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## ‘Study Effortless-Action’ *Rethinking Northern Song Chinese Chan Buddhism in Edo Japan\**

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### Abstract

Today there is a distinction in Japanese Zen Buddhist monasticism between prayer temples and training centers. Zen training is typically thought to encompass either meditation training or public-case introspection, or both. Yet first-hand accounts exist from the Edo period (1603–1868) which suggest that the study of Buddhist (e.g., public case records, discourse records, sūtra literature, prayer manuals) and Chinese (poetry, philosophy, history) literature may have been equally if not more important topics for rigorous study. How much more so the case with the cultivation of the literary arts by Zen monastics? This paper first investigates the case of a network of eminent seventeenth- and eighteenth-century scholar-monks from all three modern traditions of Japanese Zen—Sōtō, Rinzai, and Ōbaku—who extolled the commentary *Kakumon Kantetsu* 廓門貫徹 (d. 1730) wrote to every single piece of poetry or prose in Juefan Huihong’s 覺範惠洪 (1071–1128) collected works, *Chan of Words and Letters from Stone Gate Monastery* (Ch. *Shimen wenzichan*; Jp. *Sekimon mojizen*). Next, it explores what the wooden engravings of Study Effortless-Action and Efficacious Vulture at Daiōji, the temple where Kantetsu was the thirteenth abbot and where he welcomed the Chinese émigré Buddhist monk Xinyue Xingchou (Shin’etsu Kōchū 心越興壽, alt. Donggao Xinyue, Tōkō Shin’etsu 東阜心越, 1639–1696), might disclose about how Zen was cultivated in practice? Finally, this paper asks how Kantetsu’s promotion of Huihong’s “scholastic” or “lettered” Chan or Zen might lead us rethink the role of Song dynasty (960–1279) literary arts within the rich historical context of Zen Buddhism in Edo Japan?

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## Keywords

Japanese Zen – Chinese Chan – Edo Japan – Juefan Huihong – Kakumon Kantetsu – Tōkō Shin'etsu

There is a rather quaint Sōtō Zen Buddhist temple in the rural Nasu district of present-day Tochigi prefecture, located approximately 150 kilometers north of Tokyo, called Kurobanesan Kuoin Daiōji 黒羽山久遠院大雄寺, where an exchange took place in the late seventeenth-century between a Chinese émigré Buddhist monk by the name of Xinyue Xingchou (Jp. Shin'etsu Kōchū 心越興壽; alt. Donggao Xinyue, Tōkō Shin'etsu 東阜心越, 1639–1696) and Daiōji's thirteenth abbot, Kakumon Kantetsu 廓門貫徹 (d. 1730). Established approximately six centuries ago in 1404, the buildings within Daiōji's rather small compound are noteworthy because they have thatched roofs.<sup>1</sup> Above the entrance to the Meditation Hall (*zendō* 禪堂) there is a wooden engraving with the seal-script (*tensho* 篆書) characters for “Study Effortless Action” (Ch. *xue wuwei*; Jp. *gaku mui* 學無為). According to temple records, both this and another wooden engraving with the characters for “Efficacious Vulture” (Ch. *Lingjiu*; Jp. *ryūjū* 靈鷲), found today above the main entrance to the monastery compound, were presented—and apparently crafted—by Xinyue Xingchou and presented to Kakumon Kantetsu in 1693, when Xinyue was in the area to bathe in the hot springs at nearby Nasu *onsen*.

Both Kakumon Kantetsu and Xinyue Xingchou are not especially well-known figures in the history of Edo or Tokugawa period (1603–1868) Japanese Zen Buddhism. This is rather peculiar because it appears that Xinyue gave Kantetsu and Daiōji a copy of the *Supplement to the Jingshan edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon* (*Jiaxing xu zangjing* 嘉興續藏藏), which had thirty-six Chinese Chan texts printed for the first time in any canon compiled in China.<sup>2</sup> We know this because Kantetsu seems to have accomplished something perhaps unprecedented as common practice by Zen scholar-monks: in 1710, Kantetsu completed a full commentary to Juefan Huihong's 覺範惠洪 (Kakuhan Ekō,

1 Daiōji is not a typical seven hall Zen temple (*shichidō garan* 七堂伽藍). Kurasawa Yoshihiro (2005) suggests that it is, citing references to the famous Sōtō Zen temple of Eiheiji 永平寺.

2 Also known as the Jingshan, Lengyan 楞嚴, or square-format (*Fangce ben* 方冊本) editions, this canon was compiled by Dagan Zhenke 大觀真可 (1543–1604), also known as Zibai Zunzhe 紫柏尊者 (Sage of the Purple Cypress Tree), who is considered one of the four great Chan monks of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). Cf. Deleanu (2007: 625–628). On the canon at Daiōji, see Kurasawa (2005: 22).

1071–1128) collected works in thirty rolls, *Chan of Words and Letters from Stone Gate Monastery* (Ch. *Shimen wenzi chan*; Jp. *Sekimon mojizen* 石門文字禪). *Shimen wenzi chan* includes 1690 poems in seven classical styles of regulated verse poetry (rolls 1–16), followed by 65 Buddhist *gāthā* (*jie* 偈), 138 eulogies (*zan* 讚), 36 epitaph poems (*ming* 銘), 2 lyric poems (*ci* 詞), 2 irregular compositions (*fu* 賦), 69 prefaces and forewords (*ji* 記 and *xu* 序), 5 records of events (*jiyu* 記語), 88 outlines (*ti* 題), 71 colophons (*ba* 跋), 76 comments or commentarial works (*shu* 疏), 12 essays (*shu* 書), and 7 stūpa inscriptions (Chen 2005: 133). Kantetsu wrote explanations for every single literary piece in *Shimen wenzi Chan*. Prefaces by three eminent Japanese Zen scholars—Sōtō Zen master Manzan Dōhaku 卍山道白 (1653–1715), Myōshinji 妙心寺 Rinzai master Mujaku Dōchū (1653–1744), and Ōbaku master Gettan Dōchō 月潭道澄 (1636–1713)—demonstrate that Kantetsu and Xinyue, by extension, were, for at least a time, among the most influential Zen monastics in Japan.<sup>3</sup>

Zen monastics in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam certainly wrote commentaries to various Buddhist *sūtras* and *śāstras*, copiously studied Zen literature (e.g., discourse records [*goroku* 語錄], public case collections [*kōan* 考案], or transmission of the lamp or flame histories [*tōroku* 燈錄 or *tōshū* 燈史]), and commented on innumerable other treatises (e.g., the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, *Analects* 論語, *Laozi huahu jing* 老子化胡經 [Scripture on Laozi Converting the Barbarians]). But I have never before seen a complete commentary with explanatory notes about each and every piece in a collected works written by any Chan, Sōn, or Zen monk. What might have motivated Kantetsu to accomplish such an exceptional and laborious task, especially when we consider that Daiōji is far from the centers of Edo period Zen or secular learning? In this paper I seek to answer this question and address three more questions about several unforeseen connections between Chinese intellectual history during the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127) and Zen scholasticism during the early Edo period in Japan. First, what do Kantetsu’s *Chū Sekimon mojizen* and the three prefaces by Manzan Dōhaku, Mujaku Dōchū, and Gettan Dōchō tell us about seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Zen scholar-monks (*gakusō* 学僧), and what may very well be their particular concern for engagement with the literary arts to produce critical investigations of canonical Buddhist literature and

3 The editions of *Chū Sekimon mojizen* 註石門文字禪 I cite are Yanagida and Shiina (2000: 95–756). See also Shi et. al. (2012). *Shimen wenzichan* was compiled ca. 1126. There are also three Chinese editions: (1) 1681 *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊 ed. *chubian* 初編 124, vol. 1015–1022; (2) 1776 *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書, vol. 116; (3) Changzhou 常州 Tianning si 天寧寺 1921 ed. of Jingshan canon ed.: J. B135 (23) 577a1–731c28. There is another Japanese edition: 1664 Kyoto Tahara Nizaemon 京都田原仁左衛門 ed. of the Jingshan canon.

extra-canonical materials?<sup>4</sup> Second, what do the wooden engravings of Study Effortless-Action and Efficacious Vulture at Daiōji disclose about how Zen was cultivated in practice? Was it particularly out of place to come across poems on paintings in black ink, examples of the art of engraving in wood, calligraphy, regulated verse poetry, or even lute playing at Zen temples and monasteries?

Finally, how might we read Kantetsu's promotion of Huihong's "scholastic" or "lettered" Chan or Zen (Ch. *wenzi* Chan; Jp. *moji* Zen) within the rich historical context of Zen Buddhism in Edo Japan? What are some of the factors that may have stimulated renewed interest in Song Chinese literary arts—poetry, calligraphy, painting, and, of course, copious study of ten thousand books in the company of secular men-of-letters—by such renowned figures as Manzan Dōhaku, Mujaku Dōchū, and several eminent Ōbaku monastics who trained Gettan Dōchō?<sup>5</sup>

Among the group of Chinese émigré Buddhist monks who apparently fled China for Japan during the latter half of the seventeenth-century, the most notable is Yinyuan Longqi 隱元隆琦 (Ingen Ryūki, 1592–1673). Apart from a short, but fascinating study by R.H. van Gulik in 1944, Xinyue Xingchou is not especially well known. Van Gulik was primarily interested in Xinyue's role in reintroducing the art of playing the seven-stringed lute to Japan. Yet Xinyue Xingchou is a remarkable figure; within the strict context of the study of the history of Japanese Sōtō Zen, he established a head temple for a new type of Chinese-style Zen in Japan, known as the Jushō 寿昌派 branch at Tentokuji 天徳寺 in Mito (alt. Go-Gionji 後祇園寺). In addition, he also appears to have reintroduced to several influential Japanese Zen monastics an appreciation for Juefan Huihong's voluminous writings, which extol cultivating the Chinese literary arts as part and parcel of Chan/Zen monastic training. Huihong has virtually no connection to the Caodong/Sōtō Zen lineage; he is perhaps the most famous disciple of Zhenjing Kewen 真淨克文 (1025–1102), an early Linji

4 On the role of Huihong in shaping Song-era Chan Buddhist scholasticism, see Zhou Yukai (1992, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2003, 2005, 2006). In a landmark article reporting the state of Zen studies in Chinese and Japanese from a special issue of *Shisō*, Sueki Fumihiko (2004: 32–36) credits Zhou Yukai with revolutionizing our understanding of Song-era Chan, and especially with respect to Huihong and *wenzi* Chan. In English, see Gimello (1989, 1992). *Shimen wenzichan* is also available in Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association 1998–2016, which includes the *Jiaxing Buddhist Canon* (Xinwenfeng Edition 嘉興大藏經-新文豐版 1987), J, vol. 23, B135.

5 Wang (2011) suggests that a close colleague of Huihong's, Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045–1105), meant it when he said he read 10,000 books in his library.

(Rinzai) lineage advocate for what would later become known as public case introspection, who was, in turn, a disciple of Huanglong Huinan 黃龍慧南 (1002–1069).<sup>6</sup>

### Rethinking the Boundaries in Northern Song Chinese Chan and Edo Japanese Zen

This study is as much about Huihong as it is about Xinyue, Kantetsu, Manzan Dōhaku, Mujaku Dōchū, and Gettan Dōchō. Therefore, its scope covers two bookends in the history of East Asian Buddhism that may turn out to be far more connected to one another than many studies of either Chinese or Japanese Zen Buddhist history typically suggest. Sectarianism is a formidable trope with which to organize the early and recent history of Chan/Zen Buddhism. If during the formative Northern Song dynasty in China Chan masters could compose sophisticated poetry and refined prose in order to secure patronage from literati at all levels of administration that appointed abbots at public monasteries, then Chan lamp histories do not present anything like an historical account of the development of transmission families (McRae 2003: 115; Welter 2005: Chap. 7; Schlütter 2008: 35–54, Chap. 3). Rather, because these histories were written to promote or recognize specific masters' lineages, John McRae's second "Rule of Zen Studies," is particularly informative: "Lineage assertions are as wrong as they are strong" (McRae 2003: xix). Huihong's writings about Buddhism and the Chan tradition are distinctive because Huihong wrote or compiled these works as a private monastic-historian, and they preserve accounts of alternative transmission families—and separate lineages—aside from those propagated in later lamp histories and discourse records. In other words, Huihong's perspective of the history of Song dynasty Chan Buddhism does not endorse the impression that sectarian boundaries were especially important.

6 Reading especially Huihong's *Chanlin sengbao zhuan* and *Linjian lu* closely, Morten Schlütter has made a convincing case not only for a "reinvention" of the Caodong transmission family during the late eleventh- and early twelfth-centuries, but also that the legendary critique by Linji lineage master Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (1089–1163)—architect of investigation of the critical phrase (*kanhua chan* 看話禪) of the *gong'an*—of Caodong master Hongzhi Zhengjue's 宏智正覺 (1091–1157) "silent-illumination" Chan (*mozhao chan* 默照禪) cannot be read back before the fall of Bianjing in 1127. Schlütter recognizes how Huihong fashioned the transmission narrative to promote the lineage of Furong Daokai 芙蓉道楷 (alt. Tianning Daokai 天寧, 1043–1118), a prominent abbot in Luoyang 洛陽 by 1108.

Research by first Araki Kengo (1976, 2001), and then Timothy Brook in *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China* (1993), led the way toward establishing scholarly consensus about how members of the Chinese Buddhist clergy actively participated in the secular literary arts in order to secure literati, or so-called Confucian, patronage for themselves and their monastic estates (Wu 2008). In recent years, scholars of East Asian Buddhism have effectively pushed this pattern of praying for power back into the Song dynasty, with Albert Welter and Ben Brose suggesting strong roots in the *saṃgha*-state relations of the Five Dynasties Ten Kingdoms Period (907–979) (Grant 1994; Halperin 2006; Schlütter 2008; Welter 2005, 2011; Brose 2009).

To a large extent, however, the framework within which researchers have investigated how Buddhist monastics in China secured patronage prior to the fourteenth century has centered upon questions related to doctrinal or soteriological concerns, coupled with rigorous attention to lineages or transmission families. Somewhat pejorative phrasing such as “harmony between Chan and the Teachings” (Ch. *chanjiao heyi*; Jp. *zenkyō gōitsu* 禪教合一), “Chan and the Teachings are Identical” (Ch. *jiaochan yizhi*; Jp. *kyōzen itchi* 教禪一致), the “Three Teachings are Identical” (Ch. *sanjiao yizhi*; Jp. *sankyō itchi* 三教一致)—the three teachings being Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism—and “Confucian and Zen [teachings] are Identical” (Ch. *ruchan yizhi*; Jp. *juzen itchi* 儒禪一致) implicitly reinforce the modern Japanese Zen sectarian dichotomy concerning practice and thought between pure or strict (*junsui* 純粹) Zen versus syncretic or mixed (*kenshū* 兼修) Zen.<sup>7</sup> Within the rigorous boundaries implied by this dichotomy lies the working hypothesis used to describe either Chinese Chan, Japanese Zen, or both, that either “public case introspection” (Ch. *kanhua chan*; Jp. *kanna zen* 看話禪) for Linji / Rinzai followers or “silent illumination” (Ch. *mozhaohan*; Jp. *mokushō zen* 默照禪) for those in the Caodong / Sōtō tradition defines Chan/Zen Buddhist thought, practice, and perhaps even ritual (Buswell 1987; Schlütter 2008).

If we can say that researchers of Chinese Chan Buddhism have taken John McRae’s “Rule of Zen Studies” to heart, then it seems the same can be said for the study of the history of Japanese Zen. It lies well beyond the scope of this study to reexamine or subject to criticism early or middle period Zen in Japan with the goal of hypercritical analysis of transmission families or lineage construction. What I can and will say, however, is that during precisely the

7 During the Tang dynasty (618–907) Chan Buddhists such as Guifeng Zongmi 圭峰宗密 (780–841) advocated the idea of the convergence of the doctrinal teachings and Chan. See Gregory (1991: 225–230); also Ibuki (2001: 64, 75, 135–136) and Zhou Yukai (1999) cited in Sueki (2004).

period when governmental and institutional religious bodies in Japan are typically understood to have bolstered divisions according to lineage claims across nearly all Buddhist traditions, or sects, in Japan—the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—we find Xinyue and Kantetsu, who appear to have supported a more inclusive approach to Zen intellectual discourse that looks a lot more like what we see in China, centuries earlier. Or did they?

The Edo period is not typically seen as a highpoint in the somewhat dubious transmission narratives of either Sino-Japanese cultural relations or East Asian Buddhism. This is because, on the one hand, Japan is understood to have been officially closed to nearly all foreigners after the Seclusion Edict of 1635, and on the other, because the warrior government (*bakufu*) established a system, the *danka seido* 檀家制度, which made it compulsory for everyone to affiliate—or register—with local Buddhist temples (Ibuki 2001: 54–255; Hur 2007). One of the more profound effects these developments are often understood to have had upon Japanese Zen Buddhist monasticism, in particular, was the creation of a rather stark institutional distinction between monastics who primarily perform liturgical services—especially dedications of merit (*ekō* 廻向—for the laity in temples called *danka jūin* 檀家寺院, *ekōdera* 廻向寺, or *kitōin* 祈禱院), and those who “practice” Buddhism in training monasteries (*senmon sōdō* 専門僧堂 or *senmon dōjō* 専門道場). It stands to reason, therefore, that more emphasis was placed upon Zen training in ritual services during the Edo period—and beyond—than had previously been the case when, presumably, more contact with and adherence to continental models had been desirable or possible.<sup>8</sup> If Japan was ostensibly closed to significant influences from the continent and Buddhist monastics were reoriented toward performing funerals and rituals for the laity, it stands to reason, so this argument goes, that Zen Buddhists in particular were far less inspired by Chinese learning or training or even scholastic methodologies than ever before.

Chinese learning (*kangaku* 漢学) during the Edo period is, therefore, typically contrasted with what preceded it during the Kamakura and Muromachi eras (ca. 1185–1573) within the system of Five Mountain Zen temples, an institutional ranking system designed to replicate the Chinese system ostensibly of the same name, established during the Southern Song dynasty to administer the official Chan temples around the city of Hangzhou, in present-day Zhejiang province, China.<sup>9</sup> Japanese Zen monastics and their patrons who con-

8 See, for example, Heine (2012), Rowe (2004, 2011), Covell (2006) and, of course, Reader and Tanabe (1998).

9 The Five Mountains monasteries were not really limited to five or ten. There were actually

structed and maintained the great Gozan monasteries—as well as those Zen temples not officially sponsored in the capital and outlying areas, known as Rinka (Beyond the Groves), such as Daitokuji 大徳寺 and Myōshinji—self-consciously chose what practices, teachings, cultural pursuits, styles, and so forth, to reproduce from the continent, and those they did not.<sup>10</sup> Gozan editions of Chinese Buddhist and secular literature attest to the fact that Japanese Zen monastics—often under the tutelage of émigré Chinese Chan masters—paid careful attention to what was considered important and relevant on the mainland, which seems to have placed a special emphasis upon cultivating the literary arts according to models established during the Northern Song dynasty in China (see Asami 2007). Under the rubric Gozan literature (*Gozan bungaku*), during the late thirteenth through the mid-fifteenth centuries, Zen texts, along with canonical Buddhist scriptures, Chinese poetry collections, encyclopedias, and even so-called Confucian—and Neo-Confucian—treatises were printed by the Gozan monasteries to encourage the study of Chinese culture (Kornicki 1998: 120–121). Huihong’s lamp history, *Chronicles of the Saṃgha Jewel within the Forests of Chan* (Ch. *Chanlin sengbao zhuan*; Jp. *Zenrin sōbōden* 禅林僧宝伝), for example, has been preserved at the Tōyō bunko in an edition brought to Japan by Jingtang Jueyuan 鏡堂覺円 (1244–1306), who resided at Engakuji 円覚寺 and Kenchōji 建長寺 in Kamakura (see Yanagida and Shiina 2000: 3–86; Yanagida 1988).

Several “pearls,” or famous monks, can be singled out as particularly important innovators who modeled Japanese Zen around a distinct, perhaps idealized, image of Chinese Chan monastic practice. The literary record demonstrates that Kokan Shiren 虎関師錬 (1278–1346), Myōchō Daitō 妙趙大燈 (1282–1337), Chūgan Engetsu 中巖円月 (1300–1375), and Ikkyū Sōjun 一休宗純 (1394–1481) enhanced the study and emulation of Chinese literary learning in both state-sponsored Gozan, or private (Rinka), Zen Buddhist monasteries (Brown 1997: 47–52; Parker 1999b).

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six Gozan temples in Kyoto and eventually five in Kamakura; see Ibuki (2001: 218–221) and Collcutt (1981). Schlütter (2008) provides some discussion of how both Chan and Vinaya (Ch. *Lü*; Jp. *ritsu* 律) monasteries developed within the environment of the *Wushan shicha* system in China.

- 10 The sub-temples of Japanese Zen monasteries of this period were nearly separate institutional entities with their own patrons, practices, and teachers. Literally “stūpa head,” the *tacchū* have retained this separate status today, but are more distinct within Rinka monasteries than in formerly Gozan Zen temples. The tradition of separate sub-temples that function in this manner in Zen monasteries is not seen in Chinese Chan temples. See Asami (2007: 21–25), Ibuki (2001: 224–225), Yanagida (1987: 39, 385).



Yet we also know that Chinese learning played a rather significant role in two of the most important cultural and literary productions of the Edo period: the *Great History of Japan* (*Dainihonshi* 大日本史) and *Notes on Images and Implements from the Groves of Zen* (*Zenrin shōkisen* 禅林象器箋). Even though the former, a massive compilation of 397 rolls in 226 volumes, took more than two centuries to complete, it was undertaken under the direction of Tokugawa Mitsukuni 徳川光圀 (1628–1701), the head of the Mito branch of the Tokugawa family, and took the eleventh century Chinese compendia *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government* (Ch. *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑) by Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086) as its guide (see Hall 1991: 409–411; and Xu 2008: 340–330). *Notes on Images and Implements from the Groves of Zen* was compiled by a Myōshinji Rinzai Zen monastic—called by Urs App (1987) the greatest encyclopedist of the Chan and Zen traditions—Mujaku Dōchū. Mujaku was opposed to the dilution of Japanese Zen practice and monastic ritual, following particularly Chinese Song dynasty norms he felt were at risk because of the presence and rising popularity of Ming-style Buddhist monasticism expounded by the followers of the new Ōbaku tradition. *Notes on Images and Implements from the Groves of Zen* is, therefore, not only the penultimate reference work used by scholars of Zen today, but it is also evidence of the extent to which [Northern] Song style Chinese learning continued to exert a deep and contemporary influence during the Edo period in Japan.

### Reading Study Effortless-Action

Kakumon Kantetsu is not one of the more celebrated Zen monastics of Edo Japan.<sup>11</sup> Xinyue Xingchou, likewise, does not figure prominently in histories of Japanese Zen, and he seems almost impossible to track down in concurrent Chinese Chan hagiographical accounts from the late Ming dynasty in China.<sup>12</sup> What the encounter between these two learned Zen monastics tells us about

11 Zengaku Daijiten Hensansho (1985: 185c) is the only readily available resource with any mention of Kantetsu. For sources, *Zengaku* provides only references to a commentary Kantetsu apparently wrote to the *Collection on Protecting the Dharma* (*Gohōshū* 護法集), attributed to Sōtō Zen master Dokuan Genkō 独庵玄光 (1630–1698).

12 Zengaku Daijiten Hensansho (1985: 918) provides tantalizing clues that Donggao Xinyue (Tōkō Shin'etsu seems to be the preferable moniker here) arrived in Japan in the tenth lunar month of 1692 (Genroku 5). Soon thereafter he moved to Tentokuji in Mito, a domain near Edo (Tokyo), where Tokugawa Mitsukuni 徳川光圀 (1628–1700) supported him as a transmitter of recent Chinese “Pure Rules”—the Jushō branch Shouchang pai “Pure

East Asian Buddhist monastic education, however, is about as normative with regard to what Chinese Chan, Japanese Zen, and presumably even Korean Sōn students and teachers may have actually studied as the message “Study Effortless Action” above the door to the Meditation Hall at Daiōji implies.

To any visitor familiar with case 42 from the *Blue Cliff Record* (Ch. *Bīyan lu*; Jp. *Hekiganroku* 碧巖錄), a well-known collection of public cases collected by the Chinese Chan monk Yuanwu Keqin 圓悟克勤 (1063–1135), “Study Effortless Action” points to a *gāthā* ascribed to Layman Pang 龐居士 (Hō Koji; alt. Pang Yun 龐蘊 740–803).

The ten directions, a common gathering,  
Everyone studies non-action.  
This is the place where buddhas are chosen,  
Minds empty, they return successful.<sup>13</sup>

Those knowledgeable about case 42 would probably also know case 44, in which Chinese Chan master Heshan Wuyin 禾山無殷 (884–960) explicitly discusses learning:

“Cultivating study is called ‘learning.’ Cutting off study is called ‘nearness.’ Going beyond these two is to be considered truly going beyond.” The words of the case come from the *Treasure Store Treatise* (*Baozang lun* 寶藏論; Sharf 2002). To study until there is nothing to study is called “cutting off study.” Thus it is said, “Shallow learning, deep enlightenment; deep learning, no enlightenment.” This is called “cutting off study.” [Yongjia Xuanjue 永嘉玄覺 (665–713)] who was enlightened in one night said, “Years ago I accumulated learning, consulted the commentaries, and searched the scriptures and treatises. Once one’s cultivation of studies is completed and exhausted, he is called a *non-doing, free man of the path, beyond study*.”<sup>14</sup>

It is, of course, also possible that a visitor to Daiōji in the late seventeenth-century, just as today, could read “Study Effortless Action” and assume that it

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Rules”: *Jushō shingi* 壽昌清規. Other sources include van Gulik (1944), Ibuki (2001: 262, 266), Xu (2008), and Wu (2008: 99).

13 *Bīyan lu* 5, T no. 2003, 48: 179c5–6. Although by no means a perfect translation, see Cleary and Cleary (1977: 255).

14 *Bīyan lu* 5, T no. 2003, 48: 181a2–9; trans. adapted from Cleary and Cleary (1977: 265). Yongjia’s remarks can also be found in the *Zhengdaoge* 證道歌.

refers to one of the central teachings presented by the inimitable Chinese *Classic by the Old Master on the Way and Virtue* (Ch. *Laozi Daodejing*; Jp. *Rōshidō-tokukyō* 老子道德經).<sup>15</sup>

Before we consider the encounter between Xinyue Xingchou and Kakumon Kantetsu at Daiōji in greater detail, let us briefly investigate the two characters “Efficacious Vulture” above the *sōmon*. These two characters allude to Efficacious or Nimble Vulture Peak, which is part of the Flown From Afar Cliffs (Feilaifeng 飛來峰) close to Xinyue’s home monastery of Yongfusi 永福寺, near the bustling metropolis—today, as back then—of Hangzhou, in China. One may presume that by presenting the wooden engraving with these two seal-script characters to Kakumon Kantetsu to display above the *sōmon* at Daiōji in northeastern Japan, Xinyue Xingchou was performing a sort of institutional transmission, connecting the two temples to a greater Caodong / Sōtō tradition in the late seventeenth-century. It may also have been the case that Xinyue Xingchou was “sealing” his approval for Kakumon Kantetsu’s recent activities at Daiōji, concurrently promoting what he had been doing in Mito as an honored guest of Tokugawa Mitsukuni.

### Scholastic or Lettered Chan / Zen

Since I have read the characters for Study Effortless Action at Daiōji through the lens of a Chinese public case record typically connected with Japanese Rinzaï Zen training, the sort of approach we can expect Mujaku Dōchū to have taken, it ought to be clear that the approach to Sōtō Zen learning and training promoted by both Kakumon Kantetsu and Xinyue Xingchou can be called inclusive. Both monastics promoted “scholastic” or “lettered” Chan or Zen, a term apparently first employed and popularized by Juefan Huihong.

Kakumon Kantetsu’s close friend and fellow Sōtō Zen scholar-monk, Dokuan Genkō 独庵玄光 (1630–1698), though not his primary Dharma teacher, wrote the following words in his *Collection on Protecting the Dharma* (*Gohōshū* 護法集):<sup>16</sup>

15 Using this translation of the title, I have the translation by Lynn (1999) in mind.

16 Kakumon’s Dharma teacher was the twelfth abbot of Daiōji, Yūhō Gengen 幽峰玄玄 (ca. 1671–1690); see Kurasawa (2005: appendix). See Kakumon Kantetsu in Zengaku Daijiten Hensansho (1985: 185c). Kantetsu wrote a commentary to this work because he was especially interested in a matter of transmission within the Chinese Song-era Caodong lineage related to Touzi Yiqing, which, incidentally, Huihong wrote about. Cf. *Tōsu Gisei zenji goroku* 投子義青禪師語錄, ZZ rpt. 1423, vol. 71: 751c8. Huihong was explicitly interested

My reputation is both similar to and necessarily different from [Huihong's]. In former times people did not set up written words (*furyū monji* 不立文字), today people also do not set up written words.<sup>17</sup> What people in former times [meant by] “do not set up written words” was [that in order to] “see one’s nature and become a buddha” (*kenshō jōbutsu* 見性成佛) one cannot cling to written words. What people today [mean by] “do not set up written words” is [that] the pursuit of fame and accumulation of profits is inferior to [studying] written words. Therefore “do not set up written words” has [both the] same meaning and a different one. Nowadays [some people] set up the private within the public, thereby leaning

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in promoting a separate history of the Caodong transmission narrative which emphasizes that, because Touzi Yiqing’s master, Fushan 浮山 Yuanjian Fayuan 圓鑒法遠 (991–1067) was the disciple of both Dayang Jingxuan 大陽警玄 (943–1027) and Yexian Guisheng 葉縣歸省, the teachings of the Caodong lineage could concomitantly be considered Linji and Caodong teaching devices. Therefore, there would be no problem, in terms of sectarian claims, for Huanglong Linji lineage monastics like himself to utilize the five positions which, in turn, influenced Chan poetry. Cf. Arai 1991, and Zengaku Daijiten Hensansho (1985: 930d). On Dokuan Genkō, see Bodiford (1991: 434), Mohr (2002, 1994: 353–355). On the *Gohōshū*, Zengaku Daijiten Hensansho (1985: 358d).

- 17 Alleged contempt for the Buddhist scriptures and a unique transmission narrative for Zen Buddhism are perhaps best represented in the first two lines from the four-part slogan from the *Zuting shiyuan* 祖庭事苑 (Chrestomathy from the Patriarchs’ Hall), compiled in 1108 and printed in 1154, which forms the *locus classicus* for the philosophical pivot for Chinese Chan and Japanese Rinzai thought: Chan is independent of the doctrinal teachings and not reliant upon the written word. The second assertion, that Chan does not rely on the written word, is the oldest of the maxim, first appearing in the *Zutang jīzūtáng* 集 (Korean: *Chodang chip*; *Anthology of the Patriarchal Hall*) by 952. Bodhidharma responded to a question by his disciple Huike 慧可 (487–593), who cut off his arm to receive tutelage, “Master, does this method have a written record or not?” Bodhidharma replies, “My method is a transmission of mind by means of mind: it does not establish any writings.” The text reads 慧可講曰：此法有文字記錄不？達摩曰：我法以心傳心、不立文字 (Yanagida 1980, 3: 1723). This passage can also be found in Zongmi’s *Zhonghua chuanxindi chanmen shizi chengxitu* 中華傳心地禪門師資承襲圖 (*Chart of the master-disciple succession of the Chan gate that transmits the mind-ground in China*), ZZ rpt. 110: 870a5–6, which can be dated to between 830–833. See Foulk (1999: 233–234) and Foulk (2007b: 446–448). The remaining two lines are: [Chan teachings] directly point to the human mind (Ch. *zhizhi renxin*; Jp. *jikishi ninshin* 直指人心), thus enabling humans to see their nature and realize buddhahood (Ch. *jianxing chengfo*; Jp. *kenshō jōbutsu* 見性成佛) ZZ rpt. 113: 66c and 132a. Cf. Gimello (1992: 412) and Foulk (1987: 164–255, 2007b: 447). On the assumptions behind Chan and Rinzai orthodoxy, see Welter (2005: 209–211).

upon the profane within the orthodox, so frivolously speaking about not setting up written words is something we must contest.

Dokuan Genkō Gohōshū 1, in SHI HUIHONG et al. (2012: 15)

You must know that the Buddha’s teachings are not divided into two. Just as it is true that Rinzai followers naturally know about [the teachings of the] Sōtō [tradition], it is also true that those who have obtained [what] Sōtō [teaches] have naturally grasped [what] Rinzai [teaches]. It is not known that Rinzai [teaches] what is unobtainable via the Sōtō [tradition], or that Sōtō [teachings] comprise what Rinzai [followers] do not know.

Dokuan Genkō Gohōshū 4, in SHI HUIHONG et al. (2012:15)

Dokuan’s words convey a clear message to his contemporaries: Sōtō and Rinzai Zen teachings ought not compete against one another, and what they both have in common is a deep and profound respect for the *real* meaning of ‘not setting up written words.’ The extent to which Dokuan apparently took these words to heart can be seen from the impressive list of secular elites he fraternized with: the Chinese poetry (*kanshi* 漢詩) connoisseur, Ishikawa Jōzan 石川丈山 (1583–1672); a famous *haiku* poet and one of Matsuo Bashō’s 松尾芭蕉 (1644–1694) teachers, Kitamura Kigin 北村季吟 (1625–1705); and the Confucian scholar, Itō Jinsai 伊藤仁齋 (1627–1705) (Shi et al. 2012: 2).

### Edo Zen Scholastic Renaissance and the *Chū sekimon mojizen*

Seventeenth and eighteenth century Japanese Zen monastics appear to have been especially troubled by questions related to defining what authoritative Chan thought, practice, monastic discipline, and rituals looked like in Song dynasty China. This was due to the arrival of several key émigré Chinese monastics who introduced contemporary continental forms of monasticism to Japan. The first Chinese Chan master to visit Edo Japan appears to have been Daozhe Chaoyuan 道者超元 (Dōsha Chōgen, d. 1660), who arrived in 1651 before returning to the continent in 1658. He was followed by Yinyuan Longqi, who arrived in Nagasaki in 1654, and within only seven years, and with support from the shōgunate, he and his Chinese and Japanese disciples—lay and monastic—had established a new tradition of Japanese Zen Buddhism with its head temple at Manpukuji 萬福寺 on Mt. Ōbaku in the small city of Uji, south of Kyoto. It was through a so-called Chinese temple (*karadera* 唐寺) within this network in Nagasaki—Kōfukuji 興福寺—that Xinyue Xingchou was invited to and subsequently reached Japan in 1677 (Ibuki 2001: 262, 266; Xu 2008; Wu 2008: 99).

On the one hand, the establishment of Ōbaku Zen in Japan appears to have produced a renaissance in terms of scholastic Buddhist studies, and in particular Zen studies, marked by a distinctive preference for Song dynasty Chinese Chan thought, practice, and perhaps even ritual forms in opposition to what has been called by many modern scholars “Ōbaku culture.” On the other hand, the presence of contemporary continental Chinese Buddhist monasticism seems to have sparked keen interest on the part of secular officials who saw these “Chinese” temples as conduits through which access to so-called Neo-Confucian learning (Ch. *Lixue*; Jp. *rigaku* or *Shushigaku* 朱子学: learning of Zhu Xi) could be obtained and then applied within curricula at Domain schools (*hankō* 藩校) for warrior-elites and their families, or in private, temple schools (*terakoya* 寺子屋) (Ibuki 2001: 253–277).

Tokugawa Mitsukuni, who patronized Xinyue Xingchou in his Mito domain, is one of the Tokugawa era Neo-Confucian philosophers who supported Buddhist scholiasts who, in turn, advocated “Zen and the Teachings are Identical” (*kyōzen itchi*), the “Three Teachings are Identical” (*sankyō itchi*) and, of course, “Confucian and Zen [teachings] are Identical” (*juzen itchi*). If a rather remarkable commentary Kakumon Kantetsu took more than twenty years to complete can be considered evidence of the extent to which Dokuan Genkō’s words may have been considered normative within the Zen communities with close ties to political power bases in and around Edo, then it would appear that prominent Sōtō, Rinzai, and Ōbaku Zen monastics shared this assessment of Zen learning at the turn of the eighteenth century. Let us recall that Kantetsu completed a full commentary to all thirty rolls of Huihong’s collected works that four prominent Zen masters wrote prefaces to: Sōtō Zen master Manzan Dōhaku, Mujaku Dōchū from Myōshinji in Kyoto, an Ōbaku monk named Gettan Dōchō; and one of Xinyue Xingchou’s disciples, Ranzan Dōchō 蘭山道昶 (d. 1756).

How exactly did Kantetsu obtain a copy of Huihong’s collected works in the first place? Why did three prominent Zen teachers and a disciple of Xinyue’s write commentaries to Kantetsu’s commentary? And, was Kantetsu still at Daiōji when he finished it? Let me answer the first question straightaway. As mentioned earlier, a copy of the Chinese Buddhist Canon commonly known as the Jingshan edition that first belonged to the fifth *shōgun*, Tokugawa Tsunayoshi 徳川綱吉 (1646–1709), was given to Kantetsu by the would-be eighth *shōgun*, Tokugawa Yoshimune 徳川吉宗 (1684–1751). *Chan of Words and Letters from Stone gate Monastery* is included in this late Ming Buddhist canon. Since, according to Manzan Dōhaku’s preface, Kantetsu had completed his commentary by Friday, the twenty-first day of the eleventh month, 1710 (Hōei 寶永 7.10.1), and it apparently took twenty years to finish, then it appears that Kantetsu brought the canon with him to Daiōji when he took up the post of

abbot in 1690. That means, however, that a seven year-old Yoshimune would have given the canon to Kantetsu to install at Daiōji.

### Ming Scholastic Chan: Dagan Zhenke and the Jingshan Canon

In order to place Kantetsu's motivations for composing a commentary to a collection of poetry and prose written by a Chinese Chan monk active in the first two decades of the twelfth-century, let us first investigate what later Chinese monks thought of the text and its inclusion in a contemporary printing of the Buddhist canon in Chinese. While certain key Chan texts were included in early printed Chinese Buddhist canons completed during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the *Supplement to the Jingshan edition* includes five works written or compiled by Huihong.<sup>18</sup> Dagan Zhenke 大觀真可 (1543–1604), who is considered one of the four great Chan monks of the Ming dynasty, is the figure most closely affiliated with the compilation of the Jingshan canon and its supplement. The project was first undertaken with Dagan's supervision in 1579 (Wanli 7) on Mount Wutai in northern China, where 500 rolls were engraved over a period of four years. On account of the long and severe winters that prevented carving woodblocks, the project was moved south to Xingsheng Wanshou Chan monastery on Mount Jing in Jiaying country, Zhejiang province, after 1592. There, concerns over humidity rotting the woodblocks precipitated transferring them, once again, to Huacheng monastery for storage in 1610. Eventually, the blocks for over 9,500 rolls were transferred to Lengyan monastery, where they were used to print and distribute this canon known as the edition of Jingshan, Jiaying, Lengyan, or Square-Format.<sup>19</sup>

Dagan Zhenke possessed great admiration for Juefan Huihong's approach to Chan and, in particular, his advocacy for literary or scholastic Chan.<sup>20</sup> In the preface Dagan wrote for *Chan of Words and Letters from Stone Gate Monastery*

18 Shiina (1993: 318–335, esp. 319). The *Chongning-Era Canon* (*Chongning Wanshou da zang-jing* 崇寧萬壽大藏經), alternate title *Dongchan Dengjue Monastery edition* (*Dongchan Dengjue siban* 東禪等覺寺版), is considered the first private edition of the printed Chinese Buddhist canon. It was printed in the city of Fuzhou, and is therefore sometimes called the Min Edition 閩本. Cf. Deleanu (2007: 628).

19 The edition held today by the Tochigi Prefecture Bureau of Cultural Properties (Tochigiken Shitei Bunkazai 栃木県指定文化財), once held at Daiōji, has 4,500 rolls.

20 Welter (2010: 72–73 and 2011: 26) is especially fond of the translation of *wenzi chan* as scholastic. Cf. Gimello (1992).

that was included in the Supplement to the Jingshan Canon in the eighth month of 1597 (Wanli 25) he expressed his approval for approaching Chan through the use of words and letters in alliterative language emblematic of an erudite monk or poet:<sup>21</sup>

Ever since the early days of Buddhism in China, those studying the [Buddhist] path have struggled over the matter of “gold dust concealing the eyes.” Yet when the first patriarch [Bodhidharma] came east, he brought the medicine to respond to this ailment: ‘directly point to the human mind; [with] no dependence on words and letters.’ Only in later generations did the argument arise that emptiness is connected to sound. Those that are jealous and unfamiliar with [Bodhidharma’s] medicine are satisfied that everything is as lofty as a wall constructed beyond the range of words and letters in Chan. From this, they divide into borders and arrange boundaries to decide the [public] case of emptiness. Those that study Chan do not devote themselves to refined meaning; while those that study words and letters do not devote themselves to settling the mind. Meaning that is unrefined results in a settled mind, but one that is neither brilliant nor extensive. Therefore, refined meaning does not settle the mind; and, in the end, words and letters do not render one into a god. Consequently, precious enlightenment lies in making use of learning without study (*wuxue zhi xue* 無學之學) ... In fact, Chan is like spring, and words and letters are like flower blossoms. Flowers blossom in spring-time; full blossoms mean it is spring. If flowers blossom in spring, then when flowers blossom spring is complete. So I say Chan and words and letters possess these two [qualities]. When Deshan [Xuanjian] 德山宣鑑 (782–865) and Linji [Yixuan] 臨濟義玄 (d. 866) overcame one another with blows (*bang* 棒) and shouts (*he* 喝), this was [using] words and letters.<sup>22</sup> It is the same as when [the exegetes] of Mount Qingliang 清涼 [Wutaishan] or Mount Tiantai 天台山 penetrate the sūtras and compose commentaries; this is also the same as Chan ... If captured in recent years, [Chan and words and letters] laugh together and are not oppo-

21 The *Shimen wenzi chan* was already compiled during the Song dynasty. Cf. *Song shi* 宋史 (History of the Song): *yíwenzhì* 藝文志 section 7, 13785; in Scripta Sinica Database of Academia Sinica 漢籍電子文獻資料庫: <http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihp/hanji.htm> (accessed 15 March 2014).

22 For information on Deshan’s blows and Linji’s shouts, see *Wudeng huiyuan* 五燈會元 4, ZZ rpt. 138: 116a or *Chuandeng lu* 傳燈錄 15: T, no. 2076, 51: 318a.



sitional like water and fire. Jiyin Zunzhe 寂音尊者 (Huihong) worried about this, which is why he called his composition *Chan of Words and Letters*.

KAKUMON KANTETSU (2000: 95–96) and *Zibai zunzhe quanji* 紫柏尊者全集 2  
[*Sage of Purple Cypress Tree's Collected Works*], 1621, ZZ rpt. 1452, vol. 73: 262b

Three points raised in this portion of the preface are worth cautious consideration. First, Dagan is something of a philologist when he states the obvious: the *records* that describe Deshan's blows and Linji's shouts are, of course, written down and not transmitted orally. Second, there is no reason to consider scholiasts as rhetorical opponents: those who produce commentaries to the scriptures can have as much of a claim to authority within the scope of the Chan tradition defined here as one who possesses an orthodox lineage certificate. And third, literary allusions may turn out to be the best way to capture the flavor of Chan. Later in the preface, Dagan defines what he means by “learning without study” using section twenty of the *Classic of the Way and Virtue* (*Daodejing*): “Repudiate learning, and stay free of worry. Really, how distant can approval be from disapproval? Or, how far apart can praise and censure be? One feared by others must also fear others, accordingly. A gulf so vast, oh, it is truly infinite” (Lynn 1999: 83).

There is a good reason why Dagan and two other eminent Ming dynasty Chan masters, Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清 (1546–1623) and Yunqi Zhuhong 雲棲朱宏 (1535–1615), favored Juefan Huihong and his inclusive boundaries for what can and what cannot be considered Chan. These three teachers gained considerable fame in late sixteenth and early seventeenth century China by securing patronage for their monasteries and projects, such as printing the private Jingshan canon and supplement, from literati and other Buddhist monastics who sustained the exegetical traditions of continental East Asian Buddhism. Furthermore, all of these monastics compiled their own collected works following the pattern set by Huihong's *Chan of Words and Letters from Stone Gate Monastery*. In the preface written for Dagan's collected works by Hanshan Deqing in 1621, Huihong and his collection are mentioned by name as the guide that was followed (*Zibai zunzhe quanji* 1: ZZ rpt. 1452, vol. 73: 135c).

Compiling a commentary to *Chan of Words and Letters from Stone Gate Monastery* was no modest task for Kakumon Kantetsu. Sixteen of the thirty fascicles are devoted to examples of seven traditional forms of Chinese poetry, followed by Buddhist *gāthā*, eulogies, epitaph poems, lyric poetry, irregular compositions, prefaces and forwards, records of events, outlines, colophons, comments, essays, and stūpa inscriptions. Despite the fact that Dagan, Hanshan, and Zhuhong emulated the example of Huihong's collected works, only a

fraction of their collections contain poetry and so many examples of classical Chinese literary styles. But there is no evidence to suggest that Kantetsu had access to these collected works (Jorgensen 2006/2007: 30). Instead, in order to compile the copious notes required to complete the commentary to Huihong's collected works, one must assume he turned to his contemporaries who had access to temple libraries with copies of books collected and printed in Japan from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries by the official Five Mountain Zen Temples (*gozan-ban*). A recent study of Kantetsu's commentary by Zhang Baiwei suggests that he utilized more than three hundred books to find the references mentioned in *Chan of Words and Letters from Stone Gate Monastery* (Shi Huihong et al. 2012: 22–23).

The question of why Kantetsu would have gone to the trouble of compiling a commentary to *Chan of Words and Letters from Stone Gate Monastery* cannot be answered by turning to any other direct source than the commentary itself. Yet the reception of Huihong's collected works in Ming China may hold a few clues. In the decades leading up to Yinyuan Longqi's departure from China for Japan, the inclusiveness implied in Dakuan's preface to Huihong's collected works, and in particular his statement concerning Deshan's blows and Linji's shouts, became the basis for a significant dispute between two Linji lineage teachers with whom Yinyuan Longqi spent considerable time. The first, Miyun Yuanwu 密雲圓悟 (1566–1642), disavowed Dakuan and his remarks, thereby challenging Hanyue Fazang 漢月法藏 (1573–1635), who maintained that orthodox Chan must be determined according to principles set forth by Linji Yixuan and further elaborated by Fenyang Shanzhao 汾陽善昭 (947–1024). The principles Hanyue Fazang followed are actually set forth in another short text compiled by Juefan Huihong called *Linji's Essential Points* (*Linji zongzhi* 臨濟宗旨) that provides a popular rendering of Fenyang's essential points as they accord with Linji's teachings (*Linji zongzhi*, ZZ rpt. 111: 86a–88b). The dispute between Miyun Yuanwu and Hanyue Fazang is the subject of Wu Jiang's *Enlightenment in Dispute: The Reinvention of Chan Buddhism in Seventeenth-Century China* and need no repetition here (see Wu 2008: esp. 7–8, 114–115).

### *Chū sekimon mojizen* in Japan: Kakumon Kantetsu's Stimuli

I would hazard a guess that continental sectarian struggles did not directly draw Kakumon Kantetsu to *Chan of Words and Letters from Stone Gate Monastery*. I say this because of two additional prefaces included in Kantetsu's *Chū sekimon mojizen*. In addition to the preface we have already examined,

written in China in 1597 by Dagan Zhenke, and the one I have alluded to, written by Manzan Dōhaku in 1710, Mujaku Dōchū wrote a preface extolling his friend Kantetsu for completing this commentary. Mujaku's preface to *Chū sekimon mojizen* begins with a different tone than we saw in Dagan's writing: "Non reliance upon words and letters defines Chan/Zen. How strange it is that Nirvāṇa Nectar (*kanrometsu* 甘露滅) considered words and letters as Chan. It isn't so" (Kakumon Kantetsu 2000: 99–101). Nirvāṇa Nectar is another of Huihong's sobriquets. The preface takes Dagan's description of Chan as spring, and flower blossoms as words and letters, to task, but concedes in the end that the literary talent contained in *Chan of Words and Letters from Stone Gate Monastery* is lovely. Mujaku points out that Kantetsu made use of at least nine Chinese classics and seventeen dynastic histories to define terms such as eggplant and certain types of gourds. He also makes an interesting reference indicative of the revived popularity of Chinese music in Edo era Japan when he tells us how Kantetsu captured the delight of how drums and lutes at Stone Gate monastery would have sounded during the Song dynasty. He concludes by saying: "Zen master Kakumon is modest, abundantly humble, and not the sort who embellishes with quotations from countless books. Instead he is a man who cultivates the Way and nourishes Virtue" (Kakumon Kantetsu 2000: 101). This is the third reference to the *Classic of the Way and Virtue* in these Chan/Zen masters' own words.

There is a short piece admiring Kantetsu's commentary and Huihong's collection by an Ōbaku monk named Gettan Dōchō within the *Chū Sekimon mojizen*. Although it has little to say regarding Kantetsu's motivations for completing this commentary *per se*, it may be instructive in terms of the reception his commentary appears to have received in 1710 when it was completed and woodblocks were carved for it to be printed. It does not seem coincidental to me that the *Chū Sekimon mojizen* contains prefaces written by an eminent Chinese Chan master, Dagan Zhenke, a well-known Sōtō Zen scholar and reformer, Manzan Dōhaku, a celebrated Myōshinji Rinzai Zen scholiast, Mujaku Dōchū, and a well-connected Ōbaku monk: Gettan Dōchō. It is almost as if this compilation from the early eighteenth century shows sectarian agreement at a time in Japan when discord is usually to be expected.

If you are wondering what Kakumon Kantetsu has to say for himself, thankfully, he wrote a colophon to the *Chū Sekimon mojizen* that may shed some light into his motivations for spending twenty years compiling a commentary to Huihong's collection of poetry and prose selections. I have translated his colophon in its entirety as follows (*Batsuchū sekimon mojizen* 跋註石門文字禪, Colophon to Notes for *Literary Chan by Stone Gate*):

After returning to the temple I was very sleepy because I had been looking through and reading Chan master Juefan's *Chan of Words and Letters*. Enchanted by the meaning [of Chan of words and letters], it is unadulterated with regard to poetic compositions. But this is not all that I appreciate about his work. Although there are people of this world who have felt similarly, I have deeply pondered what Chan of words and letters means and consider it to be of profound talent: Just as clouds contend with streams but do not completely dissipate and are, therefore, boundless. How could one who is considered superficial about slight matters be able to catch a glimpse and collapse with regard to invisible boundaries? When this book was printed and published, Master Dagan of the Great Ming [dynasty] made a mistake when he wrote that it greatly disrupts the rough causing people to have doubts [about it] and become perplexed about what's inside. When I acquired this rare book I wanted to make a commentary but found myself without any benchmarks. This made me sigh. So a monastic friend told me: "Your new luck will result in posterity." How could I not produce a commentary [to *Chan of Words and Letters from Stone Gate Monastery*] with a bibliography of sources pertaining to the Sōtō tradition? Subsequently, I penetrated Huihong's collection and sent letters to friends with questions. They responded by telling me that my destiny is not to produce nirvāṇa but, as a matter of course, the thoughts in my mind are peaceful and without love or hate, goodness or wickedness, in an uncommon way. I could only agree and cover my eyes. From that time until now, I have abandoned my unpretentious outlook and read through piles of books [looking for answers to many] questions. Becoming truly exhausted as the years passed, the purpose of the commentary became a matter of enduring what is cast aside. Returning to the publication of this book, those trapped in the net of contamination in this fleeting world cannot make much of a difference over time. What I have produced is merely a bundle of brushwood (fascine) or a pile of fallen leaves that I wish to bestow upon later generations. With bundle by bundle of brushwood, it is as if the remnants of Master Juefan's [work] is contained in this preface. So how could it enclose any fame? I narrate this now because the woodblocks [to print] my commentary are nearly completed. My only hope is that those [who study] Chan will be able to depend on this book to know the standards with which to compose poetry and letters.

KAKUMON KANTETSU (2000: 17, 754–755)

Kantetsu's colophon reaffirms what Manzan Dōhaku and Mujaku Dōchū have already told us: he spent years compiling this commentary and formed many

friendships along the way. His conclusion, however, points to the real reason he appears to have worked so diligently for two decades: Kantetsu compiled the *Chū sekimon mojizen* as a guidebook for contemporaries who also saw convergence between Chan and the art of Chinese poetry (*shizen ichimi* 詩禪一味) (Ibuki 2001: 131, 161, 231). This emphasis is certainly not a new development within Japanese Zen communities established during the Edo period. Recall that eminent poet-monks (*shisō* 詩僧) who thrived within the institutional environment of the Five Mountains (*gozan*) system such as Kokan Shiren, Chūgan Engetsu, Musō Soseki 夢窗疎石 (1275–1351), and Gidō Shūshin 義堂周信 (1325–1388), and within the associated Rinka monasteries, Daitō (Myōchō) and Ikkyū Sōjun, must have been known to Kantetsu (Collcutt 1978, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1990).<sup>23</sup> What, therefore, made Huihong's *Chan of Words and Letters from Stone Gate Monastery* such a valuable tool in Kantetsu's eyes?

### Edo Zen Monastic Education, Tōkō Shin'etsu and Chan/Zen of Words and Letters

It may well be that whereas Mujaku Dōchū compiled encyclopedias concerning Zen monasticism, and Manzan Dōhaku endeavored to reform transmission within the Sōtō tradition, at least in part as a response to the existence of a third, new, tradition of Japanese Zen—Ōbaku—by the mid-to-late seventeenth century, Kantetsu's *Chū sekimon mojizen* suggests that there was a parallel movement within the Sōtō Zen tradition itself with adherents interested in promoting Chinese literary culture in late medieval Japan. I am not suggesting that there was anything like a monolithic school of Zen thought and practice within Tokugawa era Zen, or even within the respective Zen sects, against which Kantetsu and his associates may or may not have struggled. Others, including William Bodiford, Michel Mohr, and David Riggs, have spoken to the matter of when and how a "sectarian consciousness" developed within late medieval Japanese Zen (Mohr 1994: 342–345; Riggs 2003). At the outset I mentioned material evidence that connects Kantetsu to the Ming dynasty loyalist and Chinese émigré Xinyue Xingchou at Daiōji in 1693. It is this connection that

23 Cf. Parker (1995, 1997, 1999a, 1999b), Huang (2005), Asami (2007: 21–25), Yanagida (1987: 89), Tamamura (1952: 149–190). See also Hu (2007), Chisaka (2002), LaFleur (1983) and especially Kraft (1992: 7, 151–152, 163–167) on Chan of words and letters in Japan.

may be informative with regard to the rediscovery of Chinese scholasticism and monastic education within Japanese Sōtō Zen.

Apart from a short study by R.H. van Gulik in 1944, footnotes here and there in western language sources tantalizingly mention Xinyue and his exploits in Japan. Recently, however, several Taiwanese scholars working in Japan have published articles outlining the relationship Xinyue enjoyed with his powerful patron, Tokugawa Mitsukuni. Recall that Mitsukuni is most famous for leading the team to compile a new history of Japan, the *Dai Nihon shi*, begun in 1657 but not completed until the beginning of the twentieth century. The inspiration for this momentous undertaking apparently came when Mitsukuni decided to apply Ming dynasty interpretations of the orthodox transmission (Ch. *Zheng-tong*; Jp. *seitō* 正統) from so-called Neo-Confucian teachings to crafting what might be called a Japan-centered historiography. The fact that Mitsukuni is also credited with instigating reforms designed to promote shrines to indigenous deities (*kami* 神) and to create an institutional framework to disconnect certain shrines from preexisting shrine-temple complexes (*jingūji* 神宮寺), confirms that he was well aware of an implicit anti-Buddhist bias to be found within writings by distinguished Cheng-Zhu philosophers, the most notable of which is certainly Zhu Xi (Xu 2008: 340–330).

Contemporaneously, the Tokugawa *bakufu* had already established policies to promote Chinese learning among intellectuals and the Buddhist clergy by preserving and supporting the Sendanrin 旃檀林 at Kichijōji in the capital of Edo. According to William Bodiford, the curriculum included Zen studies, new Zen Buddhist studies, Chinese literature, and Chinese composition (Bodiford 1991:433). It is within this intellectual context that Xinyue Xingchou received patronage from Tokugawa Mitsukuni. Not only was Xinyue an expert in the arts of engraving in wood, composing poems with paintings and Chinese poetry on its own, he is also credited with reintroducing the art of playing the seven-stringed lute to Japan. Confucians since time immemorial have upheld the notion that preserving the *Chinese* literary arts is the best way to disseminate so-called Confucian values within any given society. Ever since the time of Zhu Xi and his teachers, the Cheng brothers, Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033–1107) and Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032–1085), however, it has been well known that so-called Neo-Confucians are not especially recognized for their literary talent. That distinction goes to a group of literary masters who lived during the Northern Song dynasty and were particularly influential in the Yuanyou-era (1086–1093). Furthermore, these literary masters openly patronized members of the Buddhist and Daoist clergies, and Huihong's *Chan of Words and Letters from Stone Gate Monastery* is chronologically the closest source written or compiled by a Buddhist monastic to celebrate the techniques for composing poetry, calligraphy,

landscape painting, and so forth, advocated by the men recognized to be the standards against which literary talent ought to be measured in late-imperial China.

Huihong and other Chinese Chan monks who possessed literary talent did not always assert that the stimulus for producing great art comes from Buddhism alone. More often than not, references to either the *Classic of the Way and Virtue* or the *Zhuangzi* were considered at least as inspirational as the words and letters contained in Chan texts. But one thing is clear when it comes to the relationship between Buddhist monastics and literati patrons in East Asia: veneration of words and letters must be part of the equation. Therefore, it is not a coincidence that what Xinyue carved for the Meditation Hall at Daiōji implies Daoist philosophy rather than Chinese Buddhist thinking. So too when Mujaku said that Kantetsu is a man of the Way and Virtue, is there a clear implication of harmony between Chan/Zen Buddhist thought and Daoist philosophy.

The extent to which Kakumon Kantetsu and Xinyue Xingchou may have wished to promote an alternative approach to stimulating Chinese learning in Tokugawa era Japanese monastic curricula by providing access to what might be called "authentic" Chinese literary talent, in contradistinction to Ming dynasty so-called Neo-Confucian learning, is nearly impossible to assess. Yet there is an enticing matter worth consideration that emerges from the records of Xinyue and his exploits with Tokugawa Mitsukuni. Neo-Confucian learning and its supporters are not especially well known for endorsing local, popular Chinese religion. It would appear, however, that when Xinyue established a head temple for his type of Chinese-style Sōtō Zen in Japan at Tentokuji, with the support of Tokugawa Mitsukuni, he installed the popular goddess who protects seafarers from southeastern China known as Mazu 媽祖 or Tianfei 天妃 (Xu 2008: 329–323). Perhaps her popular Buddho-Daoist background appealed to Mitsukuni when, we presume, he learned Mazu was now in residence in eastern Japan. This, indeed, is a topic for further research.

### Conclusion: Hakuin and the Problem with Pure Zen

What are we to make of the presence of Xinyue Xingchou and his connection to Kakumon Kantetsu, who compiled a commentary to an early twelfth-century Chinese Chan master's collected works in early eighteenth century Japan? I hope the suggestions for interpreting these two intriguing figures I have presented in this paper have, at the very least, provided an opportunity for reconsideration of some of the ways scholars understand the transmission

narrative of Chan/Zen Buddhism in both Japan and China. We have merely scratched the surface of how the role literati patrons have played in shaping the thought, practices, and literary output by Chinese Chan and Japanese Zen monastics. Whether or not core practices like “silent illumination” or “public case introspection” were created in order to cater to literati tastes, I have not investigated in this paper. Yet I do think that all signs point to the fact that, from the very beginning of Chinese Chan and Japanese Zen Buddhist monastic training and education, especially during the tenth century in China and the twelfth century in Japan, working within the institutional and intellectual framework of East Asian literary culture remained the best means to effectively pray for power. I am, therefore, reminded of what Herman Ooms once remarked about the process of assigning beginnings and tracing the origins of traditions: “Beginnings pertain to an epistemological order rather than the order of things. To talk of a beginning is to engage in a highly interpretative discourse, and a very problematical one ... Such talk of beginnings often serves concrete interests and is thus itself ideological” (Ooms 1985: 4–5).

There remains one individual who figures rather prominently in most discussions concerning seventeenth and eighteenth century Japanese Zen I have yet to mention: Hakuin Ekaku 白隠慧鶴 (1686–1769). He may be the best-known Tokugawa era Rinzai Zen master to support and enhance the distinction between pure or strict Zen and mixed Zen, the topic I have subjected to criticism in this presentation. Philip Yampolsky (1920–1996), one of the most eminent western scholars of Chan/Zen Buddhism, remarked in his seminal study of Hakuin: “It might not be too much of an exaggeration to say that when Zen flourishes as a teaching it has little to do with the arts and that when the teaching is in decline its association with the arts increases” (Yampolsky 1971: 9). Such an observation fits within both the framework of Yampolsky’s impressive scholarship, which also introduced the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* (*Liuzu tan jing* 六祖壇經, T no. 2008) to a western audience for the first time, and to Hakuin’s Zen teachings as interpreted according to normative sectarian considerations.

My own research on Zen in China and Japan, however, is based upon the opposite supposition about Zen and the arts: the path to liberation in Chan/Zen Buddhism is through literature, and perhaps not meditation at all. It would not be an exaggeration to say that when Zen thrives as a teaching, it has everything to do with the arts, and that when Zen degenerates it has little to do with the arts. We need only reflect that in East Asian cultures, literature encompasses three scholarly arts: poetry, painting and calligraphy. Chan/Sōn/Zen culture, created in the Buddhist monastic institutions of China, Korea, and Japan, has



produced a wealth of material and literary evidence to substantiate the claim that liberation through the literary arts may be the primary method leading to the Way and Virtue.

In his book, *China Road: A Journey into the Future of a Rising Power*, journalist Rob Gifford critically examines a commonly held assumption about Japan held by many Chinese who see “Japanese culture as derivative from, and therefore inferior to, Chinese culture” (Gifford 2007: 44–45). It would appear that such a tactless supposition bolsters some of the most basic conclusions scholars have arrived at concerning the transmission of the Buddhist religion and its teachings across East Asia.<sup>24</sup> In the case of the transmission narratives of the Chinese Chan and Japanese Zen traditions examined here, emphasis upon Chinese precedents for nearly every aspect of monasticism seem to be the rule, rather than the exception.

How much more so the case if one seeks to investigate the topic of Buddhist monastic education in East Asia? Chinese standards, such as the state managed *sūtra* examinations (*shijing* 試經) held before monastics could receive their tonsure certificates (*dudie* 度牒 or *jiedie* 戒牒) from as early as the Tang (618–907) dynasty through the Ming, manuals governing daily services in temples and monasteries (Ch. *rike*; Jp. *ikka*; Kor. *ilkwa* 日課), so-called Pure Rules (Ch. *qinggui*; Jp. *shingi*; Kor. *ch'ŏngyu* 清規) regulating conduct for all manner of activities within Chinese monasteries, all seem to demonstrate that Japanese and Koreans effectively mimicked or imitated their elder brothers and sisters on the continent.<sup>25</sup> If we take into account the role Chinese secular learning—Confucianism or “Neo-Confucianism”—undoubtedly played in shaping curricula within East Asian Buddhist monasteries, it seems almost impossible to avoid reiterating the claim that Buddhism in East Asia is merely a product of the Chinese cultural sphere. It seems only fitting to return, then, to the institutional division mentioned at the outset: since the early Edo period in Japan, there have been Zen training monasteries and those temples where laity can perform ritual dedications of merit and, of course, funerals. This side of the coin,

24 Still perhaps the best concise account of East Asian Buddhism in print in any language, Kamata (2003) is a very good example of an account that favors this problematic narrative.

25 Although the precise name for the governmental bureau charged with overseeing tonsure certificates changed over time, it was often under the supervision of the Ministry of Sacrifices (*cibu* 祠部). For an overview of monastic examinations in English see Kieschnick (1997: 118–123), Zürcher (1989: 30, 32–35). Kamata Shigeo (1986) remains the indefatigable source for information about daily services in China. On Korea, see Buswell (1992), and on Japan see Giei and Smith (1973), Satō (2006), and Kraft (1988). On Pure Rules in China and Japan from a comparative perspective, see Foulk (1988, 1993, 2004, 2007a).

however, demonstrates beyond a doubt that Japanese Buddhism—including Zen—cannot effectively be informed by another culture.

### Abbreviations

- T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經, 100 vols., eds. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎, Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡邊海旭, et al., Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai, 1924–1932. Rpt., Chinese Buddhist Electronic Texts Association 中華電子佛典協會, CBETA Electronic Tripiṭaka Collection 電子佛典集成, Taipei: 1998–2016 or SAT Daizōkyō Database ver. 2015: <http://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT/satdb2015.php?lang=en> (accessed 22 May 2016).
- ZZ Nakano Tatsue 中野達慧 et al. (eds.). 1905–1912. *Dai Nihon Zokuzōkyō* 大日本續藏經 (Supplement to the Buddhist Tripiṭaka). 150 vols. Kyoto: Zōkyō Shoin. Rpt. *Xinbian wanzi xu zangjing* 新編卅字續藏經, 150 vols., Taipei, Xinwenfeng chubanshe, 1968–1978. Digital version: Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association 中華電子佛典協會, *CBETA Chinese Electronic Tripiṭaka Collection* 電子佛典集成, Taipei, CBETA, 1998–2016.

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