main within the palace grounds. With [the emperor's] reverence and faith in the Buddhist teachings, can he not be said to be [like] a lotus blossom within a flame?

The emperor had a great affinity with the National Teacher (Yinyuan) from the start and he also showed great favor to the Old Man Bukkoku (Gaoquan). Possessed of such nobility and reverence, he never forgot the Buddhist community. [Thus] can he not be called a Bodhisattva of Station? What I humbly desire is that if Gaoquan has an audience with the emperor and offers him the [Mu] koan of Jōshū, the emperor will suddenly be enlightened, and thus he will not only receive the joy of the Dharma [but also enlightenment]. In the first place this is a way to increase the well-being of all the people under heaven isn't it? Dōka humbly received the imperial order and respectfully increased the imperial prestige. It is just like borrowing water and presenting [a bouquet] of flowers, which he (Dōka) bundled together with verses of praise.

The imperial virtue is truly difficult to measure. Even before his (Emperor Reigen's) birth his supreme merit was clear even under the skies of Fujian [in China]. Yet, without leaving the profane world and attaining the way of the immortals he was able to leave his rare name in this country of Japan.¹⁹

Shinshi no setsu 識詩之説 by Daizui Dōki 大隨道機

¹⁹ Kadenokōji 1705, fasc. 1:16-18.

This great Japan is a divine country. The heavenly founder established the foundation, and the Sun Goddess transmitted the lineage. Golden branches and jade flowers, [the imperial house is] one type of [special] lineage. The way of the ruler is bright [even] far distant.

Peaceful and brilliant, the Japanese imperial line] surpasses [the imperial line in] China where [dynasties] are born in the morning and change by evening. In addition, the emperor has not forgotten [the teachings] of Buddhism. The emperor turns his mind to the vehicle of the Buddha. Therefore, from ancient times the many teachers, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist, broke off a reed and went out to sea, and with their many arrivals they have [made certain that] the way is practiced throughout the world. Now, my ancestor, who received the special [title] “The National Teacher of Great Light and Universal Illumination [Yinyuan Longqi]” is a person from Fuqing county in Fu[jian] province in the country of China. Near to Mt. Huangbo in the province where he lived, there is a mountain called Shizhu where lives an immortal named Chen Bo, with the appellation “No Smoke.”

He received the name “Xiyi” [Inaudible and Invisible] from the Taizong [emperor] of the Song dynasty. He always used the willow stick to divine the good and bad fortunes of people. All of [the predictions] were accurate. He was also skilled in poetry. One day, ascending Mt. Huangbo, the National Teacher requested a verse [and] discussed it with [Chen] Bo. The National Teacher then laughed at the verse he made. Bo internalized it and produced a variation on it in praise. From that time on they became friends in Buddhism.

At that time the National Teacher received the request that he travel to [Japan]. [Yinyuan] had Bo divine the good and bad [fortunes] of that request. Bo pronounced it exceedingly auspicious and therefore sent the farewell poem [that runs] 'Presented to the Huangbo monk [Yinyuan] on his journey to Japan: Even if I thoroughly chew the yellow root, my teeth are not cold. On this occasion it should be known that there is a pass for Zen [to flourish]. On the day that three thousand peach buds first burst forth, I will wait to eat in the company of the immortal.' This is the prophetic verse [of Chen Bo].

The third stanza celebrates the birth of the emperor. The National Teacher's arrival in Japan coincided with the birth of the emperor [Reigen]. The retired emperor of the Genna era [Go-Mizunoo] was devoted to the [Zen] style of the National Teacher and often called on legitimate Zen masters whom he questioned through an intermediary on the essentials of the Dharma. Ultimately, he received the stamp [of transmission of the Dharma] from the master [Ryōkei Shōsen 龍溪性潛 1602-1670] thus becoming a true grandson disciple of the National Teacher. In this way he specially received his present name. Ah, although [Chen] Bo was separated [from Japan] by a myriad li across the ocean, he knew of the emperor's birth and sent a verse of celebration. That is to say, that bit of devotion and sincerity [to the emperor] pervaded the entire universe. Earlier, the emperor had heard of this and thought it wondrous, so he ordered the many disciples of the National Teacher to compile an account of Chen Bo [which] was collected into a work of three fascicles. Imperially [ordered] it is called the *Tōzuihen*. It is thought that Bo humbly met with the exalted person [the emperor] and held a deep sense of gratitude [toward] the emperor. He therefore

sent divine agents to our country to unceasingly serve the emperor and under all circumstances to protect both his person and his peaceful reign. Therefore, seeing this, Bo made this prophetic verse.

This is so fortunate. However, there is only the verse “I will wait to eat in the company of the perfected one” and he (Chen) has not said anything else. How was it that Chen could pronounce this verse twenty years [before] the National Teacher received the imperial order and founded the New Mt. Ōbaku [in Uji] and made flourish the way of the Zen school? Although at that time [the National Teacher] had received [the devotion] of Go-Mizunoo he had not yet acquired the devotion of Reigen, the empress, or the imperial prince. He thought of the Buddhist imperial Prince Ichijo, who was the older brother of Reigen and is also the uncle of the current emperor. He was widely versed in the Buddhist scriptures and greatly revered our school. He came in the imperial palanquin [when he visited] Mt Ōbaku where he met with the National Teacher on a number [of occasions]. Therefore, under the late Master Gaoquan’s tutelage he quickly attained enlightenment and received the wordless seal [of transmission].

Although he resided in two kinds of splendor [the imperial and that of enlightenment] he was a ‘true man of no rank.’ In the past [Yinyuan] traveled to Mt. Shizhu in a dream and received Chen Bo’s prophetic verse. This must be said to be a wondrous meeting [indeed]. Also, the verse [that says] Prince Shinkei ate together with the perfected one clearly hit the mark.

At this point Daizui Dōki secretly wrote this down and presented it to the imperial prince, Shinkei. The prince looked it over and laughed saying 'Why in the world does this prophetic verse concern me?' Daizui Dōki knew that the prince was a humble person by nature and he (Dōki) politely left... Shinkei said 'One day this story should be taken and presented to the retired emperor [Reigen]. He selected a brush and recorded this in the *Tōzuihen*.' What he desired [was] to have Prince Ichijo [Shinkei], in accordance with the momentous event of the immortal's prophetic verse, to make the prestige [of the imperial house] endure for 1000 years. Dōki was truly grateful for Prince Ichijō's ten years of favor, and thus, however little, he wanted to express his admiration of the retired emperor Reigen's virtue. Prince Shinkei nodded in agreement. One day the prince attended the emperor's banquet at which time the emperor's discussion extended to the *Tōzuihen*. The emperor ordered Prince Shinkei saying, 'First, have the various Zen masters each write a piece [on this]. We do not yet have Daizui Doki's contribution yet. One day this matter will surely be imperially ordered, augmented, compiled, and then Prince Shinkei will happily present it to [me].' This made the emperor's face fill with joy, upon which he made the prince communicate the imperial edict.

The beneficence of emperor [Reigen] as well as his graciousness and wisdom are expansive. He does not take a partial view toward the Three Teachings [of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism]. In addition, he does not treat China as a foreign country. This compilation [will be] imperially commissioned, as it is an auspicious sign that our [Japanese] ancient imperial way will long flourish. However, it is not only Chen Bo who previously had a great connection [to the em-

peror] and was singled out. Our founder and teacher [Yinyuan also had a great connection] as well as the various other masters who all wrote a detailed account which was offered to the emperor. The emperor was present among the assembly at Mt. Gṛdhrakūṭaparvata. At the time when he personally received the Buddhist teachings, his attendants lined up on the sides like geese. When he looked back, Dōki at that time he was a small blade of grass. At such a great assembly, how did an ignorant person such as [Dōki] receive such an honor as being chosen by the emperor?²⁰

The first chapter, *Senmei jigū*, starts out by freely intermingling Chen Tuan's biography with the nearly nonexistent details of Chen Bo's life, conflating Tuan's title, Xiyi (Elder of the Inaudible and Invisible), bestowed by the Chinese emperor Taizong, and his historically validated residence on Mt. Hua, with the immortal [Bo] who appears in the writings of the Ōbaku monks. Already in the first couple lines of this section the two figures are presented as one. The union is further solidified when the immortal's Daoist name "Tuan" is clearly stated to have changed to "Bo" with the addition of the title "wuyan," [no smoke] claimed to be based on the imagery and associations of an incense burner. The section then segues into the immortal's (now simply designated 'Chen') descent to Mt. Huangbo where it pronounced a single verse to Yinyuan that predicted his journey to Japan would coincide with the birth of a future emperor. At this point the text takes an interesting direction. The character of the immortal, and by extension, Yinyuan as well, is related through a revealing anecdote. Zizu 自足, whose name aptly translates as "self-sufficiency," is displeased

²⁰ Kadenokōji 1705, fasc. 1:21-24.

at the monks who gather to request guidance of the transcendent, which he characterizes as “a hindering god” and “homeless spirit” who comes to deceive the monks. As the immortal sees into Zizu’s mind and is angered by his perceptions, he predicts a tiger will be let loose to devour him, something for which Yinyuan admonishes the immortal, reminding him that immortals are supposed to be compassionate and admonish the taking of life. What is of particular interest in this episode is that the immortal, while wielding significant powers, is akin to a wayward child who requires (and acquiesces to) the instruction of a Buddhist monk, placing Yinyuan in the exalted status as teacher of both men and Daoist spirits/immortals.

The next chapter, *Chin Haku meiben*, starts out by unequivocally establishing that the immortal is Chen Tuan, who is identified as Chen Bo, the prognosticating spirit channeled through the planchette. With Chen’s prophetic pedigree and talents established, the chapter turns to the prophecy and its genesis, which are related in detail. Prince Shōgaku (Shinkei) is presented as acting on the orders of Reigen when he inquires about the name change from “Tuan” to “Bo.” The name change itself is described rather ambiguously, simply stating “he later changed his name from Tuan to Bo” 搏後改博. The immortal is described as being like Laozi in that he manifests himself in the world under different names. As if citing company with Laozi is not enough to adequately explain the name change, it is averred that “it is difficult to standardize [the names]” 実難一定也. It should be noted that the considerable effort taken to identify Chen Tuan with the obscure Chen Bo has its purpose in the final lines of the chapter. Reigen’s virtue and his understanding of Buddhism are extolled such that he is called a “Bodhisattva of Station.”²¹ It is here that, arguably, the pur-

²¹ A “Bodhisattva of Station” *jūi no bosatsu* 地位菩薩 refers to a bodhisattva between the forty-first and fiftieth stages of the Fifty-two Stations of Bodhisattvas. See Nakamura 1999, 561.

pose of the chapter and the work as a whole can be found—the extolling of imperial prestige, phrased in this section as “Even before his [Emperor Reigen’s] birth his supreme merit was clear even under the skies of Fujian.” It is to this end that Chen Bo must be interpreted as Chen Tuan. If the emperor’s merit is sufficiently high so as to be recognized by a Daoist immortal, it could only further redound to his benefit to have the immortal identified as the illustrious Chen Tuan.

The third chapter, *Shinshi no setsu* differs from the other two in both structure and content. It opens with an almost aggressive assertion of the grandeur of the Japanese imperial house, founded by the Sun Goddess, and of its superiority to the imperial house in China where dynasties are “born in the morning and change by evening.” In addition, another point of divergence is the presentation of the immortal, who is referred to as Chen Bo throughout, and except for brief mention that he received the name Xiyi from the Chinese emperor, there is no attempt to explain the name change, as the character Tuan 搏 does not even appear in the chapter. Also interesting is the assertion that Chen Bo traveled to Japan and met directly with an emperor (Go-Mizunoo?), and moved by a deep sense of gratitude, sent a divine agent, ostensibly Yinyuan, to serve the imperial house.

An unbiased reading of the *Tōzuihen*, and particularly the passages above, leaves one with the impression that the planchette-divining Chen Bo was deliberately interpreted as Chen Tuan, the renowned immortal only partially associated with prophetic powers. It may have been deliberate or fortuitous, but with a prognosticating immortal named Chen Bo 陳博 who is separated only by a few brushstrokes from Chen Tuan 陳搏, it is not surprising that throughout the work there is a self-conscious effort to associate the two figures as one and the same. By so doing, the Ōbaku monks become custodians of an immortal associated with the prophetic pedi-

gree of Chen Tuan. For both the Ōbaku school as well as the imperial house, Chen Bo's being interpreted as Chen Tuan was a matter of mutual convenience. As both the Ōbaku School and the imperial house were in difficult straits at the end of the seventeenth century, the prognostications of Chen Tuan represented an opportunity of symbiotic succor.

Conclusion

While the Ōbaku monks may not have been unique in China, the cultural milieu within which they lived and trained, their continental pedigree set them very much apart from their Japanese Buddhist brethren at the time. They came to Japan and diffused the most recent trends and developments of Chinese Buddhism, which, superimposed on the landscape of Japanese Buddhist practice, caused quite a sensation. This eventually came to serve as the occasion for Japanese Buddhism to take a long introspective look at its own identity, models, and practices. Ming Buddhism, needless to say, is not simply a collection of purely Buddhist rituals and texts since elements of folk religion and practice, much of which is Daoist in provenance, also came to pervade the tradition. As we have seen above, one expression of this Daoist influence—if we may use the word “influence” in the case of a natural cultural accretion—was the practice of spirit writing, or *fuji* 扶乩, the prognosticating planchette through which human beings attempt to communicate with immortals or gods from the spirit world. This was the asserted mechanism by which Yinyuan was said to have communicated with Chen Bo, the obscure immortal who later came to be identified as Chen Tuan.

Besides being a renowned Daoist immortal, Chen Tuan also has prominent characteristics which make him an apt spiritual benefactor to the Ōbaku monks. One of

these is his association with officialdom, most conspicuously seen in his supposed meeting with Song Taizong, which contributed to his being viewed as the legitimizing saint of the new dynasty. It is my contention that, as the Ōbaku monks were facing a downturn in their fortunes in Japan, they seized on this by trying to forge a connection with one of the founts of Japanese political and cultural authority—the imperial house. That the Ōbaku monks made recourse to a Daoist practice (*fūji*) and a Chinese immortal in their dealings with the imperial house was not an extraneous maneuver since the Japanese imperial house itself is rich in Daoist influence and associations.

Comprised of chapters written by Chinese and Japanese Ōbaku monks, courtiers, and a preface by Emperor Reigen himself, the *Tōzuihen*'s unique content is only matched by the novelty of its agenda, namely, the assertion of a supernaturally-validated spiritual connection between a resident Chinese monk and a retired Japanese sovereign. The extreme ambiguity of the single verse which serves as the impetus and rationale of this connection requires an elaborate and contrived justification, and this is what the *Tōzuihen* attempts to achieve. One aspect of this justification, the reinterpreting of Chen Bo with Chen Tuan, showcases the deliberate nature of the textual agenda.

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