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Note from the Editors

In this issue, our review essays address recent debates in the history and interpretation of the Chan and Zen traditions of east Asian Buddhism. They are focused upon the work of the well-known scholar of Zen Buddhism, Steven Heine, whose work has and continues to contribute to our understanding of this extremely influential religious tradition. This issue features a review essay by Professor Heine, “Not So Quiet on the Eastern Front: On Deconstructing and Reconstructing Traditional Zen Narratives,” which critically surveys recent works that address the history of the Chan/Zen traditions. It also includes a review essay by Jimmy Yu

of several of Heine’s recent works, “Contextualizing the Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Chan/Zen Narratives: Steven Heine’s Academic Contributions to the Field.” Lastly, we offered Professor Heine the opportunity to respond to Professor Yu’s review; his response is the short essay “Historical Hermeneutics of Zen Buddhist Discourse: On Contesting the Mu Kōan.” It is a reflection upon the issues raised by the works under review here. It includes a case study of the famous yet often misunderstood *mu kōan*. It is our hope that these works will be of considerable interest to many of our readers.

Review Essays

Not So Quiet on the Eastern Front: On Deconstructing and Reconstructing Traditional Zen Narratives

MONKS, RULERS, AND LITERATI: THE POLITICAL ASCENDANCY OF CHAN BUDDHISM

By Albert Welter
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008
Pp. x + 322. Hardcover, \$75.

HOW ZEN BECAME ZEN: THE DISPUTE OVER ENLIGHTENEMENT AND THE FORMATION OF CHAN BUDDHISM IN SONG DYNASTY CHINA

By Morten Schlütter
Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism, 22
Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008
Pp. x + 289. Hardcover, \$59; paper, \$27.

IMPERIAL WAY ZEN: ICHIKAWA HAKUGEN'S CRITIQUE AND LINGERING QUESTIONS FOR BUDDHIST ETHICS

By Christopher Ives
Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009
Pp. x + 274. Hardcover, \$52.

SHOTS IN THE DARK: JAPAN, ZEN, AND THE WEST

By Shoji Yamada, translated by Earl Hartman
Buddhism and Modernity. Nichibunken Monograph Series, 9
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009
Pp. viii + 290. Hardcover, \$35.

ONE KOREAN'S APPROACH TO BUDDHISM: THE MOM/MOMJIT PARADIGM

By Sung-Bae Park
Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009
Pp. vii + 152. Paper, \$19.95.

SHATTERING THE GREAT DOUBT: THE CHAN PERSPECTIVE OF HUATOU

By Sheng Yen
Boston: Shambhala, 2009
Pp. xi + 196. Paper, \$14.

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ZEN DISCOURSES AND COUNTERDISCOURSES

Over the past several decades, a strong scholarly challenge has been presented to the idealized view of Zen Buddhism, which became commonly known in mid-twentieth-century America through the works of D. T. Suzuki and A. Watts, among others.¹ Based on an insider approach toward disseminating Zen narratives first expressed in Song dynasty (960-1279) Chinese sources, including transmission of the lamp, recording sayings, and kōan commentary texts, the Suzuki-Watts paradigm portrayed Zen as an uninterrupted series of transmissions from enlightened master to insightful disciple resulting from a sudden experience of intuitive illumination beyond reason as expressed in an irreverent and antinomian rhetorical style. Because it seemed to take literally the traditional self-characterization of Zen as a “special transmission outside the teachings” (*kyōge bet-suden*), this approach has been referred to as the “string of pearls” fallacy, which purports that Zen succeeded as an expanding religious movement because each successive generation produced its own charismatic master who inherited and in turn passed on the legacy with unique ingenuity.

Influenced by the groundbreaking historical studies of Yanagida Seizan (1967), then a professor at Kyoto University, based, in large part, on the discovery of Dunhuang manuscripts, which reveal the complexity of its development, “the early history of the Chan movement has been rewritten” (Welter 4). Since Yanagida, and even though his own work has been called into question in some quarters for romanticizing the tradition, numerous scholars on both sides of the Pacific have criticized the Suzuki-Watts paradigm for its presumptions of ahistoricity in the name of spiritual purity, insistence on immediacy without regard for human effort that necessarily intervenes in any flash of insight, and assertions of cultural exceptionalism derived from a false sense of moral transcendence.

In examining current debates regarding the role of Zen “writes” or literary records, Zen “rites” or monastic rituals, and Zen “rights” or public involvement issues, my recent book, *Zen Skin, Zen Marrow: Will the Real Zen Buddhism Please Stand Up?* (Heine 2008), makes a basic distinction between what I refer to as dissemination of the Traditional Zen Narrative, which embraces the transmission records,

and the methods of Historical and Cultural Criticism, which try to keep a skeptical distance from insider sources. However worthy as a means of maintaining the tradition, in seeking to convey the subjective essence of the Zen experience by uncritically accepting Song texts as sacred accounts that are not to be questioned, and thereby conflating historical studies with hagiography while avoiding responsibility for engagement in social reform, the Traditional Zen Narrative often succumbs to apologetics. At the same time, in trying to uncover the sociohistorical origins and ethical implications of the tradition, the approach of Historical and Cultural Criticism can at times become overly harsh and unwilling to recognize what is valuable by striving for scholarly objectivity, which may go so far as to dismiss Zen as a mere social construct with reprehensible consequences for modern society.

Zen Skin, Zen Marrow concludes with a plea to overcome extreme positions while seeking for a middle-way standpoint that surpasses a hyperbolic critique, which throws the baby out with the bath water, so to speak, yet also does not unconsciously fall back on conceptual categories that are demonstrably outdated or misleading. Each of the six books under review here, which can be grouped into three pairs of studies, in its own thought-provoking fashion seeks to occupy a discursive space that either debunks and demythologizes the traditional narrative or revives and resuscitates its inner meaning. The first four works on the list contest the deficient paradigm through historical research based on exploring a wide variety of sources from both inside and outside of the tradition that demonstrate the political background and secularized motivations at the heart of the spread of Zen in East Asian societies in the eleventh through thirteenth centuries, as well as often unfortunate modern consequences in ethical and cultural realms, such as advocacy for twentieth-century Japanese militarism and misrepresentations regarding the role of Zen in Japanese culture.

The books by Welter and Schlütter exemplify textual historians seeking to deconstruct Zen writes, which were created during the formative period of Song dynasty China. The authors show that Zen's monastic institutional and literary traditions became firmly entrenched in the cultural world of Song literati and scholar-officials based, to a large extent, on regional political concerns accompanied by ideological appeals targeting powerful lay followers who forged alliances with the government. The works by Ives and Yamada express contemporary social criticism that uncovers the misguided role of Zen rights in twentieth-century Japanese society in two ways. One is by exposing nefarious connections with imperial politics on the part of leading monks and temples, especially in the period leading up to World War II. The other is by explicating how postwar

attempts at appropriating the Zen tradition, including its celebrated relation to rock gardens and martial arts, have been subverted by the insidious trends of Orientalism and Reverse Orientalism.

The last two books on the review list are written by heirs and proponents of various lineages, who, in light of attacks on Zen spirituality, have tried to reconstruct traditional approaches to religious practice by evoking their own personal experiences as a basis for the analysis. In revisiting the Zen rites of meditation and kōan training, Park and Sheng Yen, as two Asian scholar-practitioners from Korea and Taiwan, respectively, who have taught extensively in the West, seek to draw on the deep wellsprings of their own individual training. They put forward a particular view of Zen contemplation that is, in both cases, based on the "head-word" or "critical phrase" (Ch. *huatou*, Jp. *watō*, Kr. *hwadu*) technique in interpreting kōan cases, which each has inherited from Song dynasty traditions nearly a thousand years old.

ON DECONSTRUCTING THE FORMATIVE YEARS OF CHINESE CHAN

Welter and Schlütter both show that after harsh sanctions against Buddhism at the end of the Tang dynasty (618-907), and with challenges to its institutional strength still to come in the highly competitive and contested religious environment of the Song dynasty that was dominated by Neo-Confucianism, Zen nevertheless emerged by the beginning of the eleventh century as a leading religious school with strong ties to secular leaders and associations with the government. In fact, political figures who were often also among the elite literati class of scholar-officials were very much involved in commissioning or editing many of the Zen transmission narratives. Welter explains that in the transition from a *wu* or martial-based to a *wen* or literary-based culture, "Under the aura of Chan, illustrious literati, some of whom were among the highest representatives of government, sought to further the interests of Chan by promoting its teachings as an instrument of state ideology" (6). Schlütter sums up the deconstructive scholarly effort by arguing, in support of his subtitle, that "political, social, and economic factors of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries had a decisive impact on the development of Chinese Chan Buddhism, without which there could have been no Zen in East Asia as we now know it" (175).

Welter and Schlütter concur that it is very important to distinguish between developments during the Northern Song (960-1127), when Chan first prospered with official support by adopting an inclusive and multibranching standpoint characterized by an absence of sectarianism, and the Southern Song (1127-1279), when Chan had become an institution that was fragmented by sectarian polemics and an attitude of exclusivity. During the Northern Song, compilers

of the transmission narratives promoted the authorized view of Chan as the quintessential teaching of Buddhism, in harmony with the scriptures yet not threatening to Neo-Confucian orthodoxy and conducive to the spiritual attainments as well as secular aspirations of unaffiliated (or cross-aligned) literati. Supposedly free of reliance on text and doctrine, Chan claimed to promote spontaneity and ingenuity, especially through poetic expressions that appealed to the scholar-officials.

However, as Welter demonstrates, Chan stories were intended not so much to awaken an individual practitioner as to pass control from one leader of a monastery to another based largely on connections with lay supporters. Rather than rely on the transmission records as presenting factual material, these texts are, according to Schlütter, “better understood as didactic narratives and symbolic representations of core teachings than as actual reports of events” (99). The Chan movement thrived because it maintained an active engagement with secular leaders and public affairs while preserving the aura of political aloofness in its stories. Welter points out that although the transmission narratives highlight typically eccentric Chan antics that are supposedly iconoclastic, anticanonical, and subversive, non-Chan sources about the school from the period do not mention this approach and take instead a more conservative stance in characterizing the institution.

The early transmission narratives, including the *Zutang ji* (952), which was lost for centuries until it was rediscovered in the twentieth century in a Korean edition and reconstructed in Chinese, and the *Song gaoseng chuan* (988) by Zanning, who also dealt with other Buddhist sects, helped lead to the compilation of the monumentally influential *Jingde chuandeng lu* (1009) by Daoxuan. This was the first officially sanctioned work in the transmission of the lamp genre, which included 1,700 entries of monk biographies or more than four times the number in previous works. Although this text tended to support the Fayen lineage, which soon died out, its approach was mainly pan-sectarian in presenting the various schools as forming a united front.

Welter’s examination closes with a careful study of the *Tiansheng guangdeng lu* (1036) compiled by Yang Yi, which marks the ascendancy of the Chan branch attributed to Linji (Jp. Rinzai), even though this Tang monk was portrayed as a rather unremarkable figure in the *Zutang ji* and other earlier texts in which the Yunmen faction was seen as the main rival. Yang Yi, a literary prodigy with unassailable credentials who was personally acquainted with two emperors and had served in a number of influential posts, made the shift from the Fayen to the Linji school based on a personal motivation for understanding which form of Chan best suited the interests of the Song dynasty. Therefore, just a couple of

decades after the multibranching, pan-sectarian outlook had reached its peak with the *Jingde chuandeng lu*, in the next major text there was a tendency to reduce Chan to a single major lineage as the Linji school gained dominance.

Welter’s book is masterful in its handling of complex textual materials by a seasoned scholar who is very reasonable in his overall approach to critical analysis by not commenting or passing judgment in a way that would tend to diminish the value of the tradition. Schlütter’s work picks up where Welter leaves off by focusing on the twelfth century. By this time, the Caodong (Jp. Sōtō) school was significantly revived and had become a major competitor of Linji. This led to a heated dispute regarding the doctrines of Kōan Introspection endorsed by the Linji school, especially Dahui Zonggao, and Silent Illumination promoted by Caodong, especially Tiantong Hongzhi. In contrast to many modern studies of the schism that merely echo traditional sectarian polemics, Schlütter’s approach aims for “a more complete and nuanced understanding of the split itself and the causes and conditions surrounding [the schism]” (3). His work “draws upon a wide range of primary sources, including government manuals, official histories, commemorative inscriptions for monasteries, funerary inscriptions for Chan masters, essay collections, travel descriptions, and private letters, as well as many different kinds of Buddhist sources” (4-5).

Before examining the Linji-Caodong controversy, Schlütter devotes several chapters to explaining some of the institutional factors that enabled Chan to expand rapidly during the Song dynasty; in particular, he shows that Chan created a view of ancestral lineage that emulated the Confucian family system and also became associated or identified with “public” monasteries, which received significant government support in contrast to private temples. The downside of gaining public status was that “A Chan master was typically moved from abbacy to abbacy throughout his career at the will of the politically powerful” (71). Because this part of the discussion takes up nearly half of the book and is important yet somewhat disconnected from the main theme covered in the concluding chapters, I feel that Schlütter would have been better served by a minor but important editorial decision to divide the book into two parts: one on causes for the spread of Chan in Northern Song and the second on the reasons for intense sectarian discord in Southern Song.

Schlütter argues that the division between the Linji and Caodong schools was greatly affected by political changes in the Southern Song as all parties were made anxious because of “confiscations of monastery lands, the restrictions on ordination, and the diminishing number of monastery conversions, together with the persecution that Buddhists underwent at the end of the Northern Song . . .” (52). Dahui

and the Linji school more generally felt threatened by the reinvented and reinvigorated Caodong lineage, which seemed to have died out but was brought back to life by Furong Daokai and his third-generation follower, Hongzhi.

According to Dahui's Kōan Introspection method, concentration on the abbreviated head-word of a kōan case—the main example is “Wu” (Jp. Mu) or “No” in response to the query, “Does a dog have Buddha-nature?”—gets rid of doubts all at once and is a technique that lay people could practice in their daily lives, even if they are unable to have the opportunity for significant encounters with a Chan master. In fiercely attacking Hongzhi's Silent Illumination method for its supposed lack of dynamism in recommending that meditation leads to a mental state that is like “dry wood, stone, wall, a piece of tile, or pebble,” Schlütter shows that “Dahui was the first to break the code of harmony that the Chan school had been able to maintain throughout the earlier part of the Song” (142). It is unfortunate, he comments, that Dahui's sectarian outlook has been adopted uncritically by contemporary scholars, who portray it as representing historical and doctrinal truth rather than a viewpoint competing with others.

Like Welter's *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism*, Schlütter's book goes a long way toward achieving a constructive compromise through a balanced weighing of traditional discourse with historical criticism as seen through the lens of analyzing diverse kinds of sources. The use of scientific studies applied to Chan Buddhism by these scholars should, in the long run, lead to a greater rather than a lesser degree of appreciation of the tradition; however, they should probably be studied alongside Mark Halperin's (2006) work, which covers a similar territory from the standpoint of Song literati rather than Buddhist monks. Both show “how Zen became Zen” in its classical phase in China, which is important for understanding the examinations of modern Japan by Ives and Yamada. Welter's theme, which is useful for understanding Schlütter's area of study, is isolated to the formative period of the school in China. However, as is seen in the works of Park and Sheng Yen, Schlütter's theme is crucial for understanding the legacy of Zen in China and Taiwan, as well as in Japan and Korea, where the Kōan Introspection method of training has become mainstream in the Linji/Rinzai school; only in Japan does it still compete with the Caodong/Sōtō sect.

ON DECONSTRUCTING ZEN'S ROLE IN MODERN JAPAN

The books by Ives and Yamada show that the twofold tendency of classical Chan to project an ideal realm that is to stand beyond, while at the same time making accommodations within, the mundane world have triggered significant consequences for Zen in the modern period. The chickens of political affiliation and alignment with secular interests forged in Song dynasty China have come home to roost in

two ways: through Zen's problematically close relations with imperial Japan, as monks and temples all too eagerly acquiesced to militarism before WWII, and in terms of the postwar Reverse Orientalist discourse of commentators who have allowed themselves, unconsciously or not, to falsify the history of the tradition for the sake of gaining worldwide popular appeal.

Ives provides a very compelling overview of Zen's entanglement with Japanese supernationalism from the beginning of the Meiji period (1868) to the present, with insightful reflections on earlier (classical, medieval, and early modern) eras as well. As opposed to Brian Victoria (1998), who castigates particular Zen masters for their subservience to the emperor, Ives tends to cast the matter from a historical perspective whereby Buddhism had always played a key role as protector of the state. Ives's methodological gaze in *Imperial Way Zen: Ichikawa Hakugen's Critique and Lingering Questions for Buddhist Ethics* is not criticism of Zen as an end in itself, however. Rather, in the final chapters, he proposes repentance and reform based on Zen traditional principles still practiced at temples today.

Ives is guided throughout his study by the life and works of Ichikawa Hakugen, a Rinzai Zen priest from Kyoto and also a scholar of historical Chan/Zen studies. Ichikawa was one of the few dissenting voices, although he admits that despite his criticisms of Buddhism's war responsibilities (*sensō no sekinin*), he was not able to extricate himself fully from the predicament until after the war was ended. Like everyone else at the time, Ichikawa faced an impossible choice of kowtowing or being imprisoned by imperial authorities, yet he avoided the double apostasy (*tenkō*) of changing his views radically before the war and then changing them in the opposite direction but without real meaning after the war. Unlike many of his peers, who continued to equivocate and try to hide or deny their past loyalties, from the 1940s up until his death in 1986, Ichikawa proved capable of genuine repentance and self-criticism.

Ichikawa shows that the problem with Zen before and after the war is that as a modern institution it has offered little in the way of self-reflection or of genuinely taking to heart its own flaws and deficiencies because “Living like the water that takes the shape of whatever vessel into which it is poured, Zen Buddhists run the risk of succumbing to a kind of flexible, shifting submission that lacks the consistency of principles, conviction, and actions necessary for a critical social ethic” (71). According to Ives, “The religious epistemology and logic of Zen are thus a recipe for passivity and acquiescence in the face of power” (79). Furthermore, within “(t)his constellation of self-forgetting, harmonious non-contention, and obedience mak[ing] up what Ichikawa terms the ‘ethic of emotion’” (134), moral considerations are limited to a sense of retributive justice based on a kind of

fundamentalist view of karma that reinforces a status quo-oriented you “get what you deserve” outlook rather than undertakes a reform-minded attempt to change and uplift society.

How is it possible to reverse a standpoint that has long “conflated principles of inner spiritual life with ways of organizing outer social life, and natural order with sociopolitical order” by making an accommodation to an accord with things (*nin'nun*) as they are and to celebrating harmony (*wa*) and obedience (*junnō*) while lacking critical judgment? According to Ives, the strengths of Zen as an ethical system are double-edged in that as soon as they are put into practice, underlying weaknesses are revealed. For example, practicing the precepts as a key to discipline functions primarily at an individual and not at a communal level; the ideal of compassion can lead to active engagement but in the end offers very little in the way of specific behavioral guidelines; and Zen’s vaunted negation of authority and convention as well as ideological flexibility can revert to an aloof and indifferent vantage point (186). Nevertheless, Ives promotes the notion that Zen temple training reveals nine principles from monastic life that can be useful in ethical reform—simplicity, thrift, manual labor, diligence, perseverance, humility, penitent self-criticism, deference-obedience, and respect (177). This analysis is an excellent springboard for further discussion of Zen’s potential for reform but needs further elaboration, which hopefully Ives will continue to pursue in his ongoing publications in the field.

The starting point for Yamada Shoji is that devotees on both sides of the Pacific tend to be so overwhelmed and awestruck by the Suzuki-Watts paradigm that they tolerate no criticism while readily concocting idealizations of the tradition. In his cultural criticism of modern appropriations of Zen in *Shots in the Dark: Japan, Zen, and the West*, Yamada takes on as his primary targets (pun intended) two of the most hallowed iconic images: experiences of spontaneity depicted in *Zen and the Art of Archery* by E. Herrigel, a German professor who lived in Sendai, Japan, in the 1920s where he studied archery with eccentric master Awa Kenzō for a few years (although not the full six years claimed in his book) and returned to Germany where he became a Nazi sympathizer, and widespread admiration for the rock garden at the Ryōanji temple in Kyoto, which, according to Yamada’s account, was little more than a pile of weeds until interest in it was renewed by Western aficionados in the early postwar period.

Over the course of a few decades, these two phenomena that were not necessarily related to Zen came to be presented by commentators as if they epitomized the Zen tradition so that the martial and landscape arts could not be understood without referencing it and vice versa. Accord-

ingly, everything that has an “air of simplicity and solitude” (22) is considered part of Zen, while Herrigel’s dictum that “all Japanese arts can be traced back to Zen” has prevailed in the general discourse even though it is a laughable proposition that does not hold up to the most basic level of historical scrutiny. The legacy lives on in such diverse works as Roland Barthes’s *Empire of Signs* (which mistakenly uses a photograph of Tōfukuji instead of Ryōanji) and Kawai Hayao’s *Kage no genshōgaku* (Phenomenology of Shadows), as well as Robert Pirsig’s *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, among many other examples. Yamada’s main concern, however, is less with the significance of the way Zen has been portrayed in the West (Orientalism) than with the meaning of the reimportation and embracing of Zen in Japan (Reverse Orientalism). This has transpired through what is, after all, a kind of fun-house “magic mirror” image, which seems to flatter but really distorts by reflecting traditional culture in the best possible light without blemishes despite evidence to the contrary.

Yamada critically analyzes two main aspects of Herrigel’s presentation. One is the claim that in Japanese archery, the arrow is not shot by the archer because Awa taught that “It shoots,” although the third-person construction is not plausible in Japanese grammar, and this was not a notion for which Awa was otherwise known. The other aspect is the report that Awa shot at his “target in the dark” and succeeded in splitting a first arrow with a second shot, even though splitting is not something valued in Japanese archery, and Awa seemed to deny the episode when asked about it. Yamada maintains that both elements of this modern transmission narrative were a fabrication on the part of Herrigel, whose Japanese proficiency was weak, and a myth further concocted and contorted through multiple versions and translations of the text (from German to English and then to Japanese). Yet somehow, Herrigel is seen by many as the true Western representative of Zen despite obvious shortcomings in his presentation as well as in his own personal and ethical life as a Nazi sympathizer. The irony of Herrigel’s fascist affiliations, which he tried to defend (his apology is included in the appendix), makes a fascinating counterpoint to Ives’s discussion of Japanese apologists for the imperial regime and willing practitioners of pre- and/or postwar apostasy.

In the case of the rock garden, Yamada documents the transition of Ryōanji from an obscure historical site known for the symbolism of “tiger cubs crossing the river” but whose beauty was often disparaged or at least hotly contested as merely constituting a group of “unsightly stones” to representing the “higher self” as the loftiest of spiritual ideals. Ryōanji is one of several Zen temples that are prominent today but, at the turn of the century during the Meiji era, were “neglected to the point of complete

dilapidation" (144) and existed without legitimate abbots. Yamada reports that while Ryōanji is now known all over the world for its rock garden, up until around 1950 it was a poor, deserted site standing in a bamboo grove, rarely visited by anyone. Before the war, textbooks rarely mentioned the garden, which was not cited in Suzuki's *Zen and Japanese Culture* or in Hisamatsu Shin'ichi's *Zen and the Fine Arts (Zen to bijitsu)*.

"After the war was over, however, everything changed," Yamada writes. "Like bamboo shoots popping up after a rain, official textbooks for the new postwar middle school system prominently featuring the rock garden at Ryōanji, complete with photographs, started to appear en masse" (128). Yamada highlights the role of Isamu Noguchi, a famous Japanese American sculptor, in disseminating both Herrigel's work and the value of Ryōanji in the early 1950s when the Zen boom in the West was getting under way. Over the past several decades, the rock garden has received countless visitations from royalties such as Queen Elizabeth, as well as other dignitaries and celebrities. It has also been the subject of detailed analyses by surveyors and landscape art critics, including Eyama Masami's logarithmic "golden ratio" interpretation of what makes the fifteen rocks standing in gravel so special for its supposed "pretty flowing water pattern and the balance of proportions which forbid the intrusion of anyone into it" (112). While some commentators still ponder whether Ryōanji is great or worthless (161), even if it is granted that the garden showcases equilibrium, symmetry, and dynamism, Yamada continually ruminates, is it "Zen?"

At the end of the book, Yamada, whose institutional affiliation is a think tank known when it was created in the 1980s for supporting Japanese exceptionalism, discloses that he is less of a scholar of Buddhism than he is a commentator and critic of current trends in Japanese society. While he has become sensitive to the "manifest difference" (245) between research support for humanities in Japan and the US, Yamada, whose field of study is informatics, indicates that his driving interest and motivation in exploring this topic are not based on Zen but on his involvement in Japanese archery (*kyūdō*). This disclosure does not in any way diminish his findings about deficiencies associated with Zen rights, but readers will have to judge for themselves to what extent he is an insightful or mischievous cultural critic. One concern I have is that at times in his analysis, Yamada is a little unclear about whether or not the evidence he mounts adheres to the postwar emphasis that is crucial to his overall argument concerning changes in Japanese attitudes about the role of Zen in relation to culture, such as when he examines William B. Acker's work on Japanese archery from 1937 seemingly out of chronological context (187-94).

RECONSTRUCTING THE TRADITIONAL APPROACH TO KŌAN STUDY

After reading the books discussed earlier, scholars and students, as well as casual observers of Zen, may wonder if there is any discursive space left for presenting the tradition in its own right or if Zen has become a self-parody that is almost entirely a matter of mere packaging that distorts more than it reveals. We must acknowledge, on the other hand, that while criticism on a scholarly basis intensifies, the interest and involvement in Zen on the part of practitioners throughout the world continues to grow unabated and to create an appetite for works that seem academically sound yet are primarily inspirational in nature.

Here, we can make a distinction between an approach to religious discourse that is homiletic, or derived from the preaching of an insider who may wish to remain oblivious to any critique of tradition, and one that is hermeneutic, or based on the interpretation of an outsider (or an insider playing that role) who teases contemporary meanings out of traditional sources' while remaining sensitive to issues of historical criticism. In seeking to evoke the spirit of hermeneutics based on their own extensive experiences as both trainer and trainee, Sheng Yen and Park offer an unabashed endorsement of a style of Zen practice that they know from firsthand personal insight (Zen rites) as well as through the study of traditional sources (Zen writes). The style is directly related to Dahui's Kōan Introspection method, which emphasizes concentration on the head-word, and the aim of the authors is to maintain continuity and consistency with, rather than change and departure from, the Song dynasty approach.

Park relates in the "Introduction" that as a young professor in the 1960s in Korea, he had a breakthrough experience while training under master Songchuel, who instructed his novices by having them conduct backbreaking ascetic practices such as making 3,000 prostrations and then running up a steep mountain. This primal event has guided his understanding of Zen ever since. Park soon left the university to become a monk, but a few years later immigrated to America where he has been a longtime professor of Korean Buddhism at Stony Brook University in New York. *One Korean's Approach to Buddhism: The Mom/Momjit Paradigm*, his first major university press publication in over twenty-five years, focuses on the distinction between *mom* or the hidden, invisible, and invariable essence (similar to the Chinese term *ti*) and *momjit* or the overt, visible, and variable function (*yong*) of things. For Park, the only real way to achieve a true awareness of the *mom/momjit* paradigm is through practice of the *hwadu* as advocated by Chinul, the thirteenth-century Korean follower of Dahui, because "it bombs the fortress. It rips away any and all illusions we may have regarding who we are and what this world is" (70).

To his credit, Park is more interested in Chinul's personal spiritual odyssey in which he had "the continuing experience of being in a shipwreck" (101) before gaining enlightenment, perhaps recalling Sartrean existentialism more than he is in echoing the master's doctrine. Park recognizes that both *hwadu*, which has been adopted by the media in Korean society to mean something like agenda, and *ti/yong*, which has been discredited or ignored by modern academics, are in dire need of rehabilitation. He summons a vast array of citations, allusions, and references to world religious philosophies as well as to popular cultural examples in the east and west in support of his explication of the paradigm. In the end, Park admits that of the four doctoral students he mentored, only one has been interested in understanding *mom* and *momijit* (132), but at the same time he feels strongly that this constitutes a universal truth that needs to be disseminated if only it can be explained properly.

Zen discourse comes full circle with the work of Sheng Yen, the fifty-seventh generational descendent of Linji and third-generation dharma-heir of the venerable Xu Yun, the major leader of a Chan renewal in modern China, who fled to Taiwan after 1949, where he eventually returned to the monkhood while completing a master's as well as a doctoral degree in Buddhist Studies at a university in Japan. Founder of the influential Chung-Hwa Buddhist temple and institution in Taipei, until his death in 2009 Sheng Yen traveled and taught extensively in many Western Zen centers. *Shattering the Great Doubt: The Chan Perspective of Huatou* is from a series of Dharma talks collected and edited posthumously, which, like Park's book, evokes the merit of the head-word method of training.

An interesting feature of Sheng Yen's work is that it treats the stories culled from traditional transmission narratives as keys to conquering spiritual doubt, precisely opposite to the way that Welter and Schlütter have cast these as historically suspect. Furthermore, Sheng Yen's account of the Dahui-Hongzhi discord about Kōan Introspection occupies the very first page (3), where he maintains in a way the historians have questioned that "All lines used this method [head-word]," but the discussion quickly moves on to trumpeting the merits of the practice for calming the mind and achieving a state of harmony. I think that, as a well-educated and sophisticated scholar who was extremely well-versed in traditional sources and by no means oblivious to modern academic trends (for example, he organized several high-level academic conferences), Sheng Yen is not ignorant of historical criticism but chooses to disregard it because his goal is closer to that of offering homiletics than to exploring hermeneutics.

Like Park, Sheng Yen evokes his own character-forming youthful experience under extreme physical conditions when

he continued to practice during an intensive meditation retreat in the mountains of Japan even though it was twenty-seven degrees below zero (98). He also forthrightly supports the head-word as the one true practice and, in particular, emphasizes the use of the Wu kōan case. When challenged at the end of a question-answer session late one night during a retreat that he was leading in America about why he does not present more diverse examples and explanations, Sheng Yen sloughs off the inquiry by declaring, "At this store the only thing we sell is Wu. A pizza store only sells pizza. [Laughter]." When pressed further about whether there are not "many selections of pizza," he retorts, "But it's still pizza. [Laughter] OK, thank you. Now let's practice huatou" (142).

CONCLUSION: WHITHER SKIN, FLESH, BONES, AND MARROW

A major question raised in *Zen Skin, Zen Marrow* is whether the seminal transmission narrative, in which first ancestor Bodhidharma awards the four disciples competing to become anointed as his successor his skin, flesh, bones, and marrow, respectively, should be interpreted to mean that the skin represents the most superficial level and the marrow as the most profound level of understanding, as in the way the passage is discussed in most commentaries. Or, as suggested by Dōgen, the founder of the Sōtō school in Japan, should this sense of hierarchy be challenged and even reversed, such that the roles of skin and marrow as well as of surface and depth can be seen as relative to ever-shifting contexts and viewpoints? When this conundrum is applied to the six books under review, one wonders which ones—the historical and social criticism, which varies from an attitude of neutrality to sardonic expressions, or the defense of the traditional paradigm, which may or may not include a comparative or cross-cultural component—represent the skin and which the marrow.

It is clear that the lines of discursive division can easily be drawn when scholarly critiques disparage traditionalists, even if indirectly, for offering surface-level apologetics, and traditionalists reverse this judgment by arguing that their approach alone captures the depths of the religious experience and that historical studies are interesting but in the end irrelevant to achieving spiritual goals. How, if it is at all possible, can the impasse be overcome?

Another way of looking at the relation between skin and marrow is to see the viewpoints as occupying neither the two extremes (or bookends) of a polarized discourse, as they do not have to be seen at loggerheads, nor the middle, a continuum of complementary viewpoints, as it must be acknowledged that there is an underlying inconsistency and incompatibility. Rather, the model could be that each discursive stance exists independently and yet, when viewed collectively, contributes to providing us with a varying and at

times, depending on the circumstance, conflicting and clashing or overlapping and intersecting perspectives. These multiple and shifting outlooks, which may undermine but do not necessarily negate one another, are useful and necessary in order to gain a more complete picture of the unfolding of Zen over a millennium and in its contemporary significance, and in this way, disquiet on the Eastern Front becomes an advantage rather than a cause for dismay.

While the beauty, or lack thereof, of rocks piled on stones, for instance, or the value of concentrating on a word that literally means negation or nothingness lies in the eye or mind of the beholder, it would be a shame in the original sense of scandal to overlook or ignore the diverse conceptual angles that present themselves and help to destabilize comfortable assumptions and assertions on either side of the dividing line separating discourses. Those who are fascinated by historical criticism may want or, in effect, need to turn to more inspirational materials that elicit a spiritual resonance, while readers of the latter literature may find their beliefs held in question but in the end reevaluated or even reinforced by critical studies. Holding to tunnel vision would clearly not be worthy of Zen. Rather, to paraphrase some of the classical figures who often evoked harsh rhetoric to disparage their rivals, such an innately limited view would represent the standpoint of “devils, heretics, and Hinayanists.”

from the era, such as Hisamatsu Shin'ichi, he was rejected by D. T. Suzuki and others for not having a firsthand experience of awakening, unlike E. Herrigel, German author of *Zen and the Art of Archery*, which is discussed above. Interestingly, Watts was known for dismissing artists such as musician John Cage for being closer in style to “Beat Zen,” as well as Western practitioners for their approach to “Square Zen,” rather than trying to understand authentic Zen (or “Zen”), which referred to the original Chinese style as he understood it.

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NOTE

1. As Yamada shows (209-11), although Watts was recognized as a leading Western authority on Zen by some Japanese figures

Contextualizing the Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Chan/Zen Narratives: Steven Heine's Academic Contributions to the Field

SHIFTING SHAPE, SHAPING TEXT: PHILOSOPHY AND FOLKLORE IN THE FOX KŌAN

By Steven Heine
Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999
Pp. x + 295. \$60 hardcover, \$34 paper

OPENING A MOUNTAIN: KOANS OF THE ZEN MASTERS

By Steven Heine
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001
Pp. x + 200. \$40 paper

DID DOGEN GO TO CHINA? WHAT HE WROTE AND WHEN HE WROTE IT

By Steven Heine
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006
Pp. x + 298. \$140 hardcover, \$60 paper

ZEN SKIN, ZEN MARROW: WILL THE REAL ZEN BUDDHISM PLEASE STAND UP?

By Steven Heine
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008
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TRAJECTORIES IN CHAN/ZEN STUDIES

Chan/Zen studies have come a long way. The field blossomed during the mid-twentieth century under the aegis (apart from a few exceptions) of Japanese sectarian scholarship (*shūgaku*). Later, Chan/Zen studies developed independence from such influences and took two paths: a philosophical approach on the one hand and a historical and cultural approach on the other hand. This article reviews Heine's four recent monographs in the context of these two approaches, in which Heine occupies a unique position as an original thinker and synthesizer. These four works actually blend both of these approaches and yield many unique insights regarding kōans or *gong'ans* and offer historical analyses and theoretical models that advance the field of Zen studies in fascinatingly new directions. They also shed light on the problematic areas in

scholarly categories and provide new ways of appreciating Chan and Zen historiography. Building on these important contributions, this essay raises a few questions designed to advance these works further.

To appreciate Heine's work, it is important to first identify some shifts in Chan/Zen scholarship. During the 1980s, Chan/Zen studies in the West became increasingly erudite, integrating the approach of towering figures of scholarship, such as Yanagida Seizan (1922-2006), whose sociohistorical studies challenged traditional and sectarian-based scholarship (Yanagida 1967). However, Chan/Zen studies as a field were still producing text-critical historiography. It was a narrowly circumscribed and relatively coherent field, which by and large relied on canonical studies of recorded teachings of Chan/Zen masters or institutions (Collcutt 1981; McRae 1986; Gregory 1987; Bielefeldt 1988). Most of the historical studies during this time made little effort to utilize non-Buddhist canonical sources or theoretical models to understand Chan/Zen in its broader cultural context.

In the 1990s, Chan/Zen studies entered a new and dynamic phase characterized in part by new approaches to canonical literature, moving away from its narrow historicism toward contemporary debates in the history and anthropology of religion. This broader interest reflects the trajectory of East Asian Buddhist studies (Faure 1991a, 1991b, 1996; Gimello 1992; Gregory and Getz 1999) and continues to shape current research. It privileges an approach that examines the cultural, economic, and social relations of Chan and Zen in local societies. In many respects, this shift of orientation proved to be a fruitful one, as the standard in the field came to be defined increasingly by more nuanced studies of ideas, institutions, events in particular places and times, and material cultures. Its impact has led many scholars to challenge the older Japanese sectarian scholarly paradigms.

The interest in material cultures during this time, for example, appears in the works of Robert Sharf and Bernard Faure, who examine the cult of relics in Chan and Zen. They discuss the role played by "mummies" and other "figures of the double" (Faure 1991a; Sharf 1992). Sharf also shows the centrality of rituals such as "ascending the hall," while Faure (1993, 1996) studies the evolution and

representations of Chan and Zen attitudes toward language, local cults, death, iconography, and the body. Bodiford (1993), likewise, demonstrates that medieval Japanese Sōtō Zen practices and institutions cannot be understood in isolation, without consideration of cultic traditions that often absorbed the purification rituals, fire and rain ceremonies, healing techniques, uses of talismans, and other cultic practices of local kami worship. All of these tendencies are less dependent on traditional Japanese Zen scholarship. This is true particularly for the anthropological approach that—beyond pure textual studies—attempts to highlight the relationship between Chan/Zen and local cultic traditions (Foult and Sharf 1993-1994) or to demonstrate the political valence in Chan/Zen rituals and monastic institutions (Faure 2003).

If the recent cultural and anthropological approaches are distinct from earlier scholarship, insofar as it does not rely directly on philosophical and textual approaches, it does not by any means imply a refutation of such approaches. As Heine demonstrates, these approaches can be fruitfully integrated. No doubt, there is still a long way to go before grasping all the complex dimensions of Chan and Zen Buddhisms. What is sure is that the normative, sectarian scholarship, which has prevailed earlier, and the ahistorical “mysticism” to which D.T. Suzuki (1870-1966) claimed to convert us are no longer adequate. We need to consider Chan and Zen holistically from multiple cultural, economic, social, aesthetic, and ritual contexts.

SHIFTS IN HEINE'S SCHOLARSHIP

Heine's scholarship is particularly notable because it not only reflects the shift in orientation in the larger Chan/Zen studies trajectory but also sets his work apart from different camps of scholarship. In the past twenty years, he has authored ten monographs and edited eleven coauthored volumes on Zen and Dōgen (not to mention his numerous journal articles). His oeuvre bears witness to the change from a hermeneutical/philosophical approach to a historical/cultural approach. He has been on both sides of the fence. Yet this is not to say that his most recent works fit neatly in the latter camp. While Heine no longer engages in the philosophical study of Zen, as do his earlier studies and edited volumes on East-West dialogue, his background in Buddhist philosophy and literary studies makes his work an interesting blend of hermeneutics, historiography, and cultural studies that uniquely advances the study of Chan/Zen as a tradition.

An in-depth discussion of Heine's oeuvre, at least all of his monographs that are listed at the end of this review, is beyond the scope of this review. However, to understand the four works under review, I have divided his oeuvre roughly into three phases: 1) philosophical and compara-

tive thought of Dōgen and Western thinkers; 2) literary studies of Dōgen and Zen; and 3) a blend of hermeneutical, historiographical, and cultural approaches to Dōgen and Zen. Of course, there are some overlaps in these three phases. Thus, this division is only for heuristic purposes. Generally, works that belong to the first two categories are evident in Heine's earlier writings from roughly the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, when he explored the philosophical, comparative, and literary dimensions of Zen and Dōgen. Works that were produced after the mid-1990s fall into the third category.

In his 1985 and 1991 monographs, *Existential and Ontological Dimensions of Time in Heidegger and Dōgen* and *A Dream within a Dream: Studies in Japanese Thought*, he compares Dōgen's thought with those of modern Western and Japanese philosophers and theologians. Similarly, the main thrust of his 1989 monograph, *A Blade of Grass: Japanese Poetry and Aesthetics in Dogen Zen*, stems from a bridging of comparative philosophy and literary studies. His works beginning in the mid-1990s to the present, which is the subject of this review, belong to the third phase. I discuss them in detail below.

In the 1980s, Heine was one of the very few American scholars doing comparative Zen philosophy in the context of the remarkable advances of Chan/Zen historical studies in Japan, the United States, and Europe. These historical studies responded to the prevalent phenomenon of “reverse cultural chauvinism” decades before and sought to unmask the problems with essentialism, romanticism, and latent ethnocentrism in other forms of Zen scholarship. They show that most East-West “comparative” works turn out to be barely concealed essentialist efforts to assert the supremacy of one philosophical tradition (i.e., the wisdom of the East) over the other, namely the West (Kasulis 1985, 86). The inherent challenges in comparative studies are many, and most studies fall short in the face of this criticism. Despite the fact that Heine's earlier comparative philosophical work also suffers from this general malaise (at least from some of his reviewers of his *Existential and Ontological Dimensions of Time in Heidegger and Dōgen*), his boldness in charting out new territory is commendable. He brought to light many insights about Dōgen and Zen such that, by the mid-1990s, he had established himself as an important American Dōgen scholar. Through the lens of comparative studies, Heine introduced to the larger Western academic audience the world of Dōgen and Japanese Zen philosophy.

What seems to have sustained Heine's interest in comparative philosophy during this time, despite the fact that most of his colleagues were doing historical-critical studies, was his collaboration with Masao Abe (1915-2006). In the West, Abe was one of the most influential proponents of the

Kyoto School of Japanese philosophy founded by Nishida Kitarō (1870-1945). Heine edited Masao Abe's series of volumes in English that sought to compare Dōgen's thought with modern Western thinkers (Abe 1992, 1995, 1997, and 2003). The topics in these volumes range from an assortment of themes in Buddhism and interfaith dialogues to Zen and Western comparative thought. Most of these works can be summarized by Abe's interpretation of *Śūnyatā* or emptiness and his relentless employment of a dialectical logic that transcends oppositions in an aim to realize a higher "absolute" truth. His most important contributions have been to introduce Buddhism and Dōgen Zen in philosophical terms as a transcendent truth by utilizing both Buddhist and non-Buddhist (European and American intellectual) categories. His Zen stems from a position in which the Kyoto School of Japanese philosophy was already deeply aware of itself as a response to and an opponent of the West.

As his editor, Heine may be understood as an heir to and critic of Abe's work. On the one hand, Heine continued his interest in Dōgen and comparative philosophy by working with Abe. In nearly all of his prefaces of Abe's work, Heine praises Abe as the leading exponent and disseminator of Japanese Buddhism for Western audiences since the death of D.T. Suzuki (Abe 1992, 1995, 1997). He acknowledges that he "had long been an admirer of his [i.e., Abe's] writings, which were a main source of inspiration in my studies of Zen and Japanese thought" (Abe 1992, 10). On the other hand, Heine was growingly aware of his Western colleagues' criticism of the Kyoto School of thought. By the mid-1990s, he began to integrate his colleagues' Zen historiography into his own research.

Heine's colleagues in Chan/Zen studies produced several landmark historical studies in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Bielefeldt 1985, 1988; McRae 1986; Foulk 1987; Faure 1987, 1991b; Bodiford 1993). By 1994, for the first time, all these historical studies were integrated into Heine's *Dōgen and the Kōan Tradition: A Tale of Two Shōbōgenzō Texts*. Heine actively appropriated not only post-modern theories but also historical-critical approaches to examine Dōgen and his relationship with kōans to show that Dōgen's thought and writings were deeply immersed in the kōan tradition and that his Zen comments on this literature were essentially a culmination of the genius of the whole kōan tradition (228).

Heine's methodological shift in *Dōgen and the Kōan Tradition* would become a basis for his later explorations of Dōgen, Zen, and critique of Zen studies. His employment of postmodern literary criticism, specifically referred to as "discourse analysis," integrates notions of intertextuality and genre criticism, which focus on the formation of texts, with narratology and tropology that highlight the rhetorical meaning and function of kōans (xiii). Such a multifaceted

approach, argues Heine, is hermeneutically in sync with the Buddhist philosophy of emptiness and interdependent nature of reality (84-85).

One of the highlights of *Dōgen and the Kōan Tradition* is his discussion of Dōgen's sensitivity to the vernacular language in *Shōbōgenzō* as a means of soteriological expression, which is distinctive and innovative in medieval Japanese Buddhism. Heine's discussion on language is one of his major contributions to Zen studies, one that is underappreciated. For example, Heine discusses Dōgen's style of kōan commentary in *Shōbōgenzō* as a "polysemous scenic route" (228), unique from the Chinese Song master Dahui Zong'gao's (1089-1163) "iconoclastic shortcut method" of *huatou* (228). He shows how Dōgen's commentary explores rather than cuts off the multiple associations of the original kōan case: where Dahui sees kōans as thwarting intellectualization, favoring instead his *huatou* method that pushes the practitioner to generate a great "ball of doubt," Dōgen hermeneutical approach allows his readers to bring all the resources of mind and language into play. Dōgen's writing, argues Heine, wields the "power of disclosure to continuously unfold multiple meanings stemming from a surplus at the inexhaustible sources" (emphasis his, 229). In the end, Dōgen's commentary itself becomes a continuously unfolding kōan.

Heine's engagement with historical-critical studies on Zen at this time can be seen in his "Five Main Aporetics of Zen Studies" (72-81), where he began to take a stance against Zen comparative philosophy. He absorbs the findings of John McRae (1986) and criticizes the Kyoto School, "Modern exponents of Zen . . . have accepted uncritically, the mythical content and narrative structure of its writings" (76) and other conventional representations of Zen narratives. While still editing Abe's works, Heine continues to absorb historical-critical studies of Zen by editing a series of volumes with Dale S. Wright, beginning with *The Kōan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism* published in 2000. All the contributors of that volume are Chan/Zen historians and key contributors of the field: Griffith Foulk, John McRae, Albert Welter, Ishii Shūdo, Victor Hori, and others. Heine also edited a series of four volumes with Wright: *Zen Canon* (2004), *Zen Classics* (2005), *Zen Ritual* (2008), and *Zen Masters* (2010).

These edited volumes draw from the most current scholarship, which have been extremely helpful for university teaching about the history of Chan/Zen. Again, all the authors in this series are Chan and Zen historians. While the articles therein do not present a comprehensive view of each of these topics (i.e., Zen masters, Zen rituals, Zen canonicity), they do testify to the vitality of the historical study of Chan and Zen and present a capstone to each of the contributing scholar's work. I have used *Zen Ritual* and *Zen Canon*

in my Chan/Zen Buddhism classes, and undergraduate students enjoyed them because the articles are not as dense as some scholarly studies, so they are more accessible to students. At the same time, they convey the findings of current scholarship. For example, in *Zen Canon*, the chapters by Jeff Broughton, Wendi Adamek, and Morten Schlütter are basically summaries of their studies on Zongmi, the *Lidai fabao ji* (Record of Dharma Jewel Through the Generations) and Hongzhi's discourse records, respectively. Editing them must have greatly enriched Heine's own nuanced understanding of Chan/Zen historiography.

The real subject of this review is the third phase of Heine's oeuvre embodied in the four monographs examined below. They are listed in the beginning of this review, and I shall review them in chronological order, beginning with the 1999 monograph to his latest monograph in 2008. I leave out Heine's numerous journal articles, edited volumes, and even a popular work on Zen: *White Collar Zen: Using Zen Principles to Overcome Obstacles and Achieve Your Career Goals*. As seen in the preceding section, Heine has benefited from a long career of engaging with Dōgen, kōans, and Chan/Zen studies. The rationale for isolating the four monographs under review is that they share a common analytical and theoretical perspective of uniting the hermeneutical, historical, and cultural approaches to Zen, which bear witness to Heine's unique position in the field.

These four monographs also clearly demonstrate Heine's move away from comparative studies of Zen in favor of an interdisciplinary approach, including historical criticism, cultural theories, literary criticism, hermeneutics, and even folklore studies. While he incorporates the scholarly findings of historical criticism, he draws from two decades of experience studying the kōan literature and philosophical and literary studies, which sets him apart from historians of religion. For example, he is extremely familiar with the literary nuances, anthropological implications, and even exorcistic themes in the kōan literature. These areas are often ignored by Chan/Zen historians. Heine's analysis of kōans through postmodern strategies often opens up the field for new research topics. Even though one may argue that his postmodernist interpretations are comparable with those of Bernard Faure, Heine is uniquely grounded almost exclusively in the kōan literature and in Dōgen's writings in the Japanese context. His background in comparative philosophy and hermeneutics also allows him to blur the contested boundary between emic and etic categories.

Heine's book, *White Collar Zen*, published in 2005, which I do not review in this article, breaks the boundary between the academic studies and the normative understandings of Zen. As I see it, this blurring indirectly critiques the academic imperialism that plagues the field of Chan/Zen studies where certain scholars are still perpetuating the

view that Buddhism should be discussed "objectively" and "scientifically" (if that is even possible) from a safe distance. The lack of transparency in taking "buddhology" as the only valid means to truth and the lack of self-reflexivity in "objectivity" would bring us back to the nineteenth-century colonial, Orientalist studies of linguistic and philology rooted in the past (i.e., dead people). This is a separate topic that I do not wish to get into in this article. But what is important to highlight here is that Heine's approach to Zen studies seeks to complicate scholarly boundaries and categories of philosophy and popular religious discourses, doctrines and folkloric beliefs, hermeneutics, and history.

With this general introduction to how Heine has evolved in his research, I now turn to the four monographs in chronological order. These works represent the latest development, the third phase, in his career, in which he engages in a multileveled reading and multivalent reconstruction of Zen Buddhism.

SHIFTING SHAPES, SHAPING TEXT: PHILOSOPHY AND FOLKLORE IN THE FOX KŌAN

Shifting Shapes, Shaping Text is the first text under review. Here, Heine exercises his intellectual gymnastics in the "fox kōan," which, according to him, is one of the most difficult kōans in this type of Chan/Zen literature. He demonstrates a sophisticated "discourse analysis" of intertextuality, arguing against earlier canonical scholars that the kōan is much more than a philosophical quandary or a pedagogical tool for religious training; it is an amalgamation of different competing (but ultimately complementary) discourses. In particular, the fox kōan explores the issue of Buddhist causality and "weaves together two seemingly diametrically opposed viewpoints: demythology and mythology" (42). In this light, this book continues the criticism first presented in his *Dōgen and the Kōan Tradition*, in which he demonstrates that kōans served to simultaneously mythologize (e.g., kōans as hagiography of Chan/Zen masters) and demythologize (e.g., kōans as a pedagogical device). However, in the current work, Heine focuses on one specific kōan and aims to unravel the multidimensional and multivalent characteristics of Chan/Zen.

The story of the fox kōan centers on the protagonist, Chan master Baizhang Huihai (749-814), and his interlocutor, a *feiren* (Skt. *amanuṣya*): a nonhuman being who in this case is a fox that transforms himself into a monk who regularly attends Baizhang's Dharma talks. One day after the talk, the fox/monk stays behind and confesses to Baizhang that in his former life, he was the abbot of this same monastery. Because he gave the wrong answer to his disciple's question concerning karma and enlightenment, as a retribution, he was karmically bound to live as a fox for 500 years. His answer was that one who is enlightened does not *fall* into

cause and effect (*buluo yin'guo*). Baizhang responded with a “turning word” (*zhuan yu*) and said that an enlightened person is not *deluded about* cause and effect (*bumei yin'guo*). With the alteration of this single character (*mei*), Baizhang enlightens the fox/monk who sheds the fox's body. The latter asks Baizhang to take care of his vulpine corpse the same way as one would take care of a dead monk. Baizhang obliges and performs a funeral service the next day for the fox/monk. Afterwards, when he relates the story in the Dharma talk to his assembly of monks, Huangbo, the chief disciple of Baizhang, steps forward and slaps Baizhang in the face. Baizhang claps his hands and laughs and says, “I knew barbarian's beards were red, and here's another red-bearded barbarian!”

Heine's ambitious project begins here, with the two perspectives on the nature of karma and enlightenment. The project is ambitious because he attempts to deconstruct the multilayered discourses embedded in this kōan by reading them through postmodern literary theories that problematize the binary structures of elite and folk paradigms, high and low genres of literature, great and little traditions, and institutional and popular divides. He points out the shortcoming of conventions as simply conventions, which in turn de-naturalizes our received scholarly categories. He sets up the fox/monk's response of *not falling into cause and effect* as representing a denial of causality but discusses it through the demythological, paradoxical, and philosophical symbolism of mainstream Zen. In other words, Zen's self-representation distances itself from its “mythological roots” by “defusing, reorienting, or suppressing any focus on the reality or unreality of folk beliefs in favor of the rhetoric of abbreviation and iconoclasm” (131). Heine contends that Baizhang's response of *not deluded about cause and effect* was representing not only as an affirmation of causality but also as an esoteric utterance imbued with “mysterious powers” (12) that reflects a deeper structure of the mythological, supernatural, bivalent, and the folkloric structures of Zen.

Heine shows that much of these cultic dimensions in kōan cannot be separated from morality tales of popular, folk religions. He casts the discourses of the demythological/paradoxical and the supernatural/bivalent in light of the relation between the elite and the popular religions, as well as the tension between ritual and iconoclasm, other power and self-power, or prayer and meditation (46).

The vector of thrust in this book can be summarized by his correct assertion that kōan literature actually reveals that these two levels of discourses are “not mutually exclusive but are deliberately played off of one another to generate a creative tension between discursive levels” (44). In demonstrating this point, Heine aims to de-naturalize and de-privilege our received binary categories.

Relating to the issue of scholarly categories, his criticism of Zen studies focuses on the way in which scholars have handled the two dichotomous discourses of Zen iconoclasm and popular religion. For example, he contends that while Faure's work on Zen is multifaceted and theoretically sophisticated, often revealing the heterological dimensions of Zen, his theoretical model cannot resolve the seemingly “inevitable (epistemological) gap” between these two competing discourses (185). Heine also praises the work of Bodiford but represents him as an example of someone at the other end of the spectrum of employing little theory. He characterizes Bodiford's textual-historical work as presenting a seamless, homogenized continuity between the elite and the popular traditions. However, he sees the lack of theory as implicitly advancing the view of “profound compatibility and mutual enhancement of elite and popular religions” (185), which to Heine do not reconcile the two levels of discourses at all. Heine discusses other scholars' works which situate between these two polarities of historicism and theory (Collcutt 1981; LaFleur 1983; Yamaoka 1983; McFarland 1987; and Foulk 1987), but he places them mostly in the camp of textual historians who are “generally unconcerned with applying critical theory,” even though they present a positive historiography that demystifies hagiography (186-89). He acknowledges that even when critical theories are used, these scholars tend to “recreate unwittingly a two-tiered model” (182) of elite and popular traditions in Zen.

Heine's own theory regarding this incongruity in Zen scholarship and specifically the fox kōan is that both Zen and popular religion “derive from a common but dispersed and polysemous *force field*” (emphasis mine). He argues that “the debate between homological and heterological interpretations is resolvable in terms of seeing a third level of conceptual movement as an intertextual transference: a movement between fluid, interdependent texts rather than stiffened, independent sects that is in turn multileveled.” He continues, “[T]he key is to develop an analysis not from the standpoint of how Zen trickles down to popular religion or how popular religion trickles up to Zen . . . but in terms of the constant struggle between perspectives conceived on a horizontal playing field” (190).

There is much value and potential in this “force field” model. It resolves the tension between the two discourses and presents a more dynamic structure of intertextuality. However, such a model, at least in the way Heine presents it, lacks historical agents/actors and precludes an examination of actual historical moments of interaction. What was this force field and how was it formed? The reader is left wondering about the “constant struggle” between these discursive fields. Merely pointing out the struggle does not explain the character of the religious landscape from which the fox kōan emerged. While he rightfully highlights the negotiation and

synchronic, intertextual connections between the kōan and folk discourses—the “amalgamation” where “great/little traditions commingle and define themselves in terms of their contrast” (196)—he needs to detail the historicity of this amalgamation and show how these discourses intersected. Otherwise, this discussion remains on the level of hypothesis.

When I read his “force field” model, it reminded me of the Q text hypothesis in Christian studies. This is basically a theory that advances a supposed “lost text” (hypothetically named “Q,” which derives from the German word “Quelle,” meaning “source”) from which both the Gospels of Matthew and Luke drew. While this theory is largely accepted by most Christian scholars, no one can historically contextualize this Q text because it does not exist. Heine’s model is similar because he wants to propose some reified thing called force field, from which both institutionalized Zen and popular religion drew. However, in the case of East Asia, we are not dealing with one particular lost text; we are dealing with an active and fluid historical context. So, my critique of this model is Heine’s deficiency of sources that he could have provided. In contrast to the Q text, in the case of China it is possible to demonstrate how the force field was discursively and historically shaped and instrumentally appropriated by agents.

Even if he does not document historical sources, he should develop this model more. Scholars of Chinese history have theorized about the syncretic contexts from which different religious traditions flourished and to which historical actors/texts responded. Rob Campany, for example, borrowing from Ann Swidler’s theory of “cultural repertoires,” discusses the hagiographical narratives that premodern Chinese people (whether Buddhists, Daoists, or “popular religion” folks) availed themselves as they negotiated their lives. He argues that the historical contexts or cultural repertoires were something repeatedly claimed, constructed, portrayed, or posited in texts, rituals, and other artifacts and activities rather than as simply given (Campany, 2003, 317).

Heine could capitalize on this theory of cultural repertoires to historicize the degrees to which his force field was accessible to the Chan masters and kōan compilers. I do not believe that this is hard to do because there is already a substantial body of historiography done on Chinese medieval culture and Chan studies. It would not be hard to show that such a force field contains different and contradictory discourses, as Heine rightfully suggests, because they answer different sets of questions, and people resorted to these different levels of discourses of meanings and values even when they contradict one another according to their needs. If Heine had elaborated on these historical issues, he would have presented a more cogent theoretical model.

This book, while it is about fox kōan, should be appreciated from the perspective of Heine’s ongoing contribution to Dōgen studies. Dōgen’s comment on the fox kōan is important because it is the one doctrinal matter in which he apparently shifted his views in tandem with his understanding about the role of karma. Thus, Heine’s focus on these issues through the lens of Dōgen and the fox kōan, which has never been fully explicated in the field, is a major contribution to Dōgen studies. His theoretical insights and ability to identify literary strands and discursive themes immanent in kōans are also useful. It is insights like the multidimensional levels of discourses in kōans that advance the field (albeit slowly) as a whole and open up new vistas for understanding Chan/Zen, which will surely inspire future scholarship.

OPENING A MOUNTAIN: KŌANS OF THE ZEN MASTERS

In *Opening a Mountain: Kōans of the Zen Masters*, Heine continues to situate himself in the interdisciplinary approach. However, with this book, he seems to be reaching out to a broader academic audience beyond Chan/Zen academics. He challenges both normative and scholarly assumptions that kōans are enigmatic expressions based on dialogical encounters between masters and disciples that were used as “psychological and pedagogical tools” for religious training. Such a view is still very much alive in the works of traditional Chan/Zen historians (Foult 2000). In its stead, taking a cultural studies approach to the kōan literature, he highlights the mythological, magical, and ritualistic dimensions behind kōans. His message is clear: anyone who understands kōans as pedagogical tools will completely miss the multifaceted significances of language and symbols that constitute these stories.

Heine chooses sixty kōans and attempts to insert them back to their larger cultic contexts of local practices and beliefs in China and Japan. He divides this selection of kōans into five themes, which constitute the core chapters of this book: Surveying Mountain Landscapes; Contesting with Irregular Rivals; Encountering Supernatural Forces; Wielding Symbols of Authority; and Giving Life and Controlling Death as Confessional Experiences. Points of discussion follow each kōan case under each of these themes. Heine omits footnotes, endnotes, bibliography, and an index, which suggest that the book may be targeting a wider intellectual community of academics who are not specialists. Because most of what he encapsulates about Chan and Zen are already known in Chan/Zen studies, perhaps Heine is making an argument for the field as a whole. Yet this absence of documentation leaves the Chan/Zen scholar hungry for more details, analyses, and historical evidences for his claims. Nevertheless, this move toward challenging traditional interpretations and advocating interdisciplinary approaches to situate kōans in East Asian cultures in general

can be seen as an inspiration for future academic studies of the kōan literature.

Heine has tapped into a very important (and obvious) dimension in kōan literature that previous scholars have ignored. That is, kōans are wonderfully weaved into the fabric of Chan/Zen teachings, local customs, and cultic traditions—all of these dimensions would constitute his force field model discussed above. Much could be done to draw out these historical, ritualistic, and performative dimensions in kōans. For example, the many rhetorical markers in the language of these kōans have implications and resonances in the larger contexts of East Asian religions; they reveal the collective memory, communally shaped traditions, and culture-making aspects in which Chan masters were invested with special status. Moreover, all of these stories were collected and written under the pressure of certain reader expectations, assumptions, and interests, which behooves scholarly attention. Such a task of recovering these nuances, coupled with the same rigorous acumen in historicism and text criticism, would advance current Zen studies tremendously.

Heine highlights all of these wonderful connections in passing. He rightfully contextualizes kōans in a more nuanced way, in the larger context of the premodern cultural landscape of East Asia, where realms of “religion” and “secular” life, elite and popular beliefs, and the world of the living and the invisible are inseparable. Unfortunately, his analyses are too succinct. An in-depth study of the wider dimensions of the kōan would yield stronger support for his main thesis and resolve what appears to be an over-reading into the stories to justify his arguments about the cultic traditions of Chan/Zen. For example, in his exposition on supernatural contests between Chan masters and irregular and marginal figures, Heine conveniently asserts that the “old granny” in the case “Chao-chou Checks Out an Old Woman” (91-94) was probably a “witch” because the Chinese character (*po*) is the same for both terms. But this may not be the case. The word *po*, which is usually rendered old granny, is not necessarily a witch; it could refer to socially marginal figures like a matchmaker, a healer, and a midwife. Moreover, Chinese historians believe that these associations are limited mainly to the late imperial times (Cass 1999), not necessarily to the period in which these kōans were situated, and there is no hard evidence that grannies were ever regarded as witches, or “*wu*,” which is the character I assume Heine is referring to.

Scholars may question his readings and selections of kōans that seem to be forced into an interpretive lens that highlights only the “supernatural and ritual imagery” (32), when in reality these motifs are not really prominent in the stories. In the section on “Surveying Mountain Landscapes,” Heine aims to show that in many kōans, encoun-

ters Zen masters had “supernatural properties that are reflected in popular religious beliefs . . . they also had to contest with, overcome, or assimilate magical forces—including spirits, gods, and bodhisattvas as well as demons—that controlled the entryway to those domains” (37). Yet some of the cases, such as case 8 (55-57), the kōan of “Nan-ch’üan Sweeping on a Mountain” has very little connection to “supernatural properties” of mountains. The story is about communal labor and it just so happens that it supposedly took place in the mountain. The same is true with case 14 (66-67), the kōan on “Manjusri’s Three by Three” and other kōans. The connection of these cases to the mysterious and “mythical dimensions of mountains” is only incidental.

Many chapters of the book rely heavily on Dōgen’s commentary on these kōans. There is nothing wrong with utilizing one text to interpret another. But perhaps Heine needs to simply stipulate the strengths and limitations of using one source from a very different cultural setting to characterize “Zen” (which in his usage also includes Chan) as a whole. Without stipulating the parameter of his study, the broader intellectual community who are not specialists may assume that kōan commentaries transcend time and culture, and Dōgen is ultimately the most important authority on this topic.

Of course, these historiographical issues are not fatal to his overall argument that kōans are fully enmeshed in the premodern context where supernatural and worldly concerns are indivisible. But in the eyes of historians, providing cogent evidence would make his arguments that much stronger. It is important to clarify the criteria for selecting these kōans under a certain rubric and demonstrate the deeper historical implications of these stories to their roots in popular Chinese culture and its cultic practices. An alternative structure for the book, which would resolve some of these caveats of historiography and documentation, is to select several key kōans (instead of sixty) and do a close reading analysis of their mythological and demonological implications. On a positive note, these issues do offer a roadmap for future research.

In the last section of this book on “Life and Death,” the discussion ends abruptly with the case on “Tao-wu makes a Condolence Call” (193-96). In this last story, Daowu (i.e., Tao-wu) and his disciples Qianyuan once made a condolence call at another monastery. Qianyuan taps the coffin and asks, “Alive or dead?” and Daowu responds with “I just won’t say.” Later, Daowu passed away, and when Qianyuan brought up the episode with Chan master Shishuang, he responded with “I just won’t say!” Upon hearing this, Qianyuan was enlightened. In his discussion, Heine basically summarizes the whole story without an in-depth analysis. He concludes, “What is the correct evaluation of the case’s discourse on the

meaning of death and supranormal powers? ‘I just won’t say!’” Of course, Heine is being playful here. But it does raise the issue of authorial voice.

For some readers, this and other passages present Heine almost as a Zen masters. While other sections of the book, particularly in the “Introduction,” the writing is expository and academic as he critiques scholarly representations and biases regarding kōans as a psychological impasse and a pedagogical tool for enlightenment. I believe that part of the issue here may be the innovative postmodern nature of the work, problematizing emic/etic levels of discourses. One thing that Heine is clearly evaluating critically is the academic assumptions that frame the understanding of kōans as psychological tools for enlightenment. He challenges those assumptions by asking questions outside the predominant ideology underlying that frame and challenging the rigid division between emic/etic discourses and the myth of scholarly objectivity. There is an explicit hierarchy of knowledge and valid interpretative approaches that is endemic to traditional buddhological Chan/Zen studies that Heine is questioning.

This criticism also reveals an instance where his own understanding of what a kōan is had shifted since his edited volume, *The Kōan*, in which he states that kōans are merely “enigmatic and often shocking spiritual expressions based on dialogical encounters between masters and disciples that were used as pedagogical tools for religious training in the Zen (C. Ch’an) Buddhist tradition” (Foulk 2000, 3). Such a view derives primarily from a canonical and enlightenment-based perspective (Foulk 2000, 16). Of course, there is also merit in such a definition, but in *Opening a Mountain*, Heine wants to show that the kōan genre is much more than literary tropes centered around enlightenment.

DID DŌGEN GO TO CHINA?

The focus of *Did Dōgen Go to China?* is not about whether or not Dōgen went to China. The rhetorical question is a vehicle to explore why Dōgen makes little mentions of his Chinese mentor, Rujing (Ju-ching) in the ten years after his return from the China trip. This book offers a critique and synthesizes existing theories of Dōgen’s teachings in Japanese Zen scholarship and presents, in a systematic way for the first time in English, a comprehensive examination of Dōgen’s vast literary output. As a result, Heine offers a new way to chronologize Dōgen’s life work. Heine’s preeminence as a Dōgen scholar is very much in evidence here.

Arguing against earlier scholarship, Heine shows that Dōgen’s life and oeuvre can now be divided into three periods (early period: 1223-33; middle period: 1233-46; and late period: 1246-53), with each period further divided into subperiods. Heine challenges scholars who present Dōgen’s thought as unchanging and shows that Dōgen’s thought kept

on evolving according to circumstances: Dōgen had a political fallout with the Tendai establishment, especially after he accepted disciples from the proscribed Daruma sect of Dainichi Nonin (fl. 1190); he decided not to compete with a potential rival Zen master for a monastery; he abruptly abandoned the imperial capital of Kyoto for the remote and mountainous hinterland of Echizen Province to establish Eiheiji, the Eternal Peace Monastery.

Heine’s main argument lies in his view of the threefold periodization of Dōgen’s life. This is based on a careful analysis of his corpus of writings. Heine is reacting against two camps of scholars with two competing theories. The first camp is what Heine calls the “Decline Theory” which includes theorists such as Yanagida, Heinrich Dumoulin, and Bielefeldt. They maintain that Dōgen’s stay in Kyoto, prior to Echizen, were his most creative years. This is the period when Dōgen produced his kōan commentaries of the seventy-five-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō* and when he stressed that all beings, no matter their sex or station, are capable of enlightenment. The scholars of this first camp read the Dōgen of the Echizen years as a man declining in breadth of vision and vigor—descending into a monastic elitism, abandoning his earlier robust universalism, and engaging in harsh and needless polemics against rival Zen lineages.

The other opposing interpretation is the so-called “Renewal Theory.” Proponents of this theory, influenced by the Critical Buddhist (*hihan bukkyō*) methodology of scholars such as Hakamaya Noriaki and Matsumoto Shirō, argue that Dōgen “had a spiritual rebirth after returning to Eiheiji in 1248 from a mission to Kamakura, where he found the dominant Rinzaï Zen sect corrupted by its association with the rising warrior class” (77). Dōgen’s subsequent writings focused on karmic causality and rejected the “original enlightenment” (*hongaku*) thought that was endemic to Japanese Tendai and the Daruma sect. Theorists in this camp judge Dōgen’s twelve-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō* as his masterwork.

Heine’s own threefold theory engages with the above two theories as dialogue partners, detailing the strengths and ideological shortsightedness of each, by drawing insights from the previously ignored *Eihei kōroku* (Extensive Record). Heine tries to negotiate some ways of accounting for subtle and overlooked continuities beneath the discontinuities. He hypothesizes that the key transition from Kyoto to Echizen (1241-44) is neither a period of decline or renewal but “as an unfolding of thought and compositions that express timeless mystical truths yet are relative to particular contexts” (84). Along the way, Heine highlights the problems with both of the earlier theories. For example, in examining *Bendōwa*, he challenges the Decline Theory’s claim that Dōgen was a liberal, universalist thinker when he shows how Dōgen’s “refreshingly ecumenical” outlook on

laypeople and women practicing zazen is merely mentioned in passing (129), and that the real point of *Bendōwa* is just to advocate the principle that *all* people are able to practice zazen regardless of their status: male, female, low, or high. Similarly, Heine critiques proponents of Renewal Theory claiming that *Bendōwa* expounds the claim of universal or “original enlightenment,” but in fact, Dōgen actually never mentions (neither endorsed nor refuted) this ideal of original enlightenment in this or any other text (131).

In this book, Heine reveals the process through which Dōgen absorbed Chinese Chan Buddhism, both its monastic traditions and its vast literature, to create his own unique understanding of buddhadharma. This book really shines and demonstrates Heine’s mastery of the corpus of Dōgen’s writings and secondary scholarship relating to him. The strengths of this book lie in a nuanced understanding of Dōgen’s life works, a sustained analysis of the state of the field in Dōgen studies in the academia and the bridging of scholarly discussions of Dōgen in Japanese and English.

ZEN SKIN, ZEN MARROW

The last book in this review is *Zen Skin, Zen Marrow: Will the Real Zen Buddhism Please Stand Up?* This book reveals Heine’s own views concerning the field of Chan/Zen studies. Here, he describes the “war” between the camps of the Traditional Zen Narrative (TZN) and the Historical and Cultural Criticism (HCC). The former are Zen proponents and the latter, Zen critics. This division is not necessarily a division between Zen practitioners as insiders and Zen scholars as outsiders. Heine shows that there are HCC critics who are insiders calling for the reformation of their religious tradition. The book attempts to expose the layers of discourses fueling the debate by examining the scholarship of these two camps. Heine elucidates his arguments by creatively analyzing various kōans. Heine encapsulates this debate and its trajectories of representations of Zen in both Western and Japanese languages.

One of Heine’s greatest strengths is his ability to insightfully encapsulate the limitations of current Zen scholarship. He openly discusses the fissure between TZN and HCC that has long been tacitly recognized in various representations of Zen. At the same time, it provides a direction for TZN and HCC proponents to bridge their criticisms when possible. While there are several monographs and articles in English that articulate the positions of either TZN or HCC, there is no extended study that articulates both of these positions under a single volume. In this sense, Heine’s project is one of a kind and long overdue. In this volume, he is able to contextualize different levels of Zen discourses in the larger historical and social contexts of Japanese culture and support his evidence with textual documents and anthropological theories.

Heine rightfully challenges TZN’s idealized view of Zen as a philosophy of unmediated, nondual experience that “does not require intercession through the conventional use of objects of worship, such as image, symbols, or representations of deities” (7). In Chapter 3, “Zen Rites,” he shows that Japanese Sōtō Zen institutions were wrought with ritualism and devotional practices; Zen “made extensive use of language” throughout its history and promoted rituals and supernaturalism that espoused “a syncretic approach to attaining worldly benefits, such as prosperity, fertility, or safety during travels” (87). He targets TZN’s presentation of Zen as founded on “the equality of all beings by virtue of their possessing the common endowment of original enlightenment” (7); he critiques the Kyoto School’s position that “Zen is ideally suited to the complex modern era” (117). In Chapter 4, “Zen Rights,” he discusses a list of social ills, such as imperialism, nationalism, militarism, and gender and class discrimination. For example, he highlights Zen’s “intolerance toward the outcaste community” or *burakumin*, to counter TZN’s idealism. The epilogue is Heine’s attempt to reconcile TZN and HCC representations of Zen. He uses the Chan/Zen discourse of favoring “formless repentance” over “form repentance” (derived from the *Platform Scripture*) to encourage Zen to be more involved in society “in a way that demands an abandonment of the traditional Zen’s de-emphasis on form repentance” (171).

The main thrust of this book (Chapters 2-4) is to show the discrepancies between prescriptive (ahistorical) truth claims and descriptive (historical) realities. For Heine, TZN presents a prescriptive, romanticized image of Zen, and HCC is a deconstruction of this idealized image. The structure of this book is built on the caricature of these two camps, which enables him to exercise his poststructuralist critiques—portraying them as binary opposites, then show that both are flawed and actually interconnected. He uses the interconnectedness of form and formless repentance to critique these camps.

Perhaps Heine is merely using Weberian “ideal types” as heuristic device to examine complex phenomena. Yet the question still remains: Are these polar camps as solid as how they are represented? It seems that the ongoing “war” in Chan/Zen is actually reified by the discussions in the book. To be sure, my critique is aimed at the field in general, in which caricatures of HCC and TZN are simply replicating the problem. If we examine these caricatures closely, they are actually grounded in very Western scholarly categories and constructs, behind which lies the debate between Orientalism and reverse Orientalism. For example, using the Bodhidharma metaphor, the book presents TZN as the “skin,” which covers the real “marrow” of “duplicity and complicity” and proponents of TZN “lack a genuine concern for society” (118), or that TZN unilaterally presents itself as a “special

transmission outside of scripture, without relying on words and letters,” where “silence is the necessary final solution to the problem of the innate deficiencies of language and logic” (55). Yet these caricatures (created mostly by proponents of HCC) of TZN as manufacturing a timeless truth beyond language, dualism, solely abiding in the realm of “pure experience” (Sharf 1995) is itself an idealization grounded in Western discourse that has very little to do with the Chan/Zen experience of enlightenment. Criticism of this characterization can be seen in Victor Hori’s introduction in *Zen Sand* (Hori 2003, 10-13).

My aim is not to deny the existence of the historical debates between proponents of TZN and HCC—and I do understand how Heine’s critique of these caricatures would only work if they are set as opposite poles—nor is it my intention to undermine Heine’s project in this monograph, which is a welcome addition to the field. But I would like to point out that the TZN/HCC debate actually inherits modern Western Orientalist discourse of the East as the other and the subsequent reverse Orientalist critique of the West as dualistic and lacking genuine “experience.” It is curious that out of all the historical sources and documents available that demonstrate the tradition’s multivalent features, HCC latches onto a vehement criticism of Zen’s rhetoric of itself as “a separate tradition outside of scriptures; not dependent on words and language” as its defining feature. To me, this shows more the biases of the field (and how Japanese Zen was transported to the West) than what Chan/Zen was. It is only in this reactionary context of reverse Orientalism that HCC’s criticisms make sense.

To be sure, Heine does an excellent job pointing out the problems with these two positions of TZN and HCC, but readers should know that the historicity of these two camps themselves may not be real oppositions. The competing narratives of TZN and HCC are only our constructions and reconstructions of histories. To polarize them would resemble a person who sets up a straw man himself and attacks it. As Heine correctly acknowledges, the TZN and HCC are like “Jekyll and Hyde”—two sides of the same person (156).

Lastly, there is a related issue of understanding Chan through the lens of Japanese Zen, which is perpetuated by Heine’s use of the words “Zen” and “kōans” in the abstract to include their corresponding Chinese antecedents: Chan and *gong’ans*. This problem is tangential to the aims of Heine’s scholarship. However, it does continue the false impression that the historical contexts, institutional developments, and rhetorical devices in Chinese Chan and Japanese Zen were identical and developed along a single, natural, and continuous trajectory. This is a problem that continues to plague the field. In criticizing Japanese Zen’s

“participation in discriminatory practices” with granting *kaimyō* (precept names) to deceased high-ranking patrons, Heine highlights Chan Buddhism’s “fascination with honoring and at the same time conquering death . . . worshipping mummies, relics, relics, and portraits of deceased patriarchs” (148-89). Or in detailing the deficiencies of Japanese Zen institutions to engage with society, he cites the prescriptive Chinese monastic regulation manual, *Chanyuan qing’gui* (Pure Rules of Chan Monasteries), as historical evidence of Chan’s tendency to acquiesce to powerful officials and emperors (141). According to him, this led to modern Japanese Zen’s participation in war and militarism (144-48). I do not want to sound like a Chan apologist, but what these passages suggest, even to a casual reader outside the field of Chan/Zen studies, is that the social ills in Japanese Zen can be traced back to China. Heine states, “From the outset, Zen [here, referring to Chan] has harbored a degree of corruption in making compromises and accommodations with state and local authorities and donors, which has led to many of the social problems evident in modern Japan” (141). Again, such a tendency to see Chan through the lens of Zen is not unique to Heine; it is symptomatic to Zen studies as a field. I merely point out this problem to draw our attention to the complex and different historical trajectories of Chinese Chan and Japanese Zen.

In this review, I have focused on Heine’s many insightful contributions to Chan and Zen studies. His oeuvre can be understood as an intellectual exploration into the relationship between hermeneutics and social processes of Zen literature. He expands vertiginously the field of inquiry, underscoring the fact that Zen discourses should be understood in relation to the religious and cultural histories of China and Japan in their totality, not only in relation to the doctrinal developments in Buddhism. He is one of the main proponents in Zen studies that spearheads the hermeneutical and cultural studies of Zen and engages with the history and the anthropology of religion beyond the limits of traditional buddhology. In this sense, his monographs are particularly strong in pointing out shortcomings in the field and opening the field to new research areas. As a preeminent scholar of Dōgen and Japanese Zen, he has given us new theoretical lenses to examine areas in both Chan and Zen that are rich in cultural dimensions. He shows us that future Chan and Zen studies must be multivalent and must go beyond the confines of philosophical analyses, historicism, and canonical studies.

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Historical Hermeneutics of Zen Buddhist Discourse: On Contesting the Mu Kōan

By Steven Heine

HISTORY AND NONHISTORY

In one of my first publications over thirty years ago, I asked whether Zen Buddhism is to be considered an example of philosophy or nonphilosophy, or how to evaluate the apparent polarity between the conceptual and literary components of Zen discourse and the school's emphasis on going beyond reason and language. The aim was not to seek a clear-cut resolution but to explore the open-ended ramifications of the multiplicity of paradoxes, ambiguities, and ironies that characterize much of the rhetoric of Zen.

Now, I wish to raise a complementary yet intertwining point about history and nonhistory. Those who see Zen as a timeless truth transcending historical dimensions, or as a matter of ahistoricity, will invariably and increasingly find their view challenged by scholars who seek to historicize and contextualize the tradition, and thereby problematize claims of transcendence. However, this academic exercise will inevitably be questioned by practitioners and others committed to Zen as a source of timeless truth regarding whether historical deconstruction is at all relevant for understanding the religious meaning and soteriological aspirations embodied in Zen's various forms of expression.

The opposition between historical and nonhistorical approaches seems to be especially pronounced when dealing with the role of enigmatic kōans (Ch. gong'ans), or the vast number of dialogues and anecdotes which one scholar has referred to as "Chan 'one-liners'" for their pithy commentary combined with deliberately perplexing anticommentary.¹ Since the pioneering work of Japanese scholars such as Yanagida Seizan, Iriya Yoshitaka, and Ishii Shūdō in the 1960s and 1970s, kōan case records are continually being examined from diverse critical scholarly perspectives in terms of textual background and social-historical context, yet remain a flash point for arguments about transcendental truth grounded primarily on spiritual training and personal experience.

Based on further recent reflections on the role of kōan literature and ritual, I have come to think that the methodological polarity that is most important to reckon with, and hopefully overcome, is not so much between history and nonhistory, or philosophy and nonphilosophy. Rather, the main area of discrepancy involves the creative tension between an apologetic standpoint, which tends to adopt a particular subjective view of the tradition and apply it universally, and a skeptical standpoint, which strives for

objectivity but may reveal a bias in undermining the truth claims of the tradition. What can get lost in the give and take involving the often unexamined assumptions of both apologetic and skeptical standpoints is the remarkable richness and range of Zen theories and practices, whereby there are multiple competing views of truth that should be allowed to stand and get highlighted in their diversification rather than reduced to singularity or somehow ignored or even negated altogether.

In research for a new book tentatively titled *Like Cats and Dogs: Contesting the Mu Kōan in Zen Buddhism* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming), I have been surprised to find the extent to which one and only one specific view of the Mu Kōan (Ch. Wu Gong'an) has been portrayed in numerous writings as the only valid approach by leading contemporary scholar-practitioners who represent three different schools—Korean Zen, the Linji (Jp. Rinzai) school of China, and the Japanese Sōtō (Ch. Caodong) sect.² The standpoint they endorse focuses exclusively on appropriating the best-known version of the case from the *Wumenguan* (Jp. *Mumonkan*) or *Gateless Gate* kōan collection of 1229, in which an anonymous monk asks Zhaozhou (Jp. Jōshū), "Does a dog have Buddha-nature or not?" and the master responds "No" or "It does not have" (Mu in Japanese pronunciation, or Wu in Chinese), which is generally taken to mean "Nothingness." Furthermore, the common approach espoused by the three different advocates emphasizes a particular understanding of the role of the kōan based on the "head-phrase" (Ch. *huatou*, Jp. *watō*, Kr. *hwadu*) method, which takes the "Mu" response in a nonliteral way to express a transcendental negation that becomes the topic of an intensive contemplative experience, during which any and all thoughts or uses of reason and words are to be abruptly cut off and discarded for good rather than investigated for their expressive nuances and ramifications.

ON EXAMINING THE MU KŌAN

Historical studies, however, can demonstrate quite persuasively that an overemphasis on this single approach to one version of the kōan is somewhat misleading for several reasons:

1. The case was not mentioned in the earliest records of Zhaozhou from the tenth and eleventh centuries, such as the *Zutang ji* (Jp. *Sōdōshū*) or *Jingde*

- chuandeng lu* (Jp. *Keitoku dentōroku*), of Zhaozhou, who lived in the ninth century and was better known at the time for many other famous kōans, including the case in which his master Nanquan (Jp. Nansen) cuts a cat in two and Zhaozhou in response puts his sandals on his head; also, the earliest kōan collections with verse comments from the early eleventh century by Fenyang and Xuedou do not cite the Mu Kōan;
2. Early Chan records do include a dialogue about the dog's Buddha-nature involving a monk named Weikuan, who lived a generation prior to Zhaozhou, which concludes in a much more open-ended and ironic fashion, as well as a dialogue about the Buddha nature in relation to an earthworm being cut in two featuring master Changsha, another disciple of Zhaozhou's teacher, Nanquan;
 3. The recorded sayings of Zhaozhou, which were probably created in the twelfth century, contain two versions of the case of the dog's Buddha-nature which are both different from the *Wumenguan* version, and also include a related case in which the question regarding the Buddha-nature of nonhumans is asked about an oak tree, which is the subject of yet another prominent Zhaozhou dialogue;
 4. Looking over the voluminous Zen texts from the Song dynasty as well as from medieval Japan reveals that the kōan tradition holds at least half a dozen versions of the case, including in addition to a dialogue in which Weikuan is asked about the dog and others cited above, but not limited to:
 - a. the No response accompanied by a dialogue probing why not (there are at least two variations of this dialogue);
 - b. two versions of the case where the answer is positive, one of these with Yes (Jp. U, Ch. Yu) including a dialogue probing why;
 - c. several versions combining the positive and negative responses with or without the follow-up dialogues, and with the No answer appearing either prior or subsequent to the Yes answer;
 5. The head-word approach is rooted in the twelfth-century writings of Linji school monk Dahui (Jp. Daie), the main disciple of Yuanwu (Jp. Engo), who was the compiler of the *Biyantu* (Jp. *Hekiganroku*) or *Blue Cliff Record* collection of 100 kōan cases published in 1129, a century earlier than the *Wumenguan*, which does not contain the Mu Kōan, and the approach was subsequently promulgated by Chinul in thirteenth-century Korea and Hakuin in the Edo period of Japan, among others;
 6. Dahui's comments on the kōan probably originally targeted an audience of lay disciples whom he accumulated during his abbacy stints in both the remote countryside while he was exiled for political reasons for fifteen years of his career and the capital when he regained the favor of the authorities during the final period of his life;
 7. There are dozens or even hundreds of verse and prose commentaries in Chinese and Japanese texts, many of which do support the *Wumenguan* approach as articulated by Dahui's head-phrase method, while countless others which prefer one of the other versions of the case tend to bypass, disagree with, or even contradict that outlook;
 8. A couple of key texts, such as the *Congrong lu* (Jp. *Shōyōroku*) or *Book of Serenity* in addition to the "Busshō" or "Buddha-nature" fascicle of Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō*, both of which are available in several English translations, reveal multiple possibilities for interpreting one or more versions of the case, especially 4.c above; and
 9. To sum up the significance of this account of the Mu Kōan, it is clear that the editor of the *Wumenguan*, who said he meditated on of the single syllable Mu for many years until he attained enlightenment and celebrated this term in some of his verses, selected a truncated version of the case as the first record of the collection precisely in order to put forward his spiritual commitment to Dahui's head-phrase method.
- In light of the tremendous degree of variation and variability in kōan commentaries, which has led to many interpreters insisting that the true message of the case is absolute nothingness (Mu), which might result in a reification of nihilism, while others argue that the point of the case is the relativity of affirmation and negation (Mu, but with less emphasis), which might result in antinomianism, it seems clear that the full implications of the case are not revealed by translations/interpretations focusing exclusively on the emphatic "No" response, which is sometimes given with an exclamation point or a transliteration of the Sino-Japanese original for stress (as in "Mu!" instead of "No").

SEEKING A MIDDLE-WAY HERMENEUTIC STANDPOINT

The next interpretative question that can be asked is whether historical findings should be used to raise a challenge to the truth claims based on the *Wumenguan* version or should be considered in the final analysis irrelevant for understanding the religious meaning of the head-phrase method. It is at this hermeneutic juncture, I maintain, that the important choice to be made by scholars is not so much

between historical or nonhistorical, or philosophical or non-philosophical modes of inquiry, but between apologetics and skepticism. Both of these alternatives, despite there being some benefits of each in terms of producing insight into the significance of the case, can all too easily succumb to fallacies that tend to conceal rather than open up the diversity within the tradition.

One problem emerges when attempts at historicism are derived from apologetics that may do more to obfuscate than to clarify. For instance, some commentators point to an apparent early ninth-century precedent for the *Wumenguan* version in a passage in one of the writings, the *Wanling lu* (Jp. *Enryōroku*) attributed to ninth-century master Huangbo (Jp. *Ōbaku*), an important representative of the Southern school of Zen who was the mentor of Linji and who died forty years before Zhaozhou and nearly three hundred years prior to the development of Dahui’s head-phrase method. While this text, if authentic, could support the view of a timeless truth—or at least a truth extended over a greater time frame of several centuries—the passage has been shown to be spurious in that it represents a later emendation that was inserted into a Ming dynasty version of the Huangbo text in order to try to buttress and substantiate retrospectively otherwise questionable truth claims.³ It seems clear that Dahui first promoted the use of the method around 1134, in part due to sociopolitical changes with the onset of the Southern Song dynasty in 1127 that affected the religious environment and also because of the retirement of mentor Yuanwu in 1130.⁴ Apparently, Dahui was not always entirely consistent about the kōan’s function in that he sometimes taught distinct approaches to different sets of followers, whether lay or monastic.

At the other end of the spectrum, healthy skepticism is introduced into contemporary discourse about the Mu Kōan by scholarship that seeks to show how the dialogue in which a faceless monk challenges his wise master about the status of the ultimate reality of a dog probably derived from complex ongoing philosophical debates peculiar to Chinese Buddhist naturalism concerning whether or not all sentient in addition to insentient beings possess the Buddha-nature as an endowment and can indeed attain—or even in their own unique way preach about—Buddhahood.⁵ Although it is beneficial to see the Mu Kōan in light of the philosophical context, and it is no doubt a distortion to overlook this background altogether as many commentators seem to, it would also do an injustice to reduce the case to a kind of doctrinal schism rather than highlighting the role the kōan plays in the existential quest for a resolution of individual spiritual goals. That is, whether or not any and all beings have Buddha-nature, the primary aim of the Mu Kōan is not to support a theoretical argument about the status of a nonhuman (whether sentient or insentient) regarding ultimate

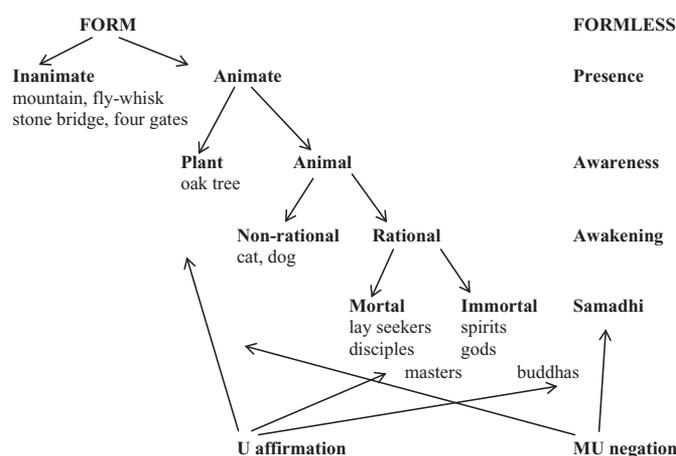


Figure 1: Inter-Relationality of Form-Formless in Zhaozhou’s Koans

reality but to bypass that concern by zeroing in on whether the aspiring but self-deprecating monk himself, who is all too aware of his ignorance and karmic transgressions, has the capacity to attain enlightenment.

Therefore, the key hermeneutic question is not whether philosophy and doctrine or historicity and contextualization are emphasized, but whether, no matter which mode of inquiry is employed, the pitfalls of an apparent overeagerness either to affirm or to deny the tradition are avoided and surpassed from a neutral, uncommitted, middle-way standpoint. In that vein, I suggest that the following template (Fig. 1), created in order to try to capture the diversity and plurality of voices in the world of Zen kōan hermeneutics, can be used as a model for constructive and innovative integration of disparate analytic modalities.⁶

INTERRELATIONALITY OF FORM-FORMLESS IN ZHAOZHOU’S KŌANS

All of the specific examples cited here, such as “mountain,” “oak tree,” or “cat,” are taken from cases in the records of Zhaozhou—“three pounds of flax,” “sesame-seed rice cake” or “water buffalo” could have been used, to cite just a few of the hundreds of instances attributed to various masters. Zhaozhou is said to have once informed his disciples that any and every object in the surroundings can become a vehicle for articulating truth but without resorting to the use of “objectivity” conceived of in dualistic fashion.⁷ The categories under the heading of “Formless” refer to possible degrees of self-understanding attainable by the respective level of beings—presence for sentient beings, awareness for animals, awakening for rational beings, and samadhi for immortals (or some of the spiritual beings who transcend the distinctions of life and death).

This comprehensive standpoint integrating sentient and insentient and unenlightened and enlightened beings

in terms of the interplay of form and formlessness functioning at various discursive levels does not reduce the case to a single line of interpretation. The goal of Figure 1 is to allow the meaning of Mu to stand out rather than to be suppressed, while also disclosing its complex—at once supportive and negative—relation to other levels of discourse implied by the U response, seen in a way that draws out textual history yet is not limited to this dimension and is greatly inspired by philosophical hermeneutics. Without detracting from the head-phrase approach based on transcendental negation, Figure 1 shows how there arise alternative standpoints reflecting affirmation as well as diverse intermediary perspectives, such that the dog's Buddha-nature is neither affirmed nor denied (nor both nor neither).

To conclude by dealing with the following question regarding textual studies and historical hermeneutics of Zen, "Is there a consistent pattern to records regarding Zhaozhou's views on whether the dog has Buddha-nature or not?" the appropriate answer would of course be nothing other than an emphatic, "Mu!" Or, to paraphrase a recent American presidential contender, it could be said in support (or refutation) of the master that, "Zhaozhou actually did speak out for the dog having Buddha-nature before he spoke out against it," or maybe this should be stated in reverse, but it is certainly not meant to imply that Zhaozhou—who told two monks "Go have a cup of tea" despite their very different responses—is a flip-flopper in the conventional sense.

One of the main values gained by working with Chan/Zen sources like the Mu Kōan is to be able to apply the rich variety of unrestricted interpretative approaches they represent directly to the task at hand. The ideological openness of kōan records encourages and enhances the adoption of a flexible methodological standpoint, whereby all possible vantage points of reference, ranging from apologetics which seek to remain true to the tradition (perhaps at the cost of being cut off from disputation) to historical criticism that can lead to casting doubt (though perhaps sacrificing authenticity), are continually explored and examined, while at the same time, fixations with any particular theoretical model are ever cast aside as additional evidence or alternative perspectives come into the light.

This situation is a little like the final scene of *Inherit the Wind*, in which the unbelieving defense lawyer Henry Drummond (based on the famous Clarence Darrow, as played by Spencer Tracy) strides gracefully from the courtroom following the so-called Monkey Trial while carrying side-by-side copies of the Bible and of Darwin, after nihilist reporter E. K. Hornbeck mockingly calls him, "The Atheist who believes in God." Therefore, the ongoing endeavor of historical hermeneutics of Zen discourse, or of "explicating Chan by inter-

preting old cases," is to cite the compiler of the *Blue Cliff Record's* commentary on the first case in which Bodhidharma tells the Emperor that there is "no merit" to good works, a "roundabout, meandering path." This "long and winding road" (*raolu*) no doubt can have as many detours as serendipitous discoveries on the nonlinear way to engaging and disentangling the multiple meanings of the voluminous classical, medieval, and modern sources.⁸

NOTES

1. William Henry Grosnick, "The Zen Master Dōgen's Understanding of the Buddha-nature in Light of the Historical Development of the Buddha-nature in India, China, and Japan," Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison (1979), p. 16.
2. The three works are, respectively, Sung Bae Park, *One Korean's Approach to Buddhism: The Mom/Monjit Paradigm* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009); Sheng Yen, *Shattering the Great Doubt: The Chan Perspective of Huatou* (Boston: Shambhala, 2009); and Hakuyu Taizan Maezumi and Bernard Glassman, *On Zen Practice: Body, Breath, and Mind* (Boston: Wisdom, 2002). The head-phrase approach is used almost exclusively in the essays included in *The Book of Mu: Essential Writings on Zen's Most Important Koan*, eds. James Ford and Melissa Blacker (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2011); for my review of this work, see "Does a Dog Have Buddhature? Well, Yes and No" in the Spring 2011 issue of *Buddhadharma*, and readers may also be interested in my review article, "Yes! We Have No Buddha-Nature: Three Recent Publications on Zen Dialogues," in *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 37/2 (2010): 367-376.
3. Morten Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen: The Dispute Over Enlightenment and the Formation of Chan Buddhism in Song-Dynasty China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008), p. 114: "This passage is clearly a quite late addition, however, since the Song editions of the *Wanling lu* do not include it." The spurious passage referencing the Mu Kōan appears in *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* vol. 48:387b, which follows a later, probably Ming, rather than Song edition of the work attributed to Huangbo.
4. A key aspect of the sociocultural transition is that many of the giant literati figures who supported or practiced Chan during the Northern Song, such as Su Shi, Zhang Shangying, and Juefan Huihong, had passed away by the time of the Southern Song and were not to be replaced, thus encouraging the arising of a more straightforward and streamlined rhetorical approach for those less sophisticated in the literary arts (or, to put it in a different, though not necessarily, more accurate way, more focused on spiritual attainment than the cultivation of refinement).
5. See Grosnick, "The Zen Master Dōgen's Understanding of the Buddha-nature"; and Robert H. Sharf, "How to Think with Chan Gong'an," in *Thinking with Cases: Specialist Knowledge in Chinese Cultural History*, ed. Charlotte Furth, et. al. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), pp. 205-243. Both of these treatises yield many insights into the history of the debates, in

which Buddhist themes may reflect the Daoist notion that humans and nature become one (*tianren heyi*).

6. This figure is rather loosely adapted from Ouyang Yizhang, “Zhaozhou wu’ de yuyan fuhao jiedu” [“Deciphering the Linguistic Signs of ‘Zhaozhou’s Wu’ ”], *Pumen Xuebao* 14 (March 2003): 1-28, esp. 14.

7. *Xu zangjing*, vol. 118:307a-b. Buddhist commentators of the period, for example, often referred to stone used for stele or other carvings as well as other inanimate forms of nature as having a “spirit resonance” (*qiyun*) or sympathetic quality.
8. *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* vol. 48:141a.