

Tiantong Mountain, Jingde Temple, Chan Teacher Rujing's Continuing Record of Sayings

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(Japanese: Tendōsan Keitokuji Nyojō Zenji Zoku Goroku)

天童山景德寺如淨禪師續語錄



Introduction by Kōkyō Henkel:

Chan Teacher Tiantong Rujing (Japanese: Tendō Nyojō, 1163-1228) was the root teacher of Eihei Dōgen Zenji (1200-1253), who brought Rujing's Sōtō Zen lineage from China to Japan. In the Chinese Canon, Rujing's Record of Sayings is quite large, filling two lengthy volumes. Rujing lived and taught at a handful of different monasteries before settling at Tiantong Mountain for the later part of his life. The short final section of Rujing's Record at Tiantong, translated here, records encounter-dialogs with each of his six Dharma heirs, including Dōgen. According to the text itself, it was compiled by Dōgen, who wrote a colophon for it in 1241. (1)

Though there are many wonderful sayings and interactions with students recorded throughout Rujing's extensive Record, this short final section is especially precious, since it only records encounters with Rujing's six intimate Dharma heirs – one dialog for each student, with three dialogs for Dōgen. Only one of the three dialogs with Dōgen is recorded elsewhere in Dōgen's writings: the well-known story of Dōgen's great awakening, "dropping off body and mind" when hearing this phrase spoken by his teacher.

This short record naturally forms a small kōan collection of ten cases (adding Rujing's own awakening story in Dōgen's introduction makes eleven), that can be taken up to turn the mind and open the treasury. Five of these stories also refer to earlier classic Chinese kōan cases (which are mentioned in the notes).

These stories reveal the unique breeze of the Sōtō tradition's subtle style: not indulging in quiescent emptiness but stepping forward into the dynamism of life, respecting all appearances, and not saying too much. As Rujing's ancestor Dongshan replied when asked what he received from his teacher, "I didn't receive any teaching from him." Those who wish to savor this plain exquisite flavor of the lineage may take up one story at a time and let it wash over the tongue until it's absorbed. It's not necessary to forcefully bring the kōan into the radiant empty space of zazen, though it may be gently recalled before sitting, allowing the heart of its meaning to naturally permeate the space of zazen.

Paying homage to Great Teacher Rujing ever more deeply after imbibing these stories, I offer nine bows to his lingering presence while recalling his words to disciple Dōgen (as recorded in the Hōkyō Era Record) who, upon hearing them, shed tears of gratitude: "Bower and bowed-to are both naturally empty and still; mystical communion is inconceivable."

With many thanks to my co-translator, Yashu Zhang. Written on a winter day in the visiting teacher's quarters at Inconceivable Joy Zen Temple in Austin, Texas. January 2022.

Clouds-and-Water Wayfarer Kōkyō, humbly devoted to protecting and maintaining Rujing's lineage

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Translated by Yashu Zhang and Kōkyō Henkel

Compiled at Kannon Dori Kōshō Hōrinji
by One Who Entered Song Dynasty China to Transmit Dharma, Shramana Dōgen

Teacher Rujing came from Mount Furong to Chan Teacher Zhijian's place on Mount Xuedou in Mingzhou. Jian asked, "Where are you from?" Rujing said, "From Furong." Jian asked, "For what reason did you come here?" Rujing said, "I hear you have a saying that traveled three-thousand miles in one night. Is this true?" Jian said "Yes." Rujing said, "What is the World-Honored One's intimate saying?" Jian then hit him. Rujing said, "What does it mean that Kashyapa did not conceal it?" Jian hit him again. Rujing was about to say something and Jian hit him again. At this, Rujing realized great awakening. He burned incense and bowed. Jian said, "What is the meaning of your burning incense?" Rujing said, "I'm offering you three bows," and he sweat all over his body. Jian then stopped and Rujing shouted "Ahhhhh!" and left. After that, he attended Jian for fifteen years. (2)

At one point Jian conferred upon Rujing the Dongshan lineage, profound and deep, saying, "You protect and keep it well." Rujing received it, and secretly went to dwell in the mountains, not wishing to come out in the world as a teacher. Later, he was called by the Emperor to teach. He declined the order twice, and finally upon the third calling he accepted. He then became the abiding abbot at Tiantong (Celestial Child) Mountain, Jingde (Scenery of Virtue) Chan Temple.

During question-and-answer sessions (mondō) and Dharma talks (teishō) Rujing had no fear or worry. Again, "the sun rises broadly on the mountain top," reviving the school's style. (3) Six disciples inherited Dharma from him and came out in the world as teachers. In six places the transformative teaching flourishes: in Chengtian there is Guichan Ruying, in Ruiyan there is Wuwai Yiyuan, in Huayan there is Tianwen Qing, there is Zian Teacher Jie, in Yuelin (next to Tiantong) there is Chiweng Teacher Ling, and in Japan there is me (Dōgen). All six of Rujing's disciples received the teacher's seal of approval and emerged in the world as teachers. Now it is the second year of the Ninji Era in Japan (1241). Ruiyan Yuan sent this record to me from afar. I respectfully honor it on the top of my head, and offer prostrations, throwing my body to the ground in admiration. What is recorded in this dignified collection is questions-and-answers and opportune conditions. I write this at the end out of gratitude for the kindness of Rujing's Dharma milk.



Teacher Rujing invited the assembly for "requesting instruction." Chengtian Ying asked, "Buddhas are illusory transformation bodies (nirmanakaya), ancestors are old monks (bhikshu). Do you, teacher, also avoid attainment?" Rujing then hit him. Ying bowed. Rujing said, "The authentic (正) is the basis of illusory transformation."

Rujing offered an "open invitation" to present questions. Ruiyan Yuan asked, "What is the inexhaustible treasury?" Rujing said, "One must take the path ascending the clear sky; losing the way, one descends to the bottom of the water." Yuan said, "How does a person who stands above the rest live?" Rujing said, "Beyond your limits." Yuan said, "How is it for a learned person like you?" Rujing remained silent for a long time. Yuan said, "Beyond the teacher's limits." Rujing said, "Thus it is, thus it is." Yuan bowed.

Huayan Qing asked Rujing, “What is the Dongshan lineage style?” Rujing said, “Mount Sumeru stands in the midst of vast space, with the sun and the moon turning around it.” Qing said, “One kind or two kinds?” Rujing said, “A multitude of mountain peaks inclining toward it, with the white clouds changing and transforming.” Qing then bowed. Rujing said, “A golden phoenix lodges in a dragon's nest; how could various carts ever crush the moss at the imperial palace?” (4)

Zian Jie asked Rujing: “The World-Honored One said, ‘When I don't see, why don't you see my not seeing?’ (5) What is the meaning of this saying?” Rujing said, “If this old monk were to answer you, I would lose my descendants.” Jie said, “Fortunately, there is the interacting of the occasion.” Rujing said, “How does a learned person like you distinguish the essential matter?” Jie then bowed. Rujing said, “This is interacting yet not interacting.” (6) Jie said, “Not seeing, the Way is harmonious, and bowing and not bowing are considerate.” Rujing said, “Thus it is, thus it is.”

Yuelin Ling asked Rujing, “Fresh abundant snow is wrong; how to attain peace?” Rujing said, “A flute with no holes strikes the sounding board (han). One can't say any more - no sound making sound is wrong.” Ling said, “What's wrong with that?” Rujing said, “One relies on the other, and snow is wrong.” Satisfied, Ling bowed.

Rujing invited the assembly to enter the individual meeting room. Then I (Dōgen) asked, “How is it when there is not a wisp of cloud in the blue sky?” Rujing said, “This is still just half holding it up.” I asked, “When completely holding it up, at such a time how is it?” Rujing said, “After the blue sky's power is exhausted, take one step after another.” I said, “Autumn withering, mountain sparseness, moon fallen into the empty pond.” Rujing said, “Yet it still has a calm appearance.” I bowed. Rujing said, “Go.”

Rujing ascended the hall on the first day of the year. I (Dōgen) asked, “What is the precious pearl in the mind?” Rujing said, “What do you have outside the mind to dislike?” I bowed. Rujing said, “Respect this, admire this.” I picked up my sitting cloth and stood. Rujing said, “Clearly observe the Dharma of the Dharma King; the Dharma of the Dharma King is thus.” (7) I then returned to the assembly.

Rujing entered the hall. He scolded a patch-robed disciple who was dozing while sitting, saying, “The practice of Zen is body and mind dropping off - how can you just wholeheartedly doze?” Hearing these words, I (Dōgen) opened to great awakening (daigo). I went up to the abbot's quarters, burned incense, and bowed. Rujing asked, “Why are you bowing?” I said, “Body and mind dropped off.” Rujing said, “Body and mind dropped off, dropped off body and mind.” I said, “This is just a temporary ability; Teacher, don't mistakenly give your seal of approval.” Rujing said, “I'm not mistakenly giving my seal.” I asked, “What are you not mistakenly sealing with approval?” Rujing said, “Dropping off has dropped off.” I stopped. (8)

A monk asked Rujing, “What is the meaning of the ancestral teacher Bodhidharma coming from the West?” Rujing said, “The ancient virtue of question-and-answer has arrived. Many monks have wanted to discuss this.” Rujing said, “What are you asking about?” The monk said, “The meaning of coming from the West.” Rujing hit him. The monk realized great awakening.

Rujing once said, “This old monk sees all the teacher-monks of present times as having no nostrils (9), yet they flaunt their fame and flaunt their profit. I urge all you elder and younger Dharma brothers to not stop and rest yet. It's one single suchness and one single mystery, yet not suchness. Do not avoid birth and death of the conditioned. Furthermore, what is birth? Try to separate from birth and death with one phrase.” After a long pause he said, “One mirror penetrates the bones of each and every person's thoughts. In the three times it's difficult to be well-versed in each and every truth.”

Dōgen's Colophon:

The Teacher's name was Rujing. He was a person of Mingzhou, Weijiang. His common name, as a disciple raising the Dharma with authority, was Taibo (Great White) Peak. With clear intimate sayings, like fragrant flowing water, a white heron standing in the snow, the bright moon in the courtyard, green mountains upright and lofty, reed flowers outside, this is the Caodong (Sōtō) School's essence. Rujing handed down (Caodong Teacher) Taiyang's original school, as blue hawks fly to the nine heavens and an old crane perches on a parasol tree, while people push forward to look for the mysterious style. Relying on questions-and-answers (mondō) and Dharma talks (teishō), he established one generation of our school's style, receiving (Caodong Teacher) Furong Daokai's ancient ancestral patched Dharma robe while intimately abiding inside the room. Having harvested the truth, the old man rests with his bamboo staff still leaning on the wall within the room. His overflowing house instructs everyone, without one person not being guided. Seeing this record, gathering together this one seeing, countless excellent results are verified.

This was written in spring of the Metal Ox Year of Japans's Ninji Era (1241) at the dōjō (practice place) of the Shakya residence, Kannon Dori Kōshō Hōrinji (Dōgen's first temple in Uji)

Tiantong Rujing Chanshi's Continuing Record Colophon, by Manzan Dōhaku (1635-1715):

Teacher Tiantong Rujing's school style is lofty and classic, complying with the world without either surpassing the ordinary or going beyond holy. This is sitting and cutting off everything in the ten directions: sometimes alone at the top of the highest peak with white waves flooding the heavens; sometimes invading the thickets (monasteries) with a spear, roaming and sporting about with miraculous powers. Isn't it appropriate for Eihei Kōso (Dōgen) who went to Song China, a monk whose awakened words resemble jade, guiding teacher for humans and gods, first generation lineage worker in Japan, to compile the annals of Changweng Jing (Chō-ō, "Elder Old-Man," another name of Rujing), conveying his Dharma inheritance? Though it is not detailed, now there is this continuing record. Teacher Wuwai Yiyuan (a disciple of Rujing) compiled this, and Eihei Kōso (Dōgen) wrote the colophon. This record has now been transmitted, like seeing the bright sun in the midst of rain. Five-hundred years ago this record appeared in the world; Kōso's comments still abide, brightly shining in the night for humans and gods, but does anyone know its true value and know its worth?

Shōtoku Era (1711-1716), second month in the middle of spring, on a good morning, in the north of Kyōto, Takagamine, Jewel Tree Forest (Genkō-an Hermitage), with a heart hearing the sound of the ocean, burning incense and offering nine bows upon composing this

Appendix: One of Rujing's Poems from his Tiantong Record (2002A)

Avalokiteshvara (Guanyin)

The full extent of sitting completely penetrates the subtle wondrous marks:

Living beings within the eye, piled up green cliffs,

Dawn arrives at the window, and outside the twitter of birds is heard.

The spring wind does not abide in the flowers and branches above:

On top of the head, as a jewel crown, the ox wears horns;

Underfoot, as lotus flowers, the horse walks on hooves;

Pervading the body, as jewel-necklaces, the debt of a hide of fur.

In the past, a forceful wind stirred the water into mud.

Mind-dust dropped off, opening the mountain cave; (10)

Self-nature completely pervades the majestic dark-red appearance.

For devas there is honor, for dragons there is respect, but no special enjoyment here.

Peaceful, yet suddenly gasping, the ocean waves upset by the black wind.

Footnotes:

1. There are two parts of Rujing's Record: Taisho Tripitaka Volume 48 numbers 2002a and b, which include his sayings at various monasteries including Tiantong (part a) and "continued" sayings at Tiantong Monastery (part b). The Tiantong section is introduced by Manzan Dōhaku, who also writes a colophon at the end (translated here). The last part of the Tiantong Record, translated here, is a short collection of sayings compiled by Eihei Dōgen. Kōkyō is currently working on translating the rest of the Tiantong Record, which is about half of Rujing's complete two-part record. There is also a short section of Rujing's sayings in *Five Lamps Merged at the Source* (X80:1566), and informal conversations between Rujing and Dōgen are recorded in Dōgen's *Hōkyō Era Record* (Hōkyōki).

2. Rujing's awakening story here is different from his story in Keizan Zenji's *Transmission of Light Record* (which has no equivalent in the Chinese canon), in which Rujing awakens by contemplating Zhijian's question, "Mr. Purity (Jing), how can you purify what has never been defiled?" *Five Lamps Merged at the Source* has Rujing's awakening being catalyzed by Zhaozhou's "Why did Bodhidharma come from the West? The cypress tree in the garden." Rujing's awakening story in this *Record of Rujing* is based on the story of the World-Honored One's intimate saying (originally from the Mahaparinirvana Sutra), which comes from Rujing's Dharma ancestor Yunju (as told in Dōgen's 300 koans, case 34):

Zen Teacher Daoying of Mount Yunju was asked by a government official, "It is said that the World-Honored One had an intimate saying and Kashyapa did not conceal it. What is the World-Honored One's intimate saying?" Yunju said, "Officer." The officer said, "Yes?" Yunju said, "Do you understand?" The officer said, "No." Yunju said, "If you don't understand, that is the World-Honored One's intimate saying. If you do understand, that is Kashyapa's not concealing it."

Also, this same saying is the catalyst for the awakening of Rujing's teacher, Xuedou Zhijian. In Keizan's *Transmission of Light Record* it is recorded:

When Zongjue was abbot of Tiantong Monastery, one day in the Dharma hall he raised up "the World-Honored One had an intimate saying; Kashyapa did not conceal it." Hearing this, Zhijian suddenly awakened to its profound meaning. He stood in the assembly and shed tears. Without thinking, he blurted out, "Why didn't I hear this before?" After the Dharma hall gathering had ended, Zongjue called Zhijian to see him and asked, "Why did you shed tears in the Dharma hall?" Zhijian said, "The World-Honored One had an intimate saying; Kashyapa did not conceal it." Zongjue approved him and said, "Is this not what Yunju predicted?"

Rujing must have known of known of Zhijian's awakening story, that "traveled three-thousand miles in one night," and inquired about it upon first meeting his teacher. This dialog was then the catalyst for Rujing's own awakening, and has now traveled all the way to us today.

Later, when Rujing was a teacher, he ascended the hall and said (in his Tiantong Record), "The World-Honored One had an intimate saying – cold pond, night moon round. Kashyapa did not conceal it – withered trees, dense clouds elegant. It seems that people attain life in the midst of death, and death in the midst of life, in order to know this message." (He opened both his hands and said:) "The fragrance of the flower forest sweetens the spring air; one speck of spiritual light brightens the world."

3. "The sun (yang) rises broadly on the mountain top" is a line from a verse by Taiyang (Taiyō Kyōgen), recorded in Keizan's *Transmission of Light Record* in the chapter on Touzi, which Taiyang gave to his Linji lineage student Yuanjian as a prediction that his (Yang's) lineage would continue in the future (see note 4 below for more details on this story).

4. Rujing is quoting a transmission poem written by Linji lineage teacher Yuanjian, which was given to Touzi (Tōsu Gisei), a Dharma ancestor of Rujing. Yuanjian, a student of Taiyang, transmitted to Touzi the Caodong lineage of Taiyang, which would have died out at his death, as a kind of "surrogate mother" since he was part of the Linji lineage. Keizan Zenji's *Transmission of Light Record* in the chapter on Touzi says:

“Yuanjian brought out the lineage implements from the descendants of Dongshan and showed them to Touzi. Yuanjian entrusted Touzi with Taiyang's (Taiyō Kyōgen's) portrait, shoes, and sitting robe and said: “You should uphold Taiyang's lineage style instead of me. Don't stay here long, but go and protect and maintain it well.” Then he wrote this verse and gave it to Touzi:

Mount Sumeru stands in the midst of vast space; (the true Dharma is like Mount Sumeru)
With the sun and moon turning around it. (Linji and Caodong lineages revolve around Sumeru)
A multitude of peaks inclining toward it, (other practitioners also incline toward it)
With the white clouds changing and transforming.
Shaolin's wind rises in the forests, (Bodhidharma's temple)
At Caoxi and Dongshan the screens are rolled up. (Huineng and Dongshan are Caodong ancestors)
A golden phoenix lodges in a dragon's nest; (Caodong lineage temporarily lives in a Linji nest)
How could various carts ever crush the moss at the imperial palace?

5. Case 88 in the *Book of Serenity* (Shōyōroku) says:

The Shurangama Sutra says, “When I don't see, why don't you see my not seeing? If you see my not seeing, that is naturally not the characteristic of not seeing. If you don't see my not seeing, it's naturally not a thing; how could it not be you?”

6. From Shitou's *Harmony of Difference and Equality* (a classic Caodong lineage poem):

“All the objects of the senses are interacting, yet not interacting.”

7. Case 1 in the *Book of Serenity* (Shōyōroku) says:

One day the World-Honored One ascended the seat. Manjushri struck the mallet and said, “Carefully observe the Dharma of the Dharma King: the Dharma of the Dharma King is thus.” The World-Honored One expediently got down from the seat.

8. This is the famous story of Dōgen's awakening, which some scholars claim was never actually recorded by Dōgen himself. Though some may say this Record of Rujing (or at least this story of Dōgen's awakening) may be a later forgery, if it was truly compiled by Dōgen in 1241, it is indeed his own recording of the event. Some scholars claim that if this is true, then Dōgen would have mentioned the event elsewhere in his Shōbōgenzō. However, it could be that out of humble respectfulness, Dōgen only included his own awakening story in the record of his teacher's sayings.

9. “having no nostrils” is a classic Zen phrase for having no true understanding, no real “life.”

10. Nowhere in Rujing's Record, besides the story of Dōgen's awakening, does the phrase “body and mind dropped off” or “dropping off body and mind” appear (though this phrase is attributed to Rujing in Dōgen's Hōkyōki and elsewhere). However, one time (in this poem) Rujing uses the phrase “mind-dust dropped off.” In Japanese this is pronounced “shinjin datsuraku” (same pronunciation as “body and mind dropped off”) and in modern Chinese it is pronounced “xinchen tuoluo” instead of “xinshen tuoluo” (body and mind dropped off). In this poem the characters are 心塵脫落 and in the story of Dōgen's awakening they are 身心脫落.