

# *Sources of Japanese Tradition*

SECOND EDITION

VOLUME 1

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## *Chapter 14*

### ZEN BUDDHISM

While most schools of Buddhism cite particular scriptures in support of their own special form of Buddhist practice, the Zen school, in contrast, rejects claims of scriptural authority and embraces many different practices. Its legitimacy rests on claims to an exclusive ancestral lineage that has been passed from teacher to disciple in an unbroken succession from Shākyamuni, the historical Buddha, down to the present day.

Zen legend says that one day on Vulture Peak, Shākyamuni Buddha preached a sermon not with words but by holding up a flower. Mahā Kāshyapa was the only one of Shākyamuni's many disciples who grasped the true significance of this wordless teaching, which he expressed by a slight smile. Mahā Kāshyapa thereby inherited Shākyamuni's robe and lineage as the second Zen ancestor. The Zen lineage was faithfully transmitted in India through twenty-eight generations until Bodhidharma (J: Daruma) brought it to China sometime in the sixth century. According to Zen teachers, certification in this lineage ensured that Zen monastics and their disciples practiced Buddhism correctly as living embodiments of the Buddha's awakened wisdom. Thus, regardless of whatever types of Buddhist practices Zen monks performed, they always would have more religious power than the exact same practices engaged in by other monks not affiliated with Zen. Because Zen orthodoxy rests on the teacher-disciple lineage alone, instead of issues of doctrine or practice, Zen clerics have

historically enjoyed great flexibility in adapting a wide variety of activities, from tantric (esoteric) rituals to Pure Land chanting, to their Zen practice.

The development of the Zen lineage is difficult to determine on the basis of the extant historical evidence. During the Tang Dynasty (618–907), several competing Zen (Ch: Chan) lineages emerged, each with distinct unilinear genealogical claims and each seeming to advocate a different approach to Buddhist practice. Regardless of the relative importance any particular lineage afforded meditation exercise (the literal meaning of *zen* or *chan*), scriptural study, or other monastic routines, each insisted that all of their ancestors and teachers had attained full awakening to the wisdom of the Buddha Mind. Some of these Tang-dynasty lineages were transmitted to Japan, most notably by Saichō (767–822), the founder of the Tendai establishment on Mount Hiei. But in Heian-period Japan, when any accomplished practitioner of meditation or esoteric rituals could be called “Zen master” (*zenji*), teacher-disciple Zen lineages were not maintained.

During the Song dynasty (960–1279), a more comprehensive vision of the Zen lineage became dominant, a multibranched one encompassing five or more family lines to which almost any ordained cleric could find affiliation. Hagiographical compendiums, known as “flame records” (*tōroku*),<sup>1</sup> compiled during the Song dynasty, depicted the Zen ancestors of all lines as expressing the activity of Buddha awakening in novel ways, with shouts or gestures and strikes and with enigmatic and sometimes impious language. Collections of these individual episodes, known as *kōan* (Ch: *gongan*),<sup>2</sup> were compiled so that they could be studied as guidelines for Buddhist practice. Song-dynasty records explained the significance of these seemingly bizarre stories in a pithy verse, attributed to Bodhidharma, which summarizes the Zen message: “A special transmission outside the scriptures, not relying on words or letters; pointing directly to the human mind, seeing true nature is becoming a Buddha.”

It is important to note that this emphasis on going outside the orthodox scriptures did not displace the traditional Buddhist monastic practices of chanting, meditation, and scriptural study. Rather, it revitalized them and charged them with increased soteriological significance by insisting that they must be performed as meaningful expressions of individual awakening realized in the here and now. The effectiveness of Zen rhetoric in promoting strict monastic practice was recognized by the Song government when it officially designated most state-recognized monasteries (i.e., public institutions, open to any legally

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1. The term *tōroku* is commonly rendered as referring to the “transmission of the lamp,” but the basic metaphor is one in which the flame of wisdom burning in one lamp is used to ignite other lamps. It is the flame that is transmitted, not the lamps.

2. Literally, “public cases” but better understood as “test cases.”

ordained monk, that offer prayers for the long life of the emperor) as being Chan (Zen) cloisters. These temples housed the monastic elites, the monks with the best education (in both Buddhist scriptures and Confucian classics), the most sincere religious motivation, the strictest discipline, and the strongest ties to powerful political patrons. It was natural, therefore, that Japanese monks who traveled to Song-dynasty China in search of a new model of Buddhist vitality, as well as Chinese émigré monks who subsequently came to Japan, would identify themselves with the Zen lineage.

## ZEN IN JAPAN

Japanese Zen tradition customarily cites Eisai (aka Yōsai, 1141–1215) and Dōgen (1200–1253) as the first teachers of Song-dynasty Zen in Japan and as the founders of the Rinzaï (Ch: Linji) and Sōtō (Ch: Caodong) Zen lineages, respectively. Certainly Eisai and Dōgen were important Zen pioneers who laid the foundation for subsequent developments, but their Zen teachings had little immediate impact. Even the wave of Chinese émigré Zen teachers who fled to Japan from the advancing Mongol armies and found new patrons among the military rulers of Kamakura immediately before and after the first Mongol invasion attempt of 1274 remained largely isolated from cultural currents. These Chinese monks provided the Hōjō regents and the new military government with a cosmopolitan aura otherwise lacking in the provincial town of Kamakura. But overall, the Kamakura warlords continued to sponsor established Buddhist schools and to join Pure Land and Nichiren movements as well. It was not until the second- and third-generation Japanese disciples of this first wave of Zen pioneers found new patrons among rival warlords and among members of the royal family that Zen became prominent in Japan.

Eisai was a Tendai monk who traveled to China twice (in 1168 and from 1187 to 1197). He was especially impressed by the resolute discipline of Chinese monasteries, which contrasted markedly with the moral laxity so common among Japanese clerics. Eisai believed that Zen would breathe new life into Japanese Tendai by reviving strict observance of the Buddhist precepts and the norms of monastic decorum. But Eisai's agenda was opposed by the Tendai establishment on Mount Hiei. He also had to contend with competition from the Darumashū, a rival Zen group founded by another Tendai monk named Nōnin, who never went to China but who had received mail-order certification in a Chinese Zen lineage. The Darumashū (named after Bodhidharma) promoted ideas completely opposite from Eisai's goals. They taught that no monastic discipline was required, since Buddha awakening could be expressed in any activity. In 1194, the court in Kyoto banned the Zen teachings of Eisai and the Darumashū. Eisai's most important work, the *Propagation of Zen for the Protection of the State* (*Kōzen gokokuron*, 1198), is an eloquent defense of Chi-

nese Zen training that shows how it differs from normative Japanese Tendai and Darumashū practices.

Dōgen also began his monastic career in Tendai but soon switched to Zen under the guidance of one of Eisai's disciples. Dōgen spent four years in China (1223–1227), but unlike Eisai he was not edified by what he saw as political corruption in Song monasticism. Upon returning to Japan, he did not try to reform Tendai or promote Zen among the ruling elite. Instead, he established a small Zen temple on the outskirts of Kyoto. After a group of former Darumashū monks joined his community, Dōgen moved deep into the wilderness of Echizen (Fukui Prefecture), where his potential audience was even smaller. Although Dōgen died in relative obscurity, in modern times his writings have achieved wide recognition as works of religious and philosophical genius. His *How to Practice Buddhism* (*Bendōwa*, 1231) remains to this day a widely studied primer for Zen practice. And his *True Dharma Eye Treasury* (*Shōbōgenzō*, unfinished) is celebrated for the novel ways in which it analyzes *kōan* stories to express the wordless truth of Zen awakening in language.

Eisai's and Dōgen's very limited success at propagating Zen illustrates a crucial issue in our understanding of medieval Japanese religion. The religious life of the age often has been explained almost exclusively in terms of the so-called New Buddhism of the Pure Land, Nichiren, and Zen traditions that first appeared during the Kamakura period and remain the dominant forms of Japanese Buddhism to this day. Recent scholarship has emphasized, however, that these new schools for a long while remained relatively marginal movements with little political power or cultural influence compared with the orthodox mainstream of mixed exoteric and tantric (*kenmitsu*) Buddhism represented by the major landholding monasteries of Nara, Kyoto, and Mount Hiei. This Esoteric Buddhism was a dominant force in all aspects of medieval Japanese culture: politics, economics, literature, arts, and religion, including the worship of local gods (i.e., the *honji suijaku* forms of Shintō). To survive, the new forms of Kamakura Buddhism either had to move into the countryside beyond the reach of Esoteric Buddhist control or compromise with the preexisting Buddhist power structure or both.

Japanese Zen developed along both lines. Zen found a home in the state-recognized Buddhist establishment in the form of the Five Mountain (Gozan) temple networks of Kamakura and Kyoto. Although the title "Five Mountain" had been awarded to some Zen temples by the Hōjō regents, initially it was just an honorary designation. Through the political machinations of, first, Emperor Go-Daigo (1288–1339) and, subsequently, the Ashikaga military rulers, the Five Mountain system eventually consisted of some three hundred Zen monasteries, ranked into three tiers, that provided crucial income to the royal family and the military rulers. At the top tier were the large urban monasteries in Kyoto that performed tantric rites for the benefit of the state, sponsored foreign trade with China, managed the military government's estates, and, most of all, pro-

moted the latest styles of Chinese culture. Five Mountain temples became centers of learning for the study of Neo-Confucian metaphysics, Chinese poetry, painting, calligraphy, and material arts such as printing, architecture, garden design, and ceramics. The role of Five Mountain Zen temples in introducing new styles of Chinese arts into medieval Japan has helped foster an indelible association between Zen and medieval forms of artistic expression.

At the center of the development of the Five Mountain system stood Musō Soseki (1275–1351), probably the most famous monk of his time, who achieved the unique distinction of receiving the title of “national teacher” (*kokushi*) from seven different emperors. Musō’s career illustrates the precarious political waters that Zen abbots of his day had to navigate. He first rose to prominence under the sponsorship of the Hōjō regents, but when they finally selected him to become abbot of a Zen monastery in Kamakura, he refused to accept the post. In 1325, however, when Go-Daigo appointed him abbot of a Zen monastery in Kyoto, he accepted. But Musō resigned the following year and returned to Kamakura, where he finally served as abbot of Hōjō-sponsored Zen temples. Then, after forces loyal to Go-Daigo overthrew the Hōjō regents in 1333, Musō returned to Kyoto, where Go-Daigo again appointed him abbot. Musō nurtured close ties as well to the warrior Ashikaga Takauji (1305–1358), who, in 1336, removed Go-Daigo from power and established a new military government in Kyoto. At the time of Go-Daigo’s death in 1339, Musō persuaded Takauji to sponsor the establishment of a new Zen monastery, Tenryūji, in order to pray for the late emperor’s salvation. Naturally, Musō himself was appointed abbot. This event signaled the apex of the new Zen institution’s identification with the ruling powers. Musō’s sermon “Reflections on the Enmity Between Go-Daigo and the Shogun, Ashikaga Takauji” speaks volumes not only about church-state relations in medieval Japan but also about how little prestige Go-Daigo then commanded.

The other main branch of Zen in medieval Japan was the Rinka (literally, “forest”) monasteries found primarily in the countryside. In contrast to the emphasis on Chinese learning found in the Five Mountain Zen temples, the Rinka generally housed less-educated monks who devoted more of their energies to the practices of “sitting Zen” (*zazen*) meditation and *kōan* study than to the writing of Chinese poetry. Rinka temples flourished among nouveau riche merchants of emerging trading centers and among the lower-ranked landed warriors and peasants, whose economic wealth and military power increased throughout the medieval period. For these merchants, warriors, and peasants, Rinka Zen monks performed simplified rites for worldly benefits, lay precept ordinations, and funerals and exorcized evil spirits and ghosts. When the Ashikaga shogunate declined in power, especially following the devastation of the Ōnin War (1467–1477), the Five Mountain system also declined in prestige and lost control of its lands, the source of its wealth. At this time, the Rinka temples’ lack of political connections to the governing elites, which initially had left them less

wealthy than the Five Mountains, proved to be a blessing in disguise. Many of the new warrior leaders who rose to power during the sixteenth century came from rural families who supported Rinka temples. The present-day Sōtō and Rinzai lineages also emerged from Rinka Zen.

Considering the Five Mountain Zen monks' pride in their poetry, it is ironic that two of the most celebrated Zen poets in Japanese history came out of the Rinka: Ikkyū Sōjun (1394–1481) from the Ō-Tō-Kan lineage of Daitokuji and Daigu Ryōkan (1758–1831) from Dōgen's Sōtō lineage. Although Ikkyū, or "Errant Cloud" (Kyōun), as he styled himself, had been thoroughly schooled in the orthodox Chinese prosody of the Five Mountain Zen monasteries, he later abandoned Five Mountain Zen and developed his own distinctive and deeply personal approach to Chinese verse. In contrast to Five Mountain poetry's conventional secular themes expressed in rigid adherence to established form, Ikkyū seems to delight in violating Chinese grammar and rhymes in novel ways as he discusses religious themes (laden with Buddhist technical vocabulary) in unconventional ways. Because of his pronounced iconoclasm, Ikkyū became the subject of many entertaining folktales and, like Ryōkan, is a well-known character ("Little Ikkyū") in the popular culture of modern Japan.

Japanese Zen establishments, both the Five Mountain and the Rinka, owed much of their success to the strict discipline of their monks and to their teaching of traditional virtues, especially loyalty to one's lord. Warriors, court officials, and merchants alike patronized Zen monks for their stern moralizing sermons. As demonstrated by figures such as Nōnin or Ikkyū, however, Zen also has antinomian tendencies. The liberated lifestyle and free literary expression still had its serious side as a means of manifesting deeper insight or protesting abuses in institutionalized Zen and, in this, can be seen the interactions between two dominant themes in Zen: discipline and liberation.

EISAI: *PROPAGATION OF ZEN FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE STATE*  
(*KŌZEN GOKOKURON*)

Eisai compiled this anthology in 1198, four years after the court had prohibited the establishment of independent Zen institutions in an attempt to persuade the court not merely to lift its ban but also to promote Zen in order to revitalize Japanese Buddhism. Since Eisai's chief adversaries at the Kyoto court were the monks of Mount Hiei monastery, which Saichō had founded, Eisai selected quotations primarily from scriptures and commentaries favored in the Tendai school to argue that Zen is the essence of true Buddhism. He points out that Saichō himself belonged to a Zen lineage and asserts that if Zen is illegitimate, then Saichō and the Tendai school he founded must also be illegitimate. In the following excerpts, Eisai equates Zen with the essence of mind, whose clarification is the goal of Buddhist practice. He asserts that mind is understood only by members of the special Zen lineage and emphasizes that the



master-to-disciple transmission of the Zen lineage preserves the correct forms of monastic discipline as well as strict adherence to the precepts. He further attacks the Darumashū as false Zen, defends Zen's rejection of language, and attempts to show how Zen practice will reform wayward Japanese Buddhist monasticism.

## Preface

So great is Mind! Heaven's height is immeasurable, but Mind goes above it. Earth's depth is unfathomable, but Mind extends beneath it. The light of the sun and moon cannot be outdistanced, yet Mind reaches beyond them. Galaxies are as infinite as grains of sand, yet Mind spreads outside them. How great is the empty space! How primal is the ether! Still Mind encompasses all space and generates the ethereal. Because of it, Heaven and Earth treat us with their coverage and support. The sun and moon treat us with their circuits, and the four seasons treat us with their transformations. The myriad things treat us with their fecundity. Great indeed is Mind! Of necessity we assign it names: the Supreme Vehicle, the Prime Meaning, the True Aspect of Transcendental Wisdom [Prajñā], the Single Dharma Realm of Truth, the Unsurpassed Awakened Wisdom [Bodhi], the Heroic Concentration [Shūrangama samādhi], the True Dharma Eye Matrix, the Marvelous Mind of Nirvāṇa. All scriptures of the Three Turnings of the Dharma Wheel and eight canons, as well as all the doctrines of the Four Shāla Trees and Five Vehicles fit neatly within it.<sup>3</sup>

The Great Hero Shākyamuni's having conveyed this Mind Dharma to his disciple the golden ascetic Mahā Kāshyapa is known as the special transmission outside the scriptures. From their facing one another on Vulture Peak to Mahā Kāshyapa's smile in Cockleg Cave, the raised flower produced thousands of shoots; from this one fountainhead sprang ten thousand streams. In India the proper succession was maintained. In China the dharma generations were tightly linked. Thus has the true dharma as propagated by the Buddhas of old been handed down along with the dharma robe. Thus have the correct ritual forms of Buddhist ascetic training been made manifest. The substance of the dharma is kept whole through master-disciple relationships, and confusion over correct and incorrect monastic decorum is eliminated. In fact, after Bodhidharma, the great master who came from the West, sailed across the South Seas and planted his staff on the banks of the East River in China, the Dharma-eye

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3. The Three Turnings of the Dharma Wheel correspond to the Flower Garland Scripture (Buddhāvataṃsaka), the provisional scriptures, and the Lotus Scripture (Saddharma puṇḍarīka). The "eight canons" is a catchall term for all genres of Buddhist scripture. The Four Shāla Trees, a reference to the four trees among which Shākyamuni passed away into nirvāṇa, symbolize impermanence. The Five Vehicles refer to Buddhist practices that lead to human rebirth, heaven, or the spiritual attainments of the *arhat*, solitary Buddha, or bodhisattva (i.e., full Buddha realization).

Zen lineage of Fayan Wenyi was transmitted to Korea and the Ox-head Zen lineage of Niudou Farong was brought to Japan. Studying Zen, one rides all vehicles of Buddhism; practicing Zen, one attains awakening in a single lifetime. Outwardly promoting the moral discipline of the Nirvāṇa Scripture while inwardly embodying the wisdom and compassion of the Great Perfection of Wisdom Scripture is the essence of Zen.

In our kingdom the sovereign shines in splendor and his honor extends far and wide. Emissaries from distant fabled lands pay their respects to his court. Ministers conduct the affairs of the realm while monastics propagate the path of renunciation. Even the dharma of the Four Hindu Vedas finds use. Why then discard the five family lineages of Zen? Nonetheless, many malign this teaching, calling it the Zen of blind trance. Others doubt it, calling it the evil of clinging to emptiness. Still others consider it ill-suited to this latter age of dharma decline, saying that it is not needed in our land. Or they disparage my capacity, saying that I lack sufficient power. They belittle my spiritual ability, saying that it is impossible for me to revive what was already abandoned. Whoever attempts to uphold the Dharma Jewel in such a way destroys the Dharma Jewel. Not being me, how can they know my mind? Not only do they block the gateway through the Zen barriers, but they also defy the legacy of Saichō, the founder of Mount Hiei. Alas, how sad, how distressing. Which of us is right? Which of us is wrong?

I have compiled an anthology of the Buddhist scriptures that record the essential teachings of our lineage for consideration by today's pundits and for the benefit of posterity. This anthology is in three fascicles consisting of ten chapters, and it is entitled *Propagation of Zen for the Protection of the State* in accordance with the basic idea of the Sutra for Humane Kings. As my humble fictive words accord with reality, I ignore the catcalls of ministers and monastics. Remembering that the Zen of Linji benefits his later generations, I am not embarrassed by their written slanders. I merely hope that the flame of wisdom transmitted in Zen verse will not be extinguished until the arrival of Maitreya and that the fountain of Zen will flow unimpeded until the future eon of the Thousand Buddhas.

[Ichikawa, *Chūsei zenke*, pp. 8–9; WB]

#### ZEN AND PRECEPTS

QUESTION: Some criticize you, asking what makes you think this new Zen lineage will cause Buddhism to flourish forever?

ANSWER: Moral precepts and monastic discipline cause Buddhism to flourish forever. Moral precepts and monastic discipline are the essence of Zen. Therefore, Zen causes Buddhism to flourish forever. Zhiyi's *Calming and Contemplation* states: "Worldly desires of ordi-

nary people are denounced by all the holy ones. Evil is destroyed by pure wisdom. Pure wisdom arises from pure Zen. Pure Zen arises from pure precepts.”

[Ichikawa, *Chūsei zenke*, pp. 35–36; WB]

#### THE DARUMASHŪ

QUESTION: Some people say that the Zen teaching of “not relying on words and letters” means the evil of clinging to emptiness and the practice of blind trance. If so, then Tendai opposes it. In Zhi-yi’s *Calm-ing and Contemplation*, where it explains contemplation of the inconceivable object, it says: “This cannot be known by the Zen teachers of blind trance or the dharma masters of scriptural chanting.” In Zhiyi’s *Profound Meaning of the Lotus Scripture* it says: “If those who contemplate Mind think that their own mind is it, equate themselves with the Buddha, and ignore the scriptures, then they fall into the error of arrogance. It is like holding a torch so as to burn oneself.” Likewise, Zhanran’s commentary on this passage says: “Grasping the torch of blind trance burns the hand of cavalier meditator.” How do you respond to these criticisms of not relying on words and letters?

ANSWER: This Zen lineage despises teachers of blind trance and hates people who practice the evil of clinging to emptiness. They are as repugnant as corpses sunk to the bottom of the ocean. We solely rely on the Perfect Teaching, cultivating the perfect and the sudden. Outwardly we observe the precepts to eliminate vice, inwardly we employ compassion to benefit others. This is called the Zen teaching. This is called the Buddha dharma. Those who practice blind Zen and cling to evil not only lack our teaching but are thieves of the dharma. Yongming Yanshou’s *Zen Mirror Record* says: “Principle truly responds to conditions. No practice obstructs principle. Practice rests on principle. No practice exists without principle. Those people who do not enter the Perfect Teaching but disparage others as being beneath them and regard themselves as spiritually advanced have not only lost the practice but completely lack principle. One must merely awaken to the essence of the One Mind free from all obstructions, in which principle and practice fuse together naturally, in which the worldly and the ultimate merge completely. If one clings to practice and mistakes principle, then one sinks into eons of *samsāra*. If one awakens to principle but neglects practice, then one lacks perfect realization. How can principle and practice not be products of the mind? How could essence and appearance not correspond? If one enters the Zen

Mirror and suddenly awakens to the True Mind, then even the words ‘principle’ or ‘practice’ do not exist, much less the clinging to principle or practice. But after attaining the fundamental, one must not abandon perfect cultivation. How can those practitioners of the Zen of blind trance even know of the Six Identities between Buddha and Humans? How can the crazed chanters of the scripture even be aware of the One Mind?” . . .

QUESTION: But what about those who mistakenly refer to the Zen lineage as the Dharumashū? They teach: “There is nothing to practice, nothing to cultivate. Originally afflictions (*klesha*) do not exist. From the beginning, afflictions are *bodhi*. Therefore, moral precepts and monastic rituals are of no use. One should merely eat and sleep as needed. Why must anyone labor to recall the Buddha (*nembutsu*), to worship relics, or to observe dietary restrictions?” What about their teaching?

ANSWER: There is no evil that such people will not do. They are the ones the scriptures denounce as nihilists. One must not talk with such people nor even sit with them. One must avoid them by a thousand *yojana* [about 8,500 miles].

[Ichikawa, *Chūsei zenke*, pp. 39–41; WB]

#### LANGUAGE

“Scriptures,” or “Zen” are merely names. “Investigate,” or “study” likewise are merely provisional designations. “Self,” “other,” “living beings,” “*bodhi*,” “*nirvāna*,” and so forth are just words, without any real existence. Similarly, because the dharma preached by the Buddha is just such words, in reality nothing was preached.

For this reason Zen lies beyond the details of words and letters, outside mental conditions, in the inconceivable, in what ultimately cannot be grasped. “So-called Buddha dharma consists of the dharma that cannot be preached.” So-called Zen is exactly the same. If anyone says the Buddha’s Zen exists in words, letters, or speech, then that person slanders the Buddha and slanders the dharma. For this reason our ancestral teachers did not rely on words and letters, pointed directly at the human mind, saw nature, and became Buddhas. Such is Zen practice. Whoever clings to words loses the dharma, whoever clings to appearances becomes topsy-turvy. Fundamentally inactive, without a thing to grasp, is seeing the Buddha dharma. The Buddha dharma consists of merely walking, standing, sitting, and lying down. Adding even a single fine hair to it is impossible. Subtracting even a single fine hair from it is impossible. Once one attains this understanding, then expend not even the least effort. With even the slightest attempt at being clever, one has already missed it. Therefore, ac-

tivity gives rise to *samsāra* while quietude leaves one in a drunken stupor, and avoiding both activity and quietude displays ignorance of Buddha nature. If one does none of the above, then what? This point lies outside clarification of doctrine. It cannot be fathomed through words. Look ahead and see! Get up and go! Once the arrow leaves the bow, there is no art that can bring it back. Even the thousand Buddhas could not grab it. As long as it has not hit the ground, no matter how much one might rue the crooked shot, one merely seizes air. Even if one tried until the last days of one's life, there is no grasping it.

[Ichikawa, *Chūsei zenke*, pp. 62–63; WB]

#### TEN FACILITIES FOR ZEN MONASTICISM

Facilities for Zen Monasticism consist of ten items, which I describe in accordance with the *Pure Rules for Zen Cloisters* and other Chinese standards.

First, the monastery: Monasteries can be large or small, but all should conform to the layout of the Buddha's Jetavana Vihāra (Gion Shōja) in India. Along the four sides there are walls without side gates. There is only one main gate, which the gatekeeper shuts at dusk and opens at dawn. Nuns, women, and inauspicious people must not be allowed to stay the night. The decline of the Buddha dharma always results from women.

Second, ordinations: The distinction between Hīnayāna precepts and Mahāyāna precepts exists only in the hearts of men. Because one must merely embody sentiments of great compassion for the benefit of others, Zen does not choose between Mahāyāna or Hīnayāna precepts but merely focuses on living a pure life.

Third, observing the precepts: After ordination, if one violates the precepts, it would be the same as obtaining a precious jewel only in order to smash it. Therefore one must strictly observe the two hundred fifty *bhikṣu* [monk] precepts, as well as the bodhisattva's three groups of pure precepts, ten major precepts, and forty-eight minor precepts. Twice each month during the *uposatha* ceremony, these precepts must be reviewed as explained in the precept scriptures. Anyone who violates the precepts must be kicked out. Such a one can be likened to a corpse cast into the ocean.

Fourth, academic study: Learning that spans the entire Buddhist canon and conduct that accords with the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna precepts as well as proper monastic decorum constitute being a field of merit for gods and men. Inwardly embodying the great compassion of the bodhisattvas constitutes being a benevolent father to all living beings. In this way we become a valued jewel to the sovereign and a good physician to the country. To these goals we must aspire.

Fifth, ritual conduct: monastics observe dietary restrictions, practice chastity, and obey the Buddha's words. The schedule for each night and day are as follows: At dusk all monks assemble in the Buddha Hall to offer incense and worship. At evening they practice sitting Zen (*zazen*). During the third watch of the night (about 2:00 A.M.) they sleep. During the fourth watch they sleep. At the fifth watch they practice sitting Zen. At cockcrow they assemble in the Buddha Hall to offer incense and worship. At dawn they eat morning gruel. At the hour of the dragon (about 8:00 A.M.) they chant scriptures, study, or attend elder monks. At midmorning they practice sitting Zen. At noon they eat their daily meal. Afterwards they bathe or wash. During midafternoon they practice sitting Zen. Late afternoons are free time. The four periods of sitting Zen must be diligently practiced. Each moment of sitting Zen repays one's debts to the state; each act commemorates the sovereign's long life. These rituals truly cause the imperial reign to long prosper and the dharma flame to shine forever.

Sixth, monastic decorum: Old and young must always wear full robes. When they encounter one another, they must first place the palms of their hands together and then bow their heads to the ground in harmonious expressions of respect. Also, all meals, all walking exercises, all sitting Zen, all academic study, all chanting, and all sleeping must be performed as a group. Even if a hundred thousand monks are together inside one hall, each of them must observe correct monastic decorum. If someone is absent, the group leader (*inō*) must investigate and must not forgive even the slightest transgression.

Seventh, robes: Both inner and outer wear should conform to Chinese designs. These imply circumspection. One must be prudent in all affairs.

Eighth, disciples: Those who embody morality and wisdom without lapse should be admitted to the assembly. They must possess both mental and physical ability.

Ninth, economic income: As they say, "Do not cultivate the fields, since sitting Zen leaves no time for it; Do not hoard treasures, since the Buddha's words alone suffice." Aside from one cooked meal each day, eliminate all other needs. The dharma of monks consists of being satisfied with as little as possible.

Tenth, summer and winter retreats: The summer retreat begins on the fifteenth day of the fourth moon and ends on the fifteenth day of the seventh moon. The winter retreat begins on the fifteenth day of the tenth moon and ends on the fifteenth day of the first moon. Both of these two retreats were established by the Buddhas. Do not doubt it. In our land these retreats have not been practiced for a long time. In the great land of Song-dynasty China, however, not a single monk fails to participate in the two retreats. From the standpoint of the Buddha dharma, the Japanese practice of calculating one's monastic seniority in terms of the retreats without actually participating in them is laughable.

ESSENTIALS FOR MONASTICS (*SHUKKE TAIKŌ*)

Unlike *Propagation of Zen for the Protection of the State*, which was directed toward a wide audience of court officials and ecclesiastical officials, Eisai wrote this treatise for his own followers as a guide to the proper lifestyle for Buddhist monks and nuns. In it, he confesses that before his trip to China he had, like most other Japanese monks, ignored the Buddhist prohibitions against eating meat and drinking alcohol. Eisai's vigorous advocacy for observing the Buddhist precepts is remarkable not just because it goes against the currents of Japanese Buddhist history but also because it stresses such elementary points (e.g., the distinctions between Buddhist robes and secular clothing) that the reader is left with the impression that clerics of Eisai's time completely lacked any firsthand knowledge of traditional Buddhist monastic norms. The opening section gives an overview of the treatise.

The Buddha dharma is the boat that ferries one across the sea of death, the chariot that traverses the roads of delusion, the good medicine that cures our eternal afflictions, the torch that illuminates our long night. The depth of its merit cannot be fathomed. Now that the degenerate and evil age has finally arrived, our ability to know suffering must develop. Now that we have entered the beginning of the latter five hundred years, the number of people who study precepts must increase. The Great Perfection of Wisdom Scripture's prophecy that it will be propagated in northeastern lands during the latter age must refer to today's Japan. Likewise, how could the Nirvāṇa Scripture's goal of promoting moral discipline during the latter age have been intended for any other time? The same applies to the Lotus Scripture's four peaceful practices for the evil age and to the *Calming and Contemplation's* encouragement of *samādhi*. What is essential for this age is merely to follow the Buddha's own words, namely, "promoting moral discipline by preaching the permanent."

The life essence of the Buddha dharma is moral purity. You must comprehend this life essence. The five-thousand scrolls of scriptures are called the Buddha dharma. How can you chant them without practicing what they teach? The sixty scrolls of Zhiyi's commentaries are known as the Tendai Perfect Doctrine. How can you discuss them without following their principles? You must know that Buddha dharma consists of the Buddha's wondrous decorum. Only a person who knows the Buddha dharma's meaning, who understands its principles, and who practices its decorum can be called a Buddhist.

In this treatise I outline the practice of Buddhist decorum in order to save people during this latter age. The Buddhist canon of discourses, discipline, and treatises resembles a contract. They record the principles of the threefold study (meditation, morality, and wisdom) of the Buddha dharma. For example, contracts for estates (*shōen*) are preserved in a ledger to show how much profit can

be derived from planting, weeding, and harvesting a piece of land. Similarly, chanting the discourses, discipline, and treatises and practicing their teachings show you how to rectify body and mind and how to follow the Buddha's footsteps.

The *Seven Past Buddhas' Precept Verse* says: "Refrain from all evil; Perform every manner of good; Purify your own mind; This is the teaching of all Buddhas." All the doctrines preached by the Buddha throughout his teaching career are summed up in this one verse. How can you rely on the Buddha's teaching to leave your home as a renunciant monk, yet not follow the Buddha's admonition? The time to uphold the precepts has arrived. How can you imagine that observing the precepts is tiresome? Isn't the wheel of suffering around your neck more bothersome? When impermanence strikes you in the face, don't be caught lackadaisically napping.

When I, Eisai, was in Great China, I studied the holy scriptures, recorded the main points of the discipline, and then returned to Japan. Once here, I knew that the time was ripe and that people's spiritual capacities were ready for me to promote the precepts. When so many monks responded to my encouragement, I experienced joy a thousand times over. Since my twenty-first year until my fiftieth year, I have trained as a Buddhist monk in Japan and in China for a full thirty years. During that time I never before experienced any miracles. Now, however, I have the miracle of all of you following me. Based on the notes that I took in China, I have written this treatise on precepts for the latter age. Anyone who wishes to attain moral purity should follow its exhortations. The essentials for monastics are written herein.

Maintaining moral purity consists of two main types of practices. The first concerns robes and meals. The second concerns practice and decorum. First, robes cover the body while meals nourish the body. Second, practice means observing the Buddhist precepts while decorum means proper etiquette. Each of these consists of two types. There are secular robes and dharma robes. There are invitations to banquets and begging for food. There are *bhikṣu* precepts and bodhisattva precepts. There are secular forms of etiquette and the universal norms of the Way. . . .

[from the 1789 woodblock edition]

## DŌGEN: HOW TO PRACTICE BUDDHISM (BENDŌWA)

Dōgen wrote this treatise in 1231 at the beginning of his ministry as a basic introduction to Zen Buddhism. In the following excerpts, Dōgen argues that true Buddhism has been preserved only by members of the Zen lineage and can be learned only by studying under a fully initiated Zen teacher. True Buddhism consists of practicing sitting Zen (*zazen*), which Dōgen identifies as self-actualizing *samādhi* or, in other



words, the concentration that transforms both self and the world experienced by self into its original state of awakened Buddha activity. According to Dōgen, other Buddhist practices lack this kind of spiritual efficacy.

After arousing dharma-seeking mind, I traveled throughout our kingdom searching for a good teacher. Finally I met Master Myōzen at Kenninji monastery. I followed him for nine swift years as I heard about the Rinzai family lineage. Master Myōzen was the foremost disciple of ancestor Eisai, from whom he alone received correct transmission of the supreme Buddha dharma. No one else compared to Myōzen.

Later I journeyed to the Great Song-dynasty China and visited various good teachers along both sides of the Qiantang River, where I learned the ways of the five family lineages of Zen. Finally, I met Zen Master Rujing on the Great White Peak of Mount Tiandong and completed the great goal of my lifelong study. Thereafter, I returned home in 1227 to save living beings by propagating the dharma. I felt as if I shouldered a heavy responsibility.

Yet I put aside my burden, and waiting for a favorable opportunity, I moved about like a cloud or tumbleweed, all the while wanting to teach in the style of my former mentor. I thought there must be a few student monks unconcerned with fame and fortune who consider the Buddha Way of first importance in their sincere study. What if they were led astray by false teachers who obscure correct understanding and thereby became self-deluded or sunk in *samsāra*? When would they ever sprout the true seeds of Prajñā [awakened wisdom] and attain the Way? As long as I move about like a cloud or tumbleweed, how can they cross the mountains or rivers to visit me? Out of concern for these monks, I have written about the practices that I saw and heard in the Zen monasteries of Great Song-dynasty China and about the abstruse import that my good teacher [Rujing] taught me. I dedicate this treatise to all students devoted to the Way so that they may know the true dharma. Here is the genuine initiation.

We teach: The Great Master, Lord Shākyamuni, atop Vulture Peak in India transmitted the dharma to Mahā Kāshyapa. Correctly transmitted from ancestor to ancestor, it subsequently reached the venerable Bodhidharma. Venerable Bodhidharma traveled to China and transmitted the dharma to Master Huide. Thus was the Buddha dharma first transmitted to China.

In this same manner the dharma was directly transmitted to Huineng, the sixth ancestor, also known as Great Mirror Zen Master. From him the authentic Buddha dharma spread throughout China without divisions. He produced two fabulous disciples: Nanyue Huairang and Qingyuan Xing-si. Both of them transmitted and preserved the Buddha-mind Seal (*mudra*), and both were teachers of gods and men. From these two disciples, five family lineages emerged: the Fayen line, the Guiyang line, the Caodong line, the Yunmen line, and the Linji line. Today in Song-dynasty China only the Linji lineage is widespread. Although the five family lineages differ, there is just one Buddha-mind Seal.

In China, since the Later Han dynasty [first century], various Buddhist scriptures had been translated repeatedly, but no one could separate the grain from the chaff. When Bodhidharma came from the West, he cut through the confusion, and since then the single pure Buddha dharma spread everywhere. We must try to do the same in our land.

We teach: For all the Buddha dharma-preserving Zen ancestors and Buddhas, sitting upright in the practice of self-actualizing (*jijuyū*) *samādhi* [concentration] is the true path of awakening. Both in India and in China, all who have attained awakening did so in this way. Because in every generation each teacher and each disciple intimately and correctly transmitted this marvelous art, I learned the genuine initiation.

In the correctly transmitted Zen lineage we teach: This directly transmitted, authoritative Buddha dharma is the best of the best. Once you start studying under a good teacher, there is no need for lighting incense, worshipful prostrations, recalling the Buddha (*nembutsu*), repentance, or chanting scripture. Just sit (*shikan taza*) and slough off body-mind (*shinjin datsuraku*).

If you, for however short a while, imprint all your activities with the Buddha-mind Seal by sitting upright in *samādhi*, then all things in the entire dharma realm become imprinted with the Buddha-mind Seal, and the entire cosmos becomes awakening. Thereupon all Buddhas and Tathāgatas increase their fundamental essence of dharma joy, and the adornments of the way of awakening are revitalized. Moreover, at this very moment all living beings in the six courses of rebirth throughout all dharma realms of the ten directions simultaneously purify their body-minds, realize great liberation, and discover their original faces. All things realize complete awakening, all creatures access Buddha bodies, transcend the boundaries of awakening, sit as Buddhas at the base of the tree of awakening, and simultaneously turn the incomparable Dharma Wheel that expresses deep, ultimate, unconditioned Prajñā.

Because the Fully Awakened Ones [Buddhas] provide mysterious assistance, when you practice sitting Zen, you will definitely slough off body-mind, eliminate habitually defiled thought patterns, and realize divinely genuine Buddha dharma. You will aid all Buddha activity in all Buddha wayfaring sites as infinite as atoms. You will encourage the aptitude for practicing beyond Buddha and promote the dharma beyond Buddha. At that moment all lands, plants, fences, and roof tiles throughout the dharma realms of the ten directions also engage in Buddha activity, causing everyone to obtain the Buddha's inconceivable mysterious assistance in attaining awakening as easily as they receive natural blessings like wind and water. Just as everyone makes use of water and fire, so too you will circulate the innate realization of Buddha deliverance so that everyone living or talking with you will all embody inexhaustible Buddha-virtue. As it unfolds and widens without end, without break, the inconceivable, infinite Buddha dharma will flow throughout the entire cosmos and beyond. The fact that the one who practices sitting Zen is unaware of the Buddha's mysterious

assistance is because it is direct realization of nondeliberative quiescence. If, as ordinary people suppose, cultivation and realization are two separate processes, then it would be possible to be aware of each in isolation. But what interacts with our awareness cannot be fundamental realization because fundamental realization is beyond deluded human thoughts.

Moreover, although both subject and object disappear and reappear during the practice of quiescent realization, because it is the realm of self-actualizing *samādhi*, they become expansive Buddha activity and profound, miraculous Buddha deliverance without moving a single speck of dust or blemishing a single image. All the lands and plants reached by this path of Buddha deliverance radiate great brilliance and preach the profound, wondrous dharma endlessly. Plants and fences sermonize for humans, for Buddhas, and for all living beings. Humans, Buddhas, and all living beings expound the dharma for the sake of plants and fences. Because this realm of self-awakening and awakening others is permeated with the quality of universal Buddha realization, fundamental realization occurs ceaselessly.

Therefore, whenever you practice sitting Zen, for however short a while, you mysteriously merge with all existence, you completely permeate all time, and throughout the infinite dharma realm, you eternally perform past, present, and future Buddha deliverance. Each and every one equally performs the same cultivation and the same realization. It is so not just during seated cultivation. Echoes of emptiness sound during the intervals both before and after the temple bell is struck because it continues to vibrate due to its marvelous resonance. In this same manner, the original cultivation of original face possessed by each one of the infinite individual beings reverberates beyond all measurable calculation.

Know that even if all the Buddhas as infinite as grains of sand used all their Buddha wisdom in an attempt to sum up the amount of merit generated by just one person practicing sitting Zen, they could never reach the end of it.

QUESTION: Now I know how immense must be the merit of sitting Zen.

But stupid people will doubt you by asking: "Since there are many different ways to practice Buddhism, why do you recommend sitting Zen alone?"

ANSWER: Because it is the main way to practice Buddhism.

QUESTION: Why is it alone the main practice?

ANSWER: Because the great master Shākyamuni transmitted this marvelous art of attaining the Way, and because all Tathāgatas of the past, present, and future all attained the Way by sitting Zen. For this reason every generation transmits sitting Zen as the main practice. Not only that, but all the Zen ancestors of India and China attained the Way through sitting Zen. For this reason, I am teaching sitting Zen to gods and men.

QUESTION: This practice, whether correctly transmitted by the Tathāgatas or handed down by the Zen ancestors, truly is beyond the ability of ordinary people. Chanting scriptures or recalling the Buddha (*nembutsu*), however, easily leads to awakening. How can just sitting vainly without doing anything lead to awakening?

ANSWER: If you say that the *samādhi* of the Buddhas, the unsurpassed great dharma, is vainly sitting without doing anything, then you are a heretic who slanders the Mahāyāna. Yours is a very deep delusion, the same as someone in the middle of the ocean denying the existence of water. Fortunately for you, all Buddhas already sit in self-actualizing *samādhi*. Have you not benefited from their great merit? How pitiful you are, with your wisdom eye closed and your drunken wits.

The realm of the Buddhas is inconceivable. It is beyond our understanding. How could it be known by someone who lacks faith or intelligence? Only someone of proper faith and Mahāyāna aptitude can approach it. Those who lack faith will not believe even if taught, just like those who left Vulture Peak when Shākyamuni was about to preach the Lotus Scripture. To generate a mind of proper faith, you must practice Buddhism and study Buddhism. If you cannot believe, then you should give up and merely regret your not having inherited any karmic link to the dharma from your previous lives.

Moreover, how do you know if you have acquired any merit from chanting the scripture or recalling the Buddha? How futile to think that the merit of Buddha activity can be produced merely by moving the tongue aloud. If you regard such practices as Buddha dharma, then you are far from the truth. You should open the scriptures only to clarify what the Buddha taught about the fundamentals of gradual and sudden cultivation and to practice in accordance with the teaching so as to attain realization. No intellectual deliberations could ever produce merit leading to *bodhi* [awakened wisdom]. To foolishly pursue the Buddha Way by chanting is like pointing your cart north while wanting to go south to the tropics. It is the same as trying to put a square peg in a round hole. To read the words without knowing the practice is the same as having the recipe for a medical prescription but forgetting to mix the medicine. Where is the benefit? Chanting without interruption resembles the frogs in the spring paddy fields croaking day and night. Ultimately it produces no merit. Those deluded by ambitions for fame and fortune cannot abandon chanting. Their greed runs too deep. As they were in ancient time, so they still are today. How pitiful!

Just know that the wondrous dharma of the past seven Buddhas is preserved and taught in its legitimate import only when there occurs the correct transmission between a student monk who merges his

mind in realized understanding with that of a master teacher who has attained the bright mind of the Way. This dharma lies beyond the knowledge of preachers who merely study the words of the scriptures. In short, you should put a stop to this nonsense, follow the teachings of a true teacher, practice the Way of sitting Zen, and attain realization of the self-actualizing *samādhi* of all the Buddhas.

QUESTION: Nowadays in our kingdom we already have the doctrines of the Lotus and Flower Garland Scriptures, both of which constitute the pinnacle of Mahāyāna. And the esoteric (Shingon) rituals have been transmitted from Mahā Vairochana through the Vajrasattva to the present in an unbroken lineage. They teach: “this very mind is Buddha” and “this very body becomes Buddha,” so that even without eons of cultivation, one will be able to attain the supreme awakening of the Five Buddhas in the Central Assembly of the Womb Mandala. Surely this is the most marvelous Buddhist practice. What superlative features of Zen cultivation cause you to recommend it alone to the exclusion of these other practices?

ANSWER: Know that Buddhists must not engage in debates over the superiority or inferiority of the teachings and must not choose between profound and shallow doctrines. Just know whether the practice is authentic or not. Grass, flowers, the landscape itself, have brought some people into the Buddha Way. Merely grasping earth or sand has caused others to receive and preserve the Buddha-mind Seal. This means that the greatest words are the ones whose abundant meanings overflow from every existing thing. The Great Dharma Wheel of preaching turns in every speck of dust. In light of this, a phrase like “this very mind is Buddha” is just the moon reflected in water. “This very sitting becomes Buddha” is just a reflection in a mirror. Do not be misled by clever slogans. I now recommend the practice of direct realization of *bodhi* because I teach the marvelous Way directly transmitted by the Buddhas and Zen ancestors and because I want you to become a true man of the Way.

The transmitting and acceptance of Buddha-dharma require both a fully realized student and a teacher in the Zen lineage. Do not rely on instruction from a scholar concerned with book learning. That would be like the blind leading the blind. In this lineage that has been directly transmitted by the Buddhas and Zen ancestors the Buddha dharma is maintained and preserved by venerating all the skilled Zen masters who attained the Way through embodied realization. For this reason, visible and invisible spirits (*shintō*) take refuge in them. Arhats who realize Mahāyāna Buddhahood ask them for the dharma. And each and every one receives mental clarification from them. Other

lineages have never known these accomplishments. Disciples of the Buddha should just study this [Zen] Buddhist practice.

[Ichikawa, *Chūsei zenke*, pp. 80–83; WB]

#### THE FULLY APPARENT CASE (GENJŌ KŌAN)

The term *kōan* originally referred to case law or legal precedents that provided guidelines for subsequent affairs. In Zen, *kōan* record the sometimes enigmatic sayings or actions of Zen ancestors that should be studied as guidelines for Buddhist practice. A fully apparent (*genjō*) *kōan* is one that we might call an open-and-shut case, a matter whose settlement (or meaning) should be perfectly obvious. For Dōgen, it does not imply that something hidden becomes obvious but refers to the actualization of each moment of reality on its own terms, in the here and now, without the distortion of human biases. The fascicle entitled *Genjō kōan* is the first essay in Dōgen's *True Dharma Eye Treasury* (*Shōbōgenzō*) because it defines the agenda, namely, self-realization through Zen practice, for the entire work. The essay begins with the fundamental issue of life and death, the inescapable *kōan* of human life. Dōgen's seemingly paradoxical use of language rests on a logic of affirmation in which any single aspect of reality is completely true in the totality of itself, even though its exact opposite must also be completely true in its own totality.

In the synchronicity of all things as Buddha dharma, there is delusion and awakening, there is religious cultivation, there is birth, there is death, there is Buddhahood, and there is humanity. In the synchronicity of all existence unconnected to yourself, there is no delusion, no awakening, no Buddhahood, no humanity, no birth, and no death.

Because the Buddha Way ultimately transcends all surplus or dearth, the Buddha Way is both birth and death, both delusion and awakening, both humanity and Buddhahood. Even as the Buddha Way is thus, nonetheless flowers wilt and die in spite of our attraction while weeds sprout and live in spite of our rejection.

The individual self striving to realize all things is delusion; all things striving to realize the individual self is awakening.

Those who awaken to delusion are Buddhas, while those who are deluded about awakening are humanity. Furthermore, others attain awakening beyond awakening, and delusion deludes others.

When Buddhahood is truly Buddhahood, there is no individual self aware of Buddhahood. Nonetheless Buddhahood is realized as each activity is Buddha realization.

If you see sights with your whole body-mind, if you hear sounds with your

whole body-mind [if you perceive objects with your whole body-mind], then you will comprehend them intimately, not in the way a mirror harbors a reflection [of an object outside itself], not in the way the moon appears in water. Illuminating one side obscures the other side.

To study the Buddha way is to study the individual self. To study the individual self is to forget the individual self. To forget the individual self is to be realized by all things. To be realized by all things is both the individual self's body-mind and the other selves' body-mind sloughing off.

[When body-mind sloughs off,] the afterglow of awakening fades away and this faded-away afterglow of awakening fades and fades away forever.

A person, at the moment when he first starts to seek dharma, departs far beyond the boundaries of the dharma. The dharma, when it is correctly transmitted, is fully embodied by that person.

A person who travels down a river on a boat and who gazes out into the distance will mistakenly see the riverbanks as moving. But if he shortens his gaze and looks down at the boat, then he will know that it is the boat that is moving. In this same manner, when you ignore your body-mind in examining things of the world, then you will mistakenly believe your own personality and own nature to be immortal. But if you return your awareness to an attentive intimacy with your own travails, then the truth that all beings lack a permanent self becomes obvious.

Firewood becomes ashes, and afterward it can never return to being firewood. Nonetheless, do not see ashes as its future or see firewood as its past. Know that because firewood dwells eternally in its dharma aspect of firewood it experiences both past and future. While both past and future exist, in the present moment there is neither past nor future. As ash dwells eternally in its dharma aspect of ash, it experiences both past and future. Just as this firewood that has become ashes can never again return to being firewood, likewise a person who has died can never again become alive. In contrast, the established teaching of the Buddha dharma does not say that the living die. It teaches the Not Living [life that transcends living and dying]. In turning the Dharma Wheel, the Buddha did not preach that the dead return to life. He taught the Not Dying [death that transcends living and dying]. Life is a single moment in time; death is a single moment in time. For example, it is like winter and spring. Don't think that winter turns into spring; don't say that spring turns into summer.

[Nishio, *Shōbōgenzō*, vol. 1, pp. 101–102; WB]

#### BUDDHA NATURE (BUSSHŌ)

Buddha nature is sometimes explained as the spiritual potential to become a Buddha that is possessed by some or all living beings. In this treatise, Dōgen rejects any sub-

stantive conception of Buddha nature as a permanent innate characteristic or metaphysical reality. Dōgen emphasizes that Buddha nature is the “no-ness” (i.e., emptiness, void, or nonsubstantiality) of all things, which is realized only through the true practice of Buddhism (what he calls “doing Buddha”). The following excerpt is characteristic of Dōgen’s style of *kōan* study in which he reads his own interpretations into the texts of *kōan*, often by ignoring the rules of Chinese grammar in favor of an overly literal, word-by-word translation.

Hui-neng, the sixth Zen ancestor of China, also known as Great Mirror Zen Master of Mount Caochi, began his study of Buddhism by going to the monastery on Mount Huangmei. When he arrived there, Hongren, the fifth Zen ancestor, asked him: “You came here from where?”

The sixth ancestor replied: “I am a Lingnan person from the south.”

The fifth ancestor asked: “You came here seeking to do what?”

The sixth ancestor replied: “I seek to do Buddha.”

The fifth ancestor said: “Lingnan People No Buddha Nature. How Can Do Buddha?”

This utterance “Lingnan People No Buddha Nature” does not say that people in Lingnan lack Buddha nature nor does it say that they possess Buddha nature. It says, “Lingnan People No Buddha Nature” [i.e., the emptiness of Buddha nature]. The utterance “How Can Do Buddha” means what kind of Doing Buddha will you do?

Overall only a few spiritual guides have clarified the truth of Buddha nature. Teachers of the *āgama* scriptures and of the Mahāyāna scriptures do not know it. Only descendants in the lineage of the Buddhas and Zen ancestors have transmitted this knowledge. The truth of Buddha nature is that it is not something we are endowed with before becoming a Buddha. We are endowed with it only after becoming a Buddha. Buddha nature and becoming a Buddha necessarily co-participate. Investigate and struggle with this truth well. If necessary, study and struggle with it for twenty or thirty years. Even holy celestial bodhisattvas have not clarified this truth. This truth is expressed by saying “Living Beings Exist Buddha Nature” and “Living Beings No Buddha Nature.” The correct object of study is the truth that Buddha Nature is what we are endowed with since becoming Buddhas. If you do not study in this way, then you are not studying the Buddha dharma. Without this kind of study, Buddhism would not have survived until the present. If you do not clarify this truth, then you will not clarify becoming a Buddha, you will not even hear of it. This is why the fifth ancestor faced the sixth ancestor and said: “Lingnan People No Buddha Nature.” When you first meet a Buddha and hear him preach the dharma, the most difficult words to understand are “Living Beings No Buddha Nature.” Whether learning from a good teacher or learning from the scriptures, however, the most joyous words to hear are “Living Beings No Buddha Nature.” If you do not fully embody the knowledge of seeing and hearing “Living beings No



Buddha Nature,” then you have not yet seen nor heard of Buddha nature. For the sixth ancestor to attain Doing Buddha and for the fifth ancestor to help the sixth ancestor attain Doing Buddha, there was nothing else to say, no other method could have been as skillful. The only thing he could say is “Lingnan People No Buddha Nature.” Know that the saying and the hearing of “No Buddha Nature” is itself the direct path of Doing Buddha. In other words, that very moment of No Buddha Nature is Doing Buddha. If you have not yet seen or heard No Buddha Nature, if you have not yet said No Buddha Nature, then you have not yet practiced Doing Buddha.

The sixth ancestor said: “People Exist North and South, but Buddha Nature No North or South.” Let’s take this utterance and struggle with its inner meaning. The words “north and south” seem quite innocent. The sixth ancestor’s words, however, convey vital religious significance. That is to say, they imply the position that while people can practice Doing Buddha, Buddha nature cannot practice Doing Buddha. Did the sixth ancestor know this or not?

[Nishio, *Shōbōgenzō*, vol. 3, pp. 118–119; WB]

*MUSŌ SOSEKI: “SERMON AT THE DEDICATION  
OF TENRYŪ-JI DHARMA HALL”  
(FROM MUSŌ KOKUSHI GOROKU)*

The following sermon was delivered at the dedication of the Dharma Preaching Hall when Musō became the founding abbot of Tenryūji monastery, founded in memory of Go-Daigo. The dedication coincided with the anniversary of the Buddha’s birthday. Musō used this occasion to remind his audience that the truth preached by the Buddha, the truth proclaimed by the Zen ancestors, and the truth taught by Musō were all the very same truth. Thus, Shākyamuni’s message of salvation is not ancient history but must be realized in this present moment at this very spot.

(In the tenth month of the second year of the Rekiō period [1339] a court decree ordered the conversion of the detached palace of Kameyama *tennō* [emperor] into a monastery dedicated to the memory of Go-Daigo *tennō* and also nominated Musō to be its founding abbot. In the fourth year of Kōei [1345], fourth month, eighth day, the Dharma Preaching Hall was opened for the first time, with their lordships Shogun Ashikaga Takauji and Vice-Shogun Tadayoshi in attendance. Musō first performed the ceremony celebrating the Buddha’s birth and then proceeded to say:)

The appearance in this world of all Buddhas, past, present, and future, is solely for the purpose of preaching the dharma that saves living beings. The Buddha used the arts of oratory and eight types of eloquence as the standards for his preaching the dharma, and the Deer Park and Vulture Peak both served as his halls of salvation. Our lineage of the Zen ancestors stresses the method

of individual instruction directed toward the essential endowment, thus distinguishing itself from doctrinal schools. But examination of our aims reveals that we too focus solely on transmitting the dharma that saves the deluded. Thus all the ancestors, from the twenty-eight in India through the first six in China, each signaled his succession to the lineage with a dharma-transmission verse. The Great Master Bodhidharma said, "I came to China in order to transmit the dharma that saves deluded people." So it is clear that Huike's cutting off his arm in the snow and the conferring of the robe at midnight upon Huineng were both meant to signify the transmission of the marvelous dharma.<sup>4</sup> In all kinds of circumstances, whether under a tree, upon a rock, in the darkness of a cave, or deep in a glen, there is no place where the dharma banner has not been erected and no place where the Mind Seal has not been transmitted to whoever possessed the spiritual capacity. Ever since Baizhang Huaihai founded the first Zen cloister, China and Japan have seen numerous grand Zen monasteries erected. All of them, whether large or small, have included a Dharma Preaching Hall for proclaiming the message of salvation. . . .

As for this mountain monk appearing before you today on this platform, I have nothing special to offer as my own interpretation of the dharma. I merely join with my true master, Shākyamuni Buddha, and with all others throughout infinite empty space, all Buddhas, bodhisattvas, holy ones, assembled clerics, patrons, and officials, the very eaves and columns of this hall, lanterns, and posts, as well as all the people, animals, plants, and seeds in the boundless ocean of existence to turn in unison the great Dharma Wheel. At this very moment, what is happening?

(Musō raised his staff high into the air.)

Look! Look! Shākyamuni is here right now on top of my staff. He takes seven steps, points to heaven and to earth, announcing to all of you:

Today I am born again here with the completion of this new Dharma Preaching Hall. All the holy ones are assembled here; people and gods mingle together. Every single person here is precious in himself, and everything here—plaques, paintings, square eaves and round pillars—every single thing is preaching the dharma. Wonderful, wonderful it is, that the true dharma lives and never dies. At Vulture Peak, indeed, this dharma was transmitted to the right man!

It is thus that Lord Shākyamuni, the most venerable, instructs us here. It is the teaching that comes down to men in response to their needs. But perhaps,

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4. According to Zen legends, Huike, the second Zen ancestor of China, gained Bodhidharma's attention by cutting off his own arm as a gesture of his sincerity, and Huineng, the sixth Zen ancestor of China, visited his teacher in secret at midnight so as to avoid incurring the wrath of a jealous monk senior to him.

gentlemen, you wish to know the state of things before Shākyamuni ever entered his mother's womb.

(Musō tapped his staff on the floor.)

Listen, Listen!

[TD 80, no. 2555; 460c-461a; WB]

“REFLECTIONS ON THE ENMITY BETWEEN GO-DAIGO AND THE  
SHOGUN, ASHIKAGA TAKAUJI” (FROM *MUSŌ KOKUSHI GOROKU*)

This extract is from a sermon delivered by Musō upon resuming the office of abbot of Tenryūji in 1351, in which he reflects on the reasons for dedicating this monastery to the memory of Go-Daigo and analyzes the causes of the rupture between the latter and Ashikaga Takauji, his erstwhile supporter. He attributes the break to jealousy, which blinded Go-Daigo and estranged him from his obedient servant. Musō's frank censure of the deceased sovereign shows both how low the prestige of the imperial house had fallen and how little awed by it was this Zen prelate, who considered it a purely human institution and not divine.

In the realm of True Purity, there is no such thing as self or other. How much less can friend or foe be found there! But the slightest confusion of mind brings innumerable differences and complications. Peace and disorder in the world, the distinction between friend and foe in human relationships, follow upon one another as illusion begets delusion. A person of spiritual luminosity will immediately recognize false thought and eliminate it, but the shallow-minded person will be enslaved by his own delusion so that he cannot put an end to it. In such cases one's true friend may seem a foe and one's implacable enemy may appear a friend. Enmity and friendship have no permanent character; both of them are illusions.

During the disorders of the Genkō period [1331-1334] the shogun, acting promptly on the court's order, swiftly subdued the foes [the Hōjō regents] of the state, as a result of which he rose higher in court rank day by day and his growing prestige brought a change in the attitude of others toward him. Ere long, slander and defamation sprang up with the violence of a tiger, and this unavoidably drew upon him the royal displeasure. Consider now the reasons for this turn of events. It was because he performed a meritorious task with such dispatch and to the entire satisfaction of his sovereign. There is an old saying that intimacy invites enmity. That is what it was. Thereupon, the auspicious clouds of goodwill were scattered to the winds, and the august dragon [Go-Daigo] had to take refuge in the mountains to the south, where the music of the court was no longer heard and whence his royal phoenix palanquin could never again return to the northern court.

With a great sigh the military leader [Takauji] lamented, “Alas, due to slan-

der and flattery by court ministers, I am consigned to the fate of an ignominious rebel without any chance to explain my innocence.” Indeed his grief was no perfunctory display, but without nurturing any bitterness in his heart, he devoutly gave himself over to spiritual reflection and pious works, fervently praying for the Buddhahood of Go-Daigo and subsequently constructing [in Go-Daigo’s memory] this grand monastery for the practice of great Buddha activity. . . .

The virtuous rule of Go-Daigo *tennō* accorded with Heaven’s will and his holy wisdom equaled that of the ancient sage-kings of China. Therefore the royal family’s fortunes rose high as reign and military power were unified. The phoenix reign inaugurated a new period of magnificence and splendor. Barbarians beyond the four borders were submissive and all within the borders were earnest. People compared his Yao-like reign to the wind, which always blows without end.<sup>5</sup> Who, then, would have thought that his Shun-like sun would appear for only a moment and then immediately disappear behind the clouds? And what are we to make of it—was it merely a random turn of events? No, the fact that Go-Daigo expended all his karmic connections to this defiled world and straightaway joined the happy assembly of the Pure Land was not because his august reign lacked luck. It was because he caused the people so much suffering and distress. As a result, from the time of his passing right up to the present there has been no peace, clergy and laity alike have been displaced, and there is no end to the complaints of the people.

What I have expounded above is all a dream within a dream. Even though it actually happened, there is no use finding fault with what is past and done—how much less with what has happened in a dream! We must realize that a Wheel-Turning Monarch (*cakravartin*), the highest position among humans, is itself but something cherished in a dream. Even Brahmā, the highest king of the gods, knows only the pleasure of a dream. This is why Shākyamuni forsook the option of becoming a Wheel-Turning Monarch and entered the mountains to practice austerities. What was his purpose? To teach all people that the King of Awakening [Buddha] far surpasses the highest rank of human society. Although the four social classes differ, each member of them is like every other in being a disciple of the Buddha, and should behave accordingly.

I pray therefore that our late sovereign will instantly transform his defiled capacity, escape from the bondage of delusion, bid farewell to his karma-producing consciousness, and realize luminous wisdom. May he pass beyond the distinctions of friend and foe and attain the luminous region wherein delusion and awakening are one. May he not forget that the dharma transmission of Vulture Peak lives on and extend his protection to this monastery, so that without ever leaving this spot his blessings may extend to all living beings.

This is indeed the wish of the military leader [Takauji]. He bears no grudge

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5. Yao is remembered as a sage ruler in ancient China who chose Shun as his successor.

toward Go-Daigo but merely wishes for him to develop favorable karmic causes, which is no trifling affair. The Buddhas in their great compassion will surely respond by bestowing mysterious blessings. In this way may the warfare come to an end, all the land within the four seas enjoy true peace, and all the people rest secure from disturbances and calamities. May [Takauji's] military success pass on to his heirs, generation after generation. Our earnest prayer is that it should wash over all opposition.

[TD 80, no. 2555; 463c–464b; WB]

### *IKKYŪ SŌJUN: THE ERRANT CLOUD COLLECTION* (KYŌUNSHŪ)

Ever the eccentric, Ikkyū wrote religious poetry about seemingly irreligious topics, including his personal feelings, brothels, drinking parties, diatribes against false Zen, and especially attacks against his compatriot Yōsō Sōi (1376–1458), whom Ikkyū accused of currying political favor and selling initiations into Zen secrets. Ikkyū more than once vowed to quit Zen in protest of such corrupt practices.

- [38] Anniversary of the Buddha's Birthday  
Past, Present, and Future: One person with many names.  
Today, who knows his alias?  
Appearing in this polluted Sahā world eight thousand times,  
As a horse, as an ass, as a shākyā.
- [39] Anniversary of the Buddha's Awakening  
Among gods and humans, only one person is venerable.  
Attaining the way in today's kingdom, receiving whose benefaction?  
This wise monk with the shooting-star eyes,  
I am Gautama's legitimate progeny.
- [40] Anniversary of the Buddha's Parinirvāna  
The complete extinguishing of that Indian, old Shākyamuni;  
For his next life in whose family will he appear?  
Two thousand three hundred years ago they wept;  
And here in Japan we scatter second-month flower petals.
- [45] Yunmen, lecturing the assembly, said: "The old Buddha and the bare pillar intermingle. What functioning is this?" Speaking for himself he answered: "In the southern mountains, clouds arise; in the northern mountains, rain falls."  
How did Mount Xiaogu wed the water spirit Peng-lang?  
Clouds raining love tonight, that's the dream.  
From morning at northern Mount Tiantai to evening at southern Mount  
Nanyue,  
I do not know from where to view Yunmen Mountain.

- [76] Puppets  
The stage presents their whole bodies,  
Some as nobility, some as commoners.  
Forgetting the guide-sticks in front of their eyes,  
Ignorant fools regard them as their original selves.
- [153] The Austerities of Shākyamuni  
For six years starvation and cold pierced his bones.  
Austerities are the essential secret of Buddha and ancestors.  
Believe me when I say that Shākyamunis are made, not born,  
All of you rice-hungry worthless monks.
- [165] Holding Up the Flower, Slight Smile  
From the assembly on Vulture Peak to the here and now;  
From the cave in Cockleg Mountain to the eons yet to come;  
A poisoned person certainly knows poison's use.  
In India and in this land: the same tricky fox.
- [171] Attacking False Zen  
Gautama's forty-nine years of teaching:  
Look at his silence in Vaishālī! Look at his silence in Magadha!  
False teachers distorting his words with *kōan* phrases,  
See if Yama, King of Hell, doesn't yank out your tongues.<sup>6</sup>
- [175] In Honor of Daitokuji Abbot Yōsō Sōi of the Great Function  
Hermitage (Daiyūan) Receiving an Imperial Purple Robe and the Title of Great  
Illuminator of Religious Wisdom Zen Master (Sōe daishō zenji)
- Purple robes and the title of "master" cannot conceal your spiritual poverty.  
The edict alone cost three hundred strings of cash.  
Your great function is perfectly obvious, you counterfeit abbot.  
Look! Here he comes! A real Szechuanese thief.
- [203] Chōroku period, 4th year [1460], 8th moon, last day, a typhoon  
brought floods to everyone's distress. That night there were customers  
enjoying themselves with singing and music. Unable to endure listening to  
them I composed this verse to comfort myself.

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6. Vimalakīrti preached a wordless sermon on the meaning of nonduality in the town of Vaishālī, and Shākyamuni preached a wordless sermon by holding up a flower on Vulture Peak in the kingdom of Magadha.

Typhoons and floods: everyone's miserable.  
 Singing, dancing, music: who's enjoying the night?  
 The dharma flourishes and declines; the times prosper and deteriorate.  
 And now that bright moon has dipped below the western rooftops.

[205] The celebrated poet Bo Juyi asked the Bird Nest Zen master: "What is the ultimate teaching of Buddhism?" Bird Nest replied: "Refrain from all evil; perform every manner of good." Bo Juyi, in disappointment, responded: Even a three-year-old child knows how to recite that verse. Bird Nest said: "A three-year-old child can say it, but even a man of eighty cannot accomplish it." Master Lingshan always instructed: "But for Bird Nest's words, my students would be corrupted by sayings like 'originally there is not a single thing,' 'do not think of good, do not think of evil,' 'the nonduality of good and evil,' 'the oneness of false and true,' and my students thereby would deny the moral truth of karma." In today's world there are many false teachers who engage in impure actions daily. Therefore I wrote the following verse for my disciples.

Student monks who deny karma sink into *samsāra*.  
 That old Zen teacher's words are worth a thousand pieces of gold:  
 "Refrain from all evil; perform every manner of good."  
 Isn't that a line in drunken Bo Ju-yi's singing?

[226] Say nothing; the *kōan* is perfectly complete;  
 The eight-sided stone mortar is stuck in my mind.  
 During a chance encounter, it's difficult to smell the stench of one's  
     own shit,  
 But the other person's faults are as obvious as one's own face in a  
     mirror.

[227] Years past I reverently gazed upon the portrait of Daitō Kokushi. I have  
 now changed my robe and joined the Pure Land school. For this reason I  
 dedicate this poem to that old master dwelling amid the clouds.

I have left the Zen lineage, the supreme vehicle,  
 And changed my robe to become a priest in the Pure Land school.  
 How foolish I was to lightly join Ryōzen Tettō's monastery [Daitokuji].  
 Alas! So many years wasted in the Daitō lineage!

[228] Errant Cloud [Ikkyū] is Daitokuji's very own Demon Pāpiyas:  
 Within the temple grounds fighting with an *Asura*'s titan-like anger.  
 Old *kōan* phrases—of what use can they be?  
 So much elation and suffering just to count up someone else's wealth.<sup>7</sup>

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7. Pāpiyas is the name of a demon who murders innocent victims. By extension, it refers to any exceedingly evil person. Asura refer to a class of Indic demigods, similar to the Titans of Greek mythology, who compete against the true gods.

- [254] Two poems for a painting of an *arhat* visiting a brothel<sup>8</sup>  
 An *arhat* in this polluted world lacks human feelings;  
 A brothel's patrons, however, overflow with feeling.  
 On this side, "no"; On that side "yes":  
 Monks struggling with demonic Buddha feelings.
- [255] In this polluted world an *arhat* is far from the Buddha land;  
 One trip to a brothel, however, will arouse his great wisdom.  
 Deeply laughing Mañjushrī recites the *Shūrangama Dhāranī*,  
 Reminiscing the long eons since his own youthful frolics.<sup>9</sup>
- [Ichikawa, *Chūsei zenke*, pp. 285–341; WB]<sup>10</sup>

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8. An *arhat* is a Buddhist saint who has eliminated the taints of human passions. Although some Mahāyāna scriptures disparage the *arhat* as inferior to the bodhisattva, in others he is seen as the protector of Buddhism who will remain on earth until the time of the future Buddha Maitreya.

9. According to a famous story in the *Shūrangama Sūtra*, the Bodhisattva Mañjushrī, the Crown Prince of Wisdom, first recited the *Shūrangama Dhāranī* (magical spell) to rescue the Buddha's disciple Ānanda from the clutches of a prostitute who was about to seduce him.

10. The poems are numbered in accordance with this edition, which is based on the Okumura manuscript.